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BELGIUM  
PAST AND PRESENT  
A. R. HOPE MONCRIEFF







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John D. Holloway  
from Frank M. Todd  
Christmas 1924

in memory of our  
investigation of Europe.



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THE GORDONS AT QUATRE BRAS



# BELGIUM

## PAST AND PRESENT

BY

A. R. HOPE MONCRIEFF



*WITH 32 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS  
IN COLOUR*

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TO THE MEMORY OF

**N. C. D.**

AND THE FIRST HUNDRED THOUSAND  
WHO GLADLY GAVE THEIR LIVES  
TO RIGHT THE WRONG



## PREFACE

THIS book does not pretend to being a formal history of the Flemish and Walloon provinces up to their union as an independent kingdom ; nor does it deal with Belgium exclusively. Its aim is, with pen and pencil, to illustrate the stirring past of that troubled borderland on which neighbour-nations have so often fought their quarrels, till in our own day it made an arena for the main stress of the greatest war ever waged on earth. Those who have gone through that titanic struggle, or followed it with anxious eyes, may willingly find here renewed for them the old fame of names now to us become at once sadly and proudly familiar.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. BATTLES LONG AGO	1
II. A DEBATABLE LAND	20
III. BOLD, "GOOD," AND GOLDEN FLEECERS	45
IV. A WRECKED KINGSHIP	72
V. PEN AND SWORD COMBATS	93
VI. BUTCHERS AND "BEGGARS" AT WAR	118
VII. THE GAME OF KINGS	136
VIII. OLD AND NEW MASTERS	159
IX. UNDER THE PARVENU EMPIRE	175
X A NEW CROWN	197
INDEX	207





# ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

	<i>Facing page</i>
1. THE GORDONS AT QUATRE BRAS	<i>Frontispiece</i>
2. A BRABANT MOOR	2
3. THE BLACK GATE AT TRÈVES	10
4. THE VIKING SHIP	22
5. THE BEGUINAGE, BRUGES	30
6. THE BANQUET HALL, CHÂTEAU DES COMTES, GHENT	38
7. THE MORNING OF AGINCOURT	46
8. THE "MAID OF ORLEANS"	50
9. QUAI DU MIROIR, BRUGES	56
10. GENERAL VIEW OF DINANT	68
11. CHARLES THE BOLD CHARGING AT THE HEAD OF HIS TROOPS	72
12. PONT DES ARCHES, LIÈGE	78
13. COLOGNE	82
14. THE CAMP AND TREASURE OF CHARLES THE BOLD IN THE HANDS OF THE SWISS	90
15. THE ARRIÈRE FAUCILLE, GHENT	96
16. ARCADE UNDER THE NIEUWERK, YPRES	102
17. STRASBOURG	110
18. METZ	114
19. THE ROADSTEAD FROM THE TÊTE DE FLANDRE	116
20. THE INQUISITION	120
21. THE ROMAN ARCH AT ORANGE, IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE	122
22. THE RELIEF OF LEYDEN	132

	<i>Facing page</i>
23. DEATH OF WILLIAM THE SILENT	134
24. CHÂTEAU DE BOUILLON IN THE SEMOIS VALLEY	138
25. HEIDELBERG	146
26. PONT DE JAMBES ET CITADELLE, NAMUR	154
27. THE FLEMISH PLAIN	166
28. THE MARKET PLACE, BREDA	170
29. A DUTCH BULB FARM IN SPRING	176
30. THE MARKET PLACE, MALINES (1884)	182
31. WATERLOO	196
32. THE PLACE VERTE, ANTWERP	200

*Sketch Map at end of volume*

# THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

## I

### BATTLES LONG AGO

AGES ago, winds and tides wrestled unheard over the corner of Europe that in our time has been drenched with its best blood. Beneath the waves for æons invisible zoophytes were at their patient task of spinning themselves into stony piles, by and by upheaved into the air, here as bluffs of chalk or ridges of limestone to be shaped and scarred by nature's tools, there as an emerging floor for the ebb and flow of the baffled sea. Slowly this surface would be skinned over by soil, bearing seeds of life to reproduce and multiply themselves amid fresh accretions. Sand drifted in from the depths to meet silt whirled down from mountain heights far in the background, till from the fruitless waters time had won an expanse of land made more and more fertile by the decay of vegetable and animal life bred amidst its slime. Then here and there again the sea bursts through the barriers it has thrown up, or the rivers break through their worn banks, to make new patterns of coast and channel :

*There rolls the deep where grew the tree.  
Oh, earth, what changes thou hast seen !  
There where the long street roars has been  
The stillness of the central sea.*

The everlasting hills, as we boast them, could be no types of eternity to an eye for which ten thousand years were as one day. Their rocky crests and peaks, baked in the sun and chilled in the

dark, lashed day and night by wind or rain, are always cracking and crumbling into splinters that roll over the snowy slopes on to crawling ice-beds to be drifted down to the melting-point where the glacier caverns pour forth a rubbish-befouled stream. It sweeps along the crumbs of the mountain-top, grinding themselves as they are whirled through lakes and rapids, now sinking to mingle with other particles, then again washed on by every flood to be borne farther and farther, till the river at last lets drop its burden by the muddy banks or shoals through which it must push its way to the sea. So the speck of matter that centuries ago glowed and froze by turns on the head of some majestic Alp has after a journey of hundreds of miles come down in the world to the prosaic level of a lowland pasture ; and the grain of dust that flies into the eye of a fat burgher taking his ease in his tulip garden may once have been pressed under the claw of a vulture or the hoof of a chamois.

Thus was mainly formed the arena which man has so often found fit for a battle-ground, with the fruits of its well-watered soil and its well-practised industry as prizes. Not all the Low Countries, to be sure, are such a dead level as they seem pictured in maps. The tributary streams of the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt have carved them into winding valleys ; and even where brooks are changed for ditches, now and then swells up a slight eminence to overlook a wide prospect of flat pasture. The south-east corner notably bristles into the wooded hills of the Ardennes and the Argonne, and all along the east side straggle heights haunted by romance. The central plain is crossed by a former sea-beach known as the Campine. This bank of sand dunes begins near Antwerp to run across Brabant into German territory, where it ends in a bold bluff overlooking the Rhine at Cleves. In Guelderland also are similar wastes of sandy heath and pine woods, refreshing to an eye sick of smug polders and sluggish channels ; and farther north stretch dreary peat moors dotted with barrows and monuments. In the south of Belgium one might often fancy oneself among the limestone "swallows" of Derbyshire, or on the heaths of our New Forest ; then farther south Champagne swells up in masses of chalk recalling Hamp-



A BRABANT MOOR



shire's northern downs. The coast is almost everywhere fringed by miniature mountain ridges of sand; but within them the land lies in general flatly low, sometimes even sunk below the level of the sea with which it has long had to struggle for existence. When the salt water was beaten back, the trickling land, drying itself in the sun with a towel of wind, proceeded to put on a coat of vegetation, beds of weeds and reeds, tangled jungles, forests of trees contending with each other for the right to spread their tops under the cheerful sky, choked below with damp carpets of moss and fern, such essays of nature's prentice hand as she has thrown aside and buried away, stored up in the coalfields of Flanders and the peat moors of Overijssel for use by generations to come. We must flit over hundreds of centuries with a guess at what living creatures first stirred in those marshes and thickets, what invisible animalculæ, what crawling worms, what short-lived insects, what flocks of screaming sea-fowl, what "dragons of the prime." Let us pass to the time when, amid the beasts here filling "a world of plunder and prey," appeared erect on his legs the being that could handle clubs and missiles against teeth and claws, could clothe himself in the skins of his victims, and strike out fire to give savour to their flesh.

Who were the human aboriginals of this corner of earth we know not, if we can conceive what stunted and brutal natures may first have found footing on the edges of its swamps and floods, or in the dank shade of its forests. By and by these wilds grew firmer to attract stronger races; and the dawn of history shows the Rhine vaguely parting two different stocks, Celts on the left bank, Teutons on the right. The former were the Gauls who fought their way to Rome, but who by contact with its civilization had in three centuries lost some of their virile simplicity. The warlike Teuton tribes, in turn, began to clash against the advancing power of Rome, while some of them, pressed out of their native breeding-grounds, here and there came swarming over the Rhine to intrude upon those less sturdy neighbours. Modern ethnologists are not always able to dogmatize on the family to which belonged this or that tribe of barbarians as to whose kinships the Romans were less concerned to

discriminate. In any case, this field would henceforth be struggled for between two races, whose descendants are still mixed here, much in the manner of oil and vinegar.

It is Cæsar's story of his campaigns that draws up the curtain on the obscure scene where he played an heroic part. The northern side of Gaul, between the Seine and the Rhine, he found dominated by the tribes of Belgæ, whom he judged most manly and formidable of its people, as farthest removed from the demoralizing influence of subjection to Rome. He took them, indeed, to be of German origin; and no doubt their temper had been at least steeled by commingling with Teuton invaders. So enterprising was this strain that it had flowed into Britain, which preserves traces and traditions of Belgic settlements. And of all the Belgæ, Cæsar extols as bravest the Nervii, apparently more Teuton than Celtic in blood, who would not let their manhood be poisoned by the wine of the south, yet perhaps kept up their hearts by some kind of German beer.

They certainly gave Cæsar most trouble, once having almost quenched his glory, on that critical day of it when, after all, he "overcame the Nervii" in the first of so many fights to be recorded on Flemish soil, from the campaigns of that conqueror who was his own special correspondent to Hindenburg's and Ludendorff's retreats "according to plan." The country of the Nervii lay to the east of Cambrai, and their great battle seems to have been on the banks of the Sambre, a few miles above Maubeuge. So unexpectedly fierce was the attack of those barbarians, that they penetrated into the Roman camp, setting to flight the Gaulish and Numidian cavalry along with a mob of light armed footmen and camp-followers, who, like the routed horsemen at Waterloo, spread news of Cæsar's defeat, perhaps not unwelcomed by his native auxiliaries. The ranks of the regular soldiery also were broken; even the doughty tenth legion was like to give way, its standard lost, most of its officers killed or wounded, and the exultant enemy closing in from either side. All were lost, had not Cæsar rushed among his shaken cohorts, seizing a soldier's shield, calling on the centurions by name, pressing to the front with orders to open out the close-



massed files that the short Roman sword might have freer play. The sight and voice of their bold general put fresh heart into his men, so that he was able to rally this legion, join it to another, and turn the tide of victory. Wounded officers rose to hobble forward leaning on their shields ; the fugitives began to return, seeking to wipe out the shame of their dismay in the forefront of the battle. So desperate still was the tribesmen's resistance that they went on hurling darts from a mound of their dead comrades' bodies. But disciplined valour prevailed ; thanks, it would seem, to the personal prowess of the Roman leader. A Belgic javelin might well have then changed the whole east of modern history. But for that borrowed shield, there would have been tyrants ruling in Europe over slavish herds, other dictators would have flattered and terrified wrangling democracies into their fetters ; monsters of cruel lust would have revelled upon tottering thrones ; crowned robbers and murderers would still have squandered hecatombs of human lives for their ambition or their folly, when they had torn up treaties for " scraps of paper " ; but such scourges of humanity would not have been hailed and adulated as Kaisers.

Cæsar boasts that in and after this hard won fight, the Nervii were almost exterminated. But such a sturdy stock took a good deal of extermination ; for we soon find them forward in one of the revolts for which the Gauls readily seized any occasion of their conqueror's back being turned. And long after the Nervii had been subdued to serve as Roman auxiliaries, they joined in a final chance of deserting the standards of that masterful republic now losing its strength under an often disputed empire. By this time the cities of Gaul had become what we as well as the Romans might call colonies, the outlying region being looked on as a protectorate.

Among all the peoples of that region, the Romans seem to have got on best with the Batavii, a Teuton tribe inhabiting an island in the Rhine Delta, where they made the core of the future Dutch nation. Their watery fastnesses bred them as daring swimmers, and they were also renowned as horsemen, who contributed to the Roman army its best cavalry, and came to be

trusted as bodyguards for emperors much in need of faithful watchmen. Thus they bore out their character as a branch of the Catti, praised by Tacitus for being the most disciplined of German warriors. Yet the time came when after more than a century of trusty service they also turned against the shaken empire.

The leader of this revolt was a chief named Claudius Civilis, of whom we know next to nothing but through the incomplete History of Tacitus. He had held high rank in the Roman service, like a Sir Pertab Singh of the period; but his brother being executed and himself imprisoned under Nero, or moved by some other grudge of injury, he schemed to snatch independence for his people from the discords that followed that Emperor's death. Like Hannibal, he had lost an eye, which is said to have suggested to him an ambition to rival so famous an enemy of Rome. Returning home, he gathered a force of Batavian and other tribesmen, at first under colour of supporting Vespasian against Vitellius for the throne that would now be so often bestowed by mutinous or mercenary legions. While Vespasian held the East, the troops in Gaul were disposed to proclaim his rival, and this partisanship brought them into collision with the levy of Civilis, soon swollen by wholesale desertion of Gaulish and German auxiliaries. Others throwing off their allegiance on the first encounter, at the head of a considerable army, he marched up the Rhine, and laid siege, in the name of Vespasian, to the advanced Roman post of *Castra Vetera*, some way below Cologne.

Here a faithful remnant of the legions had hastily ensconced themselves, as our people at Cawnpore and Lucknow held out against a flood of mutiny. From Mainz, a Roman army moved to its relief under greater difficulties than beset Havelock or Sir Colin Campbell. They were not all of one mind, some of the higher officers being at heart for Vespasian, whereas the mass of the rank and file favoured Vitellius. Their commander, Flaccus, was a crippled invalid, highly unpopular, and his more active lieutenant, Vocula, is accused of being not over-eager to end a war that promised him power and promotion. The men were sullen and undisciplined to such a pitch that more than once we

hear of them arresting, even reviling and assaulting their generals in the soreness of a reverse. Again and again the native auxiliaries showed how little they were to be depended on. The Rhine was unusually low that season, which hindered the carriage of troops and stores by water. In Civilis' first affray on its banks, perhaps near Arnheim, the pressed rowers of a Roman flotilla feigned awkwardness as an excuse for hindering the fighting crews, against whom they presently rose to kill the officers who would have prevented them running ashore on the enemy's side. The capture of these prizes, loaded probably with arms, counting for a signal success, a snowball of followers quickly gathered round the Batavian chief, for the most part, it appears, from the German tribes now so numerous settled along the Rhine's left bank that the Romans styled this region the provinces of Upper and Lower Germany.

He, for his part, had his own difficulties. The rebellious tribesmen were more fit for prowess as irregular cavalry or guerillas than for laying siege to an entrenched camp. The garrison of *Castra Vetera*, weak and ill-provided as it was, held out stoutly. Having repelled at Bonn the first insufficient force sent to its relief, Civilis was fain to blockade it, after one fierce assault to satisfy the ardour of his German allies, so numerous that he could afford to throw them away. So Tacitus judges in picturing this scene of half savage warfare, where the better-drilled Batavians seem to have been kept in reserve for steady conduct of the siege. One may attempt a rather free translation of the historian's concisely cryptic style.

“ Night did not end the onset : carousing about piles of logs blazing around, one after another, as they excited themselves by drink, the assailants dashed up with futile rashness, for their missiles went wasted in the dark, whereas the Romans took good aim at the barbarians displayed in a mass or at any warrior made conspicuous by his boldness or his trappings. Noting this, Civilis had the fires put out, that the fighting should be confused under darkness. Now it was all a discordant din of shouts, a medley of accidents, a blind exchange of blows, avoided or driven home : wherever the clamour swelled loudest, men closed in, a

mass of bodies and limbs struggling at random. Courage did not avail ; all was a whirl of chance in which the bravest might well be laid low by a coward's javelin. The strength of the Germans lay in reckless fury ; but the Roman soldiers, familiar with such onslaughts, coolly flung down ironshod stakes and heavy stones upon their enemy. As often as they caught the sound of scaling or placing of ladders against the walls, they thrust back these stormers with their shields and sped them off with a volley of darts, or all able to scramble over were stabbed. When the night had thus worn away, daylight showed a new form of attack. The Batavians had been constructing a two-storied tower, now pushed forward to the prætorian gate, the ground there being most level. When close up, however, it was battered to pieces by strong poles and beams dashed from above, with heavy loss of the men ensconced within it. A sudden successful sally completed this repulse ; and at the same time our soldiers' skill brought into play more artful contrivances. What struck most terror was a machine letting down a dangling clutch, worked by a pulley so as to fish men up into the air one by one, in sight of their comrades, and swing them over, to be heaved inside the walls."

The impetuous warriors thus disheartened, their veteran leader gave up any hope he may have had of taking the place by storm, and fell back upon his plan of a watchful investment, making repeated offers that failed to shake the defenders' fidelity. He had soon to send off the pick of his force to meet Vocula advancing down the Rhine. In their encounter, neither side came off with credit, and the Romans so hardly got the best of it that by exhibiting captured standards and other trophies Civilis would have deceived the garrison into a fear of all being lost for them, had not one of the prisoners bravely shouted out the truth before he could be silenced by death. In another battle with the relief force, now under the walls, whose defenders sallied forth to take part in it, Civilis was unhorsed, an accident that struck panic into his host. Vocula, however, did not follow up his success, contenting himself with strengthening and provisioning *Castra Vetera*, then left it to be again beset by the returning rebels.

All was now at sixes and sevens in the Roman army. The party of Vespasian had prevailed ; Vitellius had been killed at Rome, and the new Emperor was about to come from Palestine, leaving Titus to complete its conquest, after the taking of Jerusalem, while his younger son, Domitian, represented him in the Senate. To him the legions on the Rhine were now asked to swear allegiance, as they did with a bad grace. There were quarrels over a donation of money sent too late by Vitellius, which the soldiers spent on drunkenness, and inflamed themselves into murdering their unpopular general Flaccus. Vocula narrowly escaped the same fate in an outbreak of mutiny, from which, however, he rallied soldiers enough to scatter another swarm of warriors retiring after a bout of bloodshed and plunder.

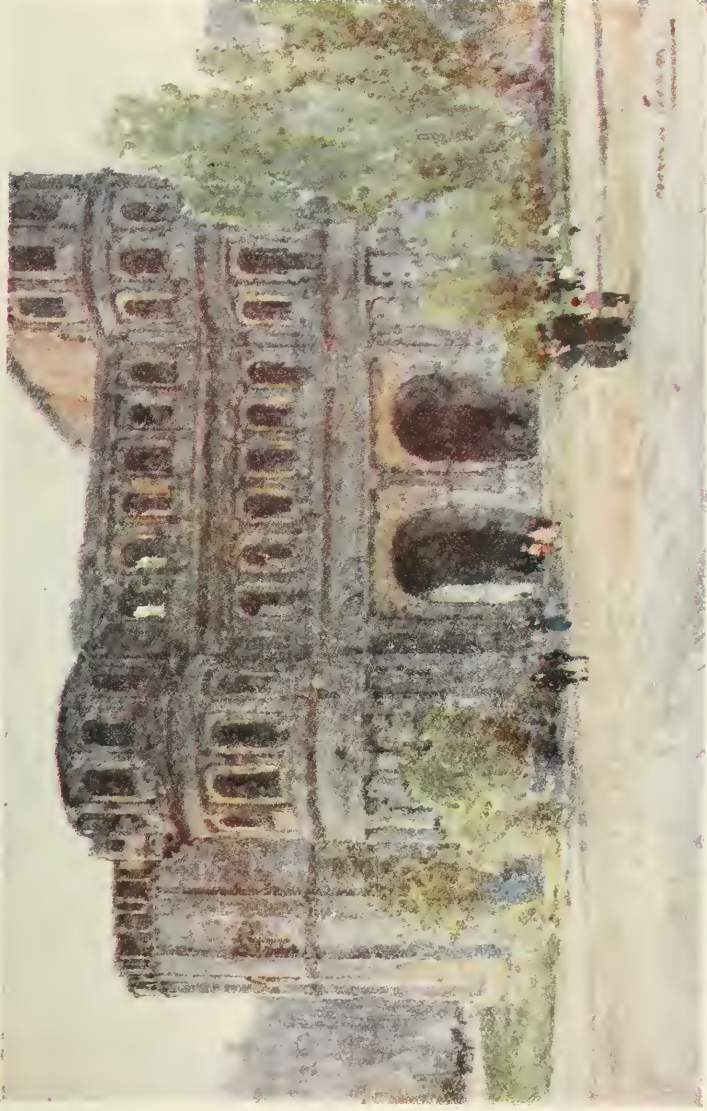
An envoy had been sent to Civilis announcing the recognition of Vespasian, that took away the Batavian chief's excuse for standing in arms. But now he threw off the mask of partisan loyalty to proclaim himself the champion of an independent Gaul. He was joined by some of the adherents of Vitellius, and notably by three leaders of auxiliary troops, Classicus, Tutor, and Sabinus, names that bespeak them as Romanized chieftains like himself. At Cologne they entered into a conspiracy to turn against Vocula, who, on finding himself deserted by the best part of his army, was for committing suicide, but met his death at the hand of an assassin employed by the traitors.

Thus the rebels came to a victorious head. The starved-out garrison of *Castra Vetera* gave themselves up, marching out to be massacred in an ambush of German warriors, as our troops by the French Indians after the surrender of Fort William Henry. Civilis, in sign of triumph, cut the shock of hair which he had sworn to let grow wild till the legions were overcome. Another hint of barbarian birth was his now invoking the aid of a virgin priestess who, living on a high tower secluded in a sacred forest, had gained veneration among the tribes by prophesying the destruction of the Roman yoke. It appears as if the aim of the Batavian chief was a great confederation of Germans and Gauls, over whom he might make himself king, a first century Charlemagne. Had all gone well with the movement, indeed, he could

well have found rivals in ambition, for Classicus was of royal blood and wealth, and Sabinus prided himself on a claim to illegitimate descent from Julius Cæsar. In any case, these allies did not pull together. Classicus, according to Tacitus, took success too easily, content to parade in the trappings of a Roman general. Sabinus, who had dubbed himself Cæsar, got so badly defeated in an attack on the loyal Sequani, that he was fain to spread a report of his death, hiding away with his family in a cave for nine years, a story that seems at the core of more than one romantic legend.

All the desertions were not on one side. Briganticus, nephew of Civilis, with whom for some reason he was at daggers drawn, served the Romans as a hot foe to his uncle. The Emperor's power, less torn by party strife, could now be brought to bear upon the revolt of its distant dependency. A strong army crossed the Alps under nominal command of Vespasian's worthless son Domitian; and at the approach of its vanguard, some of the rebels thought well to return to the Imperial standards. The Roman general Cerialis, after defeating Tutor and the Treviri and reoccupying Treves, felt able to dismiss these untrustworthy recruits, but he took back into his ranks some of the mutinous legionaries when they showed repentant shame for their defection. It was a better disciplined force that now pressed against the widespread insurrection, which in turn began to go to pieces. The leaders at loggerheads, their bands could not be held together. They made a resolute onslaught upon Treves, which had almost succeeded; but the greed of the fierce warriors for plunder enabled the Romans to drive them off.

For a time the war went on with varied fortunes, one of its episodes being an encounter of hostile fleets at the confluence of the Rhine and the Meuse. Cerialis, after losing credit and nearly being captured in a night surprise of his camp, was able to invade the Batavian island, which he laid waste, out of policy sparing the estate of Civilis that his own people might suspect him of a treacherous understanding with the Romans. The Batavians, indeed, by this time sick of the war, took to murmuring against a chief on whom they blamed their misfortunes to the



THE BLACK GATE AT TREVES  
Built by the Romans when they were masters of Gaul





point of being ready to sacrifice him in proof of repentance. Civilis, aware of their changed mood, feared that the game was up, and sought to come to terms with the Roman general. It was arranged that he and Cerialis should parley from either end of a broken bridge. We are told how the insurgent leader protested that his quarrel had been with Vitellius, that he had no desire to stand out against Vespasian, that other officers who had taken the same side were rebels as much as himself——

Here abruptly breaks off the mutilated record of Tacitus. Did success reward some such search for his lost books as is described in Freytag's romance, "Die Verlorene Handschrift," we might learn the further fortunes of Civilis, whose ambition at least came to naught, and no more is heard of this hero unless some vague memory has caricatured him as a boastful coward bearing his name in a folk-tale of buffoonery. At all events his kinsmen and neighbours were now brought to subjection, the Gauls for their part but too well tamed, in the end, as it proved when northern pirates came to ravage the coasts whose inhabitants had forgotten their ancestral fierceness. The spirit of the Teuton warriors, however, was by no means broken, nor their intrusion checked among the Celtic tribes to the south. It was the stock from which Civilis sprang that, a few generations later, would pour down from the Rhine in an overwhelming confederation of bands boasting themselves Franks or Freemen, to turn the ruins of the Roman Empire into the foundations of a French kingdom in which Celt and Teuton became more widely confused.

The fifth century saw the massive Roman Empire falling in ruins, mined and battered by barbarian incursions, as split up by the secession of East and West. From outposts like Britain, the feeble rulers of the West had to withdraw their legions, now largely recruited from the intruding tribes. Puppet Emperors, with seldom unquestioned title, clung to uneasy pomp at Rome or Ravenna, fain to let their tottering power be defended by some generalissimo who, bearing the title of Patrician, was as like as not to be himself no pure-blooded Roman. Northern hosts pressed to the gates of Rome, and crossed the sea to cut off its African corn supply more effectually than by submarine warfare.

The Franks were setting up a kingdom over the Netherlands and the north edge of Gaul, the very soil drenched with so much blood in our own day. Further south pressed in another German stock of warriors, the Burgunds, whose name and centre of power were to shift along that side of France during the Middle Ages. From the Baltic shores had broken loose the swarm of Goths that divided themselves east and west as Ostrogoths and Visigoths, to settle in different parts of Europe: the Visigoths made their way into Spain, whence by a bargain with Rome they transferred their mastery to Aquitania, the southern part of Gaul. In the heart of this nominally Roman province the Empire had to trust a force of Scythian Alans for backing up its oppressive tax-collectors, and defending it against insurgent Bretons who had kept their Celtic blood freest from admixture.

In the middle of the century, the sword of Rome was the Patrician Ætius, who is said to have steeled his youth as a hostage among barbarian invaders. The Kaiser of the period was Attila, of whom it is vaguely stated that he had served under the Roman eagles before, by killing or ousting his brother, he made himself sole king of the Huns, a prolific horde of Scythian warriors breaking out from Asian steppes against both Europe and India. The headquarters of his semi-savage state were now in the north of Hungary, from which his very name spread terror over half the Empire, shuddering before him as the "Scourge of God," whose boast was how the grass never grew where his horse's hoof had trod. It is suggested that his devastations indirectly affected even Britain by pressing out Saxon pirates from their native haunts to seek new fortunes on shores now deserted by the shrinking legions.

Though the walls of Constantinople baffled him as those of *Castra Vetera* repelled *Civilis*, Attila's overwhelming raids had already humbled the Eastern Empire, when, in A.D. 450, he assembled half a million of men for an attack on Gaul, a host renowned as Huns, but, as in the case of Napoleon's march on Moscow, swollen by contingents from the various peoples he had mastered. Attila appears to have had intelligence of the Empire's straits in Gaul, and some hope of being received here as a deliverer

by its harassed subjects. A doubtful story is that he was called in as champion by one of two brothers contending for kingship over the Franks. Another makes him expecting to be welcomed by the Alan garrison of Orleans, whose kinsmen followed his own banners. But among Romans and barbarians alike his approach spread dismay, heralded as it seemed to be by natural portents, earthquakes, an eclipse of the moon, a fearsome comet taken to presage the destruction of the western world, and a blood-red Aurora Borealis such as shone on the German siege of Paris in 1870.

Ætius, the Roman commander in Gaul, exerted himself shrewdly to meet the coming storm. Peace being patched up with the Bretons and other rebels, he called on the Teutonic intruders to rally round him for defence of what was now becoming their own domain. The Visigothic king, Theodoric—not to be confused with his more famous namesake of later history—was foremost to recognize the policy of standing by the Roman force. Then round this core of resistance gathered also the Franks, the Burgundians, and some of the Bretons, to withstand the invader of what would grow into their common country. So Attila, crossing the Rhine at the Neckar mouth and sweeping down with fire and sack through the Vosges, or the Ardennes, found that he would be powerfully opposed. He made for Orleans, as heart of the province, which he perhaps reckoned on having given up to him by its Alan garrison. Disappointed on this point, he laid siege to the city, and succeeded in capturing it, yet appears to have spared its inhabitants the usual ordeal of plunder, no doubt to the disgust of his barbarous followers. This part of the history is a little obscure, the certain upshot being that before the union of forces under the Roman standard, the Hun saw well to retreat from Orleans, falling back to northern France. Here, in the plains of Champagne, his miscellaneous host was overtaken by the allies following Ætius, and brought to a battle renowned under the name of Chalons, the chief town of the vicinity, but its actual scene was some way to the south, near Troyes on the Seine.

It is said that, Attila taking the auspices in old Roman

fashion, from the victims' entrails were interpreted a defeat for his own army and death for the leader of his adversaries, as was fulfilled, not indeed by the loss of Ætius, but of the Visigothic king Theodoric. The Visigoths appear to have borne the brunt of a battle, which, if contemporary statisticians may be trusted, was the bloodiest slaughter of that region till a Christian Kaiser sought to outdo it in the name of Kultur. Three hundred thousand is the number said to have fallen on both sides. The carnage was brought to an end by a stormy night, under cover of which the Huns took refuge in their camp, behind a wall of light chariots like the zariba of wagons we have seen used in African warfare. There Thorismund, son of Theodoric, burning to avenge his father's death, would have attacked them next day ; but was restrained by Ætius, either from military prudence, or, as was charged against him, not eager to crush a foe whose power made his own services indispensable to the Empire. If the tale be true, Attila so far gave all up for lost that within his entrenchments he raised a pile to cremate himself rather than fall into the hands of the enemy. Finding, however, that their victory was not pressed home, he slipped off, rapidly retreating across the Rhine, and got back to Hungary with but a small half of the host he had led so disastrously. The name of Ettelbruck, in Luxemburg, is interpreted as Attila's bridge.

Next year he had gathered fresh strength to cross the Alps for his famous march on Rome, when its Bishop Leo came to meet him with a stern bidding to turn back, obeyed out of superstition rather than mercy. This barbarian more than once showed some respect for holy men, and that there were softer spots in his coarse nature would appear from an interview with him reported by the Greek envoy Priscus. A year later, he died suddenly in a drunken bout or from the breaking of a blood vessel, and his dominion broke up, like that of other barbarian conquerors, while his memory lived on, seen through a softening haze, as the Etzel of German romance. Soon afterwards Ætius was murdered by the ungrateful young Emperor Valentinian, who perhaps suspected him of ambition to wield the sceptre as well as the sword of Rome.

Through the second half of that century went on in Gaul the fusion of Teuton blood and Latin culture. The Visigoths firmly held the south-west. The Burgunds pushed themselves down the south-east. Between the Loire and the Seine, the country seems to have been still in the hands of Roman officers. The Salian Franks, destined to come to the top of this welter of stocks, as yet were confined to the northern edge, their king's seat being at Tournai, and his authority perhaps extending over the wilds of Belgium. But when here Chilperic had been succeeded as king by his young son Clovis—a name Latinized as Ludovicus, then softened down to the French Louis—this prince was able to set about extending his dominion, helped not a little by his conversion to Catholic Christianity. Persecution had now been added to the troubles of Gaul, for its Visigothic and Burgundian invaders were zealous Arians, whereas most of the Romans here remained Catholics, ready to welcome even a pagan champion against the dominant heresy. Clovis had already begun the conquering career that led him from the Somme to the Seine, from the Seine to the Loire, and northwards to Cologne as eastwards across the Rhine. One story of his conversion is that, in a battle with the Allemands who were to be nucleus of the chief rival power, he vowed faith in the Cross as price of victory. But it was more probably due to the influence of his wife Clothilde, a Burgundian princess, who, having seen her parents and brothers cruelly murdered by an Arian kinsman, was fervently Catholic, and may well have induced her husband's baptism by the orthodox St. Remy; then if his Christianity was but skin deep, there need be no doubt about a Catholicism that served his ambition. At all events, the Catholics in Gaul and its remnants of the Roman legions rallied round Clovis for a victorious attack, first on the Burgunds, then on the Visigoths. Recognized by the title of consul as a viceroy of Rome, he was able also to win a titular headship of his own people. The Frankish tribes had been a confederation, formidable, like the Iroquois, by acting in leagued concert under any leader who proved himself fit to command. One by one, Clovis appears to have more closely united them by getting rid of the other chiefs, some knocked on the head, some

let off with their hair cut as a sign of being no longer qualified to rule over warriors. Thus, when he died at Paris, he had made this the centre of a kingdom extending over most of Gaul and far into Germany.

By this time the emperors of the West were no longer upheld on their quaking thrones by generals who shrank from usurping their title, so majestic still, even in Gothic or Frankish eyes, was the shrinking shadow of Roman state. The Emperor of the East claimed universal sovereignty, but was fain to let the Western lands be governed by barbarian princes. Justinian, who vainly strove to make his authority real in Italy and Africa, granted to the successors of Clovis the heirship of Rome in Gaul ; and their Catholicism gave them favour with the Popes, whose spiritual dignity waxed at Rome with the waning of the Imperial power.

The rule thus founded was not unlike what we know as a protectorate. Conquerors and conquered remained for generations marked off from each other, to the eye by the long locks in which those " hairy " barbarians had their pride, while the Romanized Gauls went shaven and shorn. The latter, keeping their own laws and customs, and the municipal privileges of cities which might still raise forces to carry on neighbourly feuds, enjoyed a quasi-independence on condition of paying tribute to the Frankish kings instead of the Roman proconsuls. Gradually came about the fusion of blood, law, and language, in which, as vassal Greece had led Rome captive by its arts and literature, the Roman culture won upon barbarian rudeness, most surely mastered by the Church built out of the ruins of the Empire. The Catholic faith became closest bond of union for the jumbled stocks among whom St. Gregory sent far and wide the monkish missionaries that were now Rome's effective soldiery.

Clovis, who by the blood of kinsmen and competitors had cemented a mastery over this " amalgam of nations," hardly illustrated his adopted faith by works ; but his conversion opened the field for more pious professors. He divided his dominion among his four sons, whose quarrels went to throw all back into confusion. Amid the partitions and intrusions of their

successors became outlined two kingdoms of Neustria and Austria, answering roughly to Northern Gaul and Southern Germany. But these Merovingian kings, as they were called from a half-legendary ancestor, were not the men to set a mark on their time by building stable walls of defence and division; the one of them least unknown to history is a certain Dagobert. Like the last emperors at Rome, they fell into a degeneracy in which their real power passed to some masterful manager, entitled Mayor of the Palace. In the eighth century these officers are found aiming at hereditary rank and sway, which could be firmly grasped by a Carl surnamed the Hammer from the doughty blows with which he overthrew all rivals, till he could stand forth as defender of the Cross against a fearsome enemy.

Early in that century the flame of Islam, spreading like wild-fire along the northern coasts of Africa, had leaped over the Gibraltar strait to burn up the Gothic dominion of Spain. Twenty years later, a mighty Moslem host crossed the Pyrenees and swept into the centre of France, threatening to carry the Crescent from the Mediterranean to the shores of the Baltic. At Tours they were met by Charles Martel heading an army united, as in the days of Attila, by the common danger. Again was fought a long drawn battle in which the slain could be multiplied as hundreds of thousands. Now in A.D. 732, the invaders were defeated and driven back into Spain.

Still that victorious Hammer of Christendom did not presume to take on himself the title of king, though he could divide his actual kingship between three sons, as was the way of the time. One of these set aside by force, another by voluntary abdication, the third brother, Pepin, gathered their authority into his own hands. He used it to deliver the Pope from the oppression of long-bearded Lombards, latest of the barbarian swarms to pour over the Alps upon Italy. The Pope rewarded this champion not only with the title of Patrician that had been borne by the protectors of Imperial Rome, but with the crown of the last *fainéant* Merovingian king, Chilperic, got rid of in the usual way by being tonsured and cloistered. Pepin's anointed son, who by a brother's death soon inherited the whole kingdom, was Charles the Great.

French romance looks on Charlemagne as a French monarch, reigning at Paris amid his twelve peers or paladins, most famous of them that Roland, of whom history knows nothing but as slain in an obscure skirmish with Basque mountaineers, while legend renowns him from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, and in fabulous wars against the Crescent. In fact the great Charles, confused by imaginative writers with his grandfather the Hammer as with crusading kings that came after him, was a German prince, born perhaps in Belgium, with a Teuton dialect for his mother tongue. His favourite residences appear to have been on or about the Rhine, at Ingelheim, Herbisthal, and Nimuegen ; at the height of his glory he was most at home in Aix-la-Chapelle, where he loved to swim in its warm springs among his brawny guardsmen. Not that he could have been much at home, when in half a century he and his sons are said to have made some fifty campaigns to extend and consolidate a power that stretched at his death from the Elbe to the Ebro, from the Lower Danube to the mouth of the Rhine. His most frequent fighting was against heathen Saxons, Frisians, and the like, whom he sent to Hades by thousands when they refused to accept the alternative of conversion ; and he had to build fortresses as well as churches to keep them fixed in the true faith. But his most momentous expedition was when, after a march to Italy in his father's footsteps as champion of the Church, the Pope recognized their services by crowning Charlemagne Emperor of Rome. Thus, A.D. 800, came to be revived a dignity long illustrious as the Holy Roman Empire. To Voltairean spirits it was neither holy, nor Roman, nor a right empire ; and soon the theory of it proved impracticable, its spiritual and temporal heads more often than not at odds as to which of them were the sun and which the moon of their Christian world, that in time would begin to break away under new lights and leaders.

This lord and hero of his age, round whose head soon gathered a saintly halo ill coloured by domestic virtues, at least deserved his fame by building up an imposing realm, in which ruined cities grew afresh, commerce arose, learning and arts were fostered, and justice was roughly done under his counts or other



lieutenants, whose power would soon be swelling to burst feudal bonds of dependence. But the great Charles left only one surviving son, that too *débonnaire* Louis, a pious soul unfit to hold martial spirits in restraint. He was flouted by his own sons of a different temper, who after his death fell by the ears over the inheritance, their quarrels ended by the treaty of Verdun, A.D. 843, that split up the Empire into three shares. Louis had the Teuton lands to the east, Charles the western part mainly representing ancient Gaul, while between them Lothaire, with the Imperial crown, kept a long central kingdom stretching from Italy to the mouth of the Rhine. Thus came to be first marked off from each other the modern France and Germany that would take firmer outline under the successors of the usurper Hugh Capet and the clearly German emperors headed by Otto the Great.

After Lothaire's death, three sons again divided his kingdom as Italy, Burgundy, and the *Lothairingia* we know as shrunk into Lorraine. This last division included the Netherlands, that for centuries would go by the name of Lower Lorraine, and still longer would be in chronic dispute between its neighbours on either side, as Upper Lorraine has been under our own eyes.

## II

### A DEBATABLE LAND

AMID those waves and tempests of conquest went on a war of man with nature, not yet fought to a finish on the Netherlands coast. It was not till the Middle Ages that the people set about systematically fortifying their country against invasion by stormy seas and swollen rivers ; but from very early times dikes, dams, and ditches were at work building up fastnesses of dry land above bog and marsh. Dank forests were here and there hewn into houses, fences, and hearth-fires, then into cradles and coffins. In the unwholesome wastes arose islands of human refuge, long liable from time to time to be swept by recurrent floods ; but the clearing of the forests gave light and drier air, beneath which man could search out safer ground for his oases of culture, growing into villages and towns about castles and churches. So, amid ebb and flow, emerged from the stagnant waters a land verily "snatched from the jaws of Neptune." Of such a flood as would again and again break in, like that swallowing up thousands of homes in the Zuyder Zee, the first record we have is from Tacitus's relation how Vitellius with his as yet faithful Batavians was surprised and routed by tide waves bursting on their line of march. The country once overrun, the practical Romans set about taming it, not only with strongholds, roads, and bridges, but with embankments and canals like one that now seems a branch of the Rhine's Yssel arm ; and their policy went to settle roving warriors upon the fields they had drained.

After the legions came those dauntless soldiers of the Roman Church, the monks, who in early days were men of work as well as prayer, and not only by precept but toilsome example set their converts upon securing and improving foundations for cloisters

and cathedrals. The most famous missionaries to the northern outskirts of Gaul were sent forth from our own shores with names that bespeak their origin, Wilfred, Willibrord, and Winfrith, the last to be renowned as St. Boniface who became Archbishop of Mainz, and fell a martyr among heathen Frisians. Their flocks, so perilously folded from wolves of the forests, were also ravaged by Viking pirates carrying fire and sword through Belgian as well as English bishoprics; and once again, in the middle of the tenth century, a horde of Eastern barbarians, still loosely styled Huns, pushed their devastating way as far as Cambrai, about which in our time has raged so fierce a struggle between the modern Hun and the defenders of civilization. But culture, both moral and material, had taken firm root in this rescued soil, by Charlemagne's time budding out in cities, palaces, schools, and the founding of noble fanes which we have seen trampled and torn under the hoof of an Attila Christian enough to boast a heart bleeding for such barbarity.

The nascent civilization welded together in Charlemagne's empire, broke up again like drops of quicksilver, here going apart, there uniting afresh, on one side or other drawn into feudal relation with the solidifying masses of France or Germany. Under the weakened rule of quarrelsome successors, his central power began to pass into the hands of such *comites* or companions as had been appointed local lieutenants for the administration of his vast dominion. In time more than one of these peers promoted himself to the title of *Dux*, or was content with that of Count, our earls and dukes, in the German tongue taking the form of *Graf* and *Herzog*. Under the shadow of such spreading potentates sprang up lesser nobles, owing feudal vassalage to the greater, as they themselves might give more or less faithful allegiance to some royal overlord. But royal privileges became usurped one by one, coining of money, administering justice, levying taxes and tolls, granting fiefs and privileges, till the main bond of dependence that knit together all ranks of feudal society was an obligation to military service. Such obligation, indeed, could not be always effectual when it might have been pledged to hostile sovereigns by a vassal who for one part of his territory

did homage to France, and for another to Germany, while a king, his own man in England, remained nominally a French vassal for his Norman dukedom.

Thus grew into note quasi-independent States, Flanders, Brabant, Hainault, Gueldres, Luxemburg, Holland, and others, waxing or waning by local aggression, by neighbourly marriages and conscience-stricken endowments, sometimes by purchase or intrigue. Not lay-lords alone took on themselves to be princes. Another strain of bishops had arisen since Boniface wrote earnest letters to high and low, seeking counsel from Rome, denouncing heretics and backsliders, rebuking clerical worldliness, and dealing faithfully with the sins of his own Anglo-Saxon king, not forgotten in the strenuous toil of his mission to utter heathen; but the care of such pastors bred up flocks worth shearing by worldlings. Between the days when Gregory sent out single-minded missionaries to plant their creed far and wide, and those in which Hildebrand could keep an emperor shivering in the snow at his gate, in the west of Europe the Church had grown proud, powerful, and wealthy, so that lordly personages were tempted to lay hands on its benefices or consecrate themselves to its offices with or without spiritual vocation. The wide-reaching bishopric of Utrecht became one of the chief domains of the northern Netherlands, as in the south that of Liège, whose prince-bishop's lordship was the last of those States to hold out in venerable autonomy, till swept down into Belgian nationality by the volcanic flood of the French Revolution. We know, too, how the archbishops of Cologne, Treves, and Mainz came to take their place among the princely Electors to the Imperial crown.

As the high went up in this feudal world, so the low went down on a scale where a line between gentle and simple came to be roughly marked by the fighting on horseback that put lords and knights above the common herd. Broken up was the old equality of skin-clad warriors who claimed a voice in the hailing of their chief, and held him jealously to ancestral law and custom. The peasants who kept their freedom were often fain to put themselves under protection of some mail-clad lord whose castle overshadowed their humbler homes, and whose exacting preten-



A VIKING SHIP



sions might crush them into serfage. Below the serfs and dependents stood a multitude of slaves, brought to this lot by conquest or other adversity, their children bound to the soil and wholly in the power of irresponsible masters. In one way or other, chiefly by the influence of the Church, their yoke could be gradually lightened and broken through the Middle Ages ; but it was not till the French Revolution that lingering traces of servitude were wiped out among the descendants of Frankish and Batavian freemen, as in our own kingdom salters and miners were emancipated, only at the end of the eighteenth century, from an hereditary bondage to their occupation.

All over the Western Empire, unless in mountain fastnesses of sturdy simplicity, came about this division of classes ; and feudal society in the Low Countries went with the times. Early romances of chivalry have often their scene on this arena or about its borders. Many a height beside the Rhine and the Meuse shows its keep or its chapel, their ruins still haunted by legends of Charlemagne and the Crusaders. The four sons of Aymon, heroes of widespread mediæval renown, had their ancestral home in the Ardennes, and when banned by the Emperor's displeasure, fled to a stronghold of refuge on the Meuse. Hubert, that patron saint of hunters, met his converting adventure in the same region. The fairy-serpent Melusine had one of her local habitations in Luxemburg. The story of Geneviève de Brabant is one of the most characteristic in a school of fiction, where the part of villain so often played by a steward gives a hint of how a lord's officials could make themselves unpopularly oppressive. The myth of Lohengrin, Knight of the Swan, seems to have taken shape in the same region, Nimucgen and Cleves figuring among its shifted scenes. Garin the Lorrainer was another favourite hero of mediæval romance, its tales carried from castle to castle by makers and minstrels whose cue would be to celebrate the ancestry of patrons good for largesse. Yet Garin appears an exception to the rule, in that he is given out as of no higher lineage than a burgher family of Metz. Siegfried, hero of the great Niebelungen epic, was son of a Netherlands king ; and his slayer, Hagen, came from Alsace.

Around those lordly strongholds was forming itself another element of society that in time would overlay romance by prosaic prosperity. Even before the reign of Charlemagne the southern side of the Low Countries was dotted with such towns as Brussels, Ghent, Liége, and Maestricht ; and still older were Roman stations like Cologne, Treves, Rheims, and Cambrai. The origin of cities makes often a point of dispute for historians, the fact being that they can have arisen in different ways. Here, some were clearly Roman centres of civilization not swept away by invading barbarism ; some will have sprung up as markets for local convenience ; many clustered for protection below the castle of some powerful man of war, or for edification about some saintly bishop's seat. Princes were moved to grant charters and privileges to communities that enhanced their dignity while helping to fill their treasuries. Their example was followed by dukes and counts, the greater nobles finding towns a bar to the turbulence of the lesser. The townsmen were looked on as feudal vassals of the lords ; but within the walls with which they would be allowed to guard their industry, there grew up guilds, fraternities, corporations, winning and extending privileges by payment or favour. In time, the lord's deputies could be supplanted by its own magistrates ; his demands had to be made more in the shape of requests ; then step by step such a municipality might gather strength to stand out against the superiority of its patron as he perhaps had encroached on the supremacy of his prince. Religion as well as interest went to cement these communities, for mediæval guilds, unlike modern trades unions, insisted on duties as well as rights, and their holidays and pageantries did not lack consecration by the Church.

