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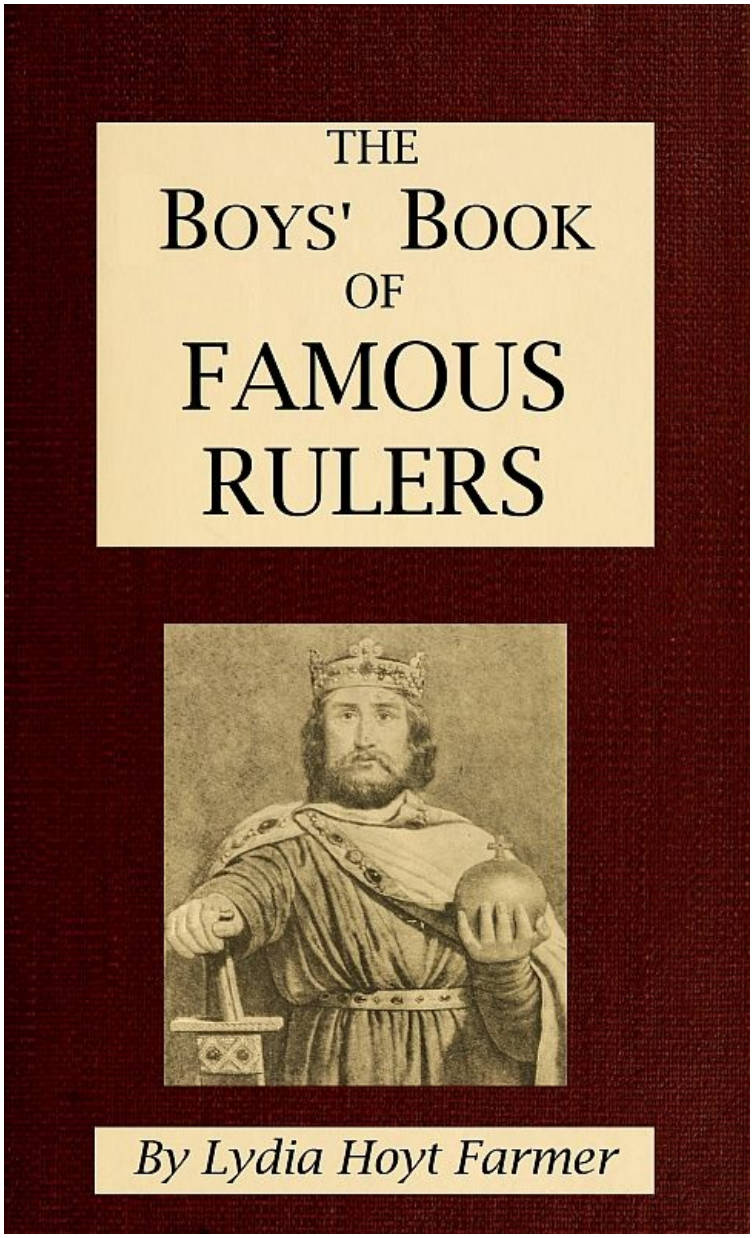

CHARLEMAGNE.

THE
Boys' Book of Famous Rulers.

BY
LYDIA HOYT FARMER,
AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF SCIENCE," "THE PRINCE OF THE FLAMING STAR," "WHAT SHE MADE OF HER LIFE," ETC.

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DEDICATED

TO

MY CHILDREN

PREFACE.

THE aim of this book is to give in as concise manner as possible, consistent with graphic narration and biographical completeness, the most important and interesting events in the lives of these famous rulers; together with a brief history of the various epochs in which they lived, and a description of the manners and customs of the people comprising the several nations governed by these illustrious monarchs.

THE AUTHOR.

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AGAMEMNON.
1184 B.C.

"The rule
Of many is not well. One must be chief
In war, and one the king."—*Iliad.*

FOR nine years the Greeks had besieged the city of Troy. This famous Trojan War, which is said to have occurred about 1184 B.C., has been embellished by romance and poetry; and although the real events have been much distorted by fabulous tales, it holds an important place in ancient Grecian history.

The marvellous Greek poet Homer has immortalized the wonderful story of this contest, in which, according to the old Grecian belief, gods and heroes fought for mastery; and it seems more fitting to the subject that we should view these events through the eyes of those ancient Greeks, whose weird yet fascinating fables peopled the mountains and seas with gods and goddesses; over whom proud Zeus or Jupiter ruled on the dread Mount of Olympus, from whence he hurled his awful thunderbolts, and shook the earth and heavens in his wrathful moods, when gods or mortals had dared to defy his imperial will. Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ, was the commander of all the Grecian hosts which for these nine years had surrounded the walls of Troy. [2] The cause of the quarrel may be thus briefly stated:—

Priam was the richest and most powerful of all the kings of Troy. His wife, Queen Hecuba, had dreamed that one of her children should become a firebrand which should consume the whole city. Whereupon, Priam was so alarmed, that he ordered that her next child should be exposed in a desert place among the mountains, and left to perish. Paris was this child, and when an infant, was hidden by his mother, that he might not be thus destroyed. Paris grew to be a youth of marvellous beauty, and was at length brought by his mother to the court of Priam. The king was so charmed by his beauty and accomplishments, that Paris ventured to make himself known, and was received by Priam, his father, with great kindness; for he was so pleased with the noble youth, that he ceased to remember the evil dream. This dream, however, was very strangely fulfilled years afterwards. Paris made an expedition into Greece, which country was at that time divided into many small kingdoms or states, each governed by its own king. Agamemnon was king of Mycenæ, and his brother Menelaüs was king of Sparta.

Agamemnon and Menelaüs were the sons of Plisthenes; but as their father died when they were very young, their mother Aërope was afterwards married to Atreus; and these two brothers were brought up by their step-father as his own children, to whom his name was given, as they were called Atridæ.

Atreus was afterwards murdered, and Agamemnon's uncle Thyestes ascended the throne of Mycenæ. Agamemnon and his brother Menelaüs then fled to Sparta. The king of Sparta agreed to recover the kingdom for Agamemnon, if he would marry his daughter Clytemnestra, and make [3] her his queen. To this Agamemnon consented, and with the aid of Tyndarus, king of Sparta, he recovered his own kingdom, and married Clytemnestra. His brother Menelaüs afterwards became king of Sparta.

During the expedition into Greece, of Paris, the son of King Priam, he visited the court of Sparta, and was received most kindly by King Menelaüs. But the handsome and fascinating Paris ill-repaid this courteous reception, for he fell in love with Helen, the beautiful wife of Menelaüs, and carried her off with him on his return to Troy. Menelaüs, enraged at this wicked treachery, persuaded his brother Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ, to espouse his quarrel, and to join him in waging war with the Trojans, to revenge his indignity, and to recover, if possible, his wife, the fair Helen, who was so exquisitely beautiful, that all who saw her fell in love with her. Agamemnon was chosen commander-in-chief of all the powerful Grecian princes who now combined their forces to fight against Troy. Homer gives us the names of the most famous of these Grecian warriors. Agamemnon was sovereign lord of all the host, and Achilles was the bravest and most valiant man amongst them. But besides these, there was the yellow-haired Menelaüs, king of Sparta, and husband of the beautiful Helen; Ajax Oïleus, or, as men called him, the lesser Ajax, king of the Locri, swiftest of foot among the Greeks, after the great Achilles; Ajax Telamon, from Salamis; Diomed, son of Tydeus, king of Argos, and with him Sthenelus; Nestor, king of Pylos, oldest and wisest among the Greeks; Ulysses, king of Ithaca, most crafty in counsel; Idomeneus, grandson of the great judge Minos, king of Crete, and with him Meriones; Tlepolemus, son of Hercules, from Rhodes; Eumelus, from Pheræ, son of that Alcestis, who died [4] for her husband, and was brought back from death by Hercules, according to Grecian mythology; and many more heroes too numerous to mention: but the bravest and strongest of all was Ajax, son of Telamon, and the best horses were those of Eumelus; but there was none that could compare with Achilles and the horses of Achilles, bravest of men, and swiftest of steeds.

The heroes upon the Trojan side were also great and brave. The most famous of their chiefs were Hector, son of King Priam, most valiant of all the Trojan warriors; Æneas, whose father was Anchises, and whose mother was supposed to be the goddess Aphrodité; Pandarus, from Mount

Ida, to whom Apollo had given a marvellous bow; Asius, the son of Hyrtacus, who came from the broad salt river, the Hellespont; Pylæmenes, king of Paphlagonia; and Sarpedon from Lycia, whom men affirmed to be the son of Zeus himself; and lastly, Glaucus his friend.

When the Grecian fleet had started upon this expedition against Troy, a wonderful incident had occurred. The fleet of the Greeks was detained by contrary winds at Aulis, owing to the wrath of the goddess Diana, whom King Agamemnon had offended by killing one of her favorite deer. In this emergency Calchas the soothsayer was consulted, and he declared that to appease the anger of the goddess. Iphigenia, the eldest daughter of King Agamemnon, must be sacrificed. She was accordingly led to the altar, and was about to be offered as a victim, when she is said to have suddenly disappeared, being caught up by Diana, who in pity substituted a stag in her place. Virgil, however, tells this story somewhat differently; for he relates that Iphigenia was actually sacrificed. The goddess having been appeased, the winds were favorable, and the Grecian fleet [5] sailed onward, and arrived safely at Troy; and for nine long years these famous warriors had been waging war around the walls of that city, within which, in the palace of Paris, son of King Priam, was concealed the matchlessly beautiful Helen, and much rich treasure, which that treacherous but fascinating prince had stolen from the Greeks.

But now within the Grecian camp a strife arises between King Agamemnon and Achilles, bravest of all his host. The Greeks, having been away from home so many years, were accustomed to make frequent raids upon the surrounding cities to supply their needs, and thus to enable them to continue still longer this weary siege. They had thus ruthlessly attacked a city called Chrysa, sacred to Apollo, where was a temple of that god.

The Greeks, in their plunderings, had not dared to molest the temple or its priest; but they had carried off, with other prisoners, the daughter of the priest of Apollo, named Chryseïs. The spoils obtained from these expeditions were divided between the various kings and heroes in the Grecian host; and the maiden Chryseïs had been apportioned as the share of King Agamemnon. The next day the priest Chryses came to the Grecian camp, bringing much gold, and wearing on his head the priest's crown, that men might thereby reverence him the more. He demanded the return of his daughter, and offered his gold as her ransom. The Grecian chiefs were favorable to his suit, but King Agamemnon angrily repulsed him, exclaiming,—

"Hence, on thy life, and fly these hostile plains,
Nor ask, presumptuous, what the king detains.
Hence with thy laurel crown and golden rod; [6]
Nor trust too far those ensigns of thy god.
Mine is thy daughter, priest, and shall remain,
And prayers, and tears, and bribes, shall plead in vain."

The sorrowful priest turned away in silence, and as he walked along the seashore, he besought the aid of his god, Apollo, praying: "Hear me, God of the silver bow! If I have built thee a temple, and offered thee the fat of many bullocks and rams, hear me! and avenge me on these Greeks."

And Apollo heard him and descended with awful wrath from dread Olympus, where dwelt the gods. The rattle of his arrows filled the air, as he twanged his deadly bow, and sent the fateful shafts of pestilence upon the Grecian fleet below; meanwhile, enwrapping his own form in shadows black as night, from which his baleful darts shot forth like lightning's flash. And so for ten long days the pestilence raged, till heaps of dead men and beasts lined the shore, and the black smoke ascended from myriad funeral piles. Then Achilles called upon the seer, Calchas, to tell them why Apollo was so wroth with them. To whom the sage replied,—

"It is on behalf of his priest that Apollo is so wroth; for when he came to ransom his daughter, Agamemnon would not let the maiden go. Now then, ye must send her back to Chrysa without ransom, and with her a hundred beasts for sacrifice, so that the plague may be stayed."

Then, with a threatening frown, King Agamemnon started from his gorgeous throne, with eyes which flashed with angry light, as he exclaimed in fury,—

"Prophet of plagues, forever boding ill! Still must that tongue some evil message bring. I will release the maid, that my people may be spared. But for this, my share of booty, shall the Greeks requite me."

Then Achilles answered,— [7]

"We have no treasures from which to make up thy loss. Let the maiden go! and when we capture Troy, we will repay thee fourfold."

Then Agamemnon replied,—

"Shall I my prize resign while thou art possessed of thine? I will send back the maid to please Apollo; but know thou that I will seize thy share, even the girl Briseïs, that all may know that I am sovereign here."

Whereupon, Achilles was so fierce with anger, that he fain would have slain the monarch, and had, forsooth, half drawn his sword from the scabbard, to thrust it into the haughty king. But lo! the goddess Athené stood behind him, and caught him by his long yellow locks of hair. None saw the goddess, save only Achilles, to whom he said,—

"Art thou come, fair Minerva, to witness these wrongs I bear from Atreus' son? If thou dost see his crime, see also my proud vengeance."

Whereupon, he raised his sword to strike; but the goddess said,—

“Forbear thy fury! Let great Achilles yield to reason. Put up thy sword; but if thou pleasest, use the dagger of thy tongue alone. With that, the gods permit thee to reproach him; but vengeance, leave thou to the care of heaven.”

So spake the goddess, and Achilles thrust his sword back into its sheath, and in proud scorn exclaimed, while turning to the king with blazing eyes,—

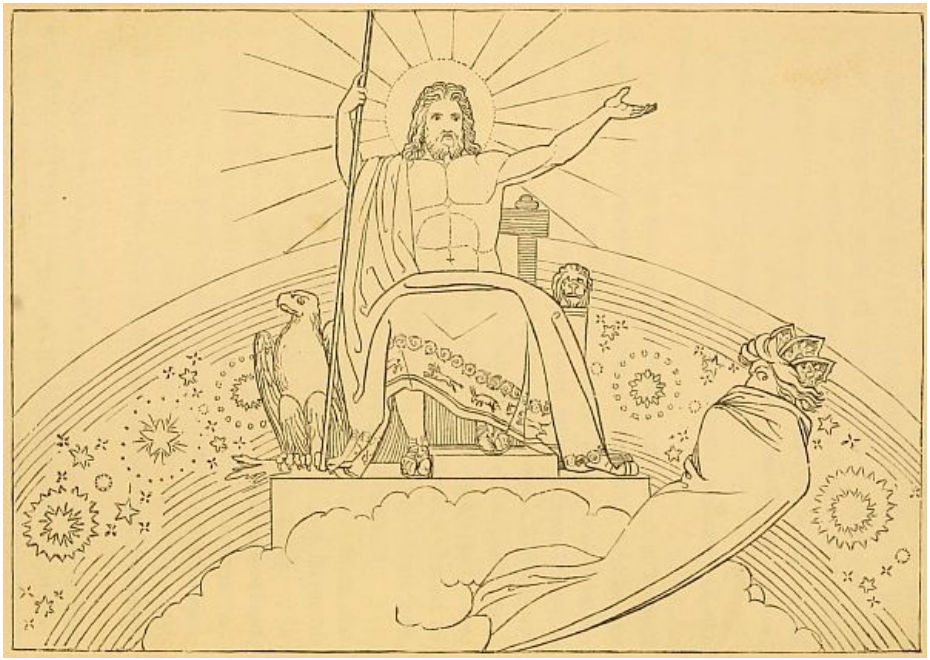
“Coward! thou rulest sure a puny race, else this had been thy last affront. Thou darest not to fight, but cowerest like a dog in safe retreat within the camp; but after we have fought and conquered, thou claimest the richest booty! But know, for this my grievous wrong, the gods shall [8] avenge it! And when the Greeks lie in heaps before the walls of Troy, slain by the dreadful Hector, then shalt thou miss the strong arm of Achilles from thy side, and thy proud heart shalt mourn the affront thy madness gave. For thou hast made the bravest Greek thy bitterest enemy.”

Then did Achilles dash his sacred sceptre on the ground, saying,—

“As surely as this sceptre, which was once a branch from off a tree, now starred with golden studs and bound with bronze, an ensign of Jove’s favor, shall never blossom more, so surely shalt thou miss the arm of brave Achilles, when the Trojans press thee sore. Thou canst play the master over others, but think not to master me! As to the maid, my prize, which the Greeks gave me, let them take it again if they will, but if thou darest to invade my tent and touch whate’er is mine, thy blood shall stream forth at the point of my revengeful blade.”

So saying, the great Achilles strode forth from the counsel-tent with wrathful looks, and the august brow of Agamemnon was overcast with threatening gloom. In vain had Nestor, eldest of the Grecian kings and wisest of counsellors, endeavored to quell this ominous quarrel. His words of reason moved not the two fierce warriors. And surely, in this strife, Achilles held the right, and Agamemnon showed himself a selfish, proud, and haughty monarch.

The priest’s daughter, Chryseïs, was sent back to her home with offerings to the god, and Ulysses was appointed to conduct her thither. But King Agamemnon would not be persuaded to renounce his purpose of seizing upon the war-prize which had been awarded to Achilles, namely, [9] the maiden Briseïs; and forthwith he sent heralds to the tent of Achilles to obtain her. The heralds approached the warrior with much dread, for they feared his awful wrath. But Achilles said to them,—



JUPITER SENDING THE EVIL DREAM TO AGAMEMNON.

“Fear not, ye heralds! It is no fault of yours that you are sent on such an errand.”

Whereupon he commanded that the maiden should be brought from her tent and given to the heralds, who led her, much against her will, to the haughty Agamemnon. Then Achilles called upon his mother Thetis, who was a goddess of the sea, to avenge his wrongs. Thetis rose like a mist from the waves, and coming to Achilles, who sat upon the seashore, she comforted him and asked his trouble. Whereupon Achilles told her the cause of his anger, and besought her to go to the great Zeus, whom Thetis had once aided, when the other gods would have bound great Jove, by bringing Briareus of the hundred hands, who so fought for the mighty Jupiter, that the other gods dared no longer defy his power. And owing this kindness to the goddess Thetis, her son thought rightly that the great Jove would listen to her petitions on his behalf. So Achilles asked his mother to go to Olympus, and pray Zeus that he would help the sons of Troy and give them victory over the Greeks, whose sovereign king had thus dishonored the bravest of all his host.

This, Thetis did, going to the palace of Jupiter on the top of Olympus, and making her prayer in her son’s behalf. Zeus was loath to grant it, for he knew that it would anger his wife Heré, who

loved the Greeks and hated the Trojans. Yet on account of the past favor of Thetis, he would not refuse, and in giving assent, nodded his awful head, thus causing Olympus to shake and tremble. So Zeus called one of his swift-winged messengers, called a Dream, and said,—

"Fly hence, swift Dream, and to the tent of Agamemnon go! Bid him lead all the Grecians forth to battle against Troy. Persuade him that the gods intend to give him victory." [10]

So this false Dream, flying to Agamemnon's side, took to itself the shape of wise old Nestor, whom the king honored more than all beside, and thus the false Nestor counselled,—

"Sleepest thou, Agamemnon? Arise! for now Zeus declares that the immortal gods are favorable to thy plans, and through thy mighty hosts will send the doom of destruction upon the city of Troy; and thou shalt reap the eternal glory."

Then Agamemnon awoke from sleep and, little thinking how he had been duped by this false Dream, quickly donned his tunic, fastened his sandals on his feet, and hung from his shoulders his mighty silver-studded sword. Wrapping his great cloak around him, he took in his right hand his royal sceptre, token of his sovereignty over all the Greeks. Thus attired, in martial grandeur, he went forth and roused his chiefs, and then the heralds called the hosts to battle. Only Achilles sat apart within his tent and went not forth to battle with the Greeks.

Now, as the two forces were about to fight, Paris, the Trojan prince, rushed forth and challenged the bravest of the Greeks to fight with him. Then Menelaüs, whom he had so greatly wronged, leapt from his chariot and rushed to meet his treacherous foe. But Paris was more beautiful in form and feature than brave in heart, and seeing the man whom he had so cruelly wronged, he was afraid to fight, and cowardlike ran back into the Trojan ranks. Then his brother, brave Hector, thus rebuked his cowardice.

[11]

HECTOR CHIDING PARIS.

"Fair art thou, Paris, beauteous indeed, but ill thy soul supplies a form so fair! Thou makest us the scorn of the proud Greeks, by thy unmanly fear. Little will it avail thee that thou art in form so stately, when thy soft curling locks and shapely limbs are lying in the dust. Thy silver lyre, nor all thy blandishments, will naught avert thy doom, for thou hast been the curse of Troy and ruin of thy race."

Then Paris, stricken with just shame, replied,—

"Thou speakest well, Hector, and thy rebuke is just. Thy heart is like iron; yet are beauty and love also the gift of the gods, and not to be despised. Now let Menelaüs and me fight for the fair Helen and all her possessions, and if he prevail, let him take her, and them, and depart to Greece. But if I prevail, then shall the Greeks depart in peace without her."

This saying, which at last betokened some spirit, pleased Hector well; and going before the Trojan ranks, holding his spear by the middle, he kept them back. The Greeks would have hurled spears upon him, but Agamemnon cried out,—

"Hold! Hector has somewhat to say to us."

Then Hector announced that Paris would fight with Menelaüs for the fair Helen and all her wealth. To which Menelaüs readily agreed, but demanded that King Priam should himself come and, with King Agamemnon, make a covenant with sacrifice, that the fair Helen and all her wealth should go to the one who should prevail.

When the heralds went to bring the old King Priam, he was found on the wall with the beautiful Helen near him, to whom he was talking and asking the names of brave Grecian heroes whom he beheld among the hostile host. And in this wise he spake to fair Helen,—

"Come near, my daughter, tell me about these old friends of thine. Who is that warrior, that I see, so fair and strong? There are others taller than he, but none of such majesty." [12]

And Helen answered,—

"Ah, my father, would that I had died before I left the fair land of Greece! That one is King Agamemnon, a good and brave soldier, and my brother-in-law, in the old days. And that one is Ulysses of Ithaca, who is better in craft and counsel than all other men."

Then Priam said,—

"Who is that stalwart hero overtopping all others?"

"That," said Helen, "is mighty Ajax, the bulwark of the Greeks; and as for the other chiefs, I could name them all. But I see not my two brothers, Castor and Pollux;" for she wot not that they were already dead.

Thereupon came the heralds and told King Priam that the armies had called for him. After the covenant between the Trojan and Grecian kings, Priam and Agamemnon, Hector and Ulysses marked out a space for the fight, and Hector shook two pebbles in a helmet, to decide which one should be the first to throw the spear, Paris or Menelaüs.

The lot fell upon Paris, and the two warriors having armed themselves, came forth into the space and brandished their spears with wrathful eyes. Then Paris threw his spear. It struck the shield of Menelaüs, but pierced it not; and thereupon Menelaüs, with a prayer to Jupiter, cast his long-shafted spear. It struck the shield of Paris, pierced it through, and passing through both corselet and tunic, would have bruised the side of Paris, but he shrank aside, and so was wounded not. Then Menelaüs drew his sword and struck a mighty blow upon the top of Paris' helmet; but the sword brake in four pieces in his hand. Then he rushed forward and seized Paris by the helmet, and fain would have dragged him to the Grecian host, but the goddess Aphrodité loosed the strap that was beneath the chin, and the helmet came off in the hand of Menelaüs, and the goddess snatched Paris away, covering him with a mist, and put him safely in his own palace in Troy. [13]

Then King Agamemnon said,—

"Now, ye sons of Troy, give back the fair Helen and her wealth!"

But just at this time the goddess Athené took upon herself the shape of Laodocus, and going to Pandarus, the false Laodocus, said,—

"Darest thou aim an arrow at Menelaüs?"

Now Pandarus had a marvellous bow made from the horns of a wild goat and tipped with beaten gold, and Pandarus strung his bow, his comrades, meanwhile, hiding him behind their shields. Then took he a sharp-pointed arrow from his quiver and laid it on the bow-string and let it fly. Right well the aim was made; but the gods decreed that the dart should not be fatal. For though it passed through belt and corselet and strong girdle, and pierced the skin so that the red blood rushed out, which sight filled Menelaüs and King Agamemnon with sore dismay, Menelaüs soon perceived the barb of the arrow, and so knew that the wound was not fatal; and when it was drawn forth by the physician Machaon, and the blood was staunched with healing drugs, King Agamemnon rejoiced that he should not thus lose his brave brother Menelaüs.

Then the mighty hosts of Greeks and Trojans went forward to the battle, and on either side the gods urged them on, Athené aiding the Greeks, and Ares—called also Mars—strengthening the Trojan warriors. Many were the valiant exploits that day performed; but we can mention but a few of them. So close pressed host on host, that the armies dashed together, shield on shield and spear on spear. Ajax Telamon slew Simoisius, and Antiphon, son of King Priam, aimed at Ajax, but missing him, slew Leucus, the friend of the valiant Ulysses. [14]

Whereupon, Ulysses, in great anger, to avenge his death, strode boldly midst the Trojan ranks and hurled his spear at Democoön, a son of Priam, whom he slew. At length the Trojan hosts were borne backward by the mighty onslaught of the Greeks, till Apollo cried from the heights of Pergamos,—

"On, Trojans! The flesh of these Greeks is not stone or iron, that ye cannot pierce it; and remember that the great Achilles fights not with them to-day!"

Athené also urged the Greeks to valiant deeds. This goddess aroused Diomed to battle, making a wondrous fire shine forth from his helmet, which made him seem a god, and he raged through the battle so furiously, that he was now seen amongst the Grecian ranks, now boldly invading the Trojan forces, and striking down his foes with mighty arm. Then Pandarus aimed an arrow at him and smote him on the shoulder. But the brave Diomed cared not for the arrow, and leaping from his chariot he called to Sthenelus, his charioteer, to draw the arrow from the wound; and praying to Athené for aid, he rushed madly into the Trojan ranks, slaying a man at every blow.

Meanwhile, Æneas, driving his swift chariot, said to Pandarus,—

"Climb up into my chariot, and thou shalt fight, and I will drive."

So Pandarus mounted the chariot, and the two drove towards Diomed, and as they came near, Pandarus cast his spear, which passed through the shield of Diomed and reached his corselet; [15]

whereupon Pandarus cried,—

“Ha, now he bleeds! Low will this haughty Grecian lie!”

But Diomed replied,—

“Thy dart has erred! Now I will try my spear.”

And straightway he hurled his keen lance toward his boasting foe. Through nose and jaw it crashed, and cleft the tongue in two; and the bright point came forth beneath the chin.

Pandarus fell from the chariot mortally wounded, and Æneas leapt to the ground with drawn spear to defend the dead body of his friend. But Diomed raised a huge stone and hurled it at Æneas, and crushed his hip-bone, felling him to the earth.

Then had brave Æneas perished, but his goddess mother, Aphrodité, caught him in her white arms and threw her veil about him. But so great was the rage of Diomed, that he spared not even the goddess, but rushing upon her, he wounded her in the wrist, and with a shriek of pain she dropped her son; but Apollo caught him up and covered him with a thick mist. Thrice Diomed pursued, and thrice Apollo drove him back. But as the rash Diomed advanced a fourth time, the god exclaimed,—

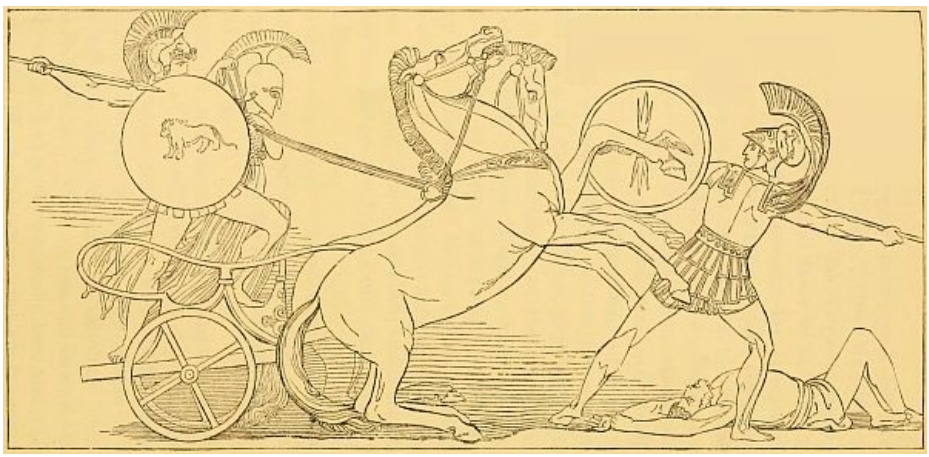
“O son of Tydeus, beware! Nor think to match the immortal gods!”

So Apollo carried Æneas out of the battle and placed him in safety in Troy. Meanwhile, fair Venus, pale from the wound which mortal man had dared inflict, was conducted by swift-winged Iris to the stern god Mars, her brother; and Venus begged his car to mount the distant skies, [16] where in the fair realms of the gods her wounded hand was healed by sacred balm. Then Mars went down upon the field of battle to aid the Trojans, and Hector rushed to the front with the god Mars by his side; and he dealt death and destruction through the Grecian ranks. Juno and Minerva saw him from Mount Olympus, and they prayed Jupiter to allow them to stop him in his fury. The mighty Zeus consented, and the two goddesses yoked horses to the chariot of Juno and passed down to earth with flying strides. Having reached the battle-field, Juno took the shape of Stentor with the lungs of brass, whose voice was as the voices of fifty men, and thus she cried,—

“Shame, men of Greece! When Achilles fought, the Trojans dare not leave the city; but now they fight even by the very ships.” Then Minerva chided Diomed for want of bravery, to whom he replied: “I know thee, great goddess, daughter of Jupiter! and ’tis thy commands I obey. Thou didst bid me fight with none of the immortals save only with Aphrodité; and therefore I gave place to Hector, for I perceived that he was aided by great Mars.”

But Athené answered: “Heed not Ares! drive thy chariot at him and hurl thy spear. This morning did stern Mars promise to aid the Greeks, and now he joins with our Trojan foes.”

So saying, the goddess pushed the charioteer of Diomed from his place, and herself mounted and seized the reins and lashed the horses furiously. With swift speed they drove together till they found the god Mars, or Ares, where he had just slain Periphas the Ætolian. Minerva was even invisible to the god, for she had donned the helmet of Hades; and so Ares, not seeing her, cast his spear at Diomed; but the goddess caught the spear and turned it aside. Then Diomed [17] thrust forth his spear, and Minerva leaned upon it, so that it even pierced the side of the god Mars, who shouted so loudly with the pain that the Greeks and Trojans trembled with fear; while the god of war, wounded by the fair goddess Athené, covered himself with a thunder-cloud, and in much rage ascended to Olympus.



DIOMED CASTING HIS SPEAR AGAINST MARS.

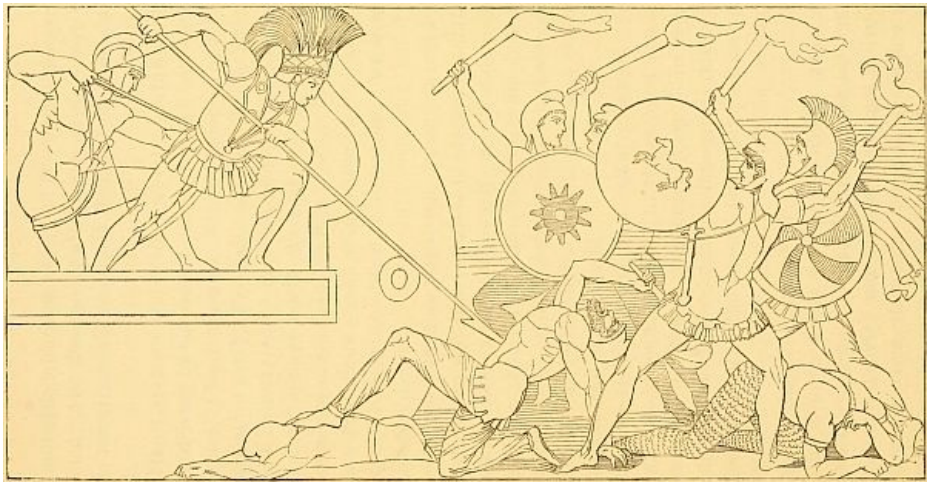
When Ares had departed, the Greeks prevailed again; but the seer Helenus said to Hector and Æneas: “Draw back the Trojan army and encourage them; and you, Hector, go within the city and bid thy mother queen, with the daughters of Troy, take the costliest robe she hath, and go to the temple of Athené and offer it to the goddess with prayers and sacrifice, that perchance she may relent and have pity on us and keep this terrible Diomed from our walls.”

This counsel prevailed, and Hector departed to the city, whence he dispatched his queen mother to Athené’s temple, and exhorted his brother Paris to arm himself and come forth to

battle. Hector then took a fond farewell of his much-loved wife Andromaché and his only child, called beautiful-headed as a star, and departed with Paris, who came forth clad in shining armor; and they fell upon the hosts of the Greeks and slew many chiefs of fame.

Again came Athené to help the Greeks; and meeting the god Apollo, they agreed to stay the battle for that day; and to this end inspired Hector and King Agamemnon to agree that Hector should fight alone with the bravest of the Greeks, while both armies should rest from battle.

Then Menelaüs desired to meet brave Hector in single combat. But King Agamemnon would not consent to this, fearing his brother would perish. Whereupon it was resolved to decide the [18]
matter by lot, which fell upon Ajax the Greater, who, having armed himself, stepped forth to battle with the mighty Hector. First Hector hurled his spear, which passed through six folds of Ajax's shield. Then Ajax threw his lance, striking proud Hector's shield. Through shield, corselet, and tunic it passed, but Hector shrank from the sharp point, and the flesh was not pierced. Then again they rushed together with wild fury. And Ajax drove his spear at Hector's shield and grazed his neck, so that the blood leaped forth. Then Hector hurled a mighty stone at Ajax; but his shield broke not. Whereupon Ajax raised a mightier stone and threw it with such aim that it broke the shield of Hector and felled him backwards to the ground. But Apollo raised him up, and as they drew their swords for deadlier conflict, the heralds held their sceptres between them and bid them cease. So Hector and Ajax, both mighty warriors and brave of heart, agreed to part as friends; in token whereof, Hector gave to Ajax a silver-studded sword, and Ajax to Hector a buckler splendid with purple. So they parted, and the conflict was stayed that night. In the morning came Trojan heralds to King Agamemnon's host, saying: "This is the word of Priam and the sons of Troy. Paris will give back all the treasures of the fair Helen and much more besides, but the fair Helen herself will he not give up. But grant a truce that we may bury our dead."



AJAX DEFENDING THE GREEK SHIPS AGAINST THE TROJANS.

So the truce was given, and the dead of both armies were burnt. Then the Greeks and Trojans both feasted through the night. But all through the hours of darkness the terrible thunder rolled on Mount Olympus; for mighty Zeus was counselling evil against the hapless Trojans.

When the morning came, the two hosts again went forth to battle with each other. Till midday [19]
neither side prevailed; but then great Jupiter sent fear and panic amidst the Grecian forces, and they fled to their ships in terror.

As the Greeks were flying in wild confusion, brave Hector driving in his chariot pursued them; and called to his horses, "Now Xanthus, Æthon, Lampus, and Podargus, speed ye well! Ye Flame of Fire, White Foot, and Brilliant, named! carry me fast, and well repay the tender care of my sweet wife Andromaché, who often from her fair white hands has fed thee! For I would win old Nestor's marvellous shield of purest gold, and strip from off proud Diomed his boasted breastplate, wrought by the mighty Vulcan."

But Jupiter willed not that this should be; for King Agamemnon prayed aloud to Zeus for succor, and Jupiter heard his prayer, in token whereof he sent a sign, namely: an eagle flew above the Grecian hosts and dropped a kid out of his claws. Then did the Greeks take courage and renewed the fight with vigor. But the darkness came, and each host rested on their arms.

Meanwhile, King Agamemnon called a council of war, and fain would have returned to Greece and leave this invincible city of Troy. But brave King Diomed would not receive such craven counsel, and angrily exclaimed,—

"Even though all the men of Greece depart, yet will I and Sthenelus abide the doom of Troy, for surely the gods have brought us hither."

To these brave words the Grecian chiefs agreed; and wise Nestor counselled that King Agamemnon should send to brave Achilles and seek to make peace with him that they might have the strong help of his mighty arm. To which King Agamemnon consented, and sent messengers to [20]
the tent of Achilles to seek his favor, promising him seven kettles of brass, ten talents of gold, twenty caldrons, twelve fleet horses, seven women slaves skilled in the work of the loom, and, more than all, the return of the maid Briseïs, the cause of all their quarrel; and when Troy should be taken, much spoil besides. And even more; for when they should return to Greece, King

Agamemnon promised him one of his own daughters for his wife, and seven cities by the sea. But all this moved not the wrathful soul of stern Achilles, and he would not be appeased; nor would he come to help the Greeks against the Trojans, but still sat silent in his tent. Then it was decided that Diomed and Ulysses should go that night disguised into the Trojan camp, to spy out, if possible, their strength and plans. This same strategy had Hector also planned, and had already sent one Dolon, swift of foot, towards the Grecian host. But as he ran he met Diomed and Ulysses, who seized him, and under threatenings forced him to reveal the Trojan secrets. Then did they slay Dolon, and forthwith proceeded to where some men of Thrace, allies of the Trojans, lay sleeping. These Thracians possessed most matchless steeds—horses so fair and tall, whiter than snow and fleeter than the winds. Diomed and Ulysses would fain secure these as a rich prize, and so they slew the sleeping Thracians and led the captured horses back to the Grecian hosts, and arrived in safety at the ships. The next day the battle waged hot again. Ulysses was wounded, and Paris shot an arrow and pierced the brave physician Machaon. Meanwhile, Achilles was standing on his ship and looking upon the conflict. When he beheld Nestor bearing the wounded Machaon to the ships, he called to his friend Patroclus and bid him see if Machaon's wound was fatal.

[21] Most fierce the battle raged. On the left, the Grecians prevailed, but on the right brave Hector and his host fought even to the very ships, dealing most deadly blows. So great were the shouts of battle that old Nestor, who was tending the wounded Machaon, was roused; and going forth he met King Agamemnon, and with him Diomed and Ulysses, who had been wounded that day. Then they counselled together. Again Agamemnon advised flight; but the others thought it not good to flee thus, and they counselled King Agamemnon that he should go to the Grecian ranks, bidding them bear themselves bravely and put courage into their hearts. This did he do, and roused their waning strength to fresh exploits. Then Ajax smote brave Hector with a mighty stone, which felled him to the ground; and the Greeks, with a great cry, rushed forth to bear him to their ranks; but the Trojans held their shields before him, and his friends lifted him up and carried him to a place of safety. But he was sorely bruised. Then Apollo, at Jupiter's bidding, poured courage into his heart and healed him of his wound, so that he rushed once more upon the field of battle, strong and well and valiant as ever. Then were the Greeks struck with dire dismay. Then did Patroclus lament to Achilles on account of the ill fortune of the Greeks, and besought the mighty warrior, if he would not fight himself in their behalf, to let him go accompanied by the valiant Myrmidons, whom Achilles always led to battle. At which the heart of Achilles was moved; and he said,—

"I will not go to battle until it reaches my own ships, but thou mayest put my armor upon thee and lead my Myrmidons to the fight."

[22] So this was done; and when the Trojans beheld these famous Myrmidons led by one who wore the armor of the mighty Achilles, their hearts were faint with fear, for they supposed great Achilles himself had come against them. Thrice did Patroclus rush against the men of Troy, and each time slew nine chiefs of fame; but the fourth time Apollo stood behind him and struck him, and his eyes were darkened, and the helmet fell off his head, so that the waving plumes were soiled with dust. Never before had this proud helmet of Achilles touched the ground. Then Apollo broke his spear, and struck the shield from his arms, and loosed his corselet. Then all-amazed, poor Patroclus stood defenceless; so Hector struck him dead, and seized the matchless armor of the mighty Achilles.

Fierce was the fight about the body of Patroclus, and many chiefs fell dead striving to obtain the prize. Then fled Antilochus to bear the ill tidings to the great Achilles, who, upon hearing of this dire defeat, poured dust upon his head, and called upon his goddess-mother to come to his aid.

"Why weepest thou, my son?" said the sea-goddess Thetis, rising from the waves.

"My friend Patroclus is dead, and Hector has my arms I gave him to wear, and, as for me, I care not to live unless I can avenge myself."

Thus Thetis said,—

"Be comforted, my son; to-morrow I will go to mighty Vulcan; he shall forge new arms for thee."

Even as they spoke together, so sore the Trojans pressed the Greeks, that Jupiter sent Iris to Achilles, and bade him show himself to the Greeks that they might be filled with courage.

"How can I go without arms?" replied Achilles.

[23] But the gods gave him courage, and he went, and Athené put her matchless shield upon his shoulders, and wrapped a golden halo round his head, so that he seemed clothed in godlike armor; and he shouted to the Trojans with a mighty voice, which so filled them with fear that they fell back, and the horses of the Trojan chariots were so terrified at the flaming fire above his head that they thrice fell back, and trampled on the Trojans, as thrice the awful voice of Achilles was heard and his shining form revealed. Thus was the body of Patroclus then secured, and carried on a bier, Achilles walking, weeping by his side.

That night the conflict rested. Meanwhile, Thetis the goddess went to the dread Vulcan, and prayed him make new armor for her son Achilles. To this did stern Hephæstus consent, saying, "Be of good cheer! I will obey thy wish; for kind thou wast to me when my mother thrust me forth

from heaven because she saw I was deformed and lame. I will make such arms for Achilles as the gods themselves might proudly wear."

So great Vulcan wrought at his mighty forge. First he made a ponderous shield, and wrought upon it the earth, and sky, and sea, and sun, and moon, and stars. He pictured upon it, also, two cities; one at peace, and one in dire confusion where war raged. In the peaceful city, they led a bride to her home with music and dancing, and women stood to see the show, and in the market-place judges sat, and men bartered. But around the other city, an army was besieging, and soldiers stood upon the walls, defending. Also, he wrought fields where men ploughed, and others reaped, and vineyards where youths and maidens gathered baskets of grapes while minstrels played on harps of gold. Also, he wrought herds of oxen going to the pasture, and [24] sheepfolds, and a dance of youths and maidens who wore coronets of gold and belts of silver. Then, too, he pictured a fierce fight between lions and angry bulls. Around the shield he wrought the mighty ocean. He made also a corselet, brighter than fire, and a helmet of gold. At dawn the goddess Thetis brought to her son this marvellous armor, which when Achilles saw, his eyes flashed wild with joy; and seizing them, he put them on most eagerly, and rushed forth to rouse the Greeks to battle. Then an assembly was called, and Achilles stood up in the midst, saying, he had put away his wrath, and King Agamemnon, who had been wounded in the battle, declared that he had been wrong, and straightway commanded to be sent to the tent of Achilles all that he had promised him, including the maid Briseïs, which was done. The Greeks gathered again to battle. Then did the fight wage sore against the Trojans, who fled within the city gates; only brave Hector remained outside to meet the mighty Achilles, who rushed towards him to engage in single combat. Then did King Priam and Queen Hecuba beseech their much-loved son that he would come within the city walls, and not risk his life by thus meeting this dread foe; but Hector answered,—

"Woe is me if I go within the walls!"

But as Achilles came near, brandishing his great Pelian spear, while the flash of his arms was as a flame of fire, Hector trembled, and dared not abide to meet him, but fled around the walls, Achilles pursuing. Thrice they ran round the city, while the immortal gods looked down upon them from dread Olympus, and Jupiter said: "My heart is grieved for Hector. Come, ye gods! shall we save him?"

But Minerva—she who was called the goddess of wisdom, for she sprang forth from the mighty [25] head of Jove completely armed—thus counselled,—

"Great Sire, is it well to rescue a man already doomed to die? If it be thy august will, then do it; but the other gods approve not."

To whom Zeus answered,—

"My heart is loath, but be it as thou wilt."

Then did the goddess descend down from high Olympus in hot haste, and Athené lighted from the air at Achilles' side, and whispered: "This is our day of glory, great Achilles! Hector shall be slain; but tarry a moment, that I may give him heart to meet thee in battle; so shalt thou slay him."

Then Minerva took the form of Deïphobus, and came near to Hector, saying, "Achilles presseth thee hard, my brother; let us stay and fight him."

Then was brave Hector glad to find one of his brothers faithful to him, and answered,—

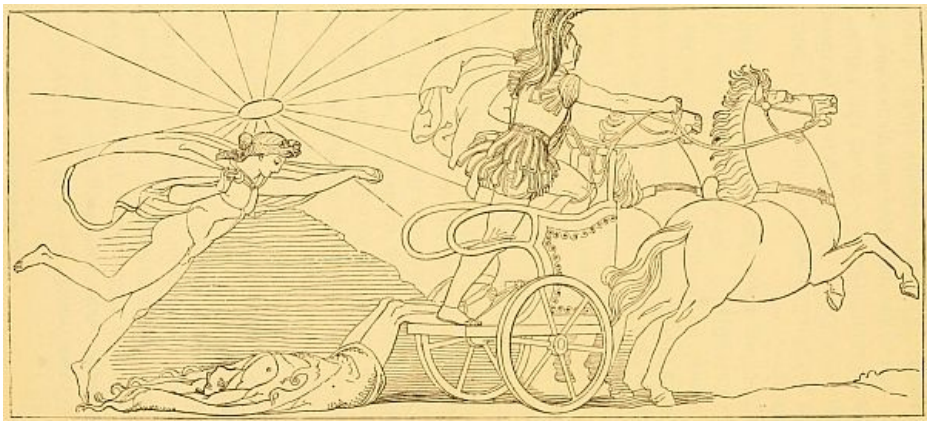
"I always loved thee best of all my brothers, good Deïphobus, and much more now to know thou darest to stand by my side in this hour of deadly peril."

Thus was Hector encouraged to meet Achilles, and Hector said to him: "Thrice, great Achilles, hast thou pursued me round the walls of Troy, and I dared not withstand thee; but now I will meet thee like a warrior. If Jupiter gives me the victory, I will do no dishonor to thy body; only thine armor will I take. Do thou the same to me."

But Achilles frowned, and answered,—

"I make no covenants with thee. There is no agreement between wolves and sheep. Show thyself a warrior if thou canst. Athené shall kill thee by my spear."

[26]



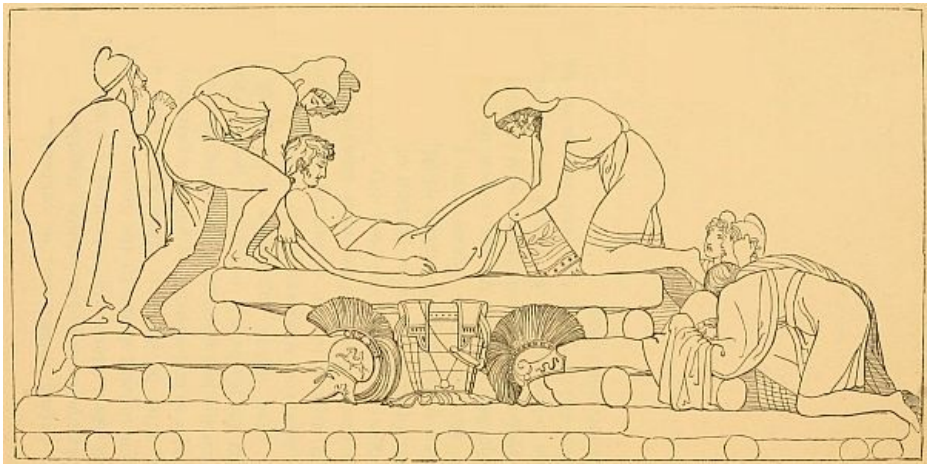
HECTOR’S BODY DRAGGED AT THE CAR OF ACHILLES.

Then did they meet in deadliest conflict. Achilles threw his mighty spear; but Hector, crouching, avoided it, and the great spear fixed itself in the ground beyond. But, unseen by Hector, Athené brought it back to proud Achilles. Whereupon, Hector cried, “Thou hast missed thy aim, great Achilles. Look out for my spear!”

And as he spake, he threw his long-shafted spear with so good an aim, that it struck the very middle of Achilles’ shield; but it pierced it not, and it bounded far away. And when Hector turned to his supposed brother, Deïphobus, to get from him another spear, lo! he was gone; and Hector knew then that his doom had come. Then thought he to himself: “Though Athené has cheated me, and Jupiter and Apollo are against me, if I must die, I will die in such manner as shall do honor to my name.” Then he drew his mighty sword, and rushed upon Achilles. But at that same instant Achilles charged to meet him, and holding his shining shield before him, with his helmet plumes waving in the air, he raised his long-pointed spear, which gleamed like a star, and drove it through the neck of the brave Hector, so that the point stood out behind; and Hector fell dying in the dust. Then with his last breath, he besought Achilles to spare his body from the Greeks; for King Priam would ransom it with much gold and treasure, to give it burial rites. But Achilles, moved with fierce wrath, cried,—

“Dog, seek not to entreat me! No gold could ransom thee.”

Then Hector died, and Achilles drew out the spear from the corpse, and stripped off the arms. Then great Achilles did a shocking deed; for he bound the body of the dead Hector to his chariot, letting the brave and noble head lie in the dust; and so he dragged the corpse of the valiant [27]
Trojan round the walls of Troy, even to the Grecian ships. And sorrowing Priam saw him from the walls; and fair Andromaché, the wife of Hector, also beheld this dreadful spectacle, and thereupon fell in a deadly swoon; and from her beautiful head dropped the golden wreath and diadem, which Aphrodité gave her on her bridal day.



THE FUNERAL OF HECTOR.

Then did old King Priam gather rich gifts, and aided by the gods, mount his swift chariot and go to the tent of great Achilles, to beg the body of his much loved son, brave Hector, praying to Jupiter that Achilles might have pity on him. This did Jove grant; for Achilles received him kindly, and gave up the body of dead Hector, which King Priam carried back into the city of Troy. For nine days the people wailed and mourned, and gathered much wood for a funeral pile, upon which they laid brave Hector; and when his body was burnt to ashes, they gathered up the white bones and put them in a chest of gold, and covered it with purple. This chest they placed in a coffin and laid upon it many stones, even until they had raised a mighty mound above it. Thus did they bury the valiant Hector, bravest of Trojan princes.

Such is a brief outline of the story of the famous Trojan War, as told by the illustrious Homer in his matchless poem of the “Iliad.” Now we return to the few further facts regarding King Agamemnon which can be culled from history.

There are two different accounts of the final overthrow and capture of Troy. According to one

of these, Antenor and Æneas treacherously betrayed the Palladium to the Greeks, and at the same time threw open the gates of the city at night. The other account relates that the capture was effected by the stratagem of the wooden horse, which was planned by the cunning of [28] Ulysses. A huge, hollow structure resembling a horse, was filled with armed men, and left standing in the plain, while the Greeks went on board their ships and sailed to the island of Tenedos, which lay not far distant. By an artful manœuvre, the Trojans were made to believe that this horse was an offering to Minerva, and that they would achieve a great triumph by carrying it into the city. Accordingly they made a breach in the wall, and transported the horse within. In the dead of night the Greeks broke out of their concealment, and set the city on fire. The fleet, on a signal given, sailed back from Tenedos; the army landed. Troy was taken and destroyed.

This event is usually placed about 1184 B.C. In the division of the spoils, after the taking of Troy, Cassandra, one of the daughters of King Priam, fell to the lot of Agamemnon. She was endued with the gift of prophecy, and warned Agamemnon not to return to Mycenæ. This warning, however, was disregarded by the king, who, upon his return from Troy, was carried by a storm to that part of the coast of Argolis where Ægisthus, the son of Thyestes, resided. This king, Ægisthus, had entered into a wicked agreement with Clytemnestra, wife of Agamemnon, to put that monarch to death upon his return from Troy, so that Ægisthus could seize the throne of Mycenæ, and marry Queen Clytemnestra. There are two accounts of the death of Agamemnon. One states that Ægisthus had set a watchman, with a promise of a large reward, to give him the earliest tidings of the return of the king. As soon as he learned that Agamemnon's fleet was on the coast, he went out to welcome him, and invited him to his mansion. At the banquet in the evening, with the consent of Clytemnestra, he placed twenty armed men in concealment, who fell [29] on King Agamemnon and killed him, together with Cassandra and all their attendants. Another account makes Agamemnon to have fallen by the hands of his wife Clytemnestra, after he had just come forth from a bath, and while he was endeavoring to put on a garment, the sleeves of which she had previously sewed together, as well as the opening for his head; thus giving her time to commit the bloody deed before any succor could reach him. His death, however, was avenged by his son Orestes.

With regard to the extent of Agamemnon's sway, Homer states that he ruled over many islands, and over all Argos; meaning not the city Argos, over which Diomed ruled, but a large portion of the Peloponnesus, including particularly the cities of Mycenæ and Tiryns. Homer also says that Agamemnon possessed the most powerful fleet; and as he was chosen the sovereign of all the Grecian kings, and commander-in-chief of all the Grecian hosts during the Trojan War, he may doubtless be called the greatest and most famous of all the more ancient Grecian rulers.

CYRUS THE GREAT.

599-529 B.C.

[30]

"Death makes no conquest of this conqueror;
For now he lives in fame, though not in life."
SHAKESPEARE.

IN a lonely and desolate country, in the depths of a dark forest, at the edge of a yawning precipice, there once lay an infant, robed in costly garments, which betokened noble or royal birth. The baby lay in a small basket cradle, made of golden wires and lined with richly embroidered cushions. It seemed to be slumbering, for it moved not, even when the afternoon shadows gathered more densely around it; and a rapacious bird of prey might have been seen hovering above its dangerous retreat, and the noise of wild beasts was heard in the dark forests around. Was there no one near to protect and care for this lovely child? Ah, see! as that vulture swoops down towards its helpless victim, a lonely watcher rushes forth from the forest, and drawing his bow, an arrow flies into the heart of the bird, which falls dead into the awful chasm below. But why does not the babe awake? and why is it left in this desolate spot? Just then a lion steals out of the brushwood, and after a stealthy glance at the tempting prey so near his reach, he prepares to spring. But again the watcher leaps forth from the shadow, and hurls a sharp javelin with so true an aim that the lordly beast is mortally wounded, and retreats to the forest, roaring with pain. And still the infant sleeps on.

[31]

Just outside of the dreary forest is a poor herdsman's hut. Here, too, might have been found an infant; but it is crowing and smiling as it raises its chubby fists to its mouth and tries to catch the sunshine, which streams in through the open door, and falls upon the wall over its head. This baby is clothed in the coarse garments of a peasant's child. And yet the infant in the costly robes, in the wild forest, is really the dead child of a poor herdsman; and this crowing, laughing baby, dressed in peasant clothes, and lying in the lowly hut, is none other than the future Cyrus the Great, upon whom hang the destinies of a vast empire. The remarkable story regarding the birth and early boyhood of Cyrus the Great is recounted by Herodotus, one of the greatest and earliest of Grecian historians. Herodotus and Xenophon—a noted Grecian general, as well as historian—are the chief sources of information regarding most of the important historical events of that period of the world. Some parts of their accounts are thought to be historical romances, founded on facts; but as they have become a part of the history of those times, I shall gather the story of Cyrus from the events related by both these writers.

About 599 B.C. there were three kingdoms in the centre of Asia: Assyria, Media, and Persia. Astyages was king of Media. One night Astyages awoke from a terrible dream: he had dreamed that a fearful inundation had overwhelmed his kingdom. As the deluge seemed in some mysterious manner to be connected in his mind with his only daughter, Mandane, he imagined that it portended that evil should come to his throne through her children. And so he arranged that she should marry Cambyses, ruling prince of Persia. In this manner he hoped to remove her so far distant, and place her in so weak a kingdom, that he need have no fears.

[32]

A year after his daughter's marriage to the king of Persia, Astyages had another dream,—of a great vine which overspread his kingdom. This vine also appeared to be associated in his mind with his daughter. So he called the soothsayers, who declared that it portended the future power of his daughter's son, who should become a king.

Astyages was now so alarmed that he determined to destroy the child. So, with seeming kindness, he invited his daughter Mandane to make him a visit. He placed her in a palace and surrounded her with his own spies and servants. As soon as the infant son was born, Astyages sent for an officer of his court, named Harpagus, whom he thought was unscrupulous enough to obey his evil commands. Astyages ordered Harpagus to go and request the attendants of Mandane to allow him to see the infant; and then, under pretence that his grandfather Astyages desired that the infant should be brought to him, Harpagus should take the child away, and in some manner cause it to be put to death.

Harpagus did not dare to refuse, and accordingly went to the palace in which Mandane was residing. Her attendants, not suspecting his evil designs, arrayed the infant in its most beautiful robes, and delivered it into his care. Harpagus took the child home and consulted with his wife what he should do. He did not dare to disobey the king, and also, as Mandane was the daughter of the king, he feared to carry out the terrible deed himself.

In his perplexity he sent for one of his herdsmen, named Mitridates, living near wild and desolate forests. When Mitridates arrived, Harpagus gave the infant to him, commanding him to expose it in the forests for three days, and when the child was dead, to send him word.

[33]

The herdsman dared not refuse this wicked mission, and took the child home to his hut. His wife Spaco had at that time just lost an infant of the same age, and its dead body was still unburied. When she saw the beautiful babe of Mandane, she implored her husband to let her keep it in place of her dead child, who was accordingly arrayed in the costly robes of the young prince, while the royal baby was dressed in the coarse garments of the little dead peasant. The body of the dead infant was then placed in the royal cradle, or basket, in which the little prince had been carried from the palace; and after being exposed in the forest for three days, attended by watchers to keep away the wild beasts, the herdsman sent word to Harpagus that the infant was dead. Harpagus sent trusty messengers to see if the report was true; and when they saw the

dead infant in the royal robes, they returned with the assurance that his orders had been complied with, and that they had seen the dead child. Harpagus gave orders to have the body buried, and sent word to King Astyages that the infant was dead.

The truth about the young Cyrus was not discovered until ten years after, and came about in a very strange way. Cyrus had now grown to be a strong, bright boy of ten years of age, and was supposed to be the son of the peasant herdsman. Several of the sons of the Median nobles were accustomed to meet in the neighborhood where he lived, for their sports, and Cyrus was always their leader in all pursuits. The story goes that he was once chosen as their king in a boyish game; and one of the nobles' sons, being one of his subjects, and having disobeyed his commands, the boy king Cyrus punished him very severely. The father of the young noble complained to King Astyages of this ill treatment which his son had suffered at the hands of a [34] peasant boy. Whereupon, the herdsman Mitridates and his supposed son were summoned to appear at court.

When the young Cyrus entered the presence of the king, Astyages was astonished at his manly bearing and his unusual beauty, and with an unaccountable feeling of interest in the supposed peasant boy, he inquired if the complaint of the noble was true. The little disguised prince looked up into the face of the dread monarch, in whose presence all his subjects trembled, and with perfect self-possession, replied,—

"My lord, what I have done I am able to justify. I did punish this boy, and I had a right to do so. I was king, and he was my subject, and he would not obey me. If you think that for this I deserve punishment myself, here I am; I am ready to suffer for it."

Astyages was so surprised at this unlooked-for answer that he hastily commanded that Mitridates should be brought before him; and under threats of severe punishment, he demanded that he should tell him the truth about the lad; for he had grave doubts about his being the peasant's son. Mitridates, frightened by the stern manner of the king, confessed the truth, and related all the circumstances regarding the infant who had been committed to him by Harpagus.

Astyages had deeply regretted his evil intentions towards his grandson, which, as he supposed, had ended in his death, and gladly claimed Cyrus as his own. But with strange inconsistency, he was equally incensed against Harpagus, who had dared to disobey his commands, by not causing the infant to be put to death; and he determined to celebrate in a strange and most shocking manner his joy at the recovery of his grandson, and his anger at the disobedience of Harpagus. [35] So with wicked craftiness he sent word to Harpagus that his grandson had been discovered, and commanded that Harpagus should send his son, a boy about thirteen years of age, up to the palace to be a companion for young Cyrus. Furthermore, he announced that he was about to celebrate his joy at the recovery of his grandson, by a grand festival, at which he invited Harpagus to be present.

Harpagus suspecting no evil, and rejoicing at the happy sequel of that deed which had occasioned him much disquiet, having sent his son to the palace, according to the command of the king, related to his wife the strange events which had taken place. Neither of them were suspicious of any evil design in this seeming kindliness of Astyages, and thought it a fitting honor for their son, that he should be chosen as the companion of Prince Cyrus. Harpagus went to the festival, and was given a seat of honor at the table. Various dishes were set before the guests, and the attendants were especially attentive to see that Harpagus was most bountifully served. At the end of the feast, Astyages asked Harpagus how he had liked his fare. Harpagus expressed himself as being well pleased. The king then ordered the servants to bring in a basket, which they uncovered before Harpagus, and he beheld with horror the head, hands, and feet of his own son.

The story relates that Harpagus did not display his terrible despair by word or look; and when the wicked king asked him if he knew what he had been eating, he replied that he did, and whatever was the will of the king was pleasing to him. Such shocking cruelties reveal the wickedness of those despotic times.

Harpagus satisfied his revenge against the cruel Astyages, many years afterwards, in a manner [36] which will be disclosed as this story continues. A king whose greed of power could condemn an own grandson to death would not scruple at other crimes. Astyages now again consulted the soothsayers as to his safety in recognizing Cyrus as his grandson and giving him his royal place at court. The Magi now replied, that as Cyrus had already been a king, even though it was only in a childish game, still, as he had been called a king, the oracles had been fulfilled, and Astyages need fear no further danger to his kingdom. Astyages therefore sent Cyrus to his parents in Persia, who received their long-lost son with overwhelming delight; and the youthful Cyrus was no doubt astonished and rejoiced to find himself the son and grandson of powerful kings, rather than a simple peasant boy, the son of a poor herdsman.

Cyrus is described by the historians as being tall and handsome, and excelling in all youthful exploits.

Xenophon describes the life of young Cyrus in the court of his father Cambyses, king of Persia. The sons of all the nobles and officers of the court were educated together in the royal palace. They were not taught to read, as there were no books, but they had certain teachers who explained to them the principles of right and wrong, and described to them the various laws of the land, and the rules by which controversies should be settled. These were put to practical use in deciding the various cases which occurred among the boys themselves; and judges were

chosen from their number who should discuss and decide these questions. Right decisions were rewarded, and wrong ones punished. Cyrus himself was once punished for a wrong decision. The case was this:—

A larger boy took away the coat of a smaller boy, whose coat was bigger than his own, and gave him his own smaller coat. The smaller boy appealed to Cyrus, who decided that each boy should keep the coat that fitted him. The teacher condemned his decision in these words,— [37]

“When you are called upon to consider a question of what fits best, then you should determine as you have done in this case; but when you are appointed to decide whose each coat is, and to adjudge it to the proper owner, then you are to consider what constitutes right possession, and whether he who takes a thing by force from one who is weaker than himself, should have it, or whether he who made it or purchased it, should be protected in his property. You have decided against law and in favor of violence and wrong.”

PERSIAN GUARDSMAN CARRYING BOW AND QUIVER.

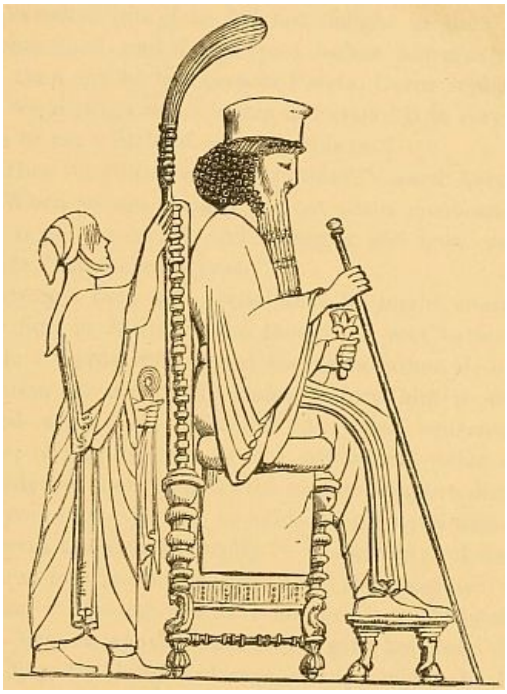
PERSIAN SOLDIER WITH BATTLE-AXE

PERSIAN FOOT SOLDIERS.

The boys at this Persian court were taught many kinds of manly exercises. They were trained to wrestle and run, and were instructed in the use of all kinds of arms then known. Each one was furnished with a bow and arrows, a shield, a sword, or dagger, which was worn at the side in a scabbard, and two javelins, one of which they were to throw, and the other to keep in the hand for use in close combat with the wild beasts which they might encounter in their hunting expeditions. These excursions were often long and fatiguing, which they took by turns with the king in the neighboring forests.

They were subjected to long marches, to cold and hunger and storms, and sometimes dangerous conflicts. These experiences were considered necessary to fit them to become good soldiers in the future.

When Cyrus was about twelve years of age, he was invited by his grandfather Astyages to make him a visit in Media. When Cyrus arrived in Media with his mother Mandane, he was [38] surprised at the magnificence and pomp of the royal court; as the manners and habits of the Persians were very simple, and as he had been sent to Persia as soon as his royal rank had been discovered, he had not before had an opportunity of seeing the splendor of his grandfather’s court.



PERSIAN KING SEATED ON HIS THRONE.

In his first interview with Astyages, Cyrus displayed his great tact and natural courtesy. When he came into the presence of his grandfather, who wore a purple robe richly embroidered with gold and covered with precious stones, and bracelets upon his arms, and a long, flowing wig, while his face was painted and powdered, Cyrus exclaimed,—

“Why, mother, what a handsome man my grandfather is!”

Cyrus was dazzled by the great display around him, for in the Persian court, Cambyses his father, and all his nobles, were clothed with great simplicity. Mandane then said to Cyrus,—

“Which one do you think the handsomer man, your father or your grandfather?”

It was a very unwise question to ask a child, but Cyrus was equal to the emergency, and replied with great tact and politeness,—

“My father is the handsomest man in Persia, but my grandfather is the handsomest of all the Medes.”

Astyages was much pleased with the aptness of this reply, and Cyrus became a great favorite with his grandfather, who lavished upon him costly garments, rich feasts, rare jewels, and the attentions of a retinue of servants. But after the first novelty had passed away, Cyrus preferred his more simple raiment and plainer food.

At one time, Astyages invited Cyrus and his mother to one of his grand feasts in his palace, and [39] ordered the rarest viands to be served for Cyrus in the most elegant and costly dishes. Instead of being flattered, Cyrus showed no particular pleasure or surprise, and when Astyages asked him if he did not delight in such rich and delicate food, and if the feast before him was not much finer than any he had seen in Persia, Cyrus replied,—

“We manage much better in Persia; it is very troublesome to eat a little of so many things.”

“How do you manage in Persia?” asked Astyages.

“When we are hungry, we eat plain meat and bread, and so we get health and strength and have very little trouble,” answered Cyrus.

Astyages then told Cyrus that he might continue his plain fare in Media, if he thought it was better for his health. Cyrus then asked his grandfather if he would give him all the costly dishes before him to do as he wished with them. To this Astyages consented, and Cyrus, calling up one of the attendants after another, presented to them as gifts the various elegant dishes with their contents. To one he said, “I give you this because you serve the king faithfully”; to another, “I make you this present because you are faithful to my mother”; and to another, “Because you have taught me to throw the javelin.” Thus he went on until all the gifts had been disposed of. Now the king had one servant, whom he honored above all others, who held the office of cup-bearer.

In those days this was an important trust, for those despotic monarchs possessed so many enemies that they were in constant danger of assassination or of being poisoned. The king’s cup-bearer must superintend the food of his master, and taste all wines himself before offering them to the king.

Great dexterity and grace were necessary to perform the latter service acceptably, as the [40] king’s cup must not be placed to the lips of his cup-bearer, but a small portion must be poured into the palm of his hand, and lifted gracefully to his mouth.

Astyages' cup-bearer was a Sacian; he was an officer of high rank, tall and handsome, and magnificently dressed. In distributing his gifts, Cyrus had neglected this officer, and when Astyages asked him his reason, Cyrus replied that he did not like the Sacian. Astyages inquired the cause of this dislike, and remarked, "Have you not observed how gracefully and elegantly he pours out the wine for me, and then hands me the cup?"

Cyrus replied that he could pour out the wine and offer the cup as well as the Sacian, and requested his grandfather to allow him to try. To this the amused king consented, and Cyrus, taking a goblet of wine in his hand, retired from the room. He soon re-entered with the pompous and dignified bearing of the Sacian, and so mimicked his manner of gravity and self-importance as to occasion much mirth amongst the assembled guests.

Cyrus, having advanced to the king, presented him with the cup, neglecting not even one single motion of the usual ceremony, except tasting the wine himself. Mandane and the king laughed heartily, and the would-be cup-bearer, becoming the child again, jumped into his grandfather's arms, exclaiming, "Now, Sacian, you are ruined; I shall get my grandfather to appoint me in your place. I can hand the wine as well as you, and without tasting it myself at all."

"But why did you not taste it?" asked his grandfather.

"Because the wine was poisoned," replied Cyrus.

"What makes you think it is poisoned?" inquired Astyages.

"Because," said Cyrus, "it was poisoned the other day when you made a feast for your friends [41]
on your birthday. It made you all crazy. The things that you do not allow us boys to do you did yourselves, for you were very rude and noisy; you all bawled together so that nobody could hear or understand what any other person said. Presently you went to singing in a very ridiculous manner, and when a singer ended his song, you applauded him, and declared that he had sung admirably, though nobody had paid attention. You went to telling stories too, each one of his own accord, without succeeding in making anybody listen to him. Finally, you got up and began to dance, but it was out of all rule and measure; you could not even stand erect and steadily. Then you all seemed to forget who and what you were; the guests paid no regard to you as their king, but treated you in a very familiar and disrespectful manner, and you treated them in the same way; so I thought that the wine that produced these effects must be poisoned."

"But have not you ever seen such things before?" asked Astyages. "Does not your father ever drink wine until it makes him merry?"

"No," replied Cyrus, "indeed, he does not; he drinks only when he is thirsty, and then only enough for his thirst, and so he is not harmed." He then added in a contemptuous tone, "He has no Sacian cup-bearer, you may depend, about him."

"But why do you dislike this Sacian so much, my son?" asked Mandane.

"Why, every time that I want to come and see my grandfather," replied Cyrus, "he always stops me, and will not let me come in. I wish, grandfather, you would let me have the rule of him for just three days."

"What would you do?" asked Astyages. [42]

"I would treat him as he treats me now," answered Cyrus. "I would stand at the door, as he does when I want to come in, and when he was coming for his dinner, I would stop him and say, 'You cannot come in now; he is busy.'" Cyrus repeated these words in the tones and with the grave manner of the Sacian.

"Then," continued Cyrus, "when he was coming to get his supper, I would say, 'You must not come in now; he is bathing, or he is going to sleep; you must come some other time, for he cannot be disturbed.' Thus I would torment him all the time, as he now torments me in keeping me from you when I want to see you."

When the time arrived for Mandane to return to Persia, Astyages was very desirous to have Cyrus remain with him; Mandane gave her consent if Cyrus should wish to do so. Astyages told Cyrus that if he would stay, the Sacian should torment him no more, but that he should be allowed to come into his presence whenever he wished to do so, and, moreover, he should have the use of all his grandfather's horses. He should also have boys of his own age for companions, and they would be allowed to hunt the animals in the park. They could pursue them on horseback and shoot them with bows and arrows, or throw the javelins at their prey. This pleasure of riding and hunting was a rare one to Cyrus, for the Persians had few horses, and there were no bodies of cavalry in their armies. Cyrus represented to his mother the great advantage it would be to him to be a skilful horseman, as that would give him a superiority over all the Persian youths. Mandane was somewhat anxious lest the luxurious habits and haughty manners of his grandfather should prove a bad example for Cyrus, but he assured her that she need have no [43]
fears, as his grandfather required all to be submissive to himself, and allowed imperiousness in no one but the king. So it was decided that Cyrus should remain in Media, and Mandane departed for Persia.

Cyrus now applied himself with great diligence to acquire all the various accomplishments and arts then most highly prized, such as leaping, vaulting, racing, riding, throwing the javelin, and drawing the bow. In the friendly contests among the boys, Cyrus would courteously challenge

those superior to himself in these exercises, thus giving them the pleasure of winning the prize, and benefiting himself by thus having the greater stimulus of contesting with attainments higher than his own. He accordingly made rapid progress, and speedily learned to equal and then surpass his companions without occasioning any envy or jealousy.

It was their favorite amusement to hunt the deer in his grandfather's park; but at last, so vigorous had been their onslaught, that the animals were wellnigh exhausted, and Astyages went to great trouble to secure further supplies. Cyrus then requested that they be allowed to hunt in the forests, and hunt the wild beasts with the men. As Cyrus had now grown up into a tall, robust young man, able to sustain the fatigues of the hunt, his grandfather consented that Cyrus should go out with his son Cyaxares. The party set out in high spirits. There were certain attendants appointed to keep particular guard over Cyrus, and prevent him from rushing rashly into danger. His attendants told him that the dangerous animals were bears, lions, tigers, boars, and leopards; and as they often attacked man, he must avoid them; but that he could hunt the stags, goats, and wild sheep as much as he pleased. They also told him of the dangers in riding over a rough [44] country where the broken ground and steep, rocky precipices made riding difficult, and hunters driving impetuously over such a country were often thrown from their horses, or fell with them into the chasms and were killed. Cyrus promised to remember their warning; but no sooner had he entered into the excitement of the chase than he forgot all their counsels, and riding furiously after a stag, his horse came to a chasm which he was obliged to leap. But the distance was too great, and the horse fell upon his knees as he reached the farther side, and for a moment before he recovered his footing Cyrus was in imminent danger of being precipitated to the bottom of the deep precipice. But Cyrus was fearless; and as soon as his horse had regained his feet and cleared the chasm, he pressed on after the stag, overtook him, and killed him with his javelin. As soon as his frightened attendants came up to him, they reproved him for his reckless daring, and they threatened to report to his grandfather. Just at the instant he heard a new halloo, as fresh game had been started, and forgetting all his resolutions, Cyrus sprang upon his horse with a loud shout and followed the chase. The game now started was a dangerous wild boar, and Cyrus instead of shunning the peril, as he should have done in obedience to his grandfather's orders, dashed after the boar, and aimed so true a thrust with his javelin against the beast as to transfix him in the forehead. The boar fell dying upon the ground, and Cyrus waited for the party to arrive, with pride and triumph. When his uncle Cyaxares came near, he reproved Cyrus for running such risks, and said that if his grandfather knew what he had done, he would punish him. "Let him punish me," said Cyrus, "if he wishes after I have shown him the stag and the hoar, and [45] you may punish me too if you will only let me show him the animals I have killed." Cyaxares consented, and ordered the bodies of the beasts and the bloody javelins to be carried home. Cyrus presented them to his grandfather, who thanked him for the presents, but said he had no such need of game as to require his grandson to thus expose himself to danger. "Well, grandfather," said Cyrus, "if you don't wish the meat yourself, will you let me give it to my friends." Astyages agreed to this, and Cyrus divided his booty amongst all his young companions who had hunted with him in the park. The boys took their several portions home, giving glowing accounts of the skilful exploits of the giver. Thus was Cyrus thus early ambitious of spreading his own fame.

When Cyrus was about sixteen years of age he went with his uncle Cyaxares on an excursion for plunder into some neighboring provinces. Neither the kings of those times nor their historians seem to have considered such expeditions as unjust or wrong, but rather as a more noble enterprise than even their favorite hunting. In this expedition Cyrus so distinguished himself by his exploits, that his father, hearing the reports thereof, concluded that if his son was beginning to take part as a soldier in military campaigns, it was time to recall him to his own country. He therefore sent for Cyrus to return home.

There was great sadness in the Median court when Cyrus departed, for he had become a special favorite with king and people.

The succeeding events of Cyrus' life take us more out of the field of romance and are more strictly confined to the facts of history. Cyrus on his return to Persia grew rapidly in strength and stature, and soon became distinguished for his manly beauty, his personal grace, and winning [46] manners, as well as excelling all others in the martial accomplishments he had acquired in Media. He gained great ascendancy over the minds of others, and as he advanced to manhood his thoughts turned from athletic sports and hunting to plans of war and ambitions for more extended dominions.

Meanwhile, Harpagus, who had always meditated revenge upon Astyages for the horrible death of his son, though at the time he had been too wary to express resentment, was constantly watching every opportunity to work evil against the king. Fifteen years had now passed since the terrible deed was committed. He remained all this time in the court of Astyages, where he outwardly demeaned himself as the friend and zealous subject of the king, but meanwhile he plotted revenge.

He kept up a constant communication with Cyrus, and at last went so far as to try to induce him to collect an army and march into Media against Astyages. The plausible motives which he suggested made it appear to Cyrus as though he would only be endeavoring to free his own Persia from ignoble bondage, as Persia was a Median dependency. Meanwhile, Harpagus sympathized with all the disaffected Medians, whose numbers rapidly increased, as the tyranny of Astyages made numerous enemies.

At length the time came when Harpagus thought the right moment had arrived for a revolt. Cyrus had now determined to attempt the enterprise. Astyages had been guilty of some unusual acts of oppression, by which he had produced great dissatisfaction among his people. Harpagus found the principal men around him willing to enter into the conspiracy, so he desired that Cyrus should come into Media with as large a force as he could raise, and head the insurrection against the government of Astyages. [47]

Harpagus did not dare to trust this message to any messenger, and so he took this novel way of communicating with Cyrus. He wrote a letter to Cyrus, and then taking a dead hare he opened the body and concealed the letter within, and then neatly sewed up the skin again so that no signs remained of the incision. He then delivered the hare to some trusty servants, who should also carry hunting weapons, as though about to go upon some hunting expedition. He also commanded that they should give the hare to Cyrus himself, and that he should open it alone. The plan was successful; the hare reached the hands of Cyrus in safety, and opening it, he read a letter which was in substance as follows:—

"It is plain, Cyrus, that you are a favorite of Heaven, and that you are destined to a great and glorious career. You could not otherwise have escaped, in so miraculous a manner, the snares set for you in your infancy. Astyages meditated your death, and he took such measures to effect it as would seem to have made your destruction sure. You were saved by the special interposition of Heaven. You are aware by what extraordinary incidents you were preserved and discovered, and what great and unusual prosperity has since attended you. You know, too, what cruel punishments Astyages inflicted upon me for my humanity in saving you. The time has now come for retribution. From this time the authority and the dominions of Astyages may be yours. Persuade the Persians to revolt. Put yourself at the head of an army and march into Media. I shall probably myself be appointed to command the army sent out to oppose you. If so, we will join our forces when we meet, and I will enter your service. I have conferred with the leading nobles in Media, and they are all ready to espouse your cause. You may rely upon finding everything thus prepared for you here. Come, therefore, without delay." [48]

Cyrus determined to comply with the proposal of Harpagus. He therefore resorted to deceit, or, as he called it, stratagem. Thus war upholds and justifies falsehood and treachery under the name of stratagem. Cyrus had a letter prepared in the form of a commission from Astyages, appointing him commander of a body of Persian forces to be raised in the service of the king. He then read this false letter at a public assembly, and called upon all the Persian warriors to join him.

Cyrus did not at first make known to them his designs, but commanded them all to assemble on a certain day at a place named, and each one was to provide himself with an axe. When they were thus mustered, he marched them into the forest, and employed them all day in felling trees. He gave them, moreover, only the coarsest food. When the day was over, he ordered them all to assemble again on the morrow. When they came the next day, instead of hard work and poor food, most sumptuous feasts had been provided for them, and they spent the day in merriment and revelry.

In the evening Cyrus called them all together and revealed to them his plans, and said to them that if they would follow him, they should live in ease and plenty; otherwise, if they should continue as they were, they would spend their lives in toil and privation; and he reminded them of the two days just spent, and asked them which they preferred to live. The soldiers received his proposals with joy, and eagerly promised to follow him into Media. When everything was ready, Cyrus led his army into Media. In the meantime Astyages, hearing of his insurrection, had collected a large force, and as had been anticipated, placed it under the command of Harpagus. When the battle was joined, the honest part of the Median army fought valiantly at first; but discovering that they were being deserted by their comrades, they fled in confusion. Cyrus, thus reinforced by the deserting Medians with Harpagus at their head, now found himself the leader of a large force, and advanced toward the capital. When Astyages heard of the treachery of Harpagus and the desertion of his army, he was frenzied with rage. The long-dreaded prediction of his dream seemed about to be fulfilled, and the Magi who had assured him that he was safe, as Cyrus had been a king when a boy, had proved themselves false. [49]

He directed them all to be seized and crucified. He then ordered every man capable of bearing arms, into the ranks, and putting himself at the head of this large force, he marched against Cyrus. But he was defeated, and he himself was taken prisoner. Harpagus was present when he was taken, and he exulted in triumph over his downfall. Harpagus asked him what he thought now of the supper in which he had compelled a father to feed upon the flesh of his own child. Astyages asked Harpagus if he thought the success of Cyrus was owing to what he had done. Harpagus replied that it was, and revealed to him how he had schemed for his destruction, and the preparation he had made in aid of Cyrus, so that Astyages might see that his downfall had been effected by Harpagus himself, in terrible retribution for the shocking crime he had committed so many years before.

The result of this battle was the complete overthrow of the power and kingdom of Astyages, and the establishment of Cyrus on the throne of the united kingdoms of Media and Persia. [50]

Cyrus treated his grandfather with kindness, though he kept him in a sort of imprisonment. The people rejoiced in his downfall, and were well pleased with the milder and more equitable government of Cyrus. Astyages met His death years after, in a strange manner. Cyrus sent for him to come into Persia, where he was then himself residing. The officer who had Astyages in

charge, led him into a desolate wilderness, where he perished from hunger and exposure. Cyrus punished the officer for this crime, though it was supposed by some that it was done by the secret order of Cyrus, in retribution, perhaps, for the evil intentions of Astyages toward himself in his infancy, which, if they had been obeyed, would have resulted in his own death from the same cause.

The character and nobleness of Cyrus, as evinced by numerous generous deeds throughout his life, would, however, seem to refute such a supposition. Harpagus continued in the service of Cyrus, and became one of his most celebrated generals.

Such is one of the stories of the accession of Cyrus to the thrones of Media and Persia. Another account gives a different version of it, and states that Astyages died while king of Media, and was succeeded by his son Cyaxares, brother to Cyrus' mother Mandane, or Mandana, as her name is given by some historians. The years of the reign of Cyrus are computed differently. Some make his reign thirty years, beginning from his first setting out from Persia at the head of an army to succor his uncle Cyaxares, who was in war with the Babylonians. Others make the duration of it to be but seven years, because they date only from the time when, by the death of Cambyses and [51]
Cyaxares, Cyrus became sole monarch of the entire empire of both Media and Persia. But as Cyrus seems to have been the leader in both the Median and Persian empires long before the death of these kings, he probably ruled them both in partnership with them; and notwithstanding Cyrus conquered and acquired Babylon by his own valor, he complacently allowed his uncle Cyaxares, whose forces had been engaged with his own, to hold the first rank. This Cyaxares is called in the Bible Darius the Mede; and it was under his reign in Babylon, which only lasted two years, that Daniel the prophet had several revelations. But as our interest is more particularly in the life and conquests of Cyrus himself, rather than those of Cyaxares and Cambyses, and as the vast power and dominion of both Media and Persia seemed to have been owing to the valor and executive ability of Cyrus alone, our story will confine itself to the achievements of Cyrus the Great, without further mention of Cambyses or Cyaxares.

We now come to the history of Cyrus and Crœsus, and before we recount the conquest of the kingdom of Lydia, it will make it more interesting, perhaps, to give a slight sketch of Crœsus, king of Lydia, and also to mention the oracles which played such an important part in the history of this king. The country of Lydia, over which this famous king ruled, was in the western part of Asia Minor bordering on the Ægean Sea. Crœsus, king of Lydia, acquired the enormous riches for which he was so famous, from the golden sands of the river Pactolus, which flowed through his kingdom. The river brought down the gold particles from the mountains above, and the slaves of Crœsus washed the sands, thus separating the metal, which was obtained in such vast quantities that this king's name has become a proverb for fabulous wealth, in the old saying, "Rich as [52]
Crœsus."

The people of those days, however, had a very different story of the origin of the gold in the river Pactolus. Their legend was that ages before, a certain king named Midas had rendered some service to a god, who thereupon promised to grant him any favor he should ask. Midas prayed that the power might be granted him of turning everything he touched into gold. This power was bestowed by the god, and after Midas had turned many objects into gold, he began to find his gift very inconvenient, and was in danger of starving to death in the midst of all his wealth. For no sooner had he touched any food than it straightway became gold. Midas was then as anxious to get rid of his dangerous gift as he had been to secure it.

He implored the god to take back the gift.

The god told him to go and bathe in the river Pactolus, and he should be restored to his former state.

Midas did so, and was saved, but in the operation a great portion of the sands of the river were transformed to gold.

Crœsus was at one time visited by a famous Grecian lawgiver, named Solon. Crœsus received Solon with great distinction, and showed him all his treasures.

One day the king asked Solon, who of all the persons he had ever met, he considered to be the happiest man.

Of course Crœsus imagined that the sage would name himself, the king, as the happiest mortal. But Solon gave him the name of Tellus, a quiet Athenian citizen.

Crœsus asked why he should place such a man before a monarch occupying such a throne as his own.

Solon replied,—

"You are now at the height of your power, but I cannot decide whether you are a fortunate and [53]
happy man, until I know your end."

Crœsus had two sons. One was deaf and dumb, the other was a young man of much promise; but he was killed while hunting.

As soon as Cyrus had become established on his throne as king of the Medes and Persians, his power began to extend westward toward the empire of Crœsus, king of Lydia.

Crœsus was roused from the dejection into which he had been plunged by the death of his son, by the danger which now threatened his kingdom. In his uncertainty regarding the future, he determined to consult the oracles. The three most important of these oracles were situated, one at Delphi, one at Dodona, and the third at the Oasis of Jupiter Ammon.

Delphi was a small town built on the southern side of Mount Parnassus. This mount was a famous place. From a deep cavern in the rocks there issued a stream of gaseous vapor, which was said to inspire all persons inhaling it with a spirit of divination and poetry. A temple was built upon this mountain, in which a priestess resided, and she gave responses to all who came to consult the oracle. When she gave her answers, she sat upon a three-legged stool, which was afterwards called the sacred tripod. This oracle became so renowned that many monarchs came great distances to consult it; and they made very costly presents to the shrine. The deity who was supposed to dictate the predictions was Apollo. Crœsus sent messengers to all of the various oracles to ask what should be the result of his contest with Cyrus. The replies were all unsatisfactory, except the Delphic oracle. Crœsus now decided that this was the oracle upon [54] which he must rely, and immediately made preparations to send most magnificent and costly presents to the Delphic shrine. Some of the treasures were to be deposited in the temple, and some were to be offered as a burnt sacrifice to the god.

After the ceremonies were completed, everything that had been used in the services, including gold and silver vessels, richly embroidered garments, and numerous other costly articles, were gathered into one vast funeral pile and burnt. So much gold had been employed in making these things, that it melted in the fire and ran into plates of great size. These were then collected and formed into an image of a lion, which was placed in the temple. Crœsus also presented the temple with a silver cistern, or tank, large enough to hold three thousand gallons of wine. There was one strange piece of statuary which he sent to this shrine, which we must not omit to mention. It was a statue of gold of a woman-servant in the household of Crœsus. It was called The Breadmaker. Its origin was this:—

When Crœsus was a child, his mother died, and his father married again. His stepmother desired to have one of her children succeed to the throne instead of Crœsus. So she gave some poison to the woman who was accustomed to make the bread for the family, telling her to put it in the portion intended for Crœsus. This servant, however, instead of minding the wicked queen, revealed the plot to Crœsus, and put the poison in the bread of the queen’s own children. In gratitude for his preservation by this slave, Crœsus ordered a statue of gold to be made in her honor, when he came to the throne; and this he sent to the temple at Delphi. After Crœsus had presented all these magnificent gifts to the shrine, he consulted the oracle. The answer was as [55] follows:—

“If Crœsus crosses the Halys and prosecutes a war with Persia, a mighty empire will be overthrown. It will be best for him to form an alliance with the most powerful states of Greece.”

Crœsus was much pleased with this answer, and then asked furthermore, whether his power would ever decline.

The oracle replied,—

“Whenever a mule shall mount upon the Median throne, then, and not till then, shall great Crœsus fear to lose his own.”

These replies strengthened the belief of Crœsus that he should be victorious; but as the sequel shows, we will learn how vague and indefinite were the answers of the oracles, and so given that they could correspond with the event, whatever might be the result.

Crœsus now sent ambassadors to Sparta to seek their aid, and meanwhile went on making great preparations for his campaign. When all things were ready, the army commenced its march eastward until it reached the river Halys.

The army encamped upon its banks until some plan could be formed for crossing the river. Crœsus had with his army a very celebrated engineer named Thales. This engineer succeeded in getting the army of Crœsus over the river by ordering a large force of laborers to cut a new channel for the river behind the army, into which the water flowed, and Crœsus and his force passed on. Cyrus had heard of his approach, and soon the armies were face to face.

Cyrus had been conquering all the nations in his path, as he went forward to meet Crœsus, and thus had been reinforced by all of the neighboring people, except the Babylonians, who were [56] allied with Crœsus against him. A great battle was fought at Pteria, which continued all day, and at its close the combatants separated without either of them having gained much advantage.

Crœsus thinking that this battle was enough for the present, and supposing that Cyrus would now go home, having found that he could not overcome him, determined to return to his own city Sardis, and there prepare for a more vigorous campaign in the spring.

Cyrus quietly remained in his position until Crœsus had time to return to Sardis. Whereupon, he followed with his entire army.

Crœsus was now thoroughly alarmed, and collecting all the forces he could command, he marched forth to a great plain just without the city, to meet Cyrus.

The Lydian army was superior to that of Cyrus in cavalry, and upon this plain they would have

a much greater advantage. To avoid this, Cyrus ordered all his large train of camels, which had been employed as beasts of burden, to be drawn up in line in front of his army, each one having a soldier upon his back, armed with a spear.

It is said that horses cannot endure the sight or smell of a camel; and when the two armies met, the cavalry of Crœsus, riding furiously to the attack, were confronted by the line of huge, awkward camels, with their soldier riders. The horses were so frightened by the spectacle, that they turned and fled in dismay, trampling down their own forces, and causing complete confusion in the Lydian army. The army of Crœsus was totally defeated, and they fled into the city of Sardis and entrenched themselves there.

Cyrus now besieged the city for fourteen days, endeavoring to find some place to scale the walls which surrounded it. One part of the wall passed over rocky precipices which were considered impassable. At length one of the soldiers of Cyrus, named Hyræades, observed one of the sentinels, who was stationed on the wall overlooking the precipice, leave his post, and come partway down the rocks to get his helmet, which had dropped down. Hyræades reported this incident to Cyrus, and so an attempt was made to scale the walls at that point. It was successful, and thus the city was taken. It is reported that in the confusion and noise of storming the city the life of Crœsus was saved by the miraculous speaking of his deaf-and-dumb son. Cyrus had commanded his soldiers not to kill Crœsus, but that they should take him alive, and he should then be brought to him. As Crœsus was escaping with his son a party of Persian soldiers took him prisoner, and were about to kill him, not knowing who he was, when the dumb boy cried out,— [57]

“It is Crœsus; do not kill him!”

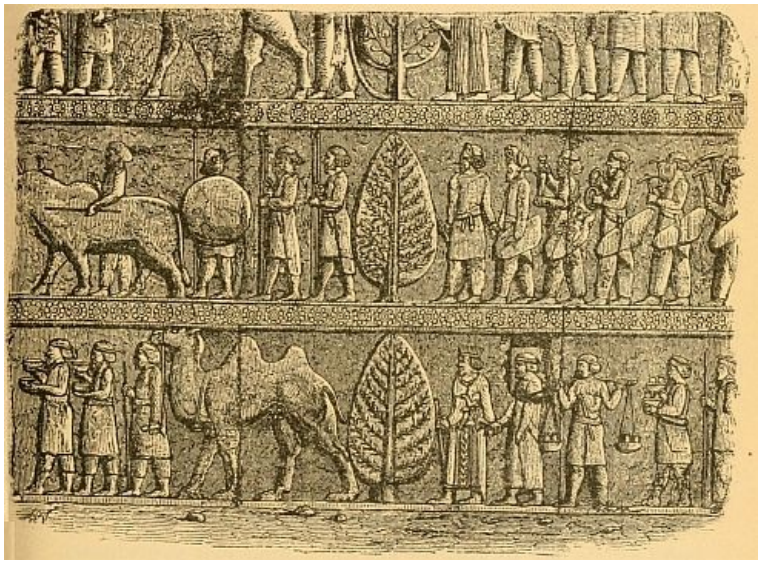
Cyrus had not ordered Crœsus to be spared from any motives of kindness; but that he himself might determine his fate.

He commanded Crœsus to be put in chains, and a huge funeral pile to be built in a public square, and Crœsus and fourteen of the young Lydian nobles were placed upon the pile.

Just as the torch was applied, Crœsus cried out in a tone of anguish and despair,—

“Oh, Solon! Solon! Solon!”

The officers who had charge of the execution asked him what he meant, and Cyrus, also hearing him, and being desirous of receiving an explanation of his mysterious words, commanded the fires to be put out, and ordered Crœsus to be unbound and to be brought to him. Cyrus now treated Crœsus with much kindness. [58]



PERSIAN SUBJECTS BRINGING TRIBUTE.

Crœsus was very much incensed against the oracle at Delphi for having deceived him by false predictions; but the priests of the oracle replied that the destruction of the Lydian dynasty had long been decreed by fate on account of the guilt of Gyges, the founder of the line, who had murdered the rightful monarch, and usurped the crown. The oracles had foretold that a mighty empire would be overthrown, and Crœsus had wrongly imagined that it referred to the destruction of the kingdom of Cyrus. As to the other prediction made by the oracle, that when he should find a mule upon the throne of Media, he would lose his own, this had been fulfilled, as Cyrus, who was descended from the Persians on his father’s side, and from the Medians on his mother’s, had thus become a hybrid sovereign, represented by the mule.

In his advance towards the dominions of Crœsus in Asia Minor, Cyrus had passed to the northward of the great and celebrated city of Babylon. He had now conquered all the nations from the Ægean Sea to the river Euphrates. He then subdued Syria and Arabia. After this he entered into Assyria and advanced towards Babylon, the only large city of the East yet unsubdued.

The taking of Babylon is one of the greatest events in ancient history, and the principal circumstances with which it was attended were foretold in the Bible many years before it

happened. Babylon, at this time, was the most magnificent city in the world. It was situated in a large plain, and was surrounded by walls which were eighty-seven feet thick, three hundred and fifty feet high, and sixty miles in circumference. These walls were in the form of a square, each [59] side of which was fifteen miles long. They were built of large bricks cemented together with bitumen, which bound bricks so firmly together that the mortar soon became harder than the bricks themselves. This wall was surrounded by a deep, wide trench filled with water. The great wall of Babylon contained 200,000,000 yards of solid masonry, or nearly twice the cubic contents of the famous wall of China. Each of the bricks was stamped with the name of Nebuchadnezzar. The wall was so wide that four chariots could move abreast upon its summit. Two hundred and fifty towers, each ten feet higher than the walls, rose above the parapet. One hundred gates of brass opened to as many streets. Each of the fifty streets was fifteen miles long, and one hundred and forty feet broad, crossing each other at right angles; these avenues divided the city into six hundred and seventy-six squares, each being two and a half miles in circuit. The buildings were erected around these squares with an open court in the centre, containing beautiful gardens and fountains. The river Euphrates flowed through the city, and was spanned by a bridge, five hundred feet long and thirty feet wide. Above the bridge rose an obelisk one hundred and twenty-five feet high. As the melting of the snows upon the mountains of Armenia caused the river Euphrates to overflow its banks in the months of June, July, and August, two artificial canals were cut, some distance above the city, which turned the course of these waters into the Tigris before they reached Babylon. To keep the river within its channel, they raised immense artificial banks on both sides, built with bricks cemented with bitumen. In making these works it was necessary to turn the course of the river another way. For this purpose a prodigious artificial lake was dug, [60] forty miles square, one hundred and sixty in circumference, and thirty-five feet deep.

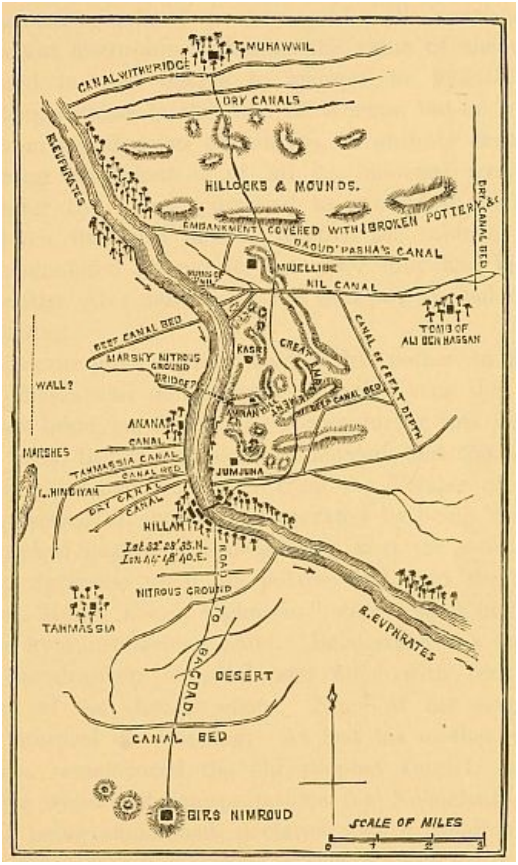


CHART OF THE COUNTRY AROUND BABYLON.

Transcriber's Note: If supported by the reader's device, a larger image of this map may be seen by clicking on the image.

Into this lake the whole river was turned by an artificial canal, cut from the west side of it, until the entire work was finished, when the river was allowed to flow into its former channel. This lake was kept, however, as a reservoir, as a means of irrigating the surrounding fields.

Along the banks of the river were the famous Hanging Gardens, where the many terraces bloomed with brilliant flowers, and were shaded by groves of trees, and cooled by fountains of sparkling water. These beautiful gardens, which were considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World, were constructed by Nebuchadnezzar to please his wife Amytis, whose native land was Media, as she was the daughter of Astyages.

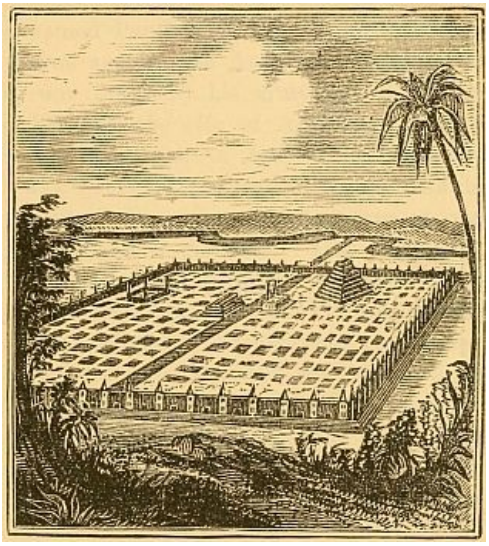
Surrounded by a triple wall, and guarded by gates of brass, rose the magnificent royal palace, whose walls were adorned by pictures of the chase, and martial and festive processions, and whose apartments were furnished with the rich carpets of Persia, the costly fabrics of Damascus, and the jewels of Bokhara.

Rising above all the other structures was the lofty Tower of Belus, or Babel. The tower was six hundred feet high, and was crowned with a statue of Belus, forty feet high, made of pure gold,

which shone resplendent in the sunlight, or gleamed with matchless beauty in the soft moonlight. It is said that this tower far exceeded the greatest pyramid of Egypt in height. The ascent to the top was by stairs round the outside of it; and as the tower proper was composed of eight stories, each decreasing gradually in size, the entire tower formed a pyramid. In the different stories [61] were many rooms, which were richly adorned with tables, censers, cups, and other sacred vessels of massive gold. Diodorus, one of the ancient historians, estimates the value of the riches contained in this temple to amount to $93,240,000. This temple stood in the time of Xerxes, but on his return from his Grecian expedition, he entirely destroyed it, having plundered it of all its immense treasures. Alexander the Great purposed to rebuild it, and employed ten thousand men to remove the rubbish which had accumulated around it, but after they had labored two months, Alexander died, and that put an end to the undertaking.

Belshazzar gave a great feast in his palace to all his chief officers and nobles, even though Cyrus the Great was then besieging Babylon. It was during this impious feast, after Belshazzar had commanded that the sacred vessels, which had been taken from the Temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem, should be desecrated by being used by his drunken guests as wine-goblets, that the marvellous writing appeared upon his palace wall, and the words “Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin” were traced in letters of fire by a mysterious hand. Belshazzar was aroused from his drunken carousal and filled with terror on account of the strange omen. None of his magicians could interpret its meaning. At last his mother, Queen Nitocris, remembered the old prophet Daniel, and his previous wonderful interpretations for Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel, being summoned, declared that it predicted the destruction of his kingdom, which should be divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.

Swiftly, indeed, did the dread catastrophe overtake the wicked king. Cyrus had caused great ditches to be dug on both sides of the city, above and below, so that the water of the river [62] Euphrates might run into them. That very night he caused those great receptacles to be opened; and while Belshazzar and his drunken army were carousing in mad revellings, the channel of the river was emptied, and the hostile forces marched into the dry channel in two bodies of troops; one entering above the city, and one below. A guide who had promised to open all the gates to Cyrus left open the gates of brass which were made to shut up the descents from the quays to the river.



SUPPOSED PLAN OF ANCIENT BABYLON.

Thus the army of Cyrus was enabled to penetrate into the very heart of the city without opposition. Arriving at the royal palace, they surprised the guards and killed them. Then rushing into the palace, and meeting the king, who had seized a sword, and stood in the midst of his frightened and helpless guests, the soldiers of Cyrus killed Belshazzar.

Cyrus, having entered the city, put all to the sword who were found in the streets. He then commanded the citizens to bring him all their arms, and afterwards to shut themselves up in their houses. Early the next morning, the garrison which kept the citadel, learning that the city had been taken, and their king killed, surrendered themselves to Cyrus. Thus did this prince, almost without striking a blow, find himself in possession of the strongest place in the world.

In the first year after Cyrus conquered Babylon, he published the famous edict permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem. Cyrus at the same time restored to the Jews all the vessels of the temple of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem, and placed in the temple of his god Belus, or Baal.

After this conquest, Cyrus established his residence in the midst of the countries within his [63] vast dominions. He spent seven months of the year at Babylon in the winter season, because of the warmth of that climate; three months at Susa in the spring; and two months at Ecbatana, during the heat of summer.

There is an interesting story, told by Xenophon, of a princess, named Panthea, in connection with the expedition of Cyrus against the Assyrians. Among the prisoners of war taken by his army

was a very beautiful princess, Panthea, the wife of Abradates, king of Susiana. Her husband was an Assyrian general, though he himself was not captured at this time with his wife. Cyrus committed this princess to the care of one of his young nobles, named Araspes. This nobleman fell in love with Panthea, and ventured to express to her his admiration for her. She was offended; and when Araspes continued his declarations of love, she complained to Cyrus. Cyrus severely reproved his officer for proving unworthy of the trust reposed in him. Araspes, mortified and repentant, was overwhelmed with fear and remorse. Cyrus, hearing of this, sent for Araspes, and instead of upbraiding him, sent him upon a trusty and difficult mission as a spy among the Assyrians. The loss of so brave an officer, who was supposed to have gone over to the enemy, greatly affected the army. Panthea, who imagined that she had been the cause of this loss to Cyrus, told him that she would supply the place of Araspes with an officer of equal merit. Accordingly, she sent for her husband Abradates. Upon his arrival, she told him of the kindness and consideration with which she had been treated by Cyrus, the generous conqueror.

"And how," said Abradates, "shall I be able to acknowledge so important a service?"

"By behaving towards him as he has done towards me," [64]
replied Panthea.

BABYLONIAN KING.

Whereupon, Abradates immediately expressed his gratitude to Cyrus, and offered to espouse his cause as his faithful ally. Cyrus received him with a noble and courteous manner and accepted his offer. Abradates then fitted up for Cyrus one hundred chariots at his own expense, and provided horses to draw them, from his own troop. These armed chariots were a very expensive sort of force. The carriages were heavy and strong and were usually drawn by two horses. They had short, scythe-like blades of steel projecting from the axletrees on each side, by which the ranks of the enemy were mowed down when the chariots were driven among them. Each chariot could hold one or more warriors beside the driver of the horses. The warriors stood on the floor of the carriage, and fought with javelins and spears. Abradates made one chariot much larger than the rest for himself, as he intended to command this corps of chariots.

His wife Panthea took much interest in these preparations, and unknown to Abradates, she furnished from her own treasures a helmet, a corselet, and arm-pieces of gold for her husband. She also provided breast-pieces and side-pieces for the horses. When the day arrived for Abradates to go into battle with his chariot corps, Panthea presented her munificent gifts to him, which were most royal. Besides the defences of gold, there were other articles for ornament. There was a purple robe, a violet crest for the helmet, waving plumes, and costly bracelets. Abradates was greatly astonished, and exclaimed with surprise and pleasure,—

"And so to provide me with this splendid armor and dress, you have been depriving yourself of all your finest and most beautiful ornaments!"

"No," lovingly replied Panthea; "you are yourself my finest ornament, if you appear in the eyes [65]
of others as you do in mine; and I have not deprived myself of you."

There were many spectators present to see Abradates mount in his gorgeous chariot and drive away; but the attention of the beholders was centred upon the exquisite beauty of Panthea, as she stood by the side of his chariot to bid adieu to her husband. This was their last parting.

As Panthea turned away from the royal train, her husband waved her a fond farewell.

On the field of battle Abradates displayed heroic courage. His chariot was observed by Cyrus, in the thickest of the fight, rushing fearlessly into the places of the greatest danger.

The victory was gained by Cyrus; but Abradates was killed in his chariot; and when Cyrus inquired about him, it was reported that Panthea was then attending to the interment of the body on the banks of a river which flowed near the field of battle.

Cyrus immediately went to the spot, where Panthea sat weeping over the remains of her beloved husband. Cyrus leaped from his horse, and knelt beside the corpse, exclaiming,—

"Alas! thou brave and faithful soul, and art thou gone?"

Cyrus said what he could to console Panthea; but she was unconsolable. He gave directions that everything should be furnished for her comfort. Panthea thanked him for his kindness.

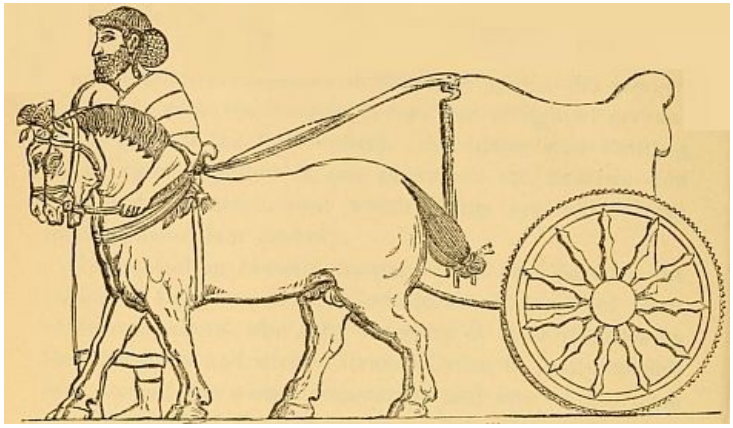
After Cyrus had left her, Panthea sent away all her servants but her waiting-maid, saying that she wished to be alone with the dead body of her husband. She then drew forth a small dagger, which she had kept concealed beneath her robe; and telling her maid to envelop her dead body in [66]
the same mantle with her husband, and to have them buried together in the same grave, she

pierced her heart with the weapon before her affrighted servant could prevent the fatal wound. Abradates and Panthea were buried together in one grave, as the heart-broken wife had requested, over which Cyrus erected a lofty monument to their memory.

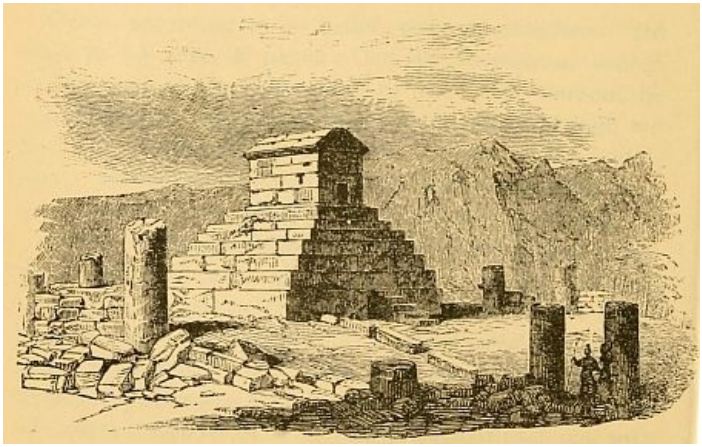
Cyrus, finding himself master of all the East by the taking of Babylon, did not imitate the example of most other conquerors, who sully the glory of their victories by their cruelties and wicked lives. Cyrus is justly considered one of the wisest conquerors and one of the most accomplished of the princes to be found in profane history. He was possessed of all the qualities necessary to make a great man. Cicero observes, that during the entire time of the rule of Cyrus he was never heard to speak one rough or angry word.

Cyrus, according to his belief, was very religious. He was, to be sure, a pagan; but he reverenced sacred things, and as his deliverance of the Jews showed, he acknowledged the power of Jehovah, even though we have no account of his complete conversion from idolatry. But his devotion to what he held to be religion is an example for the worshippers of the one true God.

Cyrus, having established himself in the midst of his wide kingdom, with his chief residence at Babylon, resolved to appear before the people in an august religious ceremony, by marching in a grand cavalcade to the places consecrated to the gods, in order to offer sacrifices to them. He ordered the superior officers of the Persians and allies to attend him; and he presented each one with a suit of clothes of the Median fashion. These were long garments, of various colors, of the finest and brightest dyes, richly embroidered with gold and silver. One of the historians gives this description of this gorgeous pageant. [67]



PERSIAN CHARIOT.



TOMB OF CYRUS.

“When the time appointed for the ceremony was come, the whole company assembled at the king’s palace by break of day. Four thousand of the guards, drawn up four deep, placed themselves in front of the palace, and two thousand on the two sides of it, ranged in the same order. All the cavalry were also drawn out, the Persians on the right, and that of the allies on the left. The chariots of war were ranged half on one side and half on the other. As soon as the palace gates were opened, a great number of bulls of exquisite beauty were led out, by four and four. These were to be sacrificed to Jupiter and other gods, according to the ceremonies prescribed by the Magi. Next followed the horses that were to be sacrificed to the sun. Immediately after them a white chariot, crowned with flowers, the pole of which was gilt; this was to be offered to Jupiter. Then came a second chariot of the same color, and adorned in the same manner, to be offered to the sun. After these followed a third, the horses of which were caparisoned with scarlet housings. Behind came the men who carried the sacred fire in a large hearth.

“When all these were on the march, Cyrus himself made his appearance upon his car, with his upright tiara upon his head, encircled with the royal diadem. His under-tunic was of purple mixed with white, which was a color peculiar to kings; over his other garments he wore a large purple cloak. His hands were uncovered. A little below him sat the master of the horse, who was of a comely stature, but not so tall as Cyrus, for which reason the stature of the latter appeared still more advantageously. [68]

“As soon as the people perceived the prince, they all fell prostrate before him and worshipped him; whether it was that certain persons appointed on purpose, and placed at proper distances, led others by their example, or that the people were moved to do it of their own accord, being struck by the appearance of so much pomp and magnificence, and with so many awful circumstances of majesty and splendor.

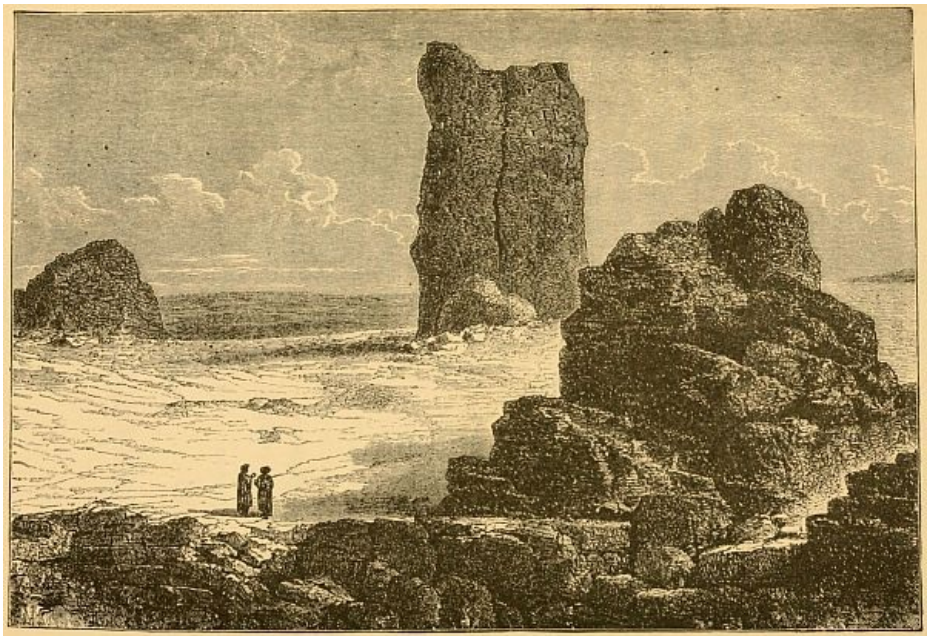
“The Persians had never prostrated themselves in this manner before Cyrus till on this occasion. When Cyrus’ chariot was come out of the palace, the four thousand guards began to march; the other two thousand moved at the same time, and placed themselves on each side of the chariot.

“The eunuchs, or great officers of the king’s household, to the number of three hundred, richly clad, with javelins in their hands and mounted upon stately horses, marched immediately after the chariot. After them were led two hundred horses of the king’s stable, each of them having embroidered furniture and bits of gold. Next came the Persian cavalry divided into four bodies, each consisting of ten thousand men; then the Median horse, and after those the cavalry of the allies. The chariots of war, four abreast, brought up the rear and closed the procession. When they came to the fields consecrated to the gods, they offered their sacrifices first to Jupiter and then to the sun. To the honor of the first, bulls were burnt, and to the honor of the second, horses. They likewise sacrificed some victims to the earth, according to the appointment of the Magi; then to the demigods, the patrons and protectors of Syria. In order to amuse the people after this grave and solemn ceremony, Cyrus thought fit that it should conclude with games and [69] horse and chariot races.

“The place chosen for them was large and spacious. He ordered a certain portion of it to be marked out, and proposed prizes for the victors of each nation, which were to encounter separately and among themselves. He himself won the prize in the Persian horse-races, for nobody was so complete a horseman as he. The chariots ran but two at a time, one against another. Some days after, Cyrus, to celebrate the victory he had obtained in the horse-races, gave a great entertainment to all his chief officers, as well strangers as Medes and Persians. They had never yet seen anything of the kind so sumptuous and magnificent. At the conclusion of the feast he made every one a noble present, so that they all went home with hearts overflowing with joy, admiration, and gratitude; and all-powerful as he was, master of all the East and so many kingdoms, he did not think it descending from his majesty to conduct the whole company to the door of his apartment.

“Such were the manners and behavior of those ancient times, when men understood how to unite great simplicity with the highest degree of human grandeur.”

There are two accounts given of the death of Cyrus. Herodotus relates that Cyrus made war against the Scythians, and after having attacked them, made a feint of retreating, leaving a great quantity of provisions and wine behind him. The Scythians, supposing he had indeed departed, seized the booty and were soon thoroughly drunk from the effects of the wine. While they were still in a drunken slumber, they were surprised by Cyrus and completely routed. The son of Tomyris, queen of the Scythians, had commanded the vanquished army, and was taken prisoner. When he recovered from his drunken fit and found himself in captivity, with a disgrace hanging [70] over his head which he could never hope to wipe out, he killed himself in despair. His mother, Queen Tomyris, determining to avenge the death of her son, collected a large force; and meeting the Persians in a second battle, they were defeated, and more than two hundred thousand of their number were killed, together with their king, Cyrus. Tomyris was so enraged against Cyrus, that even his death did not suffice her vengeance; but it is said that she ordered his head to be cut off and flung into a vessel full of blood. This shocking account, however, is not given by Xenophon, who relates that when Cyrus perceived the time of his death to be near, he ordered his children and officers of state to be assembled about him. After thanking the gods for their favors to him, he declared his oldest son, Cambyses, to be his successor, and left the other, whose name was Tanaoxares, several important governments. Having taken his leave of them all, he addressed these words to his sons:—



RUINS OF BABYLON.

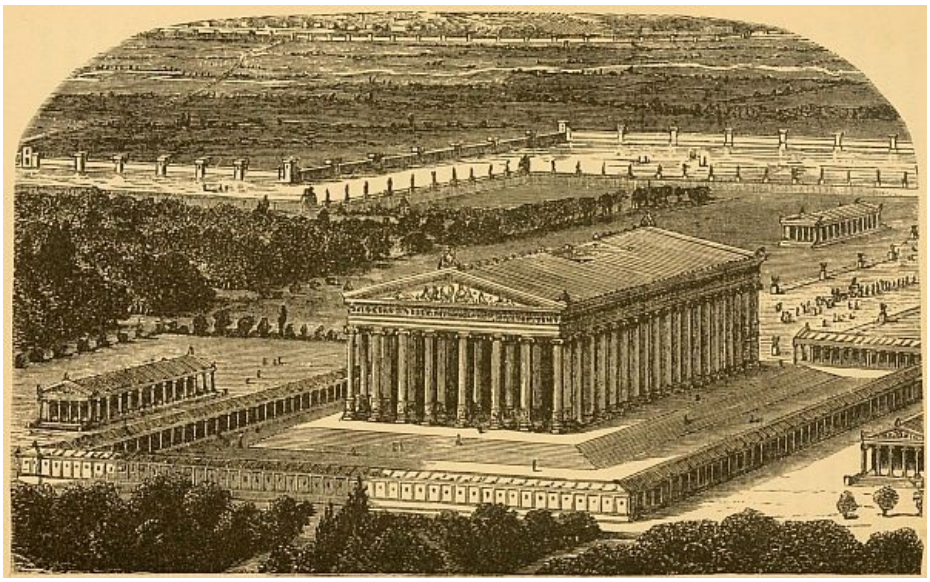
“I could never imagine that the soul only lived while in a mortal body, and died when separated from it. But if I mistake, and nothing of me shall remain after death, at least fear the gods, who never die, who see all things, and whose power is infinite. Fear them, and let that fear prevent you from ever doing, or deliberating to do, anything contrary to religion and justice. For my body, my sons, when life has forsaken it, enclose it neither in gold or silver, nor any other matter whatever; restore it immediately to the earth. Adieu, my dear children; may your lives be happy. Carry my last remembrance to your mother. And for you, my faithful friends, receive this last farewell, and may you live in peace.” Having said these words, he covered his face and died, sincerely lamented by all his people.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.
356-323 B.C.

[71]

“Self-conquest is the greatest of victories.”—Plato.

ONE day a terrible event transpired in the ancient city of Ephesus. The magnificent temple of Diana, one of the famous Seven Wonders of the World, was in flames. The people from all parts of the country flocked to the scene of the imposing conflagration. This marvellous temple had been built at the expense of all Asia Minor. One hundred and twenty-seven kings had contributed one hundred and twenty-seven magnificent columns of Parian marble, which were sixty feet in height, and wrought by the most famous artists. Pliny says that two hundred and twenty years were occupied in rearing this vast structure. But now the flames mount higher and higher. All the efforts of the distracted people to subdue them are in vain. See! the rapacious tongues of fire are nearing the sacred image of the goddess, which the Ephesians believed had fallen from heaven. Why does not Diana, the great goddess, prevent the destruction of this, her most imposing and sacred shrine? The people call upon her in their wild despair; but still the flames devour with fury the magnificent structure, and the air is rent with the cries of the horror-stricken multitude. That very night, while the heavens were still red with the lurid light of the burning temple, another event occurred upon the other side of the Ægean Sea, in the royal [72] palace of the kingdom of Macedon. A tiny infant first opened its eyes upon this strange world; and above his royal cradle, king and nobles bent in gratified delight, and welcomed the little stranger with proud joy. But what had this helpless babe to do with the burning temple in Ephesus? This baby was the infant Alexander the Great; and so superstitious were the people of those times that in order to explain the strange fatality of a great goddess like Diana allowing her magnificent temple to be burned and destroyed without any miraculous intervention on her part, to punish such a sacrilegious desecration of her shrine by wicked mortals, the historians of those days declared that as Diana was at that time lending her aid and presence to insure the future greatness of the new-born infant Alexander, it was on account of her absence on so beneficent an errand, that her temple was not guarded from this impious destruction.



TEMPLE OF DIANA AT EPHESUS.

But what mortal had so dared to insult the gods, as to apply the torch to this most sacred shrine? At last it was discovered that a person named Herostratus had fired the temple; not by accident, but with wicked intent. Upon being put to the torture in order to force him to confess the motive for so infamous a crime, he declared that it was to immortalize his own name, that he might be known to all posterity as the destroyer of this famous structure. A decree was then published that all should be prohibited from mentioning his name. But this decree only caused greater curiosity, and scarcely one of the historians of those times have failed to mention the name of this wicked and vain man.

These events happened about 356 B.C. Alexander was born the heir to the throne of one of the Grecian kingdoms. His father was King Philip of Macedon. The kingdom of Macedon was in the [73] northern part of Greece. The mother of Alexander was Olympias, the daughter of the king of Epirus, which was a kingdom lying west of Macedon. Olympias was a woman of very strong character, but possessed also some unlovely traits. His father, King Philip, was a great warrior, and during the boyhood of Alexander, he made many conquests in various parts of Greece. Alexander was much favored in the circumstances of his early life, and also in the possession of a superior mind, and handsome face and figure, and most winning manners. He was born to rule; and had he always used his many gifts as wisely as he employed his executive powers and physical courage, he would have been one of the greatest of men, whereas now he can be called only one of the greatest of conquerors, whose life was marred by some of the most terrible of vices.

But the boy Alexander is intensely attractive and interesting. He seemed to possess few of the faults of youth. He was active, and full of ardor and enthusiasm, and at the same time he was

calm and prudent in emergencies, and very thoughtful and far-seeing. He was kind and considerate, faithful to his friends, and generous to his foes. He possessed a remarkable mind, and delighted in study and in improving conversation with his teachers. He was privileged to be a pupil of the famous Aristotle. The progress of the pupil was equal to the care and ability of the preceptor. Alexander became very fond of philosophy and metaphysics, even though a young boy; and he did not omit mathematics and the study of the wonders of nature. But Alexander applied himself chiefly to the study of morality, as it contributes to the good conduct of a prince and the best government of a people. How sad it was that, with all these desirable qualities of heart and mind, his later years were marred by the greatest of vices, and his natural noble impulses were [74] deadened by a life of brutal ferocity and drunken debauchery, which tarnished the brightness of his glory and sullied the reputation of a great conqueror, whose brilliant actions and intrepid bravery dazzled the eyes of friends and foes!

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

But we must not suppose that the youthful Alexander was a melancholy dreamer or an embryo philosopher. His greatest delight was to read of the exploits of the Grecian heroes, which were described by Homer, an ancient poet who lived four or five hundred years before the time of Alexander. There were then no printed books, but these and other works were written on parchment rolls, which the young scholars were taught to read. As Homer's tales were written in Greek, which was the native language of Alexander, he could understand them very easily, and was greatly excited with the stirring scenes there depicted. Aristotle ordered a beautiful copy of Homer's poems to be prepared expressly for his princely pupil. Alexander afterwards carried this copy with him in all his campaigns; and years after, when he was fighting the Persians, among the spoils taken from them was a very costly casket, which King Darius had used for jewels or perfumes. This box was always afterwards employed by Alexander as a receptacle for his beautiful copy of Homer; and he placed it with his sword beneath his pillow at night. Although he was a prince, he was not brought up in habits of luxury. The Greeks in those days had no firearms, and in battle combatants fought in hand-to-hand conflicts. It was the business of the officers to lead the men on, and set them the example of bravery by performing themselves deeds of daring and valor. It was considered necessary to accustom the young, even though princes, to hardship and fatigue. Alexander was full of energy [75] and spirit. He early evinced a great degree of ambition; and when news of his father's many conquests would be brought to the court in Macedon, Alexander often remarked to his companions, in a tone of sorrow and dejection,—

"There will be nothing left for us to conquer."

The story of Bucephalus, his famous horse, illustrates the courage and also the keen observation of Alexander. A spirited war-horse had been sent to Philip while Alexander was quite a young boy. The king and his courtiers went out into one of the parks to view and try the horse; but so furious was the animal that no one dared to mount him, as he seemed entirely unmanageable. Philip was very much provoked, and gave orders that the horse should be sent back into Thessaly, as useless.

Alexander had stood quietly by, noticing the actions of the animal and attentively studying his traits. He perceived that the horse seemed to be frightened at his own shadow; and he begged the consent of his father to allow him to try the experiment of mounting him. Philip at last gave a reluctant consent, as the attempt seemed so hazardous for a young boy, when all his experienced grooms condemned the horse as too vicious to be subdued. Alexander, however, quickly turned the frightened creature round, so that he could not see his shadow; and patting him on the head and neck, reassured him with the gentle tones of his voice; and as he became less restive, he sprang upon the animal and gave him full rein to run as he pleased. King Philip and his nobles first looked on in terror, then in admiration, as the splendid steed flew over the plains like the wind, with his intrepid rider seated in calm grace upon his back, evidently perfectly fearless and [76] self-possessed. Having allowed the horse to tire himself with his free run, Alexander reined him

in with perfect ease, and returned safely to the king. Philip was so pleased and proud of his son that he embraced Alexander when he had alighted, and kissing his forehead, he said to him, “My son, seek a kingdom more worthy of thee, for Macedon is below thy merit.” This Bucephalus afterwards became the famous war-horse of Alexander the Great, and many surprising stories are told of his marvellous sagacity. When this horse was saddled and equipped for battle, he seemed to realize his proud position, and would allow no one to approach him but Alexander. When his master wished to mount him, he would kneel upon his forelegs. Some historians relate that when Alexander was fighting in a desperate battle, and had plunged too imprudently amidst his infuriated foes, Bucephalus, though severely wounded, bore his master to a place of safety, although he was himself bleeding to death, pierced with the fatal darts of the enemy. Then, perceiving that Alexander was safe, he fell exhausted, and expired. Others say that Bucephalus lived to be thirty years of age, and that Alexander so mourned for him at his death that he built a city on the spot where his faithful horse had been buried, and called it Bucephalia in honor of the noble and trusty steed.

When Alexander was only sixteen years of age, his father, Philip, made him regent of Macedon while he was absent on a great military campaign against the other Grecian states.

At this time some ambassadors from the Persian court arrived in Macedon. In the absence of Philip, Alexander received them with courtesy. They, supposing that he would be interested in hearing about the splendors of the Persian court, entertained him with stories of the famous [77]
Hanging Gardens of Babylon; and the vine of gold, the grapes of which were emeralds, rubies, and other precious stones; and the marvellous golden plantain-tree. But Alexander, instead of appearing absorbed and delighted with these glowing accounts of fabulous wealth, inquired about the geography of the country, the various roads, and the strength and power of the Persian king. What battles he had fought, how he behaved towards his enemies, and how he governed his people. The ambassadors, astonished at such maturity in one so young, and filled with admiration for the Grecian prince, began to compare among themselves Alexander and their own Artaxerxes, saying, “This young prince is great, while our king is only rich.”

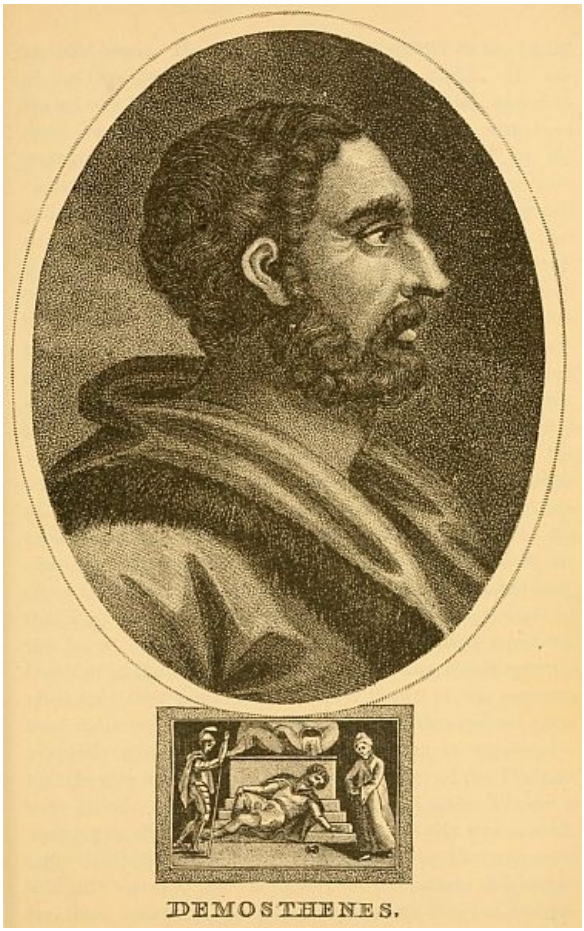
When Alexander was eighteen years of age, King Philip took him with him on one of his military campaigns, during which Philip fought one of his great battles in Bœotia. Philip gave the command of one of the wings of his army to Alexander; and so valiantly did he lead his troops, that his wing was victorious, and Philip and his command had to exert themselves to prevent being outdone by the youthful prince. His mother, Olympias, was of a haughty and imperious temper, and Philip himself was headstrong and obstinate, and the result of their frequent quarrels was a final separation, and Philip obtained a divorce from his wife, she returning to the court of her father. Philip then married a young and beautiful princess, and at the wedding festivities an incident occurred which illustrated the traits of both father and son. The uncle of the new queen, having made some disparaging remark about Olympias, the mother of Alexander, that prince threw the cup from which he had been drinking at the offender’s head. Attalus, the queen’s uncle, then threw his cup at Alexander, and Philip, enraged at such disturbance at the [78]
feast, seized his sword, and rushed towards his son. Having a lame foot, he stumbled, and fell upon the floor; and Alexander, looking upon him with scorn and contempt, exclaimed, “What a fine hero the states of Greece have to lead their armies, a man who cannot get across the floor without tumbling down!” He then turned away and left the palace, and afterwards joined his mother in Epirus, and espoused her cause in the quarrel with his father.

Philip had been planning a great expedition into Asia. He had formed a strong combination among the states of Greece, and had raised a large army. Alexander is said to have taken sides with his mother, not so much out of filial devotion, as because he was jealous of his father’s conquests, and desirous himself of reaping the glory which seemed to await the Grecian army in the coming campaign. Before setting forth upon this expedition, Philip desired to become reconciled to his son Alexander, and Olympias. He realized the importance of securing the co-operation of Alexander in his plans; and it would be dangerous to leave his own kingdom with a son so near in open hostility. Whereupon, Philip sent conciliatory messages to Olympias and Alexander, and he proposed that one of his own daughters should marry the present king of Epirus, who was the brother of Olympias. His overtures were peacefully received; and Olympias and Alexander returned to Macedon, where great preparations were made for the proposed wedding festivities. Philip determined that this event should be celebrated with most gorgeous pomp and splendor.

He received very costly presents from the other states of Greece; and though their professions of friendship were very hollow on both sides, he took this occasion to pay marked attention to [79]
their kings and generals; and they sent him golden crowns, most beautifully wrought, and large embassies, expressing their good wishes. Athens, the seat of literature in Greece, sent a poem, in which the history of Philip’s expedition into Persia was related in anticipation, and in which he was described as being most triumphantly successful.

The wedding was at length celebrated with much splendor, and the day after the nuptials was devoted to games and processions. In one of the latter, which was a religious ceremony, twelve statues of the gods, carved with marvellous art, were carried with great pomp through the streets. A thirteenth, which surpassed them all in magnificence, was a statue of Philip, representing him as a god. The procession was moving towards a great theatre, where games and spectacles were to be exhibited. At length Philip himself appeared in the procession. He had ordered that a wide space should be left around him, so that he might be more plainly visible to the populace, and also as a proof of his confidence in the love of his people, thus to expose

himself without a guard. He was clothed in white robes, and adorned with a sparkling crown. Just as the statues of the gods had been carried into the theatre, and as that of Philip was about to be born in, an officer of the guards, a young Macedonian nobleman, named Pausanias, advanced quickly towards King Philip, and before the spectators suspected his design, he plunged his dagger into the heart of the king, who fell dead upon the ground. All was now confusion. The murderer was instantly cut to pieces by the guards; and an officer of state hastened to inform Alexander of his father's death, and his succession to the throne. An assembly of the leading [80] statesmen was hastily summoned, and Alexander was proclaimed king. It was by some supposed that the motive which induced Pausanias to murder Philip was a private revenge for a personal insult he had received from the uncle of Philip's present wife, which insult Philip would not notice. But others believed that the murder was instigated by the other states of Greece, who were hostile to Philip. Demosthenes, the celebrated orator, was Philip's bitterest enemy, and he used his eloquence in stirring up the Grecians against him. These orations were called his Philippics.


DEMOSTHENES.

Alexander's first measures were to punish his father's murderers. Although it could not be ascertained who were involved in the plot, several were suspected, and put to death. Alexander decided not to make any change in his father's appointments, and to carry out his proposed campaigns. There were two officers in particular, who were the especial confidants of Philip,—Antipater and Parmenio. Antipater had charge of the civil, and Parmenio of military affairs. Alexander, at this time, was only twenty years of age; and Parmenio, a very distinguished general, was sixty years old. But the genius, power, and enthusiasm of Alexander's character made even men of such age and experience willing to obey his orders, and aid in the execution of his plans.

The Macedonians advised Alexander not to attempt to hold all the states of Greece; but to relinquish the conquests of Philip, and join with them in an alliance. But Alexander determined to march boldly into their midst, and demand their continued subjection, which his father had gained. This was a bold measure for so young a prince. He thereupon collected his forces, and set forth at their head. He first marched his troops to [81] the banks of the Danube, which he crossed in one night. He defeated the king of the Triballi in a great battle, and subdued several barbarous nations. While he was thus engaged, several of the Grecian cities, inflamed by the eloquence of Demosthenes, who harangued the people, calling Alexander "a child, a hare-brained boy," formed a powerful alliance against him. A false report that Alexander was dead inspired the Thebians with a boldness which proved their ruin. Alexander, having secured his kingdom from the barbarians, marched with much expedition towards Greece, and passed the Strait of Thermopylæ. He then said to his army, "Demosthenes called me, in his orations, a child, when I was in Illyria, and among Triballi; he called me a young man, when I was in Thessaly; and I must now show him, before the walls of Athens, that I am a man grown." At the Pass of Thermopylæ, a great council was held between Alexander and the Thessalians, who were favorable to his claims. Alexander now appeared so suddenly before the city of Thebes, as to astonish them. He demanded only that they should deliver up to him the two ringleaders of the revolt against him, and then he promised a general freedom to the citizens. But the Thebans insultingly replied that they would only comply, if two of his generals were delivered to them. Alexander now determined upon a speedy punishment, and attacked them so vigorously, that the city was taken, and a large number of the Thebans were killed. Alexander then resolved to make Thebes a warning to all the Grecian states, and the city was accordingly destroyed, and thirty thousand of the Thebans were sold into slavery. He, however, set the priests at liberty; and those who had opposed the revolt, and also the descendants of Pindar, the famous poet. Alexander now sent word to Athens, and demanded [82] that they should deliver up to him ten orators, whom he supposed had influenced the people against Philip and himself. The Athenians, though in this dilemma, were still unwilling to deliver up their orators to death; and at last, one Demades, who was a friend of Alexander's, offered to undertake the embassy alone, and plead for them. Alexander, having now satiated his revenge, and believing that the Grecians were enough subdued to be controlled, waived his demand.

He then summoned all the monarchs and potentates of Greece, to meet him at Corinth, that he might obtain from them the same supreme command against the Persians which had been conferred by them upon his father Philip. The deliberations of the assembly were short, and Alexander was appointed generalissimo against the Persians.

There is a story told of Alexander and the philosopher Diogenes, who was then at Corinth. Alexander supposed that Diogenes would of course come with the officers and governors of cities, and philosophers, who waited upon him immediately to congratulate him upon his election. But Diogenes did not come, and so Alexander, having curiosity to see a man who would thus slight a king, condescended to call upon Diogenes. Attended by his courtiers, he paid the philosopher a visit.

Diogenes was found lying in the sun, and seeing the crowd of people advance toward him, he sat up and fixed his eyes upon Alexander.

That prince was surprised to see so great a philosopher in such seeming poverty, and accosting him kindly, asked him courteously if there was anything he wanted.

“Yes,” replied Diogenes, “that you would stand a little out of my sunshine.”

The courtiers of the monarch were astounded at such audacious boldness; but Alexander [83]
exclaimed,—

“Were I not Alexander, I would be Diogenes.” For Alexander perceived, that even with all his wealth and power, he was in some sense inferior to a man to whom he could give, and from whom he could take, nothing.

Alexander now returned to Macedon to prepare for his great expedition into Asia. As king of Macedon he possessed large estates and revenues, which were his own personal property, independent of the state. He apportioned these among his officers and generals, both those who were to go with him, and those who were to remain to guard his kingdom, over which he placed Antipater as viceregent during his absence.

He displayed such generosity in his gifts, that his friends asked him what he had reserved for himself.

“Hope,” replied Alexander.

After all things were ready, Alexander celebrated the religious sacrifices and ceremonies. This great Macedonian festival was held in honor of the Muses, as well as Jupiter. The Muses, according to the belief of the Greeks, were nine singing and dancing maidens, who were very beautiful in face and form, graceful in motion, and brilliant in mind. They were supposed to have first come from Thrace, and having gone to Mount Olympus, they were made goddesses by Jupiter. At last they selected for their place of residence a palace in Mount Parnassus. They were worshipped all over Greece and Italy as the goddesses of music and dancing. Afterwards arts and sciences were assigned to them,—one being the goddess of history, another of astronomy, another of tragedy, etc.

Alexander celebrated these festivities with great magnificence and pomp, and then bid a long [84]
farewell to his native land. His army consisted of about thirty thousand foot and four or five thousand horse. But they were all brave men. His officers were experienced men of sixty years of age, who had served under Philip his father. Parmenio commanded the infantry, Philotas his son the cavalry. Alexander sent a fleet of one hundred and fifty galleys over the Ægean Sea, to land at Sestos, to be ready to transport his army across the Hellespont. The army marched to Sestos by land. Having arrived there, Alexander left Parmenio to conduct the transportation of the army, while he himself went in a single galley to visit the ruins of Troy, which city was the scene of Homer’s poems, which had so charmed Alexander in his early years. So Alexander resolved that his first landing in Asia should be at Troy. As they approached the Asiatic shore, Alexander took the helm and steered the galley himself, and just before he reached the land, he stood upon the prow and threw a javelin at the shore as he approached, as a sign of his purpose to take possession. He then leaped upon the land before any of his crew, and afterwards offered sacrifices to the gods, having erected altars on the shore to Jupiter, Minerva, and to Hercules.

A large part of Asia Minor had been settled by the Greeks, and sometimes these cities had been under Grecian rule, and sometimes under Persian. They were now included in the dominion of Persia. One of these cities, called Lampsacus, had incurred the anger of the Greeks, because it had formerly revolted from their rule. Alexander determined to destroy this city. The ambassador sent by the city to implore his mercy was a famous historian, who had once been Alexander’s teacher. Alexander knowing his errand, and fearing his former friendship might weaken his [85]
resolve, declared with a solemn oath, as the ambassador approached him, that he would not grant the request he was about to make. The witty historian replied,—

“I have come to implore you to *destroy* Lampsacus.”

Alexander, pleased with the readiness of the reply, kept his oath; and of course the city was saved.

In his progress onward, Alexander found himself obliged to cross either Mount Ida, or a river which descended from its slopes, called the Granicus. As they neared the river, some of the Grecian scouts, or as they were called by the Greeks, *prodromi*, reported that the opposite side was lined with Persian troops, waiting to dispute the passage.

Parmenio counselled Alexander against an immediate crossing, but Alexander was unwilling to delay. Accordingly, the army advanced to the banks in order of battle. The centre portion of the Grecian troops was arranged in a peculiar manner, and was called a phalanx. The men

composing it were heavily armed. They bore a shield upon the left arm, and they carried spears sixteen feet long and pointed with iron, which they clasped firmly with both hands, with the points projecting in front. These men were placed in line, one behind another, to the number of sixteen, all facing the enemy. So that a phalanx contained sixteen thousand men. The spears were so long, that when drawn up in close lines, the points of eight or ten of the ranks projected in front, forming a bristling wall of sharp points of steel. This wall no force could penetrate; men, horses, elephants, rushed upon it, only to meet inevitable destruction. If their enemies threw javelins from a distance, the shields upon their arms were held in such a manner as to form a [86] mass of close scales of metal, upon which the javelins fell harmlessly. The troops upon the sides of the phalanx were called the wings, and were composed of cavalry and foot-soldiers, who were more lightly armed, and could therefore move with greater speed.

Alexander commanded one wing, and Parmenio the other. The Persians had assembled in vast numbers upon the opposite shore. The Grecian army, led by Alexander, descended into the stream, and moved on through the water. The Persians dashed down the farther banks, and strove to oppose their landing. A terrible battle ensued, the soldiers grappling with each other in the midst of the waves, and the Granicus ran red with the blood of the wounded. Alexander was fearless and irresistible, and his long white plume, waving from his shining helmet, was a conspicuous target for the arrows and javelins of the enemy. At one time, meeting the foe in close combat, a Persian horseman aimed a blow at his head with a sword. The weapon took off the white plume, and cut into the helmet of Alexander, who immediately stabbed his antagonist through the heart. Just as a second Persian had raised his sword to strike a fatal blow upon the exposed head of the Grecian hero, a Macedonian general cut the uplifted arm from the assailant's body, and saved the life of Alexander the Great. The Persians were defeated, and Alexander landed his brave band of warriors upon the opposite bank, while the terrified Persians fled in dire confusion.

Darius himself had not commanded this Persian force, and he employed all of the following winter in preparing for a vigorous defence of his dominions from the encroaching foe.

Alexander, however, did not remain idle during the winter. He marched from province to [87] province, meeting with many adventures. During this time Parmenio had remained in the western part of Asia Minor, with quite a large force. As the spring approached, Alexander ordered him to meet him at Gordium. One reason which influenced Alexander in this plan was the desire to attempt to untie the famous Gordian knot. The story of the Gordian knot was this:—

Gordius was a sort of mountain farmer. One day he was plowing, and an eagle flew down and alighted upon his yoke, and remained there until he had finished his plowing. This was an omen; but Gordius did not know what it meant. So he went to a neighboring town to consult the prophets and soothsayers. On his way he met a maiden who was going forth to draw water. Gordius fell into conversation with her, and related to her the occurrence which had just transpired. The maiden advised him to go back and offer a sacrifice to Jupiter. Finally she consented to go back with him and aid him. The affair ended in her becoming his wife, and they lived in peace and happiness for many years upon their farm. They had a son named Midas. The father and mother were accustomed to go out in their wagon drawn by oxen, with Midas as their driver. One day they were going into the town in this manner, at a time when it happened that there was an assembly convened, which was in a state of great perplexity, on account of civil dissensions in the country. They had just inquired of an oracle what they should do. The oracle said that "a cart would bring them a king who would terminate their eternal broils." Just then Midas came up, driving the cart in which his father and mother were seated. The assembly thought at once that this must be the cart meant by the oracle, and they made Gordius king by [88] acclamation. They took the cart and yoke to preserve as sacred relics, consecrating them to Jupiter, and Gordius tied the yoke to the pole of the cart by a thong of leather, making a knot so close and complicated that nobody could untie it again. It was called the Gordian knot. The oracle afterwards said that whoever should untie this knot should become monarch of all Asia. Thus far, nobody had succeeded.

Alexander was very desirous of examining this wonderful knot and trying his own fortune. He accordingly went into the temple where the sacred cart had been placed, and after looking at the knot, he became convinced that it could not be untied, whereupon he cut it to pieces with his sword.

From this story comes the old saying, when any one gets out of a difficulty by very violent means, "He has cut the Gordian knot."

After leaving Gordium, Alexander proceeded with his whole army against Darius, who was now advancing to meet him.

On a very warm day, after a long and fatiguing march, the Grecian army reached the river Cydnus, a small stream which came down from Mount Taurus, near the city of Tarsus. Alexander, warm and weary, plunged into the cold mountain stream, and was taken with a violent chill, and as he was lifted out of the water, he fainted away. He was borne to his tent. A severe and protracted fever came on. Alexander bewailed this enforced delay, and summoned his physicians, to whom he said,—

"The present condition of my affairs will not admit either of slow remedies or fearful physicians. A speedy death is more eligible to me than a slow cure. In case the physicians think it [89] is in their power to do me any good, they are to know that I do not so much wish to live as to

fight.”

All his physicians but one, however, were afraid to dare any violent and hazardous remedies, especially as an unfavorable result would endanger their honor; for Darius had published that he would reward with a thousand talents the man who should kill Alexander.

His old family physician, named Philip, who had attended him from childhood, offered to give him a dose of medicine which would be speedy in its effects, but desired three days to prepare it. During this interval of waiting Alexander received a letter from Parmenio, who had been left behind in Cappadocia, warning him against this physician Philip, and stating that Darius had bribed him by promising a thousand talents, and his sister in marriage. Alexander courageously refrained from divulging its contents, and placed the letter under his pillow.

When Philip entered the tent with the medicine, Alexander took the cup, and handing the letter at the same time to the physician, he swallowed the dose without waiting his perusal of it. After reading the letter, Philip replied,—

“Royal sir, your recovery will soon clear me of the guilt of murder, with which I am charged.”

Three days after, Alexander showed himself to his army, who were filled with delight at his wonderful recovery; and the accused physician was now the recipient of the most lavish praises, and looked upon with the deepest reverence, because he had saved the life of their sovereign.

Slowly Darius marched in stately grandeur to meet his advancing enemy. A description of his martial procession reads more like a picture of a grand tournament than the march of an army. [90] One of the historians thus describes this gorgeous pageant:—

“The king advanced with his troops towards the Euphrates. It was a custom long used by the Persians never to set out upon a march till after sunrise, at which time the trumpet was sounded for that purpose from the king’s tent. Over this tent was exhibited to the view of the whole army the image of the sun set in crystal, as the Persians were worshippers of the sun and fire.

“The order they observed in their march was as follows: First, they carried silver altars, on which there was fire, called by them sacred and eternal; and these were followed by the Magi, singing hymns after the manner of their country. They were accompanied by three hundred and sixty-five youths, corresponding to the number of days in a year, clothed in purple robes. Afterwards came a chariot consecrated to Jupiter, drawn by white horses, and followed by a courser of a prodigious size, to whom they gave the name of the sun’s horse; and the equerries were dressed in white, each having a rod of gold in his hand.

“Ten chariots, adorned with sculptures in gold and silver, followed after. Then marched a body of horse, composed of twelve nations, whose manners and customs were various, and all armed in a different style. Next advanced those whom the Persians called the Immortals, amounting to ten thousand, who surpassed the rest of the barbarians in the sumptuousness of their apparel. They all wore gold collars, were clothed in robes of gold tissues, with surtouts completely covered with precious stones. Then followed those called the king’s relations, to the number of fifteen thousand, in habits very much resembling those worn by women, and more remarkable for [91] the vain pomp of their dress than the glitter of their arms. Then came the king’s guards; they carried the cloak of the monarch, and walked before his chariot, in which he seemed to sit as on a high throne. This chariot was enriched on both sides with images of the gods in gold and silver; and from the middle of the yoke, which was covered with jewels, rose two statues a cubit in height, the one representing war, the other peace, having a gold eagle between them, with wings extended, as ready to take its flight.

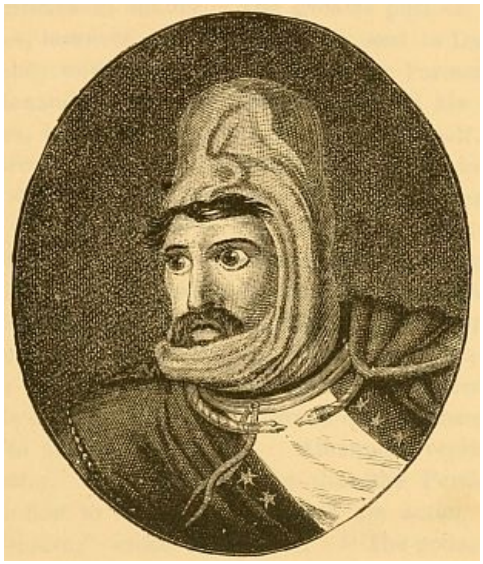
“But nothing could equal the magnificence of the king. He was clothed in a vest of purple, striped with silver, and over it a long robe glittering all over with gold and precious stones, that represented two falcons rushing from the clouds and pecking at one another. Around his waist he wore a gold girdle, called cidaris, after the manner of women, from which hung his scimitar, the scabbard of which flamed all over with gems. On his head he wore a tiara, or mitre, round which was a fillet of blue mixed with white. On each side of him walked two hundred of his nearest relations, followed by ten thousand pikemen, whose pikes were adorned with silver and tipped with gold; and lastly, thirty thousand infantry, who composed the rear-guard. These were followed by the king’s horses, four hundred in number, all of which were led.

“Then came the chariots of his wife Statira and his mother Sysigambis, with the several female attendants of both queens, riding on horseback. After them came fifteen large chariots, in which were the king’s children and those who had the care of their education, escorted by a band of household officers. Then followed three hundred and sixty carriages, containing the ladies of the court, dressed in the costumes of princesses.

“After these marched six hundred mules and three hundred camels, which carried the king’s [92] treasure, and were guarded by a great body of archers. After these came other chariots, in which rode the wives of the crown officers and of the greatest lords of the court; then the sutlers and servants of the army. In the rear were a body of light-armed troops, with their commanders, who closed the imposing procession.”

Darius, at the head of six hundred thousand men, and surrounded with this mighty pomp, considered himself invincible, and imagined that he had only to show his gorgeous army to the few Grecian troops led by the boy Alexander, in order to inspire such awe as should cause them

to fly in terror.



DARIUS.

The two opposing forces came in sight of each other upon a plain near the city of Issus. It was now evening. At midnight the army of Alexander had reached a defile in the chain of mountains called Mount Taurus. Among these mountains there are various tracts of open country, and upon one of these the army of Darius was encamped. Alexander ascended one of the eminences from whence he could look down upon the great plain beyond, which was dimly illuminated by the smouldering fires of the Persian encampment. Alexander there sacrificed by torchlight to the gods of the Grecians, and returning to his army, prepared for an early conflict. In the morning, at break of day, Alexander began his march down to the plain. The battle waged hotly all day, and at sunset all the valleys and defiles around the plain of Issus were thronged with the vast masses of the Persian hosts, flying in confusion from the victorious Macedonians. The flight of Darius had been so sudden that he had left his wife and mother and children and much of his treasure behind in the deserted camp. He pressed on in his chariot as far as he could, and then mounted a horse and fled for his life. Alexander and his army soon abandoned the pursuit, and returned to take possession of the Persian camp. The tents of King Darius were filled with gold and silver vessels, caskets, boxes of rich perfumes, and many articles of luxury. The greater part of his vast treasures, however, he had previously sent to Damascus, where they were afterwards captured by Parmenio. So that Alexander came into possession of all his splendid treasures, upon which he had so prided himself. Alexander treated the captive wife, mother, and children of Darius with great kindness, and gave them every attention he would have paid to honored guests. [93]

Darius got together a small remnant of his army and continued his flight. After he had crossed the Euphrates, he sent an ambassador to Alexander to make propositions for peace. He offered him any sum he desired as a ransom for his wife, mother, and child, and agreed to become his ally and friend if he would deliver them up and depart to his own dominions. Alexander replied by a brief letter. He reminded him that the Persians had been the first to invade Greece. “I am acting only on the defensive,” wrote Alexander. “The gods, who always favor the right, have given me the victory. I am now monarch of a large part of Asia, and your sovereign king. If you will admit this, and come to me as my subject, I will restore your wife, mother, and child without any ransom. And, at any rate, whatever you decide in respect to these proposals, if you wish to communicate with me on any subject hereafter, I shall pay no attention to what you send unless you address it to me as your king.”

As the vast army of the Persian king had now been defeated, none of the smaller kingdoms or provinces thought of resisting. They yielded one after another, and Alexander appointed governors of his own to rule over them. He then advanced along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, until he reached the city of Tyre. [94]

The Tyrians wished to avoid a quarrel if possible, and so sent complimentary congratulations to Alexander, presenting him with a golden crown. Alexander replied courteously, and stated that his reason for coming to Tyre was to offer sacrifices to Hercules, a god whom the Tyrians worshipped. The Tyrians, fearful of allowing him to enter the city, sent him word that it would not be in their power to receive him in the city, but that he could offer the sacrifice on the site of ancient Tyre, as there was a temple sacred to Hercules among the ruins there.

This answer displeased Alexander, and he now determined to build a broad causeway from the mainland to the island upon which the present city of Tyre stood. This causeway he would build out of the ruins of old Tyre, and then march his army over it and take the new city. His soldiers accordingly commenced this work. But the Tyrians constantly harassed the workers; now attacking them with arrows and javelins; then they took a large galley and filled it with combustibles, and towing it near the enemy’s works, they set fire to it; and putting it in motion towards the pier where there was the largest collection of engines and machines, the vessel drifted down upon Alexander’s works, and notwithstanding the most strenuous efforts of the Macedonians, the whole mass was destroyed. Not long after this the sea itself came to the aid of the Tyrians, and a fearful storm destroyed the portions of the work which had escaped the fire. [95] Whereupon the Tyrians deridingly inquired, “Whether Alexander was greater than Neptune, and if they pretended to prevail over that God?”

But Alexander was not to be defeated by fire, or storm, or the hostile Tyrians, and again ordered his men to repair the pier. Meanwhile, Alexander himself collected and equipped a fleet, and sailed into the Tyrian seas.

The fleet of galleys now protected the men at work on the pier, and Alexander began to prepare for the final assault. He proposed to force his entrance on the southern side of the city, where there was a large breach in the wall.

The plan was successful. He prepared a number of ships, with platforms raised upon them in such a manner that on getting near the walls they could be let down, and form a sort of bridge,

over which the men could pass to the broken fragments of the wall, and thence ascend through the breach above.

The ships advanced to the proposed place of landing. The bridges were lowered, and before the Tyrians realized their danger the city was filled with thirty thousand infuriated soldiers, who showed them no mercy. Thus the city was stormed.

Alexander here displayed a brutal ferocity which tarnished the brightness of his victory. The inhabitants were put to the sword, some were executed, some thrown into the sea; and it is said that two thousand were crucified along the seashore.

Prosperity and power were beginning to exert a baneful influence upon the character of Alexander. He became haughty, imperious, and cruel. About this time Darius sent him a second communication, proposing terms of peace. Darius offered him a large sum of money for the [96] ransom of his wife, mother, and child, and agreed to give him all the country he had conquered. He also offered him his daughter Statira in marriage. He recommended that he should be content with his conquests, and added that he could not hope to succeed in crossing the mighty rivers of the East, which were in the way of his march toward the Persian dominions.

Alexander replied “that if he wished to marry the daughter of Darius, he could do it without his consent; as to ransom, he was not in want of money; and as to the offer of Darius to give him all the territory west of the Euphrates, it was absurd for a man to speak of giving what was no longer his own; that he had crossed too many seas in his military expeditions, since he left Macedon, to feel any concern about the *rivers* that he might find in his way; and that he should continue to pursue Darius wherever he might retreat in search of safety and protection, and he had no fear but that he should find and conquer him at last.”

The siege and storming of Tyre has been considered one of the greatest of Alexander’s exploits.