Many cities with different degrees of freedom and wealth had thus taken root in and about the Low Countries, when the Crusaders came to stir up European society as the Crusade of our time, for Right against Might, seems to be doing. France may claim to be the cradle of the Crusades ; and its northern borderland played a conspicuous part in the movement. Peter of Amiens was the enthusiastic hermit who, at the end of the eleventh century, inflamed the Western peoples by preaching the wrongs



and sufferings of his fellow-pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre. It was at Clermont, in Auvergne, that Pope Urban II, driven from Rome by a rival, called on disunited Christendom to march for Jerusalem. The Pope himself had more prudence than to be shepherd for the vast mob of fanatics which Peter led across Europe to miserable destruction; and the chief sovereigns, as then under ban of the Church's quarrels, were no one of them able to head its armies. Among the princes and nobles who followed up Peter's wild forlorn hope, there soon came to the front as leader, Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine, who, with his brothers Eustace and Baldwin, boasted the blood of Charlemagne as well as a mythical descent from the Knight of the Swan. Nor was it only noble blood of this region that could be shed in service of the Cross. In the Mediterranean the Crusaders' fleet fell in with a squadron of pirates from Holland and Friesland; then these coarse Christians, moved by repentance or hope of booty, threw in their fortunes with the deliverers of the Holy Land.

Count Robert of Flanders was another leader of the Crusading armies, among whom Godfrey of Bouillon would come to be recognized as their Agamemnon, with the Norman Tancred for Achilles. When Jerusalem had been taken, A.D. 1099, Godfrey was elected its king, but humility forbidding him to assume a royal title in the city where Christ had been crowned with thorns, he chose that of Defender of the Holy Sepulchre. Dying before a year was out, he was succeeded by his brother Baldwin, who did not scruple to style himself King of Jerusalem, and for nearly a century his heirs held a throne that soon began to shake under them, as the first flush of religious enthusiasm faded away. Again and again, during the next two centuries it was revived in the spasmodic efforts that launched seven notable armaments, in one of which another Flemish Count Baldwin seized the Eastern Empire, held for two generations by his successors. In the last great Crusade, the disastrous one when St. Louis died in Tunis, A.D. 1270, Flemings and other Lorrainers were still to the front among his followers. And when Constantinople at last fell to the Turk, it was the Duke of Burgundy, by this time lord of the

Low Countries, whom the Pope called on to be champion of Christendom ; but vain was his attempt to galvanize a long dead fashion. Its spirit had been fizzling out even when St. Louis' contemporary, the cultured Emperor Frederick II, though strongly suspected as an unbeliever, had himself indeed crowned king at Jerusalem, but seemed worthy of excommunication for having arranged a practical *modus vivendi* with the Saracens, by which they kept possession of the Holy City, while access to it was conceded to Christian pilgrims like Chaucer's Wife of Bath and William Way, Fellow of Eton, who wrote a sort of guide-book for the long trip. Till General Allenby's sweeping conquest, every further attempt to set the Cross here above the Crescent had been a mere blaze of straw.

As Gibbon points out, the Crusades had undermined the Gothic fabric of mediæval life. From Godfrey of Bouillon to St. Louis, the mail-clad paladins little guessed what would come of their pious adventures. By them East and West were drawn together not only in the shock of arms. The Cross brought back richer spoil from the battlefield held by the Crescent till our own day. Yet the West had the best of the struggle in which it came to know the East better and to profit by the lesson, while Islam, for its part, proved less able to learn from Christendom. So what began as an encounter of fierce fanaticism, went to reshaping by various means the civilization of Europe.

Through the nine generations or so gradually losing interest in those international expeditions, no "Truce of God" as proclaimed by the Church could keep peace at home. In and about the future cockpit of Europe, all along went on a great deal of confused fighting, as all over Europe. There were chronic quarrels of Pope and Emperor. The Empire itself was distracted between the ambition of Guelf and Hohenstaufen. There were wars between overlords for the vassalage of provinces. Rival claimants drew the sword for lordship of disputed fiefs. Princes and people often fell by the ears. The rising cities cherished feuds with one another. And within the cities raged often a strife of factions like those which in Holland long played an embittered part under the cryptic style of "Cods" and "Hooks,"

as obscure in their origin as our Whig and Tory. This welter is impatiently summed up by Motley with true American want of sympathy for feudal picturesqueness.

“Duke, count, seignor and vassal, knight and squire, master and man, swarm and struggle amain. A wild, chaotic, sanguinary scene. Here, bishop and baron contend, centuries long, murdering human creatures by tens of thousands for an acre or two of swampy pasture; there, doughty families, hugging old musty quarrels to their heart, buffet each other from generation to generation; and thus they go on, raging and wrestling among themselves, with all the world, shrieking insane war-cries which no human soul ever understood—red caps and black, white hoods and gray, Hooks and Kabbeljaws, dealing destruction, building castles and burning them, tilting at tourneys, stealing bullocks, roasting Jews, robbing the highways, crusading—now upon Syrian sands against Paynim dogs, now in Frisian quagmires against Albigenses, Stedingers and other heretics—plunging about in blood and fire, repenting at idle times, and paying their passage through purgatory with large slices of ill-gotten gains placed in the ever-extended dead hand of the Church, acting, on the whole, according to their kind, and so getting themselves exterminated or civilized, it matters little which.”

In the heat and dust of their clashing, these promiscuous adversaries would be ill aware of what future historians, taking a bird's-eye view of that Iron Age, can note as chief effects of the Crusades in melting down its clumsy armour and putting new weapons into the hands of nascent powers.

The most obvious result was a spread of commerce that poured fresh blood into municipal life. It was not only that the wares of the East began to find opener markets in Europe. The crusading lords needed money to furnish forth their gallant array: Godfrey of Bouillon had to sell his ancestral castle before setting out in search of distant fortune; and St. Louis, after draining his realm to hire and equip nearly two thousand ships for his unlucky Egyptian enterprise, got out of it by ransoming himself from captivity for a million of gold besants. From first to last, the lords of the soil were put upon raising a great deal of

money, not always to be wrung from their subjects, nor borrowed from Jewish hoards or the bankers who out of Florence began to set up their counters over Europe. Then for gold the men of iron were fain to part with possessions, favours, immunities, privileges, hereditary rights that could be turned into cash. Ready customers would be the towns, that within their walls had been growing rich by industry while princes impoverished themselves by war. When their lords' hands were full of wasteful business, charily patronized communities could take the chance of driving a good bargain for fresh privileges, or of extending their freedom gratis by timely revolt. Thus towns waxed into chartered cities, sitting more and more loosely to their feudal superiors, and joining in *Hansa* leagues for mutual profit and protection. The first notable association of the kind appears in Northern Italy, where in the middle of the twelfth century, a Lombard League of cities headed by Milan was able to triumph over the Emperor Barbarossa, and to prevail against an opposite confederation under Milan's rival, Pavia. The cities of the Netherlands were not far behind in such high treason. Enriched by their manufacture of English wool, while their own flax-fields supplied linen fabrics, not a few of them were now noted for the wealth and prosperity manifested in noble buildings, which we have seen ruined in a modern attempt to restore the age of blood and iron.

Flanders had the thickest group of such cities, some forty to be counted by the thirteenth century, chief among them Bruges, Ghent, Ypres, Lille, Arras, and Douai. Ypres claims to have been at one time the largest; Bruges went ahead of the rest, growing larger than London, and second only to Florence as a seat of European commerce, till thrown back by the silting of its canal, that came to be restored in our day with the port Zeebrugge, whose original was prophetically denounced centuries ago as "a hurtful place which will do great damage to ships." For an early rival Bruges had Ghent, looking on one another with such jealous ill-will as broke out between king and kaiser. Each of these cities still shows the belfry from which it called its citizens to arms, as one of the privileges conceded by their lords; and

either of them in their heyday could send forth an army many thousands strong. Their staple trade in most cases was wool or linen weaving; but certain towns specialized in productions sometimes kept up to our own time. Chaucer's Sir Thopas wore "hosen brown" from Bruges, to which his Merchant fares as a mart of such goods; Lille was noted for dyeing, Utrecht for velvet, Brussels already for carpets, Valenciennes for lace, Liège from an early time for metal-work, Dinant for copper ware, and so on. We get our word *cambric* from Cambrai, *diaper* probably from Ypres; Spa became our type of a health resort; *holland*, *schiedam*, and *delf-ware* explain their origin.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Bruges followed the example of Milan in showing princes that they had a crick in their armour. Its lord was the Count of Flanders, against whom, like other Flemish cities, waxing fat it was apt to kick. This count's overlord was Philip the Fair of France, who, keeping his vassal prisoner at Paris, sought to extend his own direct dominion by professedly interfering on the side of the Flemings. They at first received the French as deliverers, but soon found the Count's yoke lighter than the exactions of the French king and the insolence of his nobles lording it over cities so rich that Philip's queen, visiting Bruges, was scandalized to see some hundred madams as sumptuously attired as herself. So hot grew the rancour of the citizens that in 1302 they rose upon the French intruders with scenes of massacre, the "Bruges Matins" recalling the Sicilian Vespers of Palermo, twenty years before. To chastise this revolt a mail-clad army marched upon Bruges to make short work of the rabble of tradesmen and artisans gathered for its defence from adjacent cities, while they of Ghent stood sullenly aloof. But when before Courtrai the dashing knights spurred forward over a plain cut up by ditches and canals, they fell floundering in the mud, helpless inside their heavy shells, from which they were picked out like crabs to be hammered and stabbed to death by the despised burghers, some twenty thousand thus drowned or butchered. From the number of such trophies gathered by the victors, this rude shock to chivalry was nicknamed the "battle of Golden Spurs." And though the king

later on was able to reduce these presumptuous plebeians to more becoming subjection, their bristling independence had in future to be cautiously handled ; the time would come when their lords were less ready to threaten than to flatter and coax the holders of fat purse-strings.

Another profiteer by the Crusades was the Church. This was much a time of absentee landlords who had often to pledge their estates for means to make a figure in crusading camps ; then as purchasers, trustees, mortgagees, guardians of orphans, counsellors of widows, and so forth, the clergy got into their hands a good deal of property, as by their regular trade of cleansing soiled souls, able to pay for being helped through purgatory as well as to fields of Palestine. Thus monastic communities amassed wealth, spent well in fostering arts and letters, ill in providing homes for sloth and debauchery. Befouling rust and dust from the outside world would gather thickly through the grated windows of such asylums, from time to time swept by reformers like Bernard of Clairvaux ; but it was hard to keep them long clean. All along, of course, both regular and secular clerics had had the benefit of their clergy, the knowledge of reading and writing that put into their hands the schooling of the young, the instruction of all ages, and the interpretation of law that only now began to evolve its own ministers.

By this time the estates of great bishoprics like Utrecht, Liège, and Cambrai covered a considerable part of the Low Countries, these spiritual lords being less often worthy pastors than rapacious exploiters of human ignorance. The Popes had gained importance by becoming figureheads of international armies, which they were able to divert from service against the Saracens to cruel suppression of Albigenses and other heretics. Under the banner of the Church, formidable corps had been enlisted in semi-monastic orders of chivalry, the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, still keeping a name in our world, the Templars vowed to guard Jerusalem, and the Teutonic Knights who, when Saracens proved too stubborn adversaries, turned their lances to the sanguinary conversion of Prussian and Lithuanian heathen nearer home, an enterprise in which, it will



THE BEGUINAGE, BRUGES





be remembered, Chaucer's perfect, gentle knight had done his bit.

The Templars fell into decay through luxury and pride, also, if their covetous persecutors can be believed, through contamination by Eastern miscreancies. But when the Popes lost this one arm of the flesh, they found at their command a new militia. The same ferment of spirit as sent nobles and knights to die in Syria and Egypt, generated at home a swarm of friars, brothers in the Lord of common folk whose ghostly fathers had fallen much into sluggishness and contempt. St. Francis of Assisi set afoot what was the Salvation Army of his period. The early Franciscans offered themselves as humble friends to misery of man and beast. The followers of the sterner St. Dominic showed their zeal rather as teachers, as weeders-out of heresy, before long as harsh inquisitors. These fissiparous bodies soon spread over the Christian world, and beyond its bounds, as soon to shed the simple-minded sincerity that won them wide influence. A century or so after such humble mendicants appeared in England, Chaucer's typical one could be described as a "wanton and a merry," very jealous of the Sompnour, his rival in imposition upon popular ignorance. In the Low Countries sprang up a peculiar organization still represented in Belgium, that of the Beguines, pious women who, without strict immurement in cloisters, threw off the world's cares to associate themselves for the relief of its sufferings, modest precursors of German deaconesses, and of the Red Cross nurses called into action by Florence Nightingale.

Through the Crusades, again, crowns began to be more firmly fixed. Not every Christian king wasted his resources like St. Louis on the expensive enterprise that impoverished so many of their nobles. Frederick Barbarossa did his part as Emperor by leading a Christian host; and adventurous princes like our Richard Lion-Heart took spells at crusading to the neglect of their duties at home. Other sovereigns more prudently profited by the absence and the needs of their turbulent vassals, as by the slackening of private wars to whose chronic pains crusading supplied a counter-irritant. It was now the cue of kings to knit

their domains together by drawing tighter the bonds of provincial allegiance. They took to tempering their ill-welded armies by hired soldiers, more at command than arrogant lords too ready to shake off the obligation to follow their suzerain's banner, sometimes, to be sure, doubly pledged to the service of himself and his enemy. This change required money, and that had in the long run to be got from the commons, who would soon here and there be heard claiming a voice in the State as price of their subsidies. Then calculating monarchs, by playing off people against peers, could contrive to elevate their thrones upon the crumbling of the feudal system.

While yet feudal vassalage kept some hold even on presuming Flemish cities, the main tug-of-war here had been between the King of France and the German Kaiser. In the sixteenth century a third Power entered this arena. England was dovetailed by the feudal allegiance of her Plantagenet kings into the western side of France, along the south of which they extended their lordship, but without attempting much further incursions into the vortex of European politics. Our worthless John did make futile alliance with Germany against France, which soon came to be shattered at the Battle of Bouvines. Henry III's brother, Richard of Cornwall, was one of rival candidates for the Imperial crown. But Edward I, after one youthful dash to the Crusades, withdrew from Continental adventure, addressing himself to the subjugation of Wales and Scotland. It was Edward III who, by his claim under the Salic law to the crown of France, began the Hundred Years War, in which England won more glory abroad than solid gain out of the misery and disorder she worked across the Channel.

An early episode of that long fitful struggle was Edward's appearance in Flanders, where his marriage with Philippa of Hainault had given him a hold. This king of ours seems a mixture of the practical and the romantic. The founder of the Order of the Garter was keenly in love with chivalric renown and gallantry, the pomp of tourneys, the pride of pageantry, so well illustrated for us by Froissart, the Flemish clerk that came to England in the service of Queen Philippa and spent the rest of

his life in a congenial atmosphere of courts and camps. All the same, Edward had a sharp eye to the main chance, as shown by his effort to transplant Flemish manufacture of English wool on his own soil, and by a threat to stop the export of this raw material as means of forcing Flanders to accept a sort of English protectorate. But its not less business-minded burghers were far from hearty in his service, when, furnished also with a commission as Vicar-General of the Empire that gave him a formal title to interference, he presented himself as their champion against the Count of Flanders, now become a mere puppet in King Philip's hands. The Duke of Brabant and other nobles backed him for a time out of selfish interest or grudge against France ; but his best ally seemed like to be Jacques van Arteveld, the rich brewer of Ghent, who had there become practically president of an attempt at a republic, looked up to by a short-lived league of neighbouring cities. Brewer, he is styled, from one of the corporations to which he belonged ; but perhaps he no more dealt in actual beer than Dante was a druggist by trade, or one of our aristocrats is anything more than an honorary fishmonger or haberdasher. It was this popular leader that pressed Edward into formally assuming the title and arms of King of France, and even proposed to invest the young Black Prince with a promoted dukedom of Flanders, to secure on his side the sentiments of feudal loyalty that still made some appeal to not fully emancipated citizens.

For all such influential backing, Edward did not prosper in his attempted protectorate. His most resounding achievement here was a naval encounter at Sluys under the King's own eye, and that of a crew of perhaps seasick ladies on their way to attend his Queen at Ghent, where was born John of Gaunt, Shakespeare's "time honoured Lancaster." In this hot fight English archers, the marines of the fleet, served him well, as they would do once and again. In intermittent warfare on the Flemish border, the prudent French king refused to be drawn to a decisive battle ; and Edward's local followers were not to be kept round his banner longer than he could bribe them with money charily granted for an unpopular war by a Parliament

that had been gaining the power of the purse in his own country. When Van Arteveld was bestirring himself to rouse the Flemings to more active support of this foreigner, he fell a victim to popular fickleness. Returning from a visit to Edward on the coast, he was amazed to find himself received at home with hostile demonstrations, stirred up by a report that for long he had been making away with the public funds and sending them secretly over to England. His house beset and broken into, in vain he appealed from a window to the howling mob now deaf to the voice that had long commanded its applause. There was nothing for it but to slip out at the back, making for sanctuary in the nearest church, then, his way blocked by hundreds of the rioters, he was savagely butchered in the street.

Having lost this main prop of his ambition here, and beaten back from the fortresses of Cambrai and Tournai, the King of England left Flanders to its broils, after doing little more than "destroy the country," ravaging and laying waste the homes of the poor folk implicated in their lords' quarrels. It was the old story of *Reges delirant, plectuntur Achivi*. The spirit of the age is shown by the way in which Froissart passes lightly over scenes of obscure suffering, to dwell with gusto on the compliments and courteous defiances exchanged between paladins like Sir John Chandos and Bertrand Du Guesclin. Amid his complacent extolling of knightly prowess, he seldom has a word of sympathy for the peasants and townfolk who had to pay the piper, in purse or in person; and when the people rose against their oppressors, under vulgar leaders like Jacques Bonhomme in France, Wat Tyler and John Ball in England, his epithets for such wild *Jacquerie* are "wicked," "infamous," and "crazy." But he takes as a matter of course the Black Prince's harryings of France, where "courageous and cruel as a lion" this hero did so much to make England's name hated by the peasantry dragged from their wasted fields and burned valleys to make targets for lances and arrows, then perhaps turn robbers on their own account, or rebels exasperated to cruel savagery. As Carlyle now and then lets himself regret some stain on the admired Frederick, this Churchman turned courtier does indeed drop a tear over his paladin's

indiscriminate massacre at Limoges, its inhabitants thus punished for the crime of bravely defending their city for their king ; and in a famous historic scene he has set for poets and painters, he is ready to record the human kindness of Sir Walter Manny and the womanliness of Queen Philippa, pleading to their irate lord for the lives of those six burghers of Calais. The hangman had been sent for, when :

“ The Queen of England fell on her knees, and with tears said, ‘ Ah, gentle sir, since I have crossed the sea with great danger to see you, I have desired nothing of your favour : now I most humbly require you, for the honour of the son of the blessed Mary, and for your love to me, that you will take mercy on these six burghesses ! ’ The King looked at the Queen and stood still in a study for a time, and then said, ‘ Dame, would that you had been now in some other place : you make such request to me that I cannot deny you, wherefore I give them to you to do your pleasure with them. ’ Then the Queen caused them to be brought into her chamber, and made the halters to be taken from their necks, and had them new clothed and gave them dinner to their content. ”

It does not palliate the Black Prince’s atrocities that they were carried out not altogether by strangers but by fellow-countrymen of the victims. Edward’s myrmidons in France were largely enlisted from his own domains there, as seemed natural. The people of Europe were only now beginning to recognize themselves as nations, not as subjects of this or that prince ; but the feats of arms of the Hundred Years War went far to breed patriotic pride and antipathies.

In disgust, Edward had left the Flemings to their native quarrels, transferring his attacks on France to Gascony and Normandy. Here he and his son warred with more of the glory for which they thirsted, Queen Philippa meanwhile showing the martial spirit of her ancestors in defending England against the Scots, always ready to take the chance of their would-be suzerain’s back being turned. Still, the ambitious King of England kept an eye on Flanders, hoping to gain domination there as in his own island, nor were his intrigues without effect. The Flemings, indeed, got back their Frenchified Count, but he was killed at

Creçy, and his son, a lad in his teens, found himself in no position to lord it too arrogantly over those sullen liegemen. It was proposed that he should marry Edward's daughter by way of cutting his ties to France; and when he trusted himself in the hands of the Flemings promising loyalty, his refusal of this alliance set them on treating him as a prisoner rather than a master. The youth, growing sick of his honourable durance, at last feigned to accept the English bride pressed upon him so gallingly, but in the very week of the wedding, according to Froissart, he gave it the slip by a bold escape. He was not kept so close as to be denied the lordly sport of hawking, so one day, having distanced his attendants in the excitement of the chase, he spurred off across country to the nearest French fortress, thence on to the King's court, there received with applause; "but the English, on the contrary, accused him of betraying and deceiving them." Later on, he came back to Flanders and with more authority, but showed less wisdom and conduct than might have been hoped from the boyish spirit with which he had refused to marry the daughter of his father's foe.

The English victories, however, followed by internal commotions and paralysing losses for France, had relieved the pressure of its influence on Flanders, leaving the border cities freer to fight it out with dwindling lordships. All over the Low Countries municipal rights were rising at the expense of feudal allegiance. The people of Liège more than once gave their bishops rude hints of times being changed. The cities of Holland, now united with Hainault, showed the same tendency to independence, fostered under family quarrels of their lords, but hampered by factious strife between civic patricians and plebeians that made a cross current in municipal politics. When Wenzel of Luxemburg became heir to Brabant as bridegroom of its duke's daughter, the princely pair's arrival at Brussels was celebrated by the granting of a constitution called the "Joyous Entry," under which the prince pledged himself to obey the laws, to consult his subjects before making war, to raise no arbitrary taxes, and to maintain the privileges of his cities, a liberal charter that for

centuries would be appealed to, not in vain, as a beacon of liberty for the Low Countries.

In the middle of the fourteenth century the Black Death's awful chill froze up that Hundred Years War. Its way smoothed by destruction and impoverishment, it spread fast over Europe, in some parts carrying off more than half the population, as far as can be made out from the loose statistics of shuddering recorders. In London 50,000 corpses are said to have been huddled into a pest field that became site of the Charterhouse. An abbot of Tournai who wrote an account of its ravages states that 25,000 persons died in that city. Elsewhere the living were not enough to bury the dead; one chronicler asserts that in parts of France the survivors numbered hardly a tenth. On its heels followed other inflictions. Crime and debauchery were bred by reckless despair; terror-stricken crowds fell into the mania of Flagellant processions; there were cruel persecutions of Jews. Famine came of fields left untilled. Social organizations, old and new, were thrown out of gear. A significant blank occurs in some records of changes affecting mediæval life.

For the Netherlands, also, this distress brought a time of confusion and obscurity. It looks as if the effect of the plague were a throwback to the fortunes of the cities, that must have suffered more within their close-packed walls and foul slums than did the nobles in their draughty castles. In the second half of the century a certain reaction appears to check the development of popular liberties. The enfeebled interference of France was replaced by the stronger intrusion of Burgundy. Resuming the war, the English, after all their conquests driven back to a few footholds on the French coast, had their hands too full to meddle with Flemish affairs. But the chief bane of these little republics, as some of them might now be styled, was their factiousness, and the feuds by which they crippled one another while clogging their own aspirations to independence.

The Count of Flanders appears lording it again at Bruges, while flouted by the rival city of Ghent. A generation after the mob murder of Jacques van Arteveld, its citizens showed tardy repentance by choosing his son Philip as their chief to oppose the

subservient party. Negotiations breaking down, and the Ghenters being almost starved out, they marched five thousand strong to attack the Count in Bruges. The Count sallied forth to meet them, with eight times their number according to Froissart, promising himself sure victory ; but his host proved ill-disciplined or half-hearted, for most of them ran away before the onset of that Gideon's band, inspired by masses and sermons and backed by artillery loaded on two hundred carts. The Ghenters entered Bruges with the flying enemy, and the proud Count had to slink off on foot after narrowly escaping the pursuers by stowing himself under the bed of a poor woman.

That astonishing discomfiture raised a wide revolt in Flanders, of which Philip Van Arteveld was now proclaimed Ruward or regent. But the help he hoped from England was not forthcoming under Richard II, who did not take after his sire in thirsting for glorious bloodshed ; and Philip the Bold of Burgundy, son-in-law and presently successor to the Count of Flanders, pushed his nephew, France's boy-king, Charles VI, into an invasion of this long-disputed territory. On his side, Van Arteveld was able to gather an army of some fifty thousand, that had not the same luck as before Bruges. After some fighting about the future battlefield of Oudenarde and beside the Lys that has once and again been reddened by French blood, the decisive encounter came off on the plain of Roosebeke between Courtrai and Ypres, then a city of two hundred thousand inhabitants, supported by clothmaking that afterwards frittered down into lace.

This was the winter of 1382, and the French knights were rather damped by cold rainy weather such as that of which our soldiers have there had trying experience. Flushed by his easy victory at Bruges, Van Arteveld was the more eager to come to an engagement, and rashly quitted a strong position he had at first taken up. Yet, though he himself seems to have affected something of chivalrous parade, it was but a Falstaff's army he led. Some tenth of them were well armed, his own Ghenters along with a few score of English archers who had joined him, deserting from the garrison of Calais. The rest had such weapons





THE BANQUET HALL, CHATEAU DES COMTES, GHENT



as bludgeons, ironshod staves, and cutlasses, the men of each town distinguished by a certain uniform, blue and yellow, green and blue, red and white, all blue, or so on ; and they marched under the banners of their trades. Against them stood the flower of French chivalry under veteran leaders, who, on the morning of the battle, notes Froissart, knighted nearly five hundred aspirants to honour. The sacred oriflamme standard was displayed, as never before against Christians ; indeed as to its being unfurled in this cause there was some question, decided on the point that the Flemings were heretics who, in a schism now dividing the Church, stuck by Pope Urban, not like the French by Pope Clement. The sanctity of the oriflamme seemed fully attested when, on its being raised in a thick mist, the air at once cleared, and the sun shone forth to show the Flemings advancing like a wood of spears and staves. Another prodigy to cheer the Frenchmen was a white dove seen fluttering over the King's " battail "—a larger division than the diminutive battalion—which was believed also to perch on one of its banners. What then befell we may read in Lord Berner's translation of Froissart, as a contrast to the battles on the same ground that have lately afforded so much copy for our newspapers :

“ So thus approached the Flemings, and began to shoot guns and arrows feathered with steel. Thus the battle began, the which was right sharp and fierce at the first encountering, for the Flemings set on proudly, thrusting with their spears and shoulders like wild boars, and they held themselves so close together that they could not be opened . . . and so therewith the king's battail was recoiled ; but the vanward and the rearward passed on forth, and enclosed about the Flemings and held them straight, I shall show you how. On these two wings the men at arms fiercely assaulted, with their strong spears well-headed with heads of fine steel, wherewith they pierced the Flemings' coats of mail into the hard bones, so that the Flemings were glad to eschew the strokes. So thus these men of arms kept the Flemings so short that they could not well help themselves, nor put down their arms to give any strokes ; so there were many that lost their strength and breath and fell one upon another, and so died for lack of breath without striking any stroke ; and there was

Philip van Arteveld wounded and beaten down among his men of Ghent, and when his page with his horse saw the discomfiture of his master, he departed and left his master, for he could not help him, and so rode to Courtrai towards Ghent.

“Thus these battails assembled together. So the Flemings’ battail was enclosed on both sides, so that they could pass no way; then the king’s battail came forth again, which was before a little drawn aback. The men of arms beat down the Flemings on every side; some had good axes of steel wherewith they brake asunder bassinets, senets; and some had malls of lead with which they gave such strokes that they beat all down to the earth before them; and as the Flemings were beaten down, there were pages ready to cut their throats with great knives, and so slew them without pity, as though they had been but dogs. The strokes on the bassinets were so great that no man could hear other speak for noise; I heard reported that though all the armourers of Paris and Brussels had been working together, [they] could not have made so great a noise. There were some that advanced so sore into the press that they were slain and overcome for lack of breath . . . which was great damage, but so great a battail as the Flemings were could not be overcome without great loss, for young knights and squires will lightly advance themselves to get honour; and the press was so great and the business so perilous that when they were in the thick of the press they could not relieve themselves, but were trodden under foot to death; and so by that means there were divers of the Frenchmen slain, but to no great number. The Flemings were slain by heaps one upon another; and when they that were behind saw the discomfiture of their company they were abashed, and cast down their bucklers and armours, and turned and fled away towards Courtrai and other places, and had mind of nothing but to save themselves; and the Bretons and Frenchmen chased them through dykes, groves, and bushes, and ever fought and slew them downright. . . . The which was right honourable for all Christendom and for all nobless, for if these said villains had achieved their intent, there had never so great cruelty have been seen before in all the world, for the commons in divers countries had rebelled to have destroyed all nobless.”

The feeble-minded boy, Charles VI, had Van Arteveld’s body searched out and hung upon a gibbet as effigy of democratic

presumption. In a combat lasting not more than half an hour, Froissart counts the slain as nine thousand on the field, and twenty-five thousand butchered in the hot pursuit. Though Ghent itself held out stubbornly for a time, the Flemings in general might well be cowed into submission to their feudal lord and his overlord. When before long they got a strong master, soon to be paramount over much of the Low Countries, it might seem as if freedom's battle "bequeathed from bleeding sire to son" were lost for good.

But it was lordship and liegemanity that now stood to lose in the long run. Iron was going down before gold and what gold could buy. Hired soldiers made more than a match for hasty feudal levies. William Tells had shown how peasants could defend their farms with pikes and cross-bows against mailed men-at-arms. Edward's signal victories in France were won by yeomen and archers over a mob of heavy armed cavalry, whose very mass crushed itself once it could be thrown into disarray. Now "those vile guns" began to batter down feudal strongholds. Cannon of a sort appear to have been used at the Battle of Crécy, an invention that found more favour with citizen soldiers than with armoured nobles. By this time Ghent had some three hundred pieces of ordnance to drag into action, besides its *Dulle Griete*, five yards long, as cherished as our Mons Meg. Edward and his fire-eating son, clinging as they did to shows of the past, were unconscious agents of a new epoch's spirit. Even the dazzled eyes of Froissart could see how the pageants, prancings, and tiltings dear to this king's heart were lighted up by a setting sun of chivalry.

It had indeed a splendid decay and a long afterglow in the high-flown school of romantic fiction laughed away by Cervantes. Francis I was still proud to be dubbed knight by the peerless Bayard; but it was his great-grandfather's rusty armour which Don Quixote had to make the best of. Half a century after Froissart's death, knightly feats of arms were degenerating into play; tournaments became more showy, but less violent than in the old days of ordeals and mortal defiances. Even as in our own sports prize-fighting and football have taken softer forms

offering a maximum of excitement to the spectators with a minimum of danger to the performers, so those tiltings, if not *à outrance*, came to be done with "arms of courtesy," pointless spears and blunted swords, and in the end to mere running at a ring in Carrousel shows. Oliver de la Marche's Memoirs of the Burgundy Court give as much space to tournaments as to pitched battles, yet he has no more injuries to report than attended Cornish hurling matches, which, an old writer tells us, used to end in bloody pates, bones broken or dislocated, and even deadly hurts, "yet all in good play, and never attorney or coroner troubled for the matter." Plate-armour had developed into such a cumbrous casing that a champion's worst chance of being hurt, as we see in those Flanders battles, was from being smothered, trampled, or hammered to death, when once unhorsed; and in the mimic encounters of the ring, it appears to have been considered not "playing the game" to injure the adversary's charger. There might be good reason for this rule, as the victor was entitled to claim the steed and armour of the fallen; then we catch some hint of "pot-hunting" among knights, who, like kings and nobles, had to find means to cut a becoming figure at such spectacles. At a fifteenth-century Spanish tournament, we read of some hundreds of courses being run and scores of lances shattered with the result of only one death, and that by accident. The doubtfully accidental killing of Henri II of France in a tournament is said to have put this kind of spectacle out of fashion.

Chivalry should have been pointed out as one of the institutions shaped by the Crusades. It had its origin of course in the adventurous spirit of heathen forefathers, whose totems perhaps became the badges afterwards developed into crests and coats of arms. It was among those hosts of international warriors that the leaders found well to be distinguished by devices displayed upon their enclosing shells of armour or the surcoats with which they covered their panoply from scorching suns. The fabulous beasts that figure in such hieroglyphics look to be of Oriental origin. Here, then, sprang up the art of heraldry, whose professors put themselves forward as interpreters and

arbiters of chivalric custom. In the hearts of the knights, courage and pride were glorified by a religious spirit not uncongenial to the old Adam when hacking and hewing infidels could be taken as cutting a way through purgatory. Service in the Holy Land bred the exaltation in which Templars and Hospitallers bound themselves under monastic vows, less lightly made among soldiers than among monks, but no more strictly kept unless when martial piety could be kept in breathing by exercise. The present-day officer, who in saluting raises the hilt of his sword to his lips, may be unaware that thus he is kissing the cross.

Most of what we know about the knights of old, we get from the *troubadours*, *trouvères* and other "makers" who celebrated their prowess with an artistic tendency to exaggeration. We may surmise that the knight-errants so keen to quell tyrants, slay dragons, and rescue distressed damsels were more common in fiction than in fact. The minstrels, ready to harp on love as well as war, can be suspected of emphasizing the spirit of gallantry that made needful to the chevalier some Dulcinea to send him on foolhardy quests. Chaucer, after drawing the picture of a perfect, gentle knight, indulges himself with a burlesque of those preposterous rhymed chronicles. The prose romances that succeeded were clearly concerned to overstep the modesty of nature. Their accounts of long-drawn adventure suggest our transpontine drama or boys' stories, where the hero, however tried by misfortune, must always be at the height of heroism and come out victorious in the long run. One of the most modern in tone of such stories, and lighted up by a rare sense of humour, is "Le Petit Jehan de Saintré," written in the middle of the fifteenth century. This aspirant to chivalric honour, even before being formally dubbed knight, is represented as touring through the courts of Christendom, overthrowing all adversaries as a matter of course, the most triumphant exploit that wins his spurs coming in the wars of Flanders, when he lays low, one after another, a round dozen of English knights who had sallied forth from Calais to maintain their king's claim to lordship here. Perhaps the author had a sly laugh in his sleeve when spinning such a yarn of improbabilities and impossibilities. Other writers, of course,

sought their account in extolling the forbears of liberal patrons. If there were some paladins who deserved much of what came to be said of them, we hear also of felon-knights, and, in too truthful records, of robber-knights swooping out of ill-famed strongholds to levy toll on traders and pilgrims, like any African tyrant not yet tamed in some European sphere of influence. And Froissart's courtly chronicle tells too plainly how little gentleness his *preux chevaliers* had to spare for the poor and simple masses.

Knighthood was never the ideal vocation it may appear in romance; and the romances themselves show how after the Crusades it fell much away into senseless punctilios, fantastic refinements, and unedifying gallantries on which the blameless Arthur or the fiery Roland would have frowned. The later orders of chivalry set up by princes as ornaments of their State, were no longer schools of devotion and self-denial, but rather of ostentatious pride and luxury. These orders are signs of a time in which both knights and nobles, giving up their feudal semi-independence, began to exchange their loose vassalage for a closer connexion with some prince as his courtiers, serving as officers of his hired troops, and depending much on his favour for means to keep up the display that grew more costly both in courts and camps. Such display needed money, and that in the long run had to come to wasteful kings and nobles from the humble workers who could not manage lance or charger, but could point an arquebus or a culverin as well as the bluest-blooded man-at-arms.



### III

#### BOLD, "GOOD," AND GOLDEN FLEECERS

IN the foregoing sketch of this region's history through the Dark and Middle Ages, the reader's memory has not been tried by a catalogue of all the Dirks, Baldwins, Godfreys, Williams, Margarets, Johannas, and so forth who bore stable or unstable rule in its different corners. Enough to say that they lived and died, rivalled and ousted each other, made alliances and inroads, lost by war, gained by marriage or inheritance, prospered or came to naught, not always according to desert. Henceforth the Low Countries will show not so many loose threads to weave into the web of their history. In the fifteenth century most of their provinces fell under one line of princes who came near raising this cockpit into a strong barrier between its two chief setters-on to combat.

Lord Bryce's "Holy Roman Empire" gives a map showing how often the name and area of Burgundy had shifted since the German tribe so called broke over the Rhone. In the fourteenth century it became fixed upon the dukedom we know by that provincial name, held as a fief under the crown of France, along with Franche Comté (the Free County) on the other side of the Saône, which still owed feudal allegiance to the Emperor: to this day the opposite banks of the river are distinguished by boatmen as *royaume* and *empire*. Charles V of France had given the duchy to his brother Philip, whom we have seen succeeding his father-in-law as Count of Flanders, and who, by his wide possessions, family alliances, and the troubles of France, was to make himself the most powerful member of the House of Valois. When young Charles VI went mad, this uncle of his proposed to govern in his name, a claim jealously resisted by the King's

brother, the Duke of Orleans. Hence arose a bitter feud between two factions which for a generation distracted France and delivered half of it to England. The Duke of Burgundy was dominant on the north side, adjoining his own States ; the south sided rather with the Armagnacs, as the opposing party came to be called when the quarrel had been inflamed by the murder of Orleans, leaving as head of his partisans the Count d'Armagnac, father-in-law of his son, kept prisoner in England for a quarter of a century.

Over the Low Countries also arose family disputes in which Philip of Burgundy was concerned as brother-in-law to the Duke of Brabant, and father-in-law to the Count of Hainault, whose domain now included Holland and Zealand. William of Hainault, a prince of Bavarian lineage, had no heir but his daughter Jacqueline, for whose protection an illustrious husband was to be desired, nor would there be wanting candidates for such an inheritance. At the age of fourteen she was married to one of the French king's sons, John of Touraine, himself a lad in his teens, who presently by the death of his elder brothers became heir to the crown. He was summoned back to France ; but a temporary clearing of the King's weak mind having enabled the Queen to oust the Burgundian party, such were the relations of this happy family that the Count of Hainault would not trust his son-in-law out of his own hands. The poor boy himself soon died, poisoned, it was suspected, by the Armagnacs, a suspicion always ready in such cases. Immediately after him William of Hainault died from the bite of a dog, leaving Jacqueline a widow and orphan at sixteen. His last wish was that she should marry her cousin and neighbour, John of Brabant, a lad of her own age whose father had fallen at the Battle of Agincourt. Too truly her father foresaw the perils awaiting an heiress well dowered with beauty, intelligence, and a high spirit that with her misfortunes have made her one of the heroines of history, whose fortunes show much in common with those of our Scottish Queen Mary.

Her worst enemy, as Count William guessed, would be his own brother John of Bavaria, ex-bishop of Liège, who had got a dispensation from the Pope letting him throw off the sub-



THE MORNING OF AGINCOURT  
*After the picture by Sir John Gilbert in the Guildhall Art Gallery*



diaconate which was his only clerical qualification ; then he married the Dowager Duchess of Brabant, niece of the Emperor and heiress to the duchy of Luxemburg. For further aggrandizement of his fortunes, this wicked uncle, whose harsh mastery of Liège had earned him the surname of John the Pitiless, at once began to stir up Holland against his niece, openly putting himself forward here as the heir, while she was recognized without question in Hainault, and her uncle Burgundy pushed on the marriage with John of Brabant. Here again a Papal dispensation was required, the parties being first cousins. This was easily obtained from Martin V, a pope much under the thumb of Burgundy ; and the wedding festivities were on foot at The Hague, when there arrived a second brief revoking the dispensation, extorted from the weak pontiff by the Emperor Sigismund, who favoured John of Bavaria's intrigues. Jacqueline's counsellors, however, both laymen and ecclesiastics, agreed to disregard this prohibition as obtained by fraud. The marriage was duly celebrated, and soon afterwards came to hand a third letter from the harassed Pope, explaining how the second had been the work of his hand, not of his heart, and formally removing the bar to that union of cousins. But a question as to the validity of this vacillating sanction was to play an important part in Jacqueline's future fortunes.

The rich princess soon found herself disappointed in a husband not worth having. John of Brabant was a senseless, selfish, spiritless youth, whose manners gave offence in his new dominions, which he proved ill able to defend when his wife's uncle openly took arms against her in Holland. Of this province, along with Zealand and Friesland, the Emperor granted John of Bavaria lordship as being male fiefs, and some of the faction-torn Dutch towns took his side. The civil war that followed is overshadowed by the darker troubles of France, in which Jacqueline's relationships involved her own vicissitudes.

The first Philip of Burgundy died, succeeded by his son John the Fearless, who had led a hundred thousand men-at-arms on a belated crusade against the Turks, to meet disaster at the Battle of Nicopolis. This Duke, allying himself with the intriguing

Queen of France when she quarrelled with the Armagnacs, won back his father's authority over the mad king, and the Parisians being gained to his interest, he made himself practically master of northern France. When he was treacherously murdered by partisans of the Dauphin, his son Philip, for the sake of revenge, threw himself into the arms of the English, Henry V having again invaded France, to whom both factions had already made advances in their envenomed hatred of each other. At Troyes a shameful treaty was made between Henry and Philip, the Queen of France being a party to it. Henry, as most of us know from Shakespeare, was to marry Charles VI's daughter, rule as regent in his lifetime and succeed to the French crown at his death. This arrangement stuck in the throats of some of Burgundy's vassals, disgusted by the Englishmen's insolence and the haughty bearing of their king; we hear of the Prince of Orange, for one, refusing to swear fidelity to the foreigner. But the marriage was solemnized; and Henry, after a honeymoon spent in besieging towns of his should-be subjects, entered Paris in triumph, hailed by the populace as a deliverer from the distress of civil war that drew wolves into its cemeteries to prey on dead bodies and drove out starved citizens to add to the robbers infesting its approaches.

The new Government, indeed, brought them no relief. Henry ruled but hardly governed to the north of the Loire; the dispossessed Dauphin to the south, contemptuously styled by the English "King of Bourges." But his partisans pushed their raids up to the gates of Paris; and his forces gathered head, stiffened by a body of Scottish auxiliaries, who indeed came almost to extermination at the Battle of Verneuil, not much regretted by their French comrades, as they had proved no more congenial allies than those John Bulls in the north. Burgundy and the King of England having gone off, each to look after his own country, his lieutenants' reverses brought Henry back to France only to die there in the prime of life, leaving an infant son to the care of his brothers, Bedford and Gloucester, as regents of the two kingdoms. Soon afterwards died the mad king. The Dauphin, left to himself, might not have been able to make good his rights. But now came a miraculous turn in his favour

through the appearance of the Maid of Orleans, inspiring his army to beat back the English, and leading Charles VII to be crowned at Rheims, the shrine of French monarchy ever since Clovis had been there baptized by St. Remy. We know how she was captured by the Burgundians, handed over to the English, and burned at Rouen by a sentence of French ecclesiastics, to become for both nations a saint, a problem, and a type of exalted patriotism. Before long the English alliance with Burgundy wore itself out, while Bedford, this duke's brother-in-law, was ill-supported at home through the quarrels of his brother Gloucester and their uncle Cardinal Beaufort. The boy Henry VI came to be crowned at Paris, but soon was withdrawn into Normandy, and when in 1435 Burgundy ended his long feud with Charles VII, France could be relieved from an English aggression more ruthlessly distressful than that of the Germans in Belgium under our own eyes.

Against this lurid background was enacted Jacqueline's humbler drama, one worthy to be treated by Scott or Shakespeare. She soon found that foolish husband of hers a poor defender against her grasping uncle. The young duchess herself took the field, more of a man than the duke, who presently sneaked away home, letting some of the chief Dutch cities, that now begin to figure in history, go over or be seized by John of Bavaria. At this point Philip of Burgundy, a little before his father's murder, intervened as mediator. He was doubly Jacqueline's cousin, her mother being Margaret of Burgundy as he was son of Margaret of Hainault. But this astute prince, "a little more than kin and less than kind," made such bad terms for her that he might well be accused of a secret understanding in his own interest with her uncle. At a family council, the agreement was that a great part of Holland should be given up to her uncle, on condition of his formally doing homage for it to her husband; and to the usurper she was to pay 100,000 English nobles, a coin struck by Edward III in memory of his naval victory at Sluys. This was not Jacqueline's idea of a compromise; but her cousin, her husband, and the rest of the family forced it upon her. By favour of the Cod faction, her uncle ruled in Holland, and when before long he was

poisoned, he left the country nominally to John of Brabant, practically in the power of Philip, Jacqueline's rights being ignored.

With that dissolute spouse of hers she was soon living a cat and dog life, recalling the relations of Mary and Darnley. He gave in to the usurping uncle with a want of spirit on which even his own people called shame, who at one time shut him out of Brussels and were disposed to supplant him by his brother, another young ne'er-do-well, who was at least more of a man. The Rizzio of such an unhappy pair, not on the spindle side this time, was the duke's unworthy favourite William le Bègue. At Mons this unpopular minion was murdered by a natural brother of Jacqueline, with her privity as was believed. The resentful duke retaliated by proposing to send away his wife's ladies-in-waiting and to replace them by Brabantines of his own choice, one of them with the name of being his mistress. That brought the quarrel to a head. Jacqueline broke with her husband, retiring with her mother from his court.

But a quiet life of retirement did not long content this lively young lady, who before long sought distraction and assistance in England. Slipping away from Valenciennes on pretence of a hunting party or some such jaunt, she made for Calais and crossed the Channel to meet a flattering reception in London. Tournaments and festivities were held in her honour; she stood godmother to Henry V's son; and she won the admiration of the King's brother, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. Humphrey "the Good" owed this by-name to his patronage of learned men and a certain popularity with the multitude, but he was no more a credit to his rank than was it truly his tomb in St. Paul's at which so many hungry Londoners have "dined," his actual burial place being at St. Albans, a minster which he patronized in a way, though understood to be in scandalous sympathy with the Lollards and such like heretics now beginning to vex ecclesiastical orthodoxy. This free-thinking and free-living duke was so much in love with the foreign princess, perhaps with her patrimonial inheritance, that he turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of the King, who foresaw how such an alliance might





THE "MAID OF ORLEANS"



cause a rupture with Burgundy. But now Henry died, and nothing stood between these lovers but the fact of the lady being married already. She professed to look on her union with John of Brabant as a crime on account of their cousinship, doubtfully set aside by shilly-shally Papal decrees. As a matter of fact she was also akin to Humphrey, through his great-grandmother, Philippa of Hainault; but it might task the brain of a senior wrangler to disentangle the relationships of those quarrelling and courting princes. Pope Martin V was now applied to for a declaration of Jacqueline's marriage as null. Rome might well take its time over a decision sure to offend some interest worth conciliating; and when its answer was delayed too long for Humphrey's impatience, he contented himself with getting the required sanction from Benedict, who had set himself up as an Antipope and would deal more cheaply in dispensations. Papal authority had somewhat gone down in value since the long exile of the Popes at Avignon, besides schisms in which two, and at one time three rivals claimed the tiara.