After the subjugation of Tyre, Alexander commenced his march for Egypt. His route led him through Judea. This was about three hundred years before the birth of Christ. A Jewish writer, named Josephus, who lived and wrote a few years after Christ, relates the circumstances of Alexander’s visit to Jerusalem.

When Alexander had been besieging Tyre, he had sent to Judea for supplies, which were refused, as the Jews were subjects of Darius. Hearing that Alexander was about to pass through Jerusalem, they began to fear a fate like that of Tyre. Accordingly the high priest Jaddus, who was the chief magistrate at Jerusalem, caused great sacrifices to be offered to Almighty God, and [97] public and solemn prayers were made, to implore his guidance and protection.

The day after these services he told the people that they need fear nothing; for God had appeared to him in a dream, and directed him what to do. “We are not to resist the conqueror,” said he, “but go forth to meet him and welcome him. We are to strew the city with flowers, and adorn it as for a festive celebration. The priests are to be dressed in their pontifical robes, and lead the procession, and the people are to follow. In this way we are to go out to meet Alexander as he advances, and all will be well.”

When Alexander met this procession he stopped, and appeared both pleased and surprised. He advanced to meet the high priest with an air of the profoundest reverence.

Parmenio, astonished at such a sudden change in his sovereign, asked for an explanation. To which Alexander replied,—

“When I was in Macedon, before setting out on this expedition, one night I had a remarkable dream. In my dream this very priest appeared before me, dressed just as he is now. He exhorted me to banish every fear, to cross the Hellespont boldly, and to push forward into the heart of Asia. He said that God would march at the head of my army, and give me the victory over the Persians. I recognize this priest as the same person who appeared to me then. It is through his encouragement and aid that I am here, and I am ready to worship and adore the God whose service he administers.”

Alexander then joined the high priest in the procession, and returned with him to Jerusalem. The high priest afterwards read and interpreted to Alexander some of the prophecies of Daniel, [98] which were supposed to refer to that conqueror; and Alexander then assured the Jews that they should be protected in their rights, and especially in their religious worship.

Alexander next proceeded to the city of Gaza. This was a place of considerable importance, and was under command of a governor, named Betis, whom Darius had appointed. This Betis refused to surrender the place to Alexander; whereupon, he besieged it for two months. Having captured the city, Alexander treated the wretched captives with extreme cruelty. He cut the garrison to pieces, and sold the inhabitants into slavery. Then becoming still more brutal, his punishment of Betis was most shocking. He ordered him into his presence, and said to him, “You are not going to die the simple death that you desire. You must suffer the worst torments that revenge can invent.”

Betis calmly looked at Alexander, without reply. This still more incensed the cruel conqueror.

“Observe his dumb arrogance,” said Alexander; “but I will conquer him. I will show him that I can draw groans from him, if nothing else.”

He then ordered holes to be made through the heels of his helpless victim; and passing a rope through the wounds, commanded the body to be fastened to a chariot, and dragged about the city until the poor captive was dead. Thus had prosperity and conquest degraded the character of Alexander.

Having destroyed Gaza, with such inhuman brutality, Alexander now formed a more ambitious project. The heroes of Homer were represented as sons of the gods; and Alexander now began to aspire to supernatural honors, and accordingly resolved that he should be declared to be the son [99] of a god. He determined to visit the temple of Jupiter Ammon, in the Oasis of Siwah, and bribe the priests there to declare his divine origin.

The priests at the great temple of Jupiter Ammon received Alexander with marks of distinction and honor. After most solemn and magnificent ceremonies, the priests, pretending to confer with the god in the temple, declared that Alexander was indeed his son; and accordingly they paid him almost divine honors. Alexander, in his subsequent orders and decrees, styled himself Alexander king, son of Jupiter Ammon.

On his return from the Oasis, Alexander began building a city at the mouth of the river Nile. This city he called Alexandria. This city is the only monument of his greatness which still remains. Upon an island near the coast, opposite the city of Alexandria, a magnificent lighthouse was erected, which was considered in those days one of the Seven Wonders of the world. It was said to have been five hundred feet high.

The building of the city of Alexandria was one of the most beneficent acts of Alexander. How much better for the world, as well as for his own true glory, if good deeds had been the rule instead of the exception in the life of this famous man!

Alexander was now master of Asia Minor, Phœnicia, Judea, and Egypt. He now continued his pursuit of Darius.

The Persian army had crossed the Tigris river, and encamped upon the extensive plain of Arbela. Here Darius waited the approach of his relentless foe.

The night before the noted battle between Alexander and Darius, the conqueror, who had come within sight of the Persian host, having completed his arrangements for the morrow's [100] conflict, retired to rest. Early in the morning Parmenio awoke him, and expressed surprise at his sleeping so quietly when such vast issues were at stake. "You seem as calm," said he, "as if you had fought the battle and gained the victory."

"I have done so," replied Alexander; "I consider the whole work done, when we have gained access to Darius, and forced him to give us battle."

Alexander is thus described as he appeared at the head of the army on this important occasion. "He wore a short tunic, girt close around him, and over it a linen breastplate, strongly quilted. The belt by which the tunic was held was embossed with figures of beautiful workmanship. Upon his head was a helmet of polished steel, surmounted with a white plume. He wore also a neck-piece of steel, ornamented with precious stones; he carried a shield, lance, and sword."

The Persians employed elephants in their wars. They also had chariots, armed with long scythes. But the terrible Macedonian phalanx, with columns of infantry and flying troops of horsemen on either side, cut through the mighty mass of their enemies with irresistible force. The elephants turned and fled. The Persian troops were routed, and Darius himself was obliged to flee. Alexander went to Babylon, where he was received as a conqueror. The storehouse of the Persian treasures were at Susa, a strong city east of Babylon. Alexander then marched to Susa, and took possession of the vast treasures collected there. Besides these treasures, Alexander here found a number of trophies which had been brought from Greece by Xerxes, some hundred years before. Alexander sent them all back to Greece. He then proceeded in a triumphal march to [101] Persepolis, the great Persian capital. Here Alexander exhibited another striking instance of wicked weakness. He was giving a great banquet to his officers. Among the women at this feast was a vain and foolish woman named Thais. While the guests were half intoxicated from the effects of wine, this Thais, seizing a burning torch and waving it above her head, proposed that they should set fire to the great palace of Persepolis, which had been built by Xerxes, and amuse themselves by watching the imposing conflagration. Alexander, flushed with wine, consented; and the drunken guests sallied forth, alarming the inhabitants with their boisterous shouts and flaming torches. Arriving at the magnificent palace, they applied their torches, and the gorgeous structure was soon a frightful mass of lurid flames. Alexander, sobered by the sublime and awful spectacle, repented of his wild folly. He ordered the fire to be extinguished; but it was too late; the infamous deed was done; the grand old palace was a hopeless mass of ruins, and another blot, which never can be effaced, tarnished the fame and character of Alexander.

Notwithstanding Alexander's evil deeds, he was kind to his mother. He sent her rich presents after his conquests; and though she was proud and imperious, and made Antipater, whom Alexander had left in command in Macedon, much trouble, so that Antipater was forced to complain of her, Alexander said that a single tear of his mother's would outweigh ten thousand accusations against her. Olympias, however, did not repay his devotion with equal nobleness; she wrote frequent letters to him full of petty fault-finding, and making unkind comments upon his officers and generals; and though Alexander showed her respect, he evinced more love towards [102] the mother of Darius, treating her and the captive children of his foe with the greatest kindness and consideration. After the battle of Arbela, while Alexander marched to Babylon and Susa,

Darius had fled to Ecbatana. He was thus in one of the Persian royal palaces, while his family were with his conqueror at another. The wife of Darius had died before this time, while still a captive in the Grecian camp. Many of the forces of Darius had gone over to Alexander's side, about forty thousand remaining faithful to him. But among these seeming friends were treacherous foes. A general, names Bessus, formed the plan of seizing Darius, and making him a prisoner, and then taking the command of the army himself. If Alexander should be likely to conquer him, he would then try to save himself by giving up Darius. If, on the other hand, their forces should be successful, he would then get Darius out of his way by assassinating him, and usurping the throne. Bessus communicated his plans to many of the chief officers, who agreed to become parties in the plot. The Grecian soldiers in the Persian army revealed this conspiracy to Darius, but he would not believe in the treachery of his countrymen. As Alexander advanced, Darius had retreated from Ecbatana, and Alexander followed him. While halting for rest, a Persian nobleman came into the Macedonian camp, and informed Alexander that the enemies' forces were two days' march in advance. Bessus was in command, and Darius deposed, the plot having been successfully carried out. Alexander immediately set forward in pursuit of Bessus and his royal prisoner. Alexander had now been two years advancing from Macedon into the heart of Asia, in pursuit of Darius. His conquest would not be complete until that monarch was captured.

As soon as Bessus and the Persian army found that Alexander was close upon them, they [103] attempted to hurry forward in the hope of escaping. Darius was in a chariot. They urged this chariot on, but it was too cumbersome for rapid flight. Bessus and his chief conspirators then called upon Darius to mount a horse and escape with them, leaving the rest of the army to its fate. Darius refused. Having become convinced of their treachery, he said he would rather trust himself in the hands of Alexander than to such traitors as they. Bessus and his confederates, exasperated by this reply, thrust their spears into Darius' body as he sat in the chariot, and galloped away. Darius remained in his chariot, wounded and bleeding. His many sorrows had at last overwhelmed him. His kingdom was lost; his beloved wife was in the grave; his family were in captivity; his cities were sacked; his palaces and treasures plundered; and now, betrayed and abandoned, he was dying, slain by his treacherous countrymen, whom he had trusted as his friends. Alone, deserted by all the world, he, the once mighty monarch of vast dominions, now lay there, faint and bleeding, waiting the coming of death or his victorious conqueror.

The Macedonians at last discovered the chariot in which Darius was lying pierced with spears. The floor of the chariot was covered with blood. They raised him a little, and he spoke; he called for water. A Macedonian soldier went to get some; others hurried to find Alexander, and bring him to the spot where his long-pursued enemy was dying. When the soldier returned with the water, Darius received the drink, and then said to those about him, "That he charged them to tell Alexander that he died in his debt, though he had never obliged him; that he gave him a multitude of thanks for the great humanity he had exercised towards his wife, mother, and his [104] children, whose lives he had not only spared, but treated them with the greatest consideration and care, and had endeavored to make them happy; that he besought the gods to give victory to his arms, and make him monarch of the universe; that he thought it was not necessary to entreat him to revenge his murder, as this was the common cause of kings." Then taking Polystratus, one of the Macedonians who had brought him the desired water to relieve his agonizing thirst, he continued, "Give Alexander thy hand, as I give thee mine, and carry him in my name the only pledge I am able to offer,—of my gratitude and affection." Saying these words, Darius breathed his last.

Alexander, coming up a moment after, was shocked at the spectacle before him, and wept bitterly. He then spread his own military cloak over the dead monarch. Having ordered the body to be embalmed, it was then enclosed in a costly coffin, and sent to Sysigambis, the mother of Darius, in order that it might be buried with the ceremonies usually paid to Persian monarchs, and be entombed with his ancestors.

The Persian generals under Bessus now resolved to betray him, as he had betrayed his master. They sent word to Alexander that they would deliver him into his hands if he would send a small force to the place where they designated. Accordingly this command was entrusted to a Macedonian officer named Ptolemy, who found Bessus in a small walled town, to which he had fled for refuge.

When Bessus was brought to Alexander, that monarch ordered the prisoner to be publicly scourged, and then caused his face to be mutilated in a manner customary in those days when a [105] criminal was condemned to be stamped with a perpetual mark of infamy. Alexander then sent the traitor as a second present to Sysigambis, to be dealt with as her revenge for the death of Darius might dictate.

After being terribly tortured, the miserable Bessus paid the last penalty of his crimes by a most shocking death, inflicted upon him by Sysigambis, to avenge her murdered son.

Alexander was now twenty-six years of age. He was now the undisputed master of all western Asia. His wealth was boundless, his power was supreme, but his character was fearfully demoralized. He lived in the palaces of the Persian kings, and gave himself up to all sorts of vices. He spent his time in drunken debaucheries. The strong sentiment of love and respect with which he had formerly inspired all around him was gone, and conspiracies and treason prevailed. When the suspicions of Alexander were aroused, he put to death some of his most trusted officers.

At last there was a conspiracy, in which Philotas, the son of the faithful Parmenio, was

implicated. Being arrested and put to the torture, Philotas accused his father, in the hopes of saving himself. Though there was no evidence against that trusty general, Alexander caused them both to be put to death.

The death of Parmenio and his son, in this violent manner, raised much unfavorable feeling against Alexander.

Another case exemplifies the wicked deeds of Alexander when under the influence of wine, and puffed up with vain-glorious pride.

One of his oldest and most faithful generals, named Clitus, was present at one of the frequent banquets given by Alexander. That monarch, excited with wine, had been boastfully recounting [106] his own exploits, and had spoken disparagingly of those of his father Philip in comparison. Clitus, also heated with wine, began to praise Philip, under whom he had fought; and then growing bolder, he upbraided Alexander for the death of Parmenio. Alexander, frenzied with wine and rage, seized a javelin, hurled it at Clitus, and struck him down, saying, “Go then, and join Philip and Parmenio.” Alexander, as soon as he came to himself, was overwhelmed with remorse and shame. He could not, however, restore Clitus to life, or remove the disgrace from his own name.

Alexander continued for two or three years his expeditions and conquests in Asia. He penetrated into India as far as the banks of the Indus. But his soldiers refused to go further. He made an address to his army, but he could not change their decision. At last one of his officers said to him:—

“We have done all for you that it was possible for man to do. We have crossed seas and land. We have marched to the end of the world, and you are now meditating the conquest of another, by going in search of new Indias, unknown to the Indians themselves. Such a thought may be worthy of your courage and resolution, but it surpasses ours, and our strength still more. Look at these ghastly faces, and these bodies covered with wounds and scars. Remember how numerous we were when first we set out with you, and see how few of us remain. The few who have escaped so many toils and dangers have neither courage nor strength to follow you any further. They all long to revisit their country and their homes, and to enjoy for the remainder of their lives the fruits of all their toils. Forgive them these desires so natural to man.”

Alexander was bitterly disappointed, but found himself obliged to relinquish further conquest. [107] He returned to Babylon, where his triumphal entrance was a scene of magnificence and gorgeous splendor.

But his life soon evinced the hopeless degradation into which he had fallen. He not only indulged in vice himself, but encouraged others to follow his evil example. He would offer prizes at his banquets to those who would drink the most, thus causing forty deaths at one of his entertainments.

Alexander now entered upon a life of the most effeminate luxury and profligate dissipation. He separated himself more and more from his old Macedonian friends, and delighted in Persian associates. He married Statira, the eldest daughter of Darius, and gave the youngest daughter to his particular friend Hephæstion, who was his chosen companion in all his drunken revels.

Alexander’s habits of intoxication and vice rapidly increased. On one occasion, after he had spent a whole night in drinking and carousing, some of the guests proposed that they should begin a second banquet instead of retiring.

Alexander half intoxicated, agreed. There were twenty present at this new feast. Alexander, to show how much he was able to drink, pledged each one separately, and then all together.

There was a very large cup, called the bowl of Hercules, which he now called for, and having filled it to the brim, he drank it off, and again filled the huge bowl, and again drank the entire contents. His strength soon failed him, and he sank to the floor.

They bore him away to his apartments. A violent fever followed this terrible debauch, which his physicians in vain tried to allay. At last, finding he must die, he drew his signet ring off from his [108] finger; this was the token that he felt all was over. He handed the ring to one of his friends, saying, “When I am gone, take my body to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, and inter it there.”

Being asked to whom he left his kingdom, he replied: “To the most worthy.” Thus died Alexander the Great, at the age of thirty-two.

Preparations were now made to convey his body with royal pomp to its last resting-place, in accordance with his orders.

A very large and magnificent funeral carriage was built. “The spokes of the wheels were overlaid with gold, and the axles were adorned upon the outside with massive golden ornaments. The platform, or floor, of the carriage was eighteen feet long and twelve feet wide. Upon this there was erected a magnificent pavilion, supported by Ionic columns, profusely ornamented, both within and without, with purple and gold. The interior of the pavilion was resplendent with gems and precious stones.

“A throne was raised in the centre of the platform, richly carved and gilded. It was empty; but the crowns of the various nations over which Alexander had ruled were hung upon it. At the foot of the throne was the coffin, made of solid gold, containing the remains of the great conqueror.

The arms of Alexander were placed between the throne and the coffin.

“On the four sides of the carriage were sculptured figures representing Alexander. There were Macedonian soldiers, Persian squadrons, elephants of India, troops of horse, and various other emblems of the departed hero’s conquests, sculptured upon this magnificent funeral carriage. Around the pavilion was a network of golden lace, to which bells were attached, which tolled mournfully as the carriage moved slowly along. Sixty-four mules, selected for their great size, drew this ponderous car. Their harness was mounted with gold and enriched with precious stones.” [109]

Notwithstanding all this gorgeous pomp, the body of Alexander never reached its first destination. Ptolemy, the officer, to whom Egypt was given in the division of Alexander’s empire, came forth to meet this solemn procession, and preferring that the body of Alexander should be buried in the city of Alexandria, it was interred there, and an imposing monument was erected over his grave. This monument is said to have remained standing for fifteen hundred years, though no remains of it are to be found.

The most fitting comment upon the life and character of Alexander the Great will be found in these brief words of Napoleon Bonaparte, who said of Alexander: “He commenced his career with the mind of Trajan, but closed it with the heart of Nero and the morals of Heliogabalus.”

JULIUS CÆSAR.

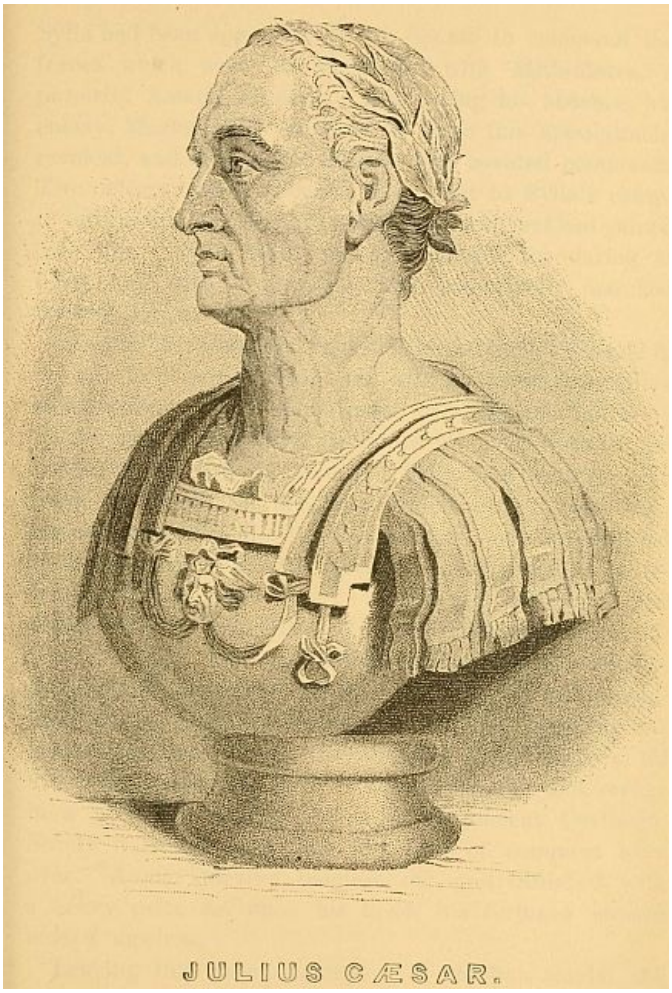
100-44 B.C.

[110]

"The elements
So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, This was a man!"
SHAKESPEARE.

THERE was wild tumult in the ancient city of Rome. The populace thronged the streets, carrying stones and bludgeons. Armed troops hurried hither and thither. The members of the Senate, a sort of House of Lords, were assembled in confusion; and their blanched faces denoted the terror which rendered them powerless to help. Several of the principal citizens had been murdered, and the other Roman lords, or patricians, knew not how soon their doom might come. But who was their terrible foe? Had some wild barbarian horde invaded their land and taken possession of their proud and magnificent city? Why did the nobles and men of rank tremble; and why were the common people roused to this wild outburst of fury?

It was no barbarian enemy, but civil discord amongst themselves, which thus filled the streets with murderers and the patricians with terror. Two powerful rivals were fighting for the possession of the Eternal City, which, at that time, was mistress of the world.



Marius, the plebian, or champion of the common people, had roused the populace to fight against Sylla, the patrician, who had been absent with his army in Italy. Sylla had been appointed by the Senate to command the forces which were to wage war with Mithridates, a powerful Asiatic monarch. But during his absence, his enemy, Marius, had contrived to have this appointment revoked, and to gain for himself this coveted command. Two officers, called tribunes, were sent to Sylla's camp, to inform him of this advantage which his rival had gained over him. Sylla killed the two officers for daring to bring him such a message, and immediately marched towards Rome.

[111]

Marius, in retaliation, caused some of Sylla's friends in the city to be put to death, and with his bands of soldiers endeavored to resist the entrance of Sylla and his army by throwing stones upon the troops from the roofs of the houses as they entered the city. Sylla then ordered every house to be set on fire, from which missiles had been thrown, and thus the helpless citizens were endangered by lawless and infuriated mobs on the one side, and relentless flames on the other. Marius was conquered, and obliged to flee for his life. He was an old man of seventy years of age. The Senate declared him a public enemy, and offered a large sum for his head. Alone and friendless, Marius wandered from place to place, enduring the greatest privations, and encountering many dangers, till at last he crossed the Mediterranean Sea, and took refuge in a poor hut among the ruins of ancient Carthage. Surely it would seem that his days of conquest were over. Alone, starving, helpless, old, and banished, with a heavy price set upon his head, his fortunes seemed indeed hopeless.

Leaving this fallen champion in his hut, amidst the ruins of a past power which could only remind him of his own hopeless prospects, we must return to the city of Rome, and look upon another scene.

[112]

A religious procession is wending its way through the famous Forum. This Forum was a magnificent square, surrounded by splendid edifices and adorned with sculptures and statues and many gorgeous trophies of past victories. There were vast colonnades forming covered porticoes, where the populace assembled and where courts of justice were held. This Forum was constantly embellished with new monuments, temples, statues, arches, and columns by the successful generals, as they returned in triumph from foreign campaigns. Here the various orators delivered their famous orations which inflamed the people to arms, or moved them to wild outbursts of enthusiastic applause in favor of some successful candidate, or calmed their boisterous tumult into silent and breathless attention to the impassioned and eloquent words which fell from the lips of these intellectual monarchs over the minds of their less gifted

countrymen. It is night now in this great public square, and as the procession of priests and attendants slowly pass beneath a row of majestic colonnades and enter one of the temples, we note the face and figure of the foremost one. He is scarcely more than a boy, but he wears the purple robe called *læna*, and a conical mitre known as the *apex*, which mark his distinguished rank as holding the office of *Flamen Dialis*, or High Priest of Jupiter. This youth, seventeen years of age, is tall and fair, and though slender in form, is handsome and noble in bearing. He is descended from patrician families of high rank and proud position; and as he passes within the portal of the sacred temple, the beholder would involuntarily cast upon him an admiring glance, and if a stranger, would surely inquire who was this comely, noble youth who so early in life was distinguished by so high an office and royal bearing.

[113] Again we enter the Forum, but it is now high noon. A noted orator has ascended the pulpit, where public speakers were accustomed to stand when addressing the assemblies. This pulpit was ornamented with brazen beaks of ships, which had been taken by the Romans in their many wars. Such a beak was named a rostrum, and the pulpit so adorned was called the *Rostra*, or the Beaks,—often termed in modern books a rostrum. As the orator of the day began to speak, a youth might have been seen pressing through the crowd, and listening with wrapt attention to the eloquent words which fell from the speaker's lips. As the burst of impassioned appeal became more persuasive, the dark eyes of the youth flashed with responsive fire, and his cheek glowed with a flush of kindling enthusiasm. Though he wears now the robes of a Roman patrician, we recognize him as the same person whom we beheld at midnight entering the temple in the attire of a High Priest of Jupiter.

Again the scene changes to midnight, but it is not in the Roman Forum, but at a grand feast in one of the sumptuous palaces of a Roman lord. Amidst a party of gay and joyous young men, seemingly intent only upon luxurious pleasures, we see once more the face and figure of this same youth who has already so attracted our interest and admiration. Priest, student, devotée of pleasure, little did his companions or acquaintances imagine that this young Julius Cæsar, patrician born, but at the same time personally inclined towards the plebeian party, would become Julius Cæsar, future Master of Rome, and therefore ruler of nearly all of the then known world. This Julius Cæsar became the greatest hero of Roman history, and ranks as one of the three heroes of ancient days,—Alexander of the Greeks, Hannibal of the Carthaginians, and Julius Cæsar of the Romans, forming the famous trio.

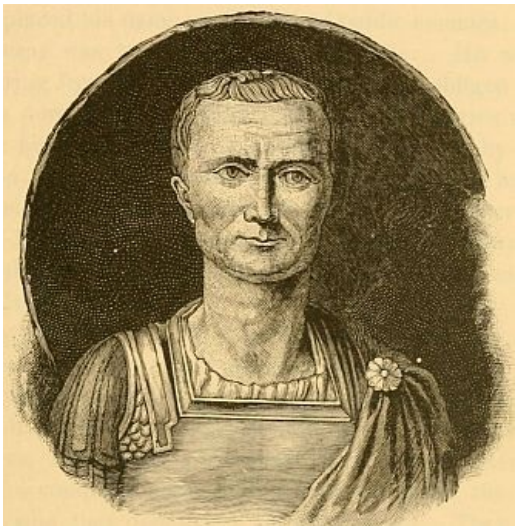
[114] Again we must return to the old exile among the ruins of Carthage. One day he is awakened from his hopeless despondency by wild rumors from Rome. His rival and enemy, Sylla, had equipped a fleet and sailed away to wage war with Mithridates. The friends of Marius now rally again, and the old exile is brought back from Africa in triumph and given the command of a large army. As he pretended to be the friend of the common people, they flocked to his standard. Vast multitudes of revolted slaves, outlaws, and desperadoes joined his forces, which now advanced toward Rome. As soon as Marius gained possession of the city, he began a dreadful work of murder and destruction. He beheaded one of the consuls, and ordered his head to be set up as a spectacle of horror in the public square. Blood ran like a red river in the streets of Rome. Patricians of the highest rank and station were everywhere seized without warning, without trial, and put to torture and death.

It is midnight in the great city, and under cover of the darkness, the evil deeds of blood-thirsty men, fired by hatred and lawless ambition, are renewed with fresh ferocity.

Against his bitterest enemies Marius contrived special modes of execution, in order to wreak upon them his insatiable revenge for his exile, and consequent sufferings and privations.

See! a party of men, composed of soldiers, and an enfuriated mob of people are dragging a lord of noble rank up to the top of a high rock, known as the Tarpeian Rock, from the summit of which state criminals were hurled down the precipice, upon sharp rocks below, where they were left to die in awful torture. This patrician, or Roman noble, had incurred the especial animosity of [115] Marius, and so by his orders, the proud old man is torn from family and friends; and without trial, with the senate powerless to help, he is dragged here at midnight to suffer the ignominious and terrible death of a state criminal. This noted Tarpeian Rock still stands in Rome, and it received its name from this ancient story. In early times there was a Roman girl, named Tarpeia, living in the ancient city, when it was besieged by an army from a neighboring country. The soldiers of the besieging forces wore golden bracelets upon their arms, as well as shields; and upon demanding that Tarpeia should open the gates to them, she declared that if they would give her, "those things they wore upon their arms," she would comply with their demands. She meant, of course, their bracelets; but not knowing the word by which they were designated, she brought upon herself a fearful doom. The soldiers agreed to grant her desire, and so she opened to them the gates. As they passed within, they threw their shields upon the poor girl, in proud derision, instead of giving her the coveted bracelets, exclaiming, "Here are the things we wear upon our arms." Tarpeia was crushed to death beneath the weight of the ponderous shields; and so the spot where she fell became a rock of blood, and was ever afterwards called, in remembrance of her sad fate, the Tarpeian Rock. There is a further legend connected with this spot, for some of the ignorant people believe that in the interior of one of the many caverns, which have been found perforating this rock, Tarpeia still sits, enchanted, covered with gold and jewels. But should any one attempt to find her, he is fated to lose his way, and never to return from his reckless adventure. But the bloody triumph of Marius was of short duration. He was seized with a [116] fatal sickness, and the cruel tyrant was obliged to meet an enemy he could not conquer. Death meted out to him some of the horrible torments he had inflicted upon others, as he died in

delirious ravings, haunted by the presence of phantom foes. His son Marius assumed his father's power; but Sylla, having returned from the Asiatic wars, and in his turn taking possession of the city of Rome, the followers of Marius were put to death with the same ferocity with which they had murdered others, and Sylla even exceeded the bloody deeds which had so brutally been performed by his hated rival. Thus the city of Rome was again plunged into wild confusion, and the scenes of murder and massacre, with all their shocking horrors, were re-enacted.



JULIUS CÆSAR.
(From Photograph of Bust in Capitol, Rome.)

It is at this time that the young Julius Cæsar first becomes a prominent figure in that bloody drama. Although Julius Cæsar was a patrician by birth, he was favorable to the plebian party. The elder Marius had married his aunt, and Cæsar himself had married a daughter of Cinna, who was four times consul, and was a powerful and ardent partisan of the party of Marius. Julius Cæsar, although at this time a very young man, was too prominent a person to be overlooked by Sylla, in his vengeance against the plebian party. The friends of Julius Cæsar tried to plead his youth with Sylla, saying that surely such a mere boy could do no harm. But Sylla had marked the aspiring spirit of the young nobleman, who with all his love of gayety and pleasure had not neglected his studies, and who was already gaining the dangerous reputation of an eloquent orator. Sylla now demanded that Julius Cæsar should divorce his wife Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna. Cæsar absolutely refused, partly from devotion to his wife, and partly from a proud [117] indomitable spirit, which thus early was a prominent trait in his character, and which made him brave any danger rather than allow himself to be controlled. Knowing that punishment for his refusal to comply with the commands of Sylla would be destruction, Cæsar fled from Rome. Sylla deprived him of his rank and titles, confiscated the property of his wife and his own estates, and placed his name on the list of public enemies.

Cæsar was now a fugitive and exile. He was also suffering from intermittent fever, and was obliged to seek some new place of refuge each day, as a price was set upon his head. He was at one time seized by a centurion, but Cæsar offered him a bribe sufficient to secure his release. After various adventures, he wandered into Asia Minor, and coming to the kingdom of Bithynia, he joined himself to the court of the king Nicomedes, and remained some time in that country. After leaving Bithynia, Julius Cæsar, while sailing near the isle of Pharmacusa, was taken prisoner by some pirates from a mountainous country called Cilicia. These Cilician pirates were half sailors and half mountaineers. They built swift galleys, and made excursions over the Mediterranean Sea for conquest and plunder. Cæsar asked the pirates what sum they demanded for his ransom. They replied twenty talents, whereupon Cæsar laughed at such a paltry sum being considered sufficient for his ransom, and told them they evidently did not know who he was. He then declared he would give them fifty talents, and forthwith sent all of his companions and attendants to the shore to go to the cities where he was known, and secure the sum required. Meanwhile he boldly remained among these rough men, with no attendants but a physician and two servants. Cæsar now assumed command over his very captors, giving orders, and demanding [118] quiet when he wished to sleep. He joined them in their sports, and wrote and read orations to them as though he was their ruler. His boldness and skill elicited their profound admiration. The pirates one day asked him what he would do to them if he should ever capture them after obtaining his own release. He replied laughingly that he would crucify them all. This, though a seeming jest, was well fulfilled. His attendants, having returned with the ransom money, Julius Cæsar was released. He proceeded immediately to Miletus, equipped a small fleet, then sailed back to the place where the ships of the pirates still lay at anchor, and having attacked them, he recovered the ransom money, seized their ships, and took all the men prisoners. He carried his captives to the land, and having cut all their throats he hung their dead bodies upon crosses, in fulfilment of his threat.

Julius Cæsar then went to Rhodes, where his former teacher Apollonius, a noted philosopher and rhetorician, resided. Cicero was also one of the pupils of this philosopher. Cæsar at length obtained pardon from Sylla, through the intercession of the vestal virgins and some of his friends. When Sylla at last yielded to their importunity, he exclaimed, "Your suit is granted; but know that this man, for whose safety you are so extremely anxious, will some day or other be the ruin of the party of the nobles, in defence of which you are leagued with me, for in this one Cæsar you will find many a Marius." Sylla had since died, and though the aristocratical party were still in the ascendency, the party of Marius were recovering somewhat from their overthrow.

Julius Cæsar now returned to Rome, and boldly espoused the popular cause. His first public act was the arraignment of Dolabella, governor of the province of Macedonia. When the trial [119] came on Cæsar appeared in the Forum, and gained great applause for his eloquence and daring. Dolabella was defended by noted orators, and was acquitted by the Senate. But Julius Cæsar had displayed his marvellous powers of eloquence, which immediately gave him great renown.

Cæsar now devoted himself to public speaking in the Forum, and acquired much celebrity. He

pronounced a splendid panegyric upon the wife of Marius at her funeral; and also upon his wife Cornelia, who died soon after. Cæsar now became ambitious of securing public offices, and lavished large sums in shows and spectacles to amuse the people and secure their votes. He thus became deeply involved in debt, but he was still successful in rising from one office to still higher positions, until he obtained that of *quæstor* in the province of Spain. This was the second office in command, the first officer being called a *prætor*. During his absence in Spain, Cæsar beheld a statue of Alexander the Great, which adorned one of the public buildings in the city of Cadiz, or Hades, as it was then called. Cæsar was now about thirty-five years of age, and reflecting upon the conquests of Alexander, who had died when only thirty-two years of age, Cæsar sighed over his own tardy accomplishment of his lofty ambitions, and leaving his post, returned to Rome, determined to seek higher honors.

He was chosen *ædile* by the people. He now had charge of the public edifices of the city, and of the games and spectacles which were exhibited in them. The arrangements made by him for the amusement of the people were on the most magnificent and extravagant scale. He exhibited three hundred and twenty pair of gladiators, and he made great additions to the public buildings. [120]
He now endeavored to have Egypt assigned to him as a province; but the senate resisted this plan, and Cæsar was obliged to abandon it. About this time, Cæsar obtained a triumph over the senate, who were very jealous of his increasing power. He replaced the statues and trophies of Marius in the capital, which had been taken down and destroyed by the order of Sylla when he returned to power. In their place, Cæsar had ordered magnificent new ones to be made, and put up secretly in the night. The senate endeavored to take them down again, but the people rallied in such vast numbers, as to prevent the work of destruction, and Cæsar was triumphant.

A dangerous conspiracy, headed by the notorious Catiline, was now discovered, and several conspirators were arrested. It was when the senate was debating whether they should be put to death, that Cæsar made his noted speech which was replied to so hotly by Cato.

Cæsar was by some accused of being cognizant of this plot, if he were not indeed a participant.

After the death of Cornelia, Cæsar had married Pompeia, but he afterwards divorced her. Julius Cæsar now began to plan for a still higher office, and upon the death of Metellus, the chief pontiff, Cæsar solicited the office.

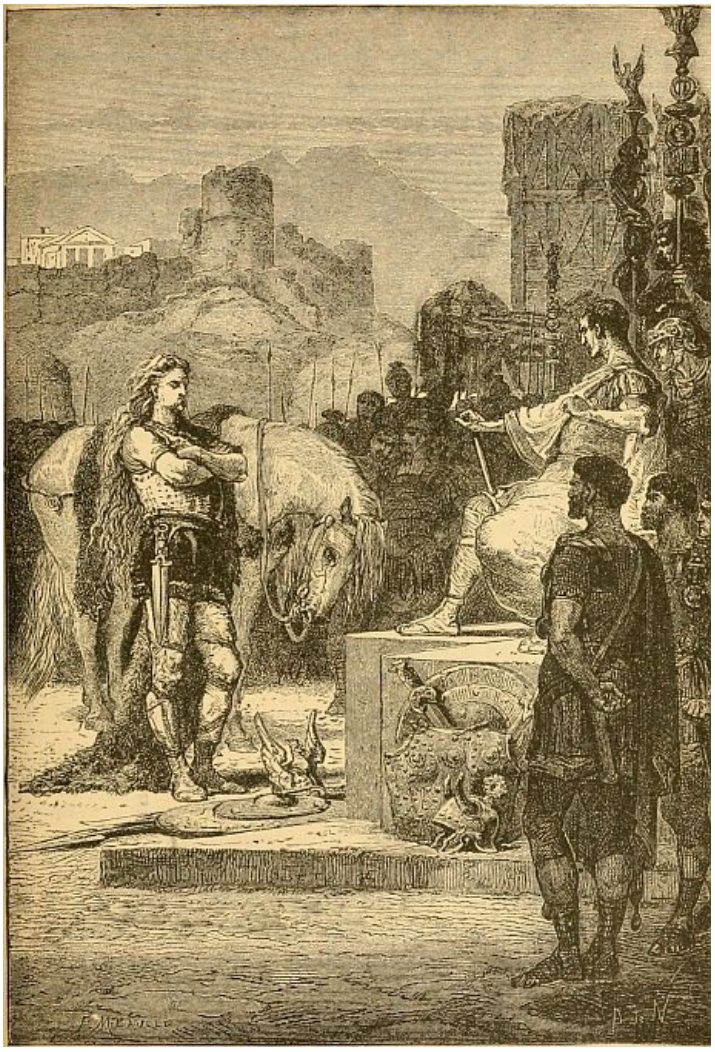
He was now so heavily involved in debt, that he faced ruin if defeated, or glory if elected. When the day of election came, Cæsar parted with his mother, saving,—"You will see me this day either chief pontiff or an exile."

But he succeeded in gaining the election. Having obtained this added power, he desired to procure the position of *prætor* in Spain. This he also secured, but so large were his debts, that Crassus, a man of immense wealth, was, by Cæsar's promises of using his political power in his [121]
behalf, persuaded to lend him the sum needed to satisfy his creditors.

Cæsar was very successful in his province in Spain, and he returned in a short time with military glory, and with money sufficient to pay his debts, and furnish fresh supplies for further bribes to secure still higher positions. He now aspired to the office of consul, which was the highest office in the Roman state.

At this time, Pompey was the military idol of the people, and Crassus, powerful on account of his vast wealth, was Pompey's bitter enemy. Cæsar conceived the plan of reconciling these two dangerous foes, and availing himself of the aid of both to further his own ambitious projects.

Cæsar was successful in this plan, and they then formed a triple league, binding themselves to promote the political elevation of each other. Having secured such powerful adherents, Cæsar now pushed his claims for consulship. He chose a man of great wealth, named Lucceius, to be associated with himself, who agreed to pay all the expenses of the election, for the sake of the honor of being consul with Cæsar. But the political enemies of Cæsar, knowing that they could not defeat his election, determined to place Bibulus, in the place of Lucceius, as the associate of Cæsar. Accordingly they raised as much money to expend for Bibulus as Lucceius should employ. The result was the election of Cæsar and Bibulus as the two consuls. But having entered upon the duties of that office, Cæsar so completely ignored Bibulus, and assumed so entirely the whole control of the consular power, that Bibulus retired to his house in chagrin and mortification, and allowed Cæsar to have his own way. Two consuls were always required by law, and so the wags of the city, in speaking of Cæsar's consulship, instead of saying, "In the year of Cæsar and [122]
Bibulus, consuls," according to the usual form, would often say, "In the year of Julius and Cæsar, consuls," ignoring the name of Bibulus, and taking the two names of Cæsar to denote his supreme rule.



CÆSAR IN GAUL.

Cæsar’s ambition was not yet satisfied. He had secured the highest place in the state, and now he aspired to military glory and foreign conquest. Having obtained the command of an army, he entered upon a campaign in the heart of Europe, which he continued for eight years.

The large tract of country now known as Northern Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, and England, was then spoken of as Gaul. The part on the Italian side of the Alps was called Cisalpine Gaul, and that which lay beyond was termed Transalpine Gaul.

Cæsar now placed himself at the head of an army of three Roman legions, and set out for Gaul. The first battle he fought was with the German king Ariovistus. Cæsar was victorious, and the Germans were put in complete subjection. Other provinces of Gaul now submitted without resistance, and those who determined to league together to resist this new military power were soon brought to submission.

One of the most interesting of the various excursions made by Cæsar during these eight years was his expedition into Great Britain.

When Cæsar arrived on the northern shores of France, he began to inquire of all the travelling merchants whom he met, and who in those days journeyed from one nation to another to buy and sell goods, about the best manner of crossing the channel, and regarding the people on the English side of the water. But the merchants could give him little information, and so he fitted out a galley, manned with many oarsmen, and placing it under the command of an officer, he [123] directed him to cross the channel and discover the best harbors to land on the other side, and then to return and report. This officer was gone five days, and upon his return, Cæsar determined to transport his troops across the channel. Cæsar had collected a large number of sailing vessels upon which he embarked his forces, and upon a given day, at one o’clock in the morning, the fleet set sail.

The Britons had in the meantime learned of Cæsar’s intended invasion, and they collected in vast numbers to guard the shore.

When the Roman fleet approached the land, the cliffs were everywhere lined with troops of Britons, and every available point was well guarded.

Cæsar now proceeded with his fleet along the shore, the Britons following on the land until a level plain was reached. Here Cæsar determined to attempt to disembark. A dreadful struggle ensued. The Britons plunged into the water, and the Romans shot darts and arrows from the decks of the vessels upon the assailants of their comrades, who were endeavoring to make the landing. The Britons were at last driven back, and Cæsar succeeded in obtaining possession of the shore.

These campaigns of Cæsar, in a military point of view, were a succession of magnificent exploits. The people at Rome were unbounded in their enthusiastic praise, and decreed him triumph after triumph, and were prepared to welcome him with high honors when he should return. Plutarch says of these eight years of foreign conquest, that Cæsar took eight hundred cities, conquered three hundred nations, fought pitched battles, at separate times, with three millions of men, took one million of them prisoners, and killed another million on the field.

[124]

THE LANDING OF JULIUS CÆSAR IN BRITAIN.

From a humane standpoint, however, what a fearful destruction of human lives, to satisfy the insatiable ambition of one man. How much more desirable would have been the fame of blessing, rather than destroying and injuring three millions of his fellow men. The time was now drawing near for Cæsar's return to Rome. During his absence a dangerous rival had become the idol of the fickle people. After the death of Pompey's wife Julia, who was the daughter of Julius Cæsar, the former alliance between these two powerful rivals had been broken, and they were now open foes. While Cæsar was absent in Gaul, he had not neglected to endeavor to retain his hold upon the populace of Rome. He had distributed vast sums for the adornment of the city. He expended over four million dollars in purchasing ground for the enlargement of the Forum; and when he heard of the death of his daughter Julia, the wife of Pompey, he ordered her funeral to be celebrated with gorgeous splendor. He distributed corn in immense quantities among the people, and sent home many captives to be trained as gladiators to amuse the populace in the theatres. Men were astounded at the magnitude of these vast expenditures; but Pompey was, nevertheless, fast securing the heart of the people. Pompey, in his vanity, imagined that he was so far above Cæsar that he need feel no solicitude at the return of his rival, and therefore took no precautions to resist any hostile designs. Cæsar had now advanced toward the Rubicon, which was a little stream that formed the boundary line between the north of Italy, which was a Roman province called Hither Gaul, and the immediate jurisdiction of the city of Rome.

Generals commanding in Gaul were never allowed to pass this river with an army. Hence, to cross the Rubicon with an armed force, was rebellion and treason. When Cæsar arrived at the [125] farther shore of this small but significant stream, he halted at a small town called Ravenna, and established his headquarters there. Pompey now sent to him to demand the return of a legion he had lent him when they were friends. Cæsar returned the legion immediately, adding some of his own troops to show his indifference to the size of his own force.

In the meantime, the partisans of Cæsar and Pompey in the city of Rome, grew more threatening in their struggles. The friends of Cæsar demanded that he should be elected consul. The friends of Pompey replied that Cæsar must first resign the command of his army, and come to Rome and present himself as a candidate in the character of a private citizen, as the constitution of the state required. Cæsar replied that if Pompey would lay down his arms, he would also do so; but otherwise, it was unjust to require it of him. This privilege he demanded as a recompense for the services he had rendered to the state. A large part of the people sided with Cæsar; but the partisans of Pompey, with the inflexible Cato at their head, withstood the demand. The city was much excited over the impending conflict. Pompey displayed no fear, and urged the Senate to resist all of Cæsar's claims, saying, that if Cæsar should presumptuously dare to march with his forces to Rome, he could raise troops enough to subdue him by merely stamping on the ground. Cæsar meanwhile had been quietly making his preparations at Ravenna. It was his policy to move as privately as possible. Accordingly, he sent some cohorts to march secretly to the banks of the river, and encamp there, while he employed himself in his usual occupation. He had established a fencing school, and on the very eve of his departure he went as usual to this school, [126] then feasted with his friends, going afterwards with them to a public entertainment. As soon as it

was dark enough, and the streets were deserted, he stole away with a few attendants. During the night, Cæsar and his guides found themselves lost, and they wandered about until nearly break of day, when a peasant guided them to the shore, where he found his troops awaiting him. Having arrived at the banks of the stream, Cæsar stood for some moments musing upon the step he was about to take. If he crossed that narrow stream retreat would be impossible. The story is told that a shepherd coming up took the trumpet from one of Cæsar's trumpeters, and sounded a charge, marching rapidly over the bridge at the same time. "An omen! a prodigy!" exclaimed Cæsar. "Let us march where we are called by such a divine intimation—*The die is cast!*"

As soon as the bridge was crossed, Cæsar called an assembly of his troops, and made an eloquent appeal to them, urging them to stand faithful to him, and promising them large rewards should he be successful. The soldiers responded with enthusiastic applause. As Cæsar advanced towards Rome, several towns surrendered to him without resistance. He met with but one opposition. The Senate had deposed Cæsar from his command during the hot debates preceding his crossing of the Rubicon, and had appointed Domitius to succeed him. That general had crossed the Apennines at the head of an army, and had reached the town of Corfinium. Cæsar advanced and besieged him there. The town was soon captured; and Cæsar, to the surprise of everyone, who supposed he would wreak vengeance upon his foes, received the troops into his own service, and let Domitius go free. News had now reached the city of Rome, of Cæsar's [127] crossing the Rubicon, and rapid advance. The Senate were terribly alarmed, and looked to Pompey in vain for help. Pompey himself was terrified, but could do nothing; and the Senate then derisively called upon him to raise the promised army of which he had boasted, telling him they thought it was high time to stamp with his feet, as he declared that by so doing he could secure a force large enough to defeat Cæsar. Cato and many of the prominent men fled from the city.

Pompey, calling upon all his partisans to follow him, set forth at night to retreat across the country towards the Adriatic Sea.

Cæsar was rapidly advancing toward Rome. As all supplies of money were cut off by his crossing the Rubicon, which severed his connection with the government, his soldiers voted to serve him without pay. His treatment of Domitius was much applauded by the people. He himself says, in a letter written to a friend at the time, "I am glad that you approve of my conduct at Corfinium. I am satisfied that such a course is the best one for us to pursue, as by so doing we shall gain the good will of all parties, and thus secure a permanent victory. Most conquerors have incurred the hatred of mankind by their cruelties, and have all, in consequence of the enmity they have thus awakened, been prevented from long enjoying their power. Sylla was an exception, but his example of successful cruelty I have no disposition to imitate. I will conquer after a new fashion, and fortify myself in the possession of the power I acquire by generosity and mercy."

Cæsar now pursued Pompey to Brundusium, whither Pompey had retreated. Cæsar laid siege to the city, but Pompey secretly made preparations for embarking his troops. He caused all the [128] streets to be barricaded, except two, which led to the landing, and in the darkness of the night, he began embarking his forces as fast as possible on board of transports already provided. Cæsar was made aware of this fact, and his army quickly brought ladders and scaled the walls of the city, but the barricaded streets so impeded their progress through the darkness of the night, that Pompey and his troops succeeded in sailing away. As Cæsar had no ships, he continued his march to Rome, and entering the city without opposition, re-established the government and took control. After various subsequent campaigns in Italy, Spain, Sicily, and Gaul, which resulted in completely subjugating these nations to his dominion, he commenced the pursuit of Pompey, across the Adriatic Sea.

As Pompey had cleared the seas of every vessel which could aid him in his flight, Cæsar had great difficulty in procuring even a sufficient number of galleys to transport a part of his army, and embarking with these he landed on the opposite shore, and sent back the galleys for the remainder of his forces, while he pursued Pompey with the troops already with him. Some of Pompey's generals intercepted a part of Cæsar's galleys, and destroyed them; the sea also, becoming very boisterous, the troops were afraid to embark, not being stimulated to courage by the presence and voice of Cæsar. Julius Cæsar still pursued Pompey, who constantly retreated; and the winter wore away with no decided battle, and leaving both armies in a suffering condition. At last, one stormy night, Cæsar determined to embark upon a galley and return to the Italian side, and bring the remainder of his army over. Cæsar disguised himself in a long cloak, with his head muffled in his mantle, and thus got aboard the galley and ordered the men to row [129] him across. A violent wind arose, and the waves were so high that at last the rowers declared they could go no further; Cæsar then came forward, threw off his mantle, and exclaimed: "Friends, you have nothing to fear; you are carrying Cæsar!" Thus inspired the men put forth herculean efforts, but all to no purpose, and Cæsar was obliged, reluctantly, to turn back. His army on the Italian shore, however, hearing of this brave deed were inspired with new courage, and making another attempt, they were successful in joining Cæsar, who, thus strengthened, planned for a vigorous attack in the spring. A parley had been held several times between the hostile hosts, but to no effect; and many skirmishes and partial conflicts took place, but no decided battle. At one time, Pompey's troops so hemmed in the army of Cæsar that his forces suffered for want of food, but his soldiers bravely made use of a sort of root which they dug from the ground, and made into a kind of bread, telling Cæsar they would live upon the bark of trees rather than abandon his cause. At length the army of Pompey was in turn hemmed in by Cæsar's forces, and becoming very desperate, on account of the distress occasioned by want of food and water, Pompey made some successful attacks upon Cæsar's lines, and broke away from his

enemy's grasp.

At last, however, they came to open battle on the plain of Pharsalia. As Pompey's forces far outnumbered those of Cæsar he felt confident of victory. "The hour at length arrived; the charge was sounded by the trumpets, and Cæsar's troops began to advance with loud shouts and great impetuosity toward Pompey's lines. There was a long and terrible struggle, but the forces of Pompey began finally to give way. Notwithstanding the precautions which Pompey had taken to [130] guard and protect the wing of his army which was extended toward the land, Cæsar succeeded in turning his flank upon that side by driving off the cavalry, and destroying the archers and slingers; and he was thus enabled to throw a strong force upon Pompey's rear. The flight then soon became general, and a scene of dreadful confusion and slaughter ensued. The soldiers of Cæsar's army, maddened with the insane rage which the progress of a battle never fails to awaken, and now excited to frenzy by the exultation of success, pressed on after the affrighted fugitives, who trampled one upon another or fell pierced with the weapons of their assailants, filling the air with their cries of agony and their shrieks of terror."

When Pompey perceived that all was lost he fled from the field, and having disguised himself as a common soldier, he retreated with a few attendants until he reached the Vale of Tempe in Thessaly. Here, in this picturesque spot, noted for its beautiful scenery, the fallen Pompey took his weary way. Having at length reached the Ægean Sea, he took refuge in a fisherman's hut; hearing still of Cæsar's pursuit he did not dare to rest, but embarked the next morning in a little vessel, with three attendants. He was afterwards taken up by the commander of a merchant ship, and was at length conveyed to the island of Lesbos, where his wife, Cornelia, was residing; Pompey had married her after the death of Julia, Cæsar's daughter. Cornelia now provided a small fleet, and, determining to accompany her husband, they set sail upon the Mediterranean Sea. At last Pompey decided to seek refuge in Egypt. Some years before Pompey had been the means of restoring a king of Egypt to his throne; this king had since died, but had left his [131] daughter, the famous Cleopatra, on the throne, to rule, conjointly, with a younger brother, named Ptolemy. At this time, the Egyptian ministers, who acted for the young prince, who was not old enough to be invested with the royal power, had dethroned Cleopatra that they might thus govern alone.

Cleopatra went into Syria to raise an army to recover her lost throne, and Ptolemy's ministers had gone forth to battle with her. It was then that Pompey arrived in Egypt, and thinking that the young prince Ptolemy would receive him on account of the services Pompey had rendered to the Egyptian king, father of Ptolemy, Pompey and Cornelia, with their little fleet, approached the shore intending to land. A messenger was sent to the young king to solicit a kind reception. The Egyptian ministers of Ptolemy persuaded him that it would be dangerous either to grant or refuse Pompey's request, and therefore, counselled that he might be invited to their camp, and then that he should be killed; this would please Cæsar, who was now so powerful, and it would put Pompey out of their way. This ungrateful counsel prevailed, and an Egyptian was appointed to perform the bloody deed. A courteous invitation was sent to Pompey to land, who, however, parted with his wife, Cornelia, with many forebodings of evil. As the boat of the Egyptians reached Pompey's galley the officers hailed him with every mark of respect; bidding Cornelia farewell, Pompey, with two centurions, stepped into the Egyptian boat and was rowed to the shore. Just as he was about to step from the boat the assassins drew their swords, and Pompey was slain before the very eyes of his wife, who beheld the bloody scene from the deck of her galley, and her piercing shriek was wafted to the ears of her dying husband. The Egyptians then cut off the head of Pompey, leaving [132] the headless body lying upon the shore. The two centurions who had accompanied Pompey, afterwards burned the body, and sent the ashes to the heartbroken Cornelia.

Cæsar, in pursuit of Pompey, soon after reached Alexandria, where he learned of his death; and the Egyptians, hoping to please him, presented to him the bloody head of his late enemy. But though Cæsar was very ambitious, he was not blood-thirsty, nor brutal in his wars. Instead of being pleased with such a ghastly gift, Cæsar turned from the shocking spectacle in horror. While Cæsar was in Alexandria many of Pompey's officers came and surrendered themselves to him; and Cæsar, finding himself so powerful, determined to use his authority as Roman consul, to settle the dispute between Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy. It was at this time that Cleopatra, in order to plead her cause, was brought by her commands to Cæsar's quarters, rolled up in a bale of carpeting, and carried upon the shoulders of a slave. As all the avenues of approach to Cæsar's apartments were in the possession of her enemies she feared falling into their hands. Cæsar espoused her cause, and determined that she and her brother Ptolemy should reign jointly. Ptolemy was so incensed against his sister, for thus securing Cæsar's allegiance, that a violent war was waged between the Egyptians and Cæsar. This is called in history the Alexandrine War. In the course of this contest Cæsar took possession of the famous lighthouse of Pharos, one of the Seven Wonders of the world. During the progress of this war a great disaster occurred, which was the burning of the famous Alexandrian library. The number of volumes, or rolls of parchment there collected, was said to have been seven hundred thousand. When we remember that the people in those days possessed no printed books, and that each one of these [133] rolls had been written by hand, with immense labor, and at vast expense, the loss to the world of works which could never be reproduced was irreparable. Cæsar was victorious in this war. The young king Ptolemy was defeated, and in attempting to retreat across one of the branches of the Nile he was drowned. Cæsar finally settled Cleopatra and a younger brother upon the throne of Egypt and returned to Rome. While Cæsar was in Egypt three great powers had arisen against him, in Asia Minor, in Africa, and in Spain.

He first went to Asia Minor and so quickly defeated his enemies there, that it was in reference to this battle that he wrote the famous inscription for his banner, which appeared in his triumphal procession, "*Veni, Vidi, Vici*," I came, I saw, I conquered. Cæsar then proceeded to Africa, where his old enemy Cato had raised a large force against him. Cæsar was successful also in this contest, and finally shut up Cato in the city of Utica. Cato, finding defence hopeless, killed himself.

From Africa, Cæsar returned to Rome for a short time, and then went to Spain to put down the rebellion there which was led by the sons of Pompey. Here also he was successful, and the conqueror returned to Rome the undisputed master of the whole Roman world. Then came his magnificent triumphs. Cæsar celebrated four triumphs for his four great campaigns, in Egypt, in Asia Minor, in Africa, and in Spain. These were celebrated upon separate days. These triumphs were gorgeous in the extreme. Forty elephants were employed as torch-bearers in one triumph which took place at night, each elephant holding a great blazing flambeau in his proboscis and waving it proudly in the air. These triumphal processions are thus described by one historian. "In [134] these triumphal processions everything was borne in exhibition which could serve as a symbol of the conquered country or a trophy of victory. Flags and banners, taken from the enemy; vessels of gold and silver and other treasures loaded in vans; wretched captives conveyed in open carriages, or marching sorrowfully on foot, and destined, some of them, to public execution when the ceremony of the triumph was ended; displays of arms and implements and dresses and all else which might serve to give the Roman crowd an idea of the customs and usages of the remote and conquered nations; the animals they used caparisoned in the manner in which they used them; these and a thousand other trophies and emblems were brought into the line to excite the admiration of the crowd, and to add to the gorgeousness of the spectacle. In these triumphs of Cæsar a young sister of Cleopatra, wearing chains of gold, was in the line of the Egyptian procession. In that devoted to Asia Minor was a great banner containing the words already referred to, Veni, Vidi, Vici. There were great paintings, too, borne aloft, representing battles and other striking scenes. Of course, all Rome was in the highest state of excitement during the days of the exhibition of this pageantry.

"The whole surrounding country flocked to the capital to witness it, and Cæsar's greatness and glory were signalized in the most conspicuous manner to all the world. After these triumphs, a series of splendid public entertainments were given, over twenty thousand tables having been spread for the populace of the city. Shows of every character and variety were exhibited. There were dramatic plays and equestrian performances in the circus, and gladiatorial combats, and battles with wild beasts, and dances and chariot races and every other amusement which could [135] be devised to gratify a population highly cultivated in all the arts of life, but barbarous and cruel in heart and character. Some of the accounts which have come down to us of the magnificence of the scale on which these entertainments were conducted are absolutely incredible. It is said that an immense basin was constructed near the Tiber, large enough to contain two fleets of galleys, which had on board two thousand rowers each and one thousand fighting men. These fleets were then manned with captives,—the one with Asiatics, and the other with Egyptians,—and when all was ready, they were compelled to fight a real battle for the amusement of the spectators who thronged the shores, until vast numbers were killed, and the waters of the lake were dyed with blood. It is also said that the entire Forum and some of the great streets in the neighborhood, where the principal gladiatorial shows were held, were covered with silken awnings to protect the vast crowds of spectators from the sun, and thousands of tents were erected to accommodate the people from the surrounding country, whom the buildings of the city could not contain."

All open opposition to Cæsar's power was now put down. The Senate vied with the people to do him honor. He was first made consul for ten years, and then perpetual dictator. They conferred upon him the title of "The Father of his Country." Cæsar now began to form plans for immense improvements which should benefit his empire. He completed the regulation of the calendar. "The system of months in use in his day corresponded so imperfectly with the annual circuit of the sun, that the months were moving continually along the year in such a manner that the winter months came at length in the summer, and the summer months in the winter. This led [136] to great practical inconveniences. For whenever, for example, anything was required by law to be done in certain months, intending to have them done in the summer, and the specified month came at length to be a winter month, the law would require the thing to be done in exactly the wrong season. Cæsar remedied all this by adopting a new system of months which should give three hundred and sixty-five days to the year for three years, and three hundred and sixty-six for the fourth; and so exact was the system which he thus introduced that it went on unchanged for sixteen centuries. The months were then found to be eleven days out of the way, and a new correction was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII., and it will now go on three thousand years before the error will amount to a single day. Cæsar employed a Greek astronomer to arrange the system he adopted, and for this improvement one of the months was called July, after Julius Cæsar. Its former name was Quintilis."

Cæsar commenced the collection of vast libraries; formed plans for draining the Pontine Marshes, and for bringing great supplies of water into the city by an aqueduct; and he intended to cut a new passage for the Tiber from Rome to the sea. He also planned a road along the Apennines, and a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, and intended to construct other vast works which should make Rome the wonder of the world.

But in the midst of all these grand projects he was suddenly stricken down. Although the Romans disliked the thought of being ruled by a king, they preserved certain statues of their

kings in some of the public buildings, and the ambition of Cæsar led him very foolishly to place his own statue among them. He also had a seat prepared for himself in the Senate in the form of [137] a throne. On one occasion, when the members of the Senate were to come to him in a temple to announce certain decrees they had passed to his honor, Cæsar received them sitting upon a magnificent chair, which seemed a throne, so gorgeous was it; and he did not even rise to welcome them, as was the usual custom, thus showing that he would receive them as a monarch, who never rises in the presence of inferiors. This incident, small as it may seem, aroused much indignation. His statue was also found adorned with a laurel crown, to which was fastened a white fillet, which was an emblem of royalty. On another occasion, at a public entertainment, an officer placed a diadem upon the head of Cæsar, who pretended to be disinclined to receive it, and taking it off, it was offered twice again, and refused, when Cæsar sent the diadem to a temple near by as an offering to Jupiter. Although he thus appeared to reject the honor, his manner indicated that he only desired to be more warmly pressed to receive it. There was now formed a strong conspiracy against Cæsar, headed by Cassius, who had for a long time been Cæsar's enemy. Cassius at last succeeded in persuading Marcus Brutus to join him. The plan was then divulged to such men as the conspirators thought most necessary to the success of their plot. It was agreed that Cæsar must be slain. They at length decided that the Roman Senate was the proper place. As it had been rumored that Cæsar's friends were about to attempt to crown him as a king on the Ides of March, that day was chosen by the conspirators as a fitting one on which Julius Cæsar should meet his doom. Cæsar received many warnings of his approaching fate, and the soothsayers reported many strange omens which betokened some portentous event. [138] One of these soothsayers informed Cæsar that he had been warned, by certain signs at a public sacrifice, that some terrible danger threatened his life on the Ides of March; and he besought him to be cautious until that day should have passed. The Senate were to meet on the Ides of March in a new and magnificent edifice, which had been erected by Pompey. In this Senate Chamber was a statue of Pompey. The day before the Ides of March, some birds of prey from a neighboring grove came flying into this hall, pursuing a little wren which had a sprig of laurel in its beak. The birds tore the poor wren to pieces, and the laurel fell from its bill to the marble pavement below. As Cæsar had been crowned with laurel after his victories, and always wore a wreath of laurel on public occasions, this event was thought to portend some evil to him. The night before the Ides of March, both Cæsar and his wife Calpurnia awoke from terrible dreams. Cæsar dreamed that he ascended into the skies and was received by Jupiter, and Calpurnia, awakening with a wild shriek, declared that she had dreamed that the roof of the house had fallen in, and that her husband had been stabbed by an assassin. When morning came, Calpurnia endeavored to persuade Cæsar not to go to the Senate, and he had consented to comply with her wish, until one of the conspirators, who had been appointed to accompany Cæsar to the Senate, came to the house of Julius Cæsar, and by his declarations that the people were waiting to confer upon their dictator the title of king throughout all the Roman dominions excepting Italy alone, he at length persuaded Cæsar to go with him. On the way to the Senate, a Greek teacher, having learned something of the plot, wrote a statement of it, and as Cæsar passed him he gave it to him, saying, "Read this immediately; it concerns yourself, and is of the utmost importance." Cæsar made the [139] attempt to do so, but the crowd of people who pressed towards him and handed him various petitions, as was the usual custom when a state officer appeared in public, prevented Cæsar from thus learning of the dreadful fate awaiting him. There was one warm friend of Cæsar, named Marc Antony, whom the conspirators feared might interfere with the successful completion of their plot, and so it was arranged that one of their number should engage the attention of Antony, while the petitioner chosen should advance and make his appeal to Cæsar, which should be the signal for the bloody deed. This conspirator made a pretence of asking Cæsar for the pardon of his brother, which request, as they had expected, Cæsar declined to grant. This occasioned an outburst of pretended fury, under cover of which the conspirators rushed upon Cæsar and stabbed him with their swords. Cæsar at first attempted to defend himself, but as Brutus, his former friend, also plunged his dagger into his side, he exclaimed, "And you, too, Brutus?" and drawing his mantle over his face, he fell at the feet of Pompey's statue and expired. Now again the city of Rome was in wild tumult.

The conspirators marched boldly through the streets with their bloody swords. They boasted of their shocking deed, and announced that they had delivered their country from a tyrant. The people, stunned by the daring of this terrible act, knew not what to think or do. Some barricaded their houses in fear; others hurried through the streets with blanched faces; and still others excitedly seized any kind of weapon near at hand, and joined a mob, which threatened to break out in awful violence, to avenge the death of Cæsar, their idol.

During all this time the body of Cæsar lay unheeded at the foot of Pompey's statue, pierced [140] with twenty-three wounds, made by the hands of men he thought were his friends. Three slaves were his only guardians; and at last they lifted the poor bruised, bleeding, and ghastly corpse, and carried it home to the distracted Calpurnia. The next day, Brutus and the other conspirators called the people together in the Forum, and there addressed them, endeavoring to persuade them that the deed had been committed only in the interests of the people, to rid them of a tyrant. But the subsequent famous funeral speech of Marc Antony, roused the people to such a wild frenzy of revenge, that the conspirators were only saved from death with great difficulty by the intervention of the Senate.

The Field of Mars had been chosen as the place for the funeral pile; but after the speech of Marc Antony in the Forum, where the body of Cæsar had been placed on a gilded bed covered with scarlet and cloth of gold, under a gorgeous canopy made in the form of a temple, the people in their wild outbursts of love for Cæsar, as they had then learned from his will, which Antony

read aloud to them, of his munificent bequests to the Roman citizens, became ungovernable in their desires to do him reverence. As a crier, by Antony's order, read the decrees of the Senate, in which all honors, human and divine, had been been ascribed to Cæsar, the gilded bed upon which he lay was lifted and borne out into the centre of the Forum; and two men, having forced their way through the crowd, with lighted torches set fire to the bed on which the body of Cæsar lay, and the multitudes with shouts of enthusiastic applause, seized everything within reach and placed them upon the funeral pile. The soldiers then threw on their lances and spears; musicians [141] cast their instruments into the increasing flames; women tore off their jewels to add to the gorgeous pile, and all vied with each other to contribute something to enlarge the blazing funeral pile. So fierce were the flames that they spread to some of the neighboring buildings, and a terrible conflagration which would have given Cæsar the most majestic funeral pile in the annals of the world, for it would have been the blazing light from the burning city of Rome itself, was only prevented by the most strenuous efforts.

Some time after, Octavius Cæsar, the successor of Julius Cæsar, and Marc Antony, waged war with Cassius and Brutus; and at the battle of Philippi, where Cassius and Brutus were defeated, and while they were fleeing from the field, hopeless of further defence, they both killed themselves with their own swords.

Cæsar died at the age of fifty-six. The Roman people erected a column to his memory, on which they placed the inscription, "To the Father of His Country." A figure of a star was placed upon the summit of this memorial shaft, and some time afterwards, while the people were celebrating some games in honor of Cæsar's memory, a great comet blazed for seven nights in the sky, which they declared to be a sign that the soul of Cæsar was admitted among the gods.

CHARLEMAGNE.
742-814 A.D.

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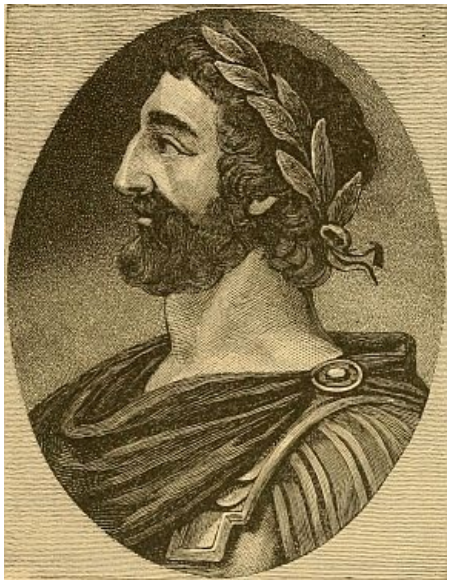
"To whom God will, there be the victory."
SHAKESPEARE.

THERE was great terror and dismay among the inhabitants of the city of Paris, called in those early days, Lutetia.

The Gauls, who dwelt in that part of the country, were now menaced by a foe even more terrible than the Roman soldiers led by the famous Julius Cæsar, who had invaded their land about 500 years before, and made their country a Roman province.



CHARLEMAGNE.
(From Early Engraving.)

[143]

But now a fearful war-cry rings through the air; and as the frightened Gauls hastily arm themselves for resistance, a horde of Teutonic giants, with light complexions, long yellow hair waving in the wind, and eyes so bright and cat-like that they fairly shone with a green glare of animal-like ferocity, which was heightened by their clothing made of the skins of the bear, the boar, and the wolf, making them look in the distance like a herd of wild beasts, came rushing like an avalanche of destruction over the peaceful homes of the Gauls. These hordes advanced in a mighty wedge-like phalanx, formed of their bravest warriors, each man carrying in his right hand a long lance, and in the left a buckler, or skin-covered shield, while his girdle held a sharp two-edged axe, which became, with dexterous handling, a most dangerous weapon, and was hurled from a distance with marvellous aim. With mounted warriors protecting the wings of this invincible phalanx, on came this fierce, wild tribe, charging to battle with a terrible war-whoop, which they made more shrill by placing the edge of the buckler to the mouth.

In vain the Gauls looked to Rome for help. There was too much trouble in Italy for the Roman government to help any one. So these giant Franks came rushing unchecked on to Paris, while the frightened Gauls were powerless to resist them. The leader of this horde was called Hilperik, the son of Meerwig; and having taken possession of Paris, and several surrounding provinces, he founded the kingdom afterwards called France, from this tribe who were called Franks.

The story of kings is too often a story of blood and cruelty, and the kingdom which the great Charlemagne inherited had been the scene of fearful and continual conflicts.

The Goths, one of the fierce German nations, had conquered a large part of Gaul after it had become a Roman province, and in the year 451, the Huns, a more terrible nation still, whose chief was the famous Attila, who called himself the "Scourge of God," invaded Gaul with his army,—horrible looking men, whose faces had been gashed by their savage parents in their infancy, that they might look more dreadful. The poor Gauls thought rightly, that it was more fearful to fall into their hands than into those of the Franks; but the Huns came no further than Orleans, where an army, composed of Gauls, Franks, Goths, Burgundians, all under the Roman general Ætius, attacked the Huns at Châlons-sur-Marne, beat them, and drove them back. Châlons was the last victory in Gaul, won under the Roman banners, and now the poor Gauls were obliged to meet their enemies alone. The chief tribes of those warlike races, who swarmed over Europe, both north and south, were the Goths who conquered Rome, and settled in Spain; [144] the Longbeards or Lombards, who spread over the north of Italy; the Burgundians, or town-livers, who held all the country around the Alps; the Swabians and Germans, who stayed in the middle of Europe; the Saxons, who dwelt south of the Baltic, and finally conquered South Britain; the Northmen, who found a home in Scandinavia; and the Franks, who had been long settled on the rivers Sale, Meuse, and Rhine. Their name meant freemen, and they were noted for using an axe, called after them. Of the Franks there were two noted tribes,—the Salian, from the river Sale, and the Ripuarian. They were great horsemen, and the Salians had a family of kings, who were supposed to have descended from one of their warlike gods, called Odin. Although the Franks were a ferocious and sometimes cruel race, they were in some respects superior to the other barbaric tribes, and were liked better by the Gauls than any other of those various nations.

THE HUNS AT CHÂLONS.

After Cæsar's conquest many of the Romans had remained in Gaul, and had built and conquered cities, and lived under Roman laws. They taught the Gauls to speak Latin, and organized many schools and colleges among them. The Gauls adopted the Roman dress and religion. The religion of the ancient Gauls had been taught to the people by priests, called Druids. Druidism was a confusion of mingled ideas of Oriental dreams and traditions, borrowed from the mythologies of the East and the North; and although it was degraded by barbaric practices such as human sacrifices in honor of the gods or of the dead, it possessed one germ of truth, for the Druids believed in the immortality of the soul. Their priests were old and wise men, who had studied often for twenty years before they were considered wise enough to become "Men of the [145] Oak," as the chief Druids were called. They made laws for the people and settled questions of dispute. Once every year the Druids went out to look for the mistletoe, which they considered a sacred plant. When a mistletoe was found growing upon an oak, the people came from all parts of the country and stood around the tree. Then a Druid, clothed in white, climbed up the oak-tree, and cut off the sacred mistletoe with a golden sickle, and the much prized plant was caught by the other Druids below, in a white cloth, and was carried away to be preserved as a great treasure.

But the Gauls living in those provinces conquered by the Romans, had given up their old Druidical religion, and adopted that of their conquerors, which was no improvement, for it was also a paganism, and was such a mass of superstition and idolatry, derived from Grecian mythology and old traditions, that it did not even possess the vital force of the Druidical belief. For the Druids worshipped, as they thought, living deities, while the Græco-Roman paganism was a dead religion, with only dead gods, buried beneath their still standing altars. Such were the superstitions and false religions with which the Christians of the early centuries had to contend in laboring to convert the then known world to the worship of the one true and living God and His Son Jesus Christ, who had already lived his holy life upon this earth, and given himself a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. Already the disciples of Christ had founded Christian churches in Asia Minor and Palestine, and many of them had died as martyrs for the faith. St. Paul had preached at Athens and at Rome, and having finished his glorious work he had received his crown of martyrdom. And all down these early centuries teachers had been sent out by the [146] Christian churches, to endeavor to convert the heathen world around to a belief in the one true and only religion which could secure the salvation of the immortal soul. The Roman emperors had all persecuted the Christians and sought to uphold paganism. But when B.C. 312, the Emperor Constantine declared himself a Christian, "paganism fell, and Christianity mounted the throne." Previous to the conquest of Gaul by the Franks, the Gauls had adopted Christianity, and when Hilperik, king of the Franks, conquered Paris and the surrounding country, and at his death left this kingdom to his son, named Hlodwig, or Clovis, there were many Christians and churches and monasteries in Gaul. Clovis conquered many of the surrounding provinces, and at last became the

ruler of nearly the whole of Gaul. Clovis had married a Burgundian maiden, named Clothilda, and as she was a Christian he allowed her to worship God in the Christian churches. But in the great battle of Tolbiacum, which Clovis fought with the Germans, when it seemed as though the Franks would be defeated, Clovis took an oath that if the God of his wife would give him the victory he would become a Christian. The Franks were victorious, and Clovis was baptized with all his chief warriors.

“THRUST HIM AWAY, OR THOU DIEST IN HIS STEAD.”

When Clovis died, he left four sons, among whom he divided his kingdom. One was the king of Paris; another, king of Orleans; a third, king of Soissons; and the fourth, who reigned over that part of Gaul nearest Germany and the Rhine, was called king of Metz. In a battle with the Burgundians, the king of Orleans, Clodomir, was killed, leaving three young sons who were placed in the care of their grandmother Clothilda. At length the kings of Paris [147] and Soissons became jealous of these children of their elder brother Clodomir, and sent for the children, under pretence of placing them upon the throne of their father. But as soon as they had them in their cruel power, they sent a pair of scissors and a sword to Clothilda, with a message, saying: “We wait thy wishes as to the three children; shall they be slain or shorn?” meaning, shall they be killed or shut up in monasteries? Clothilda, in despair, cried out: “Slain, rather than shorn!” and the messengers, not waiting to hear her further words, returned to the cruel kings, and announced that they had secured the consent of Clothilda for the shocking deed. The wicked kings then hastily entered the room where the three helpless boys were imprisoned, and having slain the eldest, the second one clung to the knees of his uncle Childebert, king of Paris, who was for a moment moved with pity, and asked his brother Clotaire to spare the boy. But the wicked Clotaire, king of Soissons, exclaimed in wrath, “Thrust him away or thou diest in his stead!” Whereupon, Childebert tried no more to save him, and Clotaire seized the poor boy, who was now shrieking with terror, and plunged a hunting-knife into his side, as he had his brother’s, and slew him. These murdered children were only ten and seven years old. The third brother was snatched up by some brave friends, and hidden away where the cruel uncles could not find him. He was afterwards placed in a monastery, and became a monk, and founded a monastery near Paris, called after him, St. Cloud. After the sons of Clovis there followed a line of kings in France called the Meerwings, or long-haired kings, known in history as the Merovingians; and only two of them are important enough to be mentioned, and those only on account of their crimes. One of the sons of Clovis left [148] four sons; and two of these, named Hilperik and Siegbert, married the two daughters of the king of the Goths, in Spain. These sisters were called Galswinth and Brunehild. Hilperik loved a slave girl he owned, named Fredegond, and either with or without his consent, his wife Galswinth was found strangled in her bed, and he afterwards married the murderess, Fredegond, who, though most atrociously wicked, became a powerful queen. Brunehild persuaded her husband Siegbert to make war upon Hilperik, to avenge the death of her sister. Hilperik was defeated, but the Queen Fredegond contrived to have Siegbert murdered, and afterwards killed her husband’s other children, thus leaving her own son heir to the throne. She then ordered her husband also to be put to death, so that she could reign alone in the name of her infant son. The four kingdoms left by Clovis had been now merged into three,—Neustria, which is now the north of France; Austrasia, which is now the north-east corner of France, and part of Belgium, and part of the western side of Germany; and the third kingdom was called Burgundy. The Neustrians and the Austrasians were usually at war with each other, the Burgundians taking now one side of the quarrel and now the other. Queen Fredegond’s part of Gaul was Neustria, while Queen Brunehild governed Austrasia. But Brunehild quarrelled with the chiefs of the country; and after many years of wars, plots, and murders, she was at last brutally killed by the son of Fredegond, who became king of all the Franks; and in Neustria every one obeyed him; but in Austrasia the great chiefs and bishops were opposed to him. The bishops had by this time become rich and powerful, for a great amount of land had been left to the church by the wills of dying Christians, or as gifts [149] from kings and chiefs. When Clotaire, son of Fredegond, died, he left two sons; one of them

named Dagobert made himself master of Neustria and Austrasia, and gave his brother land in the south part of the country, which had not been visited before by a Frankish king. Dagobert took Paris for his chief town; he made himself a splendid court, took journeys through his kingdom, doing justice to his subjects, and encouraged the building of churches, and had copies of the old Frankish laws written out and sent throughout his kingdom. The people liked him; but the powerful chiefs and the bishops, who had become so worldly that they thought a great deal more about piling up riches than in turning the people to Christianity, were filled with dismay to have so wise and just a king, who was fast gaining a great power over the people. After ten years Dagobert died and left two sons; one was king of Austrasia; and the younger king of Neustria. After these, there followed three more kings in Neustria, and four in Austrasia, but they had no power, and were only called kings, while the government was really in the hands of a new set of men, from which line the illustrious Charlemagne sprang. The chief man next the king in these countries was called the Mayor of the Palace. He had the chief command in times of war, and at last became in truth the sovereign ruler; and they only put up one of their do-nothing kings as a figure-head. After the death of Dagobert, there was no other Frankish king of any importance in the line of the Merovingians. The Fainéants, or do-nothing kings, as they were called, sat on the throne and pretended to rule, but the mayor of the palace told them what they must say to the people and what they must do. This went on for nearly a hundred years. When Dagobert died, the [150]
mayor of the palace was named Pepin, and through several reigns he really governed both Austrasia and Neustria. He made war against the Germans, and sometimes when they were very troublesome he went with an army and subdued them; and at other times he sent monks to try and convert them to Christianity. When Pepin died, his son Karl became the mayor of the palace. Now Karl wished to secure money to give to his chiefs, so that they would fight for him, and so he took away from the bishops the rich lands which belonged to the church, and gave them to his warriors. Karl had first to fight the Saxons, whom he defeated, and then there appeared a new foe. The Arabs lived in Arabia, on the east side of the Red Sea, in Asia.

They had always been a poor, wandering people. But about one hundred and fifty years before this time, an Arab had appeared among his countrymen, claiming to be a mighty prophet, and teaching them a new religion. It was not the Christian religion; but this man, who was named Mohammed, claimed that he had been sent by God to teach the people; and so the religion he proclaimed was called Mohammedanism. Now the Arabs had never left their own country before, but they determined to go forth and conquer the world, and make all the nations Mohammedans. They conquered Persia, Egypt, Spain, and a part of Africa. When they overcame any nation, if the people would consent to become Mohammedans, the Arabs treated them with kindness; but if they refused, they made slaves of them, and sometimes put them to death. Having conquered Spain, the Arabs wished to become masters of France.

When they had passed the Pyrenees, Karl went forth to meet them. There was a great battle, [151]
known in history as the Battle of Tours, and at length Karl conquered the Mohammedans, and drove them out of France. Some accounts state that three hundred thousand Arabs were killed.

This mayor of the palace has been called Karl the Hammer, or in French, Charles Martel, in memory of the blows he inflicted upon these Mohammedan enemies. He was afterwards called the Duke of the Franks.

In the time of Charles Martel, several kings became monks. An English monk named Winfrid had been sent by the Pope and Charles Martel to preach to the Saxons. After persuading thousands of the people to be baptized, this monk was made bishop and then archbishop. But he thought more of converting the heathen than of wearing honors, and leaving his bishopric to another, he went forth into a wild part of the country to preach Christianity. When a large number of people had assembled to be baptized, an armed force of the heathen attacked them, killing Winfrid and all the Christian people. This good monk is called also St. Boniface.

After the death of Charles Martel his two sons ruled for six years together, and then one of them went into a monastery, leaving the younger, Pepin, who now became the only duke of the Franks.

The people began to think it absurd to have a useless set of lazy, do-nothing, Merovingian, or long-haired kings, who were only puppets in the hands of the reigning duke. So Pepin, also called Le Bref, or the Short, asked the Pope to make him king, instead of the figure-head who sat upon the throne, who at that time bore the name of Hilperik. The answer of the Pope was, “He who has the power ought also to have the name of king.”

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As the Pope had thus consented to the change, all the Franks were delighted, and they took the useless king from his throne, cut off his long yellow hair, which was his sign of royalty, and shut him up in a monastery. He died two years afterwards, and was the last of the Merovingian kings.

Pepin was now crowned by St. Boniface, as this event preceded the death of that king, and thus he became the first of the Carlovingian kings, so called from Carolus, the Latin for Charles, which was the name of Pepin's father, and his still greater son.

Pepin now aided the Pope by marching into Italy and fighting the Lombards; and having conquered them, he took their lands and gave them to the Pope, which property afterwards descended from one pope to another, so that the popes at last became masters of quite a kingdom in Italy. Pepin also besieged a town in Southern Gaul, belonging to the Arabs, and after seven years captured it, and drove the Arabs over the Pyrenees, into Spain. He reigned for sixteen years, and dying left his kingdom to his two sons Karl and Karloman, who divided it between them; but Karloman lived but three years, when Karl became the king of France.

While his Austrasian subjects, who spoke German, called him Karl, the Neustrians, whose language was a mingling of the Latin and the German, which has since become the French language, called him Charles; and after he became so famous, the Latin word *magnus*, meaning great, was added, and Charles-Magnus thus became the Charlemagne of history.

Very little can be learned regarding the early life of Charlemagne. One of the old writers, named Eginhard, who afterwards became the secretary of Charlemagne, records that neither he [153]
himself, nor any one then living, knew anything about the birth of this prince, nor about his infancy, nor even youth. His father, King Pepin, had his two sons associated with himself, when he received the title of king from the Bishop of Rome; but neither of them received any separate government during their father's life. They were taught, with the other young nobles, by Peter of Pisa, whom Pepin retained at his court for this purpose. It is supposed that King Pepin took the young princes with him in his Italian expeditions, and that Charlemagne accompanied his father in the Aquitanian war. When King Pepin died, his eldest son was twenty-six years and a half old, while the younger was barely nineteen. Both were already married to wives of the Frank race. Charles, or Charlemagne, to Himiltrude, and Carloman to Gerberge.

The first battle in which Charlemagne engaged was soon after his father's death, with the Aquitanians, who were the people living in the south-west part of France. The brother-kings raised troops to meet them, but Carloman through jealousy withdrew his forces, leaving Charlemagne to carry on the war alone. He was victorious, and the Aquitanians submitted. The queen-mother Bertrada now used her influence to secure a permanent alliance between the Lombards and the Franks, and persuaded Charlemagne to divorce his wife and marry Desiderata, the daughter of Didier the Lombard king. This Charlemagne consented to do, even against the advice of the Pope, and he suffered for his folly, or wickedness; for so it was, even though his mother did sanction it, for he was so unhappy with Desiderata, that in about a year he put her

away and married Hildegarde. In those days kings married and divorced their wives as often as [154]
they pleased, and Charlemagne, with all his greatness and his aid to Christianity, was in this particular very culpable, and his domestic life was not at all in keeping with the majesty, and goodness, and uprightness of his public life. After the death of Hildegarde, he married two other wives. One Fastrada, an Austrasian, was a very wicked woman, and caused him much trouble. The last one, whom he loved the most, was named Luitgarda. She was kind and gentle, and her influence over Charlemagne was very beneficial after the wicked Fastrada had led him into so much trouble. The French have an old legend, which relates that the evil influence which Fastrada exercised over the strong mind of the great king, leading him to acts of injustice and tyranny, which alienated the affections of his nobles, was due to the magic spell of a ring which she wore. On her death, the ring came into possession of a bishop, for whom Charlemagne immediately showed such admiration, that the bishop found it unpleasant, and cast the ring into a neighboring lake. Here it also exercised its magic charm, and the king would sit for hours gazing into the waters of the lake, as though spell-bound. But this legend cannot disguise the weak side of Charlemagne's character, and we can only turn from it and fix our attention upon his great career.

He was one of the wisest and most powerful of kings. His life was one of constant war. He fought the Saxons for thirty-three years, but at last he conquered Witikind, the great Saxon leader, in 785, and persuaded him to be baptized. Charlemagne made him Duke of Saxony, and he lived in good faith to the new vows he had taken. Notwithstanding this victory over the
Saxons, Charlemagne foresaw the evils which should come upon Europe through the formidable [155]
Northmen. The monk of St. Gall relates this incident: "Charlemagne arrived unexpectedly in a certain town of Narbonnese Gaul. Whilst he was at dinner, and was as yet unrecognized of any, some corsairs of the Northmen came to ply their piracies in the very port. When their vessels were descried, they were supposed to be Jewish traders according to some, African according to others, and British in the opinion of others; but the gifted monarch perceiving by the build and lightness of the craft that they bare not merchandise, but foes, said to his own folk, 'These vessels be not laden with merchandise, but manned with cruel foes.' At these words, all the Franks, in rivalry one with another, ran to their ships, but uselessly, for the Northmen, indeed, hearing that yonder was he whom it was still their wont to call Charles the Hammer, feared lest all their fleet should be taken or destroyed in the port, and they avoided by a flight of inconceivable rapidity not only the blows, but even the eyes of those who were pursuing them.

"Pious Charles, however, a prey to well-grounded fear, rose up from table, stationed himself at a window looking eastward, and there remained a long while, and his eyes were filled with tears. As none durst question him, this warlike prince explained to the grandees who were about his person the cause of his movement and of his tears. 'Know ye, my lieges, wherefore I weep so bitterly? Of a surety I fear not lest these fellows should succeed in injuring me by their miserable piracies; but it grieveth me deeply that whilst I live, they should have been nigh to touching at this shore, and I am a prey to violent sorrow when I foresee what evils they will heap upon my descendants and their people.'"

But during all the years of the Saxon wars, Charlemagne had been carrying on various [156]
campaigns elsewhere. The Lombards were again at war with the Popes, and the king of Lombards, Didier, whose daughter Charlemagne had married and so soon divorced, had now become his bitter foe. The new Pope, Adrian I., sought the aid of Charlemagne in this war with the Lombards, and he prepared for this Italian expedition. He raised two armies,—one to cross the Valais and descend upon Lombardy by Mount St. Bernard, and the other, to be led by Charlemagne, was to go by the way of Mount Cenis. Didier had with him a famous Dane, named Ogier, who had quarrelled with Charlemagne and taken refuge in Lombardy. One of the monks of that time thus describes Charlemagne's arrival before Pavia, where Didier and the Dane Ogier had shut themselves up, as it was the strongest place in Lombardy.

"When Didier and Ogger (for so the monk calls him) heard that the dread monarch was coming, they ascended a tower of vast height, whence they could watch his arrival from afar off and from every quarter. They saw, first of all, engines of wars, such as must have been necessary for the armies of Darius or Julius Cæsar. 'Is not Charles,' asked Didier of Ogger, 'with this great army?' But the other answered, 'No.' The Lombard, seeing afterwards an immense body of soldiery gathered from all quarters of the vast empire, said to Ogger, 'Certes, Charles advanceth in triumph in the midst of this throng.' 'No, not yet; he will not appear so soon,' was the answer. 'What should we do, then,' rejoined Didier, who began to be perturbed, 'should he come accompanied by a larger band of warriors?' 'You will see what he is when he comes,' replied
Ogger; 'but as to what will become of us I know nothing.' As they were thus parleying appeared [157]
the body of guards that knew no repose, and at this sight the Lombard, overcome with dread, cried, 'This time 'tis surely Charles.' 'No,' answered Ogger, 'not yet.' In their wake came the bishops, the abbots, the ordinaries of the chapels royal, and the counts; and then Didier, no longer able to bear the light of day or to face death, cried out with groans, 'Let us descend and hide ourselves in the bowels of the earth, far from the face and the fury of so terrible a foe.' Trembling the while, Ogger, who knew by experience what were the power and might of Charles, and who had learned the lesson by long usage in better days, then said, 'When ye shall behold the crops shaking for fear in the fields, and the gloomy Po and the Ticino overflowing the walls of the city with their waves blackened with steel (iron), then may ye think that Charles is coming.' He had not ended these words when there began to be seen in the west, as it were, a black cloud, raised by the north-west wind or by Boreas, which turned the brightest day into awful shadows. But as the emperor drew nearer and nearer, the gleam of arms caused to shine on the people

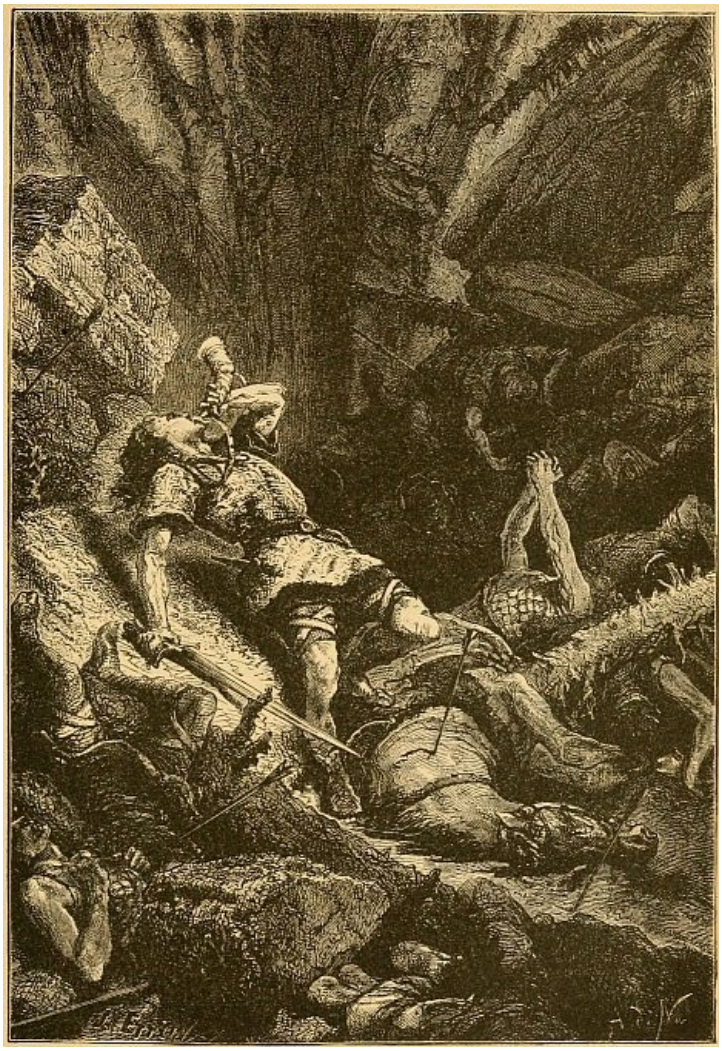
shut up within the city a day more gloomy than any kind of night. And then appeared Charles himself, that man of steel, with his head encased in a helmet of steel, his hands garnished with gauntlets of steel, his heart of steel and his shoulders of marble protected by a cuirass of steel, and his left hand armed with a lance of steel which he held aloft in the air, for as to his right hand, he kept that continually on the hilt of his invincible sword. The outside of his thighs, which the rest for their greater ease in mounting a horseback were wont to leave unshackled even by straps, he wore encircled by plates of steel. What shall I say concerning his boots? All the army [158] were wont to have them invariably of steel; on his buckler there was nought to be seen but steel; his horse was of the color and the strength of steel. All those who went before the monarch, all those who marched at his side, all those who followed after, even the whole mass of the army, had armor of the like sort, so far as the means of each permitted. The fields and the highways were covered with steel; the points of steel reflected the rays of the sun; and this steel, so hard, was borne by a people with hearts still harder. The flash of steel spread terror throughout the streets of the city. 'What steel! alack, what steel!' Such were the bewildered cries the citizens raised. The firmness of manhood and of youth gave way at sight of the steel, and the steel paralyzed the wisdom of the gray beards. That which I, poor tale-teller, mumbling and toothless, have attempted to depict in a long description, Ogger perceived at one rapid glance, and said to Didier, 'Here is what ye have so anxiously sought'; and whilst uttering these words he fell down almost lifeless."

But notwithstanding all King Didier's fear, he and the Lombards evinced such resistance, that Charlemagne was obliged to settle down before Pavia in a long siege. His camp without the city became a town, so that he sent for his wife, Queen Hildegarde, and her court, also his children and their attendants, and said to the chiefs of his army, "Let us begin by doing something memorable." So men were at once set to work to build a basilica, and within a week it was completed, with its walls, roofs, and painted ceilings, which would seemingly have required a year to erect.

In this chapel, Charlemagne, and his family, court, and warriors, celebrated the festival of Christmas, 773. But just before Easter, 774, Charlemagne determined to leave his lieutenants to [159] continue the siege, and attended by a numerous and brilliant retinue, he set off for Rome. On Holy Saturday, when Charlemagne was about three miles from Rome, the magistrates and citizens and pupils of the schools came forth to meet him, bearing palm-branches and singing hymns. At the gate of the city, Charlemagne dismounted before the cross, and entered Rome on foot, and having ascended the steps of the ancient basilica of St. Peter, he was received at the top by the Pope himself. Then a chant was sung by the people all around him: "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

According to the custom of pilgrims, Charlemagne visited all the basilicas in Rome. He confirmed his father's gift to the former Pope, and added new gifts of his own. The Pope gave to Charlemagne a book containing a collection of the canons written by the pontiffs from the origin of the church. This he dedicated to Charlemagne, and wrote in it, "Pope Adrian, to his most excellent son Charlemagne, king."

Charlemagne then returned to his camp before Pavia, and having captured the city, received the submission of all the Lombards. In 778 Charlemagne had a war with the Arabs in Spain. He crossed the Pyrenees and went as far as the Ebro, but the Arabs gave him large gifts of gold and jewels, and persuaded him to spare their fine cities. As he was returning over the mountains, his army was attacked by a wild people called the Basques; and several of his bravest leaders were killed, among them the famous Roland, concerning whom various stories are told, one being that he blew a blast on his bugle with his last breath, to warn Charlemagne, who was far in the front, of this unexpected danger. Another legend makes him to have possessed herculean strength, in [160] token of which a great cleft is shown in the Pyrenean Hills, said to have been made by one stroke of his sword, and it bears the name of the "La Brèche de Roland." Pfalgraf, or Count of the Palace, was the name given to some of the bravest Frank lords, and in old romances Roland and others are called the Paladins.



DEATH OF ROLAND.

Charlemagne had three sons, Carl, Pepin, and Lodwig, afterwards called Louis le Débonnaire. In 781 Charlemagne took his two younger sons, Pepin, aged four, and Louis, only three years of age, to Rome, where they were anointed by Pope Adrian I.,—Pepin as king of Italy, and Louis as king of Aquitaine. On returning from Rome, Charlemagne sent the baby Louis at once to take formal possession of his kingdom. He was carried to Orleans in a cradle, and then the little prince was clad in a tiny suit of armor, and attendants held him up on horseback as he entered his kingdom of Aquitaine. He was accompanied by many officers and men of state who were to form his council of guardians. Afterwards the poor baby king was taken back to his father's palace to be educated.

Charlemagne founded Aix-la-Chapelle and made it his favorite winter residence. He went out to fight each summer, and came back to his kingdom in the winter. He was very seldom defeated in war, for he was wise and energetic, and moved his army about so quickly that he was a match for much larger forces than his own. He held a council of war every Easter when all his chiefs assembled, and Charlemagne made known to them his plans for his coming campaign. He made improvements in the armor and weapons of his soldiers. Their helmets were provided with visors which could be brought down to protect their faces in battle, and their shields were long and [161] large, instead of the small round skin-covered bucklers of the early Gauls. His soldiers fought with sharp-pointed, two-handed swords, and they employed also heavy clubs covered with iron knobs, which were most formidable weapons. Charlemagne's forces were mounted on strong fleet horses from the Rhine, and so great was his knowledge of all the surrounding countries, that he could despatch an army to any part of his kingdom at short notice, and with perfect accuracy as to route.

On the 23d of November, 800, Charlemagne arrived at Rome, where he was met by Pope Leo III., whom he had several times aided in conflicts with his enemies, at one time receiving Leo into his own palace for a year, when conspirators at Rome were seeking the Pope's life. In return for these favors, and to secure the help of so mighty a warrior, Pope Leo crowned Charlemagne Emperor of Rome. The ceremony was performed on Christmas day, 800. Eginhard thus described the scene: "The king came into the basilica of the blessed St. Peter, apostle, to attend the celebration of mass. At the moment when in his place before the altar he was bowing down to pray, Pope Leo placed upon his head a crown, and all the Roman people shouted, 'Long life and victory to Charles Augustus, crowned by God, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans!' After this proclamation the pontiff prostrated himself before him, and paid him adoration according to the custom established in the days of the old emperors; and thenceforward Charles, giving up the title of patrician, bore that of emperor and Augustus." Charlemagne had now become emperor of France, of Germany, and of Italy.

But it is not only as a great warrior that Charlemagne is famous. His government was a model [162]
for those times, and he held his subjects, so diverse as to nationality and education, under a most wise and powerful authority; and out of a chaos of different nations—the wild anarchy of ruined Rome, and the ill-regulated force of barbaric hordes—he founded a monarchy strong in him alone, and though it fell at his death, each piece of his great empire possessed enough of the vitalizing force, which his mind and wisdom had given to it, to enable it to rise an empire by itself. So, though Charlemagne's kingdom could not be preserved by his successors, from that great power rose the separate empires of France, Germany, and Italy. One of Charlemagne's humane acts was his care for the slaves in Gaul. At that time all the chiefs were warriors, while their lands were tilled by serfs, or slaves, who went with the land as part of the property, whether bought or captured. He made laws to protect the slaves as far as possible against unjust and cruel masters.

Charlemagne was also fond of study. He learned Latin and Greek, and improved his native German language by inventing German words for the months and the winds. He paid great attention to astronomy and music, and in theological studies evinced a strong interest. He caused to be commenced the first Germanic grammar. But with all his learning there was one thing he could not accomplish, which was to write a good hand, though he zealously practiced the art, even putting his little tablets under his pillow that he might catch at any odd moments day or night to perfect his imperfect writing. At whatever palace Charlemagne was residing, he always formed there a school called the School of the Palace, where many learned men were gathered together, and where members of the royal family, including Charlemagne himself, and his [163]
children, took lessons in the different sciences, grammar, rhetoric, and theology. Two names are famous among these wise men, who became the particular advisers and confidants of Charlemagne, Alcuin and Eginhard, who afterwards became the biographer of Charlemagne, and the adviser of his son Louis le Débonnaire. It was the custom for members of this school to assume other names than their own: thus Charlemagne was called David; Alcuin, Flaccus; Angilbert, Homer; and Eginhard, Bezaleel,—that nephew of Moses to whom God had granted the gift of knowing how to work skilfully in wood and all materials needed for the ark and tabernacle. All of these scholars afterwards became great dignitaries in the church. Charlemagne was of a cheerful disposition, and fond of hunting and other sports. He was especially expert in swimming. He sometimes played jokes upon his chiefs and nobles, and the old monks of his time tell several stories regarding his sly humor. At one time when he thought his courtiers were too much given to fine clothes, he commanded a party of them when decked out in their finest trappings, to follow him in the chase through the rain, mud, and brambles. He was of a tall figure, and though his dress was rich and gorgeous when the occasion demanded it, he was not fond of finery. His appearance is thus described by Eginhard:—

"Charlemagne was large and robust in person, his stature was lofty, though it did not exceed just proportion, for his height was not more than seven times the length of his foot. The summit of his head was round, his eyes large and bright, his nose a little long, beautiful white hair, and a smiling and pleasant expression. There reigned in his whole person, whether standing or seated, [164]
an air of grandeur and dignity; and though his neck was thick and short, and his body corpulent, yet he was in other respects so well proportioned that these defects were not noticed. His walk was firm, and his whole appearance manly, but his clear voice did not quite harmonize with his appearance. His health was always good, except during the four years which preceded his death. He then had frequent attacks of fever, and was lame of one foot. In this time of suffering he treated himself more accordingly to his own fancies than by the advice of the physicians, whom he had come to dislike because they would have had him abstain from the roast meats he was accustomed to, and would have restricted him to boiled meats. His dress was that of his nation; that is to say, of the Franks. He wore a shirt and drawers of linen, over them a tunic bordered with silken fringe, stockings fastened with narrow bands, and shoes. In winter, a coat of otter or martin fur covered his shoulders and breast. Over all he wore a long blue mantle."

He would not adopt the short mantle worn by the later Franks, but preferred the long cloak of the ancient Franks, which made him a distinguished and royal-looking person amidst his short-cloaked courtiers. He was always girded with his sword, which became so famous that it received the name of Joyeuse, whose hilt was of gold and silver, his girdle being also of gold. Upon solemn festive occasions this sword was replaced by one enriched with precious stones. After he became Emperor he sometimes wore the long tunic, the chlamys, and the sandals of the Romans. At great feasts or festivals his dress was embroidered with gold, and his shoes adorned with precious stones. His mantle was fastened with a brooch of gold, and he wore upon his head a glistening [165]
diadem of gold and gems; but his usual dress was simple. He avoided all excesses at the table, particularly that of drinking, for he abhorred drunkenness. While he was dining he liked to have histories or poems read to him. He took great pleasure in the works of St. Augustine. He was endowed with a natural eloquence which rendered his speech delightful. His chosen name of David was not inappropriate, for he was a founder and benefactor of the church, and was very devout in the outward observances of the Christian religion; but his domestic life was an irretrievable blot upon his character, which no plea of the laxity of those times can remove. It is true that the same fault mars the greatness of Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and other famous rulers; but Alexander and Cæsar were not Christians, while Charlemagne stands forth as the great champion and upholder of the religion of the spotless Christ. Charlemagne caused to be erected at Aix-la-Chapelle a magnificent basilica, or chapel, which he adorned with gold and silver, and with screens and gates of brass from Rome, and marbles and columns from Ravenna. He always attended service here night and morning, and often arose to assist at some especial worship in the night. He introduced great improvements in the lessons and the psalmody, and is said to have

composed several hymns, among them the “Veni Creator Spiritus,” that invocation of the Holy Spirit which is sung at ordinations. Charlemagne was always ready to help poor Christians, not only in his own kingdom, but in Syria, Egypt, in Africa, at Jerusalem, Alexandria, Carthage, and elsewhere. Of all the holy places he had most veneration for the Church of St. Peter at Rome. He sent rich gifts of gold and silver and precious stones to that cathedral, for he desired to make it [166] surpass all other churches in its decorations and riches. But he was only able to go four times during his reign of forty-seven years, to visit that cherished place. Toward the end of his vigorous life and magnificent career, the Emperor Charlemagne met with severe family losses. In less than two years his sister, daughter, and his sons, the two Pepins, one of whom was a hunchback, died; and lastly his son Charles, whom he intended should be crowned emperor, also died, leaving only Louis and several daughters. But Louis was the worthiest of all the sons of Charlemagne to succeed his illustrious father. In the year 813 Charlemagne, fearing that his end was drawing near, assembled all his chief men at Aix-la-Chapelle, and in a grand ceremonial in the chapel he caused his son to be declared emperor, bidding him take the diadem himself from the altar, and place it on his own head, whereupon Charlemagne exclaimed, “Blessed be the Lord, who hath granted me to see my son sitting on my throne!” But he did not at that time resign the crown. Louis went back to his kingdom in Aquitaine; and Charlemagne, in spite of his growing infirmities, continued through the autumn his usual hunting excursions, returning to Aix in November. In January Charlemagne was seized with a fever, but he determined to doctor himself, as was his usual method, which was to “starve” the fever. But pleurisy set in, and still refusing to be ministered to by physicians, on the seventh day after he had taken to his bed, having received communion, he expired about nine o’clock in the morning on the 28th of January, 814, in the seventy-first year of his age, and the forty-seventh year of his reign. He was buried with unusual grandeur. A large and beautifully carved sarcophagus of classical workmanship, was lying empty [167] in the basilica of Aix. But they placed Charlemagne in a large marble chair in the crypt beneath the dome of his great basilica. The chair was ornamented with gold, and Charlemagne was clad in his royal robes with his sparkling crown upon his head, and his royal sceptre in his hand, and the good sword Joyeuse, which had served him in so many famous battles, was girded to his side, while his pilgrim’s pouch was suspended from his girdle, and a copy of the Gospels was laid upon his knees. Thus was he seated on the throne chair, with his feet resting in the carved sarcophagus, as though the great emperor was not to be shut up in a coffin like common mortals, but even in death still sat upon his throne in royal state. Beneath the dome, on the stone which closed the entrance to the tomb, was carved the following epitaph in Latin:—

“In this tomb reposeth the body of Charles, great and orthodox emperor, who did gloriously extend the kingdom of the Franks, and did govern it happily for forty-seven years. He died at the age of seventy years, in the year of the Lord, 814, in the seventh year of the Indication, on the fifth of the Kalends of February.”

This crypt was opened two hundred years afterwards by the Emperor Otho III., when he found the remains of Charlemagne, as described above. A huge black flagstone now lies under the dome, bearing the inscription, “Carolo Magno,” and it is supposed to cover the entrance to the tomb of Charlemagne. Over it hangs a large golden candelabrum which the Emperor Barbarossa gave to burn above the grave. In the time of Barbarossa, the church enrolled the name of the great emperor in its Calendar as St. Charlemagne.

No sovereign ever rendered greater service to the civilized world than Charlemagne, by [168] stopping in the north and south the flood of barbarians and Arabs, Paganism and Islamism. This was his great success, and although he ultimately failed in founding a permanent empire which should exist in unity and absolute power after his death, though at one time he seemed to be Cæsar, Augustus, and Constantine combined, his death ended his empire; but he had opened the way for the Christian religion and human liberty to establish other and more lasting governments. The illustrious French writer, Guizot, thus sums up the life and achievements of Charlemagne. “Great men are at one and the same time instruments and free agents in a general design which is infinitely above their ken, and which, even if a glimpse of it be caught, remains inscrutable to them,—the design of God towards mankind. Charlemagne had this singular good fortune, that his misguided attempt at imperialism perished with him, whilst his salutary achievement, the territorial security of Christian Europe, has been durable to the great honor, as well as great profit, of European civilization.”

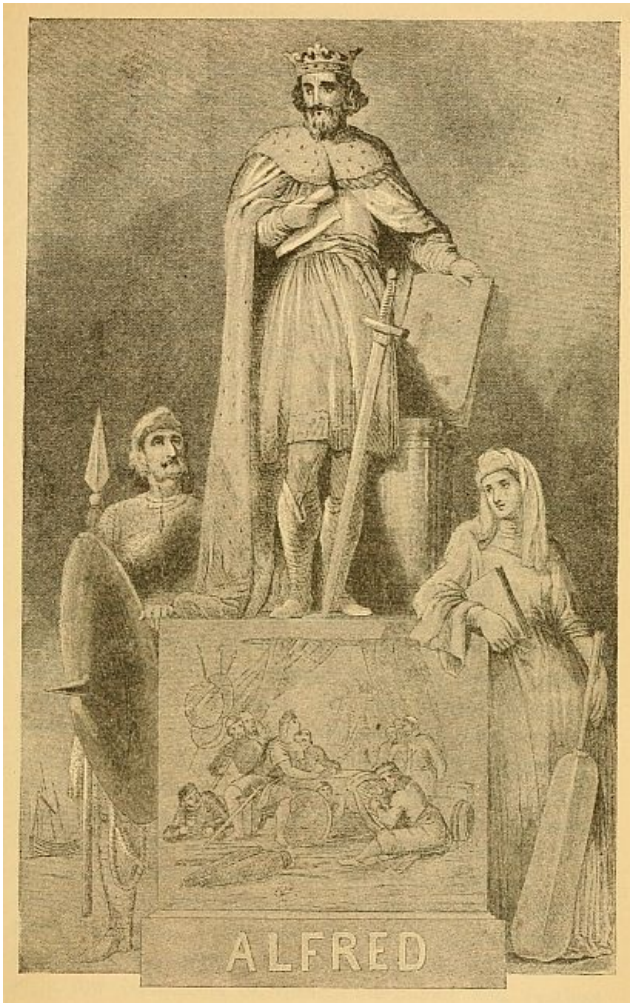
ALFRED THE GREAT.

849-901 A.D.

"An honest man's the noblest work of God."
POPE.

STORY and song have immortalized the romantic traditions regarding the early inhabitants of the British realm, and although many of them are no doubt fabulous tales, the romantic history of Alfred the Great would be robbed of much of its weird fascination if no mention were made of these fantastic but charming traditions. King Alfred's reign was eight hundred years after the Christian Era. Authentic history takes us back through those eight hundred years to the time of Julius Cæsar and his invasion of Great Britain, and traditions carry us still farther back, for eight hundred years more, to the days of Solomon.

There is a story that at the close of the Trojan war, which we have described in the life of Agamemnon, Æneas landed in Italy with a company of Trojans. They settled near the spot upon which Rome was afterwards built. One day, while Brutus, the great-grandson of Æneas, was hunting in the forests, he accidentally killed his father with an arrow. Brutus, fearing evil consequences from this terrible accident, fled from Italy. Going to Greece, he collected a band of Trojans, and they made war upon a king named Pandrasus. Brutus conquered this king but promised to make peace with him if he would agree to provide a fleet of ships for Brutus, and give him his daughter in marriage. This Pandrasus did, and Brutus sailed with his bride and fleet, [170] until they arrived at a deserted island, upon which they found the ruins of a city and an ancient temple of Diana, where there still remained an image of the goddess.



The story goes that Brutus consulted this oracle of Diana, and received the following answer:—

"Far to the West, in the ocean wide,
Beyond the realm of Gaul, a land there lies;
Sea-girt it lies, where giants dwelt of old.
Now void, it fits thy people; thither bend
Thy course; there shalt thou find a lasting home."

Brutus followed this direction, and proceeded westward through the Mediterranean Sea. He arrived at the Pillars of Hercules, which was the name given in those days to the Rock of Gibraltar, and then he turned northward and coasted along Spain. At length they arrived on the shores of Britain. They found the island covered with rich verdure, and in the forests were many wild beasts and the remnants of a race of giants.

Brutus and his forces drove the wild beasts into the mountains of Wales and Scotland, and killed the giants, and seized upon the island as their own. Many wild adventures are told of his

successors, down to the time of the invasion of Julius Cæsar. Such is the story in brief of the early Britons.

After the conquest by Cæsar, the Romans retained possession of the island for four hundred years. During this time there were many rebellions in the various provinces, until at last the Britons submitted to their sway. Now another enemy advanced against this picturesque island. The Picts and Scots, hordes of lawless barbarians, who inhabited the mountains of Ireland and [171] Scotland, made continual expeditions for plunder into the fair land of the Britons. At length one of the Roman emperors named Severus, visited the island of Britain, and endeavored to conquer the Picts and Scots. It was at this time that the famous Wall of Severus was built. The wall extended across the island, from the mouth of the Tyne on the German Ocean, to the Solway Frith, nearly seventy miles. This wall was a good defence against the barbarians, as long as Roman soldiers remained to guard it. But about two centuries after the time of Severus, the Roman soldiers were required by their own government at home, and the Britons were left to fight with the Picts and Scots alone. During this time another brave and warlike race had arisen. The Anglo-Saxons had now become powerful sea-rulers on the German Ocean and Baltic Sea. They delighted in storms and tempests, and cared not whether it was summer or winter when they sailed the seas, so brave and fearless were they. They would build small vessels of osiers, covering them with skins, and in these frail boats they courageously sailed amidst the rough winds and foaming surges of the German Ocean, in search of conquest and wild adventure. If they fought they conquered, and if they pursued their enemies they were sure to overtake them, and if they retreated they successfully made their escape. Neither winds, waves, nor enemies could quell this adventurous and brave race, which was fast rising into power and renown. They were clothed in loose and flowing garments, and wore their hair long, floating about their shoulders. They had much skill in fabricating arms of superior workmanship, which gave them a great advantage over their enemies. The landing of a few boat-loads of these determined and fearless Anglo-Saxons, on a small island near the mouth of the Thames, was an event which [172] marks an important epoch in English history, as it was the real beginning of British greatness and power. The names of the commanders who headed the expedition of the Anglo-Saxons which first landed in Britain, were Hengist and Horsa. They were brothers. The island where they landed was called Thanet. The name of the king of Britain at this time was Vortigern. When the Anglo-Saxons arrived, his kingdom was distracted by the constant incursions of the Picts and Scots. In this danger, Vortigern appealed to the Anglo-Saxons for help. He offered to give them a large tract of territory in the part of the island where they had landed, if they would aid him in his contest with his enemies. Hengist and Horsa agreed to this proposal, and they thereupon engaged in battle with the Picts and Scots, and defeated them, and they were driven back to their mountains in the north. The Anglo-Saxons now established themselves in the part of the island assigned to them, and it is related that Hengist gave his daughter Rowena in marriage to King Vortigern, to strengthen the alliance more closely. At last the Britons became alarmed at the increasing power of the Anglo-Saxons, and the result was a fierce contest. It is related that King Vortigern, with three hundred of his officers, were invited by Hengist to a feast, and a quarrel having arisen, an affray occurred in which the Britons were all killed, except Vortigern who was taken prisoner, and was only ransomed by ceding three whole provinces to his captors.

The famous King Arthur, whose Knights of the Round Table have been so celebrated in fable and song, was a king of the Britons during these wars between his people and the Saxons. He is [173] said to have performed marvellous exploits of strength and valor. He was of prodigious size, and undaunted courage. He slew giants, killed the most ferocious wild beasts, gained many splendid victories, and is said to have made long expeditions into foreign countries, once even going to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage to obtain the Holy Cross. He was afterwards killed in a combat with his nephew, who had gained the affections of Arthur’s wife during his absence. Arthur had been a deadly enemy of the Saxons. He fought twelve great pitched battles with them, in every one of which he gained the victory. It is related that he killed with his own hand, four hundred and seventy men in one of these contests. The landing of the Saxons, under Hengist and Horsa, is supposed to have been in the year 449. It was more than two hundred years after this before the Britons were entirely subdued, and the Saxon power became supreme. In one or two centuries more the Saxons had, in their turn, to meet an implacable and powerful enemy. These new invaders were the Danes.

The territory of Britain was divided into seven or eight Saxon kingdoms, each under a separate king. This power is known in history as the Saxon Heptarchy. The Danes were not exclusively the natives of Denmark. They came from all the shores of the Northern and Baltic Seas. They were a race of bold naval adventurers, as the Saxons themselves had been two or three centuries before. They were banded together in large hordes, each ruled by a chieftain, called a sea-king. One of the most famous of these sea-kings was named Ragnar Lodbrog. His father was a prince of Norway, and Ragnar had married a Danish princess, and had acquired a sort of right to a Danish [174] kingdom, which right was disputed by one Harald. The Franks aided Harald in this contest, and Ragnar was defeated. But he now brought the other sea-kings under his control, and raising a large force, he invaded France, and landing at Rouen he marched to Paris. The king of the Franks finding himself completely in his power, bought off the sea-kings by paying a large sum of money, and Ragnar and his hordes returned to the Baltic Sea with riches and wide renown for their daring adventures. Ragnar afterwards invaded Spain, and finally grew bold enough to attack the Anglo-Saxons on the island of Britain. For this contest, Ragnar had prepared two enormous ships, and, filling them with picked men, he sailed down the coast of Scotland until he reached Northumbria. Here he encountered a large force of Saxons under their king Ella. A terrible struggle ensued. Ragnar was defeated and

taken prisoner, and was afterwards put to death in a barbarous manner by the Saxons. They filled a den with poisonous snakes, and drove the captive Ragnar amongst these horrid reptiles, by whose venomous fangs he was killed. In 851 a large horde of Danes landed on the island of Thanet, and afterwards advanced boldly up the Thames. They plundered London and Canterbury, and marched thence into one of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, called Mercia. Although the Danes were there defeated by a large force of Saxons, new hordes were continually arriving, and becoming more formidable. At length an immence force of Danes landed, under the command of Guthrum and Hubba. This horde was led by eight kings and twenty earls. Hubba was one of Ragnar's sons, and many of the horde were his relatives and friends, who swore vengeance for his cruel death. It was at this time that young Alfred appears prominently upon the scene of English history.

THE NORTHMEN INVADING FRANCE.

[175]

Alfred was the youngest child of Ethelwolf, king of the West Saxons. Under Egbert, the father of Ethelwolf, the kingdoms of the West Saxons had been united; and Egbert is called king of the English, he having given the name of Anglia to the whole kingdom.

When young Alfred was five years old, his father sent him to Rome to see the Pope, and to be anointed by him as king of the West Saxons; as Ethelwolf intended to pass over his elder sons and give his throne to his favorite son Alfred. This journey was made with great pomp and splendor; and a large train of nobles and ecclesiastics accompanied the young prince, who was received with splendid entertainments as he passed through France. Two years after this journey, Alfred's father Ethelwolf determined himself to go to Rome, and his favorite son accompanied him. Ethelwolf placed his elder sons in command of his affairs at home, and with a magnificent retinue crossed the channel, and landed in France on his way to Rome. King Ethelwolf and Prince Alfred were received with great distinction by King Charles of France, and after a short stay in the French court they proceeded to Rome. The king of England carried most costly presents to the Pope. Ethelwolf had been educated for the monastery, as he was a younger son, but the death of his father and elder brother placed him on the throne instead of in an ecclesiastical office. Therefore his religious inclinations were always very strong, and this pilgrimage to Rome was made as a religious ceremony as well as for political objects, and his offerings were very magnificent. One gift was a crown of pure gold, weighing four pounds. Another was a sword richly mounted in [176] gold. There were also many vessels of gold and silver, and several robes richly adorned. King Ethelwolf also distributed money to all the inhabitants of Rome; giving gold to the nobles and clergy, and silver to the people. So great was his munificence, and so magnificent was his courtly retinue, that this visit attracted universal attention, and made the little Alfred, on whose especial account the journey was performed, an object of great interest. King Ethelwolf remained a year at Rome, to give young Alfred the benefit of the advantages of the schools which had been established there. As they returned home through France, King Ethelwolf was married to the young daughter of the king of France, Princess Judith, who was only twelve or fourteen years of age. The mother of Alfred had died about three years before, and although this marriage occasioned much trouble in the kingdom of Ethelwolf, the young bride Judith was a kind and affectionate stepmother to Alfred, who was at this time about eight years of age. The story is related, that on one occasion Judith was showing Alfred and his older brothers a manuscript of some Saxon poems. Although much care had been bestowed upon the education of Alfred, he could not yet read. Indeed, very few even of the princes or kings in those days ever learned to read. Reading was considered as a necessary art, only for those who were to become professional teachers. Alfred expressed so much delight in this manuscript, which was beautifully illuminated with hand drawings, that Judith promised the volume to the one who should first learn to read it. Alfred's brothers, although much older, did not aspire to this honor, and Alfred made such diligent use of his time, that with the help of his teachers he was soon able to read the poems [177] fluently, and so claimed and received the prize. About two years after, the father of Alfred died, and Judith became the wife of Ethelbald, the eldest brother of Alfred, who succeeded to the throne. He died soon after, however, and Judith returned to France, where she married a Flemish noble, whom her father afterwards made Count of Flanders. We cannot stop to trace the life of Judith any farther, but we must mention that Alfred the Great afterwards gave his daughter Elfrida in marriage to the second count of Flanders, who was the eldest son of Judith. Through

this marriage the English sovereigns trace their descent from Alfred the Great.

There is a strange story connected with the youth of Alfred, which is best given in the quaint language of one of the biographers of this good and brave king. “As he advanced through the years of infancy and youth, his form appeared more comely than those of his brothers, and in look, speech, and manners he was more graceful than they. He was already the darling of the people, who felt that in wisdom and other qualities he surpassed all the royal race. Alfred, then, being a youth of this fair promise, while training himself diligently in all such learning as he had the means of acquiring, and especially in his own mother tongue and the poems and songs which formed the chief part of Anglo-Saxon literature, was not unmindful of the culture of his body, and was a zealous practiser of hunting in all its branches, and hunted with great perseverance and success. But before all things he was wishful to strengthen his mind in the keeping of God’s commandments; and finding that worldly desires and proud and rebellious thoughts which the devil, who is ever jealous of the good, is apt to breed in the minds of the young, were likely to have the mastery of him, he used often to rise at cock-crow in the early mornings, and repairing [178] to some church or holy place, there cast himself before God in prayer, that he might do nothing contrary to His holy will. But finding himself still hard tempted, he began at such times to pray, as he lay prostrate before the altar, that God in his great mercy would strengthen his mind and will by some sickness, such as would be of use to him in the subduing of his nature, but would not show itself outwardly, or render him powerless or contemptible in worldly duties, or less able to benefit his people. For King Alfred from his earliest years held in great dread leprosy and blindness, and every disease which would make a man useless or contemptible in the conduct of affairs. And when he had often, and with much fervor, prayed to this effect, it pleased God to afflict him with a very painful disease, which lay upon him with little respite until he was in his twentieth year. At this age he became betrothed to her who was afterwards his wife, Elswitha, the daughter of Ethelred, the Earl of the Gaini in Mercia. Alfred, then, at that time being on a visit to Cornwall for the sake of hunting, turned aside from his sport, as his custom often was, to pray in a certain chapel in which was buried the body of St. Guerir. There he entreated God that he would exchange the sickness with which he had been up to that time afflicted for some other disease, which should in like manner not render him useless or contemptible. And so, finishing his prayers, he got up and rode away, and soon after perceived within himself that he was made whole of his old sickness. So his marriage was celebrated in Mercia, to which came great numbers of people, and there was feasting which lasted through the night as well as by day. In the midst of which revelry Alfred was attacked by sudden and violent pain, the cause of which [179] neither they who were then present, nor indeed any physician in after years, could rightly ascertain. At the time, however, some believed that it was the malignant enchantment of some person amongst the guests; others, that it was the special spite of the devil; others again, that it was the old sickness come back on him, or a strange kind of fever. In any case, from that day until his forty-fourth year he was subject to this same sickness, which frequently returned, giving him the most acute pain, and, as he thought, making him useless for every duty. But how far the king was from thinking rightly in this respect, those who read of the burdens that were laid upon him, and the work which he accomplished, can best judge for themselves.” Such is this quaint account of Alfred’s religious devotion, and his patient endurance of suffering.

According to the will of Ethelwolf, the father of Alfred, Ethelbald, his eldest son, was to retain the throne of Wessex until his death, when he should be succeeded by his two youngest brothers, Ethelred and Alfred, in succession; while Ethelbert, the second son, should be king of Kent, Sussex, and Surrey. His estates and other property were divided amongst his children. From 858 until 860 Ethelred and Alfred lived in Kent with their brother Ethelbert. Upon the death of Ethelbald in 860, Ethelred and Alfred both waived their rights, and allowed Ethelbert to ascend the throne of Wessex. In 866 Ethelbert also died, and Ethelred now became the sovereign, and Alfred the crown prince. Alfred was very fond of study, and also very devout, as the above description from the old annals shows. During his youth he had gathered together the Services of the Hours, called *Celebrationes Horarum*, with many of the Psalms, which he had written in a [180] small handbook that he always carried with him; and on battle-field, or exiled in the wild forests, or ruling the nation as a proud king, this little book of devotion was always within reach, and constantly perused.

Within six weeks after his marriage he was called to arms by the invasion of the Danes, already mentioned, under Guthrum and Hubba; and within a few short months his brother Ethelred had been killed in battle, he himself had become king, and nine pitched battles had been fought in his own kingdom of Wessex under his leadership.

To understand more clearly the character of the Danes, a slight description of their weird and fantastic religious ideas is necessary. Woden was the chief figure in their ancient mythology. He was the god of battles, “who giveth victory, who re-animates warriors, who nameth those who are to be slain.” This Woden had been an inspired teacher as well as a conqueror, and had given to these wild Northmen a Scandinavian alphabet, and songs of battle. Their traditions related that Woden had led them from the shores of the Black Sea to the fiords of Norway, the far shores of Iceland. Having departed from them, he drew their hearts after him, and lived ever after in Asgard, the garden of the gods. There in his own great hall, Valhalla, the hall of Odin, he dwelt. And it was believed that the brave slain in battle should be permitted to go to Valhalla, and feast there with the mighty Odin.

There were also supposed to be other gods in this hall of Valhalla. Chief of these was Balder, the sun-god, white, beautiful, benignant; and Thor, the thunder-god, with terrible smiting

[181]

hammer and awful brows, engaged mainly in expeditions into Jotun land, a chaotic world, the residence of the giants, or devils, known as frost, fire, tempest, and the like. Thor's attendant was Thealfi, or manual labor. This thunder-god was described to be full of unwieldly strength, simplicity, and rough humor. There was supposed to be a tree of life also in the unseen world,—Igdrasil, with its roots in Hela, the kingdom of death, at the foot of which sit the three Nornas, known as the past, present, and future. They also believed that there would some day be a struggle of the gods and Jotuns, or dwellers in the chaotic world, and that at last the gods, Jotuns, and Time himself would all sink down into darkness, from which in due season there should issue forth a new heaven and a new earth, in which a higher god and supreme justice shall at last reign.

So their religion was only a religion of war; and, to be brave in battle, they thought the most pleasing devotion they could show to their warlike gods. So this contest between the Danes and Saxons was not only one for the possession of the fruitful land of England, but was a contest between Paganism and Christianity. King Alfred was a devout Christian, and although the Saxons' ideas of religion were mixed with much superstition and bigotry, they believed in the true God, Jehovah, and in salvation through the redemption of Jesus Christ; although the pure Gospel, as taught by Christ himself when on the earth more than eight hundred years before this time, had become mixed with all sorts of legends of saints and marvellous stories fabricated by the priests, and handed down as traditions among the people, whose ignorance placed them completely under the sway of the only class of men who were educated sufficiently to read and write, and by whom all copies were made of such books as they possessed at that day, which consisted only of rolls of parchment, penned laboriously by hand in the various monasteries, [182] scattered throughout the different kingdoms of the then civilized world. The most famous battle between the Saxons and the Danes is known as the battle of Ashdown, and is thus described in the old English annals:—

"At early dawn the hosts were on foot. Alfred marched up promptly with his men to give battle, but King Ethelred stayed long time in his tent at prayer hearing the mass. Now the Christians had determined that King Ethelred with his men should fight the two pagan kings, and that Alfred his brother, with his men, should take the chance of war against the earls. Things being so arranged, the king remained long time in prayer, while the pagans pressed on swiftly to the fight. Then Alfred, though holding the lower command, could no longer support the onslaught of the enemy without retreating, or charging upon them without waiting for his brother. A moment of fearful anxiety was this for the young prince, who thus no doubt mused: 'Bagsac and the two Sidrocs at the top of the down with double my numbers, already overlapping my flanks: Ethelred still at mass—dare I go up at them? In the name of God and St. Cuthbert, yes!' and with a strong heart, brave for this great crisis, Alfred puts himself at the head of his men, and leads them up the slope against the whole pagan host, 'With the rush of a wild boar.' For he too relied on the help of God. He formed his men in a dense phalanx to meet the foe, which was never broken in that long fight. Mass being over, Ethelred comes up to the help of his brother, and the battle raged along the whole hillside. The pagans occupied the higher ground, and the Christians came up from below. There was also in that place, a single stunted thorn-tree. Round this tree the [183]

opposing hosts came together with loud shouts from all sides, the one party to pursue their wicked course, the other to fight for their lives, their wives and children, and their country. And, when both sides had fought long and bravely, at last the pagans, by God's judgment, gave way, being no longer able to abide the Christian onslaught; and after losing a great part of their army, broke in shameful flight. One of their two kings and five earls were there slain, together with many thousand pagans, who covered with their bodies the whole plain of Ashdown. And all the pagan host pursued its flight, not only until night, but through the next day, even until they reached the stronghold from which they had come forth. The Christians followed, slaying all they could reach until dark. Neither before nor since was ever such slaughter known since the Saxons first gained England by their arms."

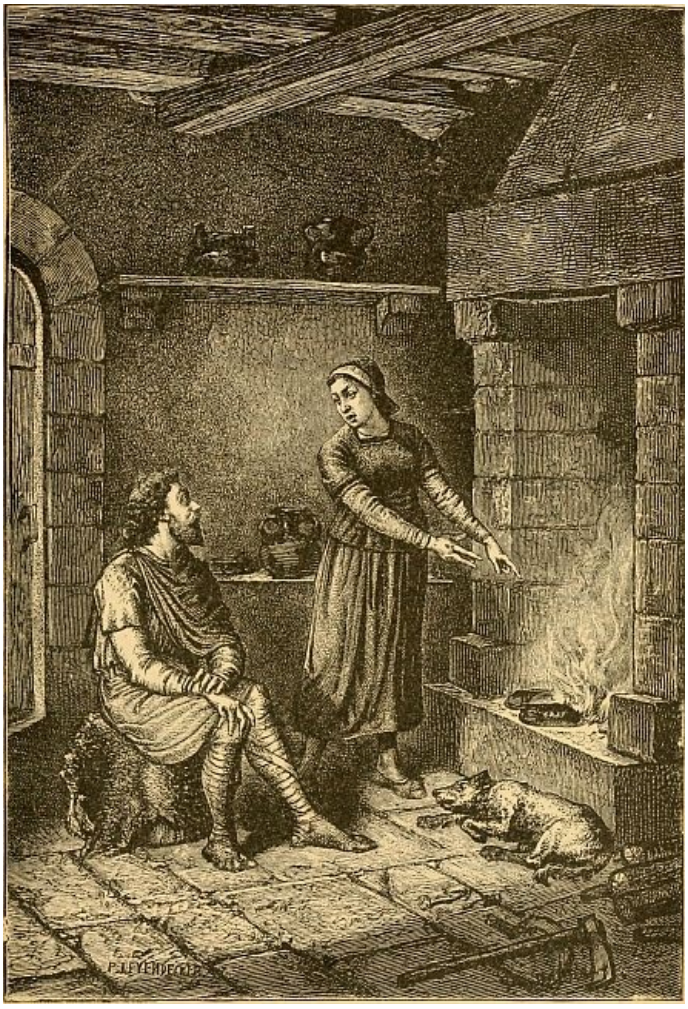
Alfred's decision and promptness, in that time of emergency, not only won the day, but hardened his own nerve to flint, and his judgment, amid the clash of arms, to steel. Through all the weary years of battle and misfortune that followed, there was no sign of indecision and faint-heartedness. He had conquered fear and hesitancy there, as valiantly as he had conquered temptations to evil in his earlier youth. About two months after the battle of Ashdown, Ethelred and Alfred fought for the last time together, against their unwearied foes. In this contest Ethelred was mortally wounded, and died soon after, and was buried by Alfred with kingly honors in Wimborne Minster.

Alfred, now at the age of twenty-three, ascended the throne of his fathers, which seemed at that time tottering, and was not an inheritance to be desired in the year of 871, when Alfred [184] succeeded his brother. It would not be surprising if for a moment he lost heart and hope, and allowed himself to doubt whether God would by his hand deliver his afflicted people from their relentless foes. In the eight pitched battles which had been fought with the pagan army, the flower of the youth of the Saxon nation had fallen. Kent, Sussex, and Surrey were at the mercy of the Danes. London had been pillaged and was in ruins, and several provinces in his own Wessex had been desolated. The Danes were even then striking into new districts, and if the rich lands yet unplundered were to be saved from their voracious grasp, it would only be by prompt and decisive action.

A month has passed since the death of Alfred's brother and his succession to this tottering throne. Alfred, with the greatest difficulty, collects enough men to take the field openly. The first great battle that Alfred fought, as king, was at Wilton. At first Alfred's troops carried all before them, but the tide turned in favor of the Danes, and Alfred and the Saxons were driven from the field. There was immense loss upon both sides, and a treaty was agreed upon between Alfred and Hubba, the Danish chieftain. By this treaty, the Danes were to retire from Alfred's dominions, provided that he would not interfere with their conquests in other parts of England. Alfred has been censured for making this treaty; but he was obliged to choose between protection for his own realm, and perhaps the entire destruction and overthrow of not only his dominions, but of all England. He had no power to aid others, and therefore endeavored to protect, if possible, his own subjects. The Danes then went to Mercia. The king of Mercia was Buthred, the brother-in-law of Alfred. Buthred paid the Danes large sums of money to leave his kingdom. The Danes departed [185] for a while, but treacherously returned, and were again bought off. Hubba scarcely left the kingdom this time, but spent the money received, and then went to plundering as before, regardless of all promises. Buthred, in despair, fled the country and went to Rome, where he died soon after of grief. The Danes then took possession of Mercia, and set over the people a king from whom they demanded an annual tribute. In the meantime, new hordes of Danes arrived in England; and one place after another was plundered by them, and they obtained possession of the town of Exancester (now Exeter), which was a great loss to Alfred. King Alfred then determined to meet the Danes upon their own element; and he built and equipped a small fleet, and was successful in his first encounter with his enemies, having defeated a fleet of Danish ships in the channel, and having captured one of the largest of their vessels.

But after all, Alfred gained no decisive victory over his foes. He then tried to bind the Danes by Christian oaths, in making a treaty with them. The Danes were accustomed to swear by a certain ornament which they wore, when they wished to impose a very solemn religious oath; and to swear by this bracelet was to place themselves under the most solemn obligations they could assume. Alfred, however, was not satisfied with this pagan ceremony, but obliged them, in one treaty, to swear by certain Christian relics, which were held in great awe and sacredness by the Saxons. But the Danes broke their treaties with the most reckless defiance; and, as years passed, Alfred found his army broken, his resources exhausted, his towns and castles taken, until about eight years after his coronation at Winchester, as monarch of the most powerful of all the Saxon [186] kingdoms, he found himself unable to resist the further attacks of the Danes, who had come over in fresh hordes, and captured his kingdom of Wessex; which calamity Alfred was powerless to prevent.

The Saxon chieftains and nobles fled in terror, and Alfred himself, with only one or two trusty friends, retired to the vast forests, which skirted the remote western frontiers of his once proud realm. It was during these homeless wanderings that the incident is said to have occurred, which has ever since been related of this bitter experience of want and misery in the life of Alfred the Great. The story is, that Alfred, weary and hungry, sought shelter in the miserable hut of a cow-herd, who gave him such poor fare as his lowly lot allowed. Alfred, while remaining with these simple folks, was one day engaged in mending his arrows, when the cow-herd's wife, totally unconscious of the rank and station of her guest, requested him, in no polite terms, to watch her cakes which were baking in the coals, while she employed herself in other labors. King Alfred,



ALFRED AND THE CAKES.

absorbed in his sorrowful musings, forgot the injunctions of the ill-natured woman, and so allowed her cakes to burn; which, when she perceived, she gave him a good scolding; saying, “You man! you will not turn the bread you see burning, but you will be very glad to eat it when it is done!” This unlucky woman little thought she was addressing the great King Alfred.

Alfred, though restless and wretched in his apparently hopeless seclusion, bore his privations with patience and fortitude, and did not cease to plan some way by which he might reorganize his forces and rescue his country from the ruin into which it had fallen. Alfred now established himself at a place called [187] Ethelney; and, having gradually collected a few followers, they built a kind of fortress, where Alfred’s family at length joined him, and to which numbers of his old troops began to repair. The following incident is recorded in the old annals concerning this time in King Alfred’s life. It was very difficult to supply his little garrison with food, and sometimes they found themselves in sore want. At one time the provisions in the house were nearly exhausted, and to add to their distress, it was also in the winter. All of Alfred’s little band having gone away with their fishing apparatus and bows and arrows in the hope of securing some food, Alfred was left alone with only one attendant. King Alfred was sitting reading, when a beggar came to the door and asked for food. Alfred, looking up from his book, inquired of his attendant what food there was in the house. It was found that there was only a single loaf of bread remaining, and a little wine in a pitcher. This would not be half enough for their own wants, should the hunting party return unsuccessful. Alfred ordered half of the loaf to be given to the stranger; but when he had been served he was seen no more, and the loaf remained whole, as though none had been taken from it, and the pitcher was now full to the brim. Alfred, meantime, had turned to his reading, over which he fell asleep, and dreamed that St. Cuthbert stood by him and told him it was he who had been his guest; and that God had seen his afflictions and those of his people, which were now about to end, in token whereof his people would return that day from their expedition with a great take of fish. And while Alfred yet mused on this strange dream from which he had awakened, his servants came in, bringing fish enough to have fed an army. The legend also goes on to say, that on the next morning King Alfred went [188] forth in the forests and wound his horn thrice, which drew to him before noon five hundred men. Another story is told of the manner in which King Alfred discovered the number and power of his enemies’ forces. It is said that he assumed the garb of a minstrel, and with one attendant visited the camp of the Dane Guthrum. Here he stayed, amusing the Danish king and nobles with his songs and harp, boldly venturing into their very tents, until he had learned all he desired to know concerning their plans.

Whereupon he returned to Ethelney; and the time having arrived for a great effort, he sent word to his people to meet him at a place called Egbert’s Stone. Here, on the 12th of May, 878, King Alfred met his gathered forces, and losing no time, moved forward toward Guthrum’s camp. Alfred encamped for the night on an eminence from which he could watch the movements of his enemies. That night, as he was sleeping in his tent, he had a remarkable dream. St. Neot appeared to him, and told him to have no fear of the immense army of pagans whom he was about to encounter on the morrow, as God had taken him under his special protection, having accepted his penitence for all his faults; he might now go forward into the battle without fear, as God was about to give him the victory over all his enemies.

The king related this dream to his army the next morning, and the men were inspired with new ardor and enthusiasm as Alfred led them to the camp where their enemies lay; for it was Alfred’s intention to surprise the Danes. The Saxons advanced to the attack; and the Danes, surprised and terror-stricken, soon began to yield. At last the flight among the pagans became general. They were pursued by Alfred’s victorious columns. The retreating army was in a short time reduced to [189] a small force, which, with Guthrum at their head, reached a castle, where they took refuge. Guthrum, shut up in this castle, was now besieged by Alfred’s forces; and when many of his men were raving in the delirium of famine and thirst, or dying in dreadful agony, he could resist no longer, but surrendered to Alfred. Thus King Alfred was once more in possession of his kingdom. The treaty which Alfred now made with the Danes evinces his generous Christian forgiveness;

and perhaps even the pagan Guthrum, in accepting the terms proposed, was influenced by emotions of gratitude and admiration for the example of Christian virtue which Alfred exhibited. As the Danes had now become so intermingled with the Saxons by their long residence in England and frequent intermarriages, Alfred determined to expel only the armed forces from his dominions, allowing those peaceably disposed to remain in quiet possession of such lands in other parts of the island as they already occupied. Instead, therefore, of treating Guthrum with harshness and severity as a captive enemy, he told him that he was willing to give him his liberty, and to regard him, on certain conditions, as a friend and an ally, and to allow him to reign as king over that part of England which his countrymen already possessed. The conditions were that Guthrum was to go away with his forces out of Alfred's kingdom under solemn oaths never to return; that he was to give hostages for the faithful fulfilment of these stipulations; and that Guthrum should become a convert to Christianity, and publicly avow his adhesion to the Saxon faith by being baptized in the presence of the leaders of both armies in the most open and solemn manner. These conditions were accepted, and some weeks after the surrender, the baptism was [190] performed in the presence of many chieftains of both nations. Guthrum's Christian name which he received at this ceremony was Ethelstan. King Alfred was his god-father. The various ceremonies connected with the baptism were protracted through several days, and were followed by a number of festivities and public rejoicings. The admission of the pagan chieftain into the Christian church did not mark, perhaps, any real change in his personal opinions, but it prepared the way for the reception of the Christian faith by his followers; and Alfred, in leading Guthrum to the baptismal font, was achieving, in the estimation of all England, France, and Rome, a far greater and nobler victory than when he conquered his enemies on the field of battle. A full and formal treaty of peace was now concluded between the two sovereigns; for Guthrum received the title of king, and was to hold a separate kingdom in the dominions assigned to him. Guthrum endeavored to keep this treaty faithfully, and whenever other parties of Danes came upon the coast of England, they found no favor or assistance from him against the Saxons.

The generosity and nobleness of mind displayed in his treatment of Guthrum made a great impression on the world at that time, and has never ceased to throw a halo of glory around the memory of this good and great king. Many stories are told to illustrate the kindness of Alfred the Great. It is said that once, while hunting in the forest with a party, he heard the cries of a child, which seemed to come from the air above their heads. It was found, after much searching, that the sounds proceeded from an eagle's nest in the top of a lofty tree. On climbing to the nest, it was discovered that a child had been carried by the eagle to its nest, and the infant was [191] screaming with pain and terror. Alfred ordered the boy to be brought to his castle, and not being able to find the parents of the child, he adopted him as his own son, gave him a good education, and provided for him well when he grew to manhood. King Alfred manifested great interest in the arts of peace, notwithstanding the warlike influences and habits of his life. He was the ruler of a race capable of appreciating intelligence, order, justice, and system; and, foreseeing the future power of this people, his chief attention during all the years of his reign was devoted to their advancement in learning, setting them an example in his own case by pressing forward diligently in his own studies, even in the midst of his overwhelming cares. It was not possible in those days to educate the masses, as there were no books; but Alfred made great efforts to promote the intellectual improvement of his people, which was all the more remarkable at that time when all other monarchs were ambitious only of their own power and personal glory. King Alfred wrote and translated many books, which were copied and, so far as it was possible, circulated amongst those who could read them. These writings of King Alfred exerted a wide influence. They remained in manuscript until the art of printing was invented, when many of them were printed. Some of the original manuscripts may still be seen in various English museums. One of the greatest of King Alfred's measures was the founding of the great university of Oxford. He also repaired the castles, which had become dilapidated in the wars. He rebuilt the ruined cities, organized governments for them, restored the monasteries, and took pains to put men of learning and piety in charge of them. He revised the laws of his kingdom. Through all his reign, his desire [192] was to lay lasting foundations for the permanent prosperity of his realm. His own life was governed by fixed principles of justice and of duty; and his calm, patient, unselfish character gave him a wide influence over his people, and made him a shining example of the truths he endeavored to impress upon them. King Alfred invented a plan for marking the different hours of the day by the burning of wax candles, so exactly made as to size that they would each burn a certain fixed time. The candles were each a foot long, and would burn four hours. They were divided into inches by marks upon them, and each inch would last twenty minutes. A large number of these candles were prepared, and a person was appointed to keep a succession of them burning in a chapel, and to ring bells to designate the successive periods of time denoted by their burning. There was one difficulty, however, which interfered somewhat with their exactness, which was that the blowing of any slight breeze or draught would make the burning uncertain. To obviate this trouble, King Alfred contrived a kind of lantern made of sheets of horn so thin that they were almost transparent. A plate of horn was set in each of the four sides of a box, which was fastened over the candle, thus forming a sort of rude lantern. This was the first lantern in England, and King Alfred is generally credited with being their first inventor; but as Diogenes, the Greek philosopher, was said to have carried a lantern in the old story, the English lantern of King Alfred may not have been the earliest ever invented. Alfred the Great was very systematic about the employment of his own time. He was accustomed to give one-third of the twenty-four hours to sleep and refreshment, one-third to business, and one-third to religious duties. Under this last head was probably included study, writing, and the management of [193] ecclesiastical affairs. At length, however, at the close of King Alfred's life, a famous Northman leader, named Hastings, landed in England, at the head of a large force, so that Alfred's reign

ended as it had begun,—in desperate and protracted conflicts with the Danes. Hastings had made one previous invasion into England, but Guthrum, faithful to his promise to Alfred, repulsed him. But Guthrum was now dead, and so King Alfred was forced to meet this tireless and implacable foe again. Year after year passed, during which a succession of battles were fought between the two nations, now the Danes gaining an advantage, now the Saxons. Hastings was finally expelled from England in 897, and once more Alfred's kingdom was at peace. But King Alfred's life was now drawing very near its close. His children had now grown to manhood, and repaid his love and care by endeavoring to imitate their illustrious father's example. His eldest son Edward was to succeed King Alfred on the English throne. A daughter named Ethelfleda, who was married to a prince of Mercia, was famed all over England for the superiority of her mind, her many accomplishments, and her devoted piety. Alfred the Great was fifty-two years of age when he died. His body was interred in the great cathedral at Winchester, and the kingdom passed peacefully to his son. His own dying farewell to his son Edward is the best memorial encomium which can be passed upon his life, and he most truly earned the title of Alfred the Great,—great in wisdom, great in power, and, best of all, great in goodness; and his purified spirit passed from earth with these truly great words upon his dying lips:—

"Thou, my dear son, sit thee now beside me, and I will deliver thee true instructions. I feel that [194]
my hour is coming. My strength is gone; my countenance is wasted and pale; my days are almost ended. We must now part. I go to another world, and thou art left alone in the possession of all that I have thus far held. I pray thee, my dear child, to be a father to thy people. Be the children's father and the widow's friend. Comfort the poor, protect and shelter the weak, and, with all thy might, right that which is wrong. And, my son, govern *thyself* by *law*. Then shall the Lord love thee, and God himself shall be thy reward. Call thou upon Him to advise thee in all thy need, and He shall help thee to compass all thy desires."

RICHARD CŒUR DE LION.

A.D. 1157-1199.

[195]

"Yet looks he like a king; behold his eye,
As bright as is the eagle's, lightens forth
Controlling majesty."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE history of Richard Cœur de Lion is a history of the third crusade, and the most memorable one of all. Upon the side of the Mussulmans was Saladin, sultan of Egypt and Syria. Saladin, whose name means "splendor of religion," was a noble and generous man, and though a Mohammedan, he often evinced a far more humane and commendable spirit than many of his foes, who called themselves Christians. Upon the side of the Mohammedans, as well as that of the Christians, this conflict was regarded as a holy war; for the Christians were fighting to obtain Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre, where the body of Jesus Christ was supposed to have lain, while the Mohammedans were just as zealously fighting to retain Jerusalem; and Saladin's answer to the Christians, when they demanded the surrender of that city was, "Jerusalem never was yours, and we may not without sin give it up to you; for it is the place where the mysteries of our religion were accomplished; and the last one of my soldiers will perish before the Mussulmans renounce conquests made in the name of Mohammed."

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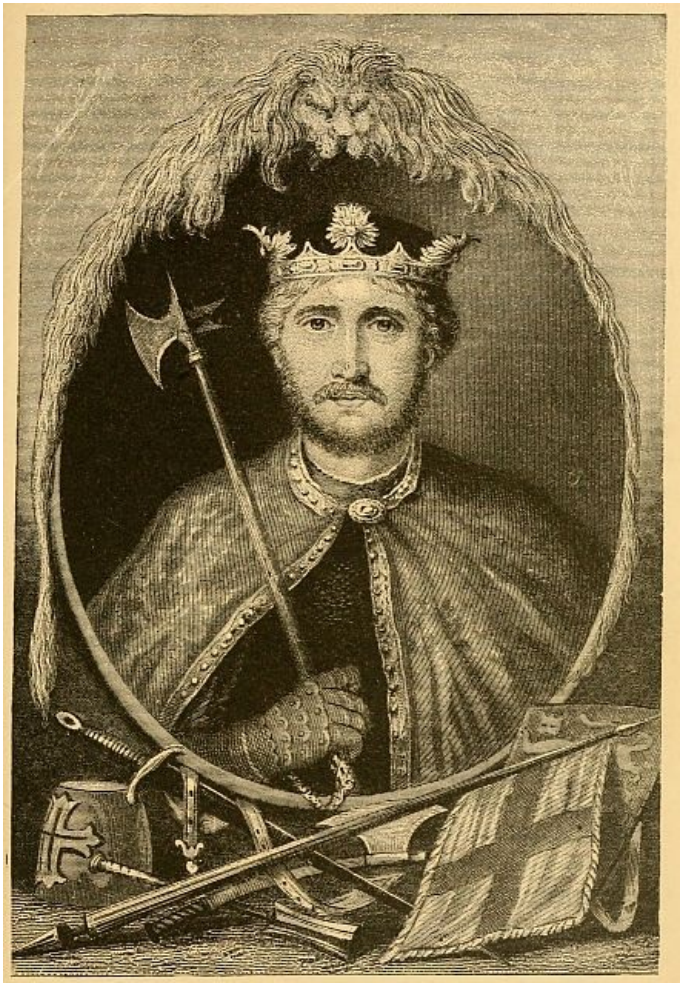


RICHARD CŒUR DE LION.

Before the time of Richard the Lion-Hearted, Jerusalem had been conquered by the Christians, and they had set up in it a king. This was in 1099, when the crusaders elected Godfrey de Bouillon as king of Jerusalem. But he reigned but one year and died. In the space of one hundred and seventy-one years, from the coronation of Godfrey de Bouillon as king of Jerusalem in 1099, to the last crusade under Louis IX. of France, in 1270, there were seven crusades which were undertaken by the kings of France and England, the emperors of Germany, the king of Denmark, and various princes of Italy. They all failed in the end of accomplishing the permanent possession of the city of Jerusalem by the Christians; but these various crusades called forth a number of devout and self-sacrificing monks and bishops, and gave occasion for brave and valiant deeds by many knights and kings, and none were so brave, and none became so famous in the annals of these holy wars as Richard I., king of England, called by the Christians Cœur de Lion, the Lion-hearted, on account of his valor, and for the same reason feared among the Mohammedans, and called by them Malek-Rik; and so great a terror did this name become, that when St. Louis, more than fifty years after, led the French to another crusade, they heard the Saracen mothers scolding their children, and threatening them with punishment by the dreadful Malek-Rik, who had never been forgotten. The first of the crusades had been inspired by a zealous monk, called Peter the Hermit. From the earliest days of Christianity, many pious persons had made pilgrimages to Palestine, to visit the graves of saints and other places. After a time, these pilgrimages had been extended to Jerusalem; and that city at length, having fallen into the hands of the Turks, the Christian people were treated with cruelty, and many of the clergy were imprisoned and even killed. Peter the Hermit had been to [197] Jerusalem, and having himself been an eye-witness of the cruelties of the Turks towards the Christians, he obtained permission of the Pope to go to the principal courts in Europe, and exhort all Christian warriors to take up arms against the infidels in the Holy Land. Peter the Hermit walked from court to court, barefoot and clothed in rags. He was listened to as a prophet, and succeeded in inspiring many knights and crowds of people to enlist in what they considered a sacred cause. The symbol of this enlistment was a cross of red stuff sewed to the shoulder of the cloak; hence the name crusade. France was at this time roused to great excitement. The barons sold and pledged their lands to obtain the means of joining the expedition. The Pope promised a full remission of sins to all who assumed the cross; and as the mass of the people were so ignorant in those days that the word of the Pope was held to be as sacred as a voice from heaven, and his blessing or excommunication was regarded by them as powerful enough to raise them to Paradise, or call down upon them everlasting destruction, thousands of wicked persons, whose sins were so many that it would have required years of penance to have gained the much-coveted

absolvance from the Pope, eagerly seized upon this method of winning earthly glory, and, as they supposed, heavenly honor. It is said that a crowd of more than a million of persons, including beggars, women and children, soon pledged themselves to this crusade. Three hundred thousand of such a motley company started, with Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless marching at their head. Nearly the entire number fell victims to the fury of their assailants in the countries through which they passed. This company of helpless beggars, women and children, were followed by three hundred thousand fighting men, who had been preparing in the different [198] kingdoms, mostly in France. Of this large host, only a small remnant under Godfrey de Bouillon, arrived at Jerusalem, and captured that city in 1099, and planted the standard of the cross on its walls.

St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, roused the people again for the second crusade, for it was discovered that the Turks had massacred the Christians in Palestine, and that Jerusalem was in danger. King Louis VII. of France, and the emperor Conrad III. of Germany, espoused the cause. Although Louis and Conrad entered the city of Jerusalem and determined upon the siege of Damascus, nothing permanent was accomplished. The siege of Damascus was abandoned, and the crusade-sovereigns returned to their respective kingdoms.

During the forty years' interval between the end of the second and the beginning of the third crusades, the relative positions of the West and East, Christian Europe and Mussulman Asia, remained much the same. But in 1187, news again reached Europe of repeated disasters to the Christians in Asia. Egypt had become the goal of ambition, and Saladin, the most illustrious as well as the most powerful of Mussulman sovereigns, being sultan of Egypt and Syria, had fought against a Christian army near Tiberias. The oriental chronicles thus describe the conflict: "The Christian army was surrounded by the Saracens, and also, ere long, by the fire, which Saladin had ordered to be set to the dry grass which covered the plain. The flames made their way and spread beneath the feet of men and horses. There the sons of Paradise and the children of fire settled their terrible quarrel. Arrows hurtled in the air like a noisy flight of sparrows, and the [199] blood of warriors dripped upon the ground like rain-water. Hill, plain, and valley were covered with their dead; their banners were stained with dust and blood, their heads were laid low, their limbs scattered, their carcasses piled on a heap like stones." Four days after the battle of Tiberias in July, 1187, Saladin took possession of St. Jean d'Acre, and in the following September, of Ascalon. In the same month he laid siege to Jerusalem. The Holy City contained at that time, it is said, nearly one hundred thousand Christians, who had fled for safety from all parts of Palestine. Saladin's taking of Jerusalem is thus described by Guizot. "On approaching its walls, Saladin sent for the principal inhabitants, and said to them, 'I know as well as you that Jerusalem is the house of God, and I will not have it assaulted if I can get it by peace and love. I will give you thirty thousand byzants of gold if you promise me Jerusalem, and you shall have liberty to go whither you will and do your tillage, to a distance of five miles from the city. And I will have you supplied with such plenty of provisions that in no place on earth shall they be so cheap. You shall have a truce from now to Whitsuntide, and when this time comes, if you see that you may have aid, then hold on. But if not, you shall give up the city, and I will have you conveyed in safety to Christian territory, yourselves and your substance.' 'We may not yield up to you a city where died our God,' answered the envoys, 'and still less may we sell you.' The siege lasted fourteen days. After having repulsed several assaults, the inhabitants saw that effectual resistance was impossible, and the commandant of the place, a knight, named Balian d'Ibelin, an old warrior who had been at the battle of Tiberias, returned to Saladin, and asked for the conditions back [200] again which had been at first rejected. Saladin, pointing to his own banner already planted upon several parts of the battlements, answered, 'It is too late, you surely see that the city is mine.' 'Very well, my lord,' replied the knight, 'we will ourselves destroy our city, and the mosque of Omar, and the stone of Jacob, and when it is nothing but a heap of ruins, we will sally forth with sword and fire in hand, and not one of us will go to Paradise without having sent ten Mussulmans to hell.' Saladin understood enthusiasm and respected it, and to have had the destruction of Jerusalem connected with his name would have caused him deep displeasure. He therefore consented to the terms of capitulation demanded of him. The fighting men were permitted to retreat to Tyre or Tripolis, which cities were in the power of the Christians, and the simple inhabitants of Jerusalem had their lives preserved, and permission given them to purchase their freedom on certain conditions; but, as many amongst them could not find the means, Malek-Adhel, the sultan's brother, and Saladin himself, paid the ransom of several thousands of captives. All Christians, however, with the exception of Greeks and Syrians, had orders to leave Jerusalem within four days. When the day came, all the gates were closed except that of David, by which the people were to go forth, and Saladin, seated upon a throne, saw the Christians defile before him. First came the patriarch, followed by the clergy carrying the sacred vessels and the ornaments of the church of the Holy Sepulchre. After him came Sibylla, queen of Jerusalem, who had remained in the city, whilst her husband, Guy de Lusignan, had been a prisoner at Nablous since the battle of Tiberias. Saladin saluted her respectfully, and spoke to her kindly. He had too great a soul to take pleasure in the humiliation of greatness." The capture [201] of Jerusalem again roused Europe to arms, but the story of this third crusade will be more fully narrated, as we proceed with the personal history of Richard the Lion-hearted, who became the chief and most illustrious figure in the annals of this third holy war.