With or without valid sanction, Jacqueline took Humphrey for her third husband; and next year he attempted to master his wife's inheritance, invading Hainault with a few thousand English troops. It was a curious complication that the Protector of England should make war on the Duke of Burgundy, the ally of his brother Bedford as English regent of France. Another strange incident was Gloucester's rival, Beaufort, obliging the Pope with a contingent of English soldiers to put down the Hussite heretics of Bohemia; but in passing through France this body could be pressed into his own service by Bedford, hard put to it to maintain his ascendancy here. Now, indeed, began to open the rift between Burgundy and England that ended in the former making up his long feud with Charles VII. It was not only Gloucester's poaching on his claims that gave him offence; Bedford had married his sister, but when she died, took the chance of wooing another Jacqueline, an heiress of the Luxemburg house, on whose prospects also Burgundy had a kinsman's eye.

When Humphrey and his bride appeared in Hainault, several of its nobles and towns rose on their side, while the Brabant party

was backed by the power of Burgundy. After this war, cruelly carried on, began to go against the English, Humphrey opened a correspondence with Philip, protesting against his interference. In the same terms of high-flown courtesy and sham regard, Philip answered with a proposal that to spare the country's further distress, their differences should be decided by a single combat between them, with either the Emperor or Bedford as umpire. Humphrey accepted his challenge, and St. George's Day was named for the encounter. This shows how the spirit of chivalry, if dying, was by no means dead. A few years before, the old and the new warfare had come strangely in touch, when at Henry V's siege of Melun, both sides dug mines that broke into each other, then meeting face to face in the dark the knights found good sport in the novelty of encountering each other underground, the King himself taking a part in these subterranean duels.

It is said that the ill blood between Humphrey and Philip had been a matter of old standing. The latter seems to have taken the challenge more in earnest, for he retired to one of his castles, where he diligently practised himself in feats of arms under famous masters. Humphrey, going back to England, professed to be preparing for the encounter, which never came off. Bedford, indignant at the war in France being hampered by his brother's folly, got an assembly of gallant and learned notables at Paris to pronounce that duel unwarrantable ; and it was allowed to drop.

Jacqueline had been left in Mons, trusted to its citizens by her new husband to protect her against the old one. Alas, it soon appeared that the fickle Humphrey had deserted her for good, captivated afresh by the charms of Eleanor Cobham, a lady of not the best character, who became Duchess of Gloucester, the sorcery-monger known to us in the play of "Henry VI," which if it be Shakespeare's work, is no credit to him as a verifier of historical references. To wipe out the duke's marriage with Jacqueline, a Papal decree, delayed for two or three years, again came in useful. The Pope at last confirmed her former union with John of Brabant, who died about the same time, leaving behind him no good memory, unless for his founding the University of Louvain. He was succeeded by his brother, Count

St. Pol, who did not live long ; then Philip quietly took possession of the duchy, as he had done of Hainault and Holland, under some cloak of acting as regent for Jacqueline.

In vain that Ariadne had written to her English Bacchus, appealing for his pity on the most miserable and shamefully betrayed woman in the world. The citizens of Mons, warned by the fate of other towns that had taken her side, gave her up to Philip ; and under charge of the Prince of Orange she was brought to the castle of Ghent as a prisoner. But there she found friends who after a time helped her to escape disguised as a man, then suddenly she appeared at Gouda, calling on the loyalty of Holland. The Hook party made her cause a standard for their hatred of the Cods ; and for three years she as bravely as cruelly carried on a guerilla war with Philip's partisans. Joan of Arc was not the only heroine of that time, when the women and children of Amersfoort defended their walls, while the men sallied out to attack the besieging duke with the same spirit as their descendants would show against the myrmidons of a later Philip. Humphrey had the grace more than once to send a little reinforcement from England for his repudiated wife, but not enough to turn the scale of her wavering fortunes, and finally he advised her to come to terms with Burgundy, now that in France there was grave danger of losing his alliance with England.

The formal recognition of Humphrey's marriage to Eleanor Cobham seems to have been the last straw that broke that Amazon's spirit. She submitted herself to Philip, agreeing to divide the government between them, and undertaking not to marry again without his consent. Bit by bit, however, authority was filched out of her hands, and she for her part did not stick to her promise. She made a secret marriage with Frank of Borselen, one of an influential family with whom, as farmers of Holland and Zealand's heavily mortgaged revenues, she would have to do in the way of business ; the courtship, in fact, began by his lending money to the hard-up princess. Philip seems to have detected this love affair, and also a plot for throwing off his yoke with fresh help from England. He came to Flanders, imprisoned the presumptuous bridegroom, and forced him to

ransom life and liberty with Jacqueline's abdication, in return for which she was free to avow and enjoy the union that this time proved a happy one. Henceforth, Philip was lord of her dominions, she retaining nothing but empty titles and certain estates, with the right to indulge her princely passion for the chase all over her former domains. After such a stormy life, she lived three quiet years, the world well lost for love, amusing herself with hunting and, according to tradition, by fashioning little vessels of clay, some of which are still treasured in Holland as her handiwork. At the age of thirty-six she died of consumption, by all her marriages leaving no child to inherit those rich possessions henceforth absorbed by the house of Burgundy. Her husband, made Count of Ostrevant and honoured with the Golden Fleece, proved a loyal servant to the usurper, and resolutely defended the coast against a futile attempt of Duke Humphrey to make good a claim on his deserted wife's birthright.

Philip "the Good," who thus by a long course of force and fraud became master of nearly all the Low Countries, no more deserved that epithet than did our Humphrey. Later on, he raked in the south-eastern corner by his claims to represent the extinct houses of Limburg and Luxemburg; he paved the way for his son's annexation of Gueldres; Namur he got by purchase from its heirless lord; and, with the countenance of a subservient Pope, he bullied Utrecht into receiving a bastard son of his as its bishop. The union of so many provinces entailed their drifting away from feudal allegiance to the Empire and a drawing towards France through the influence of their powerful lord.

This accumulator of dukedoms, countships, and other lordships along with a regency in France, was then a king in all but name; and he had many of the qualities looked for in a great prince of the period. Thanks to the rich industries of his many cities, he was magnificent in display, munificent in patronage of letters and art, generous to his friends, gracious to all so long as he got his own way, and not too hotly resentful towards his enemies, unless in the pardonable case of his father's assassins. Like Frederick the Great's father, he indulged odd tastes for human curiosities such as giants, also dwarfs; like Henri IV and many

another popular monarch, he took royal privileges in the gallantry of love as knightly risks in that of war; like our Edward III he was concerned to gild and polish the arms of chivalry, now a little like to go rusty or smoke-begrimed. At Dijon, Lille, Ghent, Bruges, Brussels, and other cities where he made his shifting headquarters, oftener in the Netherlands than in Burgundy, he held tourneys, sumptuous festivals, and exhibitions of pomp for which in the long run the gaping citizens would have to pay. At Paris he treated the starving people to their fill of such spectacles, including the appropriate diversion of the *Danse Macabre*, "dance of death," performed in a cemetery, to the special admiration, we are told, of his English visitors, with the turn for taking pleasure seriously attributed to them by Froissart. At Arras, during a truce of his wars with France, we hear of his "letting cry" a tournament, where French and Burgundian knights jostled against each other in courteous sport, which to be sure had a touch of earnest, for the duke "made great care be taken of the wounded, and gave most courteous reception to their comrades; then on both sides they set about carrying on the war more cruelly than ever."

Philip's most dazzling renown as a patron of chivalry was through his order of the Golden Fleece, set up in rivalry to that of the Garter, which thus began *faire école* till no petty prince of Europe thought his court duly equipped without at least one such distinction to bestow more or less freely. The Golden Fleece brotherhood consisted of thirty knights with the Duke himself at their head, and so coveted were its rich insignia that thus he gathered round him a band or council of nobles like the peers of Charlemagne, as Edward had taken the hint of his institution from Arthur's Round Table.

It was at Bruges in 1430 that he formed this order to signalize his third marriage, with the King of Portugal's daughter; yet the scandal went that it was not his bride but a fair-haired lady of the city who played the Countess of Salisbury's part for him. To celebrate the wedding, Bruges was kept *en fête* night and day for a week, princes, nobles, and burghers vying with each other in costly entertainments. In front of the palace three stone

fountains spouted wine without stint or scot to pay ; a lion gave out Rhenish, a stag Burgundy, and a fabulous monster's throat ran by turns with Malvoisy, Muscat, Hippocras, then for intervals of an hour supplied the carousers with rose-water to wash their hands. When skinfuls were going gratis, the result was that the streets of Bruges made a Dutch picture of common folk lying dead drunk or staggering up against each other in their efforts to keep a footing. The knights of the new order, it is to be hoped, were more discreet in their potations at the elaborate banquets that marked their meetings. Bruges left to recover from its general headache, the wedding train went on to repeat the same revels at Ghent, Arras and other cities that for the nonce hailed their lord with intoxicated joy.

But not always merry as marriage bells were the relations of the Duke and his "good towns." His expensive, not to say extravagant tastes plunged him into debt, then the burghers were less ready to meet his demands for money than to revel at what seemed his expense. Things came to a sore head between them soon after. Philip broke away from his English alliance, presently making open war on the side of France. This stopped the export of English wool to feed the looms of Flanders, throwing masses of people out of work, while also the English fleet assailed Flemish merchantmen, injuries not calculated to favour England's attempts at stirring up the Duke's subjects against him, yet naturally breeding poverty and unrest in the towns, round which the peasantry had often been driven to desperation by the wastings of war.

It was now going ill with our pretensions in France, soon to be crippled by the Wars of the Roses. The prudent Regent, Bedford, was dead, succeeded by the Duke of York ; and other princes of the royal family quarrelled around their unmasterful young King. The English garrison had been turned out of Paris, which at last Charles VII could enter after his long exile from the capital. Even Normandy rose in revolt against its foreign lords. Little was left them but Calais, still remaining a sore thorn in the side of Burgundy's domain. When Humphrey assumed his own title of Count of Flanders, Philip was provoked





QUAI DU MIROIR, BRUGES



into an attempt at wresting this important landing-place from his late allies. He led against it an army thirty thousand strong, not knights and men-at-arms this time, but chiefly citizen soldiers from Ghent and other cities, armed with spears and clubs, full of fight, and well furnished with artillery, wagon-train, tents, and all the apparatus of a lordly camp, down to a cock in a cage to act as clock by night.

But such citizen militia was not yet a match for veteran soldiery. The mobilized burghers' ardour soon oozed away in skirmishes about the walls; and then perhaps arose the legend as to one Englishman being equal to three Frenchmen. The Duke's fleet did not arrive to blockade the port. A device we have seen used against Ostend and Zeebrucke, he tried less successfully, sinking ships loaded with stones to block the harbour; but when low water exposed these hulls the people of Calais sallied out to break up and burn them, and the stones were washed away by the tide. The disheartened citizen army turned mutinous, breaking up in good time, for Humphrey of Gloucester was on his way to the relief of Calais with ten thousand soldiers.

Philip was fain to summon to his standard more trustworthy men-at-arms; but before he could gather a strong force, he had much to put up with from those discontented and impoverished burghers of his. For once Ghent and Bruges united in complaints; the rabble took to murdering their magistrates and pillaging the well-to-do; the Duchess, so lately fêted, was insulted in Bruges, with difficulty getting leave to carry her infant son out of the riotous city. Her husband had to dissemble his wrath, and visited Bruges in the belief that his presence would restore order. But he met an angry reception there; the mob massacred before his eyes two respectable citizens who came forward to greet him; and when his escort tried to disperse the insurgents, it found itself assailed from the windows with stones and beams of wood as well as arrows. The gate by which he entered had been locked behind him; then after cutting his way back to it with heavy loss, the Duke stood in danger of his life, had not a loyal citizen got the gate broken open to let him escape with a

few of his followers, the bulk of them done to death in the streets or drowned in trying to pass the moats. Next day were beheaded that deliverer of his and a locksmith who had assisted him. It was all the clergy could do to save the lives of some score of prisoners, in which humane effort they were supported by the foreign merchants resident at Bruges, who more than once now appear as enemies of disorders much against their interest.

Inflamed by their own boldness, the men of Bruges took to sallying forth in arms to plunder the country around ; and it looked as if Flanders were to be given up to a confused civil war. But Ghent and other cities turned against them ; and the Duke starved out their contumacy by blockading the canals and rivers that were the highways of their commerce. The classes regained the upper hand over the masses, thrown into a cold fit by famine and disease ; then the rebellious city gave proof of repentance by executing some of the leading demagogues, and engaging the good offices of the Duchess to plead for its pardon, which her husband granted upon hard conditions to a deputation kneeling at his feet. A league outside the gates he was to be received by citizens barefoot and bareheaded ; Bruges was to pay him a heavy fine and compensation to the families of the mob's victims ; the gate at which its lord had been impiously assaulted was to be turned into an atoning chapel. More than forty persons were excluded from the amnesty ; and Philip's re-entry was graced by a long list of executions. But he did not fully pardon this city for some years, till the Duke of Orleans, released by his good offices from a twenty-five years' captivity in England, sealed the reconciliation of the two long hostile houses by marrying Burgundy's niece, when the fountains of Bruges again played with wine ; and its streets were decorated and illuminated to welcome a master now in gracious mood. So hard died the notions of feudal duty.

Charles VII of France had reason to look askance on this alliance between two powerful houses that might again overshadow his throne as they had done his mad father's. Though restored to his capital, he had little but trouble from a kingship for which he was too easygoing and self-indulgent. Once and

again attempts to make peace with the English failed through their obstinacy in sticking to that claim to the crown of France, which was not finally given up till George III's reign, though Henry VIII renounced it in a treaty with Francis I. But, while their incursions were now confined to the west side of the kingdom, all France found itself harassed by roaming bands of freebooters, expressively styled "skinners," plundering and massacring wherever they could not be resisted, or enlisting as soldiers of fortune in any private war that might be on foot. The poor King issued proclamations as vain as were the complaints of his subjects, holding him to blame for what he could not hinder. He was ill backed by captains some of whom were the worst offenders. His council and the Count of Richemont, Constable of France, were opposed by leaders of faction. The great nobles, Burgundy and all, took their own way; and even the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI, dabbled in treason before he was out of his teens. Yet young Louis played the man and the prince against the English, gradually driven out of France till they held nothing there but Calais, the only monument of their forty years' domination beyond ruins and wild woods growing rank over untilled fields. Father and son joined in doing another service to their people, by gathering the plundering companies into an army which they led to make war on the Rhine, beyond which many of those swashbucklers took themselves off to ravage in Germany, while others were enrolled in France as regular troops.

Charles VII's chief exploit here was making good a claim to Lorraine for his kinsman René of Anjou, a prince richer in titles than possessions, for he had inherited the empty crowns of Naples, Sicily, and Jerusalem, but little else; then a heavy ransom due through his capture by the Burgundians had brought him to bankruptcy. His daughter Margaret came to England as wife of the feeble-minded Henry VI, to whom she brought a minus figure as dowry, for the family fiefs of Maine and Anjou were now transferred to France. Lorraine, shrunk to a duchy, was soon to be again a bone of contention, not for the last time. For the moment, it passed under Burgundian influence by the marriage

of Philip's daughter to René's son. René himself, the reviled "Regnier" of Shakespeare :

*A worthless king,  
Having neither subject, wealth, nor diadem,*

retired to Provence, thenceforth seeking renown as artist and poet rather than in arms.

While Charles VII made progress in reducing his kingdom to order, he was still like to be eclipsed by Philip, now at the height of his glory. When in the middle of the century, the Turks threatened Constantinople, it was to him that the moribund Eastern Empire and the eyes of Christendom turned for aid. He did talk loudly of heading a new Crusade, a duty from which the Emperor and the French shrunk ; but all that came of it at once was the dispatch of a Flemish fleet to the Levant for such exploits as helping the knights of St. John to hold Rhodes against the infidel. On the fall of Constantinople, the Duke was stirred into a solemn vow, made at the most gorgeous entertainment ever given by his spendthrift court. It came off at Lille, the preparations for it taking three months. Surrounded by his knights of the Golden Fleece, Philip glittered in jewels said to be worth a million crowns. After the tourney *de rigueur*, the guests sat down in a hall hung with tapestry representing the labours of Hercules, to a banquet at tables bearing up hugely elaborate devices, on one a model of a church with bells, organ and a choir to sing grace, on another a pie that opened to reveal not twenty-four blackbirds but a band of twenty-eight musicians, on a third a representation of an Oriental forest with its fierce beasts moving as if alive. The sideboard, loaded with gold and silver plate, had a live lion chained to it in guard over a female statue whose paps spouted Hippocras. The naked figure of a child gave out rose-water after the manner of a notorious mannikin we have seen in modern Brussels. The dishes came down from the ceiling on chariot-like trays rich with gold and enamel. When the eating and drinking were over, a curtain rose upon a masque of Jason and the Golden Fleece, performed with bulls breathing fire and the slaughter of a dragon whose teeth were sown to come up as

soldiers fighting and killing each other. Then entered a giant leading an elephant, on the howdah of which sat a nunlike lady, presenting the Holy Church. In her train were the twelve virtues, Faith, Charity, Prudence, and so forth, each with a speech in verse. All in tears, she complained of the ravages of the infidel, demanding succour from the knights of the Golden Fleece. Thereupon the herald of the order brought in a live pheasant set with jewels, according to an ancient custom of making a vow over some noble bird. To this official Philip handed his written promise to undertake a Crusade, and as the Lady of the Church went round the tables, the excited knights followed their master's example, several adding fantastic vows of their own, suggested by the romances of chivalry. One engaged himself not to go to bed on Saturdays so long as his undertaking was unfulfilled, another not to sit down at table on Tuesdays, a third to fast with special rigour on Fridays, and an early teetotaller to drink no wine till he had tapped infidel blood. Thus they went on outbidding each other in extravagances, but one undertaking seems to come short of romance when a squire vowed, if his lady did not smile upon him, to marry, on his return from the Crusade, the first woman he met possessed of twenty thousand crowns. If prevented by sickness or other efficient cause, several pledged themselves to send from four to twenty substitutes, fitted out and paid for a year. One knight, quite in the taste of the times, vowed if he came safe back from the Crusade to offer chivalric challenges in three Christian kingdoms.

Yet all this after-dinner enthusiasm went for next to naught, even though volunteers by thousands offered their swords from every quarter of the West. The enterprise, for years much talked about, was put off and off, while the Turk fixed himself firmly on the Bosphorus. Philip's zeal for the Cross and taste for chivalrous exploits were counteracted by suspicion of how France might take advantage of his back being turned in the East; also he had to count with recalcitrant Flemish taxpayers. The French king, for his part, was bound to think of the English. The Emperor Frederick, who should have led such a movement, was too spiritless to let himself be goaded into much interest in

it. The Duke of Burgundy seems to have been honestly desirous, at least by fits and starts, of making good his vow ; and after a serious illness towards the end of his life, an appeal from Pope Pius II had nearly set him off with one foot in the grave. A crowd of famished, sickly, and discontented adventurers did gather at Ancona, where shipping failed to be provided for them as promised ; then the death of that zealous Pope threw a blight over the arrangements ; so that the Duke's council were able to restrain his senile ardour. Some pressing care or other always came in the way ; the zeal generated for the true faith spent itself partly in persecution of heretics at home ; and the knights of the Golden Fleece probably found some excuse for slipping out of vows that else must have saddled upon them lifelong mortifications.

Thus the chivalry that should have been turned against the infidel, went wasted in such spectacular play of arms as was now the fashion at courts, when romances of heroes like Lancelot, Gawaine, Amadis, made the favourite study of lords and ladies no longer illiterate. Philip had a passion for these sports, in which it appears that champions fought both on foot and horseback, not often able to do one another much deadly hurt. It was now that flourished that peerless knight of Flanders, Jacques de Lalaing, who had vowed to accomplish thirty feats of arms before reaching his thirtieth year. In this quest, he toured the tiltyards of France, Spain, Portugal, and Scotland, everywhere winning fresh distinction. But when such a conquering hero came to England, gentle Henry VI hindered the English knights from accepting his challenges, so that he would have left our shores *bredouille*, had not a fiery Welsh squire named Kar rowed out to his ship at Sandwich with an offer to meet him in his own country. The combat came off at Bruges before the Duke of Burgundy's brilliant court. They fought on foot with pole-axes and maces, hammering at one another's helmets and trying to find some joint in the adversary's armour. After many clanging blows had been exchanged, the Briton succeeded in piercing with his pole-axe point De Lalaing's left arm below the gauntlet, so that blood ran out. The Flemish champion being manifestly



half disabled, the Duke was expected to throw down his baton as signal for the combat to stop; but Philip forbore out of a sense of fair play to the stranger. "The Sire de Lalaing, however, had stuck the axe under his left arm, as a woman puts her distaff, and managing it with his right hand, he parried the blows on its handle. All the assembly trembled for the young knight, who from time to time raised his wounded hand, from which blood could be seen dripping, as if to call his lord's attention to his plight, or, as some thought, to shake the blood back into his veins. Every eye was turned on the good Duke. But, at whatever cost, he was minded to do his duty as judge, trusting in God and the prowess of his dear Jacques de Lalaing." And, sure enough, the Fleming got the best of it, after all. Pushing his axe handle under Kar's arm so as to truss him up, and throwing the wounded limb round his neck, with his right hand he tugged at the other's helmet. Kar, taken by surprise, and overweighted by his heavy armour, was pulled over, sprawling full length face downwards in the sand. De Lalaing scorned to take advantage of his downfall, but was now adjudged victor, for though the Welshman tried to make out that he had fallen only on his knees and elbows, the marshal of the lists gave that point against him. Then his courteous adversary not only forbore to exact the stipulated display of submission by giving up a gauntlet, but presented the beaten man with a fine diamond by way of consolation prize.

In the year of Jubilee at Rome, 1450, when a great concourse of visitors was expected to celebrate the end of the schism of rival popes, this Flemish fire-eater fixed himself for a whole year at Chalons-sur-Marne, on the road to Italy, in company with a like-minded Spanish knight, both bent on challenging all passers-by. They erected a gorgeous pavilion adorned with a picture of the Virgin, and a figure of a richly dressed lady weeping tears into a fountain, of whom they gave themselves out as champions. Beside this a unicorn displayed three shields to be touched at choice according as a combat was demanded with axe, sword, or lance. Many knights from the countries around came to this adventure, including an Italian of renown, with whom at Arras

De Lalaing had already shivered twenty-seven lances, neither of them the worse of it in honour or in skin. The winding-up of what came to be a rendezvous for European nobility, that universal challenger signalized by a great banquet and rich presents, bestowing the pious paraphernalia of his enterprise upon the church at Chalons, before going on to seek fresh laurels in Italy. It is noted that this knight without fear and reproach was of such piety that he never uttered an oath, as was too much the way of his brothers in arms ; so he was fitly employed when his master sent him on an embassy to enlist Christian princes for that abortive Crusade.

Affairs had kept Philip of Burgundy away from this congenial scene at Chalons. His wife disliked such spectacles ; and we hear of her more often as doing her best to placate his discontented subjects or make peace with his enemies. But the Duke had to attend to business as well as pleasure. Several times he visited Holland and Zealand to repress the bloody feuds of the Hook and Cod factions. And now that Bruges was reduced to submission, the people of Ghent raised a hydra-head of revolt. To meet the expense of his sumptuous revels, their lord had followed the unpopular example of the French king in imposing a tax on salt ; and while Ypres and Bruges submitted, Ghent refused to pay it as not granted by the States of Flanders, now claiming such a voice in such matters as the English Parliament had secured. The Duke dismissed Ghent's magistrates, but this exercise of arbitrary power again led to the considerate few being put under the hotheaded many. "That worst of tyrants, an usurping crowd," not only defied him, but set up a reign of terror, out-Heroding their Herod in tortures, executions, and confiscations, as we have seen done in the recent Russian revolution. Their princely dispenser of such severities had nothing for it but preparations to humble the presumptuous rebels.

The Duke's son, Count de Charolais, was now, at eighteen, to make his first appearance in arms ; and the father had him take his degree in chivalry by tilting against Jacques de Lalaing. When that perfect knight too plainly favoured his young opponent by letting him get the best of it, the Duke flew into a rage,

insisting on his son being put to harder proof. Another course was run in which they came off more equal, then the father smiled while it was the mother's turn to frown on De Lalaing, since she thought more of her son's safety than of his honour ; and after he had broken eighteen lances, the ladies of the court adjudged the prize to this young hopeful. All the same, unlike our Edward III, who, at Crécy, refused help to the boy Black Prince that he might win his spurs with more credit in the coming campaign, Philip was concerned to "nurse" his heir, once on the eve of a battle sending him off to inquire after his mother's health, a bootless errand that found her in no way ailing, and in vain she tried to keep him at her apron-string. Furious at the trick played on him, the lad galloped back to the army, he whom his first real battle had filled with joy ; and another day he wept for vexation, because his veteran tutor vetoed an attack on account of the stifling heat. For this was to be the most dashing of all Burgundian dukes, Charles the Bold, whose epithet *le Téméraire* were better translated the Over-bold.

The war between that rich city and its powerful prince was for a time indecisive. The Duke could not at once assemble an army as strong as if his enemy were a kingdom, nor could he hold it together through a protracted campaign. Ghent sent 30,000 men to attack Oudenarde, garrisoned in his interest. This force was driven back after a hot fight, in which the bravery of one of its heroes, a butcher, roused admiration in the mailed pursuers, pushing so far as to strike their lance-points on the city gates. The citizens, distracted within their walls by mutual charges of treachery and fresh outbursts of popular violence, still sallied out to impede the enemy, defending their dikes and canals, and flooding the country in part. Besides a strong contingent of rebels from Holland, they had some backing from the Flemish peasantry ; but rival cities were deaf to their incitements of revolt ; and in vain they appealed to the King of France, who, again at war with the English, could only counsel them to make terms with their lord. So they offered to do ; but Philip, stung to wrath by the death in battle of his favourite bastard son, would listen to no offer but absolute surrender.

After a truce the war went on more hotly than ever. The Duke's army melted away for want of pay or plunder ; and the Ghenters continued bold excursions over his territories, while more and more weakened by their own seditions. They were joined by some 1500 English soldiers from Calais, but these auxiliaries proved keener for pillage than fighting, and soon took to deserting to the enemy. The Burgundian forces had a sore loss in the paladin Jacques de Lalaing, the top of his head carried away by a cannon-ball, luckily, it is recorded, on the very morning he had made sure his admission to paradise by hearing three Masses in atonement for the burning of a castle that troubled his sensitive conscience. Philip gathered head again for a fresh onset, against which Ghent put in arms every man between twenty and sixty. They sallied out 45,000 strong, to do battle with such desperate spirit that the Duke himself was for a moment in danger. But a powder wagon blowing up among the Ghenters turned them to confusion and flight, thus hoist with the petard that had served them well against mailed men-at-arms. The pursuit was a carnage in which nearly half their number is said to have fallen. The mourning city had nothing for it but to throw itself on the mercy of the Duke, who entered in haughty triumph, at heart welcomed by those that had much to lose besides their heads. But again it was some years before their lord took back the humbled citizens into full grace.

Called off on pressing business, to stir up the sluggish Emperor and other potentates for the Crusade he had still at heart, Philip presently left his son as Regent of Flanders. In this post Charles did not give satisfaction, not that he meant to play the tyrant, but the young count's administration of justice was too off-hand and slap-dash for a people taking its stand upon laws and charters. But first he had been provided with a wife. As a matter of policy he was betrothed in childhood to the French king's daughter, the little princess being even sent away to be brought up at the Burgundian court, where a ceremony of marriage had united these two children, but the poor bride died before she became actually a wife. His mother, akin to English royalty, would now have chosen Edward IV's sister Margaret, for whom

Charles was willing enough ; but the Duke had other views. He was peremptorily ordered to marry his cousin the Duke of Bourbon's daughter ; and, however sighing as a lover, the youth obeyed as a son, making this lady a more faithful husband than his father had been. On her death, indeed, he married English Margaret after all.

Charles did not always so readily please this masterful parent, being a chip of the old block as to having his own way. A violent scene between them is recorded where Philip was held back by the Duchess from falling sword in hand on his son. One cause of their dissensions was our Wars of the Roses, in which Charles, prompted by his mother, at first sympathized with the Lancastrian party, whereas his father favoured the Yorkist side. Another chronic quarrel between them, later on, was on account of Philip's presuming favourites, the De Croys, a *parvenu* family, whose influence over him seemed to be used in the interest of France. But as the Duke grew old and infirm, his wilful heir was able to assume a lead in their affairs. Almost the last glimpse we have of Philip "the Good" is his looking on from a litter while his hopeful son avenged him on Dinant by slaughtering, sacking, burning, and razing to the ground a town that had insultingly refused to admit the Burgundian supremacy.

After the father's long resplendent life, this son was to strut and fret but ten years on the stage of Europe, almost always in angry opposition to his feudal lord, Louis XI. In youth these two future foes, "the French spider and the Burgundian lion," saw a good deal of one another on what may have been friendly terms. The Dauphin got on as badly with Charles VII, as that son had set him example for in his conduct to Charles VI. Louis quarrelled with his father's famous mistress, Agnes Sorcl, whom he was accused of having struck and suspected of poisoning ; indeed Charles died believing himself poisoned by this undutiful son ; but the apothecaries must have had a thriving trade if all such suspicions of death in high places were well founded. Louis held aloof from the court, retiring to his own appanage of Dauphiny, and marrying the Duke of Savoy's daughter in the teeth of the King's wish. Threatened with attack by this offended

sire, he fled for asylum into Burgundy, to be received with honourable welcome as its Duke's future suzerain. Philip granted him a residence near Brussels, and a pension, refusing steadily to give him up to that irate father of his, while also he declined to help the son against their king. More than once this harbouring of the Dauphin threatened war between those two potentates; and Charles VII showed foresight in a bitter speech as to the cousin of Burgundy cherishing a fox that would steal his fowls one day. For the nonce, however, the sly prince repaid such hospitality by professions of gratitude, by standing godfather to Charles of Charolais' daughter, Mary, and by interfering to reconcile this father and son when, in turn, they fell out hotly. Under pretence of a desire to join the proposed Crusade, for several years Louis remained here in exile, keeping much company with Philip's heir. They had a common passion for hunting which threw them together; but the hot-headed Charles must have found in his crafty cousin no congenial "sportsman." At all events, they got on together as yet without open quarrel; and when in 1461 Louis XI succeeded to the crown of France, Philip and Charles did their feudal duty by attending the coronation with a magnificent display that eclipsed the out-at-elbows royal state, their suite of eighty knights including princes and dukes among lords of lower degree. The new king, to whom this rich vassal paid all outward signs of respect, was liberal of nothing but fine words, and expensive only in his love of the chase. Then things did not long go smoothly between those jealously watchful powers.

Louis XI's vices of cunning and cruelty have left too black blots on a record that was not without merit. Like his father, whose good intentions had been fettered by light loves and intriguing counsellors, the son more sternly and shrewdly worked for the welfare of their people, readier to pardon such faults as those of Charles. Seeing what mischief the quarrels and intrigues of the great vassals did his kingdom, Louis' policy was to reduce them to wholesome dependence on the crown; and it was his unscrupulous efforts to suppress all tyranny and injustice but his own, along with the craven superstition by which he drugged a



GENERAL VIEW OF DINANT





crime-laden conscience, that have given him such a bad name in history. He perhaps honestly took it that his end justified his means. Personally, as we have seen, he was brave enough, if, unlike Charles the boldly rash, he did not care to use *voies de fait* when craft would serve him to check, control, or extinguish his enemies. But the great nobles who in him found a harder master, were by no means willing to be checked and controlled. Before long the King's brother, the Duke of Berri, the quasi-independent Duke of Brittany, the Duke of Bourbon and other feudatory powers formed against him what they styled a League of Public Welfare, with Berri for its nominal head, but Charles of Charolais its most active spirit, his father appearing rather to consent to than desire a war.

The King and the dukes raised armies, Louis more rapid in his movements than the Confederates. Before their forces were united, Louis and Charles, trying to dodge past each other into Paris, met at Monthèry for a confused battle like that of Sheriff-muir, in which most of the fighters on either side ran away believing themselves beaten. Charles, who kept the field, after being wounded and nearly taken, claimed the honour of victory, but Louis gained the fruits of it by slipping into Paris, that no longer showed its old affection to Burgundy, letting itself be won by the artful professions with which this sly king could be lavish when anything was to be gained. Though both armies were swollen by reinforcements, the war soon fizzled out in skirmishes about Paris, such as that comic one described by De Comines. The princes had well-wishers within the walls, who one night sent out a stentorian page to bawl across the Seine a warning that they were to be attacked next day. So they stood to their arms on the morning of what turned out a very dark day, perhaps foggy, and further obscured by the smoke of a cannonade on each side. Reconnoitring towards the city, their scouts fell back with a report of having sighted a whole forest of lances in front. What could this be but the King sallying out to give battle? So all the warriors donned their full panoply, even the Dukes of Berri and Brittany, who, according to the chronicler, were not over-keen for fight. But when they advanced to meet that

enemy, his lances turned out to be nothing but a thicket of tall thistles, mistaken by the peering scouts for an army !

Louis declined to be drawn out to battle, and took to his favourite weapon of negotiation, very effective against those irresolute allies, not of one mind and distrustful of each other's intentions. Now, as was his way, the crafty tyrant did the last thing to be expected of him, by boldly coming into Charles' camp and placing himself in his hands for a conference. That frank and hot-hearted adversary took no advantage of this confidence in his generosity, but refused to trust himself in Paris for a return visit. Each of these old comrades knew his man.

The end of it was an arrangement by which the self-interested princes could be bought over to peace for the present. Berri was to get Normandy for an appanage, and the rest were served with other sops, Charles securing a concession he had much at heart. When Philip broke off his alliance with the English he had received in pledge for a loan to the French king certain towns on the Somme, Abbeville, Amiens, and St. Quentin, names too familiar to us of late years. The money not having been paid back for a generation, Burgundy had come to look on these towns as annexed for good ; and when Louis proposed to resume them, taken out of pawn, that made one of the contentions between the Duke and his son, Charles being strong against surrender of any part of his inheritance. Now Louis let him have his wish ; and on satisfactory terms he was well pleased to cut short this futile war, carrying off the Burgundian contingent to the urgent task of putting down that again contumacious city Liège, which, indeed, owed no duty to his family, but a member of it had been put in as prince-bishop by way of shoeing-horn to draw this state also under its authority.

By this time Philip, broken by infirmity, had laid aside the reins of government, caught up by his eager son. In 1467 he died of apoplexy at Bruges, Charles galloping over from Ghent just in time to receive his last blessing. He left also two or three dozen illegitimate children, when to be the " Bastard " of some prince made a quasi-title of honour. His body was afterwards transferred to Dijon, the hereditary capital, where he had

been little at home of late years ; but at Bruges he had a pompous funeral, amid general mourning, heartiest on the part of those who knew how they had now got a harder master. The old Duke's lavish display gave him a kind of popularity even among ex-rebels ; and except in fits of temper, he had shown himself *bon prince* as well as calculating usurper. Where he used whips, in the hands of his successor it was like to be scorpions, thought some, shaking considerate heads. Yet Charles won also a certain popular admiration, for it was a joke of his father's that their Flemish subjects applauded the heir rather than the lord in possession—" man never is but always to be blessed."

## IV

### A WRECKED KINGSHIP

THE great Duke of Marlborough is not the only Englishman who might confess to taking his ideas of history from Shakespeare ; but he or whoever hatched up the play of " Henry VI " cannot be recommended as a safe guide, where above all considerations national prejudices had to be flattered. We have now reached a period illustrated for us in " Quentin Durward " and " Anne of Geierstein " by Scott, who also is not altogether to be trusted for a fair picture. He has caught the character of Charles the Rash better than that of Louis XI, whom he throws into limelight in his squalid and superstitious old age, haunted by terrors of death and ghosts of his victims, a good many years after the actual date of the events figuring in the former romance.

Both these almost lifelong antagonists we see clearly drawn by two chroniclers brought up at the Burgundian court, Philip de Comines and Oliver de la Marche, the former of whom, taking a name from his Flemish birthplace, was familiar companion and counsellor first to Charles, then in turn to Louis. The latter has left us an appreciative character of this young master. The worst of it was a peevishness, restlessness, and quick temper, very natural to a spoiled child, which yet by good sense Charles learned to smother under a courteous manner when he pleased. He was excellent at all sorts of games and exercises, as fond of boating on the sea as of hunting by land, with a pretty taste for music and noted skill at chess. But, unlike some athletic youths, he learned his lessons diligently and with profit, even after getting beyond such congenial studies as the romances of chivalry. From history he picked up an aspiration, as son of a second Philip, to renown himself as another Alexander, a hero who



CHARLES THE BOLD CHARGING AT THE HEAD OF HIS TROOPS



figured much also in romance. He showed due respect for religion, and like his admired exemplar, Jacques de Lalaing, he eschewed the oaths that came too freely on other proud lips. Another rare trait was his temperance : he did not inflame a heady nature by wine. When thwarted, we shall see how he could play the ruthless tyrant ; and indeed the merits of his youth became much obfuscated by the exercise of arbitrary power. In some points what is said of him suggests the Kaiser Wilhelm of our time, especially as to a firm belief in himself ; but there appears one striking difference between a war-lord who was shy of risking his own precious skin, and a prince never happier than in the thick of peril.

A keen ambition of Charles, as of his father, in the latter's case somewhat diverted by prudence and by his crusading enthusiasm, was to crown their *de facto* kingship with a royal title. But for awkward gaps in the centre, the domains of Burgundy now reached round from the Alps to the Channel, taking in the richest provinces of Europe. Its dukes were stronger and wealthier than most Christian kings, so it was but reasonable that they should aim at higher rank. Had they been successful in their design of establishing upon the Rhine and the Rhone a buffer State between France and Germany, the result must have been to change the whole course of modern history, down to those Armageddon battles from which their territory is still shaking.

But the young heir soon found how uneasy may lie the head that wears even a ducal coronet. When from his father's funeral he went back to show himself off at Ghent, the magistrates received him becomingly, but the masses took advantage of a religious festival to demand redress of grievances and restoration of privileges. Charles, forcing his way through a threatening mob armed with pikes, lost his temper to the point of striking one man, and that had nearly cost him his life. It was all prudent attendants could do to get him safely up to a balcony from which he might address the crowded market-place ; then even here he was pushed aside by an insolent spokesman of the people calling on them to press their demands. Swallowing his

wrath, the Duke retired to spend a miserable night. He had but an ornamental escort, and had given hostages to disorder by bringing with him, not only a good part of his father's paraphernalia of jewels and gold to cut a dash in this rich city, but also his own greatest treasure, Mary, his one child. There was nothing for it but to grant the concessions pressed upon him, and slink out of the tumult with such a bitter pill undigested.

The worst of it was that other cities were infected by the example of Ghent, most of them soon brought to reason ; but the chronically insurgent men of Liége boldly defied Charles after putting to flight his puppet their prince-bishop. It sent out 30,000 men to encounter his prancing army ; and for a moment the result was in doubt, but the townsmen found themselves driven back behind their walls and saw best to accept humiliating terms of surrender, after being assured against fire and pillage. The haughty Duke refused to enter by one of the gates, but had the moat filled up and a wide breach made in the wall ; then he contented himself with some half-dozen executions, besides destroying the city fortifications, carrying off its artillery, abrogating its privileges, and exacting from it a fine of 120,000 florins.

This stubborn city, however, would still give him a good deal of trouble, from time to time stirred up by secret emissaries of Louis, diligently spinning a web of intrigues to entangle every step of his rival. The wily king was also interfering to keep England in commotion, giving chary help to Margaret of Anjou's invasion, whereas Charles now sided with the dominant Yorkists, and presently became brother-in-law to Edward IV. Louis had his hands full of other concerns, for again the chief princes of France were leaguings against him ; but of all those enemies he most feared, and took most pains to cajole, his vassal of Burgundy, master of what was now the best army in Europe. It was not left so by Philip, when for a generation his soldiers had hardly had to face any foe but citizen militia, and all that play and pageantry of tournaments, not to speak of the enervating luxury of his court, proved to have ill steeled efficient soldiers for his son's first battles. But Charles had set himself to reform his showy troops, tightening the reins of discipline, equipping



them with the best artillery and munitions, and enlisting foreign soldiers of fortune, such as a brigade of English archers to set off against Louis' Scottish bodyguard; latterly, a good part of his troops were Italian mercenaries.

Louis was eager to make a truce with the most powerful of his enemies, that should leave him free to turn his forces upon Brittany, since these partners in opposition did not co-operate harmoniously. In the autumn of 1468, Charles lying on the Somme, his army not yet at full strength, the King's captains pressed him to bring on a battle; but Louis chose rather to try one of his boldest tricks, hoping to talk over the impetuous Duke, presumably out of humour with his sundered and inactive allies. The King demanded and received a safe-conduct, with which he again ventured into the den of a lion on whose chivalric generosity he relied not to take advantage of such a show of confidence. With a small retinue he visited Charles at Peronne, a strong fortress that boasted the title of *Pucelle* as never taken, till it lost that distinction to the Duke of Wellington after Waterloo. But for once the royal trickster's intrigues, or his agents, served him ill. He had again been inciting Liège to revolt, and either overlooked this, or his counter-orders miscarried, for, when the Duke had received his suzerain with all due respect, news came of the Liégeois having risen afresh against their bishop, whom they were even said to have killed, the latter a false report adopted by Scott as true for the sake of romantic effect. As a matter of fact, the bishop had again been turned out; but it was not till some years later that he was murdered by that picturesque ruffian De la Marek, "The Boar of the Ardennes," as related in "Quentin Durward."

From the narratives of De Comines and De la Marche, who were present, Scott has drawn at length the moving scene of the Duke's fury on receiving this news, when the arch-plotter was now in his power. The King, at first lodged in the town, on the plea that there he saw himself neighboured by scowling ill-wishers, had at his own request been quartered in the castle, below a gloomy tower, ill-famed for the murder of one of his ancestors. Here, to his dismay he found the gates guarded,

himself and his suite of some dozen persons imprisoned, and soon learned how his host was raging against him like a madman. For two or three days he felt his life or liberty in peril, all he could do being to distribute what money he had among the Duke's servants, on whom he would not spare promises and flatteries. It was perhaps now that he won over De Comines to his service ; at all events this intimate attendant of Charles seems to have done what he could for the imperilled guest.

The Duke's counsellors also did their best to calm his wrath, which a little abated when further tidings showed how the Liège outbreak had been exaggerated. After long and anxious deliberation, it was resolved to let the King go on the humiliating condition that, after signing a treaty to settle all contentions between them in favour of Burgundy and its allies, he would accompany his vassal for the chastisement of the city, of whose insolence he was secret fomentor. Yet again, before granting his sovereign an interview, Charles spent a troubled night, walking up and down, throwing himself full dressed on his bed, now and then getting up to mutter wrathful threats in the hearing of his chamberlain, De Comines, who towards morning was able to pacify him somewhat. But when the irate Duke came to the illustrious prisoner's presence, his voice trembled, and even there he was like to break out into fresh rage. "His behaviour towards the King was humble and lowly, but his countenance furious, and his language sharp, for he asked him in few words whether he would observe the treaty concluded." Oliver de la Marche's account presents Louis too as ill at ease. "Am I not safe, my brother, in your house and your country ?" he asked in the tone of Agag.—"Yes, sire," replied the Duke, but in no hearty accents, "and so safe that if I saw a bolt shot at you, I would place myself in front as your shield." Judging the bitterness of death thus passed, the King readily offered to do all required of him. From his baggage was produced a reputed fragment of the true Cross, said to be an heirloom from Charlemagne ; and on this precious relic that had special power to bind his slippery conscience, Louis swore to observe the treaty now signed by him. The news quickly spread to the town, that for three days had

lain hushed under the awe of an impending tragedy ; but now the churches rang peals of joy, calling the people together to thank heaven for a reconciliation between their lord and his overlord.

Without delay these potentates set out together on the expedition against Liège, Louis dissembling what chagrin he must have felt in this awkward comradeship. The bulk of their force was Burgundian, the King having been able to call up only a troop of his men-at-arms, besides a few score of his Scottish archers. Scott arms Quentin Durward with an arquebus ; but in this campaign Comines shows them shooting arrows, with which, he slyly hints perhaps on their own information, they did more hurt to the Burgundians than to the enemy. The word archer, however, seems now tending in France to mean a foot-soldier in distinction from the mounted *gensdarmes*, both of these services destined in turn to be degraded into officers of police, as our village constableness has come down in the world from the proud title of Constable of France, a commander who more than once at this period seemed like to assume the dictatorship of those ancient Mayors of the Palace. Our novelist falls into a more serious mistake in taking the Liège people as of German speech, whereas this is the Walloon country whose patois is related to French as Flemish to German.

Liège could offer poor resistance, the fortifications having been mainly demolished after its last submission. Yet the citizen army sallied out for a hot fight ; and by a night surprise both princes had nearly been captured in their suburban lodgings. The Duke was for holding the King back as a mere spectator, but when the fumes of fighting seemed to over-excite that fiery leader it was noted how Louis coolly took command in right royal style. The final assault was hardly opposed, the people flying out across the Meuse as the soldiers poured in from the other side. This time the obstinate city was given up to fire and pillage. The Duke's first care was to make a push for the cathedral, both to return thanks and to save its rich store of relics, as he did after killing one or two plunderers with his own hand. The other churches were sacked as well as the houses, and

many of the inhabitants venturing to remain were slain, while the fugitives starved by hundreds among the hills and forests where in cold winter weather they found themselves hunted down like wild beasts. The Burgundians, also hard up for provisions, after a few days fell back to Brussels, leaving a detachment to complete their devastation by burning the empty houses.

Till the last moment the Duke had kept a watchful eye upon Louis, suspicious that he might go over to head the men of Liége ; but now the King professed joy in that punishment of offences instigated by himself, and sought to tickle Charles into good humour for leave to part company. After exacting from him further oaths to observe their treaty, Charles let him go, so glad to be his own man again that on crossing the French border, his page saw him dismount to kiss the ground in thankfulness. Arrived at home the King showed such displeasure towards his hitherto favourite counsellor, Cardinal Balue, for having ill-advised the unfortunate visit to Peronne, that the cardinal judged wise to make secret overtures to Burgundy. Their treachery being discovered, he and a confederate prelate were punished by being shut up for years in iron cages so narrow that they could neither stand nor lie in them, a protracted torture vaguely said to have been of Balue's own invention, as the Regent Morton was beheaded by the " Maiden " he had introduced into Scotland, and as fabling history killed Dr. Guillotin by the apparatus that has ensanguined his name.

Of course that royal deceiver would before long be wriggling out of his sworn promises and undertakings ; but for a time Charles was free to tour through his Low Country dominions, hearing complaints and administering justice in an arbitrary manner that apparently erred on the right side of backing the poor and humble against his mightier subjects. Among the many projects that distracted his too-busy brain, now took firmer shape that of claiming a crown, an ambition which presently rose higher, for nothing would satisfy him but being chosen King of the Romans, that is, recognized heir to the Emperor Frederick, who for a generation past had been the shame of Germany by his do-nothingness. With an active prince as the



PONT DES ARCHES, LIEGE



official head of Christendom, there might yet be some hope for that glorious Crusade, stuck in the mud for want of some Hercules to set it going. As a step to his designs, Charles now made a bargain, which in the end was unforeseen to be his undoing. Sigismund, Duke of Austria, was harassed in his Alsatian territory by those rude neighbours, the Swiss; then wanting means or spirit to stand up for himself here, he offered to pawn it to the rich and bellicose lord of the Low Countries. The Duke jumped at a proposal enabling him cheaply to span a gap in the long stretch of his dominions, while giving him further footing among the princes of the Empire; and he sent off a small army to take possession of a pledge not likely to be redeemed by that impetuous lord. Not long afterwards he filled up another blot in his chequer by taking over the duchy of Gueldres under an arrangement with its dying duke, whose unnatural son by imprisoning his father could be held unworthy to succeed him.

Meanwhile Louis watched for any chance to play off his enemies one against another. He kept peace for a time with the Duke of Brittany, and had what seemed a heartier reconciliation with his brother, the Duke of Berri, to whom the Peronne treaty had promised Champagne as an appanage instead of Normandy. On consideration, however, he judged it bad policy to set up a possible enemy so close to a probable one, Charles of Burgundy, so he offered Charles of Berri Guienne; and his brother was content with an exchange that kept him far sundered from his old ally. No serious objection was raised to this arrangement; but soon the Duke of Burgundy had hot complaint to make of the King's meddling in English concerns. Warwick, our "king-maker," fallen out with Edward IV, took refuge in Normandy, coming to terms with his old adversary, Margaret of Anjou, and getting welcome and countenance from Louis. With the King's connivance, if nothing more, he fitted out a few vessels in the Seine, and while awaiting an opportunity to invade England, used them in piratical attacks on Flemish commerce. Charles's stronger fleet retaliated by blockading the Norman coast; but, having gathered a small force, Warwick slipped through to land at Dartmouth and blow up the embers of the Lancastrian cause

into a sudden blaze that drove Edward from his throne. The imbecile Henry brought out from the Tower to be restored to puppet kingship, Edward took refuge in the Netherlands, received there by his brother-in-law with a show of coldness, since Charles feared to lose the English wool trade, a great part of which came through Calais, now in the hands of the Lancastrians.

Allied with England against Burgundy, for the moment Louis' star seemed to be in the ascendant. An assembly of notables was got to declare the Treaty of Peronne not binding, as obtained under constraint. Charles was summoned before the Parliament of Paris to answer for himself. That, of course, made a *brutum fulmen*; but the King's lieutenants attacked him on the Somme where, taken by surprise and his army dispersed, he lost ground. His secret allies in France were inactive; some of his trusted servants now deserted from such an exacting and arrogant master, among them one of his own bastard brothers; other things began to go wrong for him. He soon, however, gathered force enough to make Louis cautious as to risking a battle; and he himself for once showed prudence in signing one of the many truces that broke up this long intermittent war between king and vassal.

Then the scale again tipped in favour of Charles. With secret support from him, Edward had landed in England to work another rapid revolution. He was welcomed in London, most warmly by his many creditors; Henry was put back into the Tower, there to be done to death; Warwick fell at Barnet, Margaret, arriving too late to join him, was captured at Tewkesbury, and her son butchered by the exulting Yorkists. Once more England threw her weight against Louis. His great peers again were leaguering together for their own good. His two chief generals were at loggerheads. His people groaned under a heavy burden of taxes. His brother, now Duke of Guienne, proposed to marry the heiress of Burgundy, and thus proclaim himself head of the opposition; but he died so opportunely that the King was suspected of having got him poisoned. Hardly any personage of that treacherous period died in his bed without some such suspicion.

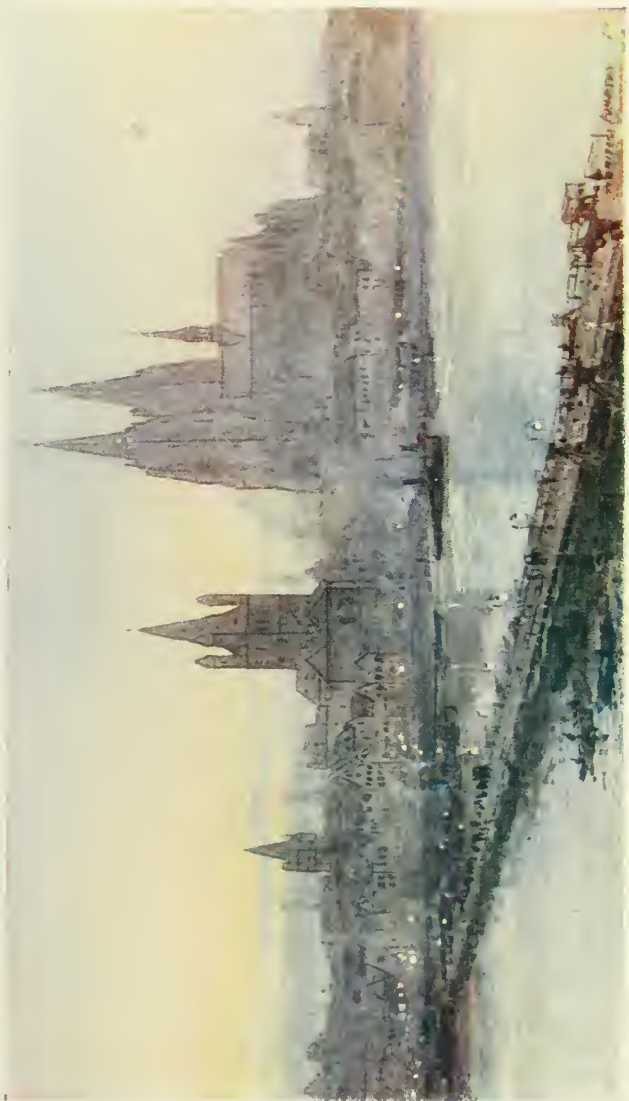


Charles, already repenting of the truce he had agreed to in a turn of discouragement, was driven to fury by news of this prince's death, which he set down to foul play. He recklessly broke the truce to carry fire and sword across the Somme. Nesle was stormed and sacked with such ferocity that the very church swam in blood. Having thus earned a new by-name as "Charles the Terrible," he next marched on Beauvais, which, ill-garrisoned as it was, he expected to fall an easy prize, and did not take the trouble to invest it before assaulting the walls from one side of its river. But the inhabitants, aware of their neighbour's cruel fate, defended themselves desperately. Women and children did their part, not only gathering the Burgundians' missiles to shoot back, but pouring down on the stormers boiling oil, quicklime, hot ashes, and the like. The legendary heroine of this siege was a local Joan of Arc named Jeanne Hachette. The gallantry of the townsfolk roused admiration in Paris; reinforcements and supplies were hurried to their aid; and after more than three weeks' costly effort, Charles turned off from Beauvais as not worth further losses. Ravaging and destroying on his march, harassed by the King's forces that yet would not be brought to a pitched battle, he advanced as far as Rouen, where he had offered to meet the Duke of Brittany's army. There was no sign of its coming, so, crippled by famine and sickness in the camp, he fell back into his own territories, having done no good to himself, but much cruel mischief to the people he claimed as his subjects.

Disgusted with the results of this French campaign, he next turned his activities towards Germany, seeking to bring to a head his negotiations with the Emperor for a kingly title. The price he offered was the marriage of his daughter to the Emperor's son, Maximilian, though she had recently been promised to Nicholas, Duke of Calabria, René of Anjou's grandson. This young prince soon dying suddenly, Louis as usual was suspected as a poisoner, though to be sure it seemed more the interest of Charles to get rid of an inconvenient suitor. He proposed to meet the Emperor at Metz; but, as a free Imperial city, it refused to open its gates to him. The conference came off at Treves,

amid a brilliant concourse of princes and nobles, where the Burgundians so much outshone the Germans as not to invite their goodwill. The Duke's pretensions also proved exorbitant. He insisted on being made at once Vicar-General—that is, deputy Emperor—and on being elected King of the Romans, Maximilian to have only a reversion of these dignities. He proposed to delay the wedding, as if his daughter's hand might still serve him to bait some other hook. He demanded for his own the four bishoprics, Liége, Utrecht, Tournai, and Cambrai, insulated in his Netherlands territory as Imperial fiefs. The flabby Kaiser felt he was being asked to pay too dear in their deal; and of course its wheels were clogged by the machinations of Louis. It appears that the day for the coronation had been fixed, when Frederick, shrinking from a face to face refusal, gave his fiery suitor the slip by clandestinely leaving Treves and making off down the Rhine to Cologne. His state had cut but a modest figure beside his would-be successor's, who kept about him a dozen pages, sixteen squires, eighteen heraldic officers, ten physicians and surgeons, with a due proportion of chaplains and choristers, and so many cooks, valets, grooms, and other menials that few cities could lodge them all at once, while on the march they filled hundreds of tents grouped round the Duke's magnificent pavilion.

That slip between the crown and the head only whetted Charles's desire to make himself a power in Germany. A distant relative of his, Robert of Bavaria, had been chosen archbishop of Cologne, but rejected by the city and chapter after trial; and their dispute now came to be submitted to the Emperor. Charles, stung by his own disappointment, plunged into what was small business of his, as champion of his kinsman, right or wrong. Thus he rashly risked a quarrel with the Empire, when his truce with Louis was near expiration. And a storm was brewing against him from the mountains of Switzerland. Once Burgundy had there been looked to as a protector against Austria; now Louis, making advances to the Swiss among whom he found sturdy recruits for his army, did not fail in exciting their suspicion of a neighbour who evidently meant to be master all along the Rhine and might prove a more formidable oppressor than the



COLOGNE



House of Hapsburg, whose yoke they had shaken off under the leadership of patriots like that legendary William Tell. The artful King sought to reconcile them with Sigismund of Austria, and offered to help in paying back the loan for which Charles held part of Alsace in pledge.

There opened the rift that was to spread through his proud estate. As Governor in Alsace, he had installed Peter von Hagenbach, a man of the worst character, who by his monstrous cruelties and orgies of vice soon roused the hatred of high and low, while his wilful master would not listen to complaints. But a day of doom came for this petty tyrant. On Easter Sunday, 1474, his unpaid German mercenaries mutinied at Breisach, to join the infuriated townsfolk in seizing Hagenbach and delivering him to the judgment of the local *Vehmgericht*, an ancient tribunal not yet conducted with the melodramatic mystery given it in "Anne of Geierstein." Sentenced to death, after being put to the torture and degraded from knighthood, he was forthwith executed by torchlight, threatening the Duke's vengeance. Charles, indeed, was wroth over this insult to his authority; but he had his hands so full of other concerns that he could only commission his dead favourite's brother to carry out ravaging reprisals in Alsace, which had the effect of still further exciting against him its Swiss neighbours.

Louis also was in anxious straits, his kingdom undermined by treason and surrounded by enemies. England, Brittany, Aragon, and Burgundy were now allying for a joint attack upon him. But they were divided in counsels and in interests; he knew his own mind and could tortuously play off one against another. When his truce with Charles came to expire, it might seem good policy to engage this most immediate enemy before his allies could take the field. Comines, however, now a trusted counsellor of the French King, from his knowledge of that former master's character, advised him to give Charles rope enough and he would run his head into a noose. So Louis renewed the truce, feigning not to observe the designs against him, while he took his own means to foil them. The Swiss being still divided in sentiment between their Austrian and Burgundian neighbours, the King

laboured to reconcile them to Austria, and advanced its impoverished Duke the money to redeem the mortgage on Alsace. When there was anything to be got by it no prince could be more liberal than Louis, whose short fustian coat and plain black hat with a leaden image stuck in it made a jest for his contemporaries.

The rash Duke, in fact, was now picking a quarrel with the German Empire. On the score of that dispute about the See of Cologne, he led off his formidable army of 60,000 men with its great train of artillery to invade the archiepiscopal state, where it was soon brought to a stand before the small but strongly fortified town of Neuss. Stoutly defended by the new bishop, it received reinforcements and supplies; then fierce assaults failing, though headed by gallant English knights, there was nothing for it but a blockading siege. Neuss proved too hard a nut to crack; the siege lasted nearly a year, costing some quarter of the assailants, among whom broke out not only the sickness of camps, but hot quarrels between soldiers of different nations. While thus tied up, Charles had the chagrin to hear how ten thousand of his troops had been defeated by the Swiss mountaineers, roused against him by the cruelties of his lieutenants on their border, as well as by the diplomacy of Louis. All Germany also had been so stirred by his inroad across the Rhine that the old Emperor was provoked into gathering an army of over 100,000, the largest seen in Christendom for long, with which he advanced to the relief of Neuss. But the wheels of this host also drove heavily in discords; and Frederick was always of a cautious humour, shown in his reply to Louis' proposals of alliance, dismissed by him with the fable about selling a bear's skin before killing it. Louis too could deal in cryptic riddles, for about the same time he sent the King of England a sarcastic present of a wolf, a boar, and a donkey, interpreted as meant to represent respectively Edward himself, Charles of Burgundy, and the Duke of Brittany. At Neuss prudence overruled valour. The two armies confronting one another without serious encounter, their leaders came to terms that enabled Charles to retreat with an appearance of saving his face.

It was high time for him to be in another quarter of his wide

field of action. Expecting to have overrun Cologne with ease, he had counted on delay of Edward's preparations through his dependence on Parliament for supplies. But a war with France being always popular, our King's Parliament lost little time in greasing for him the wheels of action; and by the summer of 1475 he was ready to pass the Channel in some hundreds of flat-bottomed boats sent over from the Netherlands. The weak French navy could do little to hinder the crossing of a finer army than had won Crécy and Agincourt. Besides fifteen thousand archers, it numbered fifteen hundred men-at-arms, who with their squires and other attendants would amount to nearly ten thousand more.

Louis, not taken by surprise, assembled his forces to meet this invasion, and had anticipated it by laying waste the Somme country so as to starve out the English on their advance from Calais. Ready to fight if it came to that, as usual he prepared to rely on cunning. When our Garter King-of-Arms brought to his camp Edward's formal declaration of war, along with thirty ells of crimson velvet he gave the herald three hundred crowns by way of largesse, with a promise of a thousand more if he should have to officiate at a treaty of peace; and by this go-between he sent flattering messages to some of the chief English lords. Louis himself was too economical to have a herald about him, but a servant, rather imperfectly rigged up to play the part, could be schooled by Comines to offer a meeting for negotiation, and at the same time to sound the lords with whom it was hoped to come to a privy understanding. If we are to believe Comines, more than one of the noblest English names then stooped to accepting bribes from the French King, one at least of them having been in the pay of Burgundy through the hands of that turncoat minister. To Edward himself, Louis sent such welcome presents as three hundred carts loaded with the best wines of France.

These overtures did not fall upon stony ground. Already the English were out of humour with the ally expected to join them at the head of his renowned army. But Charles, hurrying back from the futile siege of Neuss, came to Calais alone, and with proposals quite unsatisfactory to his royal brother-in-law. His

plan of campaign was that the English should attack Louis from the sea, he himself from the other side of France, to meet at Rheims where Edward might be crowned after victory. The two potentates parted in hot quarrel ; and as the English advanced from Calais they were disgusted to learn themselves misled by broken promises. St. Pol, the Constable of France, playing fast and loose with both parties for his own hand, whereby he soon lost his head, was to have opened to them the fortresses he held on the Somme ; but he did no such thing ; and the passages of the river were found strongly guarded by the French. Worst of all for English stomachs, the army ran short of victuals, a sore trial to certain pury citizens and Members of Parliament whom their King brought in his train, to be quickly sickened of the hardships of camp life. It was not difficult then to open negotiations. Richard Crookback headed a party of his brother's counsellors still hot for fighting ; but a majority agreed on terms that to some of the French seemed too good to be true. Preliminaries were entered upon by deputies from Louis, ensconced in Amiens, and from Edward's camp pitched a little way outside the city ; then all appeared so promising for peace that the hungry John Bulls let themselves be entertained by their enemies. Comines shows how well his foxy master knew the way to English hearts :

“ He had caused to be set at the entry of the town gate two long tables, on each side of the street one, furnished with all kinds of delicate meats that provoke drink, and with the best wines that might be gotten, and men to wait upon them : of water there was no mention. At each of these tables he had placed five or six great fat gentlemen of good houses, thereby the better to content those that desired to drink. . . . After they were within the town, what house soever they entered into they paid nothing. Further, nine or ten taverns were well furnished at the king's charge of all things necessary, whither they went to eat and drink and called for what they would, but the king defrayed all, and this cheer lasted three or four days.”

So freely did our Nymys and Bardolphs accept his invitation, that Comines had to report with some alarm how there were nine



thousand armed English soldiers at once inside the city, the gate guard not venturing to refuse entrance to such willing guests. By the King's order, he asked some of the English captains to abate this conviviality ; but " for one they put forth of the town, twenty came in." His concern disappeared, however, after looking into a tavern where a hundred and eleven gratis customers had been served before nine o'clock. " The house was full ; some sang, some slept, and some were drunk, which when I saw, I perceived no damage to be of such men, and sent word thereof to the king."

The formal interview between the monarchs took place at Pecquigny, on a bridge barred by a grating through which they could exchange courteous salutations, after the manner of that treacherous time. Here, Edward on a missal book, Louis on the relic that served him for great oaths, they swore to a truce of seven years, upon terms already settled by their ministers. Their allies on each side were to have the option of joining in this suspension of arms, the distant day, and even hour, of its expiry being fixed, and trustees or umpires appointed by both parties to maintain its due observance. Edward was to retire from France with payment of 65,000 crowns down, and an annuity of 50,000 crowns during the lifetime of both. Louis, moreover, was to pay 50,000 crowns as ransom of Margaret of Anjou, now prisoner in the Tower. The Dauphin, as yet a small child, was betrothed to Edward's daughter, whom Louis would endow with 60,000 crowns a year when they were old enough for a marriage, the expense of which he also took upon himself. These terms, which Henry V might not have counted glorious, seemed humiliating enough for the French, while the English took them as a paying of tribute, and fed their pride on the fact that Edward had not once addressed his rival as King of France. Louis, too practical to stick on this punctilio, was well pleased to get rid of such an enemy at any cost to pride or pocket ; and celebrated the agreement by entertainments and rich presents to the chief English lords, even sullen Richard not disdaining to profit by his politic munificence. Then Edward took his army home, leaving that resentful brother-in-law of his to make a truce for himself, if he chose.

For once Charles was prudent enough to follow his example. In treating for a truce, he bargained with Louis to give up to his vengeance the Constable St. Pol, in consideration of not being hindered in the conquest of Lorraine he had now most at heart. Both dealers well aware how each might be trying to deceive the other, it is notable with what solemn forms they professed to bind their consciences :

“ We swear on the word of a prince, by the faith and oath of our body, by God our Creator, on the divine faith and law given us in holy baptism, on the sacred canon of the mass, on the sacred gospels, on the true and precious cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, which canon, gospels, and relic we have touched with our hands, to hold, keep, observe, accomplish, and entertain all the matters set forth below without seeking any means, pretence, or excuse to make any change in them. We bind ourselves by the pledge of all and every one of our possessions, on our honour, under pain of being perpetually disgraced and reviled in all places. Also, we promise and swear by the same oaths never to solicit from our holy father the Pope, from any council, legate, penitencier, archbishop, bishop, or other prelate, a dispensation, absolution, or relaxation from the said matters, without the king's express consent.”

St. Pol, holding the border district, long a bone of contention between these potentates, had been shiftily playing false to them both. Seeing himself now at the end of his doublings, he chose to trust the generosity of Charles, as his kinsman and youthful friend. But when he took refuge at Mons, he was given over to the French, to be put in the Bastille, tried and beheaded. Though he well deserved his fate, the surrender of him was judged less to the Duke of Burgundy's honour than to his profit in thus gaining St. Quentin and other towns on the Somme.

Louis behind his back being tied up for a time by fresh oaths, Charles betook himself to the conquest of Lorraine, and made a triumphal entry into Nancy, which he announced was to be the seat of the royal crown that seemed within his grasp. This corner, with the minor adjacent Duchy of Bar, would make a keystone for the wide arch of his domains, now stretched south-

wards in his ambitious imagination. He believed that he could at any time lay hands on Savoy, held by its Duchess-Regent, Louis' sister, for her young son. Old René of Anjou had promised to leave him the heirship of Provence. He was in close alliance with the Duke of Milan beyond the Alps, and perhaps had some vague scheme of pushing over into Italy. It was his humour now to take himself not so much for an Alexander as for a modern Hannibal, unaware how attempts upon the Alps were to be his undoing. His wrath was turned against those presumptuous Switzers, who, not content with lending a hand to Alsatian rebels, had the insolence to withstand in their Alpine passes the Italian mercenaries he was numerously recruiting. It suited Louis to keep the Swiss quiet for the moment ; but when he saw the war cloud sure to burst, he did not spare them encouragement and secret subsidies.

In vain the States of Flanders remonstrated with their lord against a new enterprise that called for heavy taxation. He haughtily replied that in future, instead of requests he would make known to them his will. Cautious counsellors also addressed a deaf ear. The infatuated Duke entered Switzerland with 40,000 men and the finest train of artillery ever brought together. Princes and nobles shone in his gallant array, tailing off into a long line of baggage and a jackal host of camp followers. So secure was he of victory that he brought into the field the treasures and ornaments of his court, his jewels, his plate, the costly furniture and priceless relics of his chapel, all to impress a people who had not as much gold and silver among them as was displayed on horse trappings of these invaders. Strange that a leader so often baffled in martial enterprises should have retained such blind confidence in his dazzling star !

But it was to be the old story of David and Goliath. Macaulay's schoolboy knows, if only from " Anne of Geierstein," how at Granson, near the Lake of Neufchatel, this magnificent host, rashly entangled in broken ground, encountered half its number of hastily gathered and rudely armed mountaineers. In sight of the foe they knelt in prayer, to the derision of the professional soldiery, who did not laugh when their charges failed

to break compact masses bristling with pikes and halberts ; then from the heights above, another swarm of peasants poured down upon the Burgundian camp, to the blood-curdling screech of two gigantic horns known as the " Bull " of Uri and the " Cow " of Unterwalden. Panic seized the Italians and spread through all the army so rapidly that not a thousand fell in what became a hopeless rout. Charles made desperate efforts to rally the fugitives, but was fain to spur off with them, not drawing rein till he reached the Jura, nearly twenty miles from that shameful field. The victors could at ease plunder his gorgeous camp, filled with treasures few of them were able to appreciate. Gems of price came to be thrown away as worthless, or sold for a trifle ; rich fabrics were torn or trodden underfoot ; gold and silver plate was taken for copper or tin, where coins could be shared out by hatfuls. One boor who picked up the Duke's jewelled hat, worth a fortune, would rather have had any rusty suit of armour. And what the Swiss valued highest among their booty was hundreds of cannon, tons of powder, and an arsenal of weapons, besides many wagons loaded with provisions and fodder.

King Louis was delighted over this discomfiture, which drove his rival almost mad. For a fortnight Charles kept himself shut up, letting his beard grow and drinking heavily, as had not hitherto been his failing. Roused from this fit of dejection, he set about gathering his scattered forces, and after two or three months had nearly as large an army on the Lake of Geneva. Thence, he advanced upon Berne, the head of the hostile confederacy ; and at Morat met the Swiss army, swollen as well as flushed by success, and now strengthened by cavalry as by the captured artillery. Again the Burgundian warriors were routed, this time after a hotter struggle and tenfold slaughter, for the confederates, exasperated by Charles's cruelty to prisoners, gave little quarter, least to the hated Italians, driven into a marshy lake to stain it with their blood or be drowned in their heavy harness.

These signal reverses had the worst effect on Charles's temper, always harsh, but hitherto not senselessly cruel. The Duchess of Savoy had shown him all kindness in his misfortune, yet,



THE CAMP AND TREASURE OF CHARLES THE BOLD IN THE HANDS OF THE SWISS



suspecting her of being in league with her brother, he sent Oliver de la Marche to abduct the family, and was furious against that faithful chamberlain because in the darkness the young heir had contrived to slip off. The Duke's servants were afraid to come near him in the Saul-like moods to which he gave way. His soldiers had ceased to trust him. The allies of his prosperity now dropped away. Both his Burgundian and his Flemish subjects refused to be further taxed for his still cherished ambition. All he could do in the last months of his life was to lead a few thousand men into Lorraine, which he must now contest with René, its legitimate heir.

This dispossessed young Duke had fought gallantly among the Swiss at Morat, and now got means to recover Nancy, besieged by Charles at the end of 1476, in hard winter weather that soon cost him half his force by sickness and desertion. On Christmas Day hundreds were frozen to death or frost-bitten. Charles would listen to no counsels of prudence such as few durst offer him. He sent to the gallows some gentlemen caught trying to reinforce the garrison, and when his favourite general, Campo Basso, remonstrated on such cruelty as against the laws of war, the Duke struck him on the face; then it is said that this artful Italian hurried on the execution to prevent one of the victims obtaining an interview with Charles to reveal his own intended treachery. In reprisal, the garrison hanged more than a hundred Burgundian prisoners in sight of their starving comrades, whose murmurs the insensate Duke punished with the same ignominious death.

The city itself was at the last extremity of famine when René advanced to its relief with a force raised in Germany and Switzerland by the general hatred into which had now passed their dread of Charles. He, scorning to retreat before a boy, after a costly failure to storm the walls, drew out a heart-chilled army for his last battle, fought beside Nancy in a snowstorm. Campo Basso here avenged that recent affront by going over to the enemy: for some time he seems to have meditated treachery, as to which Louis had once given his master a warning, but even when telling the truth this King could hardly expect to be

believed. Charles himself raged like a lion amid what soon became a slaughterous flight. For two or three days his own fate remained unknown till a page who had seen him fall guided the searchers to a pond or ditch, where, frozen into its edge lay a group of bodies, stripped and gnawed at by wolves. By certain marks upon it, known to his household, one of these could still be identified as the dead lord of half a dozen duchies, who had come so near changing the map of Europe by setting up a new kingdom.

To his fallen foe, Duke René gave honourable burial at Nancy ; but so great was the glamour of a name embalmed in so many fears and curses that for years his subjects were slow to believe him dead : in a simpler age his memory might have been ranked with heroes like Arthur, and Frederick Barbarossa, looked on by popular superstition as living in enchanted seclusion, one day to return to earth for some hour of need. Dying at the age of forty-three, he left as heir his young daughter Mary, in much the same parlous position as that of Jacqueline three-quarters of a century earlier, whose inheritance had been absorbed by his house. Perhaps his last despairing thought had been that of James V of Scotland's deathbed : " It came with a lass and it will go with a lass ! "



## V

### PEN AND SWORD COMBATS

LOUIS XI, eagerly awaiting news from Nancy, gave thanks to all his saints for the fall of that dreaded rival, which he at once turned to profit. He seized upon Burgundy as a Salic fief, ignoring the rights of a male heir, the Count de Nevers, grandson of John the Fearless ; and after some recalcitrancy, this province let itself be incorporated into his kingdom. On the death of old King René, he became heir to Provence ; then he paved the way for an arrangement by which Brittany also would be drawn into the hands of his successors. Thus in his miserable old age, haunted by dread, suspicion, perhaps remorse, he saw prosper his lifelong intrigues to unite and consolidate France under the crown. He had at once, after the Duke's death, laid hands on the towns of the Somme so long in dispute between them, as well as others of Artois and Picardy while he was about it ; and he would fain have grabbed at the Flemish territory beyond. Here Mary of Burgundy, though she had lost the land that gave her father's proudest title, was still the richest heiress in Europe through lordship over the industrious Low Countries, now best known under the general name of Flanders, as our three United Kingdoms are England for the Continent.

We have seen how this heiress had already been wooed by and half betrothed to as many suitors as Penelope's, her hand being a bait which Charles dangled before first one and then another prince he would catch in his political schemes. The orphan girl got the news of his death at Ghent, where she made one of few mourners : funeral services in the churches were ill-attended, the citizens being ready rather to ring joy-bells over the fall of their exacting tyrant, and they soon showed a dis-

position to take advantage of his helpless daughter. It was clear that, as in the case of Jacqueline, the sooner she got a husband as protector the better. Her own wishes turned towards the Emperor's son, Maximilian, to whom she had been most nearly pledged in the bargain for her father's kingship. The Flemish burghers, for their part, now that they saw a chance of securing fuller liberty, had no good mind to put themselves under any powerful lord, favouring rather some local noble, such as the Duke of Cleves' son, whose authority could be more effectually limited. The most pressing of the wooers, on behalf of his son, was King Louis, an awkward feature in this suit being that the proposed bridegroom, only eight years old, had been solemnly contracted by treaty to the King of England's daughter. Edward's brother, the ill-fated Duke of Clarence, was also in the field of fortune-hunters; and the English Queen, Elizabeth Woodville, was understood to have an eye on such a prize for her brother, Lord Rivers.

Louis, then, who could not lightly afford to offend England, had to move in the matter with congenial slyness, and made his proposals through Olivier le Dain, the barber-surgeon favourite whom he had decorated with an ill-fitting title. The young Duchess and her counsellors naturally resented his sounding them on such a subject by so mean a minion, whom she declined to receive. The Flemings could see for themselves how this treacherous King, while he professed nothing but kindness to his "beloved god-daughter," went on seizing frontier towns, and cruelly ravaging the edge of her territory. As a second string to his bow, he was secretly inviting Edward to join him in a conquest and division of the Netherlands; but the Yorkist King, grown fat and slack in quieter days, was not now inclined to martial enterprises.

Another of the French King's intrigues was directed to stirring up mutiny among the people of Ghent; and thereby he overreached himself. The only personages of importance there understood to be in favour of the French marriage, were the Chancellor Hugonet and the late Duke's lieutenant, D'Imbercourt, both highly unpopular as agents of his harsh masterfulness,

though in fact they had tried their best to restrain it. The mob rose upon those unfortunate noblemen, dragged them from a cloister where they had concealed themselves, and appointed partial judges, by whom they were tortured and condemned to death. In vain the young Duchess hurried to the market-place, begging with tears for the lives of her father's faithful servants. After seeing them beheaded before her eyes, she was carried back fainting to the palace, in which she now found herself a prisoner rather than a ruler.

Meanwhile, a French invasion of Hainault was hotly resisted ; the cruelties of Louis' troops raised indignant horror, and the taste for bloodshed quickened by his sedition-mongering in Ghent and elsewhere was turned against himself. The Flemings opposed him with an army that fared ill, the old jealousies of Ghent and Bruges breaking out in its ranks, and its leader falling in battle, who was no other than that titular Duke of Gueldres deposed by Charles for unfilial violence to his own father. This disreputable lord had even been favoured by some of her subjects as a fit husband for Mary ; but now, beaten in the field, they were disposed to accept as the least of evils deliverance and protection from the Empire. Maximilian was invited to Ghent, a lad of eighteen, two years younger than Mary. He could speak French no more than she German ; but their looks proved eloquent enough ; betrothed on the evening of his arrival, next day they were hastily wedded, the bride still in mourning for her father, with two knights and two young maids for all her train. So higger-muggerly went off a wedding that was to have important results in history.

The Archduke Maximilian, who in time grew to be King of the Romans and Emperor in turn, proved not much of a deliverer or even a master for his wife's territories. He was brave enough, and had the sense in youth to listen to elder heads ; but, too fond of pleasure to inspire respect, he disappointed his new subjects in not being effectually backed by the arms of his flabby father. It was all he could do to make head at once against internal revolts and French incursions on the frontier. In spite of a defeat at Guinegate, Louis might have overrun the Low

Countries but for his own hesitations and the desire for peace that grew upon him at the end of his life. He took to his old game of intrigue, proposing to secure a slice of Flanders as dowry for Mary's eldest daughter, her baby hand now in turn sought for the boy Dauphin, who a little while back had been put forward as wooing the mother, although solemnly betrothed to the English King's daughter, already decking herself with the title of Dauphiness. Edward IV must long have been aware how like she was to be jilted ; but he let himself be cajoled by the flatteries and bribes of France ; and when the publication of this breach of promise roused in him a spark of resentment, he was taking to a deathbed, hastened, it is probable, by indulgence in the rich gouty wines with which Louis plied him and his corrupt counsellors. Then the stormy usurpation of Richard III staved off the danger of war with England.

Maximilian was the last person to be consulted as to his daughter's marriage out of the nursery. All along, his wife's subjects had treated him as a mere Prince-Consort ; and when she died through a fall from her horse, he was made to feel himself no more than a figurehead, grudged even the guardianship of his children, who were kept in custody by the burghers of Ghent. They showed the lead in a revulsion of feeling, when the States of Flanders sought to end intermittent hostility by an accommodation with Louis. The widowed Archduke had to consent to a treaty, the principal article of which was his two-year-old daughter Margaret being sent to be brought up in France till old enough to marry the Dauphin, Burgundy, Artois and other disputed territory going with her as dowry, while the wary Flemings stuck out for holding to certain frontier fortresses, such as Lille and Douai. After all, however, the Dauphin when come to the throne married another bride, Anne of Brittany, who brought that province to the crown as her dowry.

Thus in his last days, Louis XI saw himself at the height of his power, freed from foreign danger, courted by all Europe, his kingdom consolidated and aggrandized at the cost of burdens that made his name as much hated as feared by his people. But this triumph was palled by mental and bodily miseries in which



THE ARRIÈRE FAUCILLE, GHENT



his life seemed a foretaste of the purgatory he had good reason to dread. Warned by fits of apoplexy, he now sank into that state of conscience-stricken superstition described in "Quentin Durward." Self-imprisoned in his gloomy castle of Plessis, fenced in by carefully guarded barriers, moats, and traps, this living skeleton fell into constant terror of treachery, that decorated the trees around with scarecrow corpses of strangers who had rashly approached his lair. His passion for the chase had dwindled to a love of hunting mice in the castle, for which sport he trained some of a huge collection of dogs of all breeds; and his low-born minions were not less keen to rid him of any one against whom he might have conceived some slightest suspicion. It was all Comines and other faithful servants could do to keep the length of this mean master's foot. The one man who could contradict him, even in a bullying tone, was a doctor who had the art to persuade the King that a horoscope fixed his death a week after the charlatan's own. As medicine for the mind, he redoubled his rich gifts to holy shrines, his purchases of relics and saintly images; and he garrisoned his parks with renowned hermits, one fetched all the way from Calabria, by their prayers to hold the king of terrors at bay. But neither prayers nor drugs availed to keep him from expiring with an invocation to the Virgin on his lips; then in 1483 France could draw such a breath of relief as had welcomed in Flanders the death of his arch-enemy Charles.

The death of that troublesome neighbour brought little good to Maximilian. He found himself flouted by the burghers of the Flemish cities, and by the States-General that were now able to limit the power of their princes. The people of Ghent took on themselves to guard his heir in their own hands, whom indeed he was able to snatch from them by a dashing enterprise. He himself was kept for months shut up at Bruges, well fed it appears, but practically a captive, till released on his father gathering an army, no longer to protect, but to overawe these very independent subjects. Harassed by constant insurrections, feuds, and insolence, Maximilian must have been heartily glad when he could escape to the Imperial throne, leaving that young son

Philip to make the best of what loyal sentiment still hung about his mother's memory.

But the reader may well be tired of wandering through this labyrinth of broils, insurrections, and intrigues; so let us take a higher point of view to note a change that had been passing over Europe, obscured for contemporaries by the smoke of its battlefields. The fall of Constantinople (A.D. 1453) is often given as birth-date of the Renaissance movement that quickened intellectual life by bringing it into fresh touch with the vigour of classical antiquity. The breath of it had already been stirring the moral darkness of Italy, a false dawn of the new scholarship having appeared in the Sicilian court of Frederick II, that wonder of the thirteenth-century world and scandal of its ignorant fanaticism. But it was the Turkish irruption that drove from the ruin of the Eastern Empire a flight of scholars, bringing with them salvage of manuscripts, medals, and works of ancient art to be zealously collected in the West instead of relics and fables, and spreading the knowledge of Greek long overlaid here by monkish Latin. In the second half of the fifteenth century this reviving wind had blown across the Alps to stir northern lands, where came to birth a new art which was for learning what gunpowder was in war. Haarlem by a bronze statue claims the invention of printing for its sacristan Koster, but this credit is more creditably given to Germany, where perhaps it began with blocks made for stamping the playing-cards said to have been first used for amusement of the mad Charles VI. From Mainz, Nuremberg, or elsewhere, the infant art soon passed into Italy to be refined by its taste. As prancing paladins did not welcome cannon, so fastidious scholars were at first inclined to despise printed books as roughly turned out by 'prentice hands; but they soon began to replace the work of careful copyists, and must have been a boon to the schools where pupils of different speech learned Latin *viva voce* at the feet of not always over-erudite teachers.

When princes now thought no shame to use the pen as well as the sword, a new love of learning was in the air, shown by the crowds of students that flocked from far and wide to famed



universities and international schools developed out of the mediæval cloister class-rooms, some of them now counting their pupils by hundreds, or even thousands, who often went about from one school to another with a smattering of Latin as their *lingua franca*. On the life of those wandering scholars light is thrown from narratives like that of the Swiss Thomas Platter, who ended as master of the school at Basle. This little mountaineer not being much good as a goatherd, the family had an ambition to see him wag his head in a pulpit, and he was sent to school under an uncle who outdid Squeers in not sparing the rod, yet all he learned from barbarous chastisements was to go about singing for alms, as Martin Luther did in his boyhood. From this super-Dotheboys life, Thomas was carried off by another kinsman named Paul, one of such young men as, under the title of Bacchants, often turned their educational course into an excuse for ne'er-do-well vagrancy, and liked to go attended by a troop of small "A B C shooters," who had to beg and steal for these fag-masters, getting more of the kicks than the coppers that fell to the party's share. As one of Paul's jackal cubs, this junior tramped to Lucerne and Zurich, on to Saxony, to Silesia and Bavaria, begging their way, stealing geese and ducks from the peasants, sometimes fain to pig it on acorns, if they could not prig onions or apples, making themselves ill also on unripe nuts, meeting fearsome adventures from outraged owners of portable property, as well as from robbers of bolder temper than themselves. The Bacchants, when they had money, caroused in inns, their fags putting up in the stables. At one town they stayed several weeks without going near the school, till the master threatened to have them dragged in by force, then they impudently attacked him and his scholars with stones, raising such an uproar that the magistrates prepared to interfere, so these truants thought well to move on for other places of instruction.

Their longest stay seems to have been at Breslau, a city of uncommon educational advantages, attracting thousands of scholars. Each of seven parishes had its own school, the pupils of which, no more than the dogs of Constantinople's different quarters, durst show themselves in their neighbours' bounds

without being set upon. At the one favoured by Swiss and Suabians, there were hundreds of cells, appropriated by the Bacchants, whose fags shifted for themselves as best they could, in cold or wet weather sleeping by the hearth in the schoolroom, and on hot nights lying out in the churchyard, with armfuls of grass or coarse reeds gathered for bedding ; then a thunderstorm might drive them indoors to sing chants by way of averting the visitation. Three times in the course of the winter Thomas had to go into a hospital provided by the city for this horde of half-naked and verminous guests. Alms here were plentiful, and provisions so cheap that the starveling boys could often overeat themselves to illness. As to study, there appears to have been not much of that ; anyhow, from so rich scholastic clover, love of change drove Paul's troop away to try what they could make of other schools. After five years of this vagabondage, Thomas came home for a holiday, having picked up little but such a hodge-podge of German dialects that his own people could hardly understand him. He had not even learned to read properly.

Once more he launched out again on his career of apprentice to Paul, arrant bully as this fellow was, whose harshness by and by drove Thomas to run away from him, feeling himself old enough to play the scholar independently. There was something in this youngster's looks that appealed to kind hearts, so his begging had been a valuable asset to so lazy a Bacchant as Paul, content to spend half a lifetime in scholastic mendicancy, growing old at it like the " mossy heads " of a German university. He, then, gave chase to his truant fag, who more than once had to decamp for fear of him ; and he sent another fag from Munich all the way to Zurich, seeking to win the truant back to his train, but that small ambassador had a bootless errand.

At Schlettstadt in Alsace young Thomas came upon the first school that seemed to him a good one, and there he settled down to study in earnest, placed as a hulking ignorant lout among tyros of the lowest form. But Schlettstadt was a poor place, to which an efficient schoolmaster's reputation drew more pupils than its charity could support, so once more he had to move on. At Zurich, he found another master to his mind in

the Reformer Myconius, from whom he learned heresy as well as grammar. Here, he had vowed, he would become a scholar or die, and from Latin he went on to Greek and Hebrew, picking up a livelihood by going errands and doing odd jobs ; he became *Custos* at the school, for which he got small fees, as for tutoring, among his pupils being some priests whose education had been neglected. Having by this time gone over to the Reformation, he cut himself off from priesthood by marriage, and took the field in the civil war between Catholic and Protestant cantons. At Basle, he worked as a rope-maker, as a proof-reader, and printer, before coming to his fittest place as a teacher. The story of his school-time, unless in its eventual success, must have been that of many boys in this time of intellectual stirring.

The students of the universities, also, were apt to be peripatetic. Dante is supposed to have got as far from home as Paris and Oxford, apparently making acquaintance with Flanders on his way. Many Englishmen sought famed seats of learning in Italy, Bologna, and Salerno, the latter noted as a school of medicine. Salamanca had 10,000 students in the fourteenth century. The German universities also were growing into note abroad ; and it was from a professor of Wittenburg that would come a thunderbolt which curdled a gathering ferment against time-honoured sanctities and solemnities. All over Europe indeed the pen was being sharpened for a duel with the sword in the hands of princes who more or less strongly felt, like our Scottish Solomon, that mitres and crowns might stand or fall together.

The Netherlands region had its share in this new growth of learning. Little more than a century after its foundation, the university of Louvain attracted 5000 students. The school of Deventer is said to have counted more than 2000 pupils, one of them to renown it under the name of Erasmus. A flourishing rival was its neighbour Zwolle, where probably Thomas à Kempis meditated the "Imitatio Christi," which has also been claimed as the work of the Frenchman Gerson. Basle became a chief centre of the printing and book-making that was soon a notable industry of the Netherlands. Holland developed the art of

engraving on wood and copper. Painting, nursed in monasteries on illumination of manuscripts and decoration of churches, came out into the world under the patronage of Burgundian princes, and the earlier Italian schools began to be rivalled by such artists as the Van Eycks, Hans Memling, and Quentin Matsys. Of Dutch glass-painting we have a fine specimen at Westminster in the great window of St. Margaret's Church, made at Gouda and said to have been presented by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain to Henry VII for the adornment of his chapel in the restored abbey, on the betrothal of his son to their daughter, Catherine of Aragon ; but another tradition has it to be a gift from the city of Dordrecht to Henry VIII. Flanders won also a name for gold and silver work. Sculpture was less practised here, except in the form of wood-carving. Architecture flowered finely in monuments we have seen recklessly ruined, such as the beautiful Cloth Hall of Ypres, said to have taken two centuries in building. Music, both sacred and secular, was cultivated among the Netherlanders, who did not so much distinguish themselves in literature till Erasmus won his European fame.

Here these rising arts found patrons not only in princes, prelates, and nobles, but in citizens who could afford to build and adorn homes that still bear witness to their taste. By the sixteenth century the Low Countries counted some two hundred cities and walled towns, many of them growing richer, in spite of oppressive taxation, factious strife, and the damage of war. When certain once frequented harbours, such as Damme and Sluys, became silted up like Rye and Sandwich on our side of the Channel, the commerce that now received an impetus from nautical adventure filled new ports at the mouth of navigable waterways, natural and artificial, with which the Netherlands coast was well provided, while by dikes and dams the fertile soil came to be more effectually guarded against inroads of the sea, still too often destructive. England had set up in wool-weaving for itself, but some finer fabrics remained the work of Flanders, to which the best English cloths still came to be dyed and finished, and other industries thrived profitably about various centres. Holland prospered through enterprising fisheries, as well as by cheese and



ARCADE UNDER THE NIEUWERK, YPRES



butter-making. In the south, farms had suffered more than walled cities from the trappings of war, so that this industrial region, like our own country, could not feed itself without imports. But the Burgundian rule, whatever evils it brought upon its subjects, had in general a beneficial effect by organizing still too alien provinces as a country, by restraining minor oppressors, and by uniting interests that might develop a national consciousness. In the first half of the sixteenth century its power, after long resistance, was stretched out over Groningen and Friesland ; and Gueldres also was subdued, an important conquest, since both these provinces had made breeding-grounds for land and sea pirates to push raids on the more tranquil side of the Zuyder Zee.