Eleanor, the mother of Richard Cœur de Lion, had herself participated in the second crusade. Eleanor's grandfather was duke of Aquitaine, a rich kingdom in the south of France. His son, the father of Eleanor, had been killed in the first crusade, and the duke of Aquitaine determined to resign his kingdom in favor of his grand-daughter, and marry her to Prince Louis VII., then heir to the throne of France. This was accomplished, and King Louis VI. of France, dying soon after

the marriage, Eleanor became queen of France, as well as duchess of Aquitaine. This princess had been well educated for those times, and was even celebrated for her learning, as she possessed the rare accomplishments of being able to read and write, as well as to sing the songs of the Troubadours, which was the fashionable music of the courts. King Louis VII., her husband, was a very pious man, much more fond of devotion than of pleasure, so he determined to go on a crusade, and Queen Eleanor, from a gay love of adventure, resolved to accompany him. Eleanor and her court ladies laid aside their feminine attire, and clothed themselves as Amazons, taking good care, however, to provide a most cumbersome amount of baggage, containing their usual rich costumes and delicate luxuries, which proved so great a burden in transportation that the king remonstrated against such a needless and troublesome excess of useless finery. But the ladies carried their point, and the crusading expedition, which should have been composed of an [202] army of valiant warriors, became an immense train of women and baggage, requiring the constant care of the princes, barons, and knights, many of them reluctant participants, who had been shamed by the taunts of these ladies into joining an expedition which had been organized upon so wild and heedless a plan as to insure only disaster and failure. But the gay ladies exclaimed to any man who dared to express any thoughts of remaining at home, “We will send you our distaffs as presents. We have no longer any use for them, but as you are intending to stay at home and make women of yourselves, we will send them to you, so that you may occupy yourselves with spinning while we are gone.”

Notwithstanding this apparent zeal which Eleanor and her court ladies displayed, their caprices and freaks continued to harass and interfere with the expedition, during the entire crusade, and Queen Eleanor so displeased King Louis by her gay and frivolous conduct, that a long and serious quarrel arose between them, and he declared that he would obtain a divorce from her. But his ministers tried to prevent this, as Eleanor possessed the rich kingdom of Aquitaine in her own right, which would be lost to Louis by a separation. So they returned from the Holy Land to Paris, still as king and queen of France. But in about two years after, Eleanor determined to be divorced from King Louis of France, so that she might marry Prince Henry Plantagenet, who afterwards became Henry II., of England. Prince Henry’s father had received the name Plantagenet from a habit he had of wearing a spray of broom blossom in his cap. The French name for this plant is *genet*, and so he was nicknamed Plantagenet, and his son Henry II. was the first king in that family, also called the House of Anjou. Although Henry II. was king of [203] England, by his marriage with Eleanor, which took place only a short time after she obtained a divorce from King Louis of France, Henry gained the great dukedom of Aquitaine, and as he already possessed Normandy and Anjou, he really was lord of nearly half of France. He ruled England well, but he cared more for power than what was right, and he often indulged in such exhibitions of fierce rage, that he would roll on the floor and bite the rushes with which it was strewn. At the time of his marriage with Eleanor, Henry was duke of Normandy, and was only twenty years of age, while Eleanor was thirty-two; but she was very much in love with him, and as she could bring him such a rich kingdom, and furnish him men and money to help him secure the crown of England, which was at that time held by King Stephen, whom Henry declared was a usurper, he was willing to accept Eleanor as his wife, although she was nearly twice his own age, and was also the divorced wife of King Louis. Some historians place the blame of the divorce upon Eleanor, some upon Louis; but all unite in condemning her previous conduct, for she occasioned many scandalous remarks by her undignified, unwifely, and even culpable actions. After she became queen of England, however, she changed in this respect, and her after quarrels with Henry were occasioned by her ambitions and his conduct regarding a lady called the Fair Rosamond, who afterwards became a nun in a convent near Oxford. Some historians think that Henry was in reality married to Rosamond before he was persuaded to espouse Eleanor, in order to gain her rich possessions. Though Eleanor had equally wronged her former husband, Louis, she made no excuse for King Henry’s devotion to Rosamond, and when she discovered Henry’s [204] affection for her, she ordered that she should be shut up in a convent out of the way. To this King Henry consented, but the jealousy of the queen against her rival was never abated, and added great bitterness to the other causes of discord between herself and King Henry, which at last broke out in the open rebellion of Queen Eleanor and her sons against the king, so that Henry would often be obliged to raise armies to put down the various disturbances caused by first one son, then another, then all together, encouraged by their mother Eleanor, who however seemed to have inspired more love and devotion in the hearts of her sons than their father. Almost all the early years of the life of Richard were spent in wars which were waged by different members of his father’s family against each other. These wars originated in the quarrels between King Henry and his sons, in respect to the family property. As Henry II. held a great many possessions which he had inherited through his father, grandfather, and his wife Eleanor, he was duke of one country, earl of a second, king of a third, and count of a fourth. Henry had five sons, of whom Richard was the third, and he was born about three years after Eleanor was crowned queen of England, when, upon the death of King Stephen, Henry became king of that country. Henry II. was a generous father, and as his sons became old enough, he gave them provinces of their own. But they were not contented with the portions allotted to them, and demanded more. Sometimes Henry would yield, at other times resist, when the sons would raise armies and rebel against their father, and then would follow the shocking spectacle of husband, wife, and sons, all fighting against each other. These wars continued for many years, the mother usually taking sides with [205] her sons, until King Henry shut her up in a castle, in a sort of imprisonment, where he kept her confined for sixteen years.

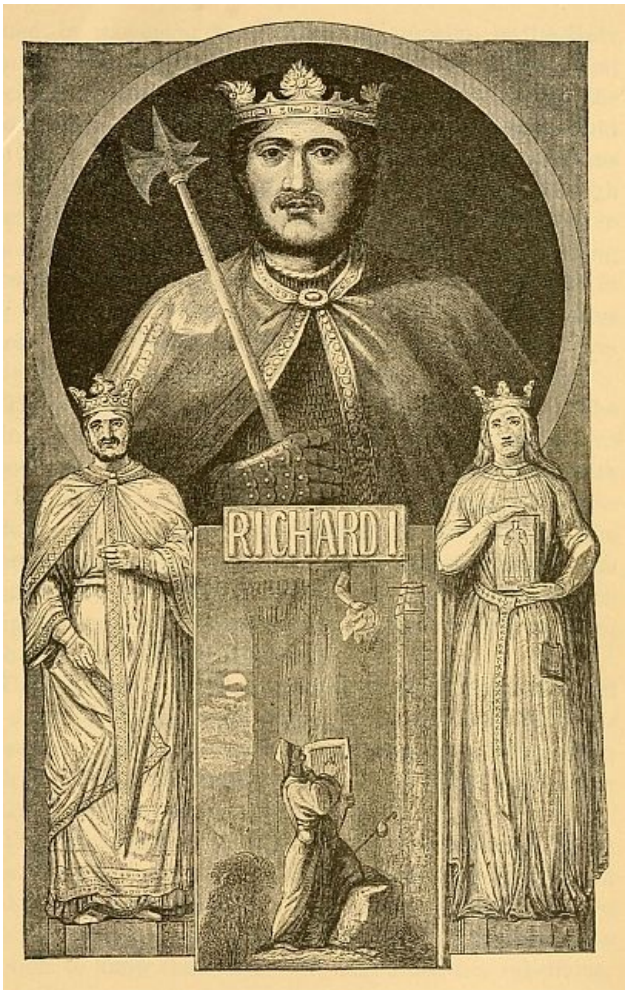
It was during the reign of Henry II. that the famous archbishop, Thomas à Becket, was murdered, under the following circumstances: Thomas à Becket had been one of Henry’s most

devoted friends and intimate counsellors, and Henry had raised him to the office of Chancellor. Afterwards Henry made Thomas à Becket bishop of Canterbury, but from that time serious differences arose between them. The king made many laws, one being, that if a priest or monk was thought to have committed any crime, he should be tried by civil judges, like other men; whereas Becket, in the name of the church, maintained that the clergy should be tried only by the bishops. This quarrel was so serious that Becket was forced to leave England and take refuge with the king of France. After six years, a half reconciliation took place, and the archbishop of Canterbury returned to England. Thomas à Becket soon again incurred the king's displeasure, and Henry exclaimed in anger, "Will no one rid me of this turbulent priest?" Whereupon four of his knights who had heard this remark, and thought that they would gain power over the king by carrying out this wish, immediately went to Canterbury, and finding the archbishop in the cathedral by the altar, they slew him. At first Henry was secretly glad, but the people and priests considered Thomas a martyr, and raised such an outcry of indignation, that three years after, King Henry went to the cathedral of Canterbury, and in order to show his penitence, he entered barefoot, and kneeling by the tomb of Thomas à Becket, he commanded every priest to strike him with a knotted rope upon his bare back. This he endured as an act of penance for causing the [206] death of the archbishop.

The first important event of Richard's childhood was his betrothment. When he was about four years of age he was formally affianced to Alice, the child of Louis, king of France. Alice was three years of age. Another of King Louis' children had been married in the same way to Richard's eldest brother Henry, and the English king complained that the dowry of the young French princess was not sufficient, and this quarrel was settled by an agreement that King Louis should give his other daughter Alice to Richard, and with her another province. These infant marriages, or betrothments, were made by kings in order to get possession of rich territories, for the father of the husbands became the guardians of the provinces, and received any sum of money agreed upon, which they usually appropriated to their own use. This betrothment of Richard became the cause of future differences between himself and Philip, the brother of Alice, when Richard had become king of England, and Philip king of France. At length, in the midst of one of the frequent wars between the king of England and his sons, his eldest son Henry was taken very sick, and being at the point of death, he sent to his father to obtain his forgiveness, and to beg that he would come to see him. The king, fearing it was only some stratagem to get him into the power of the rebellious young prince, who had often broken his word, did not dare to go, but sent an archbishop to Prince Henry, with a ring as a token of his forgiveness. The poor prince who was really dying, and very penitent for his unfilial conduct, pressed the ring to his dying lips with frantic tears of remorse, and commanded his attendants to lay him upon a bed of ashes, which he had ordered prepared, that he might die there as a sign of his sincere repentance. When King [207] Henry heard of the sad death of his eldest son, he was moved to tears, and releasing his wife Queen Eleanor from her imprisonment, he became reconciled to her for a time. But soon again the family dissensions arose. Prince Geoffrey, the second son of King Henry, was killed in a tournament, and Richard, who had now reached manhood, demanded that his father should give him the Princess Alice in marriage, and with her the lands and money intrusted to his care by the king of France. This King Henry refused to do. Some said, because he wished to keep the rich lands himself; others said, because he himself loved the Princess Alice, and that he was determined to seek a divorce from Queen Eleanor, so that he might marry the young princess. Whatever was his motive, King Henry refused to have Richard's marriage with Alice consummated, and kept the princess shut up in a castle. Whereupon Richard rebelled against his father, and persuaded his younger brother John to espouse his cause. Of course Eleanor took sides with her sons, so she was again shut up in a castle by King Henry, and Richard and John set off for Paris and gained the support of Philip II., of France, who was now king, as Louis was dead. King Henry had determined to divide his kingdom, and as John was his favorite as well as youngest, he resolved to have him crowned king of England, leaving his French possessions to Richard. Whereupon Richard carried off his young brother, and with the help of Philip, raised an army to fight against his father. In this war King Henry, who was now old and broken-spirited by his many sorrows, was so far defeated that he was obliged to submit to negotiations for peace. While the terms were being arranged, King Henry fell very ill, and when the articles of treaty [208] were brought to his bedside, he found that the name of his youngest son John, his darling, who had never rebelled against him before, now headed the list of the princes, barons, and nobles who had gone over to Richard's side. This quite broke his heart, and he exclaimed with tears, "Is it possible that John, the child of my heart, he whom I have cherished more than all the rest, and for love of whom I have drawn down on my own head all these troubles, has verily betrayed me? Then," said he, falling back helplessly upon the bed, "let everything go on as it will, I care no longer for myself, nor for anything else in the world." The king grew more and more excited, until at last he died in a raving delirium, cursing his rebellious children with his last breath. Thus Richard I. became king of England when he was about thirty-two years of age. The sad death of his father occasioned some remorse in the heart of Richard, and he joined in the funeral solemnities. King Henry had died in Normandy, and was buried in an abbey there.

King Richard now sent at once to England, and ordered the release of his mother Queen Eleanor, and invested her with power to act as regent there, while he himself remained in Normandy to secure his French possessions. Queen Eleanor was regent in England for two months, and employed her power in a very beneficent manner. Her imprisonment and sorrows had no doubt disposed her to kindness towards others, and remorse for her past evil deeds prompted her to many acts of mercy.

King Richard now arranged with King



Philip of France, to go upon a crusade. Richard was brave, though he was not a good man. His greatest delight was in fighting, and as his claims to his own kingdom were now undisputed, he was eager to enter into a [209] campaign in the Holy Land. His brother Prince John was very willing that Richard should go, and made no claims to any of the provinces of his father, for he hoped that Richard would be killed in the Holy War, and thus the rich kingdoms of England and Normandy would fall to him. Though Richard was brave, he was neither wise nor provident in the administration of his government. His one absorbing idea was how to gain fresh glory as a valiant knight in the war with the Saracens, and he levied heavy taxes upon all his dominions to raise the necessary funds required for the equipment of his army.

These Holy Wars were very costly expeditions. The princes, barons, and knights required very expensive armor, and rich trappings for their horses, and ships were to be bought and equipped, arms and ammunition provided, and large supplies of food purchased. Though the pretense was religious zeal in going out to fight for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre, the real motive which animated most of the participants in the several crusades, was love of glory and display.

Upon King Richard’s arrival in England, he proceeded at once to Winchester, where his father had kept his treasures. Richard found here a large sum of money, rich plate, and precious gems of great value. These he placed under the care of trusty officers.

The former adherents of Richard, when he was a prince rebelling against the lawful king his father, now supposed that they would be held by him in high esteem. But in this they were greatly disappointed. King Richard was wise enough to know that those who had aided his rebellions, might likewise aid others against his own supremacy. So he retained his father’s officers and experienced men of state.

The day upon which the coronation of Richard I. was celebrated by a very magnificent [210] ceremony in Westminster Abbey, has become historical not only on that account, but in consequence of a great massacre of the Jews, which resulted from a riot that broke out in Westminster and London immediately after the crowning of the king. The Jews had been persecuted by all the Christian nations of Europe, and the people imagined that they were serving the cause of religion in oppressing them, as they were considered little better than infidels and heathen. As Philip had banished the Jews from France, and confiscated their property, the Jews in England determined to send a delegation to conciliate Richard’s favor, and they accordingly came to Westminster at the time of his coronation, bearing rich presents. As Richard had commanded that no Jew or woman should be present at this ceremony, when the Jewish deputation came in and offered their presents amongst the rest, there was loud murmuring throughout the crowd.

King Richard gladly accepted their rich gifts, but as a Jew was attempting to enter at the gate, a bystander cried out, “Here comes a Jew!” and struck him a blow. Others now assailed him, and as he was escaping, bruised and bleeding, the cry was raised that the Jews were expelled by the king’s orders, and as a riot was now raised in the streets, which became a bloody fight between Jews and Christians, the rumor went forth that the king had ordered all the Jews to be killed. The mob instantly attempted to carry out this supposed order, and Jews were murdered everywhere, in the streets, in their homes; and when they barricaded their dwellings, the mob set fire to them, and men, women, and children perished in the flames.

The king and his nobles were meanwhile feasting in the great banqueting-hall at Westminster, [211] and for a time took no notice of the disturbance. At length officers were sent to suppress the mob, but it was too late. The enfuriated people paid no attention to the few soldiers sent to quell them, and only rested from their bloody work, from sheer exhaustion, about two o’clock the next day.

A few of the men engaged in the riot were afterwards brought to trial and punished, but King Richard found that so many of his chief men were implicated, that he let the matter drop, only issuing an edict, forbidding the Jews to be injured any more.

King Richard now entered upon his preparations for the crusade, with intense zeal. His great

need was money, and he seemed to think that the sacred cause was an excuse for most unkingly measures. Richard was endowed with a sort of reckless lion-like courage, which led him to look upon fighting as a sport, and as he had no one to fight at home, he espoused eagerly any pretense of a sacred cause which would give him the pleasure of killing as many men as he pleased, and thereby winning not disapprobation from the world, but loud plaudits for bravery, and zealous devotion to a holy enterprise. Strange delusion! That men should go forth to murder, rob, and devastate the land in the name of the meek and lowly Christ. Only ignorance and superstition could allow the human soul to be so infatuated with not only false, but most atrociously wicked, ideas, which were in entire opposition to the teachings of the Divine Leader whom they professed to follow.

In securing money for the crusade, King Richard resorted to many very questionable expedients. He proceeded to sell the royal domains which he had inherited from his father, and in [212] this manner disposed of castles, fortresses, and towns to the highest bidder. When remonstrated with for thus diminishing the crown property, he replied, “I would sell the city of London itself, if I could find a purchaser rich enough to buy it.”

Richard also sold high offices and titles of honor; and the historians state that King Richard’s presence-chamber became a regular place of trade, where castles, titles, offices, and honors were for sale, to whomsoever would give the best bargain. But the most disreputable manner of raising money was by imposing fines as a punishment for crimes, and then endeavoring to fix crimes upon the wealthy, so that they would be obliged to pay large sums to free themselves. Lastly, Richard sold the nominal regency of England to two wealthy courtiers, one a bishop, the other an earl. Or if he did not sell it to them outright, he arranged that they were to receive the power, and were to give him a large sum of money. He, however, stipulated that his brother John and his mother should have their share of influence in deciding upon measures concerning the government.

Notwithstanding Richard’s quarrels with his father, regarding his marriage with the Princess Alice when he became king, Richard seemed in no hurry to fulfil his engagement, and even determined to set it aside altogether, for he had met and loved a Spanish princess named Berengaria. But, lest this should cause a fresh quarrel with Philip, the brother of Alice, Richard resolved to keep his plans a secret. So he sent his mother Queen Eleanor to Spain to secure Berengaria for his wife, and Eleanor having been successful in her mission, the two ladies, with a train of barons and knights, set out for Italy, where Richard intended to meet them.

Meanwhile, the two kings, Philip and Richard, had continued their preparations for the [213] crusade. As Philip had no ships of his own, he made arrangements with the republic of Genoa to furnish him with ships, and so he departed for that place. Richard, having a large fleet, which he had sent round to Marseilles with orders to await him there, marched his army across France by land. So little reliance did either Philip or Richard place in each other, that neither of them would have thought it safe to leave his own dominions unless the other had been going also. They made a final treaty of alliance before starting, that they would defend the life and honor of the other upon all occasions; that neither would desert the other in time of danger; and that they would respect the dominions of each other.

When King Richard reached Marseilles, he found that his fleet had not arrived. It had been delayed by a storm. Richard, not waiting for his fleet, hired ten large vessels and twenty galleys, and embarked with a portion of his forces, leaving orders for the remainder to follow in the fleet, and to meet him at Messina, in Sicily.

Joanna, the sister of King Richard, had married the king of Sicily. He was now dead, and the throne had been seized by one Tancred, and Joanna had been shut up in a castle. King Richard determined to redress his sister’s wrongs, and after arriving at Genoa, where he found Philip, Richard set out on his way to Messina, stopping at Ostia, Naples, and Salerno, by the way. Having arrived at Messina, where Philip had also landed, Richard, having met his own fleet on the Italian side of the strait, entered the harbor with his ships and galleys fully manned and gayly decorated, while musicians were stationed on the decks, to blow trumpets and horns as the fleet [214] sailed along the shore. The Sicilians were quite alarmed to behold such a formidable host of foreign soldiers, and his allies, the French, did not like this grand display any better, for Philip had arrived with disabled ships, and immediately began to be very jealous of the growing fame of King Richard. Philip determined to leave Messina as speedily as possible, and proceed on his way towards the Holy Land, but having attempted it, and encountered a severe storm, he was obliged to turn back again. As winter had now set in, both kings found that they must remain there until spring. As soon as Richard landed his troops at Messina, he formed a great encampment on the seashore near the town, and then sent an embassy to Tancred, demanding Joanna’s release. Tancred, awed by Richard’s power, immediately complied with this demand, and Joanna being safely out of the power of her enemy, Richard forthwith attacked the city of Messina, and having captured it, Tancred made peace with Richard upon the following terms:—

Richard had a nephew about two years of age, named Arthur. Tancred had an infant daughter. So it was agreed that Arthur and this young daughter of Tancred should be affianced, and that Tancred should pay to Richard twenty thousand pieces of gold as her dowry. Richard was to receive this money as guardian of his nephew, and also twenty thousand pieces of gold besides, in full settlement of all claims of Joanna.

This treaty was drawn up in due form and signed, and sent for safe keeping to the Pope at Rome, and Richard having received the money, began immediately to lavish it in costly presents

to the barons and knights in both armies, which gave King Philip cause for suspicions, as he thought Richard was endeavoring to buy the allegiance of his troops, and soon an open quarrel [215] occurred between the two sovereigns. Richard's use of this trust money demonstrates the small regard he had for the just rights and claims of others. But the distrust which existed between Richard and Philip was no longer concealed. Tancred showed Richard a letter, which was said to have been written by Philip, in which Richard was bitterly denounced as a treacherous foe. Richard indignantly showed this letter to Philip, who denied having written it, and the two kings were soon in a hot dispute. Philip then declared that Richard was endeavoring to break his engagement with his sister Alice. Whereupon Richard retorted that he would never marry her.

The matter was finally settled by a compromise. Richard promised to pay a large sum of money to Philip, who agreed to relinquish all claims on the part of Alice. So Philip sailed away in March, and Richard selected from his fleet a few of his most splendid galleys, and with a chosen company of knights and barons, proceeded to the port in Italy, where Berengaria was staying, under the care of Joanna, Queen Eleanor having returned to England; and King Richard conducted the ladies to Messina. It being the season of Lent, the marriage was still postponed; and Joanna and Berengaria were provided with a strong and well-manned ship, and sailed with the expedition; it being the purpose of Richard to land at some port, after Lent, where the marriage ceremony would be performed. King Richard's fleet consisted of nearly two hundred vessels. There were thirteen great ships, and over fifty galleys, besides a large number of smaller vessels. Richard sailed at the head of his fleet, in a splendid galley, called the *Sea-Cutter*. This fine fleet sailed out of the harbor with flying banners, affording the Sicilians an imposing spectacle.

But storms overtook this brilliant array of ships, and soon the fleet was dispersed. Some of the [216] vessels were driven to Rhodes; others took refuge in Cyprus. Richard's galley went to Rhodes; but the ship containing Berengaria and Joanna was swept onward by the gale to the mouth of the harbor of Limesol, the principal port of Cyprus. The king of Cyprus, in accordance with the custom of those times, had seized upon the wrecks of several vessels belonging to Richard's fleet; and the commander of the ship in which the princess and queen had sailed, feared to land, lest some harm should come to the royal ladies.

After the storm, Richard set out with his part of the fleet, to find the missing vessels; and having arrived before Cyprus, he found the galley of Berengaria and Joanna safe, but learned that the king of Cyprus had seized upon several of his wrecked vessels, and claimed them as his prize. This was a common practice at that time, and the king of Cyprus had acted in accordance with a customary law, which, though a violation of the real rights of property, gave a person the liberty to confiscate wrecked vessels or goods. In later times, this law was annulled, but the king of Cyprus had the law upon his side; notwithstanding, Richard immediately prepared for war, for he was only too glad to find some pretext for attacking and capturing the fair isle of Cyprus. Richard's assault upon Limesol was successful; and King Richard, having signaled the galley of Joanna to advance, the whole army landed, and the ladies were lodged in one of the most magnificent of the palaces of the king of Cyprus. The daughter of the king of Cyprus was very beautiful, and was greatly terrified when she was brought into the presence of her father's conqueror. Richard gave her as an attendant to Berengaria, and sent the defeated king of Cyprus [217] to Tripoli, in Syria, where he was shut up in a dungeon, and secured with chains, which, however, in honor of his rank, were made of silver, overlaid with gold. But what mattered it to the poor imprisoned monarch that his galling chains were of costly metals, when he was shut up in a gloomy dungeon, and his daughter a prisoner in the hands of his enemy?

This poor king died in captivity, broken-hearted, four years after. Now, at last, the marriage of King Richard and Berengaria was celebrated with royal splendor. After the marriage ceremony, there was a coronation, when Richard was crowned king of Cyprus, and Berengaria as queen of both England and Cyprus.

The appearance of King Richard and Berengaria on this occasion was very striking. King Richard wore a rose-colored satin tunic, which was fastened by a jeweled belt about his waist. Over this was a mantle of striped silver tissue, brocaded with silver half-moons. He wore also a costly sword; the blade was of Damascus steel, the hilt of gold, and the scabbard was of silver, richly engraved. On his head was a scarlet bonnet, brocaded in gold, with figures of animals. He carried in his hand a truncheon, which was a sort of sceptre, very elaborately adorned. He was tall and well-formed, with yellow curls and a bright complexion; and when mounted upon his magnificent charger, he appeared a perfect model of military and manly grace. This horse was named Faunelle, and became quite a historical character, acquiring great fame by his strength and courage, and by the marvellous sagacity he displayed in the various battles in which he was engaged with his master. His trappings were very rich; the bit, stirrups, and all the metallic mountings of the saddle and bridle were of gold, and the crupper was adorned with two golden [218] lions. The costume of Queen Berengaria was equally magnificent. The veil was fastened to her head by a royal diadem, resplendent with gold and gems, and was surmounted by a *fleur de lis*, with so much foliage added to it that it had the appearance of being a double crown, symbolizing her double queenship, both of England and Cyprus.

The chief landing-point for expeditions of crusaders to the Holy Land was Acre, called also St. Jean d'Acre. It received its name from a military order, known as the Knights of St. John, who founded a monastery there for the safety and entertainment of pilgrims. This place was at this time in the hands of the Saracens; and Philip, the French king, who arrived before Richard, had in vain tried to capture it. King Richard, having left Cyprus, together with his bride and sister,

proceeded on his way to join Philip at Acre; but he met with one adventure which is worthy of note. In sailing along, his fleet fell in with a ship of large size. Richard ordered his galleys to press on, as the ship seemed to be endeavoring to escape. As they came nearer, they perceived that the strange ship was filled with Saracens. King Richard thereupon ordered his men to board the ship and capture it. The Saracens, feeling that escape was hopeless, scuttled the ship, determined to sink with her rather than fall into the hands of the Christians. Then a dreadful combat ensued. Each side fought with ferocious energy; for although the Saracens expected to die, they were resolved to first wreak their fury upon their foes. The Saracens employed Greek fire, which was a celebrated means of warfare in those days. It was some kind of combustible matter, which was set on fire and thrown at the enemy. Nothing could extinguish it, and besides [219] the great heat it produced, it threw forth dense volumes of poisonous and stifling gases, which soon suffocated those near by. It was thrown on the ends of darts and arrows, and even water did not extinguish it; so that the sea all around this Saracen ship was a mass of lurid flames. Although many of Richard's men were killed, the Saracen ship was captured before it had time to sink, and the Christians, rushing on board, transferred to their own vessels nearly all of its valuable cargo. But their treatment of their Saracen foes was barbarous in the extreme. They killed and threw into the sea all but about thirty-five men out of twelve or fifteen hundred. These were saved, not from humanity, but in the hope of securing large sums for their ransom. King Richard afterwards defended this brutal conduct by declaring that they had found on board the Saracen ship large jars filled with poisonous snakes, which the infidels were about taking to Acre, to let them loose near the crusaders' camp.

When Richard's fleet arrived at Acre, the crusaders encamped there were much encouraged; for their situation was getting very critical, and they had accomplished little or nothing.

The crusaders were not as well disciplined as the Saracen army, which was united under the command of the valiant and powerful Saladin. Among the Christians there were constant quarrels, caused by the petty jealousies and hostilities of the knights and barons. There was one great wrangling over the title of King of Jerusalem, which, although it was an empty title (for the city was still in the hands of the Saracens), there were many claimants for; and each one of them intrigued incessantly to gain partisans to his side. A short time after Richard landed with his [220] bride and army at Acre, fresh quarrels arose between the two kings; and so serious was the difference, that when Philip planned an assault, Richard would not assist him; and when Richard, likewise, made an attack, Philip refused to aid. So that neither assault was successful against their common foe, while large numbers of their own men were killed.

Although the allies failed to capture Acre by assault, the town was at length obliged to surrender to the Christians on account of the famine, which caused such distress that the Saracens entered into negotiations for surrender, which were as follows: "The city was to be surrendered to the allied armies, and all the arms, ammunition, military stores, and property of all kinds which it contained, were to be forfeited to the conquerors. The troops and the people of the town were to be allowed to go free on payment of a ransom. The ransom by which the besieged purchased their lives and liberty was to be made up as follows: The wood of the cross on which Christ was crucified, which was alleged to be in Saladin's possession, was to be restored. Saladin was to set at liberty the Christian captives which he had taken in the course of the war from the various armies of crusaders, and which he now held as prisoners. The number of these prisoners was about fifteen hundred. Saladin was to pay two hundred thousand pieces of gold. Richard was to retain a large body of men—it was said that there were five thousand in all—consisting of soldiers of the garrison, or inhabitants of the town, as hostages for the fulfilment of these conditions. These men were to be kept forty days, or, if at the end of that time Saladin had not fulfilled the conditions of the surrender, they were all to be put to death."

Saladin was not within the city, but was encamped with his army upon the surrounding [221] mountains; and finding that he could not aid the besieged inhabitants, he agreed to these overbearing terms, which King Philip had in vain tried to make more honorable. Although the treaty had been made in the names of both the kings, Richard entered the city as the conqueror, assigning to Philip a secondary place; and having taken possession, Richard established himself and Berengaria in the principal palace, leaving Philip to secure quarters as best he might. Richard also enraged the archduke of Austria, who was also one of the crusaders, by pulling down the banner of the duke, which he had ventured to place on one of the towers.

Now, again, the disputes regarding the title of the King of Jerusalem were renewed. Two knights, Guy of Lusignan and Conrad of Montferrat, claimed this title, and Philip and Richard espoused opposite sides, Philip agreeing to help Conrad's claims, and Richard taking part with Guy. This occasioned so much hard feeling that Philip, who had been sick, announced that he was too ill to remain longer in such an unhealthy climate; and leaving ten thousand French troops under the command of the duke of Burgundy, King Philip returned to France.

We now come to the barbarous massacre of the five thousand Saracen prisoners, by the orders of King Richard, which shocking deed has left a dark blot upon the fame of Richard, even though he gloried in the act and considered it a proof of his zeal in the cause of Christ. The writers of those days praised it, and maintained that, as the Saracens were the enemies of God, whoever killed them did God service. How they could be so blinded by ignorance and superstition we cannot understand; and it appears very amazing that the religion of love which Jesus of Nazareth [222] preached, by his words and his example, could have been so misunderstood by the perverted minds of men; that such a diabolical spirit of ferocious brutality could be esteemed as commendable worship of Almighty God.

The time which had been agreed upon for Saladin to comply with the stipulations of the surrender of Acre having expired, Richard ordered the five thousand prisoners, which he held as hostages, to be brutally beheaded; and a false rumor having been raised, that Saladin had put to death his Christian prisoners, the soldiers of Richard were easily infuriated to be willing to execute this barbarous order. In the face of Saladin's humane treatment of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, when he captured that city, Mussulman though he was, this shocking barbarity of the crusading army, while calling themselves Christians, was an atrocious crime, which no plea of supposed zeal or ignorant superstition can excuse.

RICHARD TEARING DOWN THE AUSTRIAN BANNER.

Saladin and his army were now retreating towards Jerusalem, which city was his chief point to defend. Richard, having repaired the walls of Acre, and placed a garrison to hold it, proceeded with thirty thousand men in pursuit of the Saracens. The recovery of the Holy Sepulchre was the great object of the crusaders. All their efforts were considered of no avail, if they failed to accomplish this important end. Richard's army were to follow the sea-shore to Jaffa, which was a port nearly opposite Jerusalem. This band of crusaders presented a brilliant appearance. The knights wore costly armor, and were mounted on horses richly caparisoned. Some of the horses were protected like their riders, with armor of steel. The columns were preceded by trumpeters and [223] bearers of flags and banners, with very gorgeous decorations. When the expedition halted at night, heralds passed through the several camps, to the sound of trumpets, and at a signal all the soldiers knelt, and the heralds exclaimed, "God save the Holy Sepulchre!" and all the soldiers shouted, "Amen."

Thus the Christian army advanced to Jaffa. The two armies, Christian and Saracen, then met on a plain near the seashore, called Azotus. Saladin commenced the attack upon the wing of Richard's army, composed of the French troops under the command of the duke of Burgundy. They resisted and drove the Saracens back. Then Richard gave the signal for a charge, and rode forward at the head of his troops, mounted on his famous charger, and flourishing his heavy battle-axe. This axe was a ponderous weapon. Richard had ordered it made before leaving England, and it was so immense that few men could lift it. But as Richard Cœur de Lion was a man of marvellous strength, he wielded this huge weapon with prodigious force. When it came down upon the head of a steel-clad knight, on his horse, it often crushed both man and steed to the ground. The darts and javelins of the Mohammedans glanced off from King Richard's steel armor, without inflicting any wound, while Saracen after Saracen was felled to the earth by the blows from his ponderous battle-axe.

It was not long before Saladin's army was flying in all directions, pursued by the crusaders. After this battle Richard established his army in Jaffa. In the meantime Saladin was collecting forces for a more vigorous resistance. Historians have condemned this inactivity of Richard's army for so many weeks at Jaffa, thus enabling Saladin to rally his men and become more determined in his defence. During the time while Richard's army was resting and feasting at [224] Jaffa, King Richard and Saladin entered upon several negotiations, which were carried on through Saphadin, the brother of Saladin, who was provided with a safe conduct through the enemies' lines. One of these propositions was that Richard and Saladin should cease hostilities and become allies, and that their difficulties should be settled by a marriage between Joanna, Richard's sister, the ex-queen of Sicily, and Saphadin, the brother of Saladin. But this, and all other propositions, at length came to naught, and in November, Richard advanced with his army as far as Bethany, with a forlorn hope that they might find themselves strong enough to attack Jerusalem. But this hope was vain. Richard's men were dying from sickness and famine, caused by a large amount of their provisions being spoiled by the fall rains which had now set in, and many of the discouraged soldiers deserted. These losses so thinned King Richard's ranks, that he was obliged to retreat to Acre. While they were at Bethany, a band of crusaders had ascended a mountain overlooking Jerusalem. King Richard was asked to come and see the holy city in the distance. "No," said he, covering his face with his cloak, "those who are not worthy of conquering Jerusalem should not look upon it."

While at Acre, Richard learned that Saladin was besieging Jaffa. The historian Guizot thus

describes the rescue of Jaffa from the Saracens:—

"When King Richard arrived at Jaffa, the crescent already shone upon the walls; but a priest who had cast himself into the water in front of the royal vessel told Richard that he could yet save the garrison, although the town was already in the hands of the enemy. The ship had not yet [225] reached the landing-stage, and already the king was in the water, which reached to his shoulders, and was uttering the war-cry 'St. George!' The infidels, who were then plundering the city, took fright, and three thousand men fled, pursued by four or five knights of the cross. The little corps of Christians intrenched themselves behind planks of wood, and tuns; ten tents held the whole of the army. Day had scarcely dawned, when a soldier flew to Richard's bedside. 'O king, we are dead men!' he cried; 'the enemy is upon us.' The king sprang up from his bed, scarcely allowing himself time to buckle on his armor, and omitting his helmet and shield. 'Silence!' he said to the bearer of the bad news, 'or I will kill you.' Seventeen knights had gathered round Cœur de Lion, kneeling on the ground, and holding their lances; in their midst were some archers, accompanied by attendants who were recharging their arquebuses. The king was standing in the midst. The Saracens endeavored in vain to overawe this heroic little band; not one of them stirred. At length, under a shower of arrows, the knights sprang on their horses, and swept the plain before them. They entered Jaffa towards evening, and drove the Mussulmans from it. From the time of daybreak Richard had not ceased for a moment to deal out his blows, and the skin of his hand adhered to the handle of his battle-axe."

Still more graphically do the old chronicles thus describe this battle:—

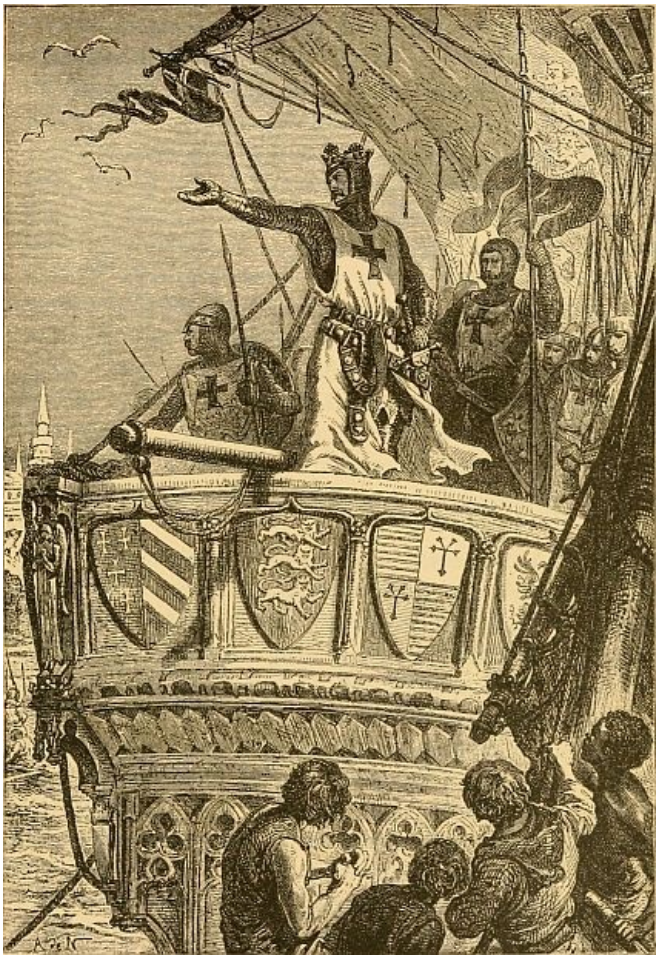
"Where the fight was fiercest there rode King Richard, and the Turks fell beneath his flashing sword. Then the galley-men, fearing for their lives, left the battle and took refuge in their boats, and the Turks thought to seize the town while the army was fighting in the field. But the king, [226] taking with him but two knights and two crossbowmen, entered the town and dispersed the Turks who had entered, and set sentinels to guard it, and then, hasting to the galleys, gathered together the men, and encouraging them with his words, brought them back to the fight. And as he led them to the field, he fell upon the enemy so fiercely, that he cut his way all alone into the midst of the ranks, and they gave way before him. But they closed around him, and he was left alone, and at that sight our men feared greatly. But alone in the midst of his enemies he remained unmoved, and all as they approached him were cut down like corn before the sickle. And there rode against him a great admiral, distinguished above all the rest by his rich caparisons, and with bold arrogance assayed to attack him, but the king with one blow of his sword cut off his head and shoulder and right arm. Then the Turks fled in terror at the sight, and the king returned to his men, and lo! the king was stuck all over with javelins, like the spines of a hedgehog, and the trappings of his horse with arrows. The battle lasted that day from the rising to the setting sun, but the Turks returned to Saladin, and he mocked his men, and asked them where was Malek-Rik, whom they had promised to bring him. But one of them answered, 'There is no knight on earth like Malek-Rik; nay, nor ever was from the beginning of the world.'"

King Richard's forces were now so weakened, that he found it would be hopeless to endeavor to take Jerusalem. The Archduke Leopold, of Austria, had left the army with his men and gone home. This was caused by a quarrel between himself and King Richard. Saladin having left Ascalon, Richard hastened to repair its fortifications. In order to encourage his soldiers, he himself carried stones to the workers, urging the archduke to do the same. "I am not the son of a [227] mason," replied the Austrian, haughtily. Whereupon, Richard, in anger, struck him a blow in the face, which indignity so enraged the archduke, that he immediately took his forces and returned to Austria.

Another event occurred at this time, the blame of which some historians lay upon King Richard. Conrad of Montferrat, one of the claimants to the title of King of Jerusalem, was murdered by two emissaries, sent by the "Old Man of the Mountain," who was a famous chieftain, living with his band of bold robbers among the mountains. The men under this chieftain were trained to obey without any dissent the commands given by their leader. A story was spread abroad that these men were hired by King Richard to kill Conrad. The friends of Richard declared, however, that it was caused by a quarrel between Conrad and the Old Man of the Mountain.

Two incidents are related of Saladin's generosity towards Richard, his foe. At one time King Richard was very sick with fever, and Saladin supplied him with cooling drinks and fresh fruits, thus kindly ministering to the comfort of his sick enemy. At another time, during a battle with the Saracens, Saladin beheld King Richard standing on a little knoll, surrounded by his knights. "Why is he on foot?" asked Saladin, for Richard's famous charter had been killed that day in the battle. "The king of England should not fight on foot, like a common soldier," exclaimed Saladin, and forthwith he sent Richard a splendid horse as a present. When the steed was brought to the king, one of his knights mounted him to try his speed. Whereupon, the intelligent animal immediately turned and ran with his rider to the camp of the Saracens. Saladin was so chagrined at this [228] unlooked-for occurrence, and fearing lest Richard should imagine his kindly present had only been sent as a treacherous stratagem, immediately placed the Christian knight upon a more gentle horse, and sent with him a still handsomer charger, as a present to the English king, which Richard gladly received.

Disquieting news now reached King Richard from England. His brother John, aided by Philip of France, had deposed the chancellor, and caused himself to be made governor-general of the kingdom. Under these circumstances, and



“MOST HOLY LAND, FAREWELL!”

the hopelessness of capturing Jerusalem, King Richard concluded a truce with Saladin, giving up Ascalon to him, but keeping Jaffa, Tyre, and the fortresses along the coast, and promising to refrain from any hostilities during a period of three years, three months, three weeks, three days, and three hours. “Then I will come back,” said Richard, “with double the men that I now possess, and will reconquer Jerusalem.” Saladin answered: “that if the Holy City was to fall into the hands of the Christians, no one was more worthy of conquering it than Malek-Rik.”

On the 9th of October, 1192, Richard Cœur de Lion left Palestine to return to his own kingdom. The queens embarked first in their vessel, followed soon after by Richard in his war-ship. As the shore of the Holy Land was receding from view, Richard gazed upon it from the deck of his galley; and stretching out his arms towards it, exclaimed,—

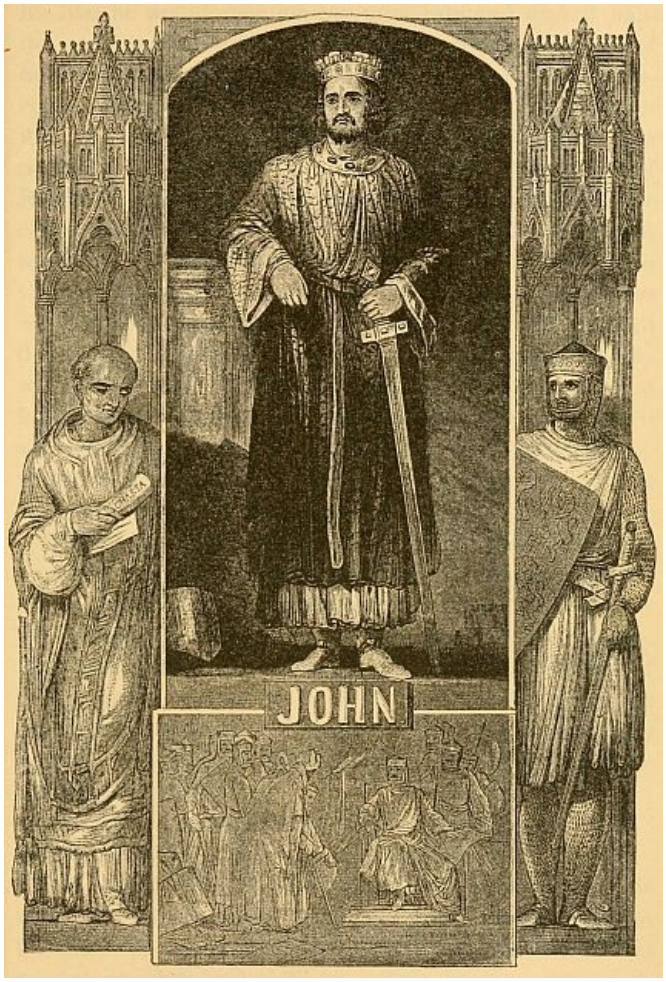
“Most holy land, farewell! I commend thee to God’s keeping and care. May He give me life and health to return and rescue thee from the hands of the infidels.”

A storm soon arose, and the vessels of [229] King Richard’s fleet were separated. The queens arrived safely in Sicily, but King Richard was driven to the Island of Corfu. Here he hired three small vessels to take him to the head of the Adriatic Sea, and then he endeavored to cross through Germany by land. He assumed the garb of a merchant, lest his many enemies should discover him. Thus he travelled through the mountains of the Tyrol. But having sent a ring with a messenger to the governor of Goritz, seeking a passport, the governor exclaimed, “This ring belongs to no merchant, but only to the king of England.”

Thus was King Richard discovered; and he was seized by his old enemy, Duke Leopold of Austria, and put into prison. Which event, coming to the knowledge of the emperor of Germany, he himself claimed the illustrious captive, saying, “A duke cannot possibly keep a king.”

So King Richard was shut up in the castle of Trifels by the emperor, where he languished for two years. Meanwhile neither his wife nor mother could obtain any trace of him; and even after his brother John learned that Richard was imprisoned by the emperor of Germany, he joined King Philip of France in making propositions to the German emperor, promising to pay him large sums of money if he would keep the king of England in prison. The place of King Richard’s imprisonment was said to have been discovered by a celebrated troubadour named Blondel, who had known Richard in Palestine, and was now travelling through Germany. As he went along in front of the castle where Richard was confined, he was singing one of the troubadour songs. When he had finished one stanza, King Richard, who knew the song, sang the next verse through the bars of his prison window. Blondel recognized the voice, and perceiving that Richard was a [230] prisoner, he made all speed to go to England and inform King Richard’s friends of his sad situation. It is said that the first news Berengaria received of Richard’s fate was by seeing a jewelled belt offered for sale in Rome. This belt she recognized as one which King Richard wore when he left Acre. But upon inquiry, she could only learn that Richard was somewhere in Germany. The news that King Richard Cœur de Lion was a prisoner in Germany roused great excitement in England and in Rome. The Pope excommunicated Duke Leopold for having seized Richard, and threatened to excommunicate the emperor if he did not release him. Finally the emperor agreed to set the king of England free upon the payment of a certain sum of money, two-thirds of which were to be received before the king should be released. At length, in February, 1194, about two years after Richard was first imprisoned, the first payment was made, and King Richard Cœur de Lion was allowed to go free; and he arrived in England in March, when the people gave him a magnificent reception. As soon as Richard had arranged his affairs, he determined to be crowned a second time as king of England, lest the two years of his captivity might have weakened his claims. He was accordingly recrowned with the greatest pomp and splendor. At the request of his mother he pardoned his brother John, saying, “I hope that I shall as easily forget the injuries he has done me as he will forget my forbearance in pardoning him.” But Richard treated Berengaria with great unkindness and open neglect, until he was suddenly seized with a severe illness, which so alarmed him that he called for a great number of monks and priests, and began to confess his sins, vowing, if God would spare his life, he would abandon [231] his profligate and wicked habits, and treat his wife with kindness. He recovered, and he so far kept his vows as to send for his wife, and become, outwardly at least, reconciled to her. But the

fault was all on his side; for poor Berengaria had given him no cause for his cruel treatment of her. The reign of Richard Cœur de Lion was soon to end, however, and the cause was one which shed neither glory nor honor upon his fame. A rich treasure had been found by one of his vassals, the viscount of Limoges. Richard at once claimed it, and the viscount sent him half. But Richard determined to secure the whole of it, and accordingly went to the castle of Chaluz, where the treasure was, and laid siege to the place. It was well defended, but provisions becoming short, the garrison wished to capitulate. “No,” said Richard, “I will take your place by storm, and cause you all to be hanged on the walls.”



While King Richard was examining the point of attack, a young archer, named Bertrand de Gourdon, shot an arrow at the king, and wounded him upon the shoulder. The town was taken and all the garrison were hung. King Richard’s wound, through the unskilful handling of the surgeons, proved to be fatal. As he was dying he sent for Gourdon. “Wretch!” said Richard to the archer, “what had I done to you that you should have attempted my life?”

“You have put my father and two brothers to death,” said Bertrand, “and you wanted to hang me.”

The dying king, at last struck with remorse for his many cruel deeds, said, “I forgive you,” and he ordered the chains of the archer to be removed, and that he should receive one hundred shillings. This humane command, however, was not obeyed, and Bertrand was flayed alive. Richard Cœur de Lion died on the 6th of [232] April, 1199, at the age of forty-two, and was buried, according to his request, at the foot of the grave of Henry II., his father, in Fontevraud Abbey. The figures in stone of the father, mother, and son, who quarrelled so much while living, all lie now on one monument. Richard Cœur de Lion was well called the Lion-Hearted. His glory consisted in his reckless and brutal ferocity. He pretended to be the champion and defender of the cause of Christ, but he used the sacred name of Christianity only as a means of gratifying his own wild ambitions and his inhuman thirst for blood. Though he won the fame of a brave and valorous knight, his savage barbarity and reckless cruelties tarnished all the brightness of his glory, and brought disgrace and dishonor upon the sacred cause of true religion, of which he pretended to be the most zealous upholder.

ROBERT BRUCE.

1274-1329 A.D.

[233]

"Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, whom Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
On to victorie!"—BURNS.

"BRUCE to the rescue! Bruce to the rescue!" was the war-cry of the valiant little band of Scottish chiefs who gathered under the banner of Robert Bruce, who was the seventh lord of Annandale, and also earl of Garrick.

The heroic William Wallace had already endeavored to free his country from the yoke of bondage in which they were held by the English king, Edward I.

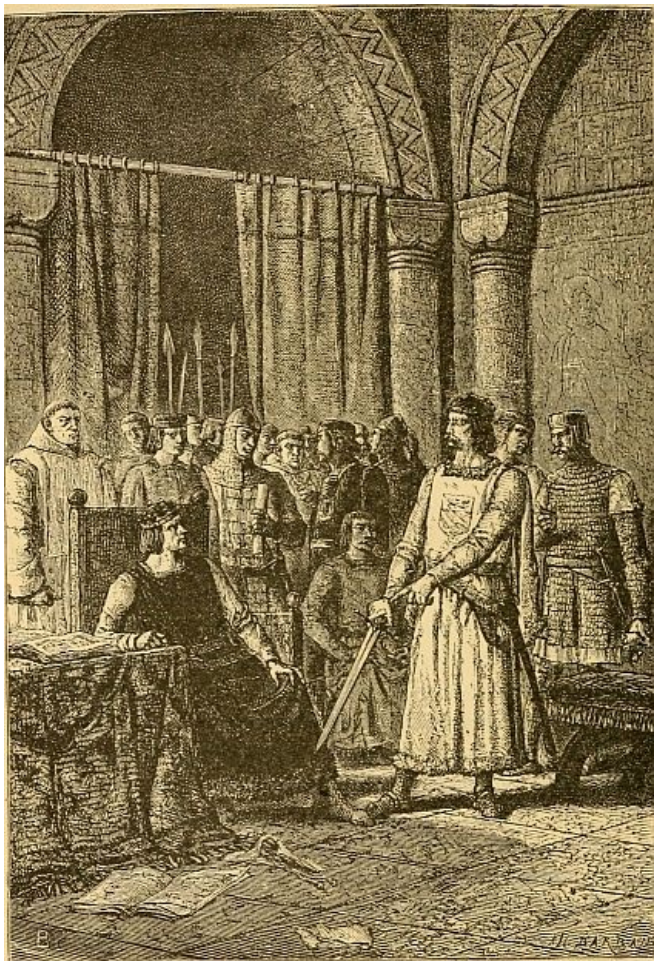
Alexander III., the ninety-fifth king of Scotland, had died in 1286, leaving his grand-daughter Margaret, the Fair Maid of Norway, heir to the Scottish throne. This child-princess was betrothed to the son of the English king; but when quite young, as she sailed from her father's castle in Norway to her future home in Scotland, she died on the voyage thither. Thus the crown of Scotland became the cause of dispute amongst thirteen noblemen, descendants of members of the royal family, who set up claims to the vacant throne.

There were but two claimants whose pretensions were based upon sufficient grounds to insure any prospect of success. These were John Baliol and Robert Bruce, grandson and son of the two [234] elder daughters of David, earl of Huntingdon, who was the younger brother of King William, the Lion, who was the ninety-third king of Scotland. This Robert Bruce was the grandfather of the hero who is the subject of this sketch.

King Edward of England, having been requested by the Scots to act as arbitrator amongst all these claimants, decided to give the preference to John Baliol, who was crowned king in November, 1292, having sworn fealty to Edward, king of England. Thus did the wily English sovereign place upon the Scottish throne a king weak enough to be used as his tool. And poor John Baliol soon found, to his sorrow, that he was a king only in name; but in reality a slave in the hands of his ambitious and powerful neighbor.

Edward, having placed the feeble Baliol upon the throne of Scotland, spared him no humiliation. Every time any Scottish petitioner appealed to Edward, Baliol's liege lord, regarding any decision of the king of Scotland which had failed to satisfy his subject, Edward would summon Baliol to appear at his court, to render an account of his judgment. This occurred four times the first year of his reign. At length Baliol refused to comply longer with these demands of Edward, whereupon the English king advanced with an army against the Scots. After a fearful massacre at Berwick, and the capture of several castles by the English, Baliol begged for peace, and was sent to the Tower in honorable captivity. He subsequently ended his life in his domains in Normandy. Robert Bruce at once claimed the crown. But Edward exclaimed, angrily, "Do you think that I have nothing else to do but to conquer kingdoms for you?"

[235]



WARREN, EARL OF SURREY, GOVERNOR OF SCOTLAND UNDER EDWARD I.

Scotland was now treated as a conquered country; and Warrene, earl of Surrey, was appointed governor, Hugh de Cressingham, treasurer, and William Ormesby, chief justicier.

Robert Bruce the grandfather, and also Robert Bruce the father of our hero, considered it the better part of discretion to resign all pretensions to the throne of Scotland. They therefore swore fealty to King Edward.

Robert de Bruce, the sixth lord of Annandale, had accompanied Edward, when prince of England, and Louis I. of France, to the Holy Land, where he acquired great renown. A romantic story is told of his courtship and marriage.

One day this knight of the crusades was riding through the domains of Turnberry. As he was proceeding leisurely along through the majestic forests, charmed with the beauty of the sylvan scenery, watching the glinting sunbeams dance athwart the leaves, and play hide-and-seek with the shadows, in the cosey nooks where moss-banks nestled, he was startled by the sound of a hunting-horn; and shortly a gay cavalcade of lords and ladies dashed through the forest on their way to the castle near by. One of the ladies, Margaret, countess of Garrick, the owner of this castle, and hostess of this splendid retinue, being captivated by the lordly bearing of the handsome, unknown knight, with the freedom and natural courtesy of one who felt her independence upon her own domain, reined in her high-bred steed, whose wild spirits were curbed by slightest touch of her fair fingers, and, bowing to the knight with queenly dignity, she invited him to join her visitors, and share her hospitality. Robert de Bruce, knowing the high position of this gracious lady, and fearing to accept too eagerly such an unexpected honor, [236] courteously declined the kind invitation, which he supposed had been offered only out of a courtly hospitality, as he had been found a stranger within her own domains. But the beautiful countess, moved by some strange attraction, which she did not stop to analyze, gaily laid hold of the reins of his steed, and laughingly replied:—

“Ah, noble knight! no trespasser on my grounds ever escapes imprisonment in my castle;” and thereupon she led him away, like a captive knight, to her castle of Turnberry.

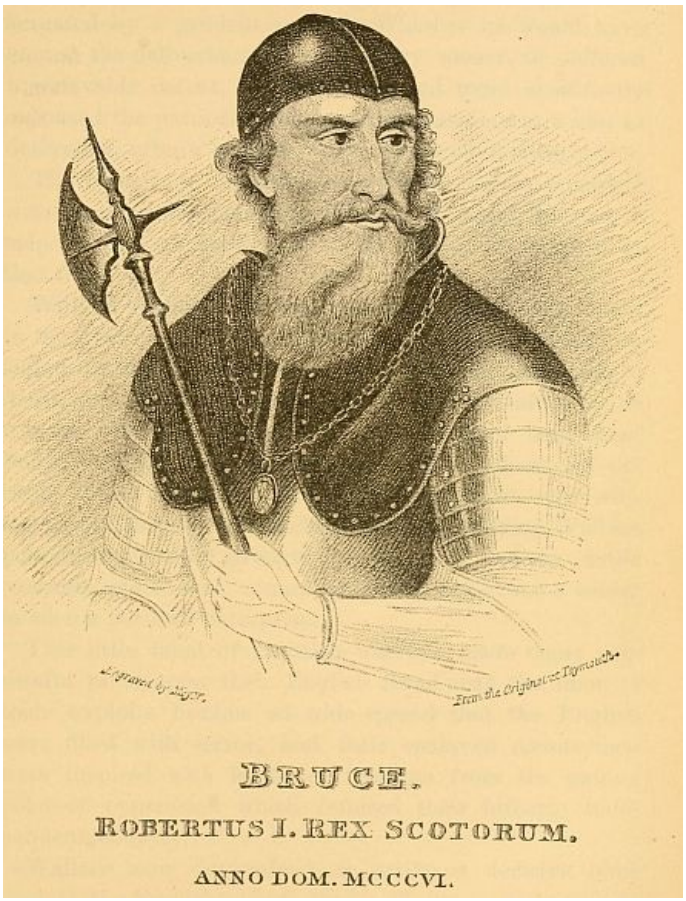
For fifteen days he was the honored guest amidst all the festivities at the castle, and the first in the chase, by the side of the bewitching countess; and, having obtained her heart, as well as her hand, they were married, without the consent of the king, whose ward she was, or the knowledge of her relatives; in consequence of which the estates and castle of the young countess were seized by the sovereign, and were only saved to her by the payment of a large fine to the crown.

The eldest son of this brave knight and beautiful countess, who had risked so much for love, and whose marriage was as romantic as any described in Scottish tales of fiction, was Robert the Bruce, our hero, who was afterwards King Robert I. of Scotland. He was born on the 21st of March, 1274. He spent his early youth at Carrick, where he was distinguished for his brave spirit

and persevering energy.

The grandfather of Robert the Bruce, Robert, lord of Annandale, refusing to take the oath of homage to his rival, John Baliol, when King Edward of England decided in his favor, gave up his Scottish domains in Annandale to his son, the earl of Carrick, lest he should hold them as [237] Edward's minion. This proceeding was also followed by the earl in 1293, in behalf of his son, Robert the Bruce, who was then serving the king of England. Notwithstanding the sympathy of young Bruce with the cause of Scotland, and his resolve to assert his claims to the Scottish crown, he had, during the greater part of the reign of his weak rival, adhered to the fortunes of Edward, deeming it better policy to yield himself to the uncontrollable necessity of circumstances, rather than risk his cause by undue haste. Sometimes he appeared to assert his own pretensions to the crown, and the independence of his country; and then, again, he yielded submission to the superior power of the English king, whose good-will he wished to keep until a favorable opportunity should offer itself of openly asserting his rights. Robert might have obtained the crown if he would have acknowledged the superior power of England, and submitted himself as a vassal to the English king, as Baliol had done. But he would not receive it on any other terms than as a free crown, which had been worn by his ancestors, and of right belonged to him.

When John Baliol was raised to sovereign power, the family of Bruce, although looking upon his elevation with envy, deemed it prudent to conceal their dissatisfaction, and the father of young Robert, who possessed the earldom of Carrick, in right of the countess his wife, resigned to his son these possessions, who was admitted to do homage to Baliol, the Scottish king, and thus became earl of Carrick.



When John Baliol had rebelled against Edward, king of England, young Bruce deemed it unsafe to rank under the banner of his natural sovereign, and therefore joined the side of Edward. Whereupon, the Scottish king, John [238] Baliol, confiscated his estate of Annandale, as that of a traitor, and gave it to one of his followers, Comyn, earl of Buchan. Some of the English peers, suspecting the fidelity of young Bruce, who had now retired to the family estate in England, summoned him to Carlisle to do homage. He forthwith obeyed, and swore fidelity to the cause of Edward, and in order to show his loyalty, he assembled some of his followers, and overran the lands of Sir William Douglas, a Scottish patriot, and even carried away his wife and children. Stung with remorse, however, for this treacherous act, which was really extorted from him, young Bruce then joined the Scottish army, which Wallace, the brave patriot, together with the bishop of Glasgow, and steward of Scotland, had raised. The Scottish leaders were too much at variance amongst themselves to make a resolute stand. The English, knowing of their dissensions, sent messengers to treat with them. With the exception of William Wallace, they sued for peace, and threw down their arms without striking a blow. Bruce deemed it prudent to submit with his countrymen to the English king, but such had been the inconstancy of this nobleman, that the English demanded security for his future fidelity. Whereupon the bishop of Glasgow, the lord steward, and Alexander de Lindesay, came forward as his securities, until he should deliver over his daughter Marjory as an hostage for his loyalty. The conduct of young Bruce seems to us vacillating and unpatriotic, viewed from the present age; but he must be judged by the spirit of those troublesome times, and his after heroic deeds in his country's behalf must soften a stern judgment regarding his changeable and uncertain conduct at this time. By the side of the staunch patriotism of the brave William Wallace, various acts of Robert Bruce, at this period of his life, are thrown into an unfavorable [239] light, but his seeming treachery he regarded as actuated by a prudent policy. Whether he would have gained the deliverance of his country sooner, or suffered irretrievable defeat, had he earlier and more steadfastly espoused the patriotic cause, we find ourselves at a loss to determine, after a careful study of that conflicting epoch.

The history of Robert Bruce would not be complete without a brief account of William Wallace, which will help to give a clearer idea of the affairs of Scotland at that time.

William Wallace was descended from an ancient family in the west of Scotland. Having been

provoked and insulted by an English officer, Wallace had put him to death, and therefore was obliged to flee for safety to the forests. Here he collected a large band of bold men. Some of these were outlawed for crimes; others, on account of bad fortune or hatred of the English, were willing participants in this daring scheme. William Wallace possessed gigantic strength of body as well as heroic courage, and so was admirably suited to become a leader in such a perilous enterprise.

This little band of Scottish warriors made many successful raids upon their English foes, until the fame of their exploits became so wide-spread that the English were filled with terror, and their enslaved countrymen were inspired with hopes of freedom from the galling yoke of oppression which fettered their hitherto independent country.

Wallace now determined to strike a decisive blow against the English government. Warrene, the governor of Scotland, had retired to England on account of his health, so that the administration of Scotland was left in the hands of Ormesby, the justiciary, and Cressingham, [240] who held the office of treasurer. Wallace formed a plan of attacking Ormesby, at Scone; but the justiciary being informed of such intentions, fled in terror to England. All the other English officers imitated his example. The Scots, encouraged by these events, sprang to arms.

Many of the principal barons, including Sir William Douglas, openly countenanced the party of Wallace. Meanwhile, Warrene, earl of Surrey, collected an army of forty thousand men, in the north of England, and invaded Scotland. He suddenly entered Annandale, and came up with the enemy at Irvine, before the Scottish forces were prepared for battle. Many of the Scottish nobles, alarmed at this unforeseen event, submitted to the English, and renewed their oaths of fealty, and gave hostages for their fidelity, whereupon they received pardon for their rebellion. Others, who had not openly declared themselves, thought best to side with the English, and wait a better opportunity for avowing themselves as partisans of the Scottish cause. But Wallace persevered in his bold enterprise, and marched northwards and established his little army at Cambuskenneth. When Warrene advanced to Stirling, he found Wallace on the opposite banks of the Forth. Wallace had chosen a position near a narrow bridge which spanned the Forth, and as the English, with thoughtless precipitation, commenced to cross, Wallace attacked them before they were fully formed, and put them to rout, gaining a complete victory. Among the slain was Cressingham, who was so hated by the Scots that they flayed his dead body, and made saddle-girths of his skin. Warrene, finding his remaining forces much dismayed by this defeat, returned again to England.

Wallace was now made regent, or guardian of the country, by his enthusiastic followers; and [241] his brave band, not content with their past exploits, invaded England, and laid waste many counties, returning to their native land loaded with spoils, and crowned with glory.

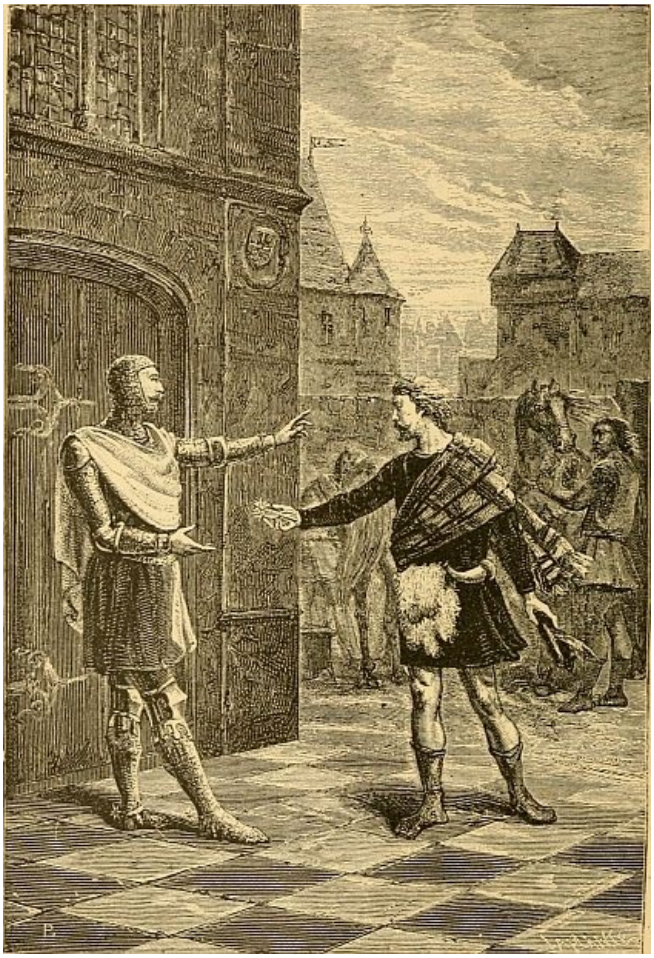
But now factions amongst the Scots themselves caused a disaster which deprived them of all they had gained. The Scottish nobles were unwilling that Wallace should be placed over them in power; and that patriot, to avoid jealousies and dissensions, resigned his authority as regent, retaining only his command over that body of warriors who refused to follow any other leader than the brave Wallace, under whose banner they had so often been led to victory.

The Scottish army was now divided into three bands. The chief power devolved on the steward of Scotland, and Comyn of Badenoch. The third band was commanded by the valiant Wallace. Edward, having collected the entire military force of England, Wales, and Ireland, marched into Scotland with an army of nearly one hundred thousand men.

When the two forces met in battle at Falkirk, the English archers chased the Scottish bowmen off the field, then shooting their arrows amongst the pikemen, they were thrown into confusion, and the English cavalry soon put the Scots to rout, with great slaughter. Some historians state that the loss of the Scots, upon this occasion, was fifty or sixty thousand men. In this general rout of the Scottish army, Wallace's superior military skill and presence of mind enabled him to keep his band together, and retiring to the farther bank of a small river called the Carron, he marched along its banks protected from the enemy. Bruce, who was serving in the English army, [242] recognized the valiant Scottish chief, and calling out to him, desired a conference. This being granted, he endeavored to convince Wallace of the helplessness of his rash enterprise, and advised him to submit. But the intrepid Wallace replied, that if he had hitherto acted alone as the champion of his country, it was because no other would assume the place. He exhorted Bruce to espouse the cause of his enslaved land, representing to him the glory of the enterprise, and hope of opposing successfully the power of the English. With enthusiasm he declared that he would prefer to give his own life, and the existence of the nation, when they could only be preserved by receiving the chains of a haughty victor.

Bruce was greatly moved by these sentiments of brave patriotism, and regretting his engagements to Edward, the enemy of his people, resolved to embrace the cause of his oppressed country.

We cannot follow the brave and valiant Wallace through his after career, and will but note his sad and unworthy fate. He was betrayed into Edward's hands by Sir John Monteith, who had been his friend. Edward ordered Wallace to be carried in chains to London, where he was tried as a rebel or traitor, though he had never sworn fealty to England; and he was executed on Tower Hill. This barbarous cruelty of the English king only inflamed the Scots to fresh rebellions; and they now again sprang to arms, shouting, "Bruce to the rescue!"



“BRUCE WAS NOT SLOW IN TAKING THE WARNING.”

Robert Bruce had long resolved to attempt to free his enslaved country. The death of William Wallace, and the memory of his patriotic exhortation after the battle of Falkirk, on the banks of the river Carron, added fresh impetus to this resolve; and his open avowal could be no longer delayed on account of two incidents which happened about this time.

[243] Bruce had ventured to disclose this resolve to John Comyn, surnamed the Red, a powerful nobleman and warm friend. He found Comyn apparently in full accord with his avowed sentiments. But that nobleman afterwards treacherously revealed the secret to the English king. Edward did not immediately seize and imprison Bruce, because he desired also to ensnare his three brothers, who resided in Scotland. But he placed spies over Bruce; and a nobleman, Gilbert de Clare, one of the lords in Edward’s court, but also a friend of Robert Bruce, having learned of the danger which threatened him, and fearing to risk his own position by an open warning, sent Bruce a pair of golden spurs and a purse of gold by his servant, with this message: “My master sent these to thee, and bid me say, that the receiver would have sagacity enough to determine quickly to what use they should be put.”

Bruce was not slow in taking the warning. Evidently, some one at court had betrayed him! Ah, he had it! surely it could be no other than the Red Comyn!

There is a story told, that three days previous to this event, Robert Bruce was praying at the altar, in a chapel where afterwards stood St. Martin’s church. It was midnight, and Bruce was alone. With tearful eyes he exclaimed,—

“Yes, at the foot of this high altar, I’ll swear forthwith to fling the yoke from off me, in spite of hostile man and misleading fiend; knowing that if I put trust in, and pay obedience to, the King of kings, my triumph shall be sure, my victory complete!”

“Amen to that!” whispered a sweet and plaintive voice in the ear of the kneeling earl.

[244] Bruce sprang to his feet, exclaiming, “Who art thou?” But he saw only a muffled figure glide swiftly behind one of the pillars. Bruce pursued; but the same soft voice replied:—

“I am neither foe to Scotland’s cause, nor shall be to him whose it is to see her righted, laggard although he be in responding to the urgent call. Farewell to the valiant Bruce! We may meet again, yet nevermore in this holy place; for even three days must not elapse and find him loitering near the stern and subtle Edward, or it will be woe to Scotland and to Scotland’s mightiest lord! Let the Bruce find his way to the altar, upon which I place a token for his keeping and his use—the bugle-horn of the immortal Wallace; with which he summoned to his standard his faithful countrymen, and led them to victory, till he was overcome by treachery and death. Take this sacred bugle-horn, and sound the call for Scotland’s freedom!”

Ere the astonished Bruce could answer, a figure shot past him, and was lost in the darkness. The earl, groping his way in the dim light to the altar, found there the precious relic promised; and he went forth under the starlit midnight sky, vowing to strike a blow for his enslaved country. Bruce needed no second warning of his danger, but the very night upon which he received the gilt spurs and purse of gold, he ordered two of his horses to be shod with reversed shoes, so that their course might not be traced, as snow had fallen, and the prints of the horses’ feet would therefore be plainly visible. Then Bruce and one faithful attendant, named Walter Kennedy, hastily mounted their horses, and rode out of London under cover of the darkness of the night.

As they left the great city behind them, Walter Kennedy ventured to say,—

[245] “If I may be so bold, good master, where gang we on sic a night? Thou bidst me tell our talkative host at the inn, that Garrick’s lord had a love adventure on foot. But me thinkst thou art too true a knight for that.”

“Well said, my faithful Walter!” replied Bruce. “’Tis in truth a love adventure, but concerns no lady fair, for my good wife is fairer to me than all other women. But ’tis for love of country we go forth,—to free our bonny Scotland. Surely that were love adventure worthy of both a valiant knight and loyal husband. Still it is for sake of lovely woman also; for my sweet wife and fair

daughters are e’en now in Scotland, and I fear me that their liberty, if not their lives, will soon be in danger, as I am warned that the wily King Edward is my bitter enemy and treacherous spy.”

“Ha! ’tis well spoken, good master!” exclaimed Kennedy, with enthusiasm, and lifting his Scotch bonnet from his head, he cried aloud, “Bruce to the rescue.”

“Hist, man!” said Bruce, laying his hand upon the bridle-rein of his faithful and loyal retainer; “knowest thou not that these English forests secrete hostile ears, to whom thy wild cry wouldst betray us? Not till I have gathered my forces and blown the bugle-horn of the valiant Wallace, will it be safe to openly sound that war-cry.”

The snow still fell thickly, and it was difficult to follow the right route through the blinding storm; but ere long the moon shone out with brightness, and seemed to smile upon their perilous adventure, and promise success.

After a few days Bruce arrived at Dumfries, in Annandale, the chief seat of his family interests. Here he found a great number of the Scottish noblemen assembled, and among the rest the treacherous John Comyn. These noblemen were astonished at the appearance of Bruce amongst [246] them, and still more when he avowed his determination to live or die with them in the defence of the liberty of Scotland. All the nobles declared their unanimous resolution to rise to arms in the cause of their enslaved country. Comyn alone opposed this measure. Bruce, already sure of his treachery, followed Comyn on the dissolution of the assembly, and attacked him in the cloisters of the Gray Friars, through which he passed, and piercing him with his sword, left him bleeding on the ground. As Bruce rushed into the street, pale and agitated, Sir Thomas Kirkpatrick, one of his friends, asked him if all was well. “I fear I have slain Comyn,” replied Bruce, as he hastily mounted his horse.

“Such a matter must not be left to doubt,” exclaimed Kirkpatrick; “I’ll mak sicker!”—and dashing into the sanctuary, he ran his dagger into the heart of the dying Comyn.

This deed of Bruce and his friend, which would be justly condemned in the present age, was at that time regarded as an act of valiant patriotism and commendable policy. The family of Kirkpatrick were so proud of the deed that they took for the crest of their arms a hand with a bloody dagger, and chose for their motto those words, “I’ll mak sicker!” meaning, “I will make sure of it.”

Bruce now raised the standard of independence. Some priests and lords gathered round him, and boldly crowned him at Scone. On the day of the Annunciation, 1306, Scotland received her ninety-seventh king in the person of the valiant Robert Bruce; and all Scotland rang with the joyful war-cry, “Bruce to the rescue!”

The undertaking of Bruce was one of a gigantic nature. Yet amidst all the seemingly insurmountable obstacles which surrounded him from English foes and Scottish grandees,—who [247] were many of them in league against him, for the faction of Baliol and the powerful family of Comyn were his avowed enemies,—and though he was subjected to frequent perils, dangerous ambuscades and escapes, and many individual conflicts of daring courage, Robert Bruce persisted firmly in his patriotic design of restoring his enslaved country to freedom, and giving protection to the people who had formerly called his ancestor their king.

Edward I. had now become aged and unwieldly, so that he could not readily mount on horseback. When he was informed of this daring attempt of Bruce to wrest from his power a kingdom which had cost him so much to gain and hold, he despatched a messenger to the Pope, praying him to issue the thunders of the Vatican against this bold traitor and murderer of Comyn, and that he would place under interdict all who should endeavor to aid him or draw a sword in defence of liberty. This sentence of interdict, which the Pope often issued against sovereigns for the most trivial offences, involved a nation in the greatest misery. The people were deprived of all the services of the church; no sacred rite was performed for them except the baptism of infants, and the administration of the communion to the dying.

The churches were deserted, and the altars were stripped of all the sacred ornaments. The dead lay uninterred, for the consecrated ground was prohibited; and when at last the corpses must be buried, they were hurriedly piled up in ditches and covered over, without any church service to soothe the surviving mourners or hallow the last rites to the dead. The thunders of the Roman pontiff, however, fell powerless upon Robert the Bruce, for he had previously secured the [248] alliance of the Scottish clergy; and as they wished to remain independent of the English bishops, they braved the thunders of the hierarchy, and persisted in celebrating divine worship, notwithstanding its prohibition by the head of the church.

In spite of old age and sickness, King Edward began to make extensive preparations for marching personally against the Scots. Prince Edward, his son, was twenty-two years of age, and having not yet been knighted, the king conferred this distinction upon him and bestowed upon him his spurs. Whereupon the young knight then conferred the same honor upon two hundred and seventy young lords who were about to become his comrades in arms. All the company then met at a magnificent banquet. A golden net was placed upon the table, containing two swans, emblems of constancy and fidelity. Then the king, placing his hands upon their heads, swore to avenge the death of Comyn and to punish the rebels of Scotland, without sleeping for two nights in the same place, and to start immediately afterwards for Palestine, in order to rescue the Holy Sepulchre. The young men swore the same oath as the king, and then they started for the frontiers, the king following more slowly, as he was too feeble to travel except upon a litter.