It was, then, a rich inheritance that at the beginning of the sixteenth century fell to one of the strongest powers of Europe. Maximilian's son, Philip the Handsome, carried his comeliness to a good market by marrying Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, whose own marriage had united the rival kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, then by driving out the Moors from Granada, they took nearly all Spain under their rule, to which the enterprise of Columbus opened dazzling prospects in the New World. The kingdom of Naples also was a dependency of Aragon. By the death of her brother and elder sister, Joanna became heiress apparent to her parents' great possessions, that soon seemed like to be again split up, when on Isabella's death Ferdinand remained King of Aragon, while Philip claimed the government of Castile in right of his wife. But soon Philip also died, so madly mourned by the doting Joanna that she lost what little wits she had and was henceforth recognized as insane. Ferdinand resumed full authority, which he had extended by violently annexing the kingdom of Navarre, and by gaining for Spain a foothold in Africa, when his ambition was cut short by death. Then the Spaniards, warned through sore experience of internal wars, agreed to accept as their king Joanna's eldest son Charles, a boy of fifteen, who, born at Ghent A.D. 1500, had been carefully brought up in the Netherlands under the guardianship of his aunt, Margaret of Austria, and of English Margaret, widow of

Charles the Rash. The Emperor Maximilian, after Philip's death, gave him as governor the lord of La Chièvre, one of that De Croy family raised to fortune by Philip the Good's favour, and as preceptor the learned Adrian of Utrecht, who both seem to have done their best for a pupil as yet revealing little of the ability and activity that would mark his reign.

His princely manners and graces, however, had so endeared him to the Netherlanders that they were loth to let him go to fill the Spanish throne, as he did in A.D. 1517, accompanied by a train of Flemish lords, who soon usurped the power hitherto exercised by Cardinal Ximenes, the Spanish regent. La Chièvre, as guardian of the young King, ruled with a high hand, keeping his pupil surrounded by Flemings, for whose benefit and his own this greedy Minister exploited the riches of Spain, to the marked discontent of its proud people. Some were ready to put Joanna, lunatic as she was, on her throne *de jure*; others spoke of supplanting Charles by his younger brother Ferdinand, who, born and educated in Spain, was as popular there as Charles in Flanders. Yet Charles contrived to hold a title balanced on mutual jealousies of the imperfectly welded Spanish states; and Ferdinand was got rid of by being sent off to Germany, to be adopted as heir of Maximilian's Austrian possessions, while to Charles he hoped to hand down the Empire, soon tending to become hereditary in the house of Hapsburg.

On Maximilian's death in A.D. 1519, the choice of an Emperor had special importance from the necessity of defending Christendom from the advancing assaults of the Turk. Frederick, Elector of Saxony, to whom the German princes looked up as their head, declined the burdensome honour for which the three chief kings of Europe put themselves forward as candidates, Charles, Francis I of France, and Henry VIII, who, firmly seated on the English throne, as heir both of York and Lancaster, showed desire to cut a figure in Continental politics. He had already imitated his predecessors by an invasion of France from Calais, when along with the Emperor Maximilian he won a second battle of Guinegate, known, like that of Courtrai, as the "Battle of Spurs" from the haste of the French flight; but on the whole



this inroad was no great success, unless as leading to an important victory in another quarter. English campaigns in France were apt to have an echo on the Scottish border, and it was now that Flodden cost James IV dear for the usual attempt to take advantage of the English king's back being turned. As for the Imperial crown, after half a year of intrigues, bribes, and hesitations, as least of evils, the Electors fixed on Maximilian's grandson, who thus, at the age of twenty, became the Emperor Charles V.

The story of his long and busy reign belongs less to the Netherlands than to his other domains. Little as they loved him, the Spaniards did not like being left by their king in charge of regents, still less granting him money to gild his new dignity ; and he had almost been kept in the country by force ; but Charles, already displaying faculties beyond his age, managed to overcome this opposition. On his voyage to the Flemish coast he turned aside for a diplomatic visit to our Henry VIII, on whose vanity he played, and on the ambition of his all-powerful minister, Wolsey, to secure the alliance of England against Francis I who was to be for Charles such a lifelong adversary as for his great-grandfather had been Louis XI. With Francis also Henry exchanged civilities at the meeting famed as " Field of the Cloth of Gold " from the magnificence displayed by the young sovereigns and their retinues. How these bellicose monarchs made a show of loving one another is told in the memoirs of Fleurange, Lord of Sedan, son of that truculent Ardennes Wild Boar, himself tamed to be such an attendant on the French king as Comines had been in Louis XI's service. The two courts holding themselves a little aloof at Guisnes and at Ardres in the Calais district, from which points they exchanged formal visits, Francis was concerned to be on terms of greater confidence.

" He got up very early one morning, not his usual custom, and took two gentlemen and a page, the first that came to hand, and wrapped in a Spanish cloak, got on a horse without any trappings, and went off to the king of England in the castle of Guisnes. And when the king appeared on the castle drawbridge, all the English were much amazed, not knowing what to make of it, and there were quite two hundred archers on the said bridge,

among them the governor of Guisnes, who was greatly astonished. Passing through them, the king demanded from them a pledge of good faith, and asked for the chamber of the king his brother, which was shown him by the governor with, 'Sire, he is not awake yet.' But he passed on to the said chamber, knocked at the door and entered, awakening the sleeper. And never was man more taken by surprise than the king of England, who said to him, 'My brother, you have done me the best turn that ever one man did to another, and shown me what great trust I ought to put in you; and for my part I now render myself your prisoner and give you my pledge.' And he took off his neck a collar worth fifteen thousand angels, begging the king of France to take it and wear it for the love of his prisoner. And the king, wishing to do him the same turn, had brought a bracelet worth more than thirty thousand angels, which he quickly asked him to wear for his sake, as he did; and he put it on his arm; and the king of France put the collar on his neck. And then the king of England being about to get up, the king of France said that he should have no other valet than himself, and warmed his shirt and gave it him when he was out of bed."

Henry lost no time in returning this unceremonial visit. There was a week of tilting in the lists, followed by exhibitions of archery and wrestling, in which the kings condescended to try their own prowess. The English yeomen got the better of the wrestling matches, and Henry distinguished himself as an archer, but he had the mortification of being tripped up by his brother of France. So, amid feasts and sports and solemn services, the Dauphin was betrothed to the daughter of England; and the two sovereigns took leave after agreeing to articles which, as Fleurance puts it, "were well drawn and well written, had they but been well kept." Within two years the royal brethren were at one another's throats again. All the presents and pledges of this interview were not so efficacious as Wolsey's hopes of the Popedom, till the ambitious cardinal found himself once and again fooled by the Emperor's promises of support.

Through the Netherlands, Charles passed on to Germany, to be crowned at Augsburg, then at once in the Diet of Worms he had to deal with upheavings destined to open a chasm between

the north and the south of Europe. The German Reformation had broken out, preluded by the Lollards in England, by the Waldenses in the south, and by the Hussites of Bohemia, not to speak of obscurer sects and heretical teachers, silenced here and there by fire and sword. In the Netherlands had arisen reformers like Wessel of Gansvoert, who on some points anticipated Luther. Here and elsewhere hard-headed men of all ranks needed no learning to cry out upon the scandalous corruptions of the Church, far fallen from apostolic simplicity. The new interest in classical studies turned thoughtful minds from the vain speculations of the schoolmen who, "with their feet on earth and their heads in the clouds," had for centuries spun metaphysical cobwebs through the darkness of knowledge. Popular ridicule was sharpened in such scholarly satires as the "*Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*," making sly fun of cloistered laziness and ignorance. When Popes and prelates often were at little pains to cloak their want of piety, the multiplying breed of classical scholars more or less openly undertook to criticize the doctrines and practices of the Church.

Among these "Humanists," the most shining light of the period was the Dutch cleric who took the name of Erasmus, perhaps to blot out an illegitimate origin of which the tale is told in Charles Reade's "*Cloister and the Hearth*." He more than once visited England, making friends with men like Sir Thomas More and Dean Colet, spending some time at Oxford and Cambridge, and even holding an English benefice. He worked also in Paris, then, grown widely famous by his learning and his writings, he made his headquarters at Basle, a focus of the new spirit leavening men's minds. Amid grave labours as an editor of classical texts, in his ironical "*Praise of Folly*," he lashed the abuses of the time with a sharpness that anticipated Carlyle in taking men to be mostly fools. He mocked at the Grammarians who on a musty stock of Latin played the tyrant and plied the rod among trembling pupils; at the Philosophers whose very imperfect science undertook to explain the universe without being agreed on any point of importance; at the school Divines with their subtle distinctions of "*Notions, Relations, Formalities*,

*Quiddities, Paradoxes*, such as no man could pry into without the eyes of a lynx to see best in the dark": the apostles themselves, he opined, would surely be puzzled by the jargon of Realists, Nominalists, Thomasists, Albertists, Occamists, and the followers of Scotus and others. Nor did he spare the monkish orders, whose study was not to be like Christ, but to be unlike one another, unless in unfaithfulness to their vows. He held up to like ridicule the Preachers, with their citations from renowned "Doctors Sacred, Subtle, Seraphic, Irrefragable," and so forth, their illustrations from fabulous history, and all their logical apparatus of "Syllogisms, Majors, Minors, Conclusions, Corollaries, Suppositions, and Distinctions" to impress the unlearned vulgar. The worldly Prelates were denounced as shearers rather than feeders of their flocks, most diligent in overseeing their own revenues; the proud Cardinals as a contrast to the apostles; and this irreverent critic did not refrain from bold hits at the Holiest Fathers who from scrip and staff had advanced themselves to such royal pomp, attained as often as not in that day by slaughter, poison, all kinds of corrupt means, aggrandized not by spiritual weapons but by meddling in the most unchristian business of war, and maintained by such weapons as anathemas, interdictions, and excommunications. What wonder then if princes and governors thought more of their own profit than of the public weal! While jocularly professing for himself to "follow the opinion of the good old fat, dull, sound divines with whom most of the learned prefer to err than to be in the right with those fellows boasting a knowledge of three languages," the satirist sometimes drops his mask of Folly to speak plain words of rebuke that interpreted the thoughts of many plain people who could not or would not give them utterance, least of all where free speech might be clapped under the extinguisher of the Inquisition, more powerful beyond the Alps and the Pyrenees. "The priests," he says, "keep the people in ignorance for their own gain, but what if any troublesome man of sense were to get up and declare the truth, that you will come to a good end by living well, that you will atone for your sins if to payment for Masses you add hatred of evil deeds; then you might give up

tears, vigils, prayers, fastings, and all that : from such and such a saint you will get grace by imitating his life ! ”

In the same spirit Sebastian Brandt wrote at Strasbourg his “Ship of Fools,” an English adaptation of which was once well known. But these learned satirists lacked ardour to kindle the pile of combustibles gathered by men of their temper, and shrank from open rebellion against the Church in which they could point out so many faults. That was the more congenial work of the pious monk, Luther, who “flared up in the flaring of mankind,” at the outset little thinking whither would lead him his studies in the Bible and the theology of St. Augustine. After a visit to Rome that must have opened his eyes to the rottenness of its sanctity, what mainly provoked him into hot controversy was Leo X’s effort to raise money for the building of St. Peter’s by a shameless traffic in indulgences for sin, peddled about Germany by pushing agents like the friar Tetzl. Thus, A.D. 1517, Luther was moved to put forth on the church door of Wittenberg his famous theses in which, while professing all proper respect for papal authority, he appealed to Scripture and learning against its abuses. The Pope, having summoned him to judgment at Rome, when he would not trust himself there, tried to silence him by a Bull of excommunication and by burning his books instead of his body. But in the north the Pope’s Bulls now found such a falling market that scholars and nobles as well as popular applause backed up the outspoken heretic, who had a protector in his own prince, Frederick of Saxony.

It was this spiritual insurrection which Charles had politically to deal with at his first Diet, where Luther boldly presented himself “though there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles on the house-tops.” The boldness with which he upheld his testimony confirmed his friends and exasperated his enemies, who were for Charles violating the safe-conduct given him, as had been infamously done in the case of John Huss at Constance. But Luther was let off unhurt, on his way back to be mysteriously kidnapped by well-wishers, and lost for a time in the Wartburg, where secluded studies and enthusiastic meditations went to ripen his revolt against Rome, soon

proclaimed by what seemed the scandal of his marriage with a nun.

The leaven of reform was now strongly at work fermenting into outbreaks unwelcome to a religious spirit like Luther's. The sufferings of the German peasantry, on whom in the long run fell the growing expense of government, drove them into frantic risings against their lords, like the French *Jacquerie* of the previous century; and one of the fiercest of these insurrections was headed in Saxony by Thomas Muncer, a fanatical disciple of the reformers, who outran grave theologians by preaching a crazy socialism with the authority of a prophet. After doing much mischief, this movement was crushed with the cruelty it had provoked; but its excesses gave a scare to rulers henceforth inclined to identify reform with revolution, and sent some weak brethren back into blind adherence to the Church with all its evident shortcomings.

The two camps began to draw openly apart for a struggle which would fill more than a century with bloodshed. All the sovereigns as yet professed a loyalty to the Church, that did not stand the strain of passion or interest. Henry showed off his orthodoxy by writing against Luther; but when the Gospel light dawned dimly upon him from Anne Boleyn's eyes, he set up as his own Pope, persecuting on either side of the *via media* ruled by him for the consciences of his subjects. Francis persecuted his own heretics at home, while he encouraged those of Germany, and even leagued himself with the Turk to parry the Christian sword in the hands of his rival. Charles, that official champion of the Church, let Europe be shocked when his unpaid army, under the renegade Frenchman Bourbon, satisfied itself by assaulting Rome, captured and savagely pillaged for months, during which the Pope was held captive and put to ransom in the name of that most Catholic Majesty, with whom after such humiliation he yet came to terms for pursuing their common worldly interests.

Before long it became recognized that the young Emperor was as able as unscrupulous in carrying out designs favoured by the discords of his adversaries not less than by his own dexterous



STRASBOURG





policy. All along he found himself entangled in distracting difficulties. He was fortunate indeed in the services of excellent generals, who won victories for him with troops often ready to mutiny for want of the pay not always to be supplied by plunder. He had to coax scanty grants from the sullen princes of Germany, as from the groaning States of Flanders, and to overawe the high-spirited nobles of Spain into support for his various enterprises. He had to consider how one threatening Power could be kept in check by another. Here a persecutor, there a reluctant tolerator, according to circumstances, everywhere, at first, cautious to steer clear of the reefs of religious controversy, he had to bring more or less pressure to bear on the unwillingness of successive Popes to call the General Council now loudly demanded for settling the troubles of the Church. He had to carry on a long struggle with France for mastery in the north of Italy, and to wheedle England into alliance with his hostility. He had more than once to face the threatening Sultan Solyman on the eastern border of the Empire. In the end he had to maintain himself against a strong confederation of Protestant princes in Germany. But once and again luck favoured him, notably in that Battle of Pavia, where Francis I lost all but honour, carried for a year into ungenerous captivity, out of which he escaped by concessions to be withheld with due absolution from the Pope when he was restored to his kingdom. Thus Charles failed to regain his forbears' Burgundy dukedom, which was one of his keenest ambitions. In a flicker of the spirit of ancestral chivalry, he accepted the challenge of his royal foe to settle their quarrel by a duel which did not come off. The dashing Francis had sense enough to commit his defence against invasion to a general who, avoiding battle, let it starve itself out on a ruinously wasted country. Else, when the Emperor led his own armies, he showed himself a commander as well as a statesman, and met with successes which at one time seemed to turn his politic head. Amid such European complications, he played the imperial champion by two gallant expeditions against the pirate States of Africa, in one gaining no little glory, in the other disastrously baffled by a tempest that played havoc with his fleet and his starving army.

Those various engagements left Charles little leisure to spend in his native Flanders, though he visited it ten times during his reign. At first his presence was more needed in Spain, and Italy might then be called the Cockpit of Europe. The Flemings, to be sure, had to take their part in attacks on France; and Ghent once indulged itself in an isolated defiance of its lord, to be again crushed with cruel severity and the forfeiture of its privileges. But the drum and trumpet history of this period did not resound in the Netherlands so much as the confused din of the Reformation that was soon hatching fresh wars. In vain the distracted Emperor tried to hedge between the two parties, yet with a bias towards the orthodoxy that squared with the absolutism he had won in Spain. At the Diet of Spires, he got a majority to forbid innovations till the assembly of a General Council, which the reluctant Pope was for holding in Italy if at all, but the Reformers insisted on its being freer in Germany. As a compromise, Trent in Tyrol was finally fixed on, not till the minority of German princes had taken the title of Protestants by protesting against the Spires injunction; and presently they formed at Smalkalde a confederation prepared to resist by arms if need were.

Luther, his name now blessed or cursed all over Europe, was clearly the central figure of the movement, to which he gave a dynamic influence by his translation of the Bible, that laid also the foundation of modern German. He had to carry on stormy controversies with humanists like Erasmus for whom he went too far, and zealots like Zwingle for whom he did not go far enough. He laboured to inspire such gentler natures as Melanchthon's with his own rough vehemence, while he conspicuously failed to restrain a swarm of ignorant fanatics bred in the volcanic upheaval of conformity. Prominent among them became the Anabaptists, a name loosely applied to be long in as ill-odour as Communist or Bolshevik is for the respectability of our generation. A remnant of these sectaries can still be found in Holland under the title of Mennonites, resembling the Quakers, both in the quiet harmlessness of their later doctrines and practices, and the early excesses that almost tempted even Roger Williams to

withhold toleration from the followers of George Fox. Some years after Muncer's insurrection, two anabaptist enthusiasts came to lurid fame, John Matthias, a baker from Haarlem, and John Boccold, a young tailor of Leyden. In the Westphalian city of Munster, they gained such extraordinary influence as to drive out the sober citizens and fill it with a crazy crew for whom their word was law and gospel. Matthias, at first taking the lead, proclaimed a community of goods in what he dubbed Mount Sion, set his followers pillaging the churches and destroying all books but the Bible, disciplined them also as soldiers, and sought to gather a host of like-minded fanatics from the Low Countries and elsewhere. The Bishop of Munster raised forces to besiege the city, to the fortifying and provisioning of which the usurper had had the sense to attend. But when, encouraged by the success of one sally, he trusted to miracle by leading forth a Gideon's band of no more than thirty, they were cut to pieces. The death of Matthias failed to daunt the defenders, his place being taken by John of Leyden, who outdid his predecessor in religious extravagances, if not in bellicose ardour. He ran naked through the streets, proclaiming the kingdom of Sion at hand; he had himself crowned king; he coined money and appointed judges; he graced his state by daily executions; and finally emulated the privileges of royalty by setting an example of unbridled lust in which any show of devotion was drowned. For more than a year this insane tyranny held out, till a close blockade reduced the city to starvation. The exalted tailor punished any talk of surrender by death; but at last the besiegers broke in one night, taking the garrison by surprise; and thus the bishop regained mastership of his desecrated churches and his misled flock. From a hot massacre, John of Leyden was spared for a death of exquisite torture, which he is said to have borne with the firmness of fanaticism.

Such outbreaks of madness, though strongly reprobated by Luther, were not likely to win friends for the Reformation in high places; but the Emperor had still his hands too full elsewhere for active interference in German affairs. At last, in A.D. 1545, the Council of Trent met to settle the divisions of

Christendom. But the Germans held mostly aloof, and the small body of Italians and Spanish bishops who came together showed a bias towards Papal views. With various interruptions, one of them ten years long, the Council was protracted till Protestantism had been firmly established in Northern Germany, while in the south of Europe the Church gained strength from what is known as the Counter-Reformation movement, with enthusiasts like Ignatius Loyola for its active spirits, under the patronage of more worthy Popes than the Borgias and Medicis.

Meanwhile, the death of his inveterate enemy Francis I and of his intermittent ally, Henry VIII, left Charles freer to act against his contumacious subjects in Germany, themselves weakened by dissensions and hesitations. Even some Protestant princes, notably the ambitious Maurice of Saxony, joined the Emperor when, with a composite army of Spaniards, Italians, and Flemings, he attacked the confederates of Smalkalde. At Muhlberg they were defeated, their leaders, the worthy Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse, being captured and imprisoned. That success filled Charles's head with haughty confidence, so that falling out with the Pope, he tried to imitate Henry VIII's dogmatic regulation of faith and worship by an "Interim" decree, intended as a temporary compromise that satisfied neither Catholics nor Protestants. But his pride was to have a fall. The harshness with which he treated the captive princes called forth general resentment, not soothed by his attempts to press his son Philip upon the Germans as heir to the Empire. Maurice, though he had been rewarded with the electorate of Saxony, now turned to opposition and made a secret alliance with the French king, Henry II, who invaded Alsace, while Maurice himself, throwing off the mask of loyalty, swooped down upon the Emperor at Innsbruck, setting him to hasty flight over the Brenner pass and scattering the bishops away from Trent. His forces dispersed, his various dominions unwilling to supply him with sinews of war, threatened on one side of the Empire by France, on the other by the Turks, Charles had to capitulate; then in A.D. 1552 the Treaty of Passau



METZ



established the Lutheran Church in Germany, a few years after the death of its founder.

When that formidable rebel, Maurice, returning to his allegiance, was employed to face the Turks on the east, the Emperor prepared to deal with the French encroachments on the west side. Scraping men and money together, he assembled another army with which, though now so crippled by gout that he had to be carried in a litter, he undertook the celebrated siege of Metz. This city was so well defended by the Duke of Guise that Charles had to give up the attempt after losing half his force. In sorry humour he retired into the Netherlands, which for a quarter of a century his sister, the Queen of Hungary, had governed as regent. Then followed indecisive campaigns on the Flemish border, and Charles had the chagrin of finding a new Pope allied with the French to resist him in Italy. The sun of his long reign threatened to set in clouds of disaster.

Yet his ruling passion flickered up on the death of Edward VI, to give him some hope of adding England to his possessions. Charles, prematurely old and infirm, was ready to marry our unattractive Queen Mary, had his son Philip not been willing to come forward as a wooer. But Philip, a widower twelve years younger than she, was willing, Mary was more than willing; and though the English people were most unwilling, the failure of Wyatt's rebellion let the queen take her own way. We know how she gave back England to the Pope, how she fed the fires of Smithfield, how she married Philip only to find that she had his hand but not his cold heart, the chief result of all her reactionary zeal being to turn her people more heartily against Rome.

And now, in A.D. 1556, the Emperor astonished the world by abdicating, a step he seems to have secretly meditated for years, with Diocletian's case as precedent. Sick in mind and body, he felt the need of preparing for death by more efficacious exercises than the burning of heretics and the bloodshed of Turks or Frenchmen. He made another effort to hand on all his titles to his son. But Philip's stiff manners had not endeared him to the Germans any better than his father's arbitrary pride; nor would

Ferdinand give up his right as King of the Romans, so Charles had to let the Empire go to his brother, for whom he had already procured the crowns of Hungary and Bohemia to enhance their hereditary duchy of Austria. All the rest of his possessions he gave over to Philip by a moving ceremony at Brussels, himself retiring to the Spanish monastery of Yuste, in hope that a milder climate might relieve the purgatory of his gouty sufferings. There, after a tranquil year or so, he sank into a childishness of superstitious austerities that did not include fasting from meat and drink bad for the gout; his last days suggest some touch of insanity prompting him to a solemn rehearsal of his own funeral rites. He is said to have regretted not burning Luther when he had the chance; and he quite superfluously spurred on Philip's persecuting zeal, for, even in retirement, the ex-Emperor kept an eye on public affairs. A more edifying reflection attributed to him is that, having made a collection of clocks and watches, and noting how they did not keep time with each other, he exclaimed on the difficulty of regulating men's minds and consciences in the matter of religion.

Thus Philip became lord of Spain, now united and broken in to absolute monarchy, of its Italian acquisitions, of its expanding conquests in the New World, and of its Netherlands dependency as rich in industry as Mexico and Peru in silver mines. The staple manufactures of Flanders had relatively declined in value, but were replaced by a commercial activity soon developed into colonial enterprise. Hundreds of ships sailed daily in and out of Antwerp, which had surpassed Venice as now the greatest port of Europe, with Amsterdam rising up in rivalry. The Antwerp Exchange became a pattern for such institutions, copied by Sir Thomas Gresham in London, which was then not so large a city. Having outstripped Ghent and Bruges, Antwerp in its population of some 200,000 counted a thousand foreign merchants, and about twenty times that number of people living by the trade with England alone. It was what London would become, the world's chief money-market, headquarters of the Fuggers and Welsers that were the Rothschilds and Barings of that period, from whom all those quarrelling princes were fain to borrow money at from





ANTWERP  
The Roadstead from the Tête de Flandre



12 to 25 per cent., according to their means, needs, and the prospects of repayment.

In State affairs the Sword no longer reigned supreme, now that the Pen was sharpening an authority of its own, as well in signing bills of accommodation and exchange, as in setting the printing press to work with or without the *imprimatur* of crowned and mitred heads, not yet fully aware how their power would henceforth have to deal with encroaching limitations. The rebirth of ancient learning, fostered by new arts, marks a clear course for modern history, in which the Netherlands were about to play their most famous part.

## VI

### BUTCHERS AND "BEGGARS" AT WAR

IN contrast to Charles V's retirement from a life of agitated vicissitudes, it was noted how the then Pope, Paul IV, after gaining a name for sanctity in devout seclusion, upon the papal throne launched out into worldly pomp and arrogant politics. His main object was to drive the most Catholic king out of Italy, for which he called in French aid; and an army marched against Naples under the Duke of Guise, a Lorraine family come to eminence through his military talents and his position as maternal uncle of Mary, Queen of Scots. To him was opposed Philip's able commander, the Duke of Alva, who was like to get the worst of it, when a heavy blow on the other side of France recalled Guise from Italian fields. Philip had assembled in Flanders 50,000 troops, led by the Duke of Savoy, now that kings showed themselves less ready to head their own armies; then at St. Quentin this general gained a crushing victory over the French. As Agincourt was fought on St. Crispin's Day, so St. Quentin on that of St. Lawrence, in honour of whom Philip erected the gloomy pile of the Escorial, which took more than twenty years to build after the pattern of the gridiron bars on which that saint had suffered his traditional martyrdom.

England, for once reluctantly, had been dragged by Mary into this French war, to win small share in its glory, but the loss of Calais, carelessly defended, and now easily taken after being held for over two hundred years. That blow, after the desertion of her husband, is said to have broken poor Mary's heart, whereupon the not inconsolable widower offered himself to his deceased wife's sister, a proposal at once declined by Elizabeth, though she was in no haste to quarrel with Philip as an ally. By a

cannonade the English fleet contributed to his further victory at Gravelines. This defeat inspired Henry II with the cautious prudence natural to Philip ; so by the celebrated peace of Cateau Cambresis they laid down their arms, the French withdrawing from Italy, which now ceased to be a cockpit for ruffling monarchs, with whom Milan, Venice, Genoa, Florence, and the States of the Church had sided alternately and fitfully, in carrying out their own intriguing jealousies, yet all more or less desirous to get rid of intruding foreigners.

Finding himself at peace with the Pope must have been a relief to the bigoted Philip's conscience, all along concerned as he was to show himself a more zealous son of the Church than his father. Charles had felt free to burn heretics in the Netherlands, if not across the Rhine ; but of late his troubles had made him somewhat slack in the performance of this religious duty ; and indeed most of his victims had been anabaptists and such like, condemned as much for sedition as false doctrine. In his retirement, learning with horror that the poison of reform was at work on Spanish orthodoxy, he wrote to Philip, as did the reconciled Pope, urging him to apply the surgery of the Inquisition, that hitherto in Spain had been chiefly employed upon Moors and Jews. The cold-hearted, narrow-minded bigot who now held so infernal a machine in his hands, needed no incitements to pious cruelty. It appears as if his eagerness to play the persecutor in Spain was what soon took him away from Flanders, with such orders sent on ahead as lighted bonfires of human flesh in the chief cities of his kingdom. Others followed as a spectacle for this most Catholic monarch, who thought he did good service in hauling to dungeons, torments, and flames many of the noblest and most learned of his subjects, including several eminent ecclesiastics, as well as obscurer names buried beneath what seems a monument of man's inhumanity to man, as well as of fanatical folly.

Against the benefits conferred by mediæval Christianity, must be set the black stain of the Inquisition's cruelty. Nowhere did it flourish so rankly as in Spain, and nowhere was it so successful in darkening the mind and breaking the free spirit of a people.

Not abolished there till early in the nineteenth century, it had its victims counted from first to last by hundreds of thousands : one estimate adds up 32,000 burnings. There could not be a more unfair court than this, in which to be accused was to be almost certainly condemned. A whole army of spies and informers, rewarded by fees for conviction, was ever at work to fill the greedy maw of a tribunal that swallowed up its captive's property, unless when this was snatched away by the crown. Every interest was against the prisoner, who must sometimes have welcomed his fiery stake to end the long ordeal of mental and bodily torture that passed for his trial. The lot of many an innocent, many a thoughtful, many a pious Christian is thus described in Prescott's life of Philip II, whose crimes against human nature no honest historian can whitewash : the one apology made for him is zeal for a creed that condemns itself in the service of such votaries, whose blind zeal, moreover, is apt to do their Church more harm than any arguments of its opponents :

“ Dragged from his solitary dungeon to the secret tribunal of the Inquisition, alone, without counsel to aid or one friendly face to cheer him, without knowing the name of his accuser, without being allowed to confront the witnesses who were there to swear away his life, without even a sight of his own process, except such garbled extracts as the wily judges thought fit to communicate, is it strange that the unhappy victim in his perplexity and distress should have been drawn into disclosures fatal to his associates and himself ? If these disclosures were not to the mind of his judges, they had only to try the efficacy of the torture—the rack, the cord, and the pulley—until, when every joint had been wrenched from its socket, the barbarous tribunal was compelled to suspend, not terminate, the application from the inability of the sufferer to endure it. Such were the dismal scenes enacted in the name of religion, and by the ministers of religion, as well as of the Inquisition—scenes to which few of those who had once witnessed them and escaped with life, dared ever to allude ; for to reveal the secrets of the Inquisition was death.”

In leaving the Netherlands, as it proved for good, Philip had



THE INQUISITION





done his best to infuse his own intolerant spirit into its government. The regency he gave to his illegitimate sister, Margaret, Duchess of Parma, raised to respectable rank by her marriage with a Pope's nephew : almost all through Charles's reign this dependency had been entrusted to female vicereignty, first to Margaret of Austria, the Emperor's aunt, then to his sister, the widowed Queen of Hungary. The ruler was now to be assisted by three councils, and by a secret cabinet of three persons, among whom soon came to the front as Prime Minister the Bishop of Arras, best known as Cardinal Granvelle. Great noblemen were bound to loyalty by being appointed as Stadtholders of provinces or groups of provinces. The Low Countries, hitherto divided between four bishoprics under French and German metropolitans, were now provided by the Pope with a number of new archbishops and bishops to keep a closer eye on straying flocks. To all these authorities was recommended a stricter enforcement of the late Emperor's edict against Lutheran and other heresy, the guilty to be burned if obstinate, but if repentant, to have a chance of stealing into purgatory minus their heads, or, in the case of women, by being buried alive. Charles and Philip should not have put Lutheranism in the forefront of their anathemas, for in fact the new doctrines filtered in here rather through France and Switzerland, so that Flemish and Dutch Protestantism took for the most part a Calvinistic tinge. In the long contests that followed, Lutherans and Calvinists, as well as Catholics and Protestants, were often at daggers drawn ; then by and by Dutch Calvinism became furiously divided against itself in its moderate and its high-flying wings.

To secure due obedience, Philip had left behind him a few thousand Spanish troops, whose presence was an eyesore to nascent patriotism. When he demanded a heavy subsidy from the provincial States, they followed English precedent in stipulating as *per contra* for the withdrawal of these insolent and rapacious foreigners. The nobles, in general, were of one mind with the citizens on this grievance ; and Philip had for a time to give way, leaving the Regent without means of enforcing his stringent injunctions for the extirpation of heresy and the fitting of his

northern dominions with such a yoke of slavish loyalty as had now been slipped upon the stiff neck of Spain. The Duchess might well ask how she was to burn tens of thousands of people, and what pressure she could bring to bear upon nobles who, while professing dutiful allegiance, had no reason to love their morose sovereign, and no interest in helping him to bigoted despotism. Cardinal Granvelle, too, the pious minister of her oppressive government, was presently withdrawn from the Netherlands, transferring his dark counsels to the court of Spain. The persecuting edicts could be but partially carried out, some governors and some towns quietly ignoring them while in others they were angrily resisted.

Charles had made a show of governing the Netherlands according to precedent and privileges, frequently calling together the States-General of the provinces, and at least listening to their remonstrances. Philip was bent on turning his authority into absolutism. Before leaving Flanders, he suspected a head of opposition in the young Prince of Orange, whom he had sought to bind to his service as Stadtholder of Holland, but who was to be the hero of a struggle more resolute than either of them yet foresaw. This great nobleman represented an ancient house taking its title from a tiny principality on the Rhone, its name corrupted from Arausio, a Roman station, that has left as monuments a triumphal arch and other fine architectural remains. The lords of Orange were famed in romance for somewhat fabulous prowess against the Saracens. Drifting northwards, they emerge in authentic history as doughty vassals of the great Dukes of Burgundy. When they died out in the male line, their title was through marriage acquired by the German Counts of Nassau, who in one way and another held rich possessions over Brabant, Holland, and Luxemburg, as well as in Burgundy, along with the remote enclave of Orange which its most famous prince never visited, and which not till the eighteenth century was absorbed into France, like its neighbour Avignon. He was more at home in his stately palaces at Brussels and Breda, and castles like the ruin that picturesquely dominates rocky Vianden in Luxemburg. Their lord was thus a subject to the heirs of Burgundy,



THE ROMAN ARCH AT ORANGE, IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE  
This shows one of the beautiful buildings raised by the Romans when  
they were masters of Gaul



as well as in a small way a sovereign prince, holding from the Empire.

"William the Silent" owed this epithet not to any taste for taciturnity, but to his discretion in holding his tongue when, sent to Henry II of France as a hostage for the Treaty of Cateau Cambresis, that king blabbed out to him how he and Philip proposed to collaborate for the uprooting of heresy. Though born of Lutheran parents, William had no zeal for heresy. He was brought up a Catholic at the court of Charles V, beginning as page and rising to be a counsellor so esteemed that on him the infirm Emperor leant when announcing his abdication. He had served Charles also in war, rewarded by being allowed to waste his own wealth in paying that impecunious master's troops. His early years were lived in stateliness, luxury, and pleasure; and what religion he had seems to have been much that of a man of the world, which only in later days deepened into reflective earnestness. But all along he disliked persecution, flatly refusing to play the Inquisition's butcher in his government, and giving the threatened heretics warning to escape.

Even in opposition to the King, he was at first disposed to be politically moderate; and the Regent was fain to rely on him for support. Professing loyalty and with no personal ambition, he did not make himself prominent in a league of nobles, both Catholic and Protestant, for securing the constitutional freedom of the seventeen provinces now loosely joined as a circle of the Empire, while dovetailed into the Spanish dominion. The burning sore was the Inquisition, whose cruelties filled high and low with anger. The Regent, at her wits' end to carry out the King's orders, sent to Spain the Count of Egmont, second only to Orange in influence, with remonstrances thrown away on that obdurate tyrant. When a deputation of three hundred nobles, in a uniform of grey frieze, came to insist upon a relaxation of the persecuting edicts, she had to grant their demand, though one foolish counsellor scornfully protested against giving in to such a crew of "Beggars." That nickname was taken up by the confederates; at a supper-party of hot-headed young roisterers, a mendicant's wallet and bowl were excitedly adopted as their badges, a half-

drunken jest that spread fast and far, so that the popular party proudly dubbed itself the "Beggars."

Still William of Orange held somewhat aloof from such violent demonstrations, and it was to him that the Regent turned for support. Antwerp being the chief hive of heretics of all shades, where burning one had already raised mob violence upon the executioners, there now broke out in this city a more serious tumult of attack upon the cathedral, in which images and paintings were recklessly destroyed amid wild desecration of sacred objects. Like the inundations that from time to time burst through its coastal dikes, that wave of iconoclasm poured over the land, spreading outrages that destroyed indiscriminately treasures of art along with relics of superstition. Only in a few cities such as Bruges, Mons, and Arras, did the better class of citizens succeed in repressing this Vandalism. The dismayed Regent was ready to take to flight; but Orange held her to her post in Brussels, urging her to grant liberty of conscience, while he exerted himself to calm the disorders. So far from an extremist was he that he restored the Catholic worship in Antwerp Cathedral, giving up some of its churches to the Lutherans and some to the Calvinists; but he had no toleration for the anarchical anabaptists, and he punished a few of the rioters. Thence he went on to Holland, trying everywhere to moderate angry spirits; but soon saw that it was all up with his hopes of keeping the peace.

The iconoclastic tumults provoked a reaction in which the Government brought its power to bear upon other towns more harshly than William had dealt with Antwerp. His friend Egmont, who had hitherto backed him in constitutional agitation, bombarded the Calvinist city of Valenciennes into surrender, hanging its heretical divines; then for two years it was kept terrorized by repeated executions. The Protestants began to fly from the country, taking refuge in England and Germany. Duchess Margaret, abandoning the policy of moderation, tried to restore her authority by severities; but soon had the vexation of knowing that the King judged her not resolute enough to rivet the Spanish fetters on this unfortunate people.

The news of those sacrilegious commotions had driven Philip to fury, in which he threw up all ideas of conciliation. To the rebellious provinces he sent the most able and ruthless of his commanders, the Duke of Alva, with an army of Spanish veterans, strong in the new arm of musketry. In vain William would have rallied for resistance great nobles like Counts Egmont and Horn, who could not bring themselves openly to defy the King. These two, neglecting plain warnings to be on their guard, received Alva as loyal subjects, and were rewarded by being speedily arrested as traitors. The prince himself, having resigned his offices, took timely refuge in Germany, proclaimed an outlaw. His eldest son, a thirteen-year-old student at Louvain, was seized and sent to Spain, there to spend most of his life, perverted from the sympathies of his father. Thus was inaugurated the reign of tyranny under which Philip proposed to crush the Netherlands into submission.

The Regent, indignant at being practically supplanted by this Captain-General, presently resigned her post, leaving the country to an absolute rule under which her late severities might pass for merciful. All the liberties, charters, and pledges granted to the miserable provinces were set at naught. The Inquisition had condemned the whole population as heretics, with whom no faith need be kept. Besides introducing the darker Spanish workings of this tribunal, Alva erected a court of Spaniards and subservient Netherlanders, that soon earned for itself the name of the Blood Council. In three months it had made eighteen hundred victims, a number which Alva boasted to have multiplied tenfold before the end of his government, but he perhaps exaggerated his own cruelties. On the slightest suspicion, men were arrested by hundreds, to be executed by scores, among them some of the greatest and best in the land, for a time overawed by terror. After a captivity of nine months, Egmont and Horn were beheaded in the great square of Brussels, Egmont's wife vainly appealing for mercy to Alva, who appears to have been a personal enemy of her husband, but acted under Philip's express orders. This tyrannous satrap set about the building of a strong citadel to dominate the heretics of Antwerp. Other cities, cowed below

similar strongholds, garrisoned by Spanish troops to relight the fires of the Inquisition, were deserted by the foreign merchants, and more and more by their persecuted inhabitants. Wilder spirits turned bandits, helping to reduce the country to a wilderness blighted by fire and blood. Philip and his stern lieutenant seemed willing to lay it in ruins if under them they could bury its claims to freedom ; and in the southern provinces their relentless cruelty was but too effectual.

Meanwhile William of Orange, safe at his ancestral German seat, which he had given over to his brother John, was straining every nerve to put resistance in the field. Selling his property, pledging his credit, and getting contributions from Protestant princes of Germany and refugee patriots, he raised troops, professedly in the name of Philip, to attack the King's bloodthirsty myrmidons, the device on his banners being *Pro lege, rege, et grege*. Those levies he did not at first lead himself, perhaps conscious how he was less qualified to shine as a general than as a statesman. The forces at his command were rather rashly advanced in three bodies from different bases, the French frontier, the Rhine, and the northern corner of the Netherlands, not yet under the heel of their foreign invader. The two former efforts were so weak as to be easily repelled by the Spanish soldiery. The third force, under William's gallant brother Louis, had one cheering success in the Groningen district ; but was utterly routed on the advance of Alva with the bulk of his disciplined army. Louis' followers were almost exterminated, he himself escaping by swimming naked across the Ems ; then after devastating the area of conflict that suffered in turn from both invaders, Alva went back to redouble his atrocities in the south.

This disaster spread fresh consternation through the oppressed land ; and Alva might boast that he who had tamed men of iron could not fail to tame men of butter. But Orange and his brothers did not lose heart, though appealing in vain for help to the Emperor and to Elizabeth of England. He was more successful in France, where the Huguenots were at odds with Charles IX and his artful mother, Catherine de' Medici. Somehow he found means to gather at Treves another army, with



which he pushed almost to Brussels, but was worsted by the cunning strategy of Alva, who declined risking a battle, letting William's ill-paid and mutinous mercenaries crumble away. The gates of cowed cities shut against him, he had nothing for it but to lead into France the remnant of his force, most of which he disbanded for want of means to hold it together. With a small faithful band he and his brothers now joined the French Huguenots in their own fight for liberty, doing good service till their defeat at Montcoutour, where William himself was not present.

At this point his fortunes are a little obscure, but they seem to have been at their lowest ebb when once more he slipped back into Germany. To public disasters were added domestic troubles. As his second wife, he had chosen Anne, Maurice of Saxony's daughter, who turned out a most unworthy helpmeet, distressing him by her outbursts of pride and temper, disgracing herself as mistress of Rubens, father of the painter, and finally having to be confined as a lunatic. By this marriage he hoped to make alliance with the German Protestant princes; and a son born to it he had baptized as a Lutheran, a sign how he was drifting away from the Catholicism impressed upon him at the court of Charles V. His mother and brothers being earnest Lutherans, the heroic Louis had been converted to French Calvinism, the doctrine finally embraced by William himself, who was never a bigot in any creed, and showed an example, rare in that age, of advocating toleration for almost all forms of Christian belief. Philip, for his part, had declared that he would doom his own son to the stake if tainted by heresy; and about this time befell the death of Don Carlos, an historic mystery as to which one guess is that he was murdered by his father on a secret sentence of the Inquisition. This ill-conditioned prince's fate has some connexion with the Netherlands through a story that among the causes of rancour between father and son was the latter's jealousy of Alva's governorship, a post in which he himself aspired to gain independence of paternal shackles. In any case he would have made as unfit a viceroy as a sorry martyr.

Alva now looked on himself as having accomplished his task.

Yet both he and his heartless employer began to suspect that they had overshot the mark of tyranny; and at Antwerp was proclaimed for the rebellious people a general pardon with many exceptions. Other misfortunes came to increase the misery they had worked. A quarrel with Elizabeth, through her seizing some specie on Spanish ships, broke off commercial relations between the two countries, completing the loss of a trade already crippled by the flight of merchants and artisans. In A.D. 1570 an overwhelming inroad of the sea, all along the coastline's broken dikes, cost some 100,000 lives with great destruction of property. There was danger of hostility both with England and France, where for a time the Huguenots were in treacherous favour at court. The crafty Elizabeth was not prepared for open war with Spain, nor did Philip avow his secret design to have her assassinated and Mary of Scots put on her throne; but he went so far as to urge Alva to an invasion of England, which that bold general declined as impracticable. Growing sick of his sanguinary job, he had added to the extermination of heresy the raising of heavy taxes, which provoked against him worldly minded spirits, less concerned on the score of religion. This burden provoked various demonstrations of resistance, at Brussels by a general strike and shutting of shops, so that it was brought to a state of starvation such as we have seen at Petrograd under the Bolshevik terror of our time. To add to the viceroy's difficulties, and the sufferings of the country, his ill-paid troops broke into chronic mutinies in which they helped themselves by indiscriminate plunder.

Heavily loaded with debt, deserted by most of his allies, and ordered by the Emperor to lay down his arms, William of Orange, patiently enduring the life of poverty and labour to which he had devoted himself, from beyond the frontier still watched for any chance to pierce some joint of Alva's armour. The first gleam of hope broke for him over the sea, where the men of Holland and Zealand were at home. Crews of refugees and adventurous spirits, calling themselves "Sea-Beggars," turned pirates to prey on Spanish commerce, not over-particular indeed where they made booty for sale in English or French ports. Orange, as a

sovereign prince, took on himself to issue commissions to them as privateers, while he tried to restrain the excesses of leaders like a descendant of De la Marek, that "Wild Boar of the Ardennes," who had sworn not to cut his hair and his nails before avenging the death of his kinsman Egmont. This worthy, his fleet of some score ships being turned out of Dover by Elizabeth, had to cast about for another harbourage. Sailing across to Brill, in the mouth of the Meuse, he captured it almost without resistance, then defended it by fire and water, cutting the dikes and burning the Spanish vessels venturing themselves on the flood. Like wildfire spread the news of this small success, celebrated by a doggerel rhyme :

*On the first of April,  
Duke Alva lost his Brill.\**

From an exploit stained by mockery and murdering of Catholic clergy, some of the pirates, grotesquely bedizened in Church vestments and other plunder, passed on to Flushing, the people of which rose against the Spaniards. The whole island of Walcheren was soon in revolt, and the flame leaped from town to town along the coast, fed as with oil by the blood shed to repress it in Rotterdam. Enkhuizen on the Zuyder Zee called upon William of Orange as the former Stadtholder ; Leyden and other cities declared for him ; the provincial States, meeting at Dordrecht, voted a supply of money for the patriotic cause, thus rekindled in one corner of the country.

Alva might have quickly quelled this rising had not his hands been tied in the south by a French invasion. The Huguenots, for a moment ascendant in the feeble Charles IX's counsels, had let loose upon him Louis of Nassau with a force that from Mons threatened Brussels. At the same time William crossed the Rhine with yet another army he had found means to raise. But once more fell on him a thunderstroke of misfortune. Not warmly received by the Walloon and Catholic people of Brabant, he was brought to a stand by news of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, Catherine de' Medici and the Guises having got the

\* There is a pun here, the Dutch word *brill* meaning "spectacles"

puppet king back into their hands. Hope of French aid being thus drowned in blood, he had nothing for it but to disband his ill-paid army, all but a faithful band with which he threw himself into Holland, vowing there to hold out to the end, or at least to find a grave. With Delft as his headquarters, he had at his back the watery coast, where a hard winter let Spanish infantry assault a frozen-up fleet, and thousands of both forces charged each other on skates.

Free from danger in the south, Alva could set about subduing the northern provinces by his favourite weapon of massacre. At one town he drowned five hundred people tied back to back ; at another he left only three score alive. Such atrocities inspired the burghers of Haarlem to a desperate resistance, in which women took their share ; and when, after seven months, famine forced them to surrender on terms, their punishment was nearly four thousand executions. Alkmaar was saved from a like fate by the heroic operation of cutting the dikes to flood out the besiegers. Alva occupying Amsterdam, William was pent into a narrow strip of coastland and islands, without resources save a little private aid from England, Elizabeth still avoiding open rupture with Spain. In the see-saw of politics at the French court, Louis of Nassau had there again got means to lead a fresh force from the Rhine ; but before William could join him, this gallant soldier and his young brother Henry were slain in a crushing defeat. It was in this darkest hour of his fortunes that the head of the family declared himself a Calvinist, who to some appeared but a lukewarm one when he exerted himself to prevent such outrages as murder of priests in reprisal for Alva's wholesale atrocities.

But now the Beggars had important successes by sea ; while their military defeats were to some extent neutralized by mutinies among the Spanish troops. And in A.D. 1573 a breath of relief was drawn on the recall of Alva, so hated that he could hardly show himself in Brussels. Both he and his master began to doubt if terror were the best means of government ; so his successor, Don Luis de Requesens, had instructions to try for some arrangement with Orange, clearly recognized as the soul of

the revolt. Protracted negotiations, however, showed no compromise possible between the bigoted absolutism and the freedom of conscience insisted upon by one and the other party. But the very fact of a disposition to treat betrayed how the long struggle was telling on Spain; and the patriots were encouraged by an exploit which may be looked on as its turning-point, the famous relief of Leyden, months blockaded and besieged by the Spaniards. Not strong enough to resist them on land, William again had resource to cutting the dikes. A timely storm brought the flood up to the walls to bear a fleet loaded with provisions for the starving citizens; and the besiegers retired in hasty confusion, leaving hundreds drowned in their trenches. To commemorate this deliverance was founded the University of Leyden, that has been the *alma mater* of many a Puritan and Presbyterian youth from over the sea.

William was now formally recognized as Regent by the cities of Holland, which yet did not give him full confidence nor as liberal supplies of money as he sought for the common cause. He had no personal ambition, always willing to accept a protectorate, even sovereignty, from England or France, any power strong enough to save the country from Spain. He gave much offence to the Calvinists dominant here by trying to moderate their intolerance of Catholics. Another stumbling-block in the eyes of some of his adherents was when he rivalled Henry VIII in the matter of divorce, marrying a daughter of the Duke of Montpensier, a renegade nun, while his former wife was still alive, whom he took on himself to repudiate as insane. But in spite of carpings and oppositions, it was generally felt that on him depended the country's hopes of freedom; and he exercised a practical dictatorship in Holland and Zealand, joined in a union that was to be the germ of a new nation.

Before long he was able to extend his authority. The new governor's death throwing the Spanish oppression out of gear, this opportunity to shake it off was seized all over the country. An assemblage of deputies from the seventeen provinces proclaimed a union for getting rid of the Spaniards and the edicts against heresy; and William was accepted as its head, still with

some pretence of his acting as the ill-advised king's lieutenant. The Spanish troops held the fortresses ; but their mutinies and outrages made them more than ever hateful. The most resounding of their outrages was the " Spanish Fury " at Antwerp, a massacre deadlier than that of St. Bartholomew. Amid the general confusion, Antwerp had kept its fame as the richest city in Europe, whose wealth now tempted the Spanish garrison to an orgy of plunder. Beginning with a cannonade from the citadel, thousands of soldiers charged into the streets, horse and foot, bearing down the resistance of the armed citizens and of Walloon troops called to their aid, some of whom indeed deserted or joined the mutineers. Lit by a conflagration of the finest quarter of the city, the work of pillage went on for three days with unspeakable atrocities. Several thousands were butchered, burned or drowned, many others being savagely tortured to make them give up their valuables. By indiscriminate robbery that spared priests and churches no more than foreign merchants and warehouses, the lawless soldiery is said to have made booty to the value of some millions, wasted by them in riot and debauchery. One result of this devastation was to wither the prosperity of Antwerp for generations ; another to turn the shuddering nation towards William of Orange as its deliverer.

The next governor sent by Philip was the victor of Lepanto, Don John of Austria, Charles V's illegitimate son ; but that doughty soldier made no match for the prince in statecraft. He had to withdraw the detested Spaniards and make other concessions before being admitted into Brussels, from which he saw well to take himself off after a few weeks, letting William make a triumphal entry, hailed with enthusiastic welcome. A new complication now arose in the intervention of the Emperor, who began to fear that the Low Countries might be lost to the pretensions of his realm as well as to Spain. He sent his young brother Matthias as a candidate for the governorship, whom William accepted as a figure-head, though he would have preferred the French royal Duke of Alençon, or Elizabeth, who now began to show more active sympathy with the rebels, all these Powers being concerned as to the strengthening of one another



THE RELIEF OF LEYDEN





by such a valuable acquisition of territory. Don John soon was got out of the way by fever, made fatal, it is thought, by the chagrin of his false position.

The next move in the game was Philip's sending another foreign army under his nephew the Prince of Parma, one of the best generals of the time. He soon drove the ill-organized patriot forces from the south, which, less hearty in support of William than the stubborn north, once more submitted to this conqueror. In the Brabant and the Walloon provinces, Protestantism had been effectually crushed, and its people were turned against the Union by a Calvinist persecution of Catholicism, which William in vain tried to bridle. He saw himself forced to work for a narrower union of the western and northern States, of which he offered a limited sovereignty to Alençon, now Duke of Anjou, on condition of military aid from France. This worthless prince came to Antwerp to take up a post of which all the real power was in William's hands; but from the first he disgusted the Flemings by his vices and his levity, and he failed in an attempt at making himself absolute by a wanton attack of his troops on Antwerp, known as the "French Fury," luckily repressed before it had done so much mischief as that of the Spanish butchers. William, in his patient policy, tried to staunch this ill blood, thereby making himself unpopular at Antwerp, from which he withdrew to Delft, henceforth again his headquarters. It is surprising that he thought well to back such a creature as Anjou, especially as there was a Protestant rival candidate in John Casimir of the Palatinate. For himself he steadily refused all avowed sovereignty, accepting only the Countship of Holland, from which he still laboured to erect a national Government under almost any head but Philip. Had Anjou succeeded in establishing himself as king, and also in his suit to Queen Elizabeth, all the Low Countries might have now been helped to shake off the Spanish yoke. But that disappointing and disappointed prince soon went back to die in France; and Elizabeth went on shilly-shallying with her friends and enemies as with her suitors.

In his last days, Orange saw his work but half successful.

The ten Catholic provinces of the south, where the revolt had begun, drew away from the seven sturdier provinces of the north, the one part falling back under Spanish viceroyalty, the other maintaining its independence and growing into the Dutch republic that in the next century would contend with its neighbour kingdoms by land and sea. But as our subject is the Belgian side, thus sundered from the rest of the Netherlands, let us pass quickly over the story of Holland's long fight for freedom.

Nearly a generation was gone since Philip, on leaving the Low Countries, bitterly reproached William as the backbone of their disaffection; and so he had proved all along. Again and again beaten in the field, baffled in his attempts at conciliation, deserted by his wrangling allies, driven often almost to despair, Orange had raised afresh his overthrown standard to chequer the red and black tyranny of Spain. The King, for all his hatred, was fain to try the effect of bribes on an adversary who sought nothing for himself, but who in the public cause had fallen from princely wealth into debt and poverty. Finding this champion no more to be bought than overawed, Philip had set a price on his head, assassins being repeatedly employed to cut short a life grown prematurely old before the age of fifty. Several attempts having failed, one at Antwerp had been nearly successful, when a young Spaniard wounded the prince severely with a point-blank pistol-shot. Two years later, one Balthazar Gerard earned the infamy for which, the murderer having perished under horrible tortures, glorying in the crime that made him a martyr in bigoted eyes, Philip rewarded his family with a title of nobility and an annuity on his victim's estates. At Delft, A.D. 1584, this crafty or crazy fanatic, feigning conversion to Calvinism, obtained from his victim's charity means to buy a pistol with which he shot William to death in a dark corner of his house. He who had been long known as father of his country's freedom, was about to be formally recognized as Holland's sovereign when thus cut off, deeply mourned in the new Union, while by its enemies his death was hailed as a triumph. "As long as he lived," is Motley's epitaph, "he was the guiding star of a whole brave nation; and when he died, the little children cried in the streets."



DEATH OF WILLIAM THE SILENT



By four wives, the last a daughter of the great Huguenot, Coligny, he left, besides a long row of girls, three sons. The eldest, kidnapped to be brought up in Spain, came back a Catholic and a courtier, a renegade from the family. His much younger brother Maurice, not out of his teens at the father's death, played a man's part in the continued struggle that had a breathing space in 1609, when exhausted Spain concluded a twelve years truce with the United Netherlands she had for half a century failed to subdue. This is no place to dwell on the further vicissitudes of the war, one of them being that when our Elizabeth foresaw how its adjacent coast made a base for the Great Armada enterprise, she interfered more actively in Holland, sending her favourite Leicester as a governor, who did not recommend himself to the Dutch, and was ill backed by his parsimonious mistress. What we remember best from that episode is the death of Sir Philip Sydney at Zutphen.

Maurice, more of a soldier than a statesman, and of less noble temper than his father, had to deal with troubles both within as well as without. Religious as well as political strife raged in the young republic, threatening its disruption by civil war. By high-handed means he overcame his ill-wishers and made himself virtual ruler of the country, once again forced to defend its freedom in what was a side-show of the great Thirty Years War that had Gustavus Adolphus as its Protestant hero; and it was not till its conclusion by the Peace of Westphalia, A.D. 1648, that Holland's independence was formally admitted. In the early stages of this war, Maurice died, succeeded by his youngest brother, Frederick William, as Captain-General and Stadtholder, who showed himself still more a chip of the old block, being both soldier and statesman. He ruled with almost royal state and power, which stirred republican jealousy; then his son William was not the man to hold down opposition. When the latter died after a few years, the House of Orange went under eclipse, from which it rose to fresh celebrity in his posthumous son, William III of England, destined to save Europe, not from Spanish, but French domination.

## VII

### THE GAME OF KINGS

THUS came back under its Spanish yoke the country which we may now call Belgium, though still it would be best known outside as the Flanders in which Uncle Toby's comrades fought and swore so terribly. We must bear in mind, however, that the eastern side was not Flemish but Walloon, with a language related rather to French than German, and a Catholic population that recruited Philip's best troops. This side had soonest rallied to the heir of its old lords; the Flemish burghers held out more stiffly, with a wistful eye on the stubborn freedom of their northern kinsmen. Antwerp was the last great Flemish city to let itself be blockaded and starved into surrender for want of expected aid from Elizabeth. Twenty years later Ostend was long gallantly held by Dutch and English defenders, a feat of arms not appealing to spiritless King Jamie when one of his first measures on the English throne was to make peace with Spain. That long siege is said to have given fashion the new colour, Isabelle, from as base an origin as the coal tar that has in our day yielded more showy tints: to encourage the besiegers, the Archduchess Isabella vowed not to change her linen till the fall of Ostend, then, the siege lasting three years dyed on her a yellowish hue copied by flattering ladies.

At the close of his life, Philip gave over Flanders as a vice-royalty for his daughter Isabella, married to the Archduke Albert of Austria, who had begun life as a cardinal, but we have seen how readily Papal dispensations could untie such knots when orthodox statecraft was concerned. The illustrious pair were welcomed in Brussels, where they summoned the States-General, and talked of restoring old rights and privileges. But

what they wanted of this parliament was money to make war on the young Prince of Orange ; and it was presently dismissed, not to be called together again for a generation. When the Archduke died childless, his wife became a mere regent for the decrepit court of Spain, that set her upon irritating Belgium into fresh grudges against the foreigners. But Protestant bigotry made an antidote to Catholic oppression, for when Maurice of Orange sought to deliver Brabant, the Dutch Calvinists showed such a persecuting intolerance of its prevailing creed as went to deepen the cleavage between the two peoples.

For the submitted provinces, moreover, the yoke was now padded by a softening of the tyranny that had cost both tyrant and victims so dear. Before his death, Philip must have seen reason to suspect that cruelty did not pay either in religion or politics. All the treasures of the New World brought into Spanish ports had not been enough to keep contented and serviceable his wasting armies in the north, whose frequent mutinies blunted their victories, while sharpening the hatred that beset their citadels. In one generation, senseless autocracy had beggared the wealthiest dependency of Spain, drained of its best blood in half a million of people butchered or driven into exile. Princely patronage still preserved for it renown in art and scholarship ; but its commercial and industrial strength had ebbed away to the free provinces or overseas to enrich other lands. Antwerp, with the mouth of the Scheldt closed by Holland, passed into a long period of eclipse. Other great cities, like Bruges and Ghent, were falling in picturesque decay. Countless towns and villages had been trampled into ruin. The one place that prospered was Brussels, growing in importance as seat of the foreign Government. And reconquered Belgium's chief loss was in that nascent sense of nationality, that took thriving root by the canals and estuaries of Holland, while the southern provinces sank back into their old position as a strip of borderland, separating hostile Powers that would make no scruple of trespassing on it at any bidding of interest or ambition.

Throughout the next century, and longer, Belgium has little history unless as a stage for the quarrels of neighbour nations.

Her cities, valleys, and low hills became as it were the pegs, holes, chequers, squares of a board for playing the game of kings, in which some of its provinces might pass from hand to hand as counters or forfeits. So packed was this period with battles and sieges, that it would take a larger volume than the present to give a panorama of them ; and the reader must be content with little beyond a mere catalogue of the successive games, or rubbers, that have afforded matter for so many a pen. It was on the eve of our Civil War that James Howell, in his "Foreign Travel," first happily dubbed this region "the very Cockpit of Christendom, the School of Arms, and Rendezvous of all adventurous Spirits and Cadets, which makes most Nations of Europe beholden to them for Soldiers."

The first match was the long one between Catholic and Protestant Germany, implicating the renewed struggle of Holland against Spain. Protestantism had now a fitful ally in France, where the all-powerful Cardinal Richelieu, though he made war against Huguenots at home, was concerned to curb the power of the Austrian kinship. The most shining hero of this Thirty Years War was, of course, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden ; and in the Netherlands field, Maurice of Orange and his brother showed themselves born leaders of men under difficulties. Maurice had a towardly pupil in Vicomte Turenne, younger son of the Duke of Bouillon, whose tiny border State was soon to be absorbed into France by Richelieu's policy of turning its vassals into courtiers of the crown.

The great Turenne was one of those shy, weakly, thoughtful lads that seem meant by nature rather "to go with Sir Priest than Sir Knight," yet from childhood he burned inwardly with the martial ardour with which his Calvinist father had followed Henry of Navarre's white plume. French books of the "Self-Help" order tell how in boyhood he tried to harden himself for soldiering, till at fourteen he had the satisfaction of being apprenticed to the art of war under his uncle Maurice, himself a commander while still in his teens. He made this nephew begin from the bottom, sharing the duties and hardships of a private soldier, who soon earned rapid promotion. As a captain, young Turenne





CHATEAU DE ROULLON IN THE SEMOIS VALLEY



distinguished himself at the siege of Bois le Duc, and at nineteen he was a colonel in the French army, beloved as few by his men, through the care he showed not only for their discipline but their welfare.

This hero's victories for France were on all the borders where she came into touch with the weakening power of Spain ; and only now and then was he engaged in and about the Netherlands. Here, after the death of Maurice, his brother Frederick Henry, and his cousin of Nassau, moved their pieces against such able Italian strategists as Spinola and Piccolomini. It is suggested that professional soldiers of this stamp were not too keen to come to checkmate in the game that gave them a good living ; but they at least countered moves by which Belgium might have been divided between France and Holland. On the side of France arose among her princes another born general, Louis de Bourbon, Duke d'Enghien, best known as the great Condé, who, like Turenne, from an unpromising boyhood, sprang up precociously into a doughty soldier. When the war in Flanders had flickered for a time, and seemed like to be extinguished by the death of Richelieu and of Louis XIII, Condé, in his twenty-first year, broke away from the leading-strings of a veteran marshal given him as tutor, to win the famous victory of Rocroi, in the Ardennes region. Here was smashed the old prestige of the Spanish infantry, nearly its whole force engaged being killed or taken prisoners, all the artillery also captured, the cavalry saving itself by flight. Had the young general been well backed, he might now have conquered Flanders, but had to content himself with clearing the enemy out of the Moselle Valley before his triumphant return to Paris.

The child king of France's government now fell into the hands of Cardinal Mazarin, exercising over the Regent, Anne of Austria, a still more masterful influence than Richelieu's over Louis XIII. Shifty politician as he was, he kept to his predecessor's aims, yet not whole-heartedly when the Catholic house of Austria was like to be humbled by Swedes and such like Protestant upstarts, as also by fresh achievements that might exalt Condé and Turenne above the Queen and her unpopular favourite. Turenne, rewarded

by a marshal's baton, was not allowed to push too far his bold attacks on Germany, nor Condé to follow up another great victory over the Spaniards at Lens in Artois. Then came the Peace of Westphalia, by which the independence of Holland was recognized after eighty years; but when Austria had retired from the exhausting struggle, Spain still continued fitfully at war with France, itself soon lamed by internal dissensions, its two foreign rulers, the Regent and her favourite, proving less able than Richelieu to domineer over proud princes and factious nobles.

That futile Civil War nicknamed the Fronde from a comparison with the sling fights of schoolboys, was an extraordinary imbroglio of frivolous conspiracies, personal jealousies, selfish aims, shifting of interest, and changing of sides, in which ladies and their love affairs played as great a part as Puritan zealots and constitutional patriotism in our sterner revolution, then drawing to an end. The Fronde began with an attempt of Mazarin and his infatuated mistress to overawe the Parliament of Paris, that body of hereditary lawyers that, since the suppression of the States-General, was the nation's best advocate against despotism. Paris broke out into barricades, its mob stirred up to back the Parliament by intriguing agitators like Cardinal de Retz. The court withdrew, calling to its aid Condé, with the laurels of Lens fresh upon him. "The Prince," as he was now among his cousins of the blood-royal, declared himself for the Queen, while advising concessions to the Parliament's just demands. His sister, the Duchess de Longueville, took a leading part among the Frondeurs, that counted also their brother, Conti, as a less serviceable partisan. Turenne, sore from a family grievance, since Richelieu had deprived his brother of quasi-independent principedom at Sedan, was for seducing his army to revolt, and on the failure of this attempt took refuge for a time in Holland.

The Court and the Parliament came to terms, Mazarin slinking back to Paris under the wing of Condé. But these two could not amicably divide authority over the Queen; and a welter of intrigue brought about the arrest of Condé and Conti, for the moment in the shadow of unpopularity with both parties. The

adventurous ladies of their family kept the war alive in the provinces ; then by and by a recrudescence of hatred for Mazarin drove him out of France and set Condé at liberty. For the moment he found himself again at the head of affairs ; but he could not ride the waves of faction like the ranks of war. Mazarin, in his exile, continued to dominate the Queen's mind ; and Condé made such a poor job of trying to keep the peace among all parties, that, afraid of another treacherous arrest, he escaped from Paris to raise forces in the south. Mazarin came back to France, gathering an army to be led by Turenne, returned to allegiance after, in the general topsy-turveydom of affairs, having joined the Spaniards to attack his own country. The two great French generals now opposed each other, Turenne having under him our banished Duke of York, whose brother, the future Charles II, served at one time on the other side. The most notable event of this strange conflict was a series of fights about Paris, when Condé escaped destruction by being admitted within the walls, after his cousin, the "Grande Mademoiselle," had turned the cannon of the Bastille on the royal army. But his presence there provoked tumults threatening anarchy and playing into the hands of the court, which once more gained the submission of the capital, Condé flying to Flanders, to form in turn a resentful alliance with Spain. As leader of the enemy he had so gloriously vanquished at Rocroi, ten years before, he now retook that and other border fortresses. But he did not make a congenial comrade for the sluggish and jealous Spanish generals, nor a match for his old brother-in-arms, Turenne, now playing the game against him on the Flemish border. Condé, indeed, won a trick in the relief of Valenciennes ; as Turenne had baffled him at his investment of Arras, and then by assailing the Spanish leaders, rather than the more wide-awake French prince, who was able to cover their retreat in confusion.

It was the befitting fortune of both these great generals to fare ill when acting as renegades to their own country. Turenne's tergiversations included a profession of Catholicism, like other Huguenot-bred nobles of France in those days. There is a more doubtful story that Condé was ready to sell his nominal faith as

well as his honour, by an offer to turn Protestant if England would take his part against France. Cromwell, concerned about the growing might of the Dutch navy and the hot rivalry of Holland in Eastern trade, was willing to take a hand in the game on one or other side, yet not with a single eye to the main chance, for before coming to terms with France, he insisted on its influence being used to stop the persecution in Savoy of those "slaughtered saints" lamented by Milton. His bargain with Mazarin was that England should be put in possession of Dunkirk, now besieged by the French with the co-operation of an English fleet and a few thousand of the Commonwealth's sturdy soldiers. To raise the siege, the Spanish army advanced through the coast dunes, among which it fought a battle with so little leadership that Condé, in contempt of his pig-headed colleagues, pronounced it lost almost as soon as begun. Sure enough it was lost so decisively that Dunkirk and Gravelines fell into the hands of Turenne, for a time to be held by England as a consolation for Calais.

That blow stunned the failing pride of Spain. She hastened to end the long contest by the Peace of the Pyrenees, the principal point in which was that Louis XIV, now of age, should marry the Infanta, with a resignation of any right she might have to Spanish inheritance. France was to keep the province of Artois, with Arras, Ypres, and other towns; but further conquests in Flanders were given up. Condé went back to his own country, to be received as a repentant prodigal. Mazarin had by this time stamped out the embers of the Fronde, and stood at such a height of power that he sought princely, even royal alliances for his nieces, well dowered by this foreigner's career of avaricious corruption. Next year he died, as not long afterwards the Queen-regent, who probably in more than one sense had been all along his infatuated mistress. It was about this time that the "Man with the Iron Mask" makes a so puzzling appearance in history; and one of the guesses as to his identity is that he was a son of that illicit love. For the most dramatic solution of the mystery may be consulted the later volumes of that long-strung romance M. Dumas spun out of the Memoirs of D'Artagnan, itself a fabrication, so that the false heraldry of fiction upon fiction

mars the scutcheon of those dashing Musketeers whose adventures cover France's subjection to usurping priests.

But a new era was at hand. On the young King being asked who was to be the next Ministers, he announced his taking of the reins into his own hands. *L'État, c'est moi*, was the motto of a reign that lasted over three score and ten years, well served by illustrious generals and by ministers like Fouquet, Colbert, Louvois, often hampered and thwarted by their imperious master. After a boyhood of alarms, privations, wanderings, at twenty-one the ill-educated Louis XIV shot up every inch a king; and France, weary of civil strife, bowed down before this dazzling idol, the Grand Monarch as it dubbed him, his own head too soon turned by vain glory hardening into cold, selfish pride. In his complacent belief that he represented the all-highest for his people, and in his ambition to be the war-lord of Europe, Louis had much in common with the Kaiser of our day; and his first innocent victim was Belgium, a Naboth's vineyard for him all through his long reign.

He succeeded to a bankrupt throne, but after the finances had been put in better order by confiscations and high-handed exactions, his first care was to treat himself to such an army as no other king could boast. The art of war was now developing by improvements continued throughout this reign of campaigns. Regular soldiery, a name implying pay, had gradually taken the place of feudal levies, and chivalrous leaders became officers of trained and disciplined regiments. Armour had been going out of use, leather making a lighter equipment. The proportion of heavily armed horsemen was lessened; and the cavalry of that day ran rather to the regiments from a dragon ornament on their muskets called dragoons, prepared to fight on foot when their horses had hurried them to the firing-point. In the infantry, pikes were more and more being exchanged for fire-arms. It was Louis' General Martinet, a strict disciplinarian whose name has given a word to our language also, who is doubtfully credited with the idea of combining pike and musket by screwing into the barrel a pointed blade such as seems to have got its name from being fabricated at Bayonne. The inconvenience of that was

spiking the weapon as a gun ; then the swift onrush on Highlanders at Killiecrankie put our General Mackay upon a way of fixing the bayonet without obstructing the muzzle. The pike, with a hint of battle-axe, remained as a halbert, an ornamental ensign in the hands of under-officers. Another new-fangled weapon was the grenade, a hand-bomb flung by strong grenadiers, who came to be ranked apart as the tallest companies. Artillery was much improved. When river-bridges were commonly guarded by walled towns, we have seen how sieges made a frequent feature of campaigning ; and these assaults, in the hailing of bombshells behind the fortifications, got a new terror that sometimes drove citizens to rise upon their defenders.

Vauban introduced a more efficient art of fortifying and besieging, by earthworks rather than solid masonry. Marches were now better based on magazines of stores and ammunition. Armies grew more into well-gear'd machines, in which the soldier was but a pawn in that deadly game which :

*Were their subjects wise,  
Kings would not play at.*

Alas ! it has of late appeared in question whether more or less freed peoples are always much wiser than kings and emperors in their heyday, when they prided themselves on deeds that, in private life, would count as robbery and murder.

In A.D. 1667 Louis undertook his first military promenade in Belgium, where he held conquest open to him in virtue of his Spanish wife's rights, formally renounced as they had been. Like our modern war-lord, this would-be Cæsar did not much risk his own person under fire ; but when his able generals had done the rough work of investing and bombarding, Louis, with his train of courtiers, mistresses, and parasites, drove from Paris in pomp to accept the honours of victory. Turenne, with the King as figure-head of the army, made a swoop on ill-defended Flanders, taking Lille, now its richest city, as well as other places. Condé, called back to activity by the War Minister Louvois' jealousy of Turenne, overran Franche Comté. These illustrious generals were keen to go on carrying all before them ; but found them-



selves restrained by prudent counsels. Other countries were taking alarm at the young King's nascent ambition. Charles II, who had made haste to sell Dunkirk to Louis, was not yet so abject a pensioner but that he had to consult his parliament. A triple alliance between England, Holland and Sweden warned the French king to make peace, giving up Franche Comté, but keeping a slice of the Flemish frontier.

He withdrew only for a further spring. The presumptuous interference of Holland had provoked him to stretch his grasp over all the Netherlands; and the strong Dutch navy was a challenge to his design of mastery by sea as well as land; like the Kaiser, he was bent on glorifying himself by a fleet and colonial expansion. Our ignoble Charles let himself be bribed off from the Triple Alliance. Minor German states, more com-  
plaisant than modern Belgium, gave his troops a passage along the Rhine. So, A.D. 1672, Holland was wantonly attacked by the greatest power of the time, after its naval rivalry with England had crippled its commerce and threatened Amsterdam with the fate of Antwerp. This little asylum of free thought, ill-prepared for defence by land, was weakened by old standing party strife between pure republicans, now headed by the De Witte brothers, and those willing to continue some modified princship of the Orange family. So high had that house been raised by William the Silent and his martial sons, that their heir in the next generation married a daughter of Charles I, whose son, now grown to manhood, was the second William of Orange, so well known to English readers as Macaulay's hero. Strong spirit in a feeble body, general often defeated but never discouraged, brave in battle as wary in council, at the age of twenty-two he presented himself a David against the French Goliath, with whom all his life would be a wrestle.

Like other democracies we know of, Holland had neglected its land defences, persuaded by the Pensionary De Witte that it had nothing to fear from France. That sudden danger of invasion weighed down the scale of De Witte's influence, and sent up young William's. Called on to face the greatest generals and best trained soldiers of Europe, what could he do but give ground

with his raw forces, behind them as a counsel of despair assembling a huge fleet of transports in which free Dutchmen, if it came to the worst, might escape to found a new Holland in their Eastern colonies ? The French crossed the Rhine and the Yssel, snapping up one fortress after another. When they had pressed on almost to Amsterdam, the States were fain to sue for peace. But Louis made so exorbitant demands, that Orange led them to that last resource of his forbear, " better a drowned land than a lost land." The De Wittes being murdered by a furious mob, and William given hereditary princship in hope of help from his English cousins, the sluices were opened, again to turn the low fields into an inland sea, from which towns and villages stood up like islands, to be assailed only upon the winter ice, while De Ruyter's prowess on the high seas warded off invasion from the coast.

That flood washed back the French onset, and gave time for neighbours to band themselves against the King's menacing ambition. Old enemies, Spain and Austria, came to the aid of Holland, as France and England in our day forgot Waterloo. A rising new Power appeared on the European parade ground ; the Elector of Brandenburg sent a score thousand soldiers who at the end of the century were to win for his son a crown of Prussia. The war, mainly waged over the prostrate body of Belgium, spread into Germany, where the Italian Montecuculli played a skilful game with Turenne on the chessboard between the Rhine and the Black Forest. Before being killed by a chance cannon ball, Turenne had made a blot on his fame by cruel devastation of the Palatinate, whose Electoral prince in a last faint echo of chivalry challenged him to single combat. Germany's most impressive ruin, the blown-up castle of Heidelberg, stands a monument of that cruel French warfare. At Seneffe, southwards from Waterloo, Condé fought with William of Orange his last great battle, a double one claimed as a victory by both sides over some twenty thousand corpses. But the school of those masters sent out new generals, Luxembourg, Catinal, Villeroy : and fresh food for powder was still forthcoming in myriads of victims to one man's pride. The battles of Steinkirk and Neerwinden were won by the French ; Namur, Mons, Charleroi and



HEIDELBERG



other places taken one by one ; Brussels was barbarously bombarded ; the allies of Holland did not pull steadily together ; but always that obstinate Prince of Orange got up from defeat once more to withstand the conqueror, who, after all, was first to grow tired of it.

For a quarter of a century lasted that slaughterous game, with short breathing spaces of truce. A turning-point in it was James II, still more subservient to Louis than his brother, being knocked out, and his son-in-law, William, coming back into the ring as King of England, itself readier to fight for freedom than for bigoted despotism. The rule then being for armies to lie idle in winter quarters, he was able to alternate his campaigns with persuasion of our not over complaisant Parliament. In 1697 the war ended with the peace of Ryswick that left France only a part of its ill-gotten gains in Flanders. But too clearly this peace was seen to be only an interval of war, bound to break out again as soon as the decrepit King of Spain's death should add to the stakes vast estates that in other hands might still be valuable, a prospect which seems to have prompted Louis to slackening for a little his long effort to extend his northern frontier.

All through those costly campaigns, Louis had hampered himself by senseless extravagance and mismanagement. By quarrelling with the Dutch, he closed his ports to customers for the industries Colbert was diligently fostering in France. Besides lavishing money on favourites and bastards, this king had an expensive taste for architecture. Enormous sums were spent on the palace of Versailles, the building of which is said to have cost as many lives as a battle. His crowning act of folly was the persecution of the Protestants, some two millions of whom were among the most orderly, intelligent and industrious of Frenchmen. In the insolence of youth, he had not been over civil to the Pope, even threatening to march on Rome and laying hands on the papal enclave of Avignon ; but all along he showed his father's dislike to the Huguenots. As he advanced in years he thought to make up for a life of self-indulgence by heartless bigotry that varnished the vices of his court under a fashion of

hypocrisy. Egged on by Jesuit priests and by the buffoon Scarron's narrow-mindedly orthodox widow, Madame de Maintenon, herself a renegade from Protestantism, whom the King privately married when tired of lighter loves, in A.D. 1685 he repealed the Edict of Nantes, by which Henry IV had given liberty of conscience to his Protestant subjects.

The Protestants were strongest in the south of France, a majority there in some parts, where now they found themselves martyred by the infamous "Dragonnades," at much the same time as Claverhouse's troopers were hunting down Scottish Covenanters. Dragoons, crack troops of the French army, were turned loose upon the Huguenot communities to curse, carouse and harry them into conformity. Worthy and law-abiding citizens were thrown into loathsome prisons; families were broken up, children being torn from their mothers to be reared by priests and nuns; the armed missionaries of the court plundered and tortured among high and low. By such means about half the Huguenots could be superficially converted, herded to mass like sheep, or nursing their heartfelt faith in secret conventicles. Hundreds of thousands escaped to Switzerland, to Holland, to England, carrying with them the best of French craftsmanship to strike root in foreign soil. Tens of thousands settled in London alone, bringing a thriving silk-manufacture to Spitalfields. One of France's best soldiers, Marshal Schomberg, was driven over to her enemies, to die at William's Battle of the Boyne. Among the wild hills of the Cevennes, the persecuted faith took a fanatical form, inspiring a fierce outburst of partisan warfare, with atrocious cruelties on both sides, that was not crushed for years by the King's veteran generals and such troops as they could spare from his quest of glory abroad. That eccentric genius, the self-exiled Queen Christina of Sweden, might well describe this persecution as a king's cutting off his left with his own right arm.

In this soul-trying time, the Belgian border became a scene of perilous adventure for Huguenots seeking asylum in Holland. That was proclaimed a high crime; and at the frontier towns a sharp watch would be kept for refugees making the attempt in

one way or other. Girls, some ladies of age and position, were fain to slink out of the kingdom disguised as footboys, as beggars, even as wandering lunatics. Dumas might have made a thrilling romance out of true stories of men who slipped through to lose themselves in the Ardennes wilds, sometimes to blunder back on to French territory and fall into the hands of spies or informers. A chain of border fortresses, like Charleroi, was now held by Dutch garrisons as a barrier between France and Spain, and these made cities of refuge for the fugitives, who found some countenance also from the officials of orthodox Spain, and in the Bishop of Liége's independent territory. Even when caught, the poor adventurers had chances of sympathy in their misfortune. Here and there an officer, disgusted with the duty put upon him, treated such prisoners with consideration, perhaps winked at their escape. Judges gave them hints how to plead against tyrannous law. They had a right of appeal to the *parlement* of Tournai, not too keen about condemning of its own motion guiltless offenders. Tournai was divided by the Scheldt between two episcopal jurisdictions, in one of which the bishop inclined to deal mildly with heretics, while on the other, we must be sorry to hear, the pious Fénélon let himself be a sharper tool of persecution. Under the slow procedure of the provincial court, the welfare of the accused seems to have at one time much depended on which side of the river he was imprisoned. But the compassion of local lawyers, some of them perhaps Protestants at heart, was rebuked by peremptory orders from Paris to show no mercy to this unpardonable class of criminal, whom they were bidden condemn to lifelong service in the king's galleys among the most hardened of malefactors.

A squadron of those huge row-boats, worked by rows of heavy sweeps, had been brought round from the Mediterranean to Dunkirk, thence to attack English and Dutch shipping less efficiently than the submarines of our day. They were at a disadvantage on the boisterous waves of the Channel, yet in smooth spells they could close upon becalmed sailing ships to throw on board their detachment of marines. Sometimes they caught a Tartar, as when a Dutch admiral disguised his men-of-war as

crippled merchantmen, suddenly to round on the assailants pressing up to their expected prey ; then at close quarters cannon and musketry could make fearful havoc on a galley's exposed decks, both among the fighting men and the galley-slaves helplessly chained to their benches, where they might find themselves running the gauntlet of a broadside of guns firing point-blank into them from above. The naked wretches had to tug at the oars in gangs, spurred through an hour or more's spell of exertion by curses and lashes from callous overseers running along a raised platform between the rowers on each side. A visit to the galleys being quite a fashionable amusement, brutal captains would sometimes show off by forcing the speed till the whole gang sank exhausted. Cruel punishments were showered upon the hardened crews, most of them rightly or wrongly sentenced for vulgar crimes, along with a mixture of Turkish prisoners. Common convicts, we are told, like the thief on the Cross, were disposed to respect their undeserving fellows in affliction ; and sometimes the rough officials showed a certain indulgence towards them. But at the best, it was a sore ordeal for gentlemen, clergymen, and scholars, whose life on the galleys is movingly described in the "Memoirs of a French Protestant," translated by Goldsmith. Their harshest oppressors were often the proselyting chaplains attached to the service ; but one of these, M. Bion, was so struck by the constancy of such innocent sufferers that he turned Protestant and wrote a denunciation of their ill-usage. At the peace of Utrecht, when the fortifications of Dunkirk came to be demolished, like a hornet's nest, Queen Anne was moved to intercede on behalf of the martyrs for conscience' sake, begging Louis to release them, as he grudgingly did in part, leaving it to the dissolute regency of Orleans to show itself more humane ; and it was not till the middle of the eighteenth century that Voltairean mockery shamed the French Government out of so barbarous persecution.

The peace of Utrecht brings us well out of the seventeenth century. At the end of it had died Charles II of Spain, leaving his crown to be scrambled for in the widespread war of the Spanish Succession, which the Powers of Europe had vainly



sought to avert by dividing the prize in anticipation. Through the blood of Spanish princesses there were three rival heirships in the field, France, Austria and Bavaria, the last, as least disturbing to the balance of power, favoured by the enemies of Bourbon and Hapsburg ambition. By a secret Partition Treaty between Louis and William, it had been agreed that the Electoral Prince of Bavaria should succeed to Spain and the Netherlands ; but his death upset this arrangement, in lieu of which the chief Powers proposed giving the Italian possessions of Spain to France, and the rest to the Archduke Charles, the Emperor's second son. This dividing of their territory by outsiders naturally provoked the proud grandees of Spain, who worried the moribund King, the Pope's authority also being brought to bear on his feeble mind, out of his leanings to Austria, and into making a will in favour of the young Duke of Anjou, second son of the dead dauphin ; then he took possession with the consent of his grandfather, all pledges to the contrary disregarded. "The Pyrenees are no more," was Louis' significant exclamation.

William, accepted in England as a least of evils, and since Mary's death seated so unsurely on their joint throne that more than once he thought of deserting it, was for the moment unable to do more than protest against that breach of faith. But Louis played into his hands by what was perhaps the most generous action of a selfish life, the courteous countenance he gave to the exiled Stuarts. On James II's death, his ostentatious recognition of the Old Pretender as King of England put John Bull's back up to change a Tory for a Whig majority in Parliament ; and the unloved Dutchman found himself in a position to form the Grand Alliance of England, Holland and Austria against the aggressive policy of France, displayed in Louis' seizing the Belgium frontier fortresses. But before William could take the field against his old enemy, he was ignobly killed A.D. 1702, by his horse stumbling over a mole-heap in the park of Hampton, giving Jacobites "the gentleman in black" for a significant toast, as the "calf's head" was for clubs of thorough Whigs.

Under the popular Queen Anne, whose consort, Prince George of Denmark, was of no account as nominal head of her army and

navy, England's sword came into the hands of one well able to wield it. This was John Churchill, a coolly calculating soldier, rapidly promoted by all the three sovereigns to whom in turn he was ready to play false for his own advantage. At one time moved to disgrace him for his intrigues with the exiled court he had betrayed, William was yet fain to recognize Marlborough's ability and entrust him with command of troops sent to the aid of Holland, when he soon proved himself the right man in the right place. Amid all his demerits no one could question the military genius of a man whose most human trait appears to have been his much tried affection for the virago of a wife that by her ill-tempered domineering as Queen Anne's favourite both furthered and hindered his career. He showed, moreover, no little concern for the many wounded in his battles, and for the peasantry he had to trample down on his marches. His notorious avarice caused him to be accused of spinning out the war to fill his own pockets, yet his letters reveal him often longing for peace, if only it could be trusted to last. If "true to one party and that is himself," he was no more treacherous than most of the selfish statesmen among whom he had to steer a wary course; while virtues rare with them were his moral and temperate habits, his kindness to friends and courtesy to enemies, and a serene command of temper that served him well in both prosperity and adversity.

He had need of his talent for managing men as well as campaigns. All along hampered by party strife at home, on taking command of the allied army in the Netherlands, he found his movements clogged by the jealousy of Dutch generals, and their republic's chronic suspicion of military power. No jealousy was cherished between him and his famous colleague, Prince Eugene of Savoy, a soldier of fortune who served Austria as well as Marlborough served England. Eugene attacked France in North Italy; the Archduke Charles landed at Lisbon, with the help of Portugal to wrest the crown of Spain from its French king, Philip V; and the Margrave of Baden commanded a German army on the Rhine, while Marlborough's first exploits were the retaking of important fortresses seized by France on the Meuse,

a success that seemed important enough to deserve his dukedom. Not all the German princes went with the allies ; Louis' side was taken by the Elector of Bavaria, and through his country they planned to strike at the heart of Austria. To foil this design, Marlborough, Eugene and the Margrave joined each other on the Upper Danube, where the least able of them gave trouble by his pretensions of seniority, so they came to the awkward arrangement of taking command day about. It was luckily Marlborough's turn when he had a chance of routing the Bavarians at Schellenberg ; then the troublesome Margrave was shaken off by being fixed down to a siege, leaving the better generals free to act harmoniously against the French and Bavarians, now come to a junction in superior force. At the village of Blenheim beside the Danube, on July 12, A.D. 1704, the two armies met in hotly contested battle won with 40,000 casualties on both sides, half the forces engaged being put *hors de combat*, for the French also lost more than 10,000 as prisoners including their commander Marshal Tallard, courteously entertained and carried off into most comfortable captivity at the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth.

This glorious victory, the first signal check to Louis' martial pride, renowned Marlborough all over Europe, and filled England with exultation, incidentally making the fortune of Addison, now employed by the Ministry to celebrate the campaign in verse that hyperbolically gave his hero the rank of a destroying angel :

*Calm and serene he drives the furious blast,  
And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,  
Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.*

Bavaria crushed out of action, next year Marlborough had to play his part upon the " old prize-fighting stage of Flanders," where his other victories were won. Here the French held a strong line of fortresses from Antwerp to Namur, forced by the English general at one point ; but to his intense chagrin, the hanging back of the Dutch hindered him from fighting a great battle near the future field of Waterloo ; and his chief activity was now in travelling about Europe to cement the rather loose

cohesion of the Grand Alliance, for which he vainly sought to enlist Charles XII of Sweden, whose exploits had been fruitlessly adorning the tale of European history. He thought of carrying off his own army to work with Prince Eugene in Italy, so disgusted was he with the Dutch ; but next year they took such shame to themselves as to leave him free to scatter the flower of the French army at Ramillies, from which he pushed on to Louvain. Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, Ostend, and all the chief cities of Flanders fell to the allies ; the French line was smashed into retreat upon its own frontier, leaving Belgium to a joint provisional government of England and Holland.

Not half-way through the war, Louis was now ready to make terms, and so were the Dutch ; but Marlborough honestly, or, as his enemies insisted, for the sake of pay and perquisites, judged France not yet humbled enough for a good peace. Next year he was again mainly busied by diplomatic dealings to keep the Allies acting in concert, before being called home to meet a danger of invasion, when Louis once more provoked the English temper by an abortive attempt in favour of the Pretender, which the winds and waves that have so often guarded our island brought to nought without more ado. In A.D. 1708 both parties took the field in Flanders with fresh resolution. The French were led by their heir apparent, Fénélon's pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, whose virtuous inexperience shrank from the advice of his able mentor, the coarse and profane Duke of Vendôme. The result was that Marlborough, Eugene, and the Dutch General Overkirk, completely defeated those uncongenial colleagues at Oudenarde ; and the French durst not risk another pitched battle to raise the siege of Lille, taken by the Allies after costly efforts.

Had Marlborough had his way, he would have pressed on to invade France, reduced to such poverty and disorder as a would-be Grand Monarch brought upon the Germany of our time. But he was held back by the hesitation of the Allies, now growing tired of the war. Next year their first effort was against Tournai, in the bombardment of which Marlborough set an example not followed by the champions of *Kultur*, in giving orders for his



NAMUR  
Pont de Jambes et Citadelle



artillery to spare its cathedral. Mons was then attacked, which brought about his last famous battle at Malplaquet, a Pyrrhic victory, where he lost more men than the beaten army. In France it was even given out that he had been killed, a report celebrated by the song, "Malbrook s'en-va-t en guerre," to the air of "We won't go home till morning," as catching there as Uncle Toby's Lillibulero in Britain. The French rhymester, who seems to have merely imitated an older ballad, was fain to sing of that doughty foe as carried off to heaven shrouded in laurels. Two years later, however, Marlborough showed himself very much alive by an almost bloodless baffling of Marshal Villars that makes little noise in history, but enhanced his reputation among judges of the art of war.

The English conqueror now stood at the height of his renown, yet his strength was going from him, partly through political intrigue, and partly through such agency as gave Samson over to the Philistines. He himself had tried to keep clear of either party, and to lean on the Coalition Government of his friend Godolphin. But the war was sustained more by Whig than Tory feeling, and its direction had fallen into the hands of Whig partisans, to whom the meddlesome duchess sought to commit her more prudent husband. This mischief-maker had overstrained her influence over the weakly obstinate Anne, who took up with a new favourite, Abigail Hill, a poor relation of the duchess, unluckily introduced by herself into the Queen's service. The old familiarity between "Mrs. Morley" and "Mrs. Freeman" gave place to squabbles that ended in a downright quarrel. Through Mrs. Masham, the married name of that sly Abigail, the Queen was got at by Harley, a crafty self-seeker who played with success on her Tory and High Church sympathies. In the country there was a reaction of the same sentiments, as shown in the excitement of the Sacheverell trial, which to us seems such a storm in a teacup. The duke, hitherto hailed with enthusiasm on returning from each glorious campaign, now lost his popularity as well as the countenance of his sovereign. Tories crept into power, bent on ending the war, denounced by Swift as their literary swashbuckler, for a generation that made much account

of pamphlets and satires. A campaign on paper led to Marlborough's dismissal from command.

The English Government, thus tempered afresh, in 1711 set afoot preliminary negotiations for peace, not signed till 1713. Both England and Holland were out of humour with Austria, that, while not pulling her full weight in the war, seemed like to carry off its prizes. Its once applauded hero, accused of peculation in the army funds, and harassed by higgings as to the cost of the Palace at Blenheim that was to have been a free gift from his grateful nation, went abroad to take possession of a German principality bestowed upon him by the Emperor, as Nelson was made Duke of Bronte and Wellington Prince of Waterloo. Still held in high honour on the Continent, he saw his place as commander of the army in Flanders slackly taken by the Duke of Ormond, who soon resigned it to Prince Eugene. The Prince held a longer lease of glory than our general, by whose side he fought so well ; and by his own campaigns in Italy he had carried the Austrian arms to victory, after some early checks. In Spain the war had for a time been full of vicissitudes. Thanks to the dashing valour of our general, Peterborough, and to the old grudges of Valencia, Catalonia and Aragon against Castile, Charles III, as he styled himself, held out in the north-east part of the country and more than once drove Philip from Madrid. But the Castilians were stancher than he deserved to their French king ; the Duke of Berwick, James II's natural son, was as doughty a commander for him as Louis' bastard Vendôme ; and the Austrian pretender lost all his winnings but the fortress of Barcelona.