The earl of Pembroke had been sent by King Edward, with a small army, into Scotland while the king was preparing his forces. Pembroke met the Scots at Methven, where a battle was fought in which the Scots were defeated, and many of them killed and taken prisoners; these were afterwards put to death with great cruelty by Edward's orders. Bruce retired into the mountains with five hundred men. King Edward had only been able to proceed as far as Carlisle; but on his dying bed he was cruelly ordering the Scottish prisoners to be beheaded, and still [249] directing the operations of his troops. Bruce was living in the forests with a few faithful companions. His wife, daughter, and sister shared his adventuresome life.

But as winter approached, the ladies were sent to the castle of Keldrummie, but they met with a sad fate here. The castle was stormed and taken by the English; Nigel Bruce, Robert's younger brother, was cruelly put to death, and the queen of Scotland and her daughter, and also the sister of Bruce, were sent to England, where the queen was imprisoned, and the daughter and sister of King Robert were shut up in wooden cages at Berwick and Roxburgh, and were exposed to the public gaze.

Bruce's little band were attacked by Lord Lorn, the Red Comyn's nephew, and therefore a bitter foe. Finding that his faithful followers were falling under the battle-axes of their enemies, King Robert sounded a retreat; and with marvellous bravery Robert Bruce, mounted upon his war-horse and clad in armor, took his position in the defile and defended the approach alone. At length three men, famous for their strength, sprang forward together upon the royal champion, who calmly held his long sword on guard, and whose bright eyes glittered beneath his helmet. One seized the bridle of the horse; but Bruce raised his sword, and the arm of the assailant fell helpless, his hand being severed. Another fastened himself on the leg of the horseman; but the fiery war-horse reared, and again the invincible sword split his head open. The third now clutched the king's cloak; but again the sword dealt its fatal blow, and the three assailants soon lay dead, while the valiant king escaped without a wound. Robert Bruce was now obliged to flee, and he took refuge in the small island of Rachrin. His retreat was unknown to his enemies, and a [250] large reward was offered to whoever would give news of "Robert Bruce, lost, strayed, or stolen."

During this time the Scottish king met with many adventures. One day, leaving the island of Rachrin, he sailed with his little band in some small boats to the isle of Arran. On landing they met a woman, of whom the king inquired if there had been any military arrivals.

"Surely, sir," she replied, "I can tell you of some who lately blockaded the English governor's castle. They maintain themselves in the woods near by."

Robert Bruce, thinking that it was of brave Douglas of whom she spoke, blew his horn. It was answered by Sir James Douglas, who recognized the bugle of his sovereign, and when he hastily approached the king, they kissed for joy at such fortunate meeting. The small bands of King Robert and Douglas now crossed in boats to the opposite shore, and concealed themselves in a cavern, called the Cave of Colean. Learning that a large party of English were settled in the town of Turnberry, Bruce made a bold attack upon them, with three hundred men, and put two hundred of the English to the sword. The garrison, in the castle near by, were afraid to sally forth, as it was a dark night, and Bruce carried off the spoil, among which were the war-horses and household plate of the governor. Bruce now retired with his brave band to a green hill, called afterwards the "Weary Neuk." Here they rested for three days, when they returned to the mountains to wait for reinforcements. It was then that King Robert learned of the sad fate of his wife, daughter, and sister, and the cruel death of his brother. But he humanely spared the life of every captive who fell into his hands, and did not yield to the temptation to revenge himself by [251] their death, in retaliation for the wrongs he had suffered. In consequence of his privations and exposures, he was attacked with a severe sickness, and having found relief from a certain medicinal spring, when he had afterwards established himself upon his throne, he founded a priory of Dominican monks there, and ordered houses to be built around the spring for eight lepers, and a certain sum of money and meal was settled upon the lands of Fullarton, for their support. In compliment to Sir William Wallace, the relatives and descendants of that knight were invested with the right of placing the lepers upon this establishment, known as the "King's Ease." This was secured by charter, and the leper's charter-stone, which was a large stone of elliptical shape, has been handed down to modern times.

King Robert had some very narrow escapes from death. It is reported that at one time, Sir Ingram Umfraville bribed an inhabitant of Carrick, with his two sons, to kill Bruce. These peasants, knowing that the king was accustomed at an early hour every morning to retire for meditation, accompanied by a single page, who carried his bow and arrows, determined to select such time for the attack. As the assailants approached, Bruce suspecting their design, took his bow and arrows from his attendant, bidding him retire to a place of safety, saying, "If I vanquish these traitors, you will have a sufficiency of arms, and if I fall, you can flee for you life."

As the peasants drew near, the king discharged an arrow, which hit the father in the eye; upon which, the son, brandishing his battle-axe, rushed to the combat, but missing his blow, he stumbled and fell, and Robert severed his head in two at one stroke. The third peasant, with [252] spear in hand, then rushed upon the king, but Bruce cut off the steel-head of the spear, and laid him also dead at his feet. When the page approached, he found the king wiping his good sword, while he remarked, "These would have been three gallant men had they not fallen victims to covetousness."

At another time, King Robert was surprised by a party of two hundred men with bloodhounds. Bruce was accompanied by only two men. The king was in a most perilous situation, but he

stationed himself in a narrow gorge and despatched his companions in haste for succor. But before his band of brave Scots arrived, King Robert had slain with his dreadful sword, fourteen of his enemies, who were found piled up in the gorge, men and horses above each other.

A party of English, under the command of John Lorn, now determined to search for the brave Bruce among the mountains of Carrick, where he was intrenched; and in order to track the valiant Scottish king, Lorn carried with him a sagacious bloodhound which belonged to Bruce. This bloodhound proved of great use to Lorn, for it discovered his master by its scent, and the English pursued him so closely that Bruce divided his men in small bands and dispersed them, that they might thus more easily flee. Still being pressed sorely by the relentless foe, Robert dismissed all his men, each one to look out for his own safety; and attended only by his foster-brother, who would not leave him, the brave Scottish king fled, still pursued by five of Lorn's men, led on by the bloodhound who tracked his master with sure scent. Meanwhile the dog was outrun by the five powerful mountaineers, and the king and his foster-brother at last stood at bay to receive them. Bruce singled three of these assailants, leaving his companion to combat with [253] two. As the first approached, the king cleft him through the skull with one blow of his weapon, and as the other two fell back for a moment, stunned by this unexpected disaster, Bruce sprang to the assistance of his foster-brother, whom he saw was in danger, and severing the head of one of his assailants from his body, he quickly laid his other two enemies dead, while the fifth was killed by his companion. When the king graciously thanked his faithful foster-brother for his aid, "It's like you to say so," he replied, "but you yourself slew four of the five."

But now the cry of the hound was heard again, for Lorn and his band were on the trail. The king and his companion hastily entered a small stream near by, to break the scent of the hound, and as the dog bounded up and down the banks, having lost all scent of his master, the foster-brother of King Robert shot him dead with an arrow, from their retreat in the forest. They then fled in safety from their pursuers, who gave up the chase. But King Robert had escaped from the bloodhound only to fall into other dangers. Three freebooters, pretending to be friends of the Scottish king, joined him and his foster-brother in their retreat through the forest. Bruce, suspecting these companions, desired them to walk at some distance before.

"We seek the Scottish king," said the strangers: "you need not mistrust us."

"Neither do I," replied Robert; "but until we are better acquainted, you must walk thus."

When they came to a ruinous hut, where they rested for the night, the king ordered the strangers to remain at the other end of the room. But the past fatigues overcoming them, at last Bruce and his foster-brother fell asleep. The king was roused from his slumbers by the approach [254] of the three villanous freebooters, with arms in their hands, intent on his assassination. Robert laid hold of his sword, and stepping heavily over his foster-brother, to awaken him, he rushed upon the assassins. After a fierce combat, in which his faithful foster-brother was killed, Bruce succeeded in overcoming these three villains, and left them dead on the spot.

It was during these wanderings that Bruce was one day resting in a ruined hut in the forests. He was lying upon a handful of straw, and considering whether he should continue this strife to maintain his right to the Scottish throne, or if it were best to abandon an enterprise attended with such danger, and seeming at times almost hopeless, and go to the Holy Land and end his days in the wars with the Saracens. While thus musing, his attention was arrested by the movements of a spider on the roof of the hut above his head. This spider was trying to fix its web on the rafters, and was swinging itself from one eave to another. The king was amused with the patience and energy displayed by the tiny insect. It had tried six times to reach one place, and failed. Suddenly the thought struck the Scottish monarch, "I have fought six times against the enemies of my country." He thereupon resolved that he would be guided in his future actions by the failure or success of this indefatigable little insect. The next effort of the spider was successful, and King Robert then determined that he would make the seventh attempt to free his country, feeling confident that he should yet achieve the liberty of Scotland. It is hence esteemed unlucky for a Bruce to kill a spider. Meantime Edward, the brother of Robert Bruce, and Sir James Douglas had made many successful raids against the English. They now joined their forces [255] with those of King Robert, and they then overran Kyle, Carrick, and Cunningham, which places had been in the possession of the English.

In 1307 Pembroke advanced against Bruce with three thousand men. But though the Scottish king's band numbered but six hundred men, they charged so valiantly with their long Scottish spears, that Pembroke's forces were completely routed, and he himself was obliged to flee for safety to the castle of Ayr. King Edward was so enraged by these events that he determined to march himself against this bold foe. But the English king had not proceeded three leagues from Carlisle when death met him. With his dying breath he ordered his remains to be carried with the army, and not to be interred until the enemy was conquered. He had previously caused his son to swear in the most solemn manner, that when he should die, he would boil his body in a caldron and separate the flesh from the bones, and having buried the former, the bones were to be carried with the army to inspire his men with hatred against the Scots, while his heart was to be taken to the Holy Land. But Edward II., instead of obeying his father's dying commands, interred his body in Westminster; and disbanding the army, the troops returned to England. The death of Edward I. gave new courage to the Scots. By this inglorious retreat of the English king, he lost all the advantages which his father had so dearly purchased for him. Edward Bruce, the brother of Robert, one of the most chivalrous knights, had conquered the English in Galloway, taking, in one year, thirteen castles. Meanwhile, Lord Douglas had recovered his ancient estate of Douglas from

the English and made many conquests.

The north and the south being now reduced to obedience, the united troops of Bruce and [256] Douglas proceeded to the west to subdue the proud lord of Lorn. By a series of well-contested engagements in which no ordinary degree of skill as a general was displayed, and the greatest personal courage, Bruce succeeded in wresting his much-injured country from the power of the English. Twice had the king of England attempted an expedition to reconquer Scotland, but he had returned without result. The authority of Bruce was rapidly being established throughout his country. The castles of Perth, Dunbar, and Edinburgh were in his hands. Many stories are told of his heroic bravery in these contests, but we can only stop to note the taking of Perth. This was a strongly fortified garrison. The fortress was enclosed by a lofty wall and towers, surrounded by a deep moat filled with water, which set at defiance the efforts of the Scots for several weeks. At last, King Robert made a feint of raising the siege, struck his tents, and departed to some distance. But one night, when least expected, he approached unperceived to the foot of the rampart, and walking up to his throat in the water, he seized a ladder and mounted to the wall's parapet, where he found a Scottish maiden whom the English had imprisoned, and who had escaped to the top of the wall, but could get no farther, as the frightful moat surrounded her on all sides.

"It is but now to descend by these corded steps," whispered Bruce to the captive maiden, "and I'll ferry you across this muddy water." But the maiden was as brave as she was fair, and knowing that any delay would risk the taking of the fortress by the brave Bruce, she heroically answered:—

"Please your Grace, no! Allow me the keeping of your dagger till you return with further [257] scaling-gear and your valiant band. Thus armed, I'll know how to defend myself, and I will watch these enemies till you return."

So King Robert, leaving the brave girl as a sentinel upon the parapet, quickly waded again through the murky waters of the moat, and having regained his band, reported his experience. Immediately fifty of his most daring men, selected for their great height, plunged into the dark waters of the moat, led by the valiant Bruce.

"Saw ye ever the like of that?" exclaimed a French knight who had lately joined the Scottish patriots. "What shall we say to our lords, when so worthy a knight and noble a monarch exposeth himself to such great peril to win a wretched hamlet?"

With this he gaily threw himself into the water, followed by the rest of the Scottish army. When Bruce again reached the maiden she said, "The late revellers are now in their slumbers; the watchword with them is '*The Lost Standard.*'" The brave maiden then aided the king to adjust the rope ladders, by which the Scots scaled the wall, one by one, until a strong force stood at their side. "'The Lost Standard' is the word," said the king; "and now for the citadel!" It was, indeed, a *Lost Standard* to the drowsy guards and sleeping revellers. The fortress was soon taken, and the captives set free. King Robert afterwards besieged the fortress of Stirling, when the governor, Sir Philip Mowbray, contrived to make his appeals for succor reach the English king. Edward roused himself from his natural indolence, and raised a large army to march against Scotland. The forces of the English amounted to nearly one hundred thousand men. This brilliant army, with banners flying and lances glistening in the sunlight, presented a grand array. Meanwhile, King Robert [258] was concealed in the forests with an army of only forty thousand men, nearly all on foot, awaiting the enemy, and preparing barriers to check the onslaught of the English. On the morning of the 23d of June, 1313, the two armies met near Bannockburn. The night had been passed in prayer in the Scottish camp, and in feasting and drunkenness by the English. At daybreak the young English king was astonished at the good order observed in the Scottish ranks.

"Do you think they will fight?" he asked of Sir Ingletram d'Umfreville. Just then the abbot of Inchaffray appeared before the Scottish troops, holding a crucifix in his hand; all bent their knees with uncovered heads.

"They are asking for mercy," cried King Edward.

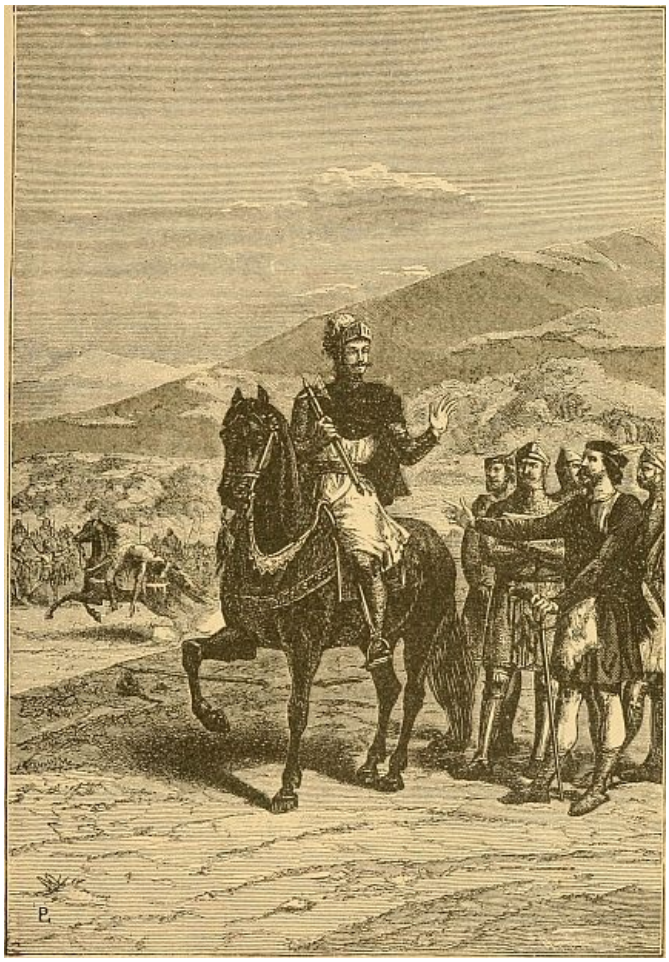
"Yes, sire," replied Umfreville, with a bitter smile; "but of God, not of you, sire. These men will win the battle or die at their posts."

The sight of the vast English army might well cause the brave hearts of the small band of Scots to tremble; but with the intrepid Bruce at their head, they awaited their foes with dauntless courage. So vast were the English forces, that it is said the country seemed on fire by the brightness of the shields and burnished helmets gleaming in the morning light. So vast was the multitude of embroidered banners, of standards, of pennons, and spears; so apparently endless the crowds of knights, blazing in their rich-colored and gemmed surcoats; so large the extent of country occupied by their numerous tents,—that one might have thought all the warriors of the world were marching against this handful of valiant Scots. The English had hastened their march and arrived with some disorder in front of the Scottish army. King Robert Bruce, with a golden crown on his helmet, was riding slowly before the line of his troops. As the brave king thus rode [259] along upon his favorite palfrey, clad in armor and carrying his battle-axe in his hand, encouraging his men by his calm voice and brave words, the English king took special note of him, and remarked, "Doubtless yonder solitary rider is of the foe, although he is almost as nigh to our front as to that of the rebels. Canst tell, Sir Knight, of what account he is, and wherefore this manœuvre?"

“My liege,” replied Sir Giles d’Argentine, to whom King Edward had spoken, “he who yonder marshalleth the Scottish host was once my frequent associate, and is well known to me, as I clearly descry from the jewelled diadem which glittereth on his helmet. It is none other than Bruce himself.”

“If it is the arch-traitor Bruce,” exclaimed Edward, “I marvel that no knight amongst you all is brave enough to challenge so audacious a foe.”

Whereupon Sir Henry Bohun, mounted on a magnificent war-horse, came dashing against the Scottish monarch, whose small palfrey seemed an ill match for so strong and large a steed. “See! the foeman coucheth his lance and pusheth at full speed against his victim, who recklessly advanceth, and now doth take his stand motionless as a rock, awaiting the onset of his enemy. Breathlessly the Scots and English watch the two combatants. On comes the impetuous Bohun. Surely some half score more plunges of the superb animal that bears him will unhorse the hero-king, unless unwonted presence of mind, nimbleness of movement, and dexterity of arm shall save him from the onrush of the powerful horse and gleaming spear. But the gallant Bruce has risen in his stirrups, and as his enemy rushes upon him, the lance is driven aside by the sweep of [260] his strong arm, and the battle-axe, wielded with rare dexterity, stops not in its swing of meteor-like speed till down it falls upon the helmet of his foe with such true aim and mighty force that the weapon shatters the helmet and fractures the skull of Sir Henry Bohun, whose fiery steed bears his dead body back to the English ranks. Bruce returned slowly to his forces, and while some of his friends surrounded him, reproaching him for so rashly risking his life, the Scottish hero laughingly answered, while looking sorrowfully at his notched axe, ‘See! I have spoiled my good battle-axe.’”



“SEE! I HAVE SPOILED MY GOOD BATTLE-AXE.”

The battle was commenced by the English at the order of King Edward. The shock of the first charge of the English cavalry was terrible; and as they were received on the spears of the Scottish infantry, the crash was heard at a great distance, and many English knights were dashed from their saddles by their furious steeds, which had been stabbed by the invincible spears of the Scots. The centre division, under the gallant Randolph, stood in a steady body to receive the charge of the English. These compact squares of the Scottish army were well calculated to break the masses which were opposed to them, and they suffered only from the arrows of the archers. The English cavalry charged with the greatest impetuosity, and endeavored to pierce through the phalanx of the Scottish spearmen; but they received them like a wall of iron, while the English receded from the shock like broken waves which had spent their fury on the rocks. When both armies joined battle, the great horses of England rushed upon the Scottish lances as if upon a thick wood, and one mighty sound arose from the breaking of the lances, the shock of falling horsemen, and the shrieks of the [261] dying. The knights sang their war-cries, and rushed on to the charge. Groom fought like squire, and squire like knight, and yet Scotland’s lion waved proudly over her bands, while the English banners rose and fell, and many of them were dyed in blood. At last the English began to hesitate. “They fly! they fly!” cried the Scots. Just then the camp followers of the Scottish army, who had been posted on an adjacent hill, excited by the ardor of the struggle, began to descend in a mass towards the field of battle. The English imagined themselves about to be attacked by a fresh army, and began a disorderly retreat. Upon which Robert Bruce charged valiantly with his reserves, and quickly decided the fate of the day. The earl of Pembroke seized the bridle of King Edward’s horse and dragged him away from the battle-field. Sir Giles d’Argentine accompanied his king out of danger, and then rode back fearlessly amidst the conflict, exclaiming, “It is not my custom to fly!” This brave knight was cut down by the Scots. The victory was complete. The fortress of Stirling surrendered immediately. The earl of Hereford, who had shut himself up in Bothwell castle, offered to capitulate, and was exchanged for the wife, daughter, and sister of the king of Scotland, who had been imprisoned in England for several years. Thus had the independence and freedom of Scotland been obtained by the brave Bruce and his dauntless little band of patriot warriors. The swords of those who fought at Bannockburn were hung up in the halls of their descendants, and handed down to modern times as trophies of the liberty and independence which they achieved. The beneficial effects of this signal victory secured forever

the independence of Scotland; and when the two kingdoms were afterwards united, Scotland received equal rights with England, and the national church of Scotland, with her universities [262] and schools, were guaranteed to the people of Scotland forever. This famous battle taught the Scottish nation a lesson which it never forgot: that a phalanx of Caledonian spears, wielded by brave and disciplined men on foot, was superior to all the vaunted chivalry of the most renowned cavaliers. In 1327 King Edward II. of England was dethroned, and his young son was crowned in his place. The young prince was but fifteen years of age. Scotland had been recovering from her misfortunes under the firm and wise government of Robert Bruce. The independence of that kingdom had been acknowledged by England. The crown jewels, which had been formerly seized by Edward I., had been returned, and the little princess Joan, who was betrothed to David, the young son of Robert Bruce, had been taken to Berwick, accompanied by the queen-dowager of England and a splendid retinue of attendants. The marriage was soon after celebrated with great magnificence. Englishmen and Scots, who for half a century had met only as foes upon the field of battle, were now joined in friendly courtesies through this marriage. King Robert's wife Elizabeth had died before she saw this happy termination of the long hostilities.

The Scottish king did not long survive these events. He was seized with a severe complaint, then supposed to have been leprosy, which at length proved fatal. When upon his death-bed he called around him his earls and barons, and commended to their care his young son David; and the prince was thereupon crowned king of Scotland. Robert Bruce, having settled the affairs of his kingdom and throne, summoned to his bedside his brave and faithful friend and gallant knight, Sir James Douglas, and entreated him to take his heart from his body after death, and [263] have it embalmed, and carry it to the Holy Land, and leave it there in the Holy Sepulchre, in obedience to a vow he had made. "When I was hard beset," said the dying king, "I vowed to God that if I should live to see an end of my wars and Scotland free, I would raise the sacred standard against the enemies of my Lord and Saviour. But as I cannot myself accomplish this vow, I know no knight more worthy for the mission of bearing the heart of King Robert of Scotland to the Holy Land." To this affecting request Lord Douglas replied, with tears in his eyes, "Ah, most gentle and noble king! A thousand times I thank you for the great honor you have done me in making me the bearer of so great and precious a treasure. Most faithfully and willingly, to the best of my power, shall I obey your commands." Then the dying king answered,—

"Now praised be God! for I shall die in peace, since I am assured, by the faith you owe to your God and the order of knighthood, that the best and most valiant knight of my kingdom has promised to achieve for me that which I myself could never accomplish."

Thus died Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, in the fifty-fifth year of his age and the twenty-fourth of his reign. His remains were deposited in the church of Dumfermline, where he was enshrined under a rich marble monument from Paris. The censures of excommunication pronounced by the Pope having been removed some time before, the religious services at his burial were performed by many prelates and bishops.

Many years afterwards his tomb was opened, and the lead in which his body had been wrapped was found twisted into the shape of a rude crown, covered with a rich cloth of gold, which had [264] been thrown over it. It was ascertained that the breast-bone had been sawn asunder in order to fulfil his request of taking out his heart; but that proud form, before which the king of England had trembled on his throne, had crumbled into dust. Robert Bruce, king of Scotland, is one of the most exalted warriors to be found in those early times. The virtues of his character were formed, and acquired their bright polish, in the school of adversity. One of the early writers says of him, "If any one should undertake to describe his individual conflicts and personal success, those courageous and single-handed combats in which, by the favor of God and his own great strength and courage, he would often penetrate into the thickest of the enemy, now becoming the assailant and cutting down all who opposed him, at another time acting on the defensive, and escaping from inevitable death,—if any writer shall do this, he will prove, if I am not mistaken, that he had no equal in his own time either in knightly prowess or in strength and vigor of body." The true greatness of Robert Bruce appeared in his humanity, moderation, and pity for the sufferings of others, which led him in the hour of victory to be generous to his prisoners even though he had suffered such bitter wrongs at the hands of his English foes. His manners were kingly and engaging, his disposition singularly gentle, courteous, and without selfishness. Yet he was high-spirited, and full of noble energy and enthusiasm. In person he was tall and well proportioned, being five feet ten inches high. His shoulders were broad, his chest capacious, and his limbs powerful and possessing marvellous strength. He possessed an open and cheerful countenance, shaded by short curled hair. His forehead was low, his cheek-bones strong and prominent, with a wound on his lower jaw. Though the expression of his face was usually pleasing [265] and kindly, he could assume a look of stern, kingly dignity, which awed his enemies, and gained him the necessary respect due to his rank and commanding position as Scotland's king, and also her bravest and most valiant knight. He was one of the most successful military leaders of the age. Well may Scotland boast of her brave Robert Bruce, the most famous of all her rulers, the deliverer of her enslaved people, the upholder of her liberty, her hero-king and most chivalrous knight!

FERDINAND V. OF SPAIN.
1452-1516 A.D.

[266]

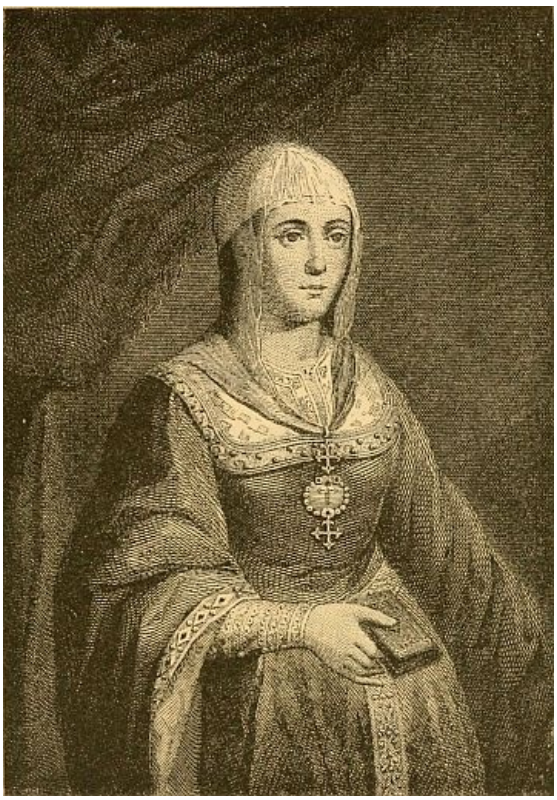
"Every monarch is subject to a mightier one."—SENECA.

FOR many years after the great Saracen invasion in the eighth century, Spain was divided into various small states. In the fifteenth century these were so united as to form four,—Castile, Aragon, Navarre, and the Moorish kingdom of Granada. The province of Granada was all that remained to the Moslems of their once vast possessions in the peninsula. On the 10th of March, 1452, in the little town of Sos, Ferdinand, son of King John of Aragon, was born. The early Spanish historians note with care the good omens attending this event. The sun, which had been obscured with clouds during the whole day, suddenly broke forth with unwonted splendor. A crown was also beheld in the sky, composed of various brilliant colors, like those of a rainbow. All which appearances were interpreted by the spectators as an omen that the child then born would be the most illustrious among men. As this event was also nearly contemporary with the capture of Constantinople, it was afterwards regarded by the Catholic Church as a providential provision in behalf of the religion of which Ferdinand became such a staunch supporter, as his zealous life might be regarded as an ample counterbalance to the loss of the capital of Christendom. One year before this time, in the palace of the king of Castile, on the 22d of April, 1451, a little [267] princess had been born, and christened Isabella. This Spanish princess was descended, both on her father's and mother's side, from the famous John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster.

But around the cradles of these two royal babies many contentions arose, which we cannot stop to note. When Isabella was four years of age, her father died, and her half-brother Henry became king of Castile; and, as she had still another brother, Alfonso, there did not seem to be much probability that she would succeed to the throne. She retired with her mother to the small town of Arevalo, where she was educated with care, and instructed in lessons of practical piety, until she reached her fourteenth year.

FERDINAND OF ARAGON.

Meanwhile, the little Prince Ferdinand, in Aragon, was surrounded with constant contentions between his father, king of Aragon, and his half-brother Carlos. Joan, the mother of Ferdinand, was the second wife of King John. She was a proud, ambitious woman, much younger than her husband, and was of the blood royal of Castile, being the daughter of Don Frederic Henriquez, admiral of that kingdom. She hated her step-son Carlos, who was heir to the throne, as she regarded him as an obstacle to the advancement of her own child, Ferdinand. We cannot stop to note all the family broils occasioned by Joan's jealousy. Prince Carlos seems to have been a youth of many attractions of mind and body, and was the idol of the people. So, when King John, influenced by his wife Joan, succeeded in having Carlos arrested, and placed in strict confinement, the entire kingdom was thrown into excitement. The people sprang to arms, determined to release the prince; and they were so threatening that King John fled with his wife to Saragossa. The insurrection now spread [268] throughout Aragon, Valencia, and Navarre, and even into King John's possessions in Sardinia and Sicily. At length, the frightened king saw the necessity of releasing his prisoner. Prince Carlos was received by the people with wild enthusiasm; and the king could only make peace with his subjects by a public acknowledgment of Carlos as his rightful heir and successor. But Carlos did not long survive this triumph. He fell sick of a fever, and died in 1461. Some historians hint that the prince was poisoned, to make way for the youthful Ferdinand, now ten years of age, and who was immediately declared heir to the throne. The queen-mother then took Ferdinand to Catalonia, to receive the homage of that province; but the Catalonian nobles, who were exasperated against the king on account of his treatment of Carlos, displayed so much hostility that the young prince and his mother were obliged to take refuge in the fortress of Gerona. Here they were at last relieved by King John. But the Catalans then seceded from the authority of the king of Aragon, and they presented the crown to the duke of Lorraine, who marched with an army of eight thousand men against the old king of Aragon, whose treasury was empty, and who had become totally blind. In this emergency, the mother of Ferdinand, who was a brave woman, placed herself at the head of such forces as she could collect; and, with her young son Ferdinand riding by her side, she heroically marched against the enemies of her husband, and attacked the duke of Lorraine with such impetuosity that she drove him in confusion from Gerona. In this encounter, young Ferdinand came near being taken captive.



ISABELLA OF CASTILE.

Meanwhile, the Princess Isabella was nearly sacrificed to the ambition of her half-brother, who was king of Castile. The beautiful princess, who [269] had now been brought from her retirement in Arevalo to her brother's court, had many suitors for her hand. Her half-brother, King Henry, promised his sister in marriage to a rich but wicked old nobleman; and great preparations were made for the wedding. The anguish of the poor Princess Isabella was so great that she shut herself up in her apartment, praying to God, with groans and tears, that He would deliver her from this impending doom. Still, the wedding preparations went on. Meanwhile, the wicked old nobleman set out from his palace to claim his youthful and beautiful bride. But God had heard the prayers of the afflicted princess; and, as the aged bridegroom reached a small village, at the end of the first day's travel, he was suddenly seized with an attack of quinsy, which terminated his life.

The nobles of Castile now entreated Isabella to allow herself to be proclaimed Queen of Castile, in opposition to her brother, whom they all hated. Her other brother, Alfonso, who would have been heir, had previously died. But Isabella was too noble to seek such revenge upon her cruel brother; but the nobles forced the king to declare her his successor to the throne, and to promise that she should not be forced to marry against her will.

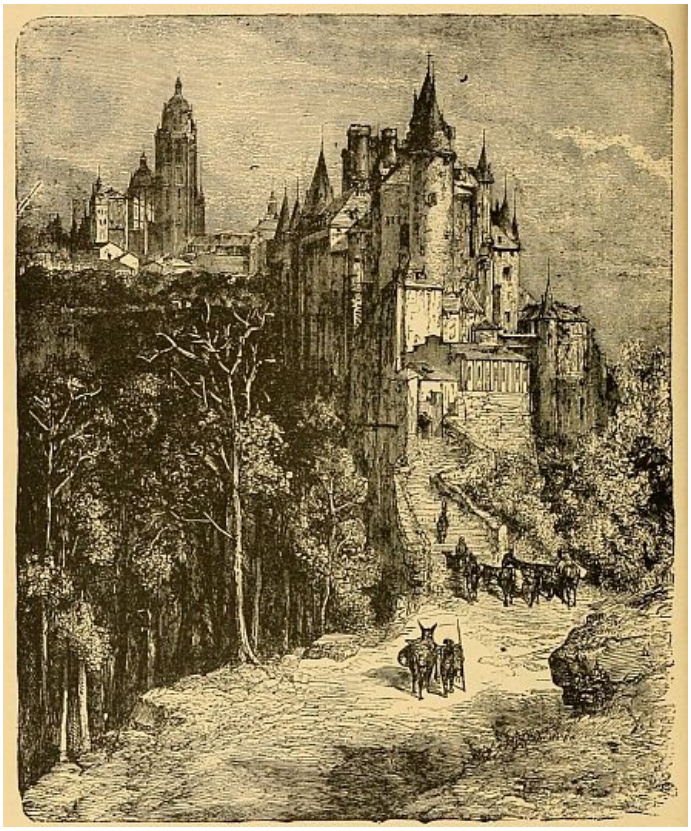
The king of Portugal now desired to secure Isabella for his bride; and her brother threatened to imprison her unless she would yield. As overtures had been made by the young and handsome Prince Ferdinand of Aragon for the hand of the fair Isabella, and as her heart was also inclined towards this handsome prince, she determined, in spite of her brother, to accept the proffered hand of Ferdinand. The marriage articles were signed on the 7th of January, 1469. Isabella was aided by the archbishop of Toledo, who raised a regiment of dragoons, and carried her in triumph [270] to Valladolid, where she was greeted by the people with the wildest enthusiasm. Meanwhile, her brother attempted to prevent Ferdinand from entering Castile to marry Isabella. As the father of Ferdinand was so pressed by a war with his nobles, he could not afford his son an armed escort sufficient to secure his safety. So Ferdinand resolved to go disguised as a merchant. With half a dozen companions, Ferdinand started upon this adventuresome expedition to secure his lovely bride, in spite of hostile foes. Amidst many perils they pressed on their way. One night, at an inn, they lost their purse, containing all their money. At length they were met by an escort, sent by Isabella for their protection. The fair princess, with her little court, was at Valladolid. Ferdinand, accompanied by four attendants, rode privately to Valladolid, where he was received by the bishop of Toledo, and conducted to the presence of Isabella. The young prince was very handsome, tall and fair, with an intelligent countenance and intellectual brow. He was eighteen years of age. He was well educated, and of temperate habits. He was graceful and courtly in manner, and seemed a fitting mate for the beautiful princess of nineteen, of whom a contemporary writer says, "She was the handsomest lady whom I ever beheld, and the most gracious in her manners."

Isabella was highly educated for those times, and spoke the Castilian language with grace and purity. After a brief lover's interview of two hours, Ferdinand returned to Duenas, where he had left his companions. Preparations were immediately made for the marriage, which was solemnized at the palace of one of the nobles in Valladolid, on the morning of the 19th of October, 1469. Ferdinand, having lost his slender purse by the way, was without money; and [271] Isabella, being a fugitive from her brother's court, was also without means. But the royal couple readily borrowed the money necessary to defray the expenses of the wedding. King Henry now determined to cast aside Isabella, and place upon the throne Joanna, the daughter of his second wife. This was a blow to Isabella, for now the court of Castile, aided by the king of France, were combined against her. Ferdinand and Isabella held their little court at Duenas, in humble style. In 1474, the brother of Isabella, Henry IV., king of Castile, died, and she was proclaimed queen. Isabella was at that time in Segovia. Attended by an imposing retinue, she rode upon a beautiful steed, whose bridle was held by two high officers of the crown, and she was escorted to her seat upon the splendid throne, which had been erected in one of the public squares of the city. As the people gazed with admiration upon their beautiful queen, a herald cried,—

"Castile, Castile, for the king Don Ferdinand, and his consort Dona Isabella, queen proprietor of these kingdoms!"

The queen took the oath of office, and then repaired to the cathedral, to pray at the altar. Ferdinand was at this time in Aragon, and when he returned he was greatly displeased with the document prepared by the dignitaries of Castile, in which Isabella alone was declared heir to the throne of Castile, but Ferdinand was associated with her in the performance of many acts of

royalty. But, persuaded by his wife, he agreed to submit.



SEGOVIA: THE ALCAZAR AND CATHEDRAL.

Alfonso V., the king of Portugal, now invaded Castile. Ferdinand and Isabella raised an army and met the foe at Toro. The powerful bishop of Toledo, exasperated by the independence of opinion which Ferdinand and Isabella displayed, whom he had supposed would be pliant tools in his hands, joined Alfonso against them. The strife was too desperate to last long. There was a hand-to-hand fight along the entire line. At length a storm arose. A dark night came down upon the conflicting hosts. A deluge of rain fell, and the field was flooded with mingled blood and water. The Portuguese were utterly routed. Ferdinand displayed great humanity to his prisoners, furnishing them with food, clothing, and a safe return to their own country. [272]

Isabella was awaiting the issue of the battle at Tordisillas, twenty miles above on the river. When she received tidings of the victory, she ordered a procession to the Church of St. Paul, as an expression of her gratitude to God, and she herself walked barefoot in the garb of a penitent. In a few months, the entire kingdom of Castile acknowledged the supremacy of Ferdinand and Isabella.

In 1479, the king of Aragon died, leaving the kingdoms of Aragon and Navarre to his son Ferdinand. Aragon, Castile, and Navarre, being thus united under these two illustrious monarchs, the great Spanish monarchy was thereby founded.

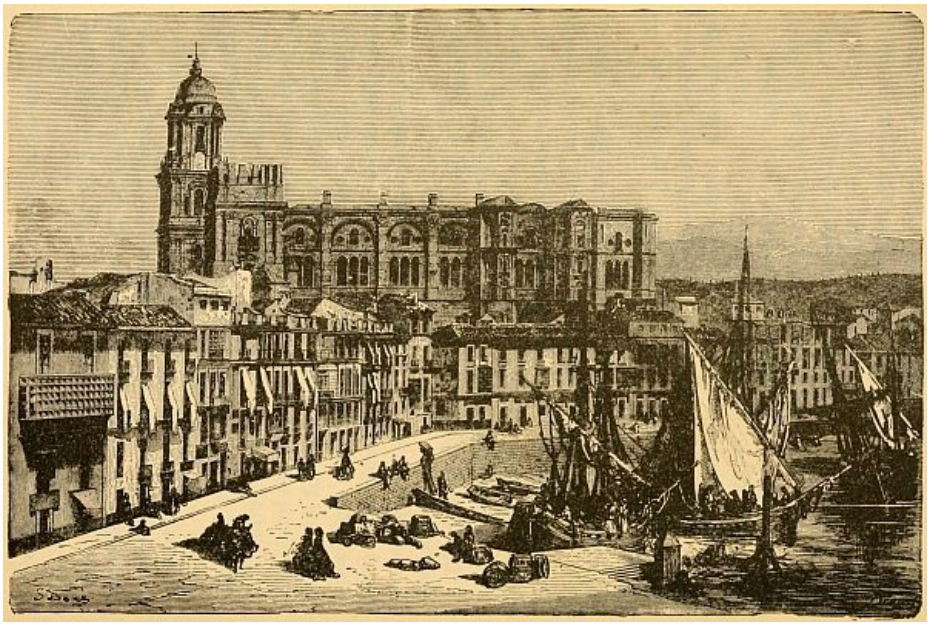
Ferdinand and Isabella now commenced the enterprise of conquering Granada, thus expelling the Moors from their last foothold in Spain. Malaga, on the coast of the Mediterranean, was one of the principal Moorish towns. The Moors were aware of the importance of this position, and had strongly fortified it. The Moors were as brave as the Christians, and were led by famous chieftains. In April, 1487, Ferdinand, at the head of fifty thousand men, arrived before Malaga, and commenced its siege. There were continual ambuscades, and nightly sallies. One day, while [273] Ferdinand was dining in his tent, which commanded a view of the field of conflict, he perceived a party of Christians, who had been sent to fortify an eminence, retreating in confusion, pursued by the Moors. King Ferdinand leaped upon his horse, not delaying for any defensive armor, rallied his men, and charged against the enemy. Having thrown his lance, he endeavored to draw his sword from its scabbard. But the sword held fast, the scabbard having been by some accident, indented. Just then several Moors surrounded him. The king would have been slain had not two brave cavaliers rushed to his rescue. The nobles remonstrated with the king for so risking his life, but Ferdinand unselfishly answered,—

“I cannot stop to calculate chances, when my subjects are perilling their lives for my sake.”

After a siege of ten days, one of the outposts of Malaga was captured by the Spaniards, who now pressed triumphantly forward to assault the city itself. Ferdinand first attempted to induce the Moors to capitulate, by generous offers, to the commander. But he loyally replied, “I am stationed here to defend the place to the last extremity. The Christian king cannot offer a bribe large enough to induce me to betray my trust.” Ferdinand then encompassed the city by sea and by land. Queen Isabella joined him, and her presence inspired the Spaniards with fresh courage. When she arrived with a brilliant train of ladies and cavaliers, an imposing escort was sent to meet her, and she was conducted to the encampment with great magnificence of parade, and many demonstrations of joy.

The assault was now renewed more fiercely than ever. Famine at length caused great suffering amongst the Moors. They had consumed most of their ammunition, while the Spanish army was [274] constantly re-enforced by new volunteers. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella maintained strict religious discipline in their camp. Neither oaths nor gambling was allowed, and the rites of the Roman Catholic Church were performed with imposing ceremony. Gradually the Christians gained ground. They succeeded in blowing up one of the towers, thereby obtaining entrance into the city. The citizens of Malaga, suffering from pestilence and famine, had been reduced to living upon the flesh of horses, dogs, and cats. Everywhere the most appalling misery was seen. Many were dying in the streets. In view of their sufferings, Hamet Zeli, the Moorish commander, gave the citizens permission to make the best terms they could with their conqueror. Ferdinand would listen to nothing, however, but unconditional surrender. At length the citizens sent a deputation to Ferdinand, declaring that they were willing to resign to him the city, the fortifications, and all

the property, if he would spare their lives, and give them their freedom. “If these terms are refused,” they added, “we will take the six hundred Christian captives, who are in our hands, and hang them like dogs on the battlements. We will then enclose our old men, women, and children in the fortress, set fire to the town, and sell our lives as dearly as possible, in the attempt to cut our way through our enemies. Thus if you gain a victory, it shall be such a one as will make the name of Malaga ring throughout the world, to ages yet unborn.”



THE CATHEDRAL AND PORT OF MALAGA.

In answer, Ferdinand replied, “If a single hair of a Christian’s head is harmed, I will put to the sword every man, woman, and child in the city.”

The citizens in hopeless despair, cast themselves upon the mercy of Ferdinand, unconditionally surrendering the city. [275]

On the 18th day of August, 1487, the Spanish army, headed by Ferdinand and Isabella, with great military and ecclesiastical pomp, entered the city, and repaired to the cathedral, where the *Te Deum* was for the first time performed within its walls. The Christian captives were liberated from the Moorish dungeons. They presented a dreadful spectacle, which drew tears from all eyes. This band of sufferers, many of whom had languished in dark cells for fifteen years, were brought forth, haggard, emaciated, and heavily manacled with chains. Being freed from their fetters, Ferdinand and Isabella addressed to them kind words of sympathy, and dismissed them with rich gifts.

The heroic Moorish chieftain, who had so gallantly defended the city, was brought loaded with chains before his conqueror. Upon being questioned why he had so long persisted, he replied, “I was commissioned to defend the place to the last extremity. Had I been properly supported, I would have died sooner than have surrendered.”

Then came the doom of the Moors. The entire population of the city, amounting to about twenty thousand, were condemned to slavery. Men, women, and children were alike sentenced by the Christians. One-third were sent to Africa in exchange for Christians imprisoned there. Another portion were sold to the highest bidder, to procure money to defray the expenses of the war. The Pope at Rome received one hundred Moorish soldiers. The Moorish girls were renowned for their great beauty; fifty of the most beautiful of these were sent by Isabella as a gift to the Queen of Naples, and thirty to the Queen of Portugal. All the property of the victims was seized by the crown. [276] Cruel as this doom appears to us, it was regarded at that time as mild and humane, though now one shudders at such unchristian barbarity. But in justice, the excuse must be made for Ferdinand and Isabella, that they supposed that thereby the Moslem Moors would be more likely to become converts to the Christian religion, even in slavery. It is said that Isabella was urged by the clergy to put all the captured Moors to death, as a warning to others. The city of Malaga was now re-inhabited by the Spaniards.

In the next year, Ferdinand, with a force of twenty thousand men, marched against Granada, the capital of the Moorish kingdom. The Christians were driven back in confusion into their own territory. The year following, King Ferdinand collected an army of ninety-five thousand men. The cavalry was composed of the highest nobility of the realm. The Christians advanced upon Baza. The Moors sallied forth from the city to meet their foes; a fierce battle lasted for twelve hours, when the Moors were forced to retreat within the city walls. The conflict had been so severe, however, that the Spanish generals counselled an abandonment of the siege. Ferdinand, relying upon the wisdom and great mental endowments of his wife, sent dispatches to Jaen, where Isabella then was, asking her advice. Her reply was so encouraging that the siege was renewed. The summer and winter passed away; the Christians suffered much during the floods of rain which inundated their camp. The energetic queen, however, came to their rescue, and sent six thousand pioneers to repair the roads; and she even pawned the crown jewels and her own ornaments, to raise money to furnish her husband’s forces with supplies. The Moorish women [277]

within the city displayed heroism equal to that of the Christian queen. At length, as the Spanish troops began to despond, Ferdinand sent for his brave wife to come to the camp, that her presence might inspire them with fresh courage. An historian thus describes the coming of the queen:—

"On the 7th of November, the queen, accompanied by her daughter Isabella, several ladies of honor, a choir of beautiful maidens, and a brilliant escort, entered the camp of Ferdinand. The inhabitants of Baza crowded their walls and towers to gaze upon the glittering pageant as it wound its way through the defiles of the mountains and emerged upon the plain, with gold-embroidered banners and strains of martial music. The Spanish cavaliers sallied forth in a body from their camp to receive their beloved queen and to greet her with an enthusiastic reception. The presence of this extraordinary woman, in whose character there was combined with feminine grace so much of manly self-reliance and energy, not only reanimated the drooping spirits of the besiegers, but convinced the besieged that the Spanish army would never withdraw until the place was surrendered. Though there was no want of food for the beleagured Moors, their ammunition was nearly expended, and the garrison was greatly reduced by sickness, wounds, and death."

Soon after the arrival of Isabella, the Moorish garrison offered to capitulate. Ferdinand was so anxious to secure the place, that he agreed to allow the army to march out with the honors of war, and the citizens to retire with their property at their pleasure. The fall of Baza secured the surrender of many other important strongholds of the Moslems. Granada, the capital of the Moorish kingdom, was still in the possession of the Moors. Ferdinand, in 1491, having raised [278]
another army, encamped within six miles of this city. Abdallah, the king of the Spanish Moors, was in personal command at Granada. The city possessed a population of two hundred thousand people.

The situation of Granada was exceedingly picturesque. A wild, rugged mountain range, whose summits were crowned with snow, protected the city upon the south. On the north was a beautiful plain, blooming with flowers, and beyond, groves and vineyards reached for thirty leagues. But upon this lovely spot occurred scenes of blended heroism and revolting carnage, which have made the fall of Granada famous for all time.

Sometimes a company of Moors, clad in armor, and mounted upon their fiery Arabian chargers, would ride forth from the gates, while bugle-blasts rang shrill upon the air, and challenge an equal number of Christian knights to combat. Promptly the defiance was met. All the citizens of Granada crowded the house-tops, battlements, and towers of the city, to watch the exciting conflict. Both armies rested upon their arms, breathlessly awaiting the issue. Again, some brave Christian knight would ride forth alone and challenge a Moorish cavalier to combat. The ladies of the two hostile courts cheered their respective champion with their fair presence and encouraging smiles; and never did knight or cavalier fight more valiantly to win the prize of victory. The memory of these brilliant but deadly tourneys still inspires the songs of the Castilians. Spanish ballads glow with thrilling descriptions of these knightly tourneys; and the prowess of Moslem, as well as Christian warriors, sheds undying glory over the conquest of Granada.

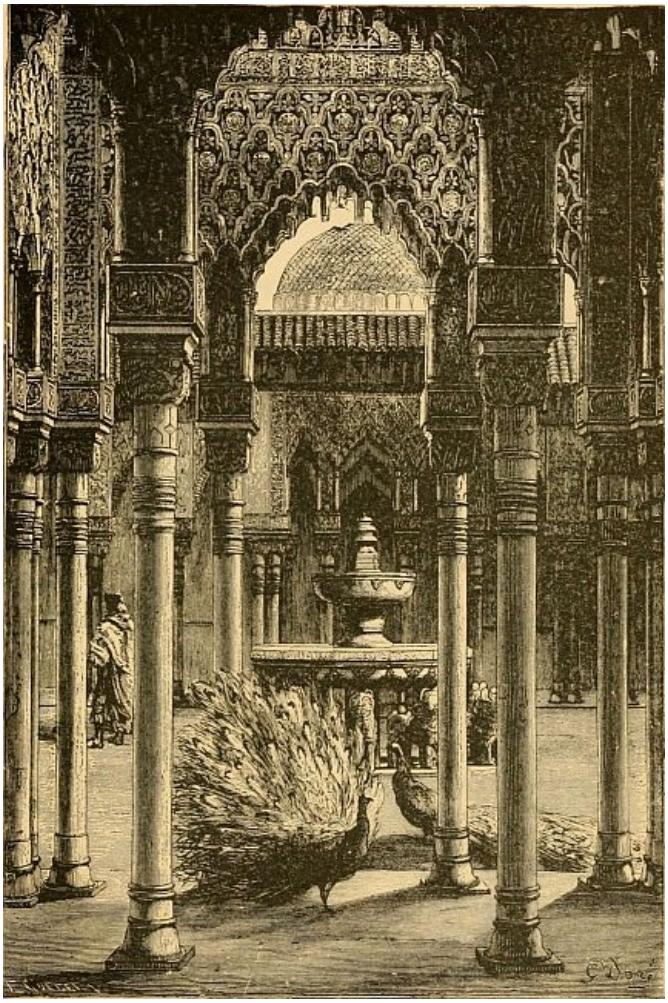
Queen Isabella took an active part in all the military operations of the Spanish army. She often appeared upon the field, encased in full armor, mounted upon a splendid steed; and her presence [279]
always inspired her troops to fresh deeds of valor. Isabella occupied in the camp a pavilion, richly draped with silken hangings. One night, a gust of wind blew the fringes of one of the curtains into the flame of a lamp, and soon the entire pavilion was in a blaze. The conflagration spread to other tents, and it was only with great difficulty that the entire camp was preserved from destruction. The queen and her children were in great danger of being destroyed. In consequence of this accident, Ferdinand, to prevent a like occurrence, ordered a city of substantial houses to be built upon the spot occupied by his army. In three months, a large and stately city arose. The soldiers wished to call it Isabella, in honor of their idolized queen, but she named it Santa Fé, in recognition of her faith in Providence. The city still stands.

The Moors were now convinced that their Spanish foes were determined to remain until the Crescent should give place to the Cross. The citizens of Granada were suffering from famine. Abdallah, therefore, surrendered Granada to the Christians on the second day of January, 1492.

This last great act in one of the sublimest of historical dramas—the invasion of Spain by the Moors—was performed with the most imposing martial and religious rites. The Alhambra was first taken possession of by veteran Christian troops, including the body-guard of the king. Ferdinand, surrounded by a very brilliant *cortège* glittering in polished armor, took his station near an Arabian mosque, now called the hermitage of St. Sebastian. At a short distance in the rear the queen Isabella took her position, accompanied by a no less splendid retinue, her high- [280]
born warriors proudly displaying the armorial bearings of their families. The immense column of the Christian army commenced its march up the Hill of Martyrs into the city. Abdallah, accompanied by fifty cavaliers, passed them, descending the hill to make the surrender of himself to Ferdinand. The heart-broken Moor threw himself from his horse, and would have seized the hand of Ferdinand to kiss it in token of homage, but the Christian king magnanimously spared him the humiliation, and threw his arms around the deposed monarch in a respectful and affectionate embrace. Abdallah then presented the keys of the Alhambra to the conqueror, saying,—

"They are thine, O king, since Allah so decrees it. Use thy success with clemency and

moderation.”



PATIO DE LOS LEONES (COURT OF LIONS), ALHAMBRA.

He then, not waiting for the words of consolation which the king was about to utter, rode on to offer the same acts of submission and homage to Queen Isabella. In the mean time the Castilian army, winding slowly up the hill and around the walls, entered the city by the gate of Los Molinos. The large silver cross which Ferdinand had ever borne with him in his crusade against the Moors was now elevated upon the Alhambra, while the banners of the conqueror were proudly unfurled from its towers. “It was the signal for the whole army to fall upon its knees in recognition of that providence which had granted them so great a victory. The solemn strains of the *Te Deum*, performed by the choir of the royal chapel, then swelled majestically over the prostrate host. The Spanish grandees now gathered around Isabella, and kneeling, kissed her hand, in recognition of her sovereignty as queen of Granada.”

Abdallah, however, did not remain as a sad witness of these scenes. With a small band he took his way to the mountains. [281] From one of the rocky eminences he sorrowfully gazed upon the beautiful realms over which his ancestors had reigned for more than seven hundred years. With eyes filled with tears he exclaimed, “Alas! when were woes ever equal to mine!”

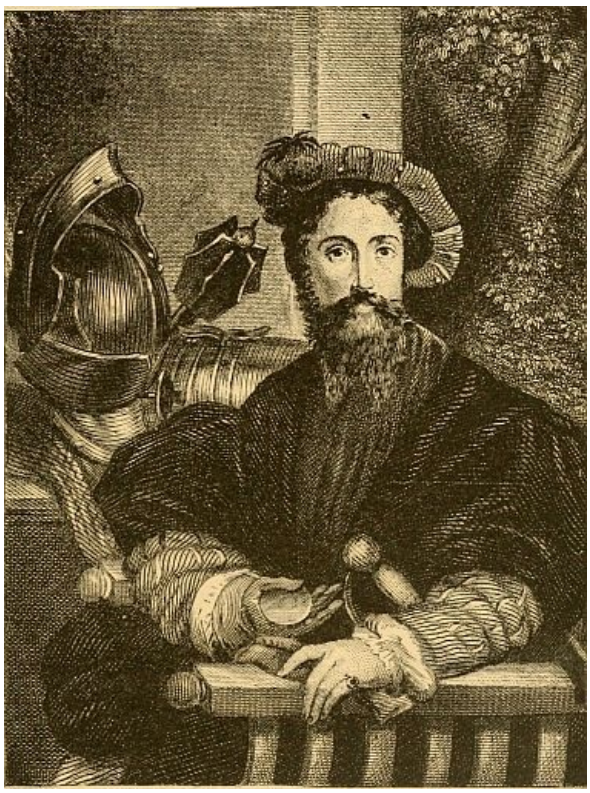
Whereupon his mother cruelly replied, “You do well to weep as a woman for what you could not defend like a man!”

Thus “The Last Sigh of the Moor,” and the cruel yet Spartan-like heroism of the Moorish queen-mother, have passed into the romantic annals of history.

While Ferdinand and Isabella were at Santa Fé, Columbus arrived at their camp. We have not space to give here a history of Christopher Columbus. We can but note a few important incidents. The Atlantic Ocean was then unexplored. Columbus, who was employed in the construction of maps and charts, became convinced that countries existed upon the other side of the globe. He was laughed at as an enthusiast, and when he declared that the world was round, one of the sages of the fifteenth century replied, “Can any one be so foolish as to believe that the world is round, and that there are people on the side opposite to ours who walk with their heels upward and their heads hanging down, like flies clinging to the ceiling? that there is a part of the world where trees grow with their branches hanging downwards, and where it rains, hails, and snows upwards?”

The doctrine of Columbus was not only regarded as absurd, but it was thought to be heretical. Columbus, fully convinced of the truth of his ideas, appealed first to the king of Portugal for means to fit out a fleet to start out on a voyage of discovery. Meeting with refusal, he visited the Spanish court in 1487. [282] At this time Ferdinand and Isabella were with the army, encamped before Malaga. The war with the Moors continuing, the Spanish sovereigns declared that they could give the matter no attention until the conclusion of the war. Disheartened, Columbus was about to apply to the king of France, when the prior of the convent of La Rabida, at Palos, who firmly believed in the scheme of Columbus, and who had formerly been confessor to Isabella, wrote to the queen, urging that Spain might not lose so great an opportunity. Isabella was so much impressed by the letter of the worthy prior that she immediately requested that Columbus should come to Santa Fé, where she was then residing, as the Spanish army were still besieging Granada. Columbus arrived there just as the Moorish banner was torn down, and the flag of Spain was unfurled upon the towers of the Alhambra. In the midst of these rejoicings Columbus presented his plans. “I wish,” said he, “for a few ships and a few sailors to traverse between two and three thousand miles of the ocean, thus to point out a new and short route to India, and reveal new nations, majestic in wealth and power. These realms are peopled by immortal beings, for whom Christ has died. It is my mission to search them out, and to carry to them the Gospel of salvation. Wealth will also flow in from this discovery. With this wealth we can raise armies, and rescue the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem from the hands of the infidels. I ask only in return that I may be appointed viceroy over the realms I discover, and that I shall receive one-tenth of the profits which may accrue.”

The Spanish courtiers were astonished at what they deemed audacious demands, and persuaded the queen to refuse. Whereupon, Columbus sadly saddled his mule to retrace his steps, and to offer his services to the king of France. Isabella was troubled, as she thought over these offers and requests of Columbus, and she expressed to Ferdinand her perplexities. He replied, “The royal finances are exhausted by the war. We have no money in the treasury for such an enterprise.” The queen then enthusiastically exclaimed,— [283]



COLUMBUS.

“I will undertake the enterprise for my own crown of Castile; and I will pledge my private jewels to raise the necessary funds.”

Thus the discovery of a continent hung upon the vanity, or heroism, of a woman! But the character of Isabella was equal to the emergency. The matter was quickly settled. A courier was sent to overtake the disappointed Columbus, who was pursuing his weary way through the sand, overwhelmed with gloom. For eighteen years he had been in vain endeavoring to carry out his cherished plans. Joyfully he returned to Santa Fé, where the queen received him with great kindness, and assented to his demands. Columbus succeeded in obtaining three small vessels,—two furnished by the Spanish government, and one by Martin Alonzo Pinzon, a wealthy Spaniard. The total number who joined the expedition was one hundred and fifty.

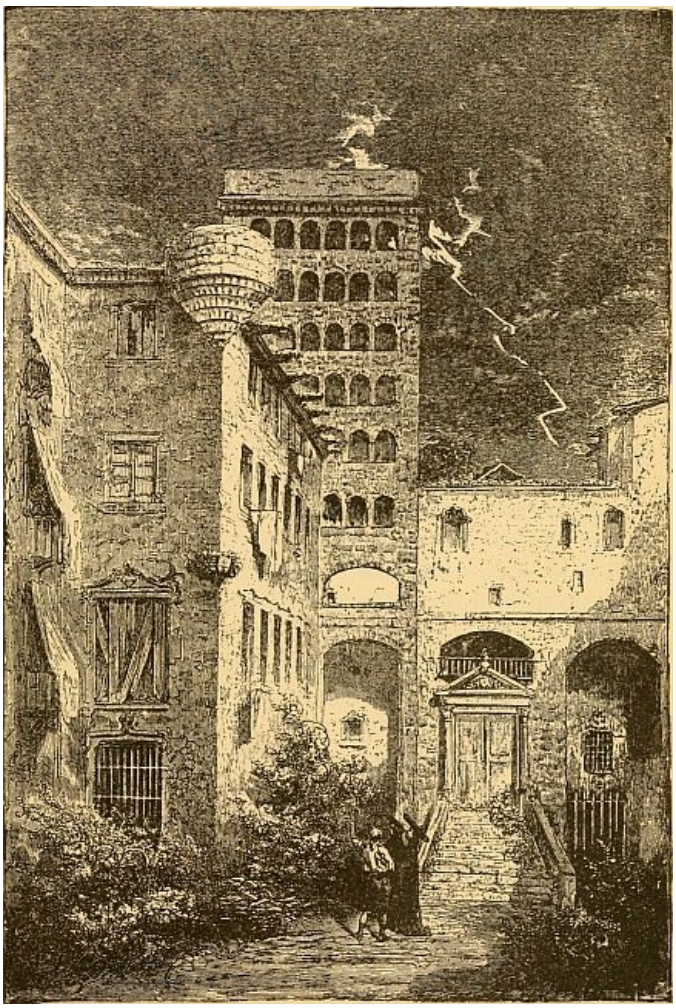
The enterprise was deemed so hazardous that it was with great difficulty that a crew could be obtained. This was in the fifteenth century. In view of the marvellous progress in knowledge, discovery, invention, and an enlightened Christianity, in the past four hundred years, in comparison with the ignorance and superstitions of preceding epochs, any student of history will be led most emphatically to exclaim, Surely the world was never so advanced in knowledge, true civilization, and pure religion as to-day! With all the wickedness at the present time, the study of [284] history reveals the fact, that the world was never so good, pure, and Christian as now.

On the 3d of August, 1492, the small squadron unfurled its sails for the momentous voyage. At the close of a week they arrived at the Canary Islands, which were on the frontiers of the known world. On the 6th of September, they again set sail.

Day after day passed; but no land came in sight. Sixty-seven days had now passed since the Highlands of Spain had disappeared from their view. They had met with indications which made them hope that land was near. A branch of a shrub, with leaves and berries upon it, had been picked up; and a small piece of wood, curiously carved, had been found drifting upon the water. It was the 11th of October. As the sun went down, and the stars appeared, Columbus took his stand upon the poop of his vessel. About ten o’clock, he was startled by the gleam of what seemed to be a torch far in the distance. For a moment it blazed, then disappeared. Was it a meteor, or a light from the land? Not an eye was closed on the ships that night. At two o’clock in the morning, a sailor at the mast-head shouted, “Land, land, land!” The day dawned; and a glimpse of paradise seemed to have been unveiled before their enraptured gaze. A beautiful island was spread out, luxuriously green, and adorned with every variety of tropical vegetation. The boats were lowered, and manned. The banner of Spain, emblazoned with the cross, floated from every prow. Columbus, richly attired in a scarlet dress, entered his boat, and was rowed towards the shore, where multitudes of the natives stood, gazing, spell-bound, upon the strange sight. Columbus leaped upon the shore, and, falling upon his knees, gave thanks to God. With imposing ceremony, the banner of Spain was planted upon the soil; and the island was called San [285] Salvador, in recognition of the protecting care of Providence. We have not space to note the other discoveries of Columbus upon this voyage. Continuing his explorations in that part of the country, he discovered the islands of Exuma, Yuma, and Cuba. Of Cuba, Columbus wrote, “It is the most beautiful island that eyes ever beheld.” During a short tour up one of the picturesque streams of Cuba, Columbus met with a bulbous root, about as large as an apple, which the natives used as food, roasting it in the ashes. They called it *batatas*. Columbus and his men were hunting for gold; but this discovery of the indispensable potato has proved a much richer prize to mankind. Here, also, he saw the natives rolling up in their hands dried leaves of a certain plant, which they lighted and smoked. These leaves they called tobacco. This discovery has proved a curse, rather than a blessing, to the world.

After discovering the islands of the Nativity and Hayti, or Saint Domingo, Columbus determined to return to Spain, to secure a more efficient fleet. The return voyage was extremely tempestuous. During the gloomy hours of storm and danger, fearing that they should never see land again, Columbus wrote an account of his discoveries upon parchment, wrapped it in waxed cloth, and, enclosing it in a water-tight cask, set it adrift. A copy, similarly prepared, was kept

upon the ship. On the 15th of March, not quite seven months and a half from the time of his departure, Columbus, with his little crew, entered the harbor of Palos. Ferdinand and Isabella were at Barcelona. They immediately wrote to Columbus, requesting him to repair to their court. His journey thither was a triumphal march. Ferdinand and Isabella were seated beneath a silken [286] canopy, to receive him with the most imposing ceremonies of state. As a remarkable act of condescension, both Ferdinand and Isabella rose, upon the approach of Columbus, and offered him their hands to kiss. The Indians and other trophies from the New World which he had brought back with him, occasioned the greatest surprise. Then Columbus narrated to the Spanish sovereigns the story of his voyage. But we are obliged to give an account of the shame, as well as glory, of the Spanish court. Ferdinand and Isabella were rigid Catholics; so much so, that Ferdinand is called in history “Ferdinand the Catholic,” and Isabella received also the same title. The Inquisition, which had existed somewhat mildly before, was re-established by them. We cannot give the details of those persecutions here, which we narrate more fully when the Inquisition appears with greater cruelty and ferocity in the life of Philip II. During the reign of Ferdinand, the persecution fell mostly upon the Jews. Just as the Spanish sovereigns were about entering into engagements with Columbus to send him in search of a new world, that Christianity might be carried to the heathens there, the unchristian and cruel edict was issued for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. We have not space to describe the heart-rending sufferings of this persecuted people.

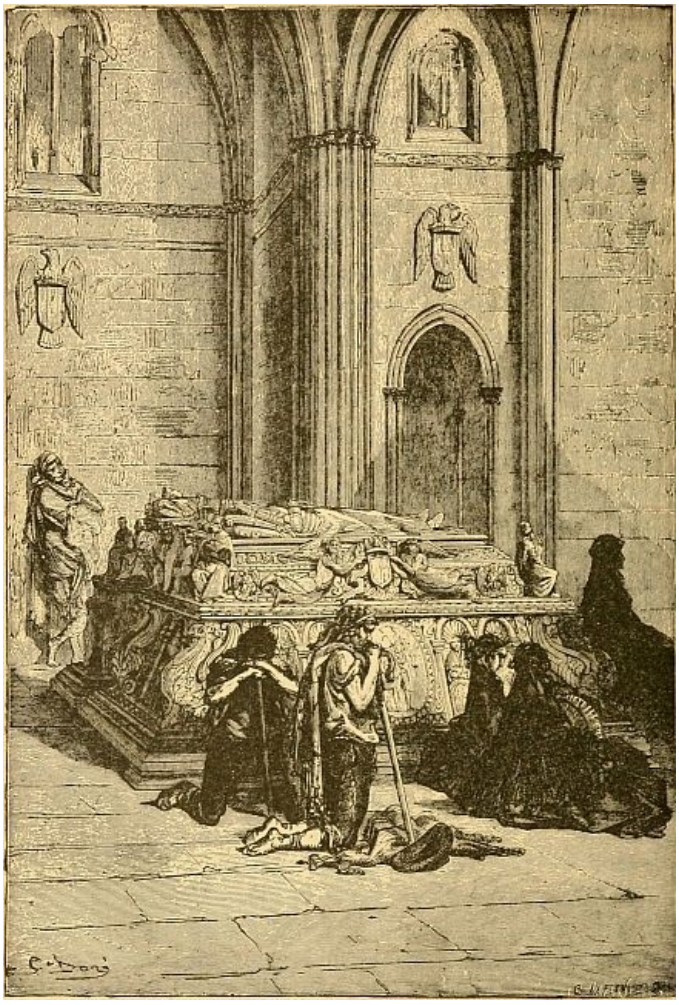


PRISON OF THE INQUISITION AT BARCELONA.

While at Barcelona, in 1492, Ferdinand narrowly escaped being killed by an assassin. King Ferdinand had not much intellectual culture; and Isabella was far superior to her husband in literary attainments. But Ferdinand was a capable man in the military and practical affairs of his kingdom. The children of Ferdinand and Isabella received unusual education for those times, and acquired rare attainments. Prince John, heir to their [287] throne, was reared with the greatest care. But just after the marriage of the young prince to Princess Margaret, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian of Austria, which was celebrated with great magnificence, Prince John was stricken with a fever, and died. Thus perished their only son. Their eldest daughter, Isabella, who had married the king of Portugal, died soon after the death of her brother, Prince John. This daughter left a babe, who thus became heir to Portugal, Aragon, and Castile; but ere a year had passed the infant also sank into the grave. Their daughter Joanna was married to the archduke Philip, son and heir of Maximilian. This unhappy princess was the mother of Charles V. of Spain. But her life was clouded with gloom, occasioned by her husband’s neglect, which at last caused her insanity. The youngest daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, Catharine of Aragon, afterwards had the misfortune to marry the infamous Henry VIII. of England. Thus, the last days of these illustrious sovereigns were overshadowed with heart-rending sorrows. We can barely note the subsequent discoveries of Columbus. Before his second voyage, while at Barcelona, he was invited by the grand cardinal of Spain to dine with him. An envious guest inquired of Columbus if he thought that there was no man in Spain capable of discovering the Indies, if he had not made the discovery. Columbus, without replying to the question, took an egg from the table, and asked if there was any one who could make it stand on one end. They all tried, but failed. Whereupon Columbus, by a slight blow, crushed the end of the egg, and left it standing before them, saying, “You see how easy it is to do a thing after some one has shown you how.”

In his second voyage he discovered the island of Jamaica and several other islands. Ferdinand [288] and Isabella received him with kindness upon his return; but two years passed before he could obtain another squadron. It was during this third voyage that complaints reached Isabella that Columbus was enslaving the inhabitants of Hayti. An officer named Bobadilla was sent to Hayti to investigate the matter. He was unscrupulous and envious; and, falsely using his official authority, he ordered Columbus to be sent back to Spain in chains. These outrages, inflicted upon a man so illustrious, roused indignation throughout the world. Ferdinand and Isabella were shocked and alarmed upon hearing of this outrageous treatment, and sent in the greatest haste to release him from his fetters, and to express their sympathy and regret for the indignities he had suffered.

Some months after, Columbus started upon his fourth and last voyage. After encountering storms and perils, Columbus reached the continent at what is now called Central America, near Yucatan. Notwithstanding the importance of having at last touched the American continent, this voyage was a series of disappointments and disasters. He was detained for a year on the island of Jamaica, on account of the loss of his ships, which were wrecked in the storms. At length, two vessels arrived at the island, and Columbus embarked for his return to Spain. When he at last reached that country, he was broken down by old age, sickness, and mental suffering. Poverty stared him in the face. Isabella was upon her death-bed; and Ferdinand was heartless, and would not offer him any relief. After all his achievements in behalf of mankind, Columbus thus sadly writes to his son: “I live by borrowing. Little have I profited by twenty years of service, with such toils and perils, since at present I do not own a roof in Spain. If I desire to eat or sleep, I have no [289] resort but an inn, and for the most times have not wherewithal to pay my bill.” In the midst of such sorrow and poverty, the heroic Columbus passed his last days on earth. He was buried in the Convent of St. Francisco, at Seville. Thirty years afterwards, his remains were removed to St. Domingo, on the island of Hayti. Upon the cession of the island to the French, in 1795, they were transferred by the Spanish authorities to the Cathedral of Havana, in Cuba.



TOMB OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA IN THE CATHEDRAL OF GRANADA.

Queen Isabella was now broken in health, from her many domestic sorrows. She died in November, 1504. The last years of Ferdinand afford a sad contrast to his early life and brilliant manhood. As the death of Queen Isabella took from Ferdinand the crown of Castile, Philip, the husband of the poor crazy Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, seized upon the throne of Castile. A bitter family quarrel ensued. In order to secure the help of France, Ferdinand, though it was only eleven months after the death of his deeply loved wife, was married to the princess Germaine, a gay and frivolous girl of eighteen, daughter of one of the sisters of Louis XII.

“It seemed hard,” says one writer, “that these nuptials should take place so soon, and that, too, in Isabella’s own kingdom of Castile, where she had lived without peer, and where her ashes are still held in as much veneration as she enjoyed while living.” The marriage ceremony took place at Duenas, where, thirty-six years before, he had pledged his faith to Isabella. In 1513 the health of Ferdinand began to fail. Dropsy and partial paralysis made his life a torment. Hoping to gain relief, he travelled southward; but, having reached the small village of Madrigalejo, he was unable to proceed farther. On the 22d of January, 1516, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, [290] Ferdinand breathed his last. He died in a small room in an obscure village. “In so wretched a tenement did the lord of so many lands close his eyes upon the world.” Thus ended the lives of Ferdinand and Isabella, shrouded with gloom and disappointment.

“A crown! What is it?
It is to bear the miseries of a people,
To hear their murmurs, feel their discontents,
And sink beneath a load of splendid care.”

PHILIP II. OF SPAIN.

1527-1598 A.D.

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"Princes who would their people should do well,
Must at themselves begin, as at the head;
For men, by their example, pattern out
Their imitations and regard of laws:
A virtuous court a world to virtue draws."—BEN JONSON.

CHARLES V. of Spain, the father of Philip II., was the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella. Through his father he inherited the Netherlands and part of Burgundy, and at the age of nineteen became emperor of Germany. He had received the throne of Spain when sixteen years of age. When his son Philip had attained sufficient age to assume the throne, Charles V. abdicated in his favor, and retired to a convent, where he died in 1558 in the fifty-ninth year of his age. Philip II., his son, was born at Valladolid in 1527. His mother, Isabella, was the daughter of Emanuel, king of Portugal. Philip was but twelve years old at the time of his mother's death. In 1543 Philip married Mary, daughter of the king of Portugal. Both bride and bridegroom were eighteen years of age. Mary died in a short time, leaving an infant son named Don Carlos. Catharine of Aragon, the youngest daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, married King Henry VIII. of England. Their daughter Mary became the second wife of King Philip II. of Spain. She was eleven years older than Philip, and was unattractive in person and a bigot in religion. Her cruelty in persecuting those whom she regarded as heretics has given her in history the name of "Bloody Mary."

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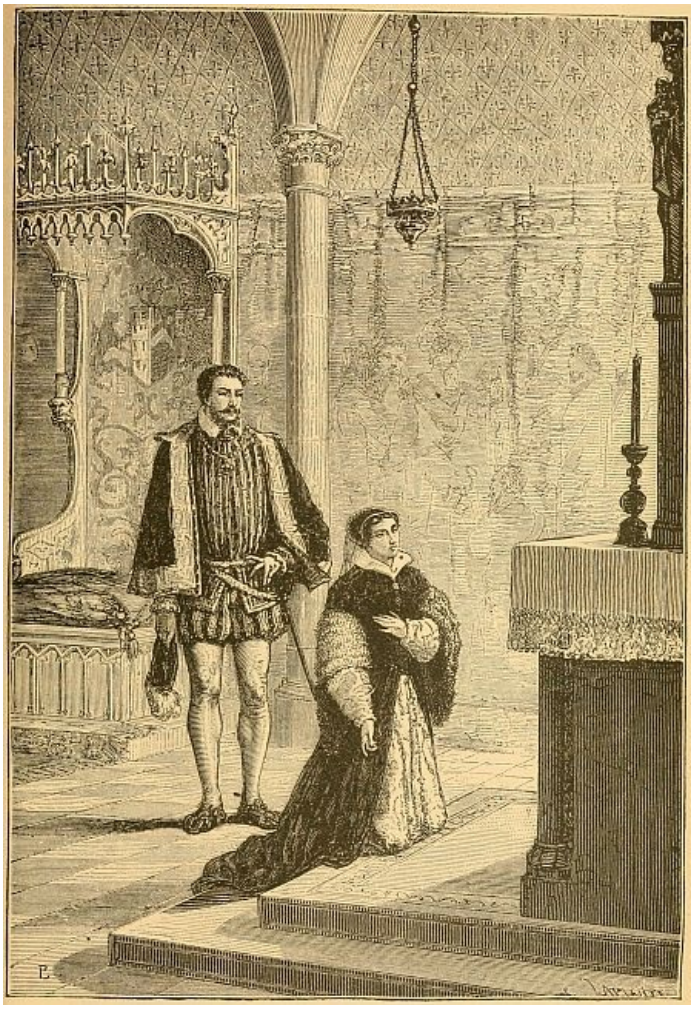
The marriage contract was signed before either of them had seen each other. As the son of an emperor, Philip set out in royal state to obtain his bride. The marriage ceremony was performed in the cathedral at Winchester. Philip was dressed in a suit of white satin, the gift of Mary. It was richly decorated with golden embroidery, and encrusted with precious stones. Mary's wedding dress was also white satin embroidered with gold. It was thickly studded and fringed with costly jewels.



QUEEN MARY PLIGHTING HER TROTH TO PHILIP.

As Mary was at this time queen of England, her marriage was celebrated with the greatest magnificence. The pompous rites of the wedding ceremony occupied four hours, during which time Philip and Mary were seated upon a throne draped with a royal canopy. The vast edifice was thronged with the nobility of England, Flanders, and Spain. After a few days, devoted to public festivities in Winchester, Philip and Mary went to London, and were received by the people and court with great demonstrations of rejoicing. Her father, King Henry VIII., had quarrelled with the Pope at Rome, but Mary and Philip were zealous Catholics, and desired to re-establish the relations of the English Church with Rome. Parliament met at Whitehall. Mary, the queen of England, sat with Philip under a canopy. By her side sat the Pope's legate. A petition was presented by the chancellor of the realm, praying for reconciliation with the Papal See. The whole assembly knelt before the Pope's legate, who pronounced upon them absolution and a benediction. Then began the fires of persecution. Many who would not consent to become Catholics were burned at the stake.

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Philip, who had now wearied of his elderly and unattractive wife, and also of being regarded as only the husband of the queen, was rejoiced at the summons of his father, Charles V., who desired him to return to Spain to receive the kingdom, that Charles might retire into convent life. By the abdication of Charles V., Philip II. became one of the most powerful monarchs in the world. He was king of united Spain; he was also king of Naples and Sicily, and duke of Milan; he was sovereign of the Low Countries; and as husband of the queen of England, who was devotedly attached to him, he had great influence in the affairs of that nation. The Cape Verde Islands and the Canaries were under his sway. A large portion of the Mediterranean coast in Africa was under his dominion; also the Philippine and Spice Islands, in Asia. He inherited those islands

which Columbus had conferred upon Spain in the West Indies, and also the vast realms of Mexico and Peru.

Such was the immense power now placed in the hands of this young prince not yet thirty years of age. Philip II. established his court at Madrid, and from his palace there sent forth his edicts over his wide domains. In 1558 Queen Mary of England died, being succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth.

Philip's only regret for his wife was, no doubt, the loss of his hold upon the English crown. Before a year had elapsed he was married to the daughter of the king of France. This young princess, Elizabeth,—called in Spain, Isabella,—was only fourteen years of age, and had been previously betrothed to the son of Philip, Don Carlos, who was of the same age.

The death of this young prince a few years afterwards, under very suspicious circumstances, caused many to think that he had been poisoned by the command of his father, who had [294] imprisoned the prince at the time. Don Carlos and his father had frequent quarrels, and at last Carlos was said to have confessed to a priest that he desired to kill his father, and he asked absolution, which the priest refused to grant. The king was informed of all this. The young prince was thereupon imprisoned, with a strong guard to watch him, and he was reported to be mad. In the course of a few months Don Carlos died.

Two stories regarding that event were told. Some historians consider Philip innocent of any attempt upon the life of his son, but others state that the physician of the prince was informed that it was very desirable that the death of Carlos should appear to result from natural causes; and that medicine was administered to the unsuspecting patient in such doses as slowly to accomplish the desired end. Philip II. was a fanatic in religion, and the terrible persecution of the Protestants during his reign has filled the world with horror, as the shocking stories have been told.

Philip had not forgotten his father's command to punish heretics with the utmost rigor. The Reformation had been silently and rapidly advancing in Spain. Now the terrible persecutions of the Inquisition were turned against this heroic little band of fearless Christians by those professing to worship the same merciful God, and to be followers of the same loving and sinless Christ. How such awful crimes could have been perpetrated in the sacred name of religion seems at the present day incomprehensible, and we shudder at the recital of such savage barbarity, more especially when committed by the enlightened and civilized nations of the world less than four centuries ago.

The bigoted Philip issued an edict "that all who bought, sold, or read prohibited works were to [295] be burned alive." Every person suspected of heresy was arrested and thrown into prison. In Seville alone, eight hundred were arrested in one day. The accused were then dragged from their dungeons and subjected to the horrors of the most merciless tortures to induce them to give up their Protestant faith; and these shocking deeds were performed in the name of religion. The awful details of those barbarous crimes are too horrible to relate. What must the reality have been to the poor victims of this inhuman persecution!

The first act of burning, under the decrees of the Pope, Philip II., and the Spanish inquisitor-general, Valdés, took place in May, 1559, at Valladolid. This terrible ceremony was called *auto de fé*, or act of faith; and so common did they at length become, that Catholics would engage to meet each other at the *"auto de fé,"* as in modern times appointments are made to meet at the theatre, opera, or other place of public gathering. One of the historians thus describes the second *auto de fé* in Valladolid, in October, 1559: "The Pope wished to invest the scene with all the terrors of the Day of Judgment. That he might draw an immense crowd, an indulgence of forty days was granted to all who should be present at the spectacle.

"The tragedy was enacted in the great square of the city. At one end of the square a large platform was erected, richly carpeted and decorated, where seats were arranged for the inquisitors. A royal gallery was constructed for the king and his court. Two hundred thousand spectators surrounded the arena. At six o'clock in the morning all the bells of the city began to toll the funeral knell. A solemn procession emerged from the dismal fortress of the Inquisition. A [296] body of troops led the van. Then came the condemned. There were two classes: the first consisting of those who were to be punished with confiscation and imprisonment; and the second, of those who were to suffer death. The latter were covered with a loose gown of yellow cloth, and wore upon the head a paper cap of conical form. Both the gown and cap were covered with pictures of flames fanned and fed by demons. Two priests were by the side of each one of the victims, urging him to abjure his errors. Those who were merely to endure loss of property and to be thrown into the dungeons of the Inquisition were clothed in garments of black. A vast concourse of dignitaries of state, and of the common people, closed the procession. The fanaticism of the times was such, that probably but few of the people had any sympathy with the sufferers. The ceremonies were opened with a sermon by the bishop of Zamora. Then the whole assembled multitude took an oath, upon their knees, to defend the Inquisition and the purity of the Catholic faith, and to inform against any one who should swerve from the faith. Then those who, to escape the flames, had expressed penitence for their errors, after a very solemn recantation, were absolved from death. But heresy was too serious a crime to be *forgiven*, even upon penitence. All were doomed to the confiscation of property, and to imprisonment—some for life—in the dungeons of the Inquisition. Their names were branded with infamy, and in many cases their immediate descendants were rendered ineligible to any public office. These first received their doom, and under a strong guard were conveyed back to prison.

"And now all eyes were turned to the little band of thirty, who, in the garb of ignominy, and [297] with ropes around their necks, were waiting their sentence. Many of these were men illustrious for rank, and still more renowned for talents and virtues. Their countenances were wan and wasted, their frames emaciated, and many of them were distorted by the cruel ministry of the rack. Those who were willing to make confession were allowed the privilege of being strangled before their bodies were exposed to the torture of the fire. After being strangled by the *garrote*, their bodies were thrown into the flames. Enfeebled by suffering, all but two of them thus purchased exemption from being burned alive.

"One of these, Don Carlos de Seso, was a Florentine noble. He had married a Spanish lady of high rank, and had taken up his residence in Spain, where he had adopted the principles of the Reformation. For fifteen months, with unshaken constancy, he had suffered in the dungeons of the Inquisition. When sentence of death at the stake was pronounced upon him, he called for pen and paper in his cell. His judges supposed that he intended to make confession. Instead of that he wrote a very eloquent document, avowing his unshaken trust in the great truths of the Reformation. De Seso had stood very high in the regards of Philip's father, Charles V. As he was passing before the royal gallery to be chained to the stake, he looked up to Philip, and said, 'Is it thus that you allow your innocent subjects to be persecuted?' The king replied, 'If it were my own son, I would fetch the wood to burn him, were he such a wretch as thou art.'

"He was chained to the stake. As the flames slowly enveloped him in their fiery wreaths, he called upon the soldiers to heap up the fagots, that his agonies might sooner terminate. Soon life was extinct, and the soul of the noble martyr was borne on angel wings to heaven. The fellow- [298] sufferer of De Seso was Domingo de Rexas, son of the marquis of Posa. Five of this noble family, including the eldest son, had been victims of the Inquisition. De Rexas had been a Dominican monk. In accordance with usage, he retained his sacerdotal habit until he stood before the stake. Then in the midst of the jeers of the populace his garments were one by one removed, and the vestments of the condemned, with their hideous picturings, were placed upon him. He attempted to address the spectators. Philip angrily ordered him to be gagged. A piece of cleft wood was thrust into his mouth, causing great pain. He was thus led to the stake and burned alive. The cruel exhibition occupied from six o'clock in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon."

Such were some of the shocking and barbarous scenes connected with the notorious Spanish Inquisition. This persecution raged year after year. So fiercely did these fires of persecution burn throughout all Spain, that nearly all traces of the Protestant religion were eradicated from the kingdom. The Spaniards degenerated into semi-barbarism. Education was discouraged, all human rights were trampled upon, and Spain became one of the most debased, impoverished, and miserable nations in Europe. Thus had religious fanaticism turned this fair province of Philip's into a desert. In regard to the blame which rests upon Philip II., for this deplorable state of things, his own words will answer. He wrote to his sister, whom he had appointed his regent in the Netherlands, thus:—

"I have never had any object in view than the good of my subjects! In all that I have done I have trod in the footsteps of my father, under whom the people of the Netherlands must admit that they lived contented and happy. As to the Inquisition, whatever people may say of it, I have [299] never attempted anything new. With regard to the edicts, I have been always resolved to live and die in the Catholic faith. I could not be content to have my subjects do otherwise. Yet I see not how this can be compassed without punishing the transgressors. God knows how willingly I would avoid shedding a drop of Christian blood; but I would rather lose a hundred thousand lives, if I had so many, than allow a single change in matters of religion."

In the Netherlands persecutions and rebellions caused constant strife. Scarcely forty years had elapsed since Luther had publicly burned the papal bull at Wittenburg. Since that time his doctrines had been received in Denmark and Sweden. In England, under Queen Elizabeth, Protestantism had become the established religion of the state. The Reformation had reached the hills and valleys of Scotland, and tens of thousands had gathered to hear the preaching of Knox. The Low Countries, or Netherlands, which now constitute Holland and Belgium, were the "debatable land," on which the various sects of reformers, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, and the English Protestants, contended for mastery over the Roman Catholic Church. Calvinism was embraced by some of the cantons of Switzerland, and had also spread widely through France, where the adherents to the Protestant faith were known as the Huguenots. The cry of the Reformation had passed the Alps, and was heard even under the walls of the Vatican, and had crossed the Pyrenees.

The king of Navarre declared himself a Protestant, and the spirit of the Reformation, as we have related, had also secretly spread into Spain. But there already the terrible Inquisition, with [300] Philip II. at its head, had crushed out Protestantism from Spain. It was not to be expected that Philip, having exterminated heresy in one part of his dominions, would tolerate its existence in any other, least of all in so important a country as the Netherlands. So the persecutions commenced there. During the latter part of the fifteenth century, and the beginning of the sixteenth, the pontifical throne had been filled by a succession of popes, notorious for their religious indifference, and the carelessness and profligacy of their lives. This was one of the prominent causes of the Reformation. But before the close of the sixteenth century, a line of popes had arisen, of stern and austere natures, without a touch of sympathy for the joys and sorrows of mankind, and entirely devoted to the work of regaining the lost powers of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Pius the Fifth was such a pontiff. He wrote to Philip, urging him not to

falter in the good cause, and to allow no harm to the Catholic faith, but to march against his rebellious vassals at the head of his army, and wash out the stain of heresy in the blood of the heretic. To him Philip replied: that the Pope might rest assured that the king would consent to nothing that could prejudice the service of God, or the interests of religion. He deprecated force, as that would involve the ruin of the country. Still he would march in person, without regard to his own peril, and employ force, though it should cost the ruin of the provinces; but he would bring his vassals to submission. “For he would sooner lose a hundred lives, and every rood of empire, than reign a lord over heretics.”

With such a pope, and such a king, no wonder that the Inquisition flourished.

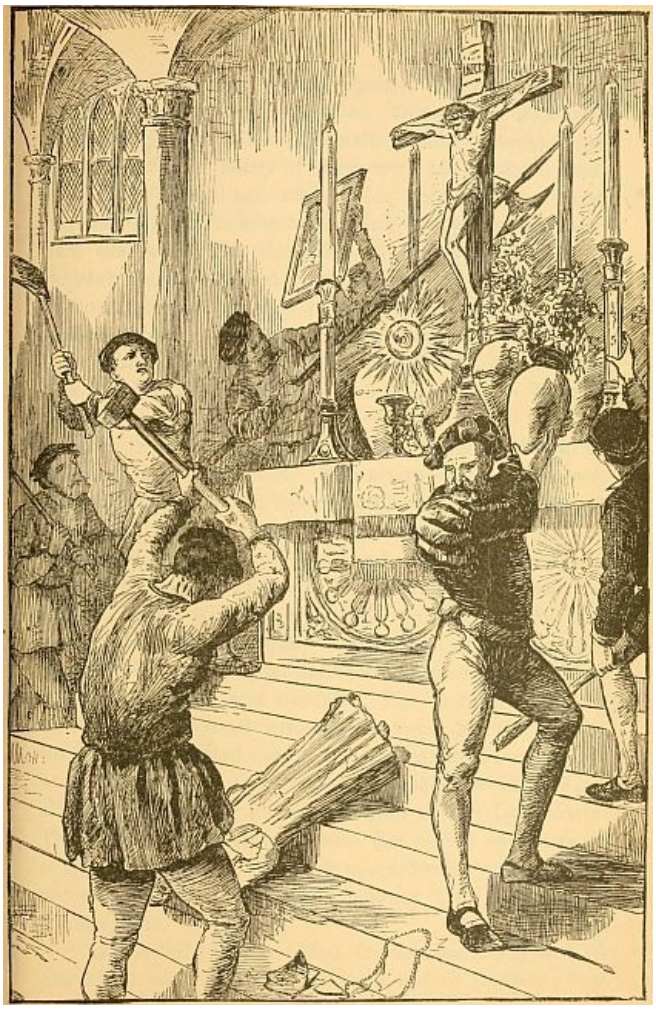
The situation of the Netherlands was such that the various opinions of the surrounding nations were easily transferred to their shores. On the south were the Lutherans of Germany; on the west, the French Huguenots; while by the ocean, they held communication with England and the nations of the Baltic. The soldier quartered on their territory, the seaman who visited their shores, the trader who trafficked in their towns, brought with them different forms of the “*New Religion*.” As most of the people were able to read, books from France and Germany were circulated amongst them. Philip II. understood the importance of his position. His whole life proves that he felt it to be his especial mission to restore the tottering fortunes of Catholicism, and stay the torrent which was sweeping away the Roman Catholic faith. Philip had made his half-sister, Margaret, regent in the Netherlands. [301]

In order to a clearer understanding of the revolt in the Netherlands, a brief sketch of William, prince of Orange, will be necessary. He was descended from ancestors who had given an emperor to Germany; William’s parents were both Lutherans, and he was educated in that faith. But Charles V. obtained the consent of his parents to remove him to Brussels, when in his twelfth year, and he was brought up in the family of the Emperor’s sister. In this household, the young prince was instructed in the Catholic faith. When fifteen years of age, William became the page of Charles V. On the abdication of that monarch, he commended William to Philip II., who at first received the prince of Orange with much favor. William married for his second wife, Anne, the daughter of Maurice, the great Lutheran champion; and though he did not openly espouse the cause, but continued in the service of Philip, a writer of the times says of him: “The prince of Orange passed for a Catholic among Catholics, and a Lutheran among Lutherans.” But this portrait of him was by an unfriendly hand, and a truer declaration is that of Prescott, “that he possessed a spirit of toleration, the more honorable that in that day it was so rare. He condemned the Calvinists as restless and seditious, and the Catholics for their bigoted attachment to a dogma. Persecution, in matters of faith, he totally condemned, for freedom of judgment in such matters he regarded as the inalienable right of man. These conclusions, at which the world, after an incalculable amount of human suffering, has been three centuries in arriving, must be allowed to reflect great credit on the character of William, prince of Orange.” [302]

There was now formed in the Netherlands a league called “The Gueux.” Some of this party of confederates demanded entire liberty of conscience; others would not have stopped short of a revolution, that would enable the country to shake off the Spanish yoke. Though this party was a political rather than a religious organization, they joined hands with the Lutherans and Calvinists, and became, for a time, a great aid to the Reformation. The origin of their name, which became the fanatical war-cry of the insurgents, happened thus: Two or three hundred of these confederates went to Brussels, to petition Margaret, the regent, to mediate with Philip in their behalf, that they should have more political liberty, and be freed from the edicts and the Inquisition. During the week spent by the league in Brussels, a banquet was given, where three hundred of the confederates were present. During the repast, Brederode, one of their number, described the manner in which their petition had been received by the regent. “She seemed at first disconcerted,” he said, “by the number of the confederates, but was reassured by Barlaimont, who told her that ‘they were nothing but a crowd of beggars.’” [303]

Some of the company were much incensed at this treatment, but Brederode, taking it good-humoredly, said, “that he and his friends had no objection to the name, since they were ready at any time to become beggars for the service of their king and country.” This witty sally was received by the company with great applause, who shouted, “*Vivent les Gueux!*”—“long live the beggars!” Brederode, finding the jest took so well, left the room, and soon returned with a beggar’s wallet and a wooden bowl, such as were used by the mendicant fraternity in the Netherlands. Then pledging the company in a bumper, he swore to devote his life and fortune to the cause. The wallet and the bowl went round the table, and as each of the merry guests drank, the shout arose, “*Vivent les Gueux!*” In every language in which the history of these acts has been recorded, the French term, Gueux, is employed to designate this party of malcontents in the Netherlands.

The league now adopted the dress and symbols of mendicants. They affected their garments as a substitute for their family liveries, dressing their retainers in the ash-gray habiliments of the begging friars. Wooden bowls, spoons, and knives became in great request, though they were richly inlaid with silver, according to the wealth of the possessor. Pilgrims’ staffs were carried, elaborately carved. Medals resembling those stuck by the beggars in their bonnets were worn as a badge. The “Gueux penny,” as it was called, a gold or silver coin, was hung from the neck, bearing on one side the effigy of Philip, with the inscription, “*Fideles au roi*,” and on the other, two hands grasping a beggar’s wallet, and the words, “*jusques a porter la besace*,”—“Faithful to the king, even to carrying the wallet.” The war-cry of “*Vivent les Gueux*” soon resounded through the Netherlands. [304]



DESTROYING STATUES, ETC., IN THE CATHEDRAL AT ANTWERP.

Philip paid little or no attention to the frequent appeals of Margaret, his regent, that he should come to some concessions which should satisfy the people and bring the rebellion to an end. But while Philip was procrastinating, the Iconoclasts rose in fury, and inspired by a false zeal, committed many terrible, sacrilegious outrages, which cast dishonor upon the upholders of the Reformation. These Iconoclasts, or image-breakers, were simply armed mobs of ignorant people, who imagined they were doing a service to God by breaking into the Catholic churches, and ruthlessly destroying everything they could lay their hands on. Prescott thus describes the destruction caused by this band of rioters in Antwerp:—

"When the rest of the congregation had withdrawn, after vespers, the mob rushed forward, as by a common impulse, broke open the doors of the chapel, and dragged forth the image of the Virgin. Some called on her to cry, '*Vivent les Gueux!*' while others tore off her embroidered robes and rolled the dumb idol in the dust, amidst the shouts of the spectators.

"This was the signal for havoc. The rioters dispersed in all directions on the work of destruction. High above the great altar was an image of the Saviour, curiously carved in wood, and placed between the effigies of the two thieves crucified with him. The mob contrived to get a rope round the neck of the statue of Christ, and dragged it to the ground. They then fell upon it with hatchets and hammers, and it was soon broken into a hundred fragments. The two thieves, it was remarked, were spared, as if to preside over the work of rapine below.

"Their fury now turned against the other statues, which were quickly overthrown from their [305] pedestals. The paintings that lined the walls of the cathedral were cut into shreds. Many of these were the choicest specimens of Flemish art, even then, in its dawn, giving promise of the glorious day which was to shed a lustre over the land. But the pride of the cathedral and of Antwerp was the great organ, renowned throughout the Netherlands, not more for its dimensions than its perfect workmanship. With their ladders the rioters scaled the lofty fabric, and with their implements soon converted it, like all else they laid their hands on, into a heap of rubbish.

"The ruin was now universal. Nothing beautiful, nothing holy, was spared. The altars—and there were no less than seventy in the vast edifice—were overthrown one after another, their richly embroidered coverings rudely rent away, their gold and silver vessels appropriated by the plunderers. The sacramental bread was trodden under foot, the wine was quaffed by the miscreants, in golden chalices, to the health of one another, or of the Gueux, and the holy oil was profanely used to anoint their shoes and sandals. The sculptured tracery on the walls, the costly offerings that enriched the shrines, the screens of gilded bronze, the delicately carved woodwork of the pulpit, the marble and alabaster ornaments, all went down under the fierce blows of the Iconoclasts. The pavement was strewed with the ruined splendors of a church, which in size and magnificence was perhaps second only to St. Peter's among the churches of Christendom.

"As the light of day faded, the assailants supplied its place with such light as they could obtain from the candles which they snatched from the altars. It was midnight before the work of [306] destruction was completed. The whole number engaged in this work is said not to have exceeded a hundred, men, women, and boys.

"When their task was completed, they sallied forth in a body from the doors of the cathedral, roaring out the fanatical war-cry of "*Vivent les Gueux!*" Flushed with success, and joined on the way by stragglers like themselves, they burst open the doors of one church after another, and by the time morning broke, the principal temples in the city had been dealt with in the same ruthless manner as the cathedral.

"No attempt, all this time, was made to stop these proceedings, on the part of the magistrates or citizens. As they beheld from their windows the bodies of armed men hurrying to and fro, by the gleam of their torches, and listened to the sound of violence in the distance, they seem to have been struck with a panic. The Catholics remained within doors, fearing a general uprising of the Protestants. The Protestants feared to move abroad, lest they should be confounded with the

rioters. For three days these dismal scenes continued.... The fate of Antwerp had its effect on the country. The flames of fanaticism, burning fiercer than ever, quickly spread over the northern as they had done over the western provinces.... In Holland, Utrecht, Friesland,—everywhere in short, with a few exceptions on the southern borders,—mobs rose against the churches."

Cathedrals, chapels, monasteries, and nunneries, and even hospitals, were destroyed by these ignorant fanatics. The great library of Vicogne, one of the noblest collections in the Netherlands, perished in the flames kindled by the mob. Four hundred churches were sacked by the insurgents [307] in Flanders alone. The damage to the cathedral at Antwerp was said to amount to four hundred thousand ducats. The whole work of this terrible devastation, occupied less than a fortnight. This wholesale destruction, perpetrated by the Iconoclasts, cannot be estimated. It is a melancholy fact that they pretended to be actuated by a zeal for the Reformation, thus dishonoring the great and glorious cause, by their ignorant fanaticism. An irreparable loss was occasioned by the destruction of manuscripts, statuary, and paintings. But the misguided Iconoclasts, ruthless as was their terrible destruction of magnificent cathedrals and priceless gems of art, must in justice have this excuse offered in their behalf, that they had been enfuriated by the infamous Inquisition which had turned Spain into one great *auto de fé* of burning martyrs, and which threatened, through the bigotry of Philip II., to invade their own land with its fiendish cruelties. Compared with the Inquisition, with its scarlet hands reeking with the life-blood of its tortured victims, the retaliation of the Iconoclasts is scarcely to be wondered at.

The tidings of the tumult in the Netherlands was received by Philip with the greatest indignation, and he exclaimed: "It shall cost them dear; by the soul of my father, I swear it, it shall cost them dear!"

These troubles in the Netherlands caused a change in the mind of William, prince of Orange. He saw the workings of Catholicism under a fearful aspect. He beheld his countrymen dragged from their firesides, driven into exile, thrown into dungeons, burned at the stake; and all this for no other cause than because they dared to dissent from the dogmas of the Romish Church. His parents had been Lutherans, his wife also was a Protestant, and William of Orange embraced the [308] doctrines of the Reformation. We cannot follow his career. After quelling a mob at Antwerp, which threatened to destroy the city, realizing that he could place no reliance upon Philip, or Margaret his regent, and as they now looked upon him with suspicion, William of Orange determined to retire to his estates in Germany. He there occupied himself with studying the Lutheran doctrine, and making himself acquainted with the principles of the glorious Reformation of which he was one day to become the champion. The regency of Margaret continued in the Netherlands from 1559 to 1567; and in the last years she succeeded in putting down the revolt. Philip, through his regent, and the aid of the Pope, had now, by several successful contests in the Netherlands, quelled the rebellion, and the party of reform had disappeared, and its worship was everywhere proscribed. On its ruins the Catholic party had risen in greater splendor than ever. Margaret now resigned the regency, and the duke of Alva was appointed in her place. He created a new tribunal, which is known in history by the terrible name it received from the people, as the "Council of Blood."

In order to justify his cruel proceedings against the Netherlands, Philip now submitted the case to the Inquisition at Madrid, and that ghostly tribunal came to the following decision: "All who had been guilty of heresy, apostasy, or sedition, and all, moreover, who, though professing themselves good Catholics, had offered no resistance to these, were, with the exception of a few specified individuals, thereby convicted of treason in the highest degree." This sweeping judgment was followed by a royal edict, dated on the same day, in which, after reciting the language of the Inquisition, the whole nation, with the exception above stated, was sentenced, [309] without distinction of sex or age, to the penalties of treason,—death and confiscation of property; and this, the decree went on to say, "without any hope of grace whatever, that it might serve for an example and a warning to all future time!"

Then followed the awful work of the "Council of Blood." Men, women, and children were dragged to the gallows. Blood ran through the streets of the cities like a red river. The poor martyrs were tortured with horrible contrivances even at the scaffold, that their dying cries might cause merriment for their fiendish foes.

And thus Philip II. vindicates his conduct during this reign of terror: "What I have done has been for the repose of the provinces, and for the defence of the Catholic faith. If I had respected justice less, I should have despatched the whole business in a single day. No one acquainted with the state of affairs, will find reason to censure my severity. Nor would I do otherwise than I have done, though I should risk the sovereignty of the Netherlands,—no, though the world should fall in ruins around me!"

The young Queen Isabella having died, Philip II. married for his fourth wife, Anne of Austria, who had also been affianced to his son Carlos. Then came the rebellions of the Moriscoes, who were the descendants of the Moors in southern Spain. In 1569, the Moriscoes rose in a general insurrection against the Christians. Many a Moor had perished in the flames of the Inquisition, and they now retaliated with bloodthirsty ferocity. The horrors which ensued cannot be described. Before these Moors had been goaded by the cruel edicts of Philip, they had been kind neighbors. The cruelties committed by the Spanish troops sent against the Moors, were as [310] shocking as the deeds of the barbarians. The Spanish army, before entering into a battle, knelt in prayer, invoking God's blessing; and after a victory, reeking with the blood of their victims, they marched, under the banner of the cross, to

the cathedrals, and chanted the *Te Deum*. Thus was religion turned into a mockery of a merciful God, and a cloak for the vilest of crimes.

Philip brought his fourth bride, Anne of Austria, to the magnificent palace or monastery of the Escurial. She lived ten years. Her children all died in infancy, except one son, who lived to succeed his father on the throne as Philip III. Spain was now rapidly on the decline. Civil war, persecution, banishment and emigration, were fast depopulating the country. The population diminished from ten to six millions.

PHILIP II., KING OF SPAIN.

As Queen Elizabeth of England had warmly espoused the Protestant cause, there was enmity between that nation and Spain. In 1558, Philip II., of Spain, who had been for three years preparing the famous Spanish Armada, ordered the fleet to sail against England. This splendid armada set sail from Lisbon with high hopes. But next day they met with a violent storm, which scattered some of the ships, and sunk others, and forced the rest to take shelter in the Groine. After the damages had been repaired, the armada again set forth. The fleet consisted of one hundred and thirty vessels, and many of them were of greater size than had ever before been employed in Europe. The plan of the king of Spain was, that the fleet should sail to the coast opposite to Dunkirk and Newport, and having joined the fleet of the duke of Parma, should make sail to the Thames, and having landed the whole Spanish army, complete at one blow the conquest of England. The armada reached Calais. Here the English admiral practised a [311] stratagem upon the Spaniards. He took eight of his smaller vessels and filled them with combustibles, and setting them on fire, sent them amongst the Spanish fleet. In the confusion caused by this incident, the English fell upon the Spanish, and captured or destroyed twelve of their ships. The Spanish admiral thereupon started to return home. A violent tempest overtook the armada after it passed the Orkneys. The ships were driven upon the western isles of Scotland, and coast of Ireland, and were miserably wrecked. Thus was the famous Spanish armada destroyed. It was almost a death blow to the Spanish monarchy. At length Philip II., with a bankrupt treasury, while his mind was filled with gloom and his body tortured with a loathsome and terrible disease, died on the 13th of September, 1598. In view of his great opportunities, vast power, and the hopeful promise of his early career, and the miserable ending of his wrecked life, brought upon himself by his barbarous cruelties and religious bigotry and superstitions, we are reminded of the saying quoted at the commencement of the sketch, and are more fully convinced that no people can be prosperous unless their rulers are humane and virtuous. In the light of such shocking events as we have just been describing, and of such barbarous deeds performed in the name of religion, it seems to be an indisputable fact that the world has surely made vast progress in an enlightened civilization and in true Christianity.

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.
1594-1632 A.D.

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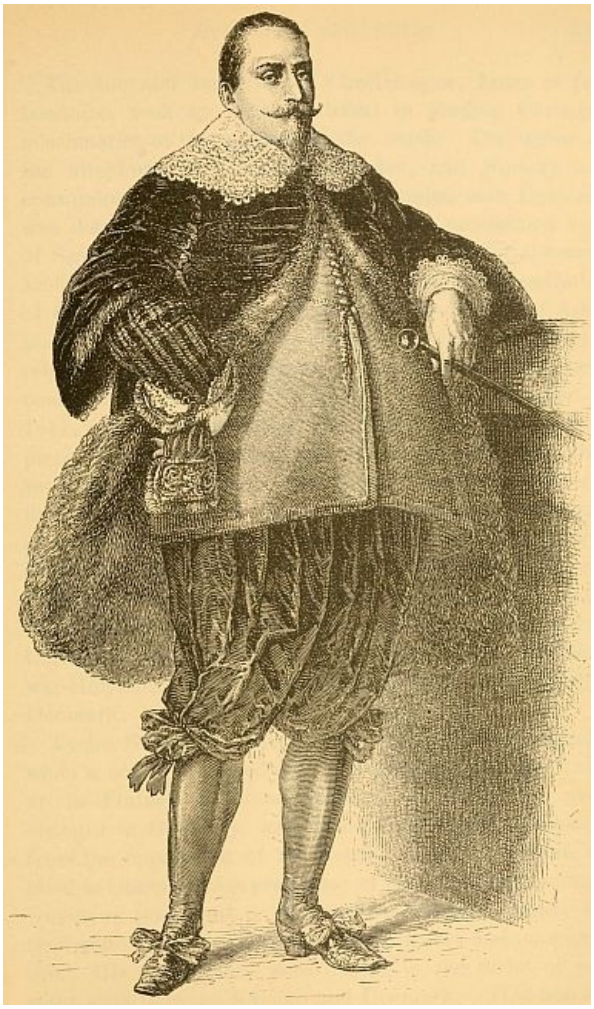
"Ay, every inch a king!"—SHAKESPEARE.

THE oldest account of the nations of Europe in the far north is that given by Pytheas, who lived three hundred and fifty years before the Christian Era. His voyages carried him to the shores of Britain and Scandinavia. The Goths were the most ancient inhabitants of Scandinavia, occupying the south, and were earlier in Sweden than the Sueones. These two tribes were at war for many years, but finally united and formed the Swedish nation. During twelve centuries after the visit of Pytheas to northern countries, nothing was known of the Scandinavian people in their own homes, although wild tribes from the north overran southern Europe, and were known as the Cimbri, Teutons, Germans, and Goths. But in the time of Alfred the Great, two travellers from Scandinavia visited the court of the English king. From the account they gave of their travels, King Alfred wrote a brief history and made a chart of modern Europe. In this book Scandinavia was described.



GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

Of the three Scandinavian countries, Sweden did not become known to the nations of southern Europe as soon as Denmark and Norway. Like the Danes, the Swedes traced the descent of their early kings back to Odin. Olaf was the first Christian king of Sweden, and received Christian baptism about the year 1000 A.D.

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The son and successor of Charlemagne, Louis le Débonnaire, took an ardent interest in sending Christian missionaries to the pagans of the north. The union of the kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway was consummated in 1387. In 1523 the union with Denmark was dissolved, and Gustavus Vasa was proclaimed king of Sweden. This king was one of the ablest of the monarchs of the sixteenth century. He was the grandfather of Gustavus Adolphus. Charles IX., the father of Adolphus, came to the throne of Sweden in 1604. During the reigns of the elder brothers of Charles, there had been constant conflicts with Denmark. Charles IX. died in 1611, leaving an unfinished war with Denmark to be completed by his illustrious son, Gustavus Adolphus, then seventeen years of age. His father, Charles, had entered into friendly alliances with all the principal Protestant powers, and for the first time Sweden had been brought into important political relations with the more influential European nations. Gustavus Adolphus was born at the royal palace in Stockholm, Dec. 9, 1594. His mother, Christine, was the daughter of Adolphus, duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and grand-daughter of Frederic I., king of Denmark.

Tycho Brahe, the famous astronomer, had announced, when a comet appeared in 1572, that there would spring up in Finland a prince destined to accomplish great changes in Germany, and deliver the Protestant people from the oppression of the popes. His countrymen applied to Gustavus this prediction of the Danish astronomer. Gustavus possessed a vigorous constitution, which was rendered robust by his childish experiences and manner of life. His early years were passed in the midst of constant wars between Sweden and Denmark. This account is given of the education and boyhood of Gustavus Adolphus:—

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"To be the tutor of the prince was appointed Master John Skytte, and Otto von Mörner his chamberlain. The last named was marshall of the court of Charles IX., and born of noble parents in Brandenburg. He had acquired extensive learning and distinguished manners in the numerous countries in which he had travelled. John Skytte, after having employed nine years in visiting foreign lands, had become one of the secretaries of the king's government. Gustavus received all the instructions necessary to a prince destined to reign. Skytte directed him in the study of Latin, of history, and of the laws of his country.

"As Charles was a strict ruler and martial prince, and as Christine had, besides her beauty, the soul proud and courageous, the education of the prince was free from softness. He was habituated to labor. At times in his early youth, particularly after he had arrived at his tenth year, he was more and more allowed by his father to attend the deliberations of the Council. He was habituated also to be present at the audiences of the foreign embassies, and was finally directed by his royal father to answer these foreign dignitaries in order thus to accustom him to weighty

affairs and their treatment.

"As it was a period of warlike turmoils, there was much resort to the king's court, especially by officers,—not only Swedes, but also Germans, French, English, Scots, Netherlanders, and some Italians and Spaniards,—who, after the twelve years' truce then just concluded between Spain and Holland, sought their fortune in Sweden. These often waited upon the young prince by the will and order of the king. Their conversation relating to the wars waged by other nations, [315] battles, sieges, and discipline, both by sea and land as well as ships and navigation, did so arouse and stimulate the mind of the young prince, by nature already thus inclined, that he spent almost every day in putting questions concerning what had happened at one place and another in the wars. Besides, he acquired in his youthful years no little insight into the science of war, especially into the mode and means,—how a regular war, well directed and suited to the circumstances of Sweden, should be carried on, having the character and rules of Maurice, prince of Orange, as a pattern before his eyes. By the intercourse and converse of these officers, in which each told the most glorious acts of his own nation, the young prince was enkindled to act like others, and if possible, to excel them. In his early years he gained also a complete and ready knowledge of many foreign languages; so that he spoke Latin, German, Dutch, French, and Italian as purely as a native, and besides had some knowledge of the Russian and Polish tongues. When he was of the age of sixteen years, his father made him grand duke of Finland, and duke of Esthonia and Westmanland, and presently bestowed upon him the town of Vesteras, with the principal portion of Westmanland, over which was placed John Skytte to be governor."

It is also stated that Gustavus knew Greek, and read Xenophon in that tongue, of whom he said "that he knew of no writer better than he for a true military historian."

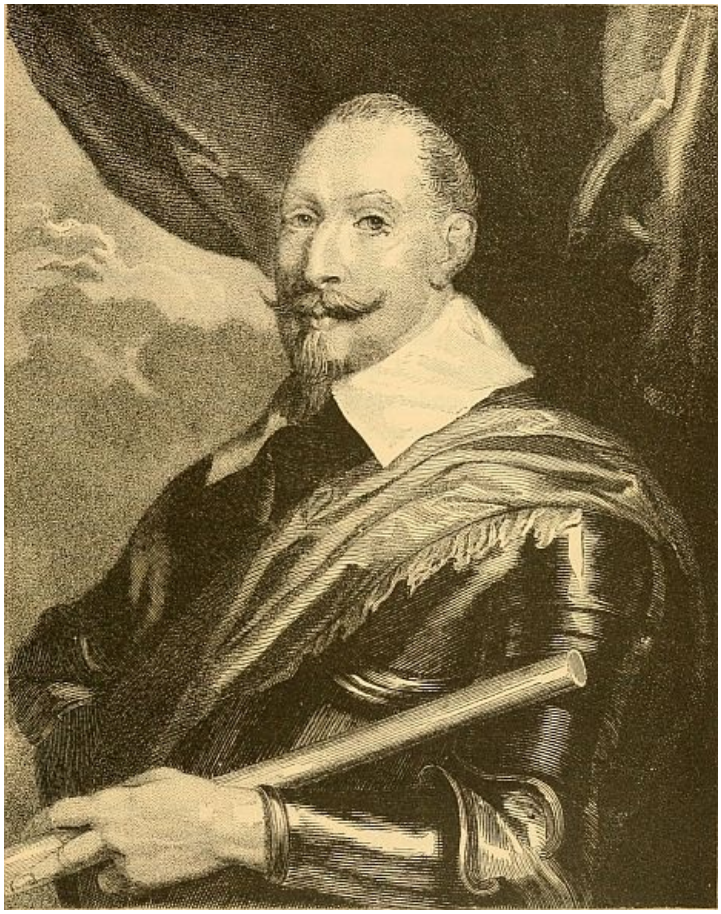
For some years after Gustavus ascended the throne, he is said to have devoted an hour each day to reading, preferring to all others the works of Grotius, especially his treatise on "War and Peace."

Young Gustavus possessed great courage, to which was joined striking benignity of character [316] which he did not inherit from his parents. King Charles was stern and somewhat heartless, and he was persuaded by his wife, the mother of Adolphus, to great acts of cruelty towards the victims of his civil wars, which obscured his nobler qualities. The mother of Gustavus, though possessed of a strong and positive character, was too tyrannical to be attractive, and too unrelenting to exert a loving influence in her household, and the severity of both husband and wife came often in collision. Adolphus was the only member of the royal family who dared attempt to pacify his father when he was angry. Though Gustavus inherited the strong characteristics of his parents, and possessed his father's failing of a quick temper, his nature was so sympathetic and unselfish that his winning manners attracted the hearts of all as much as the unrelenting sternness of his parents repelled. Their sternness became in the household only exacting selfishness; whereas all the severity of his character manifested itself only in unflinching allegiance to the right and true, and the steadfast upholding of high and noble principles of state or religion. Gustavus was scarcely fifteen years of age when he requested to be placed in command of troops in the war against Russia. But his father, deeming him too young, refused. When he was seventeen years of age, war having been declared with Denmark, young Gustavus was pronounced in the Diet—as the assembly of the Swedish nobles was called—fit to bear the sword, and he was, according to ancient custom, invested with this dignity with most splendid ceremony.

In this expedition young Gustavus endured his first trial of warfare, being present at all the remarkable encounters, holding chief command in most of them. For during this war King [317] Charles died, and the command was left to Gustavus, then seventeen years of age. In the first month of his eighteenth year, he received the crown in the presence of all the representatives of the estates of Sweden, at the Diet of Nyköping. He took the title of his father,—king-elect and hereditary prince of Sweden, of the Goths, and of the Wends. Since the death of Gustavus Vasa, his grandfather, a period of more than fifty years, Sweden had not enjoyed a single year of peace.

When Gustavus Adolphus ascended the Swedish throne, in 1611, being then in his eighteenth year, he found an exhausted treasury, an alienated nobility, and not undisputed succession, and, with all this, no less than three wars upon his hands,—one with Denmark then raging,—also the seeds of two other wars, with Russia and with Poland, which soon after burst forth. The first fifteen years of his reign were occupied in bringing these wars to a conclusion; and in these struggles he won an experience which afterwards proved of great service in making him illustrious upon a more conspicuous battle-field. We have not space to describe at length the wars between Sweden and Denmark, nor her conflicts with Russia and Poland, but must pass on to the more important period of the history of Gustavus Adolphus, which gives him a place in the foremost ranks of leadership, and places his name with Napoleon I., Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, and Charlemagne. It was not so much what he himself personally accomplished,—though that was much, for death met him long before the glorious end was reached,—but it was on account of the vast and momentous train of circumstances he set in motion, because he stood forth, the only man capable of taking the helm of the great ship of the Reformation, which, but [318] for him, aided by the almighty ruling of an Omniscient Providence, seemed to the finite vision of mankind doomed to destruction. It was not as a conqueror of vast empires, like Alexander, Julius Cæsar, and Napoleon, that Gustavus Adolphus is illustrious; but it is because, through the providence of God, he was made the instrument in helping to achieve the more important conquest of gaining spiritual liberty of soul from the bondage of bigotry and superstition. As the champion of the Reformation, the name of Gustavus Adolphus must be placed amongst the

foremost of the famous rulers of the world.



GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS, FROM A PICTURE BY VAN DYCK. [319]

Gustavus was now thirty-four years of age. He had prosecuted wars with Denmark, Russia, and Poland, and secured advantageous terms of peace with these nations. Before he had reached his twentieth year, he had driven back the invaders of his country, and gained independence for Sweden. In four years more, his victories over his eastern enemies enabled him to declare, “Russia cannot now, without our consent, launch a single boat on the Baltic.”

For twelve years Gustavus had watched the bloody strife between the defenders of the Reformed Faith in Germany and the powers of the Catholic league of the Empire and of Spain. What Philip II. of Spain was to the Catholics as a leader and upholder of the infamous Inquisition, such a power did Gustavus Adolphus become, in behalf of the Protestants, as a leader and defender of the Reformation. Holland, England, and France had earnestly pressed him to conclude the Polish wars; for the eyes of the suffering adherents of the Reformed Faith in Germany were turned in hope toward the youthful king of Sweden as their deliverer. In setting out upon this distant enterprise, Gustavus Adolphus encountered the gravest obstacles, which he himself did not fail to realize; for when his resolution was fully formed, and the consent of his Estates obtained, he exclaimed, “For me there remains henceforth no more rest but the eternal.”

Though he left Sweden full of hope and courage, it was with the sure presentiment that he would never return. Gustavus had married Marie Eleonore, daughter of the elector of Brandenburg; and at the time of his German expedition left a little daughter behind him, only four years of age, who was sole heir to the Swedish throne. Gustavus Adolphus was one of the most skilful commanders of his age. Napoleon I. was wont to set him among the eight greatest generals whom the world has ever seen, placing him in the same rank with Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Julius Cæsar, in the ancient world, with Turenne, Prince Eugene, Frederic the Great, and himself, in the modern.

Before his time, the only artillery brought into the open field consisted of huge, heavy guns, slowly dragged along by twelve, sixteen, or twenty horses or oxen, which, once placed, could only remain in one position, even though the entire battle had shifted elsewhere. Gustavus was the first who introduced flying artillery, capable of being rapidly transferred from one part of the field to another. At a siege, this valiant Swedish king would in the same day “be at once generalissimo, chief engineer to lay out the lines, pioneer, spade in hand and in his shirt digging in the trenches, and leader of a storming party to dislodge the foe from some annoying outwork. If a party of the enemy’s cavalry were to be surprised in a night attack, he would himself undertake the surprise. He, indeed, carried this quite too far, obeying overmuch the instinct and [320] impulses of his own courageous heart. And yet there was also a true humility in it all,—a feeling that no man ought to look at himself as indispensable. ‘God is immortal,’ he was wont to reply, when remonstrated with on this matter, and reminded of the fearful chasm, not to be filled by any other, which his death would assuredly leave.” Richelieu said of him, “The king of Sweden is a new sun which has just risen, young, but of vast renown. The ill-treated or banished princes of Germany in their misfortunes have turned their eyes towards him as the mariner does to the polar star.”

Gustavus was admitted by the ablest statesmen of Europe to be the ablest general of his time. He was familiar with the military tactics of ancient and modern times, and he devised a more effective system of warfare than his predecessors had known. In answer to the question, Why did Gustavus Adolphus enter into the religious contests of Germany, and assume the commanding place he filled in that terrible struggle known as the “Thirty Years’ War”? an able writer gives thus briefly the reason:—

“First, a deep and genuine sympathy with his co-religionists in Germany, and with their sufferings, joined to a conviction that he was called of God to assist them in this hour of their utmost need.

"Secondly, a sense of the most real danger which threatened his own kingdom, if the entire liberties, political and religious, of northern Germany were trodden out, and the free cities of the German Ocean, Stralsund and the rest, falling into the hands of the emperor, became hostile outposts from which to assail him. He felt that he was only going to meet a war which, if he tarried at home, would sooner or later inevitably come to seek him there.

"And, lastly, there was working in his mind, no doubt, a desire to give to Sweden a more [321] forward place in the world, with a consciousness of mighty powers in himself, which craved a wider sphere for their exercise."

In answer to John Skytte, who remarked that war put his monarchy at stake, he responded: "All monarchies have passed from one family to another. That which constitutes a monarchy is not men, it is the law."

At length, in 1630, Gustavus landed on the island of Usedom, at the mouth of the Oder.

"So we have got another kingling on our hands," the emperor exclaimed in scorn, when the news reached Vienna. Little did the enemies of the Reformation then imagine what a terrible and irresistible foe this despised "kingling" would prove to be. The army of Gustavus consisted of only fifteen thousand men; but, if his army was small, the material was indeed valuable. Gustavus said of his staff of officers, "All these are captains, and fit to command armies." And when his early death left them without a leader, these same officers led the Swedish armies so successfully that, even after France had become her ally, Sweden was not obscured, but still held a prominent place in the mighty contest. Gustavus had determined not to hazard a battle until he was joined by German allies. As soon as they landed on the island of Usedom, Gustavus, having leaped first upon the shore, at once fell upon his knees, and sought the aid and blessing of God; and then the working and the praying went hand in hand. He was the first to seize a spade; and, as the troops landed, one half were employed in raising intrenchments, while the other half stood in battle array, to repel any attacks of the enemy. It was a long time before any German ally appeared; for, though gallant little Hesse Cassel boldly announced its allegiance, it was a power too small and [322] too distant to count for much. The two most powerful of the German Protestant princes were his brother-in-law, the elector of Brandenburg, and the elector of Saxony. John George of Saxony was a great hunter, having killed with his own hand or seen killed 113,629 wild animals. He was, however, such a great drunkard that he was called the Beer King. But this bold Nimrod, who could fight wild animals so courageously, was too cowardly to come forward against the enemies of his country, and only joined Gustavus when the terrors of the Catholic league forced him to seek safety in such an alliance.

As to the brother-in-law of Gustavus, little was to be obtained from him. He was so vacillating in character and in politics that Carlyle says of him, "Poor man, it was his fate to stand in the range of these huge collisions, when the Titans were hurling rocks at one another, and he hoped by dexterous skipping to escape share of the game."

The arrival of Gustavus Adolphus in Germany was at first looked upon with indifference by the imperial court. The emperor Ferdinand said carelessly, "We have another little enemy before us." At Vienna they made sport of Gustavus and of his pretensions to require himself to be called "Your majesty," like the other kings of Europe. "The snow-king will melt as he approaches the southern sun," they exclaimed derisively. But the valiant Swedes worked on at their fortifications at Pomerania, indifferent to the sneers of their foes, inspired by the example of their loved leader, whose watchword was, "to pray often to God with all your heart is almost to conquer." In a short time, the army was enclosed in an intrenched camp, defended by cannon. The king of [323] Sweden then addressed these stirring words to his soldiers:—

"It is as much on your account as for your religious brethren in Germany that I have undertaken this war. You will there gather imperishable glory. You have nothing to fear from the enemy; they are the same whom you have already conquered in Prussia. Your bravery has imposed on Poland an armistice of six years; if you continue to fight as valiantly, I hope to obtain an honorable peace for your country and guaranties of security for the German Protestants. Old soldiers, it is not of yesterday you have known war; for you have shared with me all the chances of fortune. You must not lose courage if you experience some wants. I will conduct you to an enemy who has enriched himself at the expense of that unhappy country. It is only with the enemy you can find money, abundance, and all which you desire."

Thus did Gustavus appeal to their courage, their patriotism, their religious enthusiasm, and their personal necessities, and inspire his soldiers with irresistible valor.

The severe discipline of the Swedish troops excited not less admiration than the personal virtue of their king. Richelieu, in his memoirs, says, "As to the king of Sweden personally, there was seen in his actions but an inexorable severity towards the least excess of his soldiers, an extraordinary mildness towards the people, and an exact justice on all occasions."

It was at the time of the landing of the Swedes that the noted general Wallenstein had fallen into disgrace with the German emperor, and had been discharged from the imperial service. His place was filled by Tilly, a military chieftain of high renown. Tilly had made himself the terror of the Protestants by his bigoted zeal for the Catholic religion and his fierce spirit of persecution [324] towards the Reformed Faith; but his military insight made him just enough to thus generously describe his famous antagonist:—

"The king of Sweden is an enemy both prudent and brave, inured to war, and in the flower of

his age. His plans are excellent, his resources considerable, his subjects enthusiastically attached to him. His army,—composed of Swedes, Germans, Livonians, Finlanders, Scots, and English,—by its devoted obedience to their leader, is blended into one nation. He is a gamester, in playing with whom not to have lost is to have won a great deal."

Gustavus was beginning to make a strong position in northern Germany, when he received an envoy from the elector of Brandenburg, urging him to consent to an armistice, the elector offering himself as a mediator between the Swedish king and the Catholic league. Gustavus thus answered this weak and cowardly advice of the elector:—

"I have listened to the arguments by which my lord and brother-in-law would seek to dissuade me from the war, but could well have expected another communication from him; namely, that God having helped me thus far, and come, as I am, into this land for no other end than to deliver its poor and oppressed estates and people from the horrible tyranny of the thieves and robbers who have plagued it so long, above all, to free his highness from like tribulation, he would rather have joined himself with me, and thus not failed to seize the opportunity which God has wonderfully vouchsafed him. Or does not his highness yet know that the intention of the emperor and of the league is this,—not to cease till the evangelical religion is quite rooted out of the empire, and that he himself has nothing else to look forward to than to be compelled either to [325] deny his faith or to forsake his land? For God's sake, let him bethink himself a little, and for once grasp manly counsels. For myself, I cannot go back.... I seek in this work not mine own things, no profit at all except the safety of my kingdom; else have I nothing from it but expense, weariness, toil, and danger of life and limb.... For this, I say plainly beforehand, I will hear and know nothing of neutrality; his highness must be friend or foe. When I come to his borders, he must declare himself hot or cold. The battle is one between God and the devil. Will his highness hold with God, let him stand on my side; if he prefer to hold with the devil, then he must fight with me."

The elector of Brandenburg still vacillating, the king of Sweden was as good as his word, and advanced with his army, with loaded cannon and matches burning, to the gates of Berlin. Whereupon, the treaty of alliance was quickly signed by the elector of Brandenburg; and not long after, the outrages of the imperial commander obliged the elector of Saxony also to join the Swedish king. During the first year in Germany, the Swedes had captured Greiffenhagen and Gartz; and soon after New Brandenburg, Loitz, Malchin, and Demmin were in their power. We have no space to note the particulars regarding these important conquests, and can only mention the taking of Demmin. The Imperialists had placed the garrison here under the command of Duke Savelli, who had been ordered to defend the place three weeks, when Tilly had promised to come to his aid. Among the Imperialists was Del Ponte, a man who had been deep in a conspiracy to assassinate the king of Sweden, which had come near being successful. As Del Ponte feared the [326] vengeance of the king whose life he had thus sought, he left the fortress secretly, leaving his baggage and wealth behind him. Savelli offered to capitulate, on condition that he might pass out with arms and baggage. As Gustavus was now on the eve of meeting Tilly, he did not think best to prolong the siege, and so agreed to the proposal of Savelli. The entire garrison passed out with ensigns flying, followed by the baggage train. As Savelli, brilliantly and carefully dressed, passed the Swedish king, Gustavus addressed him: "Tell the emperor I make war for civil and religious liberty. As to you, duke, I thank you for having taken the trouble to quit the splendid feasts of Rome to combat against me, for your person seems to me more in its place at courts than in the camps." After the Italian general passed, Gustavus remarked to his officers, "That man reckons much on the good nature of the emperor; if he was in my service, he would lose his head for his cowardice."

As the baggage of the treacherous Del Ponte was noticed in the train, some of the Swedish officers suggested that it would be well to retain what belonged to that traitor, to which Gustavus responded, "I have given my word, and no one shall have the right to reproach me for having broken it." As to the energy and bravery of Gustavus, one of his Scotch officers thus testifies: "I serve with great pleasure such a general, and I could find with difficulty a similar man who was accustomed to be the first and the last where there is danger; who gained the love of his officers by the part he took in their troubles and fatigues; who knew so well how to trace the rules of conduct for his warriors according to times and circumstances; who cared for their health, their honor; who was always ready to aid them; who divined the projects and knew the resources of his [327] enemies, their plans, their forces, their discipline, likewise the nature and position of the places they occupied. He never hesitated to execute what he had ordered. He arrested an officer who, while the fortifications of Settin were being repaired, stated that the earth was frozen. In affairs which had relation to the needs of the war, he did not admit of excuses. The lack of good charts and the great importance he attached to knowledge of the ground, caused him to go *en reconnaissance* in person, and expose himself very near to danger, for he was short-sighted."

At the siege of Demmin he had gone to reconnoitre, and held a spy-glass in hand, when he plunged half-leg deep in the marsh, in consequence of the breaking of the ice. The officer nearest to him prepared to come to his aid. Gustavus made a sign to him to remain tranquil, so as not to draw the attention of the enemy who, not less, directed his fire upon him. The king raised himself up in the midst of a shower of projectiles, and went to dry himself at the bivouac fire of the officer, who reproached him for having thus exposed his precious life. The king listened to the officer with kindness and acknowledged his imprudence, but added, "It is my nature not to believe well done except what I do myself; it is also necessary that I see everything by my own eyes." Gustavus now advanced boldly into the heart of Germany, and met the forces of the Catholic League on the plains of Leipsic. As the Swedes drew up in line of battle, Gustavus rode

from point to point, encouraging his soldiers, telling them “not to fire until they saw the white of the enemies’ eyes.”

Then the Swedish king rode to the centre of his line, halted, removed his cap with one hand and lowered his sword with the other. His example was followed by all near him. Gustavus then [328] offered this brief prayer in a powerful voice, which enabled him to be heard by a large number of his army:—

“Good God, thou who holdest in thy hand victory and defeat, turn thy merciful face to us thy servants. We have come far, we have left our peaceful homes to combat in this country for liberty, for the truth, and for thy gospel. Glorify thy holy name in granting us victory.”

Then the Swedish king sent a trumpeter to challenge Tilly and his army. The battle ensued, in which Gustavus defeated Tilly, the victor on more than twenty battle-fields. The king of Sweden so shattered and scattered the Catholic army in this conflict, that for a while all Germany was open to him. Gustavus was now everywhere hailed by the down-trodden Protestants of Germany, whose worship he re-established, and whose churches he restored to them, as their saviour and deliverer. The very excess of their gratitude would sometimes make him afraid. Only three days before his death he said to his chaplain, “They make a god of me; God will punish me for this.”

The appearance of Gustavus at this time is thus described: “He was one ‘framed in the prodigality of nature.’ His look proclaimed the hero, and at the same time, the genuine child of the North. A head taller than men of the ordinary stature, yet all his limbs were perfectly proportioned.” Majesty and courage shone out from his clear gray eyes; while, at the same time, an air of mildness and *bonhommie* tempered the earnestness of his glance. He had the curved eagle nose of Cæsar, of Napoleon, of Wellington, of Napier,—the conqueror’s nose as we may call [329] it. His skin was fair, his hair blonde, almost gold-colored, so that the Italians were wont to call him, *Re d’oro* or the Gold-king. In latter years he was somewhat inclined to corpulence, though not so much as to detract from the majesty of his appearance. This made it, however, not easy to find a horse which was equal to his weight.

Gustavus now carried his victorious arms to the banks of the Rhine, where there still stands, not far from Mayence, what is known as the Swedish column. On the banks of the Lech he again met Tilly, who would have barred the way. Some of the officers in the Swedish army counselled that the king should not meet Tilly, but should march to Bohemia.

The Lech was deep and rapid, and to cross it in the face of an enemy was very hazardous. In case of failure the entire Swedish army would be lost. But Gustavus exclaimed, “What! have we crossed the Baltic, the Oder, the Elbe, and the Rhine, to stop stupefied before this mere stream, the Lech? Remember that the undertakings the most difficult are often those which succeed best, because the adverse party regard them as impossible.”

Gustavus threw over the Lech a bridge under the crossfire of seventy-two pieces of cannon. The king stimulated his troops by his own example, making with his own hand more than sixty cannon discharges. The enemy did their utmost to destroy the works, and Tilly was undaunted in his exertions to encourage his men, until he was mortally wounded by a cannon-ball, and victory soon was on the side of the heroic Swedes.

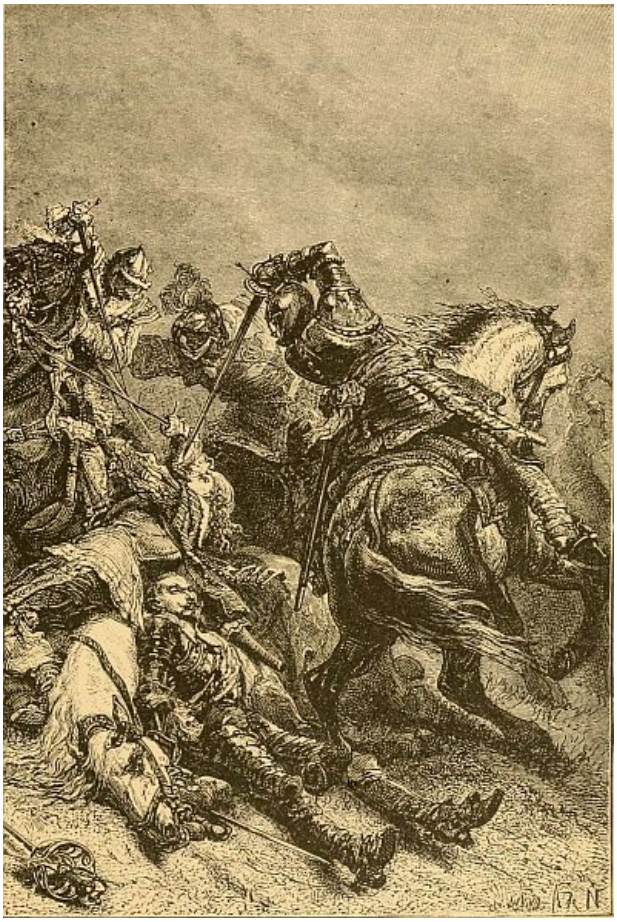
This crossing of the Lech in the face of an enemy is esteemed the most signal military exploit of Gustavus. The emperor was now forced to recall Wallenstein to lead the hard-pressed [330] Imperialists against this invincible Swedish king.

But with the battle of Lützen, where the Swedes encountered the Imperialists under Wallenstein, we come also to the lamentable but heroic death of Gustavus Adolphus. We cannot recount the further conflicts of the Thirty Years’ War.

The work of Gustavus Adolphus in Germany was continued by his able generals and allies, until at length the treaty, concluded at Westphalia in 1648, gave security and permanence to the work which the king of Sweden and his brave soldiers had in a large degree achieved before his death. A wound which Gustavus had received in his Polish wars, made the wearing of armor very painful to him, and upon the morning of the day upon which the battle of Lützen was fought, when his armor was brought to him, he declined to put it on, saying, “God is my armor.”

His death is thus described. Learning that the centre of the Swedish lines were wavering, Gustavus hastened thither. “Arriving at the wavering centre, he cried to his troops, ‘Follow me, my brave boys!’ and his horse at a bound bore him across the ditch. Only a few of his cavaliers followed him, their steeds not being equal to his. Owing to his impetuosity, perhaps also to his nearsightedness and the increasing fog, he did not perceive to what extent he was in advance, and became separated from the troops he was so bravely leading. An imperial corporal, noticing that the Swedes made way for an advancing cavalier, pointed him out to a musketeer, saying, he must be a personage of high rank, and urged him to fire on him. The musketeer took aim, his ball broke the left arm of the king, causing the bone to protrude, and the blood to run freely. ‘The [331] king bleeds!’ cried the Swedes near him. ‘It is nothing; march forward my boys!’ responded the wounded hero, seeking to calm their disquietude by assuming a smiling countenance. But soon overcome by pain and loss of blood, he requested Duke Lauenburg, in French, to lead him out of the tumult without being observed, which was sought to be done by making a *détour*, so as to conceal the king’s withdrawal from his brave Smolanders he was leading to the charge. Scarcely had they made a few steps, when one of the imperial regiment of cuirassiers encountered them, preceded by Lieut.-Col. Falkenberg, who, recognizing the king, fired a pistol shot, hitting him in

the back. ‘Brother,’ said he to Lauenburg, with a dying voice; ‘I have enough. Look to your own life.’ Falkenberg was immediately slain by the equerry of the duke of Lauenburg. At the same moment the king fell from his horse, struck by several more balls, and was dragged some distance by the stirrups. The duke of Lauenburg fled. Of the king’s two orderlies, one lay dead and the other wounded. Of his attendants, only a German page, named Leubelfing, remained by him. The king having fallen from his horse, the page jumped from his own, and offered it to the dying hero. The king stretched out his hands, but the young man had not strength sufficient to lift him from the ground. Meanwhile the imperial cuirassiers hastened forward, and demanded the name of the wounded officer. The loyal page would not reveal it, and received wounds from which he died soon after. But the dying Gustavus bravely answered, ‘I am the king of Sweden.’ Whereupon his cruel enemies shot a ball through his head, and thrust their swords through his bleeding body. His hat, blackened with the powder and pierced with the ball, is still to be seen in [332] the arsenal at Vienna; his bloody buff coat as well. More is not known of the final agony, except that, when the tide of battle had a little ebbed, the body of the hero-king was found with the face to the ground, despoiled and stripped to the shirt, trodden under the hoofs of horses, trampled in the mire, and disfigured with all these wounds.”



DEATH OF GUSTAVUS AND HIS PAGE.

Such was the end of the imposing and kingly bodily presence; but this was not the end of the accomplishment of that heroic soul. When the horse of the fallen Gustavus, with its empty saddle covered with blood, came running amongst the Swedish troops, they knew what had happened to their king. Duke Bernhard, riding through the ranks, exclaimed, “Swedes, Finlanders, and Germans! your defender, the defender of our liberty, is dead. Life is nothing to me if I do not draw bloody vengeance from this misfortune. Whoever wishes to prove he loved the king, has only to follow me to avenge his death.” The whole Swedish army, fired by a common enthusiasm nerved by desperation, advanced to the attack, and so valiantly did they fight, that their gallant charge completed the victory of Lützen. Thus died the “Gold-king of the North”; but his dying hours were gilded by the sunset glories of immortal fame, and the “Snow-king,” of Sweden, leaves a name as pure and glistening as the starry snow-flakes.

“Great men, far more than any Alps or coliseums, are the true world-wonders, which it concerns us to behold clearly, and imprint forever on our remembrance. Great men are the fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind; they stand as heavenly signs, ever-living witnesses of what has been,—prophetic witnesses of what may still be; the revealed embodied possibilities of [333] human nature, which greatness he who has never with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced, is himself forever doomed to be little.”

LOUIS XIV. OF FRANCE.
1638-1715 A.D.

"To do what one pleases with impunity,
That is to be King."—SALLUST.

THE reign of Louis XIV., whether regarded politically, socially, or morally, was undoubtedly the most striking which France has ever known. The splendor of his court, the successes of his armies, and the illustrious names that embellished the century over which he ruled, drew the attention of all Europe to the person of the monarch who, every inch a king, assumed the authority and power of regality as well as its mere visible attributes. All Europe looked to France, all France to Paris, all Paris to Versailles, all Versailles to Louis XIV.

The centre of all attraction, he, like the eagle, embraced the whole glory of the orb upon which he gazed; and seated firmly upon the throne of France, ruling by the "right divine," he ushered in the golden age of literature, himself the theme and gaze and wonder of a dazzled world.

The morning of the 5th of September, 1638, dawned bright and clear. In the forest of St. Germain, the birds sang merrily in the trees, and the timid deer sought shelter in the deepest shade, all unconscious that ere the setting of the sun a royal prince would look upon it for the first time.

The park and palace were filled with an eager and excited throng; earls, princes, dukes, and bishops anxiously awaited the announcement that an heir was born to the crown of France. In the grand salon of Henry IV., King Louis XIII., the Duke d'Orleans, the bishops of Lisieux, Meaux, and Beauvais, impatiently awaited the long-expected tidings. And now the folding-doors are thrown back, and the king is greeted with the welcome intelligence that he is the father of a *dauphin*. Tenderly he takes the child, and stepping upon the balcony, exhibits him to the crowd, exclaiming joyfully, "A son, gentlemen! a son!" and park and palace re-echo with the shouts of "*Vive le Roi!*" "*Vive le Dauphin!*"

Thus this baby prince, when first he saw the light, was greeted by the homage of a court—an homage which, during a life of seventy-seven years, he ever exacted and received, until as Louis XIV., the *Grand Monarque*, in obedience to Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords, he laid aside his sceptre and his crown, and slept with his fathers in the royal vaults of St. Denis. The birth of the dauphin afforded Louis XIII. such delight that for a time he threw aside his melancholy manner; but his health, never robust, failed rapidly, and on the 20th of April, 1643, feeling that his end could not be far distant, he declared the regency of the queen, and desired the christening of the dauphin. It accordingly took place on the following day with much pomp in the chapel at St. Germain. The king desired he should be called Louis, and after the ceremony, when the little prince was carried to his bedside in order to ascertain if his wishes had been fulfilled, he demanded, "What is your name, my child?" And the little dauphin replied promptly, "I am Louis XIV."

"Not yet, my son, not yet!" said the dying king; "but I pray to God that it may soon be so."

From this time his health failed rapidly, and on the 14th of May, 1643, he expired, having reigned thirty-three years.

The little dauphin early displayed that haughtiness and self-will which were to be the ruling principles of his life. His education had been grossly neglected, and through this came many of his after faults; and though he excelled in every punctilio of court etiquette, and was the very essence of politeness, yet in other things he was far behind the other youths of his age. This was exactly as Cardinal Mazarin intended that it should be, that by thus dwarfing the intellect of the king, he might the longer grasp the reins of government. The wily cardinal fully understood the character of the young prince with whom he had to deal, and upon one occasion, when some one remonstrated with him concerning the course he had adopted toward the king, he replied, "Ah, you do not know His Majesty! he has the stuff in him to make four kings and an honest man."

The hatred and dislike of Louis for the cardinal increased day by day. The state affected by him jarred upon his natural haughtiness, and, boy as he was, it was impossible that he could contrast the extreme magnificence of his mother's minister with his own neglected condition without feeling how insultingly the cardinal had profited by his weakness and want of power. On one occasion at Compiègne, as the cardinal was passing with a numerous suite along the terrace, the king turned away, saying contemptuously, without any attempt to lower his voice, "There is the Grand Turk going by."

A few days afterwards, as he was traversing a passage in which he perceived one of the [337]
cardinal's household named Bois Fermé, he turned to M. de Nyert, who was following him, and observed, "So the cardinal is with mamma again, for I see Bois Fermé in the passage. Does he always wait there?"

"Yes, sire," replied Nyert; "but in addition to Bois Fermé there is another gentleman upon the stairs and two in the corridor."

"There is one at every stride, then," said the young; king dryly.

But the boy-king was not the only one who found the arrogance of the haughty cardinal unbearable. There had gradually sprung up a deadly feud between the court and Mazarin on one side, and the Parliament on the other.

The people of Paris were in sympathy with the Parliament; and nobles, even of royal blood, out of enmity to Mazarin, joined the popular cause.

Thus commenced the famous civil war of the Fronde; for as the cardinal contemptuously remarked, "The Parliament are like school-boys *fronding in the Paris ditches*," and the Parliament of Paris accepted the title, and adopted the *Fronde*, or sling, as the emblem of their party. There were riots in Paris, and affairs grew threatening. Mazarin and the court party were alarmed and fled to St. Germain.

Thus there were two rival courts in France,—the one at St. Germain, where all was want and destitution; the other at the Hotel de Ville in Paris, where all was splendor, abundance, and festive enjoyment. The court and Mazarin soon tired of the life at St. Germain, and the king; sent a herald to the Parliament. The Parliament refused to receive the herald, but sent a deputation to the king, and at last, after a lengthy conference, a not very satisfactory compromise was agreed [338]
upon, and on the 5th of April, 1650, the royal fugitives returned to Paris.

"Thus ended the first act of the most singular, bootless, and we are almost tempted to add, burlesque war, which in all probability, Europe ever witnessed. Through its whole duration society appeared to have been smitten with some moral hallucination. Kings and cardinals slept on mattresses; princesses and duchesses on straw; market-women embraced princes; prelates governed armies; court-ladies led the mob, and the mob in its turn ruled the city."

On the 5th of September, 1651, the minority of the dauphin ceased, he had now entered upon his fourteenth year, and, immature boy as he was, he was declared to be the absolute monarch of France. On the seventh of the month, the king held his bed of justice. The ceremony was attended with all the pomp the wealth of the empire could furnish. The young king left the Palais Royal attended by a numerous and splendid retinue. Observed of all observers, "handsome as Adonis, august in majesty, the pride and joy of humanity," he sat his splendid steed; and when the horse, frightened by the long and enthusiastically prolonged cries of, "*Vive le Roi!*" reared and plunged with terror, Louis managed him with a skill and address which called forth the admiration of all beholders. After attending mass, the young king took his seat in the Parliament. Here the boy of thirteen, covering his head while all the notabilities of France stood before him with heads uncovered, repeated the following words:—

"Gentlemen, I have attended my Parliament in order to inform you that, according to the law of my kingdom, I shall myself assume its government. I trust that by the goodness of God it will be [339]
with piety and justice."

The chancellor then made a long address, after which the oath of allegiance was taken by all the civil and ecclesiastical notabilities. The royal procession then returned to the gates of the Palais Royal. Thus, a stripling, who had just completed his thirteenth year, was accepted by the nobles and by the populace as the absolute and untrammelled sovereign of France. "He held in his hands, virtually, unrestrained by constitution or court, their liberties, their fortunes, and their lives." Two years later, in 1653, the coronation of the king took place at Rheims. France at this time was at war with Spain, and, immediately after the coronation, the king, then sixteen years of age, set out from Rheims to place himself at the head of the army. He went to Stenay, on the northeastern frontier of France. This ancient city, protected by strong fortifications, was held by the Prince de Condé. The royal troops were besieging it. There were marches and counter-marches, battles and skirmishes. The young king displayed intrepidity which secured for him the admiration of the soldiers. Turenne and Fabert fought the battles and gained the victories. Stenay was soon taken, and the army of the Prince de Condé driven from all its positions. "There is nothing so successful as success;" and the young king, a hero and a conqueror, returned to Paris to enjoy the congratulation of the populace, and to offer public thanksgiving in the cathedral of Nôtre Dame. Though the king was nominally the absolute ruler of France, still there was the influence of his mother, Anne of Austria, which up to this time had exerted over him a great control; but this was soon to end.

Henrietta Maria, the widowed queen of the unfortunate Charles I., was then residing at the [340]
French court. Her daughter Henrietta, as grand-daughter of Henry IV. and daughter of Charles I., was entitled, through the purity of her royal blood, to the highest consideration at the court. When, then, at a ball given for these unfortunate guests, the music summoned the dancers upon the floor, and the king, in total disregard of his young and royal cousin, advanced, according to his custom, to lead out the Duchesse de Mercœur, the queen was shocked at so gross a breach of etiquette, and, rising hastily, she withdrew his hand from that of the duchess, and said in a low voice, "You should dance first, my son, with the princess of England."

Louis replied sullenly, “I am not fond of little girls.”

ANNE OF AUSTRIA AND CARDINAL MAZARIN.

Both Henrietta and her daughter overheard this discourteous remark. The English queen hastened to Anne of Austria, and entreated her not to attempt to constrain the wishes of his majesty. The position was exceedingly awkward for all parties; but the proud spirit of Anne of Austria was aroused. Resuming her maternal authority, she declared that if her niece, the princess of England, remained a spectator at the ball, her son should do the same. Thus constrained, the king very ungraciously led out the English princess upon the floor. After the departure of the guests, the mother and son had their first serious quarrel. Severely Anne of Austria rebuked the king for his shameful and uncourteous conduct. Louis faced his mother haughtily. “Madam, who is lord of France, Louis the king or Anne of Austria? Too long,” he said, “I have been guided by your leading strings. Henceforth, I will be my own master; and do not you, madam, trouble yourself to criticise or correct me. I am the king.” And this was no idle boast; for from that tearful evening of the [341] queen’s ball to the day of his death, sixty-one years after, Louis of Bourbon, called The Great, ruled as absolute lord over his kingdom of France; and the boy who could say so defiantly, “Henceforth, I will be my own master,” was fully equal to that other famous declaration of arrogant authority, made years after in the full tide of his power, “*I am the state!*”

But Anne of Austria was not the only one destined to feel the imperious will of the young sovereign. The Parliament of Paris refused to register certain decrees of the king. Louis heard of it while preparing to hunt in the woods of Vincennes. He leaped upon his horse, and galloped to Paris. At half-past nine o’clock in the morning, the king entered the Chamber of Deputies, in full hunting dress. He heard mass, and, whip in hand, addressed the body: “Gentlemen of the Parliament, it is my will that in future my edicts be *registered*, and not discussed. Should the contrary occur, I shall return, and enforce obedience.”

The trumpet sounded, and the king and his courtiers galloped back to the forest of Vincennes. The decrees were registered. Parliament had ventured to try its strength against Cardinal Mazarin, but did not dare to disobey its king.

The marriage of the king was a matter of much importance, and was much talked of. The aspirants for his hand and the throne of France were numberless. Maria Theresa, the daughter of the king of Spain, was very beautiful. Spain and France were then engaged in petty and vexatious hostilities, and a matrimonial alliance would secure friendship.

So negotiations were begun; and on the 10th of June, 1660, Louis, then in the twenty-second year of his age, was joined in marriage, at the Isle of Pheasants, to Maria Theresa, infanta of [342] Spain. On the 26th of August, the king and his young bride made their public entry into Paris. Triumphal arches spanned the thoroughfares, garlands of flowers and hangings of tapestry covered the fronts of the houses, and sweet-scented herbs strewed the pavements, upon which passed an apparently interminable procession of carriages, horsemen, and footmen; and in the midst of the clangor of trumpets, the boom of cannon, and the shouts and acclamations of the multitude, came the chariot of the young queen, who, radiant and sparkling with brilliant gems, beheld from her lofty height all Paris striving to do her honor. By her side rode the king. His garments, of velvet richly embroidered with gold, and covered with jewels, had been prepared at an expense of over a million of dollars. The gorgeousness of this gala day lived long in the minds of the splendor-loving Parisians. For succeeding weeks and months, the court luxuriated in one continued round of gayety. “There was a sound of revelry by night” in the *salons* of the Louvre and the Tuileries, while lords and ladies trod the floors in the mazy evolutions of the dance. And yet, to maintain all this state, all this splendor, all this reckless extravagance, thousands of the peasantry of France were compelled to live in mud hovels, to wear the coarsest garb, to eat the plainest food, while their wives and daughters toiled barefoot in the fields.

The Cardinal Mazarin was old and dying. For eighteen years he had been virtually monarch of France. Avaricious and penurious to the last degree, he had amassed enormous wealth. Cursed by the peasantry whom he had ground to the earth, hated by the king whom he had tried to rule,

despised by the court which he had attempted to humble, on the 9th of March, 1661, at his [343]
Chateau Mazarin, the cardinal breathed his last. From that moment until the day of his death, Louis XIV. sat all-powerful upon his throne. And when the president of the Ecclesiastical Assembly inquired of the king to whom he must hereafter address himself on questions of public business, the emphatic and laconic response was, "*To myself*."

M. Fouquet, the Minister of the Treasury, was rolling in ill-gotten wealth. His palace of Vaux le Vicomte, upon which he had expended fifteen millions of francs, eclipsed in splendor the royal palaces of the Tuileries and Fontainebleau. The king disliked him. He knew he was robbing the treasury, and it was more than his self-love could endure, that a subject should live in state surpassing that of his sovereign. Fouquet most imprudently invited the king and all the court to a fête at the chateau. No step could have been more ill-advised; for the king was little likely to forget, as he looked upon the splendors of Vaux le Vicomte, by which St. Germain and Fontainebleau were utterly eclipsed, that its owner had derived all his wealth from the public coffers; and at a time, too, when he was himself in need of the funds here lavished with such reckless profusion. Every one in France, who bore a distinguished name, was bidden to the princely festival, which was destined to be commemorated by La Fontaine and by Benserade, by Pelisson and by Molière. Fouquet met the king at the gates of the chateau, and conducted him to the park. Here, notwithstanding all he had heard of the splendors of Vaux le Vicomte, the king was unprepared for the scene of magnificence which burst upon his view. The play of the fountains, the beauty of the park, and the splendor of the chateau were long remembered by the [344]
guests at this princely festival. But to Louis XIV. it was gall and wormwood; and when he took leave of his obsequious host, he remarked bitterly: "I shall never again, sir, venture to invite you to visit me. You would find yourself inconvenienced."

Fouquet felt the keen rebuke, and turned pale. The king and his courtiers returned to Paris, but in the mind of Louis XIV. there loomed up distant visions of the palaces of Versailles and the great hydraulic machine at Marly. On the 8th of January, 1666, Anne of Austria died. It was a gloomy winter's night when the remains of her who had been both queen and regent of France were borne to their last resting-place in the vaults of St. Denis. In his previous campaigns, Louis had taken Flanders in three months, and Franche-Comté in three weeks. Alarmed by these rapid conquests, Holland, Switzerland, and England entered into an alliance to resist further encroachments, should they be attempted. That such a feeble state as Holland should think of limiting his conquests, aroused the anger of the *Grand Monarque*. Armies were mustered, munitions of war got together, and ships prepared; and on the 12th of June, 1672, at the head of an army of one hundred and thirty thousand men, Louis crossed the Rhine, and made his triumphal entry into the city of Utrecht. Then, indeed, Holland trembled; Amsterdam trembled; Louis was at the gates. But, rising in the frenzy of despair, they pierced the dikes, which alone protected the country from the sea. In rushed the flood, and Amsterdam rose like a mighty fortress in the midst of the waves, surrounded by ships of war, which found depth to float where ships never floated before. Thus suddenly Louis XIV. found himself checked in his proud career. Chagrined at [345]
seeing his conquest at an end, he left his army under the command of Turenne, and returned to his palaces in France.