Then the hand of death swept the chief pieces from the board. The Archduke Charles gained his brother's Imperial crown, after which there could be no more question of his Spanish kingship. Louis' grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, the best of the family, died with his wife and his own eldest son, carried off at one fell swoop by a malignant attack of measles. He left another son two years old to grow up as Louis XV, but then with such poor chances of life as to put a spoke in the slow wheels of peace making, till Philip of Spain gave assurances that he and his



would in no case claim the crown of France. Louis himself was near his morose deathbed, on which he was fain to confess, "I loved war too well." His long life might have been longer but for the gross Bourbon appetite that kept him much under drug-gings for digestion as well as conscience, while his corrupt court was gorged at the expense of the country he left lean and humbled, when his shining reign went out in snuff. This Louis, his father and his great-grandson, each coming to the throne in childhood, bore rule over five generations of Frenchmen, brought to poverty by the selfish folly for which a heavy reckoning fell on the most innocent of the Louis, little wiser than his predecessors. Our good Queen Anne, whose goodness, rather negative than positive, well padded her constitutional throne, died the year before her neighbour sovereign. Under the wing of George I's quiet accession, with a revival of Whig influence, Marlborough came back to England to spend his few last years in ease and honour, dying in premature dotage.

After nine years' bloodshed, the peace of Utrecht had left things much as they were at the opening of the game. The Bourbon king kept Spain and Louis got back French Flanders, for centuries a shuttlecock dented by fire and sword; the other side of Flanders, taken by him for his own, had to be restored to Belgium. England's most conspicuous gain was the rock of Gibraltar; she also got Minorca for a time, and some French territory in North America. Holland had to be content with a bulwark of fortresses for her independence. The Duke of Savoy, for having gone over to the Allies, was rewarded with Sicily, afterwards exchanged for a kingdom of Sardinia that one day would take in all Italy. Austria, continuing the war a little longer than the rest, kept her winnings in Italy, and also gained Belgium, which had at first owned Philip, then Charles as master, but was held down under France till delivered by Marlborough and Eugene, the latter appointed its Governor-General.

The power that scored least was the *teterrima causa* of the war, never since to hold its head up in Europe. Once its strongest, its richest, its most feared, for a time its freest nation, misgovern-

ment and bigotry had sunk Spain deep in the slough upon which Macaulay throws the accusing light of his rhetoric :

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst weaken the nations! If we overleap a hundred years, and look at Spain towards the close of the seventeenth century, what a change do we find! The contrast is as great as that which the Rome of Gallienus and Honorius presents to the Rome of Marius and Cæsar. Foreign conquest had begun to eat into every part of that gigantic monarchy on which the sun never set. Holland was gone, and Portugal, and Artois, and Roussillon, and Franche Comté. In the East, the empire founded by the Dutch far surpassed in wealth and splendour that which the old tyrants still retained. In the West, England had seized, and still held, settlements in the midst of the Mexican sea. The mere loss of territory was, however, of little moment. The reluctant obedience of distant provinces generally costs more than it is worth. Empires which branch out widely are often more flourishing for a little timely pruning. Adrian acted judiciously when he abandoned the conquests of Trajan, and England was never so rich, so great, so formidable to foreign princes, so absolutely mistress of the sea, as since the loss of her American colonies. The Spanish empire was still, in outward appearance, great and magnificent. The European dominions subject to the last feeble Prince of the House of Austria were far more extensive than those of Louis XIV. The American dependencies of the Castilian crown still extended to the north of Cancer and to the south of Capricorn. But within this immense body there was an incurable decay, an utter want of tone, an utter prostration of strength. . . . Every foreign Power could plunder and insult with impunity the heir of Charles the Fifth. Into such a state had the mighty kingdom of Spain fallen, while one of its smallest dependencies—a country not so large as the province of Estremadura or Andalusia, situated under an inclement sky, and preserved only by artificial means from the inroads of the ocean—had become a Power of the first class, and treated on terms of equality with the courts of London and Versailles.”

Our day has seen Spain's further humiliation by the vigorous young offshoot of another small people upon whose neck Philip II thought to set his foot as heavily as upon Holland and Belgium.

## VIII

### OLD AND NEW MASTERS

BELGIUM, then, had passed from the extinct Spanish Hapsburgs, through the grabbing of France and the victories of Marlborough, back to the Empire now held by the Austrian Hapsburgs, who were to rule it by viceroys for some three-quarters of a century. They were not entirely masters here, for the Dutch still insisted on garrisoning Namur, Tournai, and other border fortresses to make a barrier against further French aggression, the upshot of which had been to nibble away from Belgium a frontier strip including the cities of St. Omer, Lille, Valenciennes and Cambrai, small enough profit on all Louis' outlay in money, misery, and bloodshed, yet to grow valuable as a rich mining and manufacturing region. But now, for a generation, this much invaded land had peace, troubled only by civil broils. The kings of Europe went to their old game again ; but the wickets came to be pitched mostly on less smoothly turfed fields than Flanders.

For a time, however, that new saddle sat heavily on the Belgian provinces, since Austrian rulers, even without meaning to be oppressive, had a knack of rubbing sores under their clumsy harness. Prince Eugene, appointed Governor-General, paid no personal attention to his functions, exercised through a deputy shepherd named De Prié. This Italian, as he was by birth, not understanding the flock set under him, tried to worry and fleece it into the meek obedience he expected from burghers and peasants. Now, through all its afflictions, Belgium had clung tight to its old charters and privileges ; nor had ever scrapped the constitutional machinery, often thrown out of gear, by which provincial States and States-General claimed to regulate the important question of taxation, while the Governor even in

Alva's days was not supposed to act without the advice of a threefold State Council. De Prié was for being absolute in a petty way, which led to riots, executions and general indignation. But Charles of Austria showed himself wiser than the Philips of Spain, in a willingness to conciliate his new subjects. That bullying governor was replaced by the Emperor's sister, and petticoat government being familiar to the provinces, this arch-duchess was able to give them quiet and returning prosperity till once more Belgium had to suffer as whipping-boy for the mischievous tricks of her neighbours.

Louis XV's reign turned out as wasteful, but not as glorious, as that of his great-grandfather. In his day, the champion prize-fighter was Frederick the Great, hardly to be called the Good even by the people whom his legacy of blood and iron has now brought to such confusion. We know how Carlyle groaned and sweated to make him out a veracious hero, glossing over his selfishness, his treacheries, his vain affectations, the brutality by which he disciplined an army of slaves, often unscrupulously kidnapped from neutral states. Before our voluminous prophet of silence got to the methylated spirit stage of quenching his thirst for hero-worship, he had taken a saner and humaner view of what goes to make such greatness in royal sport. In his earlier account of the "net purport and upshot of war," that Ecclefechan poet "wanting the accomplishment of verse," was thinking of the Louis and Georges, before there had swum into his obfuscated ken a fuliginous hero who would probably have treated such an admirer as scurrily as he did Voltaire.

"There dwell and toil in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain 'Natural Enemies' of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say, thirty able-bodied men: Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them; she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avir-dupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected, dressed in red, and shipped away, at the public

charges, some two thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain, and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot in the south of Spain are thirty similar French artizans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending, till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition, and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word ' Fire ' is given, and they blow the souls out of one another ; and in place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel ? Busy as the Devil is, not the smallest ! They lived far enough apart, were the entirest strangers ; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then ? Simpleton ! their Governors had fallen out, and instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot. Alas ! so is it in Deutchland, and hitherto in all other lands ; still as of old, ' what devilry soever kings do, the Greeks must pay the piper ! ' ”

Now, to be sure, the Dumdrudgians of Europe insist upon a say in their packing off to slaughter, whereby it is fondly hoped that such encounters may soon be out of date. Let us wait and see. The Greeks of old fell out with their neighbours, even when they had no princes to set them on.

In Carlyle's amusing pages, we read how Frederick had been bullied, stinted and badly educated in youth by the boorish father who, with all his faults, was an economical husband of his country's means ; and how the heir tried to run away from so harsh a lot, making a narrow escape from being shot as a deserter. But when he came to the throne, this flute-playing, verse-making, Frenchified prince amazed Europe by turning out no mere philosophic dilettante after all. Frederick William had collected soldiers as a miser hoards gold. Frederick, setting aside as counterfeit those gigantic grenadiers that were the freaks of the collection, proposed to himself spending the army he inherited in unbroken order, and soon found an opening for gain and glory.

The Emperor Charles VI, having no male heir, was much pre-occupied by anxiety to hand on to his daughter, Maria Theresa, the hereditary dominions that of late had gone with the Empire.

This he hoped to have secured by an agreement known as the Pragmatic Sanction, accepted by all the powers from whom opposition might be feared, Prussia among them. But as Prince Eugene had shrewdly remarked, an army 200,000 strong was worth more than any paper sanction, and Frederick anticipated a descendant of his in taking the same view. He could not resist the temptation to rob an orphan queen. Raking up a flimsy claim to lordship of Silesia, he invaded that corner of her dominions ; and, though so inexperienced that he ran away from his first victory, mistaken for a defeat, he soon showed extraordinary genius in the art of war, rapidly improved by practice, to renown him as the first general of his time.

Maria Theresa, throwing herself on the loyalty of her Hungarian and Bohemian subjects, was overborne by that sudden onset, but naturally cast about for allies that should help her to a *révanche*. Sides were picked up for a European scrimmage, in which she had the help of England, Holland, Sardinia, and parts of North Germany, while Frederick enlisted France and Bavaria, whose prince made a stop-gap Emperor. On his death before long, Maria Theresa's husband, Francis of Lorraine, was chosen for the dignity that made the queen an empress, not in her own right, yet with all the authority of a regal nature. But France would not allow Lorraine to be incorporated with Austria, so Francis had to take in exchange the Grand Dukedom of Tuscany, his hereditary state being given to Stanislaus, ex-King of Poland, father-in-law of Louis XV, who on his death succeeded to a territory that had been long under the thumb of France. This acquisitive monarchy had during the previous century gobbled piecemeal the more entirely German Alsace ; but it was the heat of the French Revolution that closely welded these provinces into the republic, from which they were to be torn away by the new German Empire of Bismarck's forging.

In the confused struggles that followed his aggression, Frederick fought for his own hand, throwing over his allies as suited him, and coming out in A.D. 1745 with his Silesian booty, when England and Austria still remained at war with France. As yet, Belgium had not been much troubled by battles that raged

so far off as Prague and Breslau. But when an English king for the last time led his army to doubtful victory at Dettingen, and the French had retired over the Rhine, finding Frederick's co-operation fail them, they turned to attack Austria on the northern border of France, again taken for a chessboard of military manœuvres. That bloated voluptuary, Marshal Saxe, with the King and Dauphin to look on at his prowess, laid siege to Tournai, garrisoned by Dutch soldiers. To relieve it came our Duke of Cumberland with a mixed army; then hard by was fought the Battle of Fontenoy to figure more famously in French than in English annals. Yet Britain has no cause to be ashamed of that disaster, for its soldiers massed into a column pushed so far into the French position that Saxe had nearly given up the battle as lost, and so it might well have been, had the Dutch and Austrian contingents not hung back.

To the final victory at Fontenoy contributed not a little a brigade of Irish Jacobite exiles in the French service. On our side appeared for the first, not for the last time, a new regiment of the British Army, the 42nd, raised as a Black Watch militia to keep order on the Highland line. Rightly or wrongly, these Gaelic soldiers had understood that they should not serve further from home; and when marched to London, they were dismayed by a rumour of their destination being the American plantations. Here, too, they excited such curiosity as our African or Gurkha auxiliaries might do to-day; and the London street boy being probably no less impudent then than now, the bewildered clansmen let themselves be provoked into mutiny. They broke away to march bodily back to the Highlands under the leadership of a corporal, but when they had got as far as Oundle were surrounded and forced to surrender. After this unfortunate debut as regular troops, they so well stood at Fontenoy their baptism of foreign fire as to be trusted with the service of covering the retreat; and ever since:

*It's where the fire has hottest raged  
That the tartans thickest lie.*

The dark tartan of this regiment's uniform is said to have been devised as a neutral one, since to men of one clan another's

hues would make a shirt of Nessus ; but there is also some reason to identify it with one of the Campbell patterns, this being the clan least "agin the Government," so that on the original formation of the Black Watch, half its companies were commanded by Campbells. But all the Highlanders were not Campbells or such-like, and this year George II and his martial son got called off to Britain by the meteoric progress of Prince Charlie. When his gallant enterprise had at last been scattered, the Butcher of Culloden went back for another tug-of-war in the Netherlands, only to be beaten once and again, and to see the country overrun, its cities taken one by one, and the conquering Saxe set over it as governor. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, however, restored it to Austria, which valued this outlying dependency so little as to be willing to give it up to France if she could bring Frederick to let go his grasp on the Silesian plunder, as ransom for which Maria Theresa had already offered him a good slice of Belgium.

Frederick had now ten years of peace, in which to occupy himself in husbanding his resources, drilling his army to pipe-clayed perfection, reforming the administration of justice in his states, encouraging commerce and agriculture, for which Carlyle can praise him with justice. Also the "philosopher of Sans Souci" is found patronizing quarrelsome men of letters like Voltaire, printing his own poor verses, performing acts of casual graciousness or cold-hearted meanness, venting sarcasms and cynicisms, getting himself much talked about at home and abroad, but all the while keeping a sharp eye on the enemies he had made by his unscrupulous dealings. Europe being then much under petticoat government, a league of resentful women was formed against him, Maria Theresa, Elizabeth of Russia, and Louis' mistress, Madame de Pompadour, to whom Frederick was not so willing to be civil as were others born in the purple. The players signed on afresh for another game, Austria, France, Russia, Saxony and Sweden all banded against Prussia, on whose side this time stood England, bound to oppose France, now that its dull big-wig had been won over by the Empire's politic chancellor, Kaunitz. So in A.D. 1756 all those wigs were on the green again, not the flowing perukes of Steinkirk and Ramillies, but the



tie-wigs and bob-wigs soon falling off into powder and pigtail, a troublesome adornment for early rising warriors, which Sir John Moore had the sense to cut away in the teeth of outcry as to the service going to the dogs.

The Seven Years' War began with Frederick's dash upon Saxony, anticipating his enemies and forcing them to show their hands so packed with honours and trumps. In that part of heroism which consists of sending myriads of souls untimely to Hades, the hard-pressed King played his game to admiration, turning to face one adversary after another, winning famous battles against odds, and showing a stubborn courage that impressed his ally, John Bull, to celebrate such prowess by many "King of Prussia" inn signs, some of them the other day hastily changed into "Empress of India" or the like. But the bigger battalions were like to get the best of it in the long run : Frederick, great as he was in war, had to see his country overrun, his capital twice occupied, himself reduced to desperate straits in which he thought of poison ; and he might have been beaten to his knees but for the death of Elizabeth that put on Russia's throne his crazy adulator Peter, to turn an enemy into an ally. By our share in the battles of Minden and Crefeldt, we did not help him much on land, Britain's best effort being on and over the seas, which availed at the peace to give her Canada and other colonial spoil, whereas it left continental Powers concerned much as they were before the exhausting struggle, except that Prussia had gained a prestige which would end in shifting Germany's centre of gravity from south to north. Then it was not many years before hot foes made friends to recoup themselves for their losses by the partition of poor Poland.

Austria this time being out of quarrel with France, Belgium was little disturbed by the Seven Years' War, for once hearing at safe distance the cannon of Kolin and Rossbach, where to be sure Walloon and Flemish soldiers played up for their Empress-Queen, beside her "whiskered Pandours and her fierce hussars." And now Belgium had a spell of halcyon days under her brother-in-law Charles of Lorraine, who, after making a mess of it as a general, proved a notable success as a viceroy. Stiff Spanish dons and

big-wigged Austrian officials had been apt to put the Belgians' back up ; they got on better with gracious ladies for governors, or jovial, familiar lords like this Charles, who instead of handing over his charge to the care of deputies, lived in the country and exerted himself for its welfare, protecting its cherished rights and privileges against the Austrian court, yet discreetly loosening time-honoured abuses rooted in its own rather pig-headed conservatism. He was a liberal patron of art and letters, encouraging agriculture also, so that fields so often blighted by war began to bloom like a garden and bring a population of some two to three millions back to the land, while their cities, once the busiest in Europe, fell more into stagnant decay, inhabited largely by paupers and beggars to live on the heirs of invested wealth.

This successfully popular viceroy died in A.D. 1780, a little before the Empress herself, after she had sent to replace him her daughter Marie Christine with this archduchess' consort, Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen. But now Belgium had to groan afresh under a tyrant who, if not "freedom's best and bravest friend," was at least a very well-meaning if ill-judging innovator. The infant Maria Theresa held up to her faithful Hungarians, when they enthusiastically vowed to die for their "king" against the encroaching Frederick, had on the death of her husband succeeded him as Emperor Joseph II. As made a fashion among potentates of the period, Frederick himself and Catherine the Great, he was tinged by the French philosophizing, not yet seen to be undermining thrones so surely as altars. For the first part of his reign, as co-regent of their hereditary States, he had been kept much in the shadow of his mistressful mother, obliged somewhat to dissemble before her pious conservatism, but restlessly inquiring, studying and planning for a new regime as often as he could get loose from her apron-strings. German books present moral anecdotes of his generosity, of his good intentions, of benevolent dispositions from which prudence was unhappily wanting to this crowned fanatic of reform which he did not mean to spell revolution. "As a man, he has much merit and talent ; as a prince, he will always have ambitions never to be achieved : his reign will be a perpetual effort to sneeze," prophesied the sharp-eyed



THE FLEMISH PLAIN



Prince de Ligne ; and the sharp-tongued Frederick compared his neighbour's head to a "magazine of dispatches, projects, decrees, all littered in confusion."

Snubbed and slighted in his youth, Joseph suffered from suppressed itch to play a leading part on the stage of Europe ; he seems even to have fancied himself as a conqueror, but luckily for the neighbours, his activity took the line of administrative improvements. As soon as the death of his mother put him in full power, he eagerly displayed himself in the novel character of a liberal despot. Not considering how institutions should grow rather than be shaped, he was in haste to recast his widely scattered inheritance, according to rule and pattern. An early sign of his good intentions was throwing open the Prater park to all and sundry, hitherto reserved for the nobles, of whom he required nobility rather than privilege. He swept away useless offices ; he tried to straighten out a labyrinth of law ; he altered the incidence of taxes and customs ; he encouraged education ; he allowed free speech and free thought ; he proclaimed toleration of creeds, showing special favour to the Jews ; he abolished rights of primogeniture, sanctioned divorce, and in other ways shocked the Pope and all but the more liberal clergy. Worst of all, he laid hands on Church property, docking the bloated revenues of bishops, suppressing a majority of the two thousand monasteries and convents in his states, even stripping sacred images of their costly gauds, frowning on pilgrimages, and cutting down the too many holy days which wasted his people's time. But the ten years of life left him were not enough to bring that "ramshackle empire" of his into the regular and reasonable order he had in view.

Such innovations proved specially unpopular in Belgium, standing so firm on its old ways as to object to the abolition of judicial torture. Joseph had little respect for its Magna Charta, the *Joyeuse Entrée*, some provisions of which to be sure had grown rustily obsolete. He reformed the courts and other machinery of government, trampling down ancient franchises, rooting up time-honoured abuses, and meddling masterfully with small matters as well as great, quite regardless of popular feeling. His scheme of conscription for the army exasperated the Belgians ;

but what gave them keenest offence was his Edict of Toleration. Paying a visit to the provinces, he scandalized his orthodox subjects there by attending a Protestant conventicle, nay more, a Jewish synagogue. His bleeding of fat cloisters was not taken altogether in bad part, the design being to transfer part of their revenues to the parish clergy. But the bishops were indignant when he closed their diocesan seminaries, setting up official schools at Louvain and Luxemburg through which all candidates for ordination should pass with a Government stamp of fitness. Of course, the general tendency of his reforms would be to take education out of the hands of the Church ; but with both Church and State affairs he meddled by as many decrees in a few years as Charles V had issued to the Netherlands in half a century.

In some respects his action was better calculated to please these stubborn Home Rulers. He took advantage of Holland's being at war with England to get rid of the Dutch garrisons in the border towns, dismantling also all the fortresses that had so often been sore points of invasion. He was less successful in an attempt to make the Dutch open the navigation of the Scheldt, at whose mouth they had choked the trade of Antwerp. But how little he esteemed this troublesome dependency was shown by a proposal to exchange Belgium for Bavaria, which would better round off his dominions and be easier to manage from Vienna. When this plan fell through, he outraged Belgian *particularismus* by cutting out the nine historic Provinces into so many neatly drawn circles, without consideration for the inveterate prejudices, traditions and proud memories that gave Brabant and Flanders, Hainault and Luxemburg a jealous patriotism of their own, matched by the steeple patriotism of their chief cities. His idea was to turn a group of irregular feudal bands into a well-drilled regiment duly numbered off into battalions and platoons, all taking the word of command from such a conscientious disciplinarian as himself.

For years the opposition to his measures smouldered and fizzled, taking the form of protests, refusal of subsidies, sometimes of riotous disturbances. The States of the different Provinces did not pull together, ill-harnessed as they were, not in

every case constituted alike, though usually, as in France, having three orders, Nobles, Clergy, and Commons, whose interests were not always identical. Joseph, well persuaded of his own wisdom and rectitude, seems not to have realized the force of the gusty storm he had evoked. His regents were at their wits' end to carry out his orders, which sometimes they took the responsibility of setting aside. When the Imperial princes who usually occupied this post chose to be mere figureheads, the government was much in the hands of a depute entitled Minister Plenipotentiary, in which capacity the Emperor was well served by the prudent Counts Murray and Trauttmansdorff. But to the latter's administration he must needs tack on, in an independent military command, the rash soldier Count D'Alton, who, having roughly quelled outbreaks in Hungary, made sure of dragooning the Belgians into due loyalty. He soon fell out with the civil governor, as Alva with the Duchess Margaret, and he played Alva in miniature by firing on a Brussels mob so as to draw a line of blood between prince and people.

When the storm gathered head Joseph was away at war on his Turkish frontier, then at first showed some willingness to withdraw from his irritating course of innovation. But, badly informed by D'Alton, he again took a high tone, arbitrarily revoked the *Joyeuse Entrée*, silenced the States of Brabant that showed a lead in contumacy, and was for standing on his absolute shall as an infallible autocrat. The fall of the Bastille scared him out of this defiant mood into a shilly-shally one, when it was too late to heal the inflammation by either blood-letting or balsam. The movement that had so strangely begun as a conservative revolt against liberalism, became complicated by spread of French revolutionary ferment across the border, its warmth as yet widely hailed as a blessing to men. Two parties outlined themselves in Belgium, with the advocates Van der Noot and Vonck as their chief spokesmen. Van der Noot, hunted into Holland, soon betook himself to the negotiations with the courts of the Hague, London and Berlin, trying for help in foreign interference. Vonck found refuge on the independent territory of Liège, from which he spread a secret society of patriots sworn

to fight for their *aris et focis*, not their hares and foxes as the phrase has been jocularly translated on our side the Channel. The confused interests and aims of these parties let them but imperfectly answer to the Girondins and Jacobins of the French Revolution; and Belgium's conservatism produced a third faction of nobles headed by the Duke D'Arenberg.

Among all classes the Government carried out wholesale arrests in a vain attempt at intimidation, from which bishops, nobles and notables escaped to set up a committee of resistance at Breda in Holland. By his abolition of the *Joyeuse Entrée*, they held Joseph to have *ipso facto* lost all claim to allegiance. From that base a force of a few hundred men, under the Belgian soldier Van der Mersch, crossed the frontier, not venturing to meet the Imperial troops in open field, but gaining a marked success in street fighting at Turnhout. Then Flanders caught fire, and Ghent, that old focus of insurrection, was able to expel the Austrian garrison. Mons also was evacuated. The Government, distracted between its civil and military chiefs, had offered an amnesty and agreed on an armistice, when in Brussels the revolt broke out so hotly, that D'Alton, his soldiers deserting by hundreds, saw nothing for it but to draw back the remnants of the army to Luxemburg. All Belgium was abandoned except this thinly populated hill region, more obstinate in its loyalty, and the citadel of Antwerp, the Belgian Bastile, which had before long to surrender to the patriots. The States of Brabant deposed Joseph, and called an assembly of deputies from the Provinces to settle on a constitution as the United States of Belgium.

That blow broke Joseph's heart. His too late concessions being rejected in Belgium, and Hungary again threatening a like explosion of its discontent, the poor man could not understand how his good intentions had paved the way to such hot hatred. He died early next year, A.D. 1790, succeeded by the brief reign of his brother Leopold, who also tried in vain to win back the Belgians' affection. But their own discords worked in his service. The factions flew at each other's throats; there were proscriptions, imprisonments, pillagings, street riots, risings of armed peasantry, a general welter of civil war such as we have seen in





THE MARKET PLACE, BREDA



Russia and Germany. The raw army, divided in opinion, could not withstand the Austrian veterans. Foreign Powers, called on to interfere, had each its own axe to grind ; but Britain, Holland, and Prussia advised Belgium to make the best terms it could with the new Emperor, pressing as he was for bygones to be bygones. There arose inter-provincial jars and jealousies, as between nobles and burghers, clergy and freethinkers. Van der Noot and his party getting the upper hand, the repressed partisans of Vonck inclined to treat with Vienna. Before the young republic could agree upon a constitution more or less as like the old one as might be, the Austrians came back on it in force, bearing Leopold's olive branch at their cannons' mouth. The States-General saw effectual resistance out of the question. As a compromise, they hurriedly elected one of the Emperor's younger sons as their Hereditary Grand Duke. The Austrian general took no notice of this step, but pushed on to enter Brussels almost without resistance, the patriot army breaking up and the leaders of the revolt taking flight to France or Holland.

The Revolution had held out for a year, and the Restoration proved no more stable. The archducal viceroys came back full of gracious words, to find everything in confusion. The Belgians seemed not to know what they wanted ; and there were mistakes and misunderstandings on the part of the Austrian officials, worried by protests, riots, conspiracies. By the end of next year, it was the old story of refusing subsidies, to which the Government retaliated by delaying its promised amnesty. Ringleaders of the two chief factions kept themselves out of its power, across the Dutch and the French frontiers respectively. Vonck's party had its headquarters at Lille, where he himself presently died, leaving his followers in close touch with the French Jacobins. The Emperor died, succeeded by his young brother Francis, against whom their brother-in-law Louis XVI was forced to declare war, not very vigorously carried on at first, yet going to stir up miscellaneous rebellion among the Belgians.

The fall of the French monarchy in August, A.D. 1792, and the cry of " the country in danger ! " roused France in arms against a coalition of shocked monarchies backed by a gathering of

French *émigrés* on the Rhine. They had hoped to put the King firm on his throne at Paris ; but, their invasion brought to a stick in the mud of the Argonne forest, they retreated to Coblenz in confusion ; then Dumouriez gained brief renown by pushing the war into Belgium, laid open by the dismantling of its border fortresses. He won the Battle of Jemappes, where the courage and skill of the Duke de Chartres, who was to be a king as Louis Philippe, proved him not unfit for a general at the age of eighteen. The Austrians abandoned Brussels ; Flanders was overrun, Antwerp taken. Liège, with many popular outbreaks and swampings by the waves of war that so often surged about it, had hitherto kept its insulated position as an episcopal principality and fief of the German Empire ; but having first tried a private revolt against its Prince Bishop, repressed for a time, it was now set free to be incorporated with Belgium, after sheltering a camp of French *émigrés* not over welcome among its inhabitants.

Dumouriez confidently called on the Belgians to rally round the tricolour ; and according to republican chroniclers the French everywhere met an enthusiastic reception, as was often enough the case. But there is another side to the picture. Priests and nuns trembled before the sacrilegious ravages of the sans-culotte warriors, notably among the many and rich churches of Liège. Vicomte Walsh, then a schoolboy at its famous Jesuit college, tells us how the chapel had been hastily stripped, pictures, plate and decorations hidden away, how the nuns were expelled from a neighbouring convent to turn it into barracks, how the soldiers, with huge tricoloured cockades to carry off a want of smart equipment, made the collegians shudder by their blasphemous rioting, even amusing themselves by taking shots at a statue of the Virgin and bursting into coarse laughter over a wounded nun who had thrown herself before it as a shield. This international school, already moved from St. Omer to Bruges, thence seeking asylum at Liège, drew many pupils from the Catholic families of the United Kingdom ; and it was now that an old boy, Blundell Weld, offered it as safer refuge his stately Lancashire mansion, left unfinished by his Elizabethan forbears, according to one legend because the founder's heir died from

eating poisonous berries, while another put it under a curse for his overworking the builders, on Sundays and all, at a day when builders could be overworked. To this rambling, decaying pile, with its spacious halls and long galleries, its priest's holes and other secret recesses, the Jesuit fathers transplanted a remnant of their scattered charge; and here that Belgian seminary took fresh root as the College of Stoneyhurst.

The extreme party was now in full power at Paris, proclaiming fraternity to all peoples, but treating resistance or independence of thought as a capital crime. In Belgium they seized on public funds, forced their depreciated assignats into circulation, insulted a Church dear to the people, and generally behaved so that all but fanatical republicans soon regretted the sleepy Austrian lordship. Dumouriez did his best to soften the tyranny prescribed for him, and, though the guillotine was set up at Brussels, he saved the country from the worst cruelties of Robespierre's Reign of Terror, such as Alsace suffered under the fiendish Schneider and his "hussars of death." But he felt his own head not to be safe on his shoulders, and, after being beaten by the allied forces at Neerwinden, scene of one of Louis XIV's victories a century before, he threw off his allegiance to the bloodthirsty Convention, whose meddling commissioners dogged its generals as spies. Summoned to Paris to account for that defeat, after in vain calling on his army to follow him there as champions of reaction, along with the future Louis Philippe Dumouriez galloped over into the enemy's lines, fired at and chased by their own men. This desertion probably saved them from the guillotine now hanging like a sword of Damocles over prominent necks, and by his son's escape brought down on that of the shifty Duke of Orleans, in vain rebaptized *Egalité*.

Once more, then, an Austrian archduke entered Brussels as master, followed by a visit from the Emperor, who for the last time was installed as Duke of Brabant, swearing to observe the *Joyeuse Entrée* and maintain all Belgium's ancient privileges. But that was only a blink of watery sunset. Pichegru led a French army on a fresh campaign in which the Austrians were driven back to the Rhine, their Dutch and English allies to the

mouth of the Scheldt. The Coalition against that furious republic now broke up, Britain alone being held resolute by Pitt, but its small contingent of troops under the Duke of York could not continue the struggle alone. Belgium was abandoned to France in its exalted mood that tore up all time-honoured charters to make a palimpsest for the Rights of Man and such watchwords of a millennium whose blood-red dawn presaged another carnival of slaughter. The Provinces found themselves under a tri-coloured yoke of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality more galling to them than that they had been helped to shake off. Its own discordant votes no longer consulted, in A.D. 1795 the whole country was incorporated with France, its ancient states shorn and trimmed into nine departments of the arbitrary republic, neatly subdivided into arrondissements and cantons. Holland, also, was invaded and turned into a brand-new republic with more independence, its Prince of Orange Stadtholder taking flight to England. After eighteen centuries' welter of fighting, the mongrel Celt here for a time held down the Teuton as under-dog.

## IX

### UNDER THE PARVENU EMPIRE

BELGIUM had soon had more than enough of its Frenchification. The new masters' contempt for its dear traditions, their trampling on its cherished religion, their want of sympathy with a people of mixed race and language, made a sour sauce for that mechanical union, chemical one only in the hearts of a Jacobin minority. Britain's blockade ruined what trade was left, bringing about widespread distress that broke out in desperate brigandage all over the country, notably in the forest of Soignies between Brussels and Waterloo. The introduction of French conscription provoked an insurrection, put down with sanguinary force, after which poor Belgium had to make the best of its misfortune.

It seems to have cheered up a little on Napoleon's winning to sole power, this people having been well used to emperors; and there was even a flicker of satisfaction when he married a daughter of its old lord, now indeed reduced from being the world's sole Emperor to a titular empire of Austria. The modern Charlemagne at least took an interest in Belgium, visiting it more than once amid flattering plaudits; and he sketched out its great future for Antwerp, whose trade during the short peace of Amiens was revived through the opening of the Scheldt navigation. Napoleon held Holland at command as well as Belgium, if with more recalcitrancy on the part of its stubborn provinces, which were not incorporated with France but erected into a kingdom for his brother Louis, "the best of the Buonapartes." He, with no itch for royalty, took a high view of his duty to unwilling subjects, refusing to be a mere viceroy of his brother, consulting rather for the interests of the country, and abdicating when ordered to betray them. Poor Holland was a victim of its

quasi-union with the new empire, its rich colonies being swept up by British fleets that made such a stumbling block for the master of the Continent. This ex-republic, tempered by an hereditary stadtholdership, had been going down in the political world since it treated as an equal with England and France, its note in the world being now for the supply of colonial wares, or at home for its quaint cities, trim farms, snug gardens and the huge fields of tulips that still glow before tourist eyes.

Napoleon's victories reached far outside of Belgium's fields, but along with France it suffered sorely from the levies of men and money that went to gild his rickety throne. Beside the "drums and tramlings" of his oft-recruited armies, its chief experience of the long war was one that has a peculiar interest for us. On the Belgian frontier were established several depots for the British prisoners, largely civilians whose luckless lot, at the rupture of the peace of Amiens, was to be arrested while travelling or pleasure-seeking in France, and detained on the excuse of our seizure of merchant ships; Napoleon also anticipated the interning of the present day by claiming all men between sixteen and sixty as captive on account of their liability to serve in the militia. The most notable of these stations, a *Ruhleben* of the period, was Verdun, where were quartered most of the civilian *detenus*, who here might have to pine for years, along with officers, masters of merchant ships and other persons not without means, the common soldiers and sailors being more rigorously confined elsewhere.

This Lorraine town, on which we have seen the Prussians waste hundreds of thousands of men and whole mines of metal, had fallen an easy prize to their invasion of A.D. 1792, and as no longer being a frontier fortress had now been dismantled, left to its modest renown for the manufacture of sweets and liqueurs. Its ten thousand or so of inhabitants were delighted to have billeted upon them a foreign guesthood, numbering at different times from several hundreds upwards, including families, for wives were allowed to join their husbands, many of them well off and with means of drawing funds from England, while some indeed found trust for running into debt not always settled.





A DUTCH TULIP FARM IN SPRING



Impecunious midshipmen, marched off by force from the impotency of their creditors, thought it a capital joke thus to spoil the Egyptians, who, for their part, took such risks into account by exorbitant charges. For nearly twelve years, some of these luckless captives were thus cut off from their friends and affairs through a fit of ill-temper on the tyrant's part that, along with his threat of invasion from the camp at Boulogne, went far to make "Boney" a bugbear in Great Britain. Hitherto, as a restorer of order in France, he had not been without admiration in our country, especially among followers of Charles Fox; and when the short peace opened the Continent, many curious sight-seers flocked over to Paris, some hundreds of them having to pay with their liberty for a spell of sightseeing. Among those nearly caught in the trap were the Duke of Bedford, the Duchess of Gordon, and Colonel Carmichael Smith, Thackeray's father-in-law and model for his "Colonel Newcome."

The *detenus* were of all classes, peers, M.P.'s, tourists, tradesmen seeking custom in France, some Radicals who had hoped here to find congenial exile, down to *chevaliers d'industrie* and other dubious characters. At Verdun most of them lodged as they pleased, on giving their parole not to go beyond a certain distance from the town. They had also to sign a roll at various intervals, according to rank, superior officers once a month, lieutenants once in five days, others once a day, light-heeled middies twice a day; but even this clog on their movements could often be got rid of by a fine. Lord Blayney, the senior officer, who took an active interest in the welfare of his fellow-captives, hired a mansion outside the town, where he made himself so much at home that he bought it after the peace. He, and others, got leave to make long excursions in the district, as far as Nancy and Metz; some were even trusted to England on parole to see after private affairs, or to take a course of waters at places like Spa or Aix-la-Chapelle; a few invalids were let go to die at home. The Britons might amuse themselves with horse-racing, clubs, coursing, duels, cock-fighting, theatricals, gambling, in fact much as they liked so long as they could afford it, and too many fell on the truly British pastime of drunkenness. Some

kept greyhounds ; others contented themselves with knocking down squirrels in the woods ; sucking Nelsons were not above birds-nesting ; and, if nobler sport were wanted, a hard winter brought wolves prowling about the town. A garden could be hired for occupation and exercise. The steadier of the young officers took the opportunity of improving their education, schools being set up for the midshipmen and such like, whose idle hands would else be apt to get into mischief. Miss Edgworth's brother Lovell now bent his thoughts on the educational schemes which ripened in the setting up of his notable school at Edgworth-town. Most of the captives, of course, turned their hard fate to profit by learning more or less well a foreign language ; but we read of one navy captain so stubbornly John Bullish that if ever he picked up a French word he would take a walk round the ramparts to have it blown out of his head. A less prejudiced tar had the surprise of finding French quite easy to learn, for, said he, house (*maison*) was simply "mizzen," shop (*boutique*) "boat-hook," and fork (*fourchette*) "a fore sheet."

A good deal of the learning was not done under snuffy pedagogues. Among the distractions of junior officers seems to have been one "old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful always," in the smiles of daughters of Heth whose brothers might be more ready to frown at international flirtations for which picnics and pleasure parties gave opportunity. An anonymous midshipman who wrote gushingly sentimental letters from Verdun, now and then dropping into verse, has much to say of his heart wounded by such a sweet enemy :

"In the centre of the wood is a small portion of ground, freed from bushes, where they retire to dance, or amuse themselves in a swing, extended from one tree to another. I solicited Victoire to accompany me to this seat of gaiety and mirth ; but not finding her possess that partiality for dancing so well known in French females, I succeeded in the attainment of her consent to a stroll in the wood. The *sentiers* were broad, well shaded, and unobstructed by bushes ; and alone with her, and unmolested, I endeavoured to soften her heart to tenderness, by reciting the painful hardships I had endured. Her bosom swelled sometimes

with a sigh, and I vainly thought that 'she loved me for the stories I had told.' . . . The jealousy of the French *garçons* occasioned in the evening a skirmish in the wood. Several French ladies, after refusing to dance with their young countrymen who solicited that favour, imprudently accepted the hands of three English officers. Fired with rage at this unexpected preference, they armed themselves with sticks, and assembled with the determination to be revenged on their happy rivals. They did not expect the cause of three Englishmen to be the common cause of all Englishmen present. One of them, in a menacing attitude, insulted a young lieutenant of the navy, who with one blow felled him to the ground. Here the attack began ; and the English, though inferior in number, drove their opponents from the field of action. Several on both sides were very severely bruised, but fortunately no lives were lost."

The worst of it was all those pastimes and privileges being held at the arbitrary discretion of the commandant, who, as well as his underlings, was apt to be much concerned with fleecing this helpless flock. By a word he could commit them to close imprisonment in the citadel, or send them off to infernos like the strong fortress of Bitche in the Rhine country, where in dark, unwholesome dungeons they might be pent up with a crew of brutalized soldiers and sailors. One such unfortunate has to tell how his fellows here gave him a so rough reception as might be expected at Tom Brown's Rugby and our goals of the good old times ; he had to pay his footing in drink, and, after being tossed in a blanket, to strip and fight a champion of his own size, an ordeal that laid him up for a week. The governor of Verdun most hatefully notorious for his rapacity was General Wirion, an ex-pettifogger, who took toll of his charges in all sorts of underhand ways, as by setting up gaming tables in which he was a secret partner ; and those who resisted his exactions had to pay for it by harsh treatment. It is fair to state that on his malversations being exposed, he was summoned to account at Paris, and there blew out his brains rather than face an inquiry ; nor is this a solitary proof of the French Government's readiness to deal severely with its officials convicted of dishonesty or undue harshness towards the prisoners.

At the best it was an irksome and wearisome life, especially for the civilians who had not reckoned on such an experience. After a time they lost all hope of release, since the hostile Governments could not agree upon terms for exchange of prisoners, a commodity of which the balance was much in our favour, and we did not treat over well the Frenchmen pent up in our pontoons. From Verdun and other depots, attempts at escape were more frequent than successful, some of the prisoners showing wonderful perseverance and ingenuity in repeated evasions at any risk. A few officers incurred general reprobation by breaking their parole; but the honourable plan was to commit some offence punished by closer restriction which cancelled that word of honour. The story of several such adventures got into print, like some lately published of escapes from German keepers. The best remembered of those narratives will be Marryat's in "Peter Simple," which though presented in the guise of fiction is mainly copied from fact, as published in the stories of Captains O'Brien and Boys, with hints perhaps from other actual experiences. These young officers had a tougher job of it in the flesh than had Peter Simple. O'Brien, on his first attempt got away to the Channel coast, but was there arrested to be sent back and condemned to incarceration at Bitche. On the way thither, he gave his escort leg-bail and managed to slip off as far as Bavaria, before being caught. Lodged in the dungeons of Bitche, he again escaped by a daring act of prison-breaking, and this time reached Austria, where he found furtherance to get on board a British ship at Trieste.

Most of such true stories have handy and resourceful sailors for their heroes. How hard our "hearts-of-oak" were to hold is shown in the recently republished reminiscences of Thomas Williams, a Cornishman living at St. Ives till 1862. Early in the century he had sailed on a merchant-brig, to be cut out by a French privateer off Beachy Head and carried into Dieppe. In a convoy of prisoners he was marched inland along the country now scarred by our trenches, past Arras, Douai, Cambrai and Rocroi to Givet, the French frontier town on the banks of the Meuse. This was a depot chiefly for common sailors, some

thousand of them confined in a long barrack-like building beside the river, below the fortress of Charlemont. Till a worthy clergyman, the Rev. R. B. Wolfe, who had been captured while travelling as a nobleman's chaplain, volunteered to look after this captive crew, they had no resources but fighting and getting drunk to wile away idle hours when they were not employed on such tasks as making French uniforms. Not that they could often get a skinful of the cheapest liquor, for, besides scanty rations their allowance from Government was some three farthings a day, at one time supplemented by a penny from a Patriotic Fund raised at Lloyd's, of which they seem to have been partly cheated by the knavery of one administrator. A break in the monotony of their lives was when Napoleon, on his way to Paris, found himself stuck fast at Givet through the breaking of its bridge over the flooded Meuse ; then the English tars were called on to construct a new bridge of boats, as they did with such success and celerity that he granted a dozen of them their liberty. At one time some hundreds, of real or feigned Irish birth, let themselves be tempted into the French service, by way of escaping their boredom ; but this contingent deserted so readily on reaching Peninsula battlefields, that such recruiting came to be dropped, strongly reprobated as it was by the majority of the prisoners, among whom renegades and informers might look to have a bad time of it ; and they did not fail to startle their gaolers by a storm of cheers on King George's birthday.

A little band of Methodists had made a nucleus of order and religion before the coming of the chaplain, who set up schools to keep hundreds of grown pupils out of mischief. Williams was a decent lad who by himself had been tackling arithmetic and navigation under difficulties. None the less was he keen to escape, as others had tried with various fortunes, one getting off as far as Prussia before being retaken five months later. Our hero's first attempt, along with two comrades, was by scaling the wall of the fortress to wander empty stomached through woods and fields in such wet weather that they could not lie down, then on the second day were recaptured near Charleroi. Brought back to Givet and tried by court martial, they were condemned to six

years in irons, and had been marched off to serve their sentence in some French arsenal, but on the way received a pardon to grace the birth of Napoleon's heir. Freed from fetters, they were now shut up in a prison cell of the Charlemont fortress, till they could be sent across France to close confinement at Bitche. But, loosening the bricks of their chimney and climbing up into a garret above, they managed to let themselves down over the wall by a rope of sheets for another dash off through thick and thin.

Five in number this time, they steered a course for the sea as best they could, hiding in woods and cornfields by day, and slinking along in the darkness, beacons by the North Star and by the great comet of 1811. At nightfall they would venture up to some house to beg bread and milk, seldom grudged them by kindly Belgian women. Once they blundered into a lion's den, by knocking at the door of a rural guard, whose duty was to look out for such fugitives; but seeing himself outnumbered, he had the discretion to entertain them with a good grace. Next day they found a heartier host in a Belgian who was hiding his sons as deserters from conscription; and he guided them on their way, armed with a pitchfork. Their chief difficulty was in crossing rivers, since Williams for one could not swim; but after eleven days they had the joy of reaching the sea at Nieuport, one of the party so ill that he bid the rest abandon him as helpless.

Here they saw boats on the beach, but failing in an attempt to make off with one, took their way along the sandy shore to Ostend. From this port smugglers or other skippers ventured across to England in spite of the effectual blockade of our navy and the nominal one decreed against us by Napoleon. But before the fugitives could get in touch with any such go-betweens, they fell into the hands of a band of *douaniers* and found themselves once more laid by the heels. From the gaol at Ostend they had the satisfaction of seeing five English middies slip out disguised as women with baskets of potatoes on their backs; but there was no such luck for themselves, after a time marched off again towards Givet. To avoid harsher treatment they denied being runaways, giving themselves out as recently shipwrecked





THE MARKET PLACE, MALINES (1884)



on the coast ; but, betrayed by a countryman who had known them at Givet, they were obliged to confess the truth.

At Bruges they came to be confined for more than two months in an ex-nunnery, filled with deserters from conscription. To facilitate a fresh escape, these sailors had the singular idea of infecting themselves with the itch so as to be sent to hospital, but no good came of that. On the first stage of their march onwards, however, three of them contrived to break out of a less solid prison, and once more reached the coast. Turning south this time, they tramped along it by Dunkirk and Calais, hoping to get on board ship at Havre as American sailors. But at Boulogne a demand for passports brought them up with a round turn, and again they found themselves in quod, this time condemned to be sent right across France to Besançon in the Jura. Williams, with his chum Henry Blight who stuck to him throughout, had been six months wandering on their own account, and he was now as long in reaching the Alps, marching all through the hard winter, with long halts in filthy prisons at places where they might have to beg a livelihood from charitable inhabitants. Stowed away in prison at Besançon, at once he set his new comrades on playing the mole with its masonry, and after months of work they had almost dug a tunnel to the outside till they were overheard, and a close search revealed the hole they had been able to hide. For this the accomplices had a month in a dungeon, the very darkness of which was welcome, for they could half fill it with stones and earth without discovery. So, before the month was up, they had worked their way out and taken to the mountains, only to be caught next day by a party of mounted gendarmes. The commandant seems rather to have admired their persevering enterprise, as they were not punished except by having to finish their month in the dungeon ; then Williams was soon at his old tricks again without success.

After two years of this prison, he was marched back to Belgium, on the way passing parties of prisoners bound for Besançon. He could not understand why the French thus kept shuttlecocking them to and fro. It was bitter weather, so that many of his ill-clothed comrades suffered from frostbite and other

disablement. Those that had not to be left at hospitals by the way were taken to the gloomy fortress of Mauberge in Belgium, the new-comers there shut up in a veritable Black Hole that nearly stifled them. Ere long, however, "Once more remove!" was the word. It was now the beginning of 1814, when the Allies were advancing upon France from north and south; and the prisoners of war had to be hastily driven inland, congesting the roads and prisons, sometimes left to shift for themselves. At Cambrai, Williams found himself one of thousands of various nations, with whom the retreating French hardly knew what to do. They were set wandering southwards, in groups slightly guarded, from town to town billeted on the inhabitants and getting what rations their authorities could deal out. There was no rough treatment now that France stood in dread of invasion. The detachment with which Williams went had been marched to Riom, when the news of Napoleon's abdication set the people dancing for joy. After some weeks easy confinement here, they trudged off for Bordeaux, which they had the joyful surprise of finding in the hands of Wellington's army, and its citizens well pleased to have shaken off that long nightmare of war.

A more minute if less exciting story is that of Peter Gordon, mate of another merchantman taken into Dieppe by a privateer. He was sent to the citadel of Cambrai, where prisoners had the benefit of a rather indulgent commandant, who yet could not prevent them being cheated by his subordinates. All the same, this young man was bent on taking any chance of escape, a determination sharpened by his lighting on the memoirs of that arch-escaper Baron Trenck. His plan was to travel as an American sailor, with a passport in that character which he had bought from a fellow prisoner. He also provided himself with a map, a compass, and a piece of watch-spring cut into a saw; and he sewed up his money as buttons on his clothes. After a good deal of scheming and hesitation, his start proved an easy matter. He had simply strolled out of the town one afternoon without any one stopping him, and though he meant to go back this time, he found himself late for the shutting of the gates, so took advantage of a foggy night to walk off to Quesnoi and thence to Mons.

Choosing by-ways, and slinking round large towns as much as possible, he made for the Meuse. It was cold winter weather, from which he found shelter in haylofts, in a sawpit, in an iron furnace, or, growing bolder, in some house, where the people were too ignorant to question his account of himself as an American, or sympathizingly took him for a deserting conscript. He was seldom denied a rest by the fire, nor a meal of bread and milk. His own chief provision was some indigestible fat ham which he used as a sop for the suspicious growlings of any farmhouse Cerberus. At one place he was arrested as a deserter, to be brought before the Burgomaster, who seems to have winked hard over his story and let him pass on. By Charleroi, Namur, Liège, he made his way on to the moors of Limburg, where among Dutch-speaking peasants he could pass for a Frenchman. As by Maestricht and Bois-le-Duc he got further into Holland, he came upon its characteristic scenery of flat green pastures and trim houses, the good-wives of which looked askance at his dirty shoes. From the confluence of the Meuse he turned down the Rhine, and so, without much adventure, reached Rotterdam after a tramp of thirteen days.

So far, so good ; but now how was he to get across the North Sea ? He found plenty of his country-people at Rotterdam, smugglers and such like, and with some others in like case made a bargain with the master of a vessel. After tantalizing delays she had set sail, but was overhauled and carried back by a guard-ship boat. Examined by the authorities, Gordon's conscience has to reproach him with all the lies he must needs tell, though he rather stuck at confirming them with an oath. Luckily for him the United States consul was a Dutchman, who could not detect his imposture as an American ; and again we have some hint of magistrates not very keen to play sleuth-hounds for their French masters. With an escort of soldiers, however, the fugitives were taken back up the river for further examination in the French camp at Bois-le-Duc. The craft in which they went was forced by a strong head wind to anchor in a creek ; then making their guards drunk and sick with fiery gin, some of the prisoners slipped on shore to walk back to Rotterdam. There Gordon had

again to lie for a time in hiding, at last to get off in a leaky Dutch *schuyt* that ran ashore, but to his satisfaction on the Norfolk coast, where it was saved by a Yarmouth boat.

Among such humble Odysseys, that of Captain Boys, already mentioned, best deserves the republication it seems not to have attained, unless in an abridgment, forty years ago, by the present writer. This lively youngster was confined first at Verdun, then more closely in the citadel of Valenciennes, where escape seemed possible only to a monkey or a middy. After fretting for years, during which his old shipmates would be earning prize money and promotion, he was able to get off one dark night with three other reëfers, one so boyish that he could be disguised as a girl, like Peter Simple; and they left an ironical letter to the commandant, impressing upon him how for the like of them :

*Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage.*

The party were armed with clasp-knives and packets of pepper to throw into the eyes of possible assailants, their design being to make for the mouth of the Scheldt, where if they could not steal a boat they might embark on the ferry for Flushing, and seize it when half-way across. Their first halt was in a subterranean hollow of the fortifications of Tournai, right under the enemy's nose. Passing for conscripts on their way to the colours, and in that character unsuspectingly advised and directed by gendarmes, they tramped on to Bruges, thence to the coast at Blankenberg. Here they trusted themselves into a little tavern, the landlady of which laughed at their story of being conscripts, at once to their dismay recognizing them for English. But she proved a good friend, who had lived as servant in an English family and felt no loyalty to Belgium's French masters. She hid them for weeks in her loft, while she set on foot bargainings with fishermen for shipping them off. By order all the fishing boats had been hauled up high and dry, so they had to wait for a spring tide to set one afloat, then, just as they were getting it off, had the mortification to be brought up by an unlucky kink in a rope that swung it back on the beach, then the Philistines

were upon them just too late to catch them scampering off through the sand dunes.

The disappointed voyagers had nothing for it but to regain their shelter at the public-house, which soon fell under suspicion, and they narrowly escaped a search by taking to a wood, where they had to lie in the cold, now half buried in snow, then flooded out by a thaw, secretly supplied with provisions through that kindly hostess. The youngest boy, disguised as a girl, was smuggled off somehow to England ; the rest had a weary waiting upon the distrust of a local Shylock who would not without careful inquiry give credit to the bills by which they offered to pay for a passage, its risk estimated so high that in the end each of the party had disbursed £135 on his repatriation. For a time they were hid in a garret at Bruges, where Boys grew so bold that he had actually started off for Givet to contrive the release of a friend imprisoned there. In company with a Belgian Flora Macdonald who showed sympathetic interest in his generous design, he went to Brussels, visited her friends there, saw the sights, and hired a carriage to travel on in the character of a wine merchant. But when he had got as far as Dinant, he heard of his friend having been transferred to Bitche, and regretfully turned back to rejoin his comrades still in hiding at Bruges.

Many persons must now have been in their secret, but none of these played false. At last, six months after their escape, the three midshipmen were got on board a boat opposite Flushing, rowing off with muffled oars, till a fair wind helped them across to Ramsgate. Before long the Walcheren expedition brought Boys back as a lieutenant to the mouth of the Scheldt, where he had the satisfaction of lending a hand to help off from the scene of his own anxieties another batch of midshipmen encouraged by his example to escape from Valenciennes.

These typical samples of many such adventures, lucky and unlucky, give us the impression of a country that needed much holding down ; and got it. Gendarmes, keen after rewards and promotion, kept a watchful eye on all wanderers ; but the countryfolk as often as not helped on the fugitives, sometimes taking them for the refractory conscripts lurking in out-of-the-

way nooks and forests where St. Hubert might to-day hunt the wild boar. In one canton, out of sixteen young men liable to service, only four presented themselves. Many mutilated their hands to be unfit for bearing arms. Others, haled to the colours, took the first chance of deserting. Prisons became crammed with such offenders. When they could not be brought to punishment, their families or the communities to which they belonged were ordered to be held responsible, a harshness that could not endear the foreign empire to a people whose interest in its glory ill-balanced the taxation it demanded in money as well as men.

Not less was devout Belgium hurt by Napoleon's dealings with the Church, moved to exclaim against this professed champion: *Haud tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis!* He had been hailed as restorer of religion; but it soon appeared that his Concordat with the Pope was to have a one-sided interpretation. No emperor of old took a higher tone with the clergy, treated by him as a branch of Government service. His bullying of Pius VII avenged Hildebrand's humiliation of a contumacious emperor. This infirm old man he made captive, first at Savona, then, on pretence of possible rescue by an English fleet, had him dragged across the Alps at the risk of his life, and imprisoned at Fontainebleau. By threats, worrying and scolding, though it seems not proven that at an angry interview he went so far as to strike the feeble pontiff, Napoleon extorted his signature to a new Concordat, afterwards disclaimable as made under duress.

A chief contention between them was over the Emperor's claim to appoint bishops as well as generals and prefects. Catholicism might well be scandalized by such insolent treatment of its head; and the Belgian clergy were moved to hot indignation, refusing to recognize the official nominees to ecclesiastical appointments, whereupon the angry despot did not stick at sending recalcitrant bishops and canons to prison or exile. Ghent showed itself true to its old reputation in kicking against the pricks of this new tyranny. Its bishop, the French Prince de Broglie, not proving duly subservient, had been sent off to the Isle of St. Marguerite in the south of France, there lodged in the



cell of that mysterious "Man with the Iron Mask," till his failing health shamed the Government into granting him a kinder place of captivity. When a usurping bishop presented himself with the official mandate, the chapter's dignitaries kept away from his installation. The students of the seminary, all but three, refused to attend the cathedral service, though positively ordered to do so, on the threat of being sent into the army in case of disobedience. "Rather soldiers than schismatics!" was their cry; and, the college having disbanded itself, the young men were presently summoned from their homes as recruits. Those found fit for service were marched off like a gang of criminals in the charge of gendarmes, acclaimed and entertained as martyrs in the towns through which they passed. Their destination was a fortress where, quartered in damp casemates, poorly fed, tormented by rats and vermin, more than half of them died before the survivors gained release after Napoleon's abdication.

Along with France, Belgium had for years to groan under the heavy burdens laid on them by their tyrant's extravagant ambition. What sale came for Flemish or Walloon manufactures through his not wholly effectual prohibition of British goods, was more than set off by the lack of free commerce. Even Spa, which by the incorporation of Liége, now stood on Belgian territory, lost its best customers, Napoleon's parvenu aristocrats not replacing the brilliant international patronage it had enjoyed since its principal spring was named after Peter the Great, treating himself to an orgy of the waters, when there seems to have been a willingness on the part of hostile generals to respect this as neutral ground, to be kept dry of bloodshed. It should, however, be put to Napoleon's credit that he did much for the canals, roads and industries of the country, taking special interest in the revival of Antwerp, both as a port and as an arsenal for the fleet he hoped to bring to fresh being. Antwerp, he declared, should be a pistol pointed at the head of England.

In 1809 England had fired a damp squib at Antwerp; or it might be compared to a gun that went off at the wrong end. The ill-starred and ill-managed Walcheren expedition numbered 40,000 men, one of the strongest armies we had yet landed on the

Continent, backed by three dozen ships of the line with a due proportion of frigates and gunboats; but its effect on war-hardened Belgium was like Topsy's whipping by Miss Ophelia. Landed without resistance in the mouth of the Scheldt, it easily captured Middleburg and other towns, then went on to the siege of Flushing, the French squadron retiring up the estuary behind Antwerp. The enemy seems to have been taken by surprise, so that a bold stroke might have mastered this city, feebly garrisoned as it was. Raw troops were hurried up for its defence, in part half-hearted conscripts without uniforms or discipline, some of them without arms under generals who did not pull together. But while the British advance hung fire, reinforcements arrived, Marshal Bernadotte took command, and Antwerp's fortifications were quickly strengthened. The invaders won nothing more than the surrender of Flushing, then lay inactive for months on a marshy island, from the first sickening with fever till half the army was invalided, and it went ingloriously home at the end of the year. Great indignation arose over this *fiasco*, the blame of which was thrown on one another by Admiral Sir Richard Strachan and the military commander, Lord Chatham, son of the great Earl. The controversy brought forth a duel between Canning and Castlereagh, also that famous epigram :

*Lord Chatham with his sword drawn  
Was waiting for Sir Richard Strachan.  
Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,  
Was waiting for the Earl of Chatham.*

Napoleon took advantage of such a false alarm to levy a new tax of flesh and blood in the form of a Belgian National Guard 80,000 strong; and presently he annexed Holland outright, that all this coast might be under his control. But soon the sun of Austerlitz was setting over Russian snows; and the afterglow of his gory battles in Germany paled before the blazing up of Europe against his selfish arrogance. It must have seemed to Belgium like old times when the Allies swarmed across the Rhine at the end of 1813, while Wellington came thundering at the back door of France. Holland shook off the alien yoke, the Prince of

Orange landing to be acclaimed as a native sovereign, and to follow the steps of his great ancestor by a triumphal entry into Brussels. Antwerp held out for a time; and a small British army met costly failure in an attempt to storm Bergen-op-Zoom, bravely defended against veteran soldiers by Belgian conscripts forced under the French tricolour. But the old chess-board of nations was soon cleared of Napoleon's knights and castles. For the sake of the arms factories of Liège and Mons, he was concerned to defend this corner of his board; but all he could do, by skilful moves of the pieces left him about the northern edge of France, only delayed the invaders pushing on to close on Paris, till the desertion of generals and ministers gave him no choice but to abdicate at Fontainebleau, to the outspoken relief of his war-weary nation.

Belgium thus set free under a Provisional Government, the question now was who should be the master of a land well-broken to foreign bridling. Its people themselves, sick from their dose of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity washed down by a bitter draught of despotism, cast a regretful eye on their old historic connexion with Austria; but this "ramshackle empire," not now very strong on its own legs, no longer cared to burden itself with such a troublesome outlying dependency. Nor was Prussia then ready to take over the charge of it, as had in his day been the design of Pitt. The Allies were agreed not to set it up as independent, which might mean its drifting back into France by force of political gravity. It was not thought worth while to consult the Belgians in an arrangement that dumped them into the new kingdom of Holland, after eight generations restoring the union broken in twain by Spanish misrule.

But before the Congress of Vienna had ended its cooking of governments and frontiers, the pot was upset by Napoleon's dash out of Elba, for a Hundred Days throwing all the fat into the fire. Even before this, the Allies had been like to fall by the ears over the partition of his spoils. Now they had to run back to arms against the common enemy, whose first blow was aimed at Brussels. Napoleon appears to have miscalculated on a loyalty he had ill-deserved from the people who received with

applause Louis XVIII taking refuge in a lordly mansion of Ghent, thus again, after long stagnation roused by the stir of a court, albeit one that might soon be under notice to quit. The usurper of course needed to snatch at his old prestige by rapid success, for the sake both of intimidating the Allies into negotiation, and of rallying to his standard the French, by no means unanimous in a welcome of stunned surprise. Of the troops he could count on as faithful some part had to be turned against royalist risings in the south and west ; another section set to watch for the advance of the Austrians and Russians on the east ; and it was with an army of some 120,000 men that, counting on his genius and his star to baffle twice as many, in June he dashed across the northern frontier upon :

*Those cities, heights and plains,  
War's favourits playground, with its crimson stains,  
Familiar as the morn with pearly dews.*

Almost as much ink as blood has been shed over the three days fighting that now befell, not the hottest battle on Belgian soil, yet perhaps the most important, at least to one of the combatants. Had Napoleon now taken every trick, it was but the first game of a rubber ; but a disaster meant for him the throwing up of his cards. French writers have it that, according to all the rules, he should have won Waterloo, but he lost. The Prussians boast this as a victory of theirs, declaring our army as on the point of defeat when Blucher came to its aid. " It was a near thing ; and if I had not been there— ! " said Wellington with modest pride. There is no agreement on the very name of the battle, christened by us from the village to the rear where Wellington wrote his report ; but the French call it Mont St. Jean, and the Germans La Belle Alliance, from other points of the field. Frenchmen who frown at our Waterloo Bridge and Trafalgar Squares, may well bethink themselves how Rivoli, Jena and Austerlitz figure in the thoroughfares of Paris. But one thing should be better remembered, that we have made rather too much of this as a truly British triumph, when of at most some 100,000 men under Wellington's orders, two-thirds were Germans, Dutch

and Belgians. Our patriotic historians have unfairly tried to deprive these auxiliaries of their due credit, and there is a legend accepted by Thackeray in pages better known to the general reader than any history, that the Belgians showed no spirit against their old master, who seems to have counted on their coming over to his standard. It appears rather that they faced him with a firmness all the more creditable to their loyalty, as the Imperial Guard had enlisted a large proportion of Belgians, so that fellow countrymen now found themselves taunting and tempting one another to desert in the heat of a *mêlée*. Their historians indeed retort that Wellington put his foreign brigades in the forefront to bear the brunt of the enemy's onset, keeping his own people drawn back in reserve. That may explain why Belgians and Germans at some points were the first to give way ; but the plain fact is that the British suffered the larger half of the 15,000 casualties, the list of which for once moved that Iron Duke to tears.

It is not for a layman to go into all the controversies raised by military pundits on mistakes charged against each commander. A sensible saying of Wellington was that every general made mistakes, then he who made the fewest got the best of it. Napoleon attributed victory to the bigger battalions, and failing that advantage which he lacked here, it is a commonplace of tactics that the main matter is, by well calculated activity, to bring superior force to bear on a given point. It seems as if the victor of Marengo and Wagram, his mind now clouded by painful bodily disorders, showed fatal hesitation and want of happy discernment at critical emergencies, under which more than one of his generals either lost his own head or failed to receive clear orders. His effort was to cut between Wellington and Blucher, separating their forces to be assailed in turn. Wellington's army on the right stretching to the Scheldt, and Blucher's to Liège, the Allies are judged by some to have spread out too long a line, with a view not so much of swift co-operation as of their divergent routes of practicable retreat, in the one case upon Antwerp, in the other to Cologne. Of course the enemy's object would be to strike where least expected ; and it was with anxiously strained

eyes that, through three fateful days, the leaders tried to catch each other's movements from windmills that made the best observatories over a flat or gently swelling country.

One point of controversy is as to Wellington's being taken by surprise on the night of that famous ball at Brussels, its music drowned by drums and pipes of a muster and a march at the small hours of dawn. Fashionable English folk must have certainly been startled to find their dancing and flirtations broken up by the distant boom of cannon; and the commander under whose wing they enjoyed themselves so confidently, could hardly have realized the rapidity of his enemy's movements. He is thought to have looked for an attack rather directed against his right; but now at once he hastened forward reinforcements to Quatre Bras, a cross-roads point some ten miles south of carefully surveyed ground on which he meant to cover the capital. A confused fight went on there through June 16, with a good deal of slaughter, increased by the unfortunate incident of a Highland regiment firing into Belgian cavalry whose uniform was mistaken for French. Wellington, like Blucher, that day had nearly been captured in one of the charges by which Ney held him, while on the right Napoleon's main body defeated the Prussians at the hotly contested Battle of Ligny, where their loss was as great as ours at Waterloo. Blucher retreated on Wavre to pull together his shaken army, opportunely strengthened by the arrival of a fresh corps, 30,000 strong. Wellington, who had held his ground at Quatre Bras, next day fell back to the position already selected by him for a pitched battle. Napoleon eagerly followed, confident of victory, since he took the Prussians to have been routed beyond rallying. So Sunday, June 18, saw the two greatest captains of their time face to face across a gentle dip between low swells of ground.

“The tale is in every Englishman's mouth; and you and I, who were children when the great battle was won and lost, are never tired of hearing and recounting the history of that famous action. Its remembrance rankles still in the bosoms of millions of the countrymen of those brave men who lost the day. They pant for an opportunity of revenging that humiliation; and if a

contest, ending in a victory on their part, should ensue, elating them in their turn and leaving its cursed legacy of hatred and rage behind to us, there is no end to the so-called glory and shame, and to the alternations of successful and unsuccessful murder, in which two high-spirited nations might engage. Centuries hence, we Frenchmen and Englishmen might be boasting and killing each other still, carrying out bravely the Devil's code of honour."

So wrote Thackeray, two generations before that rankling memory came, let us hope, to be drowned beneath seas of blood poured out on the same soil in a common war against the enemy of Europe's peace. By that time it was Sedan rather than Waterloo that made a sore point in French hearts, since once more the fate of a nation had been decided on Cæsar's hottest fields of conquest. Alas, that poor Belgium could not count Waterloo as the last struggle in which, with or without her consent, she must let herself be trampled and torn by foreign invaders!

Many a Briton has visited that famous field, passing through the Bois de Cambre that is the Bois du Boulogne of Brussels, then the shady roads of the Soignies Forest, to emerge after a dozen miles on the open plateau where the most prominent landscape feature is an artificial mound raised as pedestal for the monument of Wellington's victory. There, all the long mid-summer day, he stood on the defensive, with farm buildings and garden walls as his strongest redoubts, stormed at by the French infantry, while from the opposite ridge their cannon pounded our steady squares, in the thick of the battle surged through by a flood of cuirassiers to be checked under the fire of Brown Bess from behind hedges of bayonets, and when some squares were crushed in, to encounter our cavalry from the rear. Ney charged a dozen times over the ground littered with dying men and steeds, where he himself had four horses shot under him. It was then that a regiment of our foreign hussars let themselves be put to such panic flight that their straggling through Brussels spread consternation among the Jos Sedleys and Lady Bareacres now startled into flight, and set poor Louis XVIII packing up at

Ghent, where not till next morning did he learn how he had no more to fear.

When the sun fell low on that corpse-strewn field, its issue seemed still doubtful. But the French onset was spent, and for some time back the Prussian cannon had been growling louder and louder on their right. In vain Napoleon played his trump card, a charge of the Imperial Guard. Wellington seized the movement for a forward move that swept the enemy into disorder. Somewhat questionable are the traditional exclamations of that evening: "Would that night or Blucher were come!"—"Up Guards and at them!"—"The Guard dies but never surrenders!"—"Ça toujours finit de même!" put into the mouth of Napoleon, thinking of Agincourt and Talavera rather than of Fontenoy. But there is no doubt about the cry of *Sauve qui peut!* raised among the despairing wreck of his army that swept him away, whose more noble end had now been to die sword in hand. While Wellington's army sank to rest on its hard won ground, by moonlight the resentful Prussians pressed the rout of a foe to whom they owed years of sore humiliation.

So fell the conqueror of the Continent to rise no more. His empire, like a mushroom growing rankly and rapidly in virtue of nitrogenous elements, had been cut at its root of martial glory. Ill received at Paris, he was again fain to abdicate, and, when the Prussians were for shooting him on the scene of the Duc d'Enghien's execution, chose surrender to "the most powerful, the most constant, the most generous of my adversaries." He was never ill off for fine phrases, which found a low rate of exchange in Britain. Too many tears have been wasted on the hard exile of the man whose selfish ambition had ruined countless homes. But when fast prisoned to eat his heart out, beyond risk of doing mischief to mankind, he might have felt shame to know, how of all the princes that had flattered and obeyed him with bitterness in their hearts, the poor old Pope, rescued from his insolent thrall, was the one to heap coals of intercession on that ex-oppressor's head. Popes and emperors had been always apt to fall out, yet they never quite forgot their old partnership in the management of a world that was now much inclined to do without them.





WATERLOO



## X

### A NEW CROWN

THE recent Congress of Paris announced its difficult purpose not to settle a people's destiny without regard to its own antecedents, interests, and desires. The Congress of Vienna troubled itself with no such revolutionary principle. In ruling afresh the map of Europe, so cavalierly cut up by Napoleon, it consulted mainly the pretensions of princes, the balance of power, the neatness of natural or artificial boundaries, the countries dealt with having little say as to what became of them. As the Belgians never had been solidly independent, it was taken for granted that they should not want any such status ; and that their country, shaken off from France, might be stuck on to Holland, which seems much as if Yorkshire were lumped in with Lincolnshire. Wellington, who had won such influence by his victories, favoured that plan, perhaps out of regard for the Prince of Orange's services at Waterloo. In the good old days, the Low Countries had stuck together well enough under Burgundian lordship, and for a time at least had looked up to the headship of Orange. So now the new Netherlands kingdom was endowed with nine Belgian provinces, containing three-fifths of the whole population of some five millions, over which William the Silent's heirs had at last graced their principedom with a crown. To be meticulously accurate one should say eight and a half provinces, Luxemburg being cut in two, one half of it handed over as a Grand Duchy to be an isolated appanage of the Dutch king. What Belgium got for itself out of the sharing of Napoleon's plunder, was a returned strip of frontier territory, with enough of the indemnity exacted from France, to restore the dismantled fortresses that had once fenced in that side.

It soon became manifest that the Belgians themselves were by no means satisfied with this arrangement, especially on finding that while their country brought in the larger block of shares, it was looked on as a junior partner in the business. Brussels was not to be the capital; the joint Parliament now formed was to meet at The Hague. The representation of the two countries was to be equal, as was not the electorate. Belgium was to bear her share of a considerable debt owed by Holland; and the king called for an expensive army to grace his brand-new royalty. There were complaints of taxation not being fairly adjusted, and of Dutch Ministers not favouring duties to protect the products of Belgium's mines and factories, growing in importance when in 1823 an Englishman, John Cockerill, set up his celebrated ironworks at Seraing in the Liége district, with the King as sleeping partner. The joint Constitution, drawn up with a good deal of wrangling, raised an outcry to heaven by its proclamation of religious equality, an idea alien to Belgium, whose glowing Catholicism hissed upon the Calvinism of Holland, now cooling into a temper congenial to toleration. The fact was that, sundered for two and a half centuries, the two peoples had been growing into very different characters to jar upon one another at several points, much like the friction between Ulster and Ireland's other provinces; and we know what a cat and dog union these two have made of it.

The new king, unfortunately, was, if a well-meaning, a not over wise man, who took himself very seriously, and earnestly pressed his good design to build up in haste a strong, united nation that might fulfil the Burgundian ambition of making a buffer state between French and German collisions. Some one shrewdly said of him that he was too much of a Liberal for a king and too much of a king for a Liberal, who, like the Emperor Joseph, tried to accomplish progressive intentions by arbitrary acts, such as overriding a majority of Belgian votes against his conscientiously planned Constitution. He so little understood or considered Belgian sentiment, that he was for making Dutch the official language of the whole kingdom. His heir, the Prince of Orange, graced by the laurels of Waterloo, was rather more in

sympathy with a people among whom he had shed his blood ; and they would have liked some kind of Home Rule under this hero as viceroy. Their protest against religious toleration and unshackled education found a mouthpiece in the Bishop of Ghent, already so harshly used by Napoleon, who now came to be in turn prosecuted and banished under the new sovereign. Writers of angry pamphlets and newspaper articles also were put down with a rigour belying the guarantees for free speech promised by a Constitution that turned out so bad a fit for more than half the kingdom.

We need not follow the train of discontent, indignation, quarrels, and intrigues that went on smouldering for half a generation in spite of all the Government's attempts at stamping it down, till it was fanned into a blaze by the hot breath of the French Revolution of July 1830. The first demonstration flared up at Brussels, when an opera audience, moved to chorus Masaniello's chant of liberty, burst out with excited cries against the Dutch and the Ministers. This city imitated Paris by throwing up barricades, and replaced the Orange standard by the Brabant red, yellow and black tricolour. The Prince of Orange, after trying his waned popularity for an attempt at appeasement, went off in dudgeon. The obstinate King took strong measures, yet not strong enough. He sent his other son, Prince Frederick, with a small army that pushed into the upper part of Brussels, but had to retreat after four days of street fighting. The insurgents, reinforced by volunteers from other parts, emboldened themselves to set up a Provisional Government ; and the country seethed with a patriotic ferment before which most of the Dutch garrisons abandoned its fortresses, falling back into Holland with but slight resistance to the outbreak.

Dutch troops, under the Waterloo veteran General Chassé, still held Antwerp, overawed by its citadel, as in the days of Alva. When patriots within the walls managed to open its gates to a band of insurgents from Brussels, the townsfolk treated themselves to an orgy of tumultuous exaltation, in which some breach of armistice terms by reckless insurgents gave Chassé an excuse for bombarding them with shells and red-hot balls from

the citadel and the warships in the river. This most lurid scene of the Revolution must have reminded historical students of the "Spanish Fury," that two centuries and a half gone by had ruined Antwerp, its place as commercial metropolis passing across the Channel to another city, which but two or three years ago had similar experience of bursting bombs, crashing walls and windows, devastating flames, but not of such panic as is described for us by Henri Conscience, the Flemish Walter Scott. He, an enthusiastic lad of seventeen, had been shouting and blazing powder among the suddenly dismayed mob; then in his glow of awakened patriotism he answered a call for volunteers to drive out three powder wagons left standing by the Hôtel de Ville in danger of explosion under that fiery hail:

"The royal warehouse, piled up with the wares of every land to the value of several millions of francs, was all on fire; the ancient church of St. Michael also was being devoured by the conflagration; gigantic flames leapt to the top of its towers, like a burning sea whose waves of blood had been lashed by a furious wind. Clouds of sparks and huge blazing fragments poured like a torrent from the bosom of that volcano, where countless riches from all parts of the world were being consumed in the fire's frightful roaring. The sky was bloodstained; in the deserted streets everything stood out clear under the weirdly menacing reflections. The whole city appeared doomed to certain destruction. . . . We got without hindrance to near the Borgerhout Gate; but there it was impossible for us to clear a passage through the scared crowd which, with cries, groans and lamentations begged and prayed to be allowed to leave the city. In my capacity as soldier, I was able to push a way through the close masses of people and approach the gate to see what was the matter. There my eyes caught a spectacle I shall never forget. I saw mothers carrying sick infants, decrepit old women, old men, children, all on their knees, holding out suppliant hands and with tearful eyes beseeching the guard to open the gate for them. They offered all the gold and silver they had, now and then casting looks of terror and horror towards the city from which a sanguinary glow struck their eyes. Some were let out in my presence; but when, on the demand of our officer, the gate was thrown wide open for the passage of the powder-wagons, a



THE PLACE VERTE, ANTWERP





thousand joyful cries rose from the crowd, and all, men, women, children, sick and impotent, burst forth with thanks to heaven. I can scarce understand how none of them were crushed among our wagons, for, not to be pushed back by the guard, a mob of fugitives slipped among them, clinging to the wheels and pressing under the horses' feet."

A Belgian National Congress was now assembling that decided on a constitution as a Limited Monarchy, then had more trouble in fixing on a monarch. There were several candidates more or less actively in the field, a favourite at first being Louis Philippe's son, the Duke of Nemours, whose father prudently withdrew his pretension that might provoke a war like that of the Spanish Succession. The Prince of Orange, not always on the best of terms with his father, was willing to angle for a crown that now seemed unlike to come to him by inheritance. He had still a party in Belgium ; but its choice finally fell on his successful rival for the hand of our Princess Charlotte, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg, who, but for the untimely death of his wife, would have been Prince Consort of Britain, as his nephew Prince Albert was to be before long. From Claremont, where he had been living in retirement, Leopold set out for his new fortunes, entered Brussels with the applause bestowed here on so many rulers, and was installed on his throne in July A.D. 1831, when the country had been nearly a year in making up its mind.

Now at last, after all those vicissitudes of subjection, Belgium was an independent state with a king of its own, albeit no native one. Before long it was to have a war of its own, after so long serving as a battle-ground for alien nations. The Dutch had consented to an armistice, during which the five Great Powers laid their heads together for a settlement in the Netherlands, each of them a little suspicious of one another's aims, yet very desirous not to stir up a European War. But before the new king was well seated on his throne, Holland broke through the net of negotiations by sending across his frontier an army under the disappointed Prince of Orange. Belgium had been setting up an army, but more showily than efficiently, while it trusted to the protection of the Powers. Its forces were chiefly on paper,

and those under arms made a motley mixture of undisciplined volunteers and out-of-work soldiers of fortune.

The Dutch advanced in overwhelming strength against this ill-organized militia, divided as two armies on the Scheldt and the Meuse. King Leopold did his best for resistance, and his raw regiments showed ineffectual gallantry ; but in less than a fortnight he was overwhelmed and driven into Louvain, a name since more tragically famed, where the broken ranks were saved from crushing humiliation as by a *deus ex machina*. Louis Philippe, who all along had been the warmest champion of Belgium, had sent an army across the frontier, that now drew near the scene of action. French officers as well as the British Minister, Sir Robert Adair, galloping at some risk through the hostile lines, warned the Dutch to a stand on pain of having to deal with France ; and they might well shrink from pushing their victory against such odds. Henri Conscience, who went through this inglorious campaign, tells us with what relief the routed soldiers passed from mouth to mouth cries of *Armistice ! Peace !* though still here and there a distant firing threw doubt on the welcome news. He owns himself to have made a very poor soldier unless for patriotic good will ; but his own trying experiences were to serve him well in the "Conscript" and other romances by which he illustrated his country's troubled history.

The Prince of Orange withdrew his army, escorted to the frontier and civilly bowed out of Belgium by the French general, who later on undertook for it the service of attacking and capturing the Antwerp citadel, last stronghold over which flew the ensign of its subjection. The quarrel now went back to diplomats, in whose hands it dragged itself out for years, while Leopold was showing himself the right man in the right place by skilfully steering his as yet rather cranky kingdom through perilous reefs and currents, winning the respect of his subjects, and improving his position by marrying a daughter of Louis Philippe. Not till A.D. 1839 did Holland sullenly consent to recognizing its loss, Belgium, for the sake of a peaceful arrangement, giving up some of its claims, so as to leave in Dutch hands part of Limburg and of the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, to be ruled under the King

of the Netherlands by a Stadtholder, till under the Salic law it passed to his kinsman of Nassau on the accession of Queen Wilhelmina. The frontier between the two kingdoms was rather arbitrarily drawn, cutting Brabant in two, and leaving uncongenial elements stranded on each side ; but it was stipulated that any subjects not satisfied with their allegiance should have a term of grace in which to sell their property and transfer themselves to the other kingdom. It could not be helped that a foreign state controlled the lower course of the Meuse, which made one of Belgium's outlets to the sea ; but the other, the mouth of the Scheldt, ought not to have been held on both banks by Holland, that had so long blocked the trade of Antwerp for the benefit of her rival ports.

After a little creaking and greasing, all went well with the wheels of Belgian independence, come about after half a century of jolts and upsets. The Flemings had not been so keen as the Walloons to shake themselves free from their Dutch kinsmen ; and presently there was an abortive plot in favour of the Prince of Orange, become king on the abdication of his disgusted father. Had that attempt succeeded, Belgium might have got as viceroy the next Prince of Orange, a worthless fellow, known by his nickname of " Citron " in the haunts of Parisian dissipation. But Belgium had hit on an excellent king who, though a foreigner and a Protestant, won the affection of his ready-made subjects, and the respect of Europe by conciliatory counsels that helped to keep neighbour crowns from knocking against each other. For his own country, he had to deal with internal dissensions, between Catholics and Protestants, between Walloons and Flemings ; but he handled his very limited authority so well that when in 1848 most of Europe burst into a straw-blaze of revolution, Belgium, once so turbulent under dukes and emperors, kept itself quiet in spite of an effort at excitement on the part of hot French republicans who undertook a comic invasion by excursion train. Later on, an old grudge against Holland was paid off in the commuting for a lump sum of the toll on shipping at the Scheldt mouth, exacted by the canny Dutch to put Antwerp at a disadvantage with Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Belgium's first king died in 1865, widely regretted, as was not his successor. He had never spared himself for the good of his adopted country, often weary as he was of its factious politics and never so happy as when he could retire into some quiet nook like his Ardennes Balmoral. The reader's humble servant can remember once staying in a French hotel where only by accident he found that this king was a fellow guest, reported as slipping out *incognito* to play dominoes in a café. Had all kaisers and kings been like Leopold, Europe might not have so many second-hand and broken thrones among its furniture of state.

One of the foundations of the Belgian kingdom had been a joint guarantee from the Great Powers to maintain its integrity and inviolability as a neutral state, a compensation due for its long experience of bloodshed as chopping-block and whipping-post of neighbour nations. King Leopold knew history and human nature too well to trust treaties that in the past had often proved so worthless scraps of paper ; and he insisted on Belgium being put in a position to take her own part, in case of need, with an army that had to be burdensomely increased as bigger nations took to playing the armament game of Beggar my Neighbour. Britain, which in its Tory time after Waterloo, had not been warmly in favour of Belgian independence, yet took so much in earnest the pledges made by Europe as to be looked on as chief champion for their fulfilment. France and Germany, in their war of 1870, took care to respect the neutrality of Belgium and of Luxemburg, whose imposing fortifications had been dismantled lest they should tempt some imperial eagle to use them as a cuckoo-nest.

We know to our cost how such a bird of prey swooped like a vulture upon harmless Belgium, crushed down and cruelly torn before loyal protectors could spring to its aid. Our enemy, too, must feel by this time how dishonesty to treaties does not always turn out good policy. It looks as if there were to be no more Kaisers in a world that can very well do without them ; and, if so, Belgium's long tale of wrongs seems to end with poetic justice in its last would-be conqueror's fall on what has so often been made a slippery stepping-stone for unscrupulous ambition. How many

a mother's son from many a land has laid his bones in that oft-disturbed earth, their wasted blood crying out on us to remember that martial pride and glory crumble away like the Alpine rocks into fields which should bear harvests, not for King or Kaiser, not for Celt or Teuton alone, but for the common welfare of mankind, hitherto so ready to mistake one nation's loss for its neighbour's gain !



## INDEX

- ÆTIUS, 12  
Aix-la-Chapelle, 18, 164  
Alsace, 79, 83, 162  
Alva, Duke of, 118, 125  
Amiens, 86  
Anabaptists, the, 112  
Anjou, Duke of, 133  
Anne of Austria, 139, 157  
Anne, Queen, 150  
Antwerp, 116, 132, 137, 170, 175,  
189, 197  
Amsterdam, 116, 145  
Ardennes, the, 2  
Argonne Forest, 2  
Arras, 55  
Arteveld, Jacques van, 33  
Philip, 37  
Attila the Hun, 12  
Austrian rule of Belgium, 159-74  
Aymon, the four sons of, 23
- BALDWIN, Emperor, 25  
Basle, 101  
Batavii, the, 5  
Beauvais, siege of, 81  
"Beggars," the, 123  
Beguines, the, 31  
Belgæ, the, 4  
Belgium, 137, 197, 204  
Besançon, 183  
Bitche, 179  
Black Death, the, 37  
Black Prince, the, 34  
Black Watch, the, 163  
Blenheim, Battle of, 153  
"Blood Council," the, 125
- Blucher, Marshal, 193  
"Boar of the Ardennes," the, 75  
Boniface, St., 21  
Bouillon, dukedom of, 138  
Godfrey de, 25  
Brandenburg, Electorate, 146  
Brandt, Sebastian, 109  
Brill, capture of, 129  
Bruges, 28, 37, 55, 57, 137  
Brussels, 29, 137, 146, 170, 199  
Burgunds, the, 12  
Burgundy, 45  
Dukes of, 25, 45, 47, 154, 156
- CÆSAR, Julius, 4  
Calais, 35, 57  
Cambrai, 29, 184  
Campine, the, 2  
Campo Basso, treason of, 92  
Carlos, Don, 127  
Castra Vetera, siege of, 6  
Cateau Cambresis, peace of, 119  
Catti, the, 6  
Celtic tribes, 3  
Châlons, Battle of, 13  
Charlemagne, 17  
Charleroi, 146, 149  
Charles Martel, 17  
Charles V., Emperor, 103  
Charles VI, of France, 38  
Charles VII, 48  
Charles IX, 129  
Charles II, of England, 141, 145  
Charles of Lorraine, 165  
Charles the Bold, 64, 72  
Chivalry, Orders of, 30, 41

- Claudius Civilis, rebellion of, 6  
 Cleves, 2, 23  
 Clovis, 15  
 " Cockpit of Christendom," the, 138  
 Cologne, 82  
 Comines, Philip de, 72  
 Condé, the great, 139, 144, 146  
 Conscience, Henri, 200, 202  
 Courtrai, Battle of, 29  
 Cromwell, Oliver, 142  
 Crusades, the, 24, 60  
  
 D'ALTON, Count, 169  
 Dettingen, Battle of, 163  
 De Witte, the brothers, 146  
 Dinant, 29  
 Dominicans, the,  
 Dumouriez, 172  
 Dunkirk, 142, 145, 149  
  
 EDICT of Nantes revoked, 148  
 Edward III in Flanders, 32  
 Edward IV, 79, 85  
 Egmont executed, 125  
 Electors, the Imperial, 22  
 Elizabeth, Queen, 118, 128  
 Erasmus, 107  
 Eugene, Prince, 152  
  
 FIELD of Cloth of Gold, the, 105  
 Flanders, 28, 136, and *passim*  
 Fontenoy, Battle of, 163  
 Francis, Emperor of Austria, 171  
 Francis I of France, 105  
 Francis of Lorraine, 162  
 Franche Comté, the, 45, 145  
 Franciscans, the,  
 Franks, the, 11, 15  
 Frederick Barbarossa, 28  
 Frederick II, 26  
 Frederick III, 61, 82  
 Frederick the Great, 160  
 Frederick William of Orange, 135  
 " French Fury," the, 133  
  
 French Revolution, the, 170  
 Froissart's Chronicles, 32  
 Fronde, the, 140  
  
 GAULS, the, 3  
 Geneviève de Brabant, 23  
 George I, 157  
 George II, 164  
 Ghent, 28, 37, 64, 73, 95, 137, 170,  
 188  
 Givet, 182  
 Golden Fleece, Order of, 55  
 Granson, Battle of, 89  
 Granvelle, Cardinal, 121  
 Guelderland heaths, the, 2  
 Gueldres, Duchy of, 79  
 Guise, Duke of, 118  
 Gustavus Adolphus, 138  
  
 HAARLEM, siege of, 130  
 Hagenbach, Peter von, 83  
 Heidelberg, 146  
 Henry II, of France, 119  
 Henry V, of England, 48  
 Henry VIII, 105  
 Hook and Cod factions, 26, 53  
 Horn, execution of, 125  
 Huguenots, persecution of, 148  
 Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, 50  
 Huns, the, 12  
  
 INQUISITION, the, 119  
 Isabella, Regency of, 136  
  
 JACQUELINE of Holland, 46  
 James II, of England, 141, 147  
 Jemappes, Battle of, 172  
 John of Austria, 132  
 John of Bavaria, 47  
 John of Brabant, 47  
 John of Leyden, 113  
 John the Fearless, 47  
 Joseph II, 166  
 " Joyous Entry," the, 36, 167



- KEMPIS, Thomas à, 101  
 Kingdom of Belgium, 201
- LALAIN, Jacques de, 62  
 League of Public Welfare, the, 69  
 Lens, Battle of, 140  
 Leopold, Emperor, 170  
     King of Belgium, 201  
 Leyden, relief of, 131  
 Liège, 22, 74, 77, 172  
 Ligny, 194  
 Lille, 29, 60, 153, 171  
 Lohengrin, myth of, 23  
 Lorraine, 19, 88, 162  
 Lothairingia, 19  
 Louis Buonaparte, 175  
 Louis of Orange, 126  
 Louis XI, 67, 93  
 Louis XIV, 142, 148  
 Louis XV, 156  
 Louis XVI, 171  
 Louis XVIII, 192  
 Louis Philippe, 172  
 Louvain, 101  
 Louvois, Minister of Louis XIV, 144  
 Luther, Martin, 109  
 Lys, the river, 38
- MALPLAQUET, Battle of, 155  
 "Man with the Iron Mask," 142  
 Margaret of Parma, 121  
 Maria Theresa, 161  
 Marlborough, Duke of, 152  
 Mary of Burgundy, 93  
 Mary, Queen of England, 115  
 Matthias of Haarlem, 113  
 Maurice of Orange, 135, 138  
 Maurice of Saxony, 114  
 Maximilian, Emperor, 95  
 Mazarin, Cardinal, 139  
 Metz, siege of, 115  
 Mons, 52, 146  
 Montecuculli, General, 146  
 Monthéry, Battle of, 69
- Morat, Battle of, 90  
 Muncer, Thomas, 110  
 Munster, Anabaptists in, 113
- NAMUR, 146, 159  
 Nancy, 88, 91  
 Napoleon, 175-95  
 Neerwinden, Battles of, 146, 173  
 Nervii, the, subdued by Cæsar, 4  
 Neuss, siege of, 84  
 Niebelungenlied, the, 23
- OLIVER de la Marche's Chronicles,  
     42, 72  
 Orange, Princes of, 48, 124, 135, 174,  
     197, 201  
 Orleans, attacked by Attila, 13  
     Maid of, 49  
 Ostend, defence of, 136, 182  
 Oudenarde, Battle of, 154
- PALATINATE, 146  
 Pavia, Battle of, 111  
 Peronne, 75  
 Peter the Hermit, 25  
 Pheasant, vow of the, 60  
 Philip of Spain, 115  
 Philip the Good, 54  
 Philip the Handsome, 103  
 Philippa of Hainault, 32  
 Platter, Thomas, 99
- QUATRE BRAS, 194
- RAMILLIES, Battle of, 154  
 Reformation, the, 107  
 Renaissance, the, 98  
 René of Anjou, 59  
     the Younger, 91  
 Requesens, Don Luis de, 130  
 Rhine, the, 3, and *passim*  
 Richelieu, Cardinal, 138  
 Rocroi, Battle of, 139  
 Roman Empire, decay of, 11

Roosebeke, Battle of, 38  
 Roses, Wars of the, 67  
 Ryswick, Peace of, 147

ST. BARTHOLOMEW, massacre of, 129  
 St. Quentin, Battle of, 118  
 St. Pol, Constable, 88  
 Sambre, the, 11  
 Savoy, Duke of, 157  
 Saxe, Marshal, 163  
 Scheldt, mouth of, 137  
 Scholars, mediæval, 98  
 Seneffe, Battle of, 146  
 Seven Years' War, the, 165  
 Siegfried, 23  
 Sigismund of Austria, 79  
 Sluys, Battle at, 33  
 Smalkalde, League of, 114  
 Somme, river, 70  
 Spa, 29  
 Spain, 103, 158  
 "Spanish Fury," the, 132  
 Spanish Succession War, 150  
 Steinkirk, Battle of, 146  
 Sydney, Sir Philip, 135

TOURNAI, 149, 159, 168  
 Trent, Council of, 112  
 Turenne, Marshal, 138, 144, 146  
 Turnhout, 170

UNIVERSITIES, 101  
 Utrecht, 29  
 Peace of, 150

VALENCIENNES, 29, 186  
 Van der Mersch, 170  
 Van der Noot, 169  
 Vonck, 169  
 Vendôme, Duke of, 154  
 Verdun, prisoners at, 174  
 Visigoths, the, 12

WALCHEREN expedition, the, 189  
 Walloons, the, 136  
 Warwick, the "King Maker," 79  
 Waterloo, 192  
 Wellington, Duke of, 193  
 Wessel of Gansevoert, 107  
 Westphalia, Peace of, 140  
 William III, of England, 135, 145,  
 151  
 William "the Silent," 122, 134  
 Wolsey, Cardinal, 105  
 Worms, Diet of, 106

YPRES, 29, 102  
 Yssel, the, 20

ZUTPHEN, Battle of, 135  
 Zuyder Zee, the, 20









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