LOUIS XIV. TAKING LEAVE OF FOUQUET.

Louis XIV. had never recovered from the mortification he had experienced at the fête at Vaux. He resolved to rear a palace so magnificent that no subject, whatever might be his resources, could approach it; so magnificent that, like the pyramids of Egypt, it should be a lasting monument of the splendor of his reign. In 1664, Louis selected Versailles as the site for this stupendous pile of marble, which, reared at a cost of thousands of lives, and two hundred millions of money, decorated by the genius of Le Notre, of Mansard, and Le Brun, twenty-five years after its commencement, was ready to receive its royal occupants; and, resting proudly upon its foundations, presented to admiring Europe the noblest monument of the reign of Louis XIV. The splendors of the fêtes which attended the completion of this palace transformed it into a scene of

enchantment, and filled all Europe with wonder.

The most magnificent room in the palace, the Gallerie des Glaces, called the Grand Gallery of Louis XIV., is two hundred and forty-two feet long, thirty-five feet broad, and forty-three feet high. Germany, Holland, Spain, Rome even, bend the knee in the twenty-seven paintings which ornament this grand gallery. But to whom do they bow? Is it to France? No; it is to Louis XIV.

"Louis XIV. and his palace not only afforded conversation for Europe, but their fame penetrated the remote corners of Asia. The emperor of Siam sent him an embassy. Three o'pras, high dignitaries of the empire, eight mandarins, and a crowd of servitors landed at Brest, [346] charged with magnificent presents and a letter from the emperor. Arrived at Versailles, they were fêted with unheard-of splendor. The day of their public audience, the fountains played in the gardens; flowers were strewn in the paths; the sumptuous Gobelin carpets were paraded, as well as the richest works of the goldsmith. The *cortège* of ambassadors was received with the most refined forms of etiquette, and led through apartments filled with the court, glittering in diamonds and embroidery, and at length reached the end of the grand gallery, where Louis XIV., clad in a costume that cost twelve millions, stood on a throne of silver placed on an estrade elevated nine steps above the floor, and covered with Gobelin carpets and costly vases. There the Siamese prostrated themselves three times, with hands clasped, before the Majesty of the West, and then lifted their eyes to him."

Louis spent millions on Versailles, millions on his pleasures, millions on his pomps, millions in his wars; he lavished gold on his favorites, his generals, and his lackeys. And all ended in national bankruptcy.

Let us, then, in imagination look upon the grand *gallerie* of Louis XIV. during one of those gorgeous fêtes which attracted the attention of all Europe. Before us is the grand *salon*, with its glittering candelabra and thousand brilliant lights, reflected in prismatic rays from the costly mirrors which line the walls. Under foot, a pavement of variegated marble, shining and polished as a floor of glass; and overhead the gorgeous frescoes of Le Brun, setting forth in glowing colors the great achievements of the *Grand Monarque*. The highest nobility of the realm, the *grande noblesse* of France, throng this splendid gallery.

The costly costumes of the cavaliers and the gorgeous robes of the *Grande Dames*, the waving [347] plumes and flashing jewels, all conspire to render the scene of marvellous magnificence. And now, as the impatient throng turn their gaze in the direction of the Salon of War, in expectation of the approach of royalty, the folding-doors are thrown back, and the stentorian voice of the usher resounds throughout the gallery: "His Majesty the King!" and upon the threshold, in a costume resplendent with sparkling gems, stands Louis XIV., the *Grand Monarque*. As a *parterre* of blooming flowers bends low before a rushing gust of wind, so bow these titled lords and ladies before his piercing glance; while Louis, full conscious of his kingly majesty, walks slowly, and with measured step, all down the long and glittering lines, pausing ever and anon to address those whose rank entitles them to this inestimable boon.

"It was not only on festive occasions that Versailles wore an air of grand gala. It was its habitual aspect. At Vaux, nature had contributed quite as much as art, to the marvellous beauty of the scene. At Versailles, she had done nothing, and Louis' pleasure was the greater, in that he considered it the unrivalled creation of his own genius. Versailles, with its palace, its gardens, its fountains, its statues, and water-works, Trianon, and appendages, was a work of art to gaze upon with wonder. Let us ascend; for, in whatever place you may be, it is necessary to mount, to reach this palace; at whatever point you may stand to look at it, you see its roofs, apparently touching the clouds. It crowns the hill like a diadem. If you come from Paris, it rises above the town, which lies prostrate at the feet of its majesty; if you approach from the park, it lifts itself above the [348] gigantic trees, above the terraces which pile themselves up towards it, above the jets of water which surround it; the groves seem to support it upon their tall heads, and the whole forest serves as its footstool. Let us ascend, for the doors are open; people are going and coming. The ladies smile, the mirrors reflect them, the chandeliers light them, the ceilings throw their golden coloring upon them. The courtiers stare in the midst of the riches of this magnificent dwelling; but, amid all this stir, all these surprises, all these wonders, only one man is calm,—this man Louis XIV.

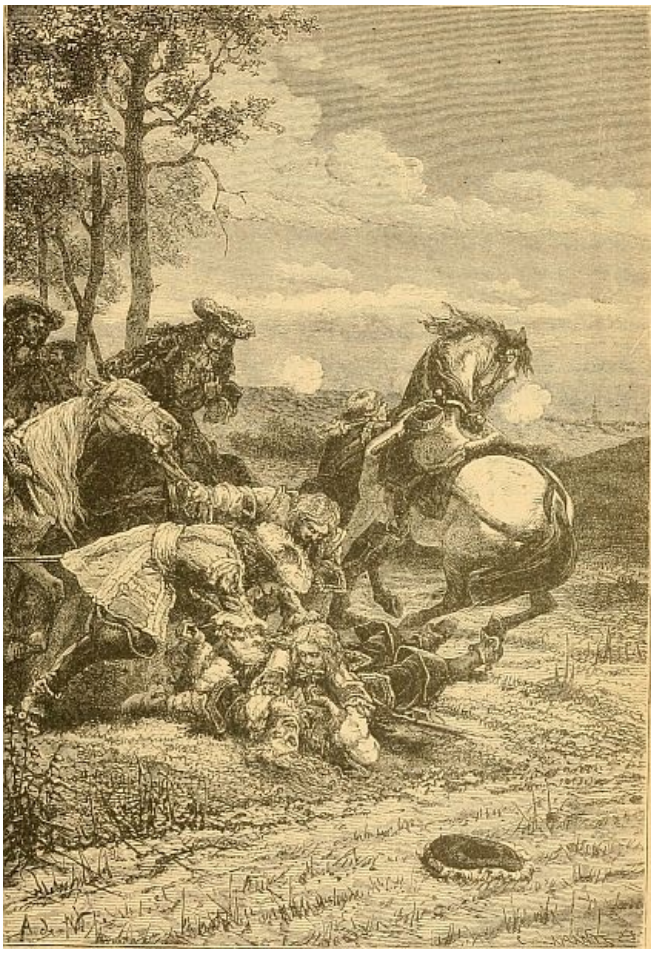
"He feels as much at ease in this palace as in a vestment made for him; and, contemplating the work to which his pride gave birth, he exclaims, in the fulness of his satisfaction, 'Versailles is myself!'

"Yet, upon a bright spring day, or soft summer evening, when Louis, disposed for one of those long promenades he was accustomed to take sometimes twice a day, descended to the gardens from the grand terrace of the palace, followed by his numerous court, the *coup d'œil* from a distance must have been charmingly effective. And, when enlivened by sauntering, chatting, flirting, laughing groups of picturesquely dressed ladies and gentlemen of the court,—a numerous retinue of lackeys following, no less resplendent in dress than their masters,—the admirable fitness of the gardens and grounds of Versailles for the purpose which Louis, no doubt, had in his mind when the designs were approved, must have been very striking. In the centre of this throng of feathers and swords, satins and laces, flashing jewels, fans and masks, solemnly paced the magnificent Louis, with the air of lord of the universe, monarch of all he surveyed, and of all who surveyed him; for his courtiers lived only in the light of his countenance. Yet the [349] countenance of this god was grandly cold, serene, and unchangeable, as that of any of the marble deities that presided over his fountains. It was no mean advantage to him that nature had kindly

exalted him, at least, three inches above almost every other man of his court. The French were not generally a fine race of men; but the dress of the period—the high heels, the wig, the lofty plume, and the looped-up, broad-brimmed hat—gave to the *grandees* an appearance of height, which, as a rule, they had not. And above them all towered their king, like Jupiter, in Olympus, in the midst of the inferior gods, or as the sun, with lesser lights revolving around him, and shining only in the refulgence of his rays.

“Red-heeled boots, slashed doublets, and flowing wigs, cordeliers of pearls, Moorish fans, masques, patches and paint, monumental head-dresses, and the thousand other items indispensable to the toilets of the lords and ladies of the Louis XIV. period, have a charmingly picturesque effect, seen through the long vista of two centuries, and heightened by the glamour of *la grande politesse, et la grande galanterie* of the *Grand Monarque* and his court. Life seems to have been with them, one long fancy-dress ball, a never-ending carnival, a perpetual whirl, an endless succession of fêtes and carousals.”

Louis XIV. now found nearly all Europe in arms against him. He sent twenty thousand men, under Marshal Turenne, to encounter the forces of the emperor of Germany; and forty thousand, under the Prince de Condé, to assail William, prince of Orange. In his defence of the frontiers of the Rhine, Turenne acquired a reputation which has made his name famous in military annals. With twenty thousand men, he defeated and dispersed the Imperial army of seventy thousand; [350] and it adds not a little to his celebrity, that, following his own judgment, he achieved the victory in direct opposition to the orders from the minister of war. A merciless warrior, he allowed no consideration of humanity to interfere with his military operations. He laid in ashes the beautiful country of the Palatinate, embracing, on both sides of the Rhine, about sixteen hundred square miles, and having a population of over three hundred thousand souls, in order that the armies of his enemies might be deprived of sustenance; while the wail of widows and orphans rose over the smouldering ruins of their dwellings, over the bleak and barren fields.



DEATH OF TURENNE.

On the 27th of June, 1675, a cannon ball struck Turenne, and closed, in an instant, his earthly career. Few men have ever lived who have caused such wide-spread misery. For two years the war continued, with sometimes varying success, but with unvarying blood and misery. At last, on the 14th of August, 1678, peace, the peace of Nimegeun, was made. Louis XIV. dictated the terms.

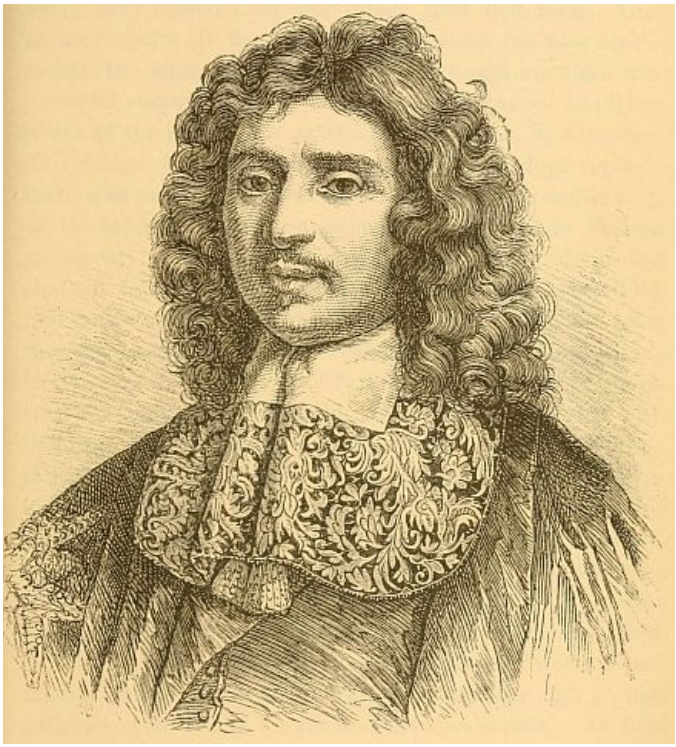
Now, at the height of his grandeur, having enlarged his dominions by the addition of Franche-Comté, Dunkirk, and half of Flanders, worshipped by his courtiers as a demi-god, the court of France conferred upon him, with imposing solemnities, the title of *Louis le Grand*. In 1685, the Queen, Maria Theresa, breathed her last. Amiable, unselfish, warm-hearted, from the time of her marriage she devoted herself to the promotion of her husband’s happiness. His neglect caused her to shed many tears. The king could not be insensible to her many virtues, and perhaps remorse, mingled with the emotions which compelled him to weep bitterly over her [351] death, caused him to exclaim, as he gazed upon the lifeless remains, “Kind and forbearing friend, this is the first sorrow you have caused me throughout twenty years.” For ten days the royal corpse lay in state at Versailles, and perpetual masses were performed for the soul of the departed. On the day of the funeral, the king, in the insane endeavor to obliterate from his mind all thoughts of death and burial, ordered out the hounds, and plunged into the excitement of the chase. His horse pitched the monarch over his head into a ditch of stagnant water, dislocating one of his shoulders.

In 1685, also died Jean Baptiste Colbert, the king’s minister of finance. As superintendent of buildings, arts, and manufactures, he had enlarged the Tuileries and the Louvre, completed gorgeous Versailles, reared the magnificent edifice of the Invalides, and founded the Gobelins. As minister of finance, he had furnished the king with the money he needed for his expensive wars and luxurious indulgence. Now old, forgotten, exhausted by incessant labor, he was on his dying bed. The heavy taxes he had imposed upon the people rendered him unpopular. The curses and imprecations of a starving peasantry rose around his dying couch. The king condescended in courtesy to send a messenger inquiring after the condition of his minister, but the dying sufferer

turned away his face, saying, “I will not hear that man spoken of again. If for God I had done what I have for him, I should have been saved ten times over. What my fate now may be, I know not.”

And so worn out by toil, anxiety, and grief, he died. On the following day, without any marks of honor, his remains were conveyed to the church of St. Eustache.

Genoa had offended the king by giving assistance to the Algerines. He seized, by a *lettre de cachet*, the Genoese ambassador, and plunging him into one of the dungeons of the Bastile, sent a fleet of fifty vessels to chastise those who had offended him, with terrible severity. On the 19th of May, 1684, the ships entered the harbor of Genoa, and immediately opened upon the city a terrific fire, so that in a few hours, a large portion of those marble edifices, which had given to the city the name of “Genoa the Superb,” were crumbled into powder. The city was threatened with total destruction, and in terror the authorities implored the clemency of the conqueror. Haughtily the *Grand Monarque* demanded that the doge of Genoa, and four of his principal ministers, should repair to the palace of Versailles, and humbly implore his pardon. Utterly powerless, the doge was compelled to submit to these humiliating terms. [352]



JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT.

On the 15th of May, 1685, Louis ordered his throne to be placed at the end of the grand gallery, by the side of the “Salon of Peace.” The doge entered with four senators Genoa had sent to accompany him. He was dressed in red velvet, with a cap of the same. In order to preserve all the dignity his misfortune allowed him, the doge remained covered until he entered the presence of the king. The king allowed the princes to remain covered during the audience. The doge discharged his sad mission with a firmness that created astonishment. His bearing was more impressive than his discourse. A few days after he attended the levee, dined with the king, was shown the park and all the fountains, and was present at a ball given in the grand apartment. Afterwards he had his audience of leave-taking, and when one of the senators asked him what surprised him most at Versailles, he replied with an air of more chagrin than usual, “At seeing myself there.” The doge and senators did not stay long in France. They saw in haste the wonders shown them, and then returned to Genoa. Arrived at home, they talked over the things they had seen. One senator spoke of the dazzling spectacles, the vast apartments, the sumptuous ornaments; and said no mind was powerful enough to carry away the remembrance of all the riches of the palace, its paintings, its statues, its tapestry, its ceilings, its gold, and its marble. The doge replied, there was more than its exterior magnificence, and luxury of its interior; that the palace was the whole French monarchy. You read the origin of the monarchy in the chateau built by Louis XIII. The architects wished to pull it down; the king replied, that, if it would not last, they must take it down, but reconstruct it on its first plan. He wished the work of his father to remain, to contrast with the edifice he was going to erect. One part of the building only projects immensely in the long outline, that is where the master dwells. The king walks alone in the first rank, the courtiers follow, and support the train of the royal mantle. If you mount by the grand staircase, you find a suite of immense *salons*, covered with beautiful paintings. The Salon of Plenty, then Venus, then Diana, then Mars, then Mercury, and then Apollo. Of what use are they? The master does not inhabit them. But go on farther, pass through empty galleries, you will at length find his apartments. All this suite of magnificent *salons*, all these galleries, serve as an ante-chamber only to the place in which he dwells. Mars and Apollo, gods formerly, are nothing now but lackeys to the king of France. [353]

In the year 1598, King Henry IV., feeling the need of the support of the Protestants to protect his kingdom from the perils by which it was surrounded, and having himself been educated a Protestant, had granted to the Protestants the world-renowned edict of Nantes. By this edict, Protestants were allowed liberty of conscience; were permitted, in certain designated places, to hold public worship; were declared to be eligible to offices of state, and in certain places, were allowed to publish books. Louis XIV. was a Catholic, a bigoted Catholic; hoping in some measure to atone for his sins, by his supreme devotion to the interests of the church, and while assuring the Protestant powers of Europe that he would continue to respect the edict of Nantes, he commenced issuing a series of ordinances in direct opposition to that contract. In 1680 he excluded Protestants from all public offices, whatsoever. A Protestant could not be employed as a physician, lawyer, apothecary, bookseller, printer, or even as a nurse. [354]

REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

In some parts of the kingdom, the Protestants composed nearly the entire population. Here it was impossible to enforce the atrocious decree. Riots and bloodshed followed. Affairs went from bad to worse, and on the 18th of October, 1685, the king, yielding to the wishes of his confessor and other high dignitaries of the Church, signed the *Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*. In this act of revocation, it was declared that, "the exercise of the Protestant worship should nowhere be tolerated in the realm of France. All Protestant pastors were ordered to leave the kingdom within fifteen days, under pain of being sent to the galleys. Parents were forbidden to instruct their children in the Protestant religion. Every child in the kingdom was to be baptized and educated by a Catholic priest. All Protestants who had left France, were ordered to return within four months, under penalty of [355] confiscation of their possessions. Any Protestant man or woman who should attempt to emigrate, incurred the penalty of imprisonment for life."

This infamous ordinance caused an amount of misery which can never be gauged, and inflicted upon the prosperity of France the most terrible blow it had ever received. Only one year after the revocation, Marshal Vauban wrote, "France has lost one hundred thousand inhabitants, sixty millions of coined money, nine thousand sailors, twelve thousand disciplined soldiers, six hundred officers, and her most flourishing manufactures."

The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was the great blot upon the reign of Louis XIV. From that hour the fortunes of the *Grand Monarque* began manifestly to decline.

Louvois, minister of war, had for a long time been all-powerful at court. Through his influence, the king had been induced to revoke the Edict of Nantes, and to order the utter devastation of the Palatinate. But that influence was upon the wane. The king had become weary of his haughty assumptions, and the conflagration of the Palatinate had raised a cry of indignation that even he could not fail to hear. Treves had escaped the flames. Louvois solicited an order to burn it. The king refused. Louvois insolently gave the order himself, and entering the royal presence, exclaimed calmly, "Sire, I have commanded the burning of Treves, in order that I might spare your Majesty the pain of issuing such an edict."

Louis was furious; and springing up, with flashing eyes, forgetful of all the restraints of etiquette, he seized the tongs from the fireplace, and would have broken the head of his minister, had not Madame de Maintenon rushed between them. The king despatched a messenger to [356] countermand the order, and declared that if but a single house were burned, the head of the minister should be the forfeit. Treves was saved.

On one occasion, when Louis XIV. went to examine the progress of the building of the Trianon, accompanied by Louvois, he remarked that a particular window was out of proportion, and did not harmonize with the rest; but the minister, jealous of his dignity as controller of the royal works, would not admit the objection, but maintained that it was similar to the others.

The king desired Le Notre to declare his opinion as to the size of the disputed window. Le Notre, fearful of offending either the monarch or his minister, endeavored to give an evasive answer. Upon which, Louis commanded him to measure it carefully, and he was reluctantly compelled to obey. The result of the trial proved that the king was right, the window was too small; and the monarch had no sooner ascertained the fact, than he turned angrily to his minister, exclaiming, "M. Louvois, I am weary of your obstinacy. It is fortunate that I myself have superintended the work of building, or the façade would have been ruined."

As this scene had taken place not only in the presence of the workmen, but of all the courtiers who followed the king upon his promenade, Louvois was stung to the quick; and on entering his own house, he exclaimed furiously, "I am lost if I do not find some occupation for a man who can interest himself in such trifles. There is nothing but a war which can divert him from his building, and war he shall have. I will soon make him abandon his trowel."

He kept his word: and Europe was once more plunged into a general war, because a window had been made a few inches too narrow, and a king had convicted a minister of error. [357]

In 1691, the French were besieging Mons. The haughty minister, unintimidated even by the menace of the tongs, ventured to countermand an order which the king had issued. The lowering brow of the monarch convinced him that his ministerial reign was soon to close. The health of the minister began rapidly to fail. A few subsequent interviews with the king satisfied him that his disgrace and ruin were decided upon; and about the middle of June, meeting the monarch in his council-chamber, although he was unusually complaisant, Louvois so thoroughly understood him, that he retired to his residence in utter despair. He ordered that his son, the Marquis de Barbesieux, might be requested to follow him to his chamber. In five minutes the summons was obeyed, but it was too late; for when the marquis entered the room, his father had already expired. Louvois had judged rightly, for the king had already drawn up the *lettre de cachet* which was to consign him to the *oubliettes* of the Bastile.

"Civil war was now also desolating unhappy France. The Protestants, bereft of their children, robbed of their property, driven from their homes, dragged to the gallows, plunged into dungeons, broken upon the wheel, hanged upon scaffolds, rose in several places in insurrectionary bands; and the man who was thus crushing beneath the iron heel of his armies the quivering hearts of the Palatinate, and who was drenching his own realms with tears and blood, was clothed in purple, and faring sumptuously, and reclining upon the silken sofas of Marly and Versailles."

On the 1st of November, 1700, Charles II. of Spain died, having no heirs. Urged by the Pope, [358] he left the throne to the children of the dauphin of France. As the duke de Bourgoyne was direct heir to the throne of France, the dauphin's second son, the duke d'Anjou, was proclaimed king of Spain, under the title of Philip V. On the 14th of the month, Louis XIV. summoned the Spanish ambassador to an audience at Versailles. The king presented his grandson to the minister, saying, "This, sir, is the duke d'Anjou, whom you may salute as your king." Then, contrary to his custom, he ordered the folding doors of his cabinet to be thrown back, and the crowd of courtiers assembled in the grand gallery poured into the apartment.

The Spanish ambassador dropped upon his knee before the young prince with expressions of profound homage; while the king, embracing the neck of his grandson with his left arm, and pointing to him with his right hand, presented him to the assembled court, exclaiming, "Gentlemen, this is the king of Spain. His birth calls him to the crown. The late king has recognized his right by his will. All the nation desires his succession, and has entreated it at my hands. It is the will of heaven, to which I conform with satisfaction."

To his grandson he added, "Be a good Spaniard, but never forget that you were born a Frenchman. Carefully maintain the union of the two nations. Thus only can you render them both happy."

Preparations were immediately made for the departure of the boy-king to take possession of the Spanish throne. The *Grand Monarque* regarded it as a signal stroke of policy, and a great victory on his part, that notwithstanding the remonstrances of other nations, he had placed a French Bourbon prince upon the throne of Spain. He saw the domain of France extending far [359] southward to the Straits of Gibraltar.

"Henceforth," exclaimed Louis XIV., exultingly, "there are no more Pyrenees!"

Louis XIV. reigned everywhere,—over his people, over his age, often over Europe,—but nowhere did he reign so completely as over his court. Never were the wishes, the defects, and the vices of a man so completely a law to other men, as at the court of Louis XIV. during the whole period of his long life. When near to him in the palace at Versailles, men lived, hoped, trembled, everywhere else in France, even at Paris, men vegetated. The existence of the nobles was concentrated in the court about the person of the king; and so abject was their submission, that Louis XIV. looked on all sides for a great lord, and found about him only courtiers.

When the king learned that certain of the nobility affected to despise the plebian genius of the great dramatist, Molière, he invited the comedian to his table; and when at the *grande entrée* the nobles thronged the apartment, he turned to them haughtily, exclaiming, "Gentlemen of the court, you see me breakfasting with Molière, whom my nobles do not consider worthy of their notice." It was enough. From that moment the great dramatist found all the nobility of France at his feet.

Never did man give with better grace than Louis XIV., or augment so much in this way the price of his benefits. Never did man sell to better profit his words, even his smiles,—nay, his looks.

Never did disobliging words escape him; and if he had to blame, to reprimand, or correct, which was very rare, it was nearly always with goodness, never with anger or severity. Never was man so naturally polite, or of a politeness so measured, so graduated, so adapted, to person, [360] time, and place. Towards women his politeness was without parallel. Never did he pass the humblest petticoat without raising his hat. For ladies he took his hat off completely, but to a greater or less extent; for titled people half off, holding it in his hand, or against his ear, some instants. He took it off for the princes of the blood as for the ladies. If he accosted ladies, he did not cover himself until he had quitted them. His reverences, more or less marked, but always light, were incomparable for their grace and manner. As, after the battle of Seneff, fought Aug. 11, 1674, against William of Orange, Monsieur le Prince, le Grand Condé, was walking slowly, from the effects of gout, up the grand staircase at Versailles, he exclaimed to the king, who

awaited him upon the landing above, “Sire, I crave your majesty’s pardon, if I keep you waiting;” to which Louis replied, “Do not hurry, my cousin; no one could move more quickly who was so loaded with laurels as you are.” It was the language of the court; and again, when in May, 1706, Marshal Villeroi returned worsted at the battle of Ramillies, in his encounter with Marlborough and Prince Eugene, the *Grand Monarque* gave utterance to one of those delicate remarks he knew so well how to make, and which sounded almost like a compliment: “Ah, Monsieur le Marshal,” exclaimed the king, when he presented himself at Versailles, “at our age one is no longer fortunate.”

“The king loved air and exercise very much, as long as he could make use of them. He had excelled at dancing, at tennis, and at mall. On horseback he was admirable, even at a late age. He liked to see everything done with grace and address. To acquit yourself well or ill before him was a merit or a fault. He was very fond of shooting, and there was not a better or more graceful [361]
shot than he. He was very fond, also, of stag-hunting, but in a *caléche*, since he broke his arm while hunting at Fontainebleau, immediately after the death of the Queen. He rode alone in a species of “box,” drawn by four little horses, and drove himself with an accuracy and address unknown to the best coachmen. He liked splendor, magnificence, and profusion in everything; you pleased him if you shone through the brilliancy of your houses, your clothes, your table, and your equipages. As for the king himself, nobody ever approached his magnificence.”

Old age had crept fast upon Louis XIV. For seventy-two years he had proudly sat upon the throne of his ancestors; but the time was near at hand when he must lay aside his sceptre and his crown. Still the more deeply he became conscious of his physical weakness, the more determined and extraordinary were his efforts to preserve intact the interests of the state.

Richard, in his war-tent on the bloody field of Bosworth, never contemplated a train of more appalling shadows than those evoked by the memory of Louis XIV., as he sat, supported by cushions and pillowed upon velvet, in his sumptuous apartment. Maria Theresa, the Queen; the grand-dauphin; his son, the duke de Bourgoyne; and last of all, the duke de Berri, the sole prop to that throne which must soon be empty, dead, all dead, save a frail infant,—such were the thoughts that crowded upon his last reveries; and well might the poor old man in his solitary moments bend down that proud head which had no longer strength to bear a crown, and laying aside the arrogance of those years in which he had assumed the bearing of a demi-god, confess to his own heart that he was but human.

On the third of May, 1715, the king rose at an early hour, to witness an eclipse of the sun. [362]
Strange coincidence that he, who had taken for his emblem a rising sun, should witness the eclipse of that brilliant orb, while he himself was sinking toward the grave. In the evening he retired early, complaining of extreme fatigue. The advanced age of the king and his many infirmities rendered even a slight indisposition alarming. The report spread rapidly that the king was dangerously sick. The foreign ambassadors promptly despatched the news to their respective courts,—a circumstance which soon reached the ears of the monarch, who, indignant at such indecent precipitancy, and to prove, not only to the court, but to all Europe, that he was still every inch a king, commanded that preparations should forthwith be commenced for a grand review of the household troops at Marly. On the twentieth of June this magnificent exhibition took place, when for the last time the troops of gendarmes and light-horse, in their splendid uniforms, defiled before the terrace of Marly; which they had no sooner done, than the monarch appeared at the principal entrance of the palace, habited in the costume of his earlier years; and, descending the marble steps, mounted his horse, and for four long hours sat proudly in his saddle, under the eyes of those foreign envoys who had announced his approaching death to their sovereigns. It was the expiring effort of his pride. During the whole of the last year of his life, it had been the study of Louis XIV. to deceive himself, and, above all, to deceive others, as to the extent of the physical debility induced by his great age. He rose at a late hour, in order to curtail the fatigues of the day; received his ministers, and even dined, in his bed; and once, having prevailed upon himself to leave it, passed several hours in succession in his cushioned chair. In [363]
vain his physician urged upon him the necessity of exercise, in order to counteract his tendency to revery and somnolency; the swollen state of his feet and ankles rendered it impossible for him to rise from his chair without severe pain, and he never attempted to do so until all his attendants had left the room, lest they should perceive the state of weakness to which he was reduced. Great, therefore, had been the effort we have described, when the monarch had for a time conquered the man, and where pride had supplied the place of strength. The only exercise which he ultimately consented to take was in the magnificent gardens of Versailles, where he was wheeled through the stately avenues, which he had himself planted, in a bath-chair; a prey to pain, which was visibly depicted upon his countenance, but which he supported with cold and silent dignity, too haughty to complain. The king grew daily worse. The disease was mortal, and he felt he was beyond the power of human aid. Bitterly Louis XIV. upon his death-bed expiated the faults and excesses of his past life. He wept over the profligacy of his youth, deplored the madness of his ambition, by which he had brought mourning into every corner of his kingdom. On the twenty-sixth of August, the king commanded all the great dignitaries and officers of the household to meet in his apartment, and addressed them in a firm voice, saying, “Gentlemen, I die in the faith and obedience of the Church. I desire your pardon for the bad example which I have set you. I have greatly to thank you for the manner in which you have served me, and request from you the same zeal and the same fidelity toward the dauphin. Farewell, gentlemen; I feel that this parting has affected not only myself, but you also. Forgive me. I trust that you will [364]
sometimes think of me when I am gone.”

How sad the scene! “The gray-haired king, half-sitting, half-lying, in his gorgeous bed, whose velvet hangings, looped back with their heavy ropes and tassels of gold, were the laborious offering of the pupils of St. Cyr; the groups of princes in their gorgeous costumes, dispersed over the vast apartment; the gilded cornices, the priceless, the tapestried hangings, the richly-carpeted floor, the waste of luxury on every side, the pride of man’s intellect and of man’s strength; and in the midst, decay and death, a palsied hand and a dimmed eye.” For a few moments there was unbroken silence. The king then requested his great-grandchild, who was to be his successor, to be brought to him. A cushion was placed at the bedside, and the little prince, clinging to the hand of his governess, knelt upon it. Louis XIV. gazed for a moment upon him with mingled anxiety and tenderness, and then said impressively, “My child, you are about to become a great king; do not imitate me, either in my taste for building, or in my love of war. Endeavor, on the contrary, to live in peace with the neighboring nations; render to God all that you owe him, and cause his name to be honored by your subjects. Strive to relieve the burdens of your people, in which I have been unfortunate enough to fail; and never forget the gratitude that you owe to Madame de Ventadour.”

Louis XV. caused these last words, addressed to him by his grandfather, to be inscribed on vellum, and attached to the head-cloth of his bed. Words to which his life for fifty years was but a hollow mockery. The following days were ones of agony to the expiring king. His intervals of consciousness were rare and brief. Mortification extended rapidly, and toward midday, on the [365]
31st of August, his condition became so much exasperated that it was found necessary to perform the service for the dying without further delay. The mournful ceremony aroused him from his lethargy, and his voice was heard, audibly and clearly, mingled with those of the priests. At the termination of the prayers, he recognized the Cardinal de Rohan, and said calmly, “These are the last favors of the Church.” He then repeated several times, “*Nunc et in hora mortis*”; and finally he exclaimed, with earnest fervor, “O, my God, come to my aid, and hasten to help me!” He never spoke again; his head fell back upon the pillow, one long-drawn sigh, and all was over. The spirit of Louis XIV. had passed the earthly veil, and entered the vast unknown. An immense concourse had assembled in the marble court at Versailles, anticipating the announcement of his death. The moment he breathed his last, the captain of the body-guard approached the great balcony, threw open the massive windows, and, looking down upon the multitude below, raised his truncheon above his head, broke it in the centre, and, throwing the fragments down into the court-yard, he cried sadly, “The king is dead!” Then, instantly seizing another staff from the hands of an attendant, he waved it joyfully above his head, and shouted triumphantly, “Long live the king, Louis XV.!” And a multitudinous echo from the depths of the lately-deserted apartment answered as buoyantly, “Long live the king!”

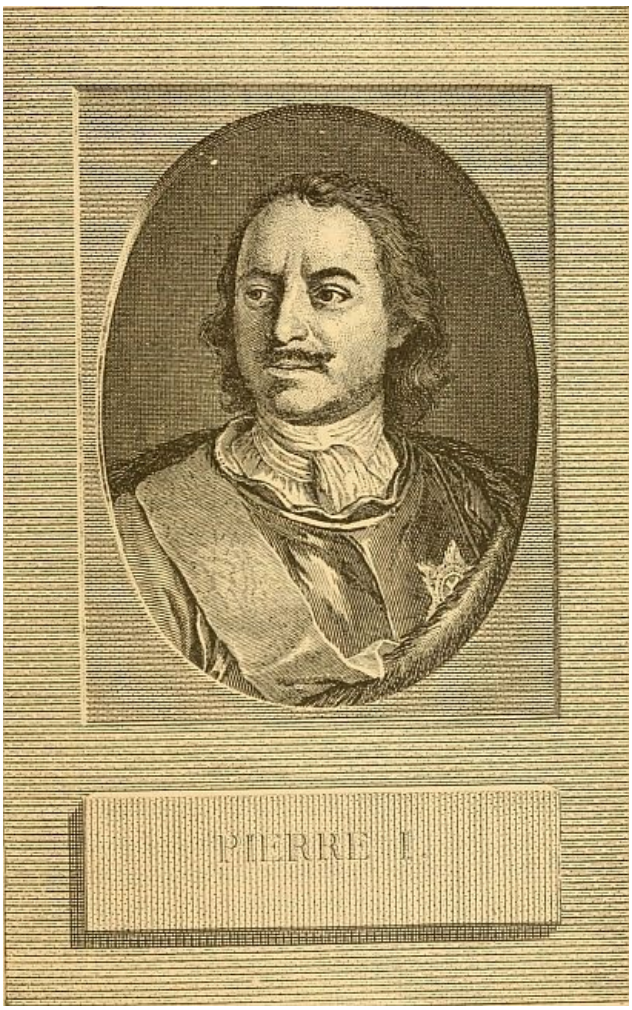
Thus, on the 1st of September, 1715, in his palace, at Versailles, died “one of the world’s most powerful monarchs, Louis of Bourbon, Louis the Great, Louis the God-given, Louis the *Grand Monarque*, Louis the worn-out, unloving, and unloved old man, of magnificent Versailles.” And [366]
when Massillon, called to preach the funeral sermon of Louis XIV., as he looked upon the magnificent draperies and insignia of royalty around him, and thought of the title the deceased king had borne during his life, he began his discourse, with the simple and striking words, which amazed the pleasure-loving courtiers of Versailles, “God alone is great, my brothers.” And now, after two hundred years have rolled away, at this present time, in this nineteenth century, after the scaffold of Louis XVI., after the downfall of Napoleon, after the exile of Charles X., after the flight of Louis Philippe, after the French Revolution,—in a word, that is to say, after this renewal, complete, absolute, prodigious, of principles, opinions, situations, influences, and facts; standing upon the terrace of magnificent Versailles, and looking upon those scenes, where, for so many years, he was the central light and figure,—we bid a last adieu to Louis XIV., the *Grand Monarque*, greatest of all the Bourbons.

PETER THE GREAT.
A.D. 1672-1725.

[367]

"No true and permanent fame can be founded, except in labors
which promote the happiness of mankind."
CHARLES SUMNER.

ONE thousand years ago, Russia was inhabited by disunited, Slavonic tribes, who were frequently at war with each other. Then Scandinavian tribes were called in, and the Russian nation grew from the two centres of Novgorod and Kíef. Christianity was introduced from Constantinople. Trade had been commenced with the west of Europe, when the whole country was over-run by the Mongols and Tartars, and the people were obliged to submit to their yoke. The country had been divided into various Russian states, which were not ruled directly by the Mongols, but became vassals. These states were each governed by its own prince, who were all subject to Tartary. One state after another was at length swallowed up by the Grand Duchy of Moscow, and the autocracy was established; which, after freeing Russia from the Mongol yoke, reached its highest development, under Iván the Terrible, in 1533. The death of Iván gave a blow to autocracy, and brought the nobility into power. In 1598, nearly the whole of the Russian people were reduced to serfdom, which was an institution then first legally established. Then came a period, called the Troublous Time, when pretender vied with pretender, and the son of [368] the king of Poland was crowned Czar of Moscow. Finally, the Poles were turned out, and young Michael Románof was elected Czar. Then followed continual wars with Poland and Sweden. In the reign of Alexis, in 1645-76, an arbitrary government was formed. Henceforth, the Czar managed all matters, both great and small, according to his own will and pleasure. The Czar Alexis was of a gentle and amiable nature, and was called by his subjects, "The most Debonnair." But his good qualities, in the end, rendered him one of the worst sovereigns of Russia; for he was entirely in the hands of wicked men, who, as his favorites, exercised all the power, and, in reality, governed the country.



Then arose the dissent in the Russian Church. The Patriarch, Nikon, undertook the correction of all the printed and manuscript copies of the liturgy; and by a decree of an Ecclesiastical Council, the corrected books were ordered to be the only ones used, and the command was given that all others should be destroyed. This measure excited the greatest hostility. It seems strange that passions should be roused, and people be found willing to suffer martyrdom, for such seemingly unimportant questions,—as to whether the name of Jesus should be pronounced, "Isus," or "Yisus"; whether, in a certain portion of the morning service, the word "Hallelujah" should be repeated twice or thrice; and whether the sign of the cross should be made with the two fore-fingers extended, or with the fore-fingers and the thumb, as denoting the Trinity. But such was the case; and so great was the commotion, that arms were resorted to by the Court, at Moscow, to enforce these innovations; and some of the most obstinate opposers were even executed. In the east of Russia, the [369] inhabitants of whole villages shut themselves up in their houses, and setting fire to them, perished in the flames, rather than accept a new, and what they called a diabolical, religion. The government was at length successful, however, and revised service-books were introduced into the churches.

At the present day, nearly one-half of the Russians belong in spirit, if not openly, to the Dissenters; and the reconciliation between them and the official church has only been accomplished by relaxing the rigor of the laws of persecution. During the reign of Alexis, the father of Peter the Great, much importance was attached to the length and fulness of the Czar's title. An accidental omission of a single word or letter from this long and cumbrous official title was considered an act of personal disrespect to the prince, almost equal to high treason, and was punished far more severely than many terrible crimes. The shortest title of the Czar that could possibly be used, and which it was necessary to repeat every time that the Czar's name was mentioned in document, petition, or discourse, was "The Great Lord Czar and Grand Duke Alexis Micháilovitch, of all Great and Little and White Russia Autocrat." The complete title contained one hundred and twenty-three words, which we have not space to give. Alexis, having lost his

first wife, in 1669, married for his second wife Natalia Narýshkin, who was a ward of Matvéief, the chief minister of the Czar. Their meeting was in this manner: One evening, when the Czar was at Matvéief's house, the wife and pretty ward of the prime minister came into the room, bringing the usual refreshments of cups of *vodka*, the caviare, and smoked fish, which are eaten by the Russians before dinner or supper. The widowed Czar was struck by the pretty face of the tall, shapely, black-eyed girl, and, on going away, said to Matvéief that he would find a [370] bridegroom for his pretty ward. It was the custom, when the Czar was in want of a bride, for all the Russian maidens, of suitable position and beauty, to assemble at the palace on a certain day, that a bride might be chosen from their number for the prince. Word was now sent to Natalia Narýshkin to appear with the other maidens, and it was soon reported that she was the chosen bride. The daughters of the Czar objected to so young a step-mother; but, in spite of opposition, both political and from his family, Alexis was married to Natalia, on the 1st of February, 1671. The Czar had several daughters of his first wife still living, and two sons, Theodore, who was very infirm and sickly, and John, or Iván, who was almost blind, and had a defect of speech, and was nearly an idiot. But his favorite child was Peter, the son of his second wife, Natalia, who was born June 9, 1672. The birth of Peter was hailed with great joy, and Alexis ordered a most splendid ceremonial in honor of the event. Then came the christening. The ceremony was performed at the Cathedral of the Annunciation; and the infant Peter was borne to the church in a cradle placed on wheels, while the priest most venerated for his sanctity sprinkled the path with holy water. The next day after the christening the feast occurred. The expense and account books, which have been preserved, show that on this occasion the tables were loaded with large pieces of sugar-work, representing eagles, swans, and other birds, larger than life; also representations of the Muscovite arms and a model of the Krémlin, the palace of the Czar, and also a large fortress with cannon. One of the first ceremonies after the birth of a Russian prince was what was called "taking his measure." The measure of Peter was taken on the third day after his birth, and was [371] performed in this manner: a board of either cypress or linden-wood was cut the exact length and breadth of the child, which in his case was nineteen and a quarter inches long and five and a quarter inches broad. Upon this board a picture, representing the Holy Trinity, together with the Apostle Peter, was painted by a famous artist. This birth-measure of Peter was carefully preserved, and now hangs over his tomb in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, in the fortress at St. Petersburg. A nurse and governess were then selected for the infant Peter; and he had a special staff of dwarfs who should be his companions and servants. The infant prince had his own apartments, some of which were hung with leather, stamped with silver, and others with fine red cloth; while the furniture was covered with crimson, embroidered with blue and yellow, and the walls and ceilings were decorated with paintings.

The curious books of accounts enumerate some of the articles ordered for him in the first years of his childhood. Among them were "cradles covered with gold-embroidered Turkish velvet; sheets and pillows of white silk; coverlets of gold and silver stuffs; coats, caps, stockings, and shoes of velvet, silk, and satin, embroidered with gold and pearls; buttons and tassels of pearls and emeralds; a chest for his clothes, covered with dark blue velvet, ornamented with mother-of-pearl; and a miniature carriage, drawn by ponies, in which he was taken out to drive. Among his toys were musical instruments of various kinds, and all sorts of military equipments." Peter grew rapidly. He was able to walk when six months old. Being the pet of his parents, he accompanied them in all their excursions and visits. When he was three years of age, he was presented with a [372] small carriage drawn by four ponies, in which he was driven by the court dwarfs, and he began to take part in the public processions of the court. One scene is thus described: "Immediately after the carriage of the Czar, there appeared from another gate of the palace the carriage of the Czarina. In front went the chamberlains with two hundred runners, after which twelve large snow-white horses, covered with silk housings, drew the Czarina. Then followed the small carriage of the youngest prince, all glittering with gold, drawn by four dwarf ponies. At the side of it rode four dwarfs on ponies, and another one behind." The presentation of Peter at court is thus described:—

"The door on one side suddenly opened, and Peter, three years old, a curly-headed boy, was seen for a moment, holding his mother's hand, and looking at the reception."

At this time, there were a dozen princesses living at the palace,—the sisters and the aunts and the six daughters of the Czar Alexis. All were unmarried. They were forbidden to marry any below their own rank; and since the Tartar invasion, only two attempts had been made to marry a Russian princess to a foreigner. None of these princesses, except Sophia, who had shared the lessons of her brother Theodore, had more than the rudiments of an education. Most of the princesses were disposed of by placing them in convents. Natalia, the mother of Peter, having been brought up by a Scotchwoman, had seen more of society than the other royal ladies; and she was allowed a greater degree of freedom than had been vouchsafed to her predecessors, who had been rigidly secluded within their own apartments.

In 1676, the Czar Alexis died, and the throne descended to his eldest son, Theodore. It was the [373] custom in Russia for the relations of the Czar's wife to have great power at court; and when Theodore came to the throne, the Miloslávsky family, who were his mother's relations, assumed great power, while the family of Peter's mother, the Czarina Natalia, lost their influence for the time.

THE KRÉMLIN OF MOSCOW.

Both Theodore and Iván were feeble and sickly children, while Peter was strong and robust. But the law of descent was inexorable, and on the death of Alexis, Theodore became Czar. As he was only fourteen years of age, the administration of the government was left to the ministers of state. Now his sister, the Princess Sophia, who was very ambitious, formed schemes for getting the power into her own hands. She therefore so devoted herself to the care of Theodore, who was sick most of the time, that she gained complete ascendency over him; and she met all the courtiers, who came to visit the sick Czar, with such affable manners, and showed such intelligence, that she won a strong party of the nobles over to her support. There was in Russia, at this time, a very powerful body of troops, which had been organized by the emperors as an imperial guard. These troops were called the Streltsi. The Princess Sophia paid great attention to the officers of these guards, and thus gained their good-will. Theodore soon after died, and named Peter as his successor, passing over his brother Iván, as his many infirmities rendered it impossible for him to reign. It is probable that it was through the influence of some of the nobles who were opposed to Sophia, that Theodore was induced to name Peter as his successor. Peter, although but ten years of age, was proclaimed emperor by the nobles, immediately after Theodore's death. Sophia now determined to resist the transfer of the supreme power to Peter. She secretly engaged the Streltsi, or guards, on her side. She caused a report to be spread, that [374] the late emperor had been poisoned, and that the Narýshkins had murdered the Czarewitz Iván, and that the Narýshkins wished to kill all the royal family. Thus were the relations of the Czarina Natalia, the mother of Peter, accused of desiring the death of all the children of the first wife of Alexis, that Peter might gain the throne. Such was the falsehood that the Princess Sophia is said to have originated in order to secure the power. The cry then arose, "To arms! Punish the traitors! To the Krémlin! Save the Czar!" A general alarm was sounded. The Streltsi, fully armed, advanced from all sides towards the Krémlin, and surrounded the palace, demanding the Czarewitz Iván. The Czarina Natalia was advised to go out on the red staircase with the Czar Peter and the Czarewitz Iván, that the Streltsi might be convinced of the falsity of the rumor. Trembling with terror, Natalia took by the hand her son and stepson, and accompanied by the nobles, went out upon the red staircase. "Here is the Czar Peter and the Czarewitz Iván!" cried the nobles, to the mob below. "There are no traitors in the royal family!" The Streltsi placed ladders against the rails, and some of them climbed up to the platform where the little Czar stood. Peter looked at them without blanching, or showing any signs of fear. But even this did not quiet the disturbance, and the Streltsi burst into the palace. Natalia took Peter and fled for safety to the monastery of the Trinity. The soldiers pursued her even into the sanctuary, and to the foot of the altar; but there the sacredness of the spot arrested their vengeance, and they left their victims with sullen oaths. In the meantime, the commotion in the city continued for several days, and the brother of the Empress Natalia, and others of her friends, were slain. At last a [375] compromise was effected, and it was agreed that Iván should be proclaimed Czar in conjunction with his brother Peter, and that the Princess Sophia should be regent. Sophia, knowing that Iván, the poor idiot, would be but a tool in her hands, endeavored in every way possible to prevent her half-brother Peter from becoming so intelligent and energetic that he would take the power away from her. She therefore caused his teacher to be dismissed, and commenced to carry out her plan to ruin the bright and talented boy, by taking away from him all restraint, and indulging him in every pleasure and whim. Peter was now established in a household of his own, at a palace in a small village some distance from Moscow, and Sophia selected fifty boys to live with him as playmates. These boys were provided with every possible means of indulgence, subject to little restraint. It was the intention of Sophia that they should do just as they chose, so that they would all grow up idle, vicious, and good-for-nothing; and she had also the hope that Peter might so impair his health as to bring him to an early grave.

PETER SAVED FROM SLAUGHTER BY HIS MOTHER.

But Peter had already been too well instructed, or possessed too much native good sense, to fall into this snare, and instead of giving up his studies, he even contrived to turn his companions into scholars also. He organized a kind of military school, where they practised the evolutions and discipline necessary in a camp. He caused himself to be taught to drum, so that he could execute all the signals used in camp and on the battle-field. He studied fortification, and set the boys to work with him to construct a battery in a regular and scientific manner. He learned the use of tools, and the wheelbarrow he used in making the fortification was one he made himself.

As he grew older, he continued to introduce higher branches of military art into the school, [376] and he adopted the uniforms and equipments for the pupils, such as were used in the military schools of other nations of Europe. The result was, that when he was eighteen years of age, and the time came for him to leave the place, the institution had become a well-organized and well-appointed military school, and it continued in successful operation for a long time afterwards. So this wicked plan of the ambitious Sophia had completely failed. The energy and talent that Peter had displayed caused many of the leading nobles to attach themselves to his cause, by which means he was finally enabled to depose Sophia from her regency, and to take the power into his own hands. But before this took place, we must note a still more wicked and evil design of the ambitious princess.

The party of nobles who now espoused Peter’s cause thought it expedient that he should marry, and the councillors accordingly chose for his wife, Eudoxia Lopúkhin, a young lady of noble birth. The Princess Sophia did all in her power to prevent this match, but she was unsuccessful, and the marriage took place in February, 1689. It was thought that a good stay-at-home wife would be likely to keep him from taking his long excursions for military manœuvres, and for ship-building, of which he was so fond. But he had scarcely been married two months before he started off again for his boat-building on Lake Plestchéief. Here he immediately set to work with his carpenters to complete the boats, and he wrote to his mother as follows:—

“To my most beloved and, while bodily life endures, my dearest little mother, Lady Tsaritsa and Grand Duchess Natalia Kirílovna. Thy little son, now here at work. Petrúshka, I ask thy blessing, [377] and desire to hear about thy health; and we, through thy prayers, are all well, and the lake is all got clear from the ice to-day, and all the boats, except the big ship, are finished, only we are waiting for ropes; and therefore I beg your kindness that these ropes, seven hundred fathoms long, be sent from the artillery department without delaying, for the work is waiting for them, and our sojourn here is being prolonged.”

And again he writes:—

“Hey! I wish to hear about thy health, and beg thy blessing. We are all well, and about the boats, I say again that they are mighty good, and Tíkhon Nikítitch will tell you about all this himself. Thy unworthy Petrus.”

Peter with his young wife resided in a country palace a few miles from Moscow. This place was called Obrogensko. Meanwhile, the Russian government had been engaged in the Crimean War.

The Poles, having become involved in a war with the Turks, proposed to the Russians, or Muscovites as they were often called, that they should aid them in an attempt to conquer the Crimea. In this war occurred the incident relating to the famous Mazeppa, whose frightful ride through the tangled thickets of a wild country, bound naked to an untamed horse, was so graphically described by the poet Byron. Mazeppa was a Polish gentleman, and having offended a Polish nobleman, he was thus cruelly punished by his enemy. Some Cossack peasants rescued the poor Mazeppa from his terrible position, and he afterwards became a chieftain amongst them. He distinguished himself in these campaigns in the Crimean war, fought by the Muscovites against

the Turks and Tartars during the regency of the Princess Sophia. This war was not successful, [378]
and Prince Golítsyn, who led the Russian forces, was obliged to retreat; but fearing to have the state of the case known, he sent word to Moscow that he had been successful, and was received by Sophia upon his return with great honors. But the young Peter, who had been studying military tactics, was so displeased and disgusted with the military operations of Golítsyn that, when that general was received by Sophia at Moscow with great state, the rewards could not then be read, as Peter had refused to sign them. He, however, was afterwards persuaded to grant them. But this unfortunate campaign of Golítsyn's was the turning point in the struggle between the aristocratic party which espoused the side of Peter, and the government of Sophia. Now there was formed a dark and wicked plot, and some historians accuse Sophia of being a party to it, if she did not even propose it. This was the assassination of the young Czar Peter.

The commander of the Streltsi selected a band of six hundred of the imperial guards to go with him to Obrogensko. Their plan was to seize Peter at night while in his bed. This plot was, however, frustrated by two of the soldiers who revealed it to Peter. He could not at first believe that Sophia would resort to such a terrible crime, and messengers were sent to the city to learn the truth of the matter. These messengers met the imperial guards when they had gone half-way to Moscow; and, concealing themselves by the wayside until the troops had passed, they hastened back by a shorter route to inform Peter of his impending danger. Peter had just time to flee with his wife and mother to the monastery of the Trinity, when the Streltsi reached his palace, and sought him in vain. They returned, discomfited and alarmed, to the Princess Sophia, [379]
and reported that Peter had escaped. From his retreat in the monastery, Peter sent a message to Sophia, charging her with having sent the imperial guards to take his life. The princess, greatly alarmed, denied her guilt. The excitement increased. The leading nobles flocked to the monastery to declare their adherence to Peter. Sophia endeavored to keep the Streltsi upon her side, but they at last went over to Peter, and he demanded that the leader of the band who attempted his assassination should be delivered into his hands. This Sophia was obliged to do; and the man was put to the torture, and revealed the plot. He said that the design had been to kill Peter himself, his mother, and several other near relations. The Princess Sophia was accused of being the originator of the plot, and many other persons were also implicated, including Prince Golítsyn, the commander of the Russian forces in the Crimean War. The leader of the band of guards who thus attempted the life of Peter was beheaded, Prince Golítsyn and his family were banished to Siberia, and many others implicated were put to death, imprisoned for life, or banished. Thus ended this conspiracy against the young Czar Peter. The Princess Sophia was shut up in a convent, where she was imprisoned for fifteen years, when she died. Iván, the brother-Czar with Peter, was too feeble and inefficient to take any part in the government, and he died about seven years after this time. The aristocratic party now filled the offices of state, and administered the government.

As Peter was yet so young, he left everything in the hands of his counsellors, and for several years took merely a formal part in the administration. He employed himself in military exercises and boat-building, and in the indulgence of his mechanical tastes. As Peter grew older, and took [380]
more direction of the affairs of the government, he made choice of two very able men, whom he afterwards raised to positions of great honor. The name of one of these statesmen was Le Fort, and the other was Menshikóf. Le Fort was the son of a merchant of Geneva. He had from childhood evinced a strong desire to be a soldier; but his father preferred that he should become a merchant, and he was taken into the counting-house of one of the great merchants of Amsterdam. This merchant was constantly sending vessels to different parts of the world, and Le Fort was sent in charge of the cargo of one vessel to Copenhagen. At this time, an ambassador was to be sent from Denmark to Russia; and, as Le Fort knew something of the Russian language, he secured the place of interpreter in the suite of the ambassador, and went with him to Moscow. On one occasion, when the Czar Peter was dining at the house of the ambassador, he noticed Le Fort, and observed that he spoke the Russian language remarkably for a foreigner. He was at once interested in him, and soon secured Le Fort as his own interpreter, as he found that he also spoke other languages. Le Fort became a great favorite of the emperor's, and continued in his service until his death. The first improvement which Le Fort introduced into Russia related to the dress and equipment of the troops. The imperial guards had been accustomed to wear an old-fashioned Russian uniform, consisting of a long outer coat or gown, which much impeded their movements. In conversing with the Czar, Le Fort suggested that the dress of the soldiers of the western nations was more convenient for military use. Peter at once desired to see it; and Le Fort immediately repaired to the tailor of the Danish ambassador, and ordered him to make two [381]
military suits in the style worn by the royal guards at Copenhagen, one for an officer and the other for a soldier in the ranks. Peter was so pleased with these suits, when they were shown to him, that he said he should like to have a company of guards dressed and equipped in that manner, and drilled according to the western style. Le Fort undertook the task of organizing and equipping such a band. When this company was completed, and clothed in the new uniform, and had been properly drilled, Le Fort placed himself at their head, and marched them, with drums beating and colors flying, before the palace gates. The Czar came to the window to see them pass, and was so pleased that he said he would join the company himself. He accordingly ordered a dress to be made for his own use, and he took his place in the ranks, and drilled as a common soldier. From this beginning, the entire imperial army was reformed. The Czar now proposed to Le Fort to make arrangements for bringing into the country a great number of mechanics and artisans from Denmark, Germany, France, and other European countries, in order that their improved methods might be introduced into Russia. To accomplish this end, the tariff of duties on the products and manufactures of foreign countries was greatly reduced. This increased the

importation of goods from foreign countries, and promoted the intercourse of the Russians with foreign merchants, manufacturers, and artisans, and accustomed the people to a better style of living by improving their dress, furniture, and equipages. Also, the new system greatly increased the revenues of the empire. Among other reforms instituted by Peter, was that of the dress of his people. The Russians had been accustomed to wear long gowns, similar to those worn now in [382] Oriental countries. As this costume was inconvenient for soldiers, workmen, and artisans, Peter required it to be changed. This description is given of one strange style of dress among the ancient Russian ladies:—

"They wore a sort of dress, of which the sleeves were ten or twelve yards long. These sleeves were made very full, and were drawn up upon the arm, in a sort of puff; it being the fashion to have as great a length of sleeve as could possibly be crowded on, between the shoulder and the wrist. The customary salutation between ladies and gentlemen in society, when this dress was in fashion, was performed through the intervention of the sleeves. On the approach of the gentleman, the lady, by a sudden and dexterous motion of her arm, would throw off the end of her sleeve to him. The sleeve, being so very long, could be thrown in this way half across the room. The gentleman would take the end of the sleeve which represented, we are to suppose, the hand of the lady, and, after kissing and saluting it in a most respectful manner, he would resign it, and the lady would draw it back again upon her arm."

Peter required the people to change this dress, and he sent patterns of the coats worn in Western Europe, to all parts of the country. He, however, met with a good deal of difficulty in inducing the people to follow these new fashions, especially regarding the shaving of their mustaches and beards. He thereupon assessed a tax upon beards, requiring every gentleman who wore one to pay a hundred rubles a year; and if any peasant entered the city wearing a beard, he was stopped at the gates, and rerequired to pay a fine of a penny. The officers of the customs, who were stationed at the gates of the towns, were ordered to stop every man who wore a long dress, and compel him to pay a fine of fifty cents, or else kneel down, and have all the part of his [383] coat which lay upon the ground cut off with a pair of big shears. The Czar first set an example also, of rapid motion through the streets. It had been the custom for all the nobles to move about attended by a vast retinue; and as it was considered more stately to move slowly, and as all those lower in rank must stand, with uncovered heads, in the presence of their masters, the streets were often blocked in the snow and rain by these vast cavalcades of royalty; and crowds were obliged to stand in the cold and wet, with bare heads exposed to the inclemency of the weather. Peter the Great was attended, therefore, only by a few persons, when going out in carriage or sleigh, and his coachman was ordered to drive at a quick pace; and he limited the attendants of his nobles to a certain number. This story is told of the manner in which the Czar's attention was attracted to young Menshikóf, who became one of his chief officers. Alexander Menshikóf was the son of a laboring man, in the service of a monastery, on the banks of the Volga. Young Menshikóf afterwards went to Moscow, and was there employed in a pastry-cook's shop. It was his part of the work to go out in the streets and sell pies and cakes. In order to attract customers, he often sang songs. At one time Peter was passing, and stopped to listen to the songs of the young pastry-boy. Finally, the Czar asked him what he would take for his whole stock of cakes and pies, basket and all. The boy promptly stated the sum he would take for his wares, but as for the basket, as it belonged to his master, he could not sell it; but he dryly added: "Still, everything belongs to Your Majesty, and Your Majesty has, therefore, only to give me the command, and I shall deliver it up to you."

This reply so pleased the Czar, that he took the boy into his service. When Peter the Great first [384] became the sole ruler of Russia, after the downfall of Sophia, he was about twenty years of age. His word was law. Life and death hung upon his will. His dominions extended so far, that, when he wished to send an ambassador to one of his neighbors—the emperor of China—it took the messenger more than eighteen months of constant travelling to go from the capital to the frontier. As to Peter's character, he was talented, ambitious, energetic, and resolute; but he was also quick-tempered, imperious, merciless, towards his enemies, and possessed an indomitable will. Peter thus describes his first trial of the open sea:—

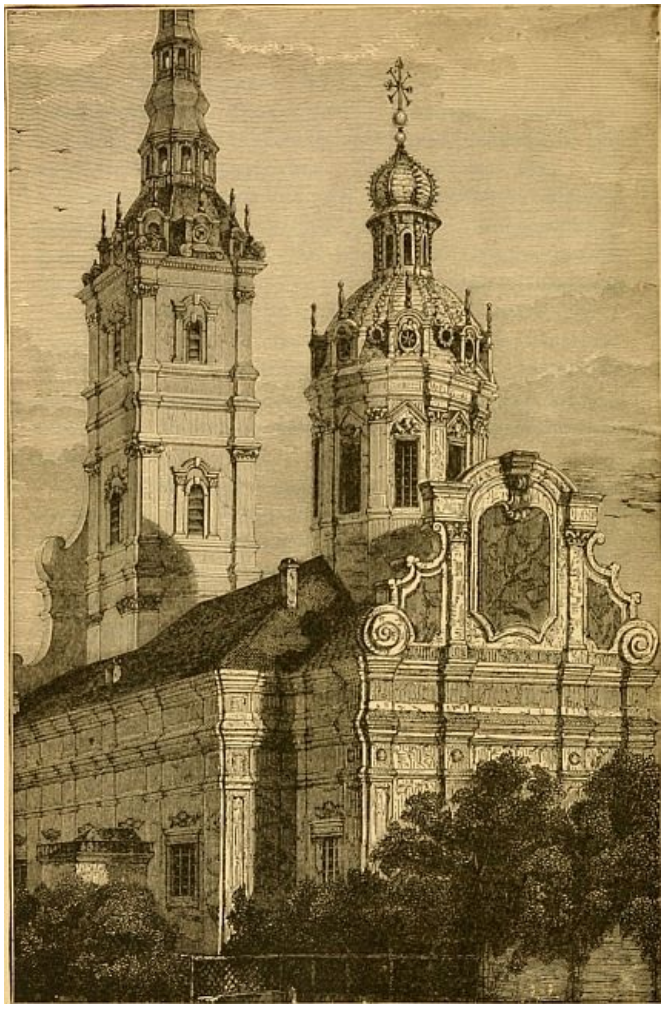
"For some years I had the fill of my desires on Lake Pereyaslávl, but finally it grew too narrow for me. I then went to the Kúbensky Lake, but that was too shallow. I then decided to see the open sea, and began often to beg the permission of my mother to go to Archangel. She forbade me such a dangerous journey, but, seeing my great desire, and my unchangeable longing, allowed it, in spite of herself."

So, in 1693, Peter set out from Moscow, with a suite of a hundred persons, to go to Archangel. Having arrived there, the smell of the salt water was too inviting to be resisted; and Peter put out to sea on a little yacht, called St. Peter, which had been built for him. His mother, who had exacted a promise that he would not go to sea, hearing that he had gone on a sea journey, was much alarmed, and wrote to him, urging his return. She even had a letter written to him, in the name of his little son, Alexis, then three years old, begging him to come back. To this he replied:—

"By thy letter I see, oh! oh! that thou hast been mightily grieved, and why? Why dost thou [385] trouble thyself about me? Thou hast deigned to write that thou hast given me into the care of the Virgin. When thou hast such a guardian for me, why dost thou grieve?"

While at Archangel, besides the time which Peter gave to the study of commerce and ship-building, he found leisure for inspecting

various industries and for practising both at the forge and at the lathe. A chandelier made of walrus teeth, turned by him, hangs now over his tomb in the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, at St. Petersburg; and carved work in bone and wood, and iron bars forged by him at this time, are still preserved. Besides the balls and dinners which he attended at Archangel, to which he had also been much given at Moscow, he frequently attended a neighboring church, where he himself read the Epistle, sang with the choir, and made great friends with the archbishop. In 1694 his mother Natalia died, and soon he repudiated his wife Eudoxia and shut her up in a convent, where he kept her confined all the rest of her life. Peter had only married this wife to please his mother and his nobles, and having never loved her, soon tired of her. She had been brought up in the old-fashioned Russian way, and was very ignorant; but as she appeared to love him devotedly, his treatment of her was wicked and cruel, and in his after domestic life there is much to condemn. Although he did much for the advancement of Russia, and his public enterprise and achievements are greatly to be admired, in character he was brutal and selfish, and his tastes were low and vicious. He was fond of drunken carousals, and sank the dignity of his rank in his associations with inferior and profligate companions. As a man, there is little to admire in him, but as a public benefactor of his country, he is greatly to be commended. As an artisan, statesman, and general, he introduced wise and good reforms into his realms, and raised his people from semi-barbarism to rank with the other civilized nations of Europe.



CATHEDRAL OF ST. PETER AND PAUL IN THE FORTRESS.

[386]

Though he was not a scholar, he encouraged learning. There was, about this time, a second attempt made to assassinate the Czar. As Peter was often accustomed to attend conflagrations in Moscow, these conspirators formed the plan of setting fire to some building near the royal palace, and when the emperor, as was his wont, should come out to help extinguish the flames, he was to be assassinated. They then determined to go to the convent where Sophia was confined, release her, and proclaim her empress. This plot was, however, revealed to the Czar, and he thereupon ordered a small body of men to attend him, and he went at once to the houses of the various conspirators and arrested them. They were afterwards executed in a most barbarous manner. The criminals were brought out one by one. First their arms were cut off, then their legs, and finally their heads. The amputated limbs and heads were then hung upon a column in the market-place in Moscow, where they were left as a bloody warning to others, as long as the weather remained cold enough to keep them frozen. Thus ended the second conspiracy against the life of Peter the Great. In 1695 the Czar, in conjunction with other European powers, declared war again against the Turks and Tartars. Peter acquired great renown throughout Europe for his successful siege against Azof, to obtain which was one of the chief objects of the campaign. This success also increased Peter's interest in the building of ships. He determined to establish a large fleet on the Black Sea, and in order to ascertain the best modes of ship-building, Peter resolved to make a journey to Western Europe.

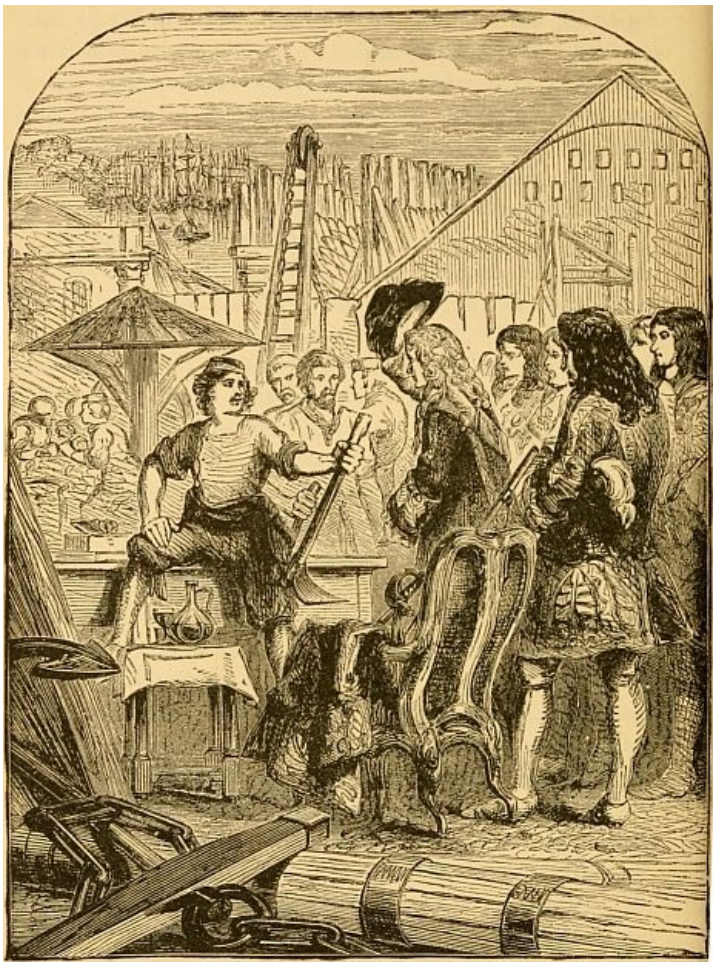
[387]

That he might not be burdened by fêtes and ceremonies, he adopted a disguise. Macaulay said of this journey, "It is an epoch in the history, not only of his own country, but of ours and of the world."

Various reasons have been given by different writers for this step of the Czar. Pleyer, the secret Austrian agent, wrote to the Emperor Leopold that the whole embassy was "merely a cloak for the freedom sought by the Czar, to get out of his own country and divert himself a little." A document in the archives at Vienna states that the "cause of the journey was a vow made by Peter, when in danger on the White Sea, to make a pilgrimage to the tombs of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome." Voltaire said, "He resolved to absent himself for some years from his dominions, in order to learn how better to govern them." Napoleon said, "He left his country to deliver himself for a while from the crown, so as to learn ordinary life, and remount by degrees to greatness." But later writers say, "Peter went abroad, not to fulfil a vow, not to amuse himself, not to become more civilized, not to learn the art of government, but simply to become a good shipwright."

His mind was filled with the idea of creating a navy on the Black Sea, and his tastes had always been mechanical. In order to give the Czar greater freedom of action, the purpose of his journey was concealed by means of a great embassy, which should visit the chief countries of western Europe. In the suite of the ambassadors were twenty nobles and thirty-five called volunteers, who were going for the study of ship-building. Among these was the Czar himself. These volunteers were chiefly young men who had been comrades of Peter in his play-regiments and boat-building. [388] During the absence of the Czar the government was intrusted to a regency of three persons, the uncle of the Czar and two princes. We have not space to describe this journey in full, and can only mention certain incidents. The Czar is thus described by the electress of Hannover and her daughter, whom Peter met at Koppenbrügge:—

"My mother and I began to pay him our compliments, but he made Mr. Le Fort reply for him, for he seemed shy, hid his face in his hands, and said, '*Ich kann nicht sprechen*.' But we tamed him a little, and then he sat down at the table between my mother and myself, and each of us talked to him in turn. Sometimes he replied with promptitude, at others, he made two interpreters talk, and assuredly he said nothing that was not to the point on all subjects that were suggested. As to his grimaces, I imagined them worse than I found them, and some are not in his power to correct. One can see also that he has had no one to teach him how to eat properly, but he has a natural unconstrained air which pleases me."



PETER THE GREAT IN THE DUTCH SHIPYARD.

Her mother also wrote: "The Czar is very tall, his features are fine, and his figure very noble. He has great vivacity of mind, and a ready and just repartee. But, with all the advantages with which nature has endowed him, it could be wished that his manners were a little less rustic. I asked him if he liked hunting. He replied that his father had been very fond of it, but that he himself, from his earliest youth, had had a real passion for navigation and for fireworks. He told us that he worked himself in building ships, showed us his hands, and made us touch the callous places that had been made by work. He has quite the manners of his country. If he had [389] received a better education, he would be an accomplished man, for he has many good qualities, and an infinite amount of native wit."

The Czar proceeded to Holland, and in the little town of Saardam, not far from Amsterdam, may still be seen the shop which Peter occupied while there. The historians say, he entered himself as a common ship-carpenter, at Amsterdam, and worked for several months among the other workmen, wearing the same dress they wore. In moments of rest, the Czar, sitting down on a log, with his hatchet between his knees, was willing to talk to any one who addressed him simply as carpenter Peter, but turned away without answering if called Sire or Your Majesty. Peter's curiosity was insatiable. He visited workshops, factories, cabinets of coins, anatomical museums, botanical gardens, hospitals, theatres, and numerous other places; and inquired about everything he saw, until he was recognized by his usual questions, "What is that for? How does that work? That will I see." He made himself acquainted with Dutch home and family life. Every market day he went to the Botermarkt, mingled with the people, and studied their trades.

He took lessons from a travelling dentist, and experimented on his servants. He mended his own clothes, and learned enough of cobbling to make himself a pair of slippers. He visited Protestant churches, and did not forget the beer-houses. The frigate upon which Peter worked so long, was at last launched, and proved a good ship. He had seen some English ships which pleased him so much, that he determined to set out for England, which he did in 1698, leaving his embassy in Holland.

King William of England made Peter a present of an English yacht, with which he was much delighted. Peter spent much of his time in England, looking for suitable persons to employ in arts [390] and mechanics in Russia. He avoided all court pomp and etiquette during this journey, and travelled incognito, as much as possible. He visited also the mint in England, for he was pleased with the excellence of the English coinage, and he designed recoining the Russian money, which he afterwards accomplished, coining copper, silver, and gold to the extent of $18,000,000 in the

space of three years, to replace the bits of stamped leather formerly used. At length he returned to Amsterdam, where his embassy awaited him. When Peter the Great was excited by anger or emotion, the ugly aspect of his countenance and demeanor was greatly aggravated by a nervous affection of the head and face, which attacked him, particularly when he was in a passion, and which produced convulsive twitches of the muscles, that drew his head by jerks to one side, and distorted his face in a manner dreadful to behold. It was said that this disorder was first induced in his childhood, by some one of the terrible frights through which he passed. This distortion, together with the coarse and savage language he employed when in a passion, made him appear at times more like some ugly monster of fiction than like a man. He disliked court etiquette, and avoided pompous ceremonies. Of course there was much curiosity to see him in the various cities he visited, but he generally avoided the crowds; and when his splendid embassy entered a city in royal state, and the people collected in vast numbers to behold the famous Czar, while they were straining their eyes, and peering into every carriage of the royal procession in hopes of seeing him, Peter himself would slip into the city by some quiet street, in disguise, and meeting the merchants, with whom he delighted to associate, he would go to some inn and indulge in his pipe [391] and beer, leaving his embassy to represent royalty. At last his disguise was discovered, and then the news was circulated that the Czar could be easily recognized by his great height,—nearly seven feet,—by the twitching of his face, by his gesturing with his right hand, and by a small mole on the right cheek. His appearance is thus described by one who saw him at this time:—

"He is a prince of very great stature, but there is one circumstance which is unpleasant. He has convulsions, sometimes in his eyes, sometimes in his arms, and sometimes in his whole body. He at times turns his eyes so that one can see nothing but the whites. I do not know whence it arises, but we must believe that it is a lack of good breeding. Then he has also movements in the legs, so that he can scarcely keep in one place. He is very well made, and goes about dressed as a sailor, in the highest degree simple, and wishing nothing else than to be on the water."

But the Cardinal Kollonitz, primate of Hungary, gives a more flattering picture of Peter the Great:—

"The Czar is a youth of from twenty-eight to thirty years of age, is tall, of an olive complexion, rather stout than thin, in aspect between proud and grave, and with a lively countenance. His left eye, as well as his left arm and leg, were injured by the poison given him during the life of his brother; but there remain now only a fixed and fascinated look in his eye, and a constant movement of his arm and leg, to hide which, he accompanies this forced motion with continual movements of his entire body, which, by many people in the countries which he has visited, has been attributed to natural causes, but really it is artificial. His wit is lively and ready; his manners [392] rather civil than barbarous, the journey he has made having improved him, and the difference from the beginning of his travels and the present time being visible, although his native roughness may still be seen in him; but it is chiefly noticeable in his followers, whom he holds in check with great severity. He has a knowledge of geography and history, and, what is most to be noticed, he desires to know these subjects better; but his strongest inclination is for maritime affairs, at which he himself works mechanically, as he did in Holland; and this work, according to many people who have to do with him, is indispensable to divert the effects of the poison, which still very much troubles him. In person and in aspect, as well as in his manners, there is nothing which would distinguish him or declare him to be a prince."

During his visit to Paris, the Czar often astonished the polite Parisians. "On one occasion he went with the duke of Orleans to the opera, where he sat on the front bench of the large box. During the performance the Czar asked if he could not have some beer. A large goblet on a saucer was immediately brought. The regent rose, took it, and presented it to the Czar, who, with a smile and bow of politeness, took the goblet without any ceremony, drank, and put it back on the saucer, which the regent kept holding. The duke then took a plate with a napkin, which he presented to the Czar, who, without rising, made use of it, at which scene the audience seemed astonished."

PETER I., CZAR OF RUSSIA.
(From Original Copperplate Engraving.)

Notwithstanding his rough manners, the history, character, and achievements of the Czar, together with his exact knowledge in so many directions, and his interest in everything that was scientific and technical, made a deep impression upon those who met him. St. Simon thus describes him: "He was a very tall man, well made, not too stout, with a roundish face, a high forehead, and fine eyebrows, a short nose—but not too short—large at the end; his lips were rather thick, his complexion a ruddy brown; fine black eyes, large, lively, piercing, and well apart; a majestic and gracious look when he wished, otherwise severe and stern, with a twitching which did not often return, but which disturbed his look and his whole expression, and inspired fear. That lasted but a moment, accompanied by a wild and terrible look, and passed away as quickly. His whole air showed his intellect, his reflection, and his greatness, and did not lack a certain grace. He wore only a linen collar, a round brown peruke without [393]

powder, which did not touch his shoulders; a brown, tight-fitting coat, plain, with gold buttons; a waistcoat, breeches, stockings, no gloves nor cuffs; the star of his order on his coat, and the ribbon underneath, his coat often quite unbuttoned; his hat on a table, and never on his head even out of doors. With all this simplicity, and whatever bad carriage or company he might be, one could not fail to perceive the air of greatness that was natural to him."

While at Vienna, Peter learned of another revolt of the Streltsi, and thereupon hastened back to Moscow to put down the insurrection. The rebellion was soon quelled; but the tortures and executions which followed were barbarous. Some were beheaded; some were broken on the wheel, and then left to die in horrible agonies; many were buried alive, their heads only being left above the ground. It is said that Peter took such a savage delight in these punishments that he executed many of the victims with his own hand. At one time, when half intoxicated, at a banquet, he ordered twenty prisoners to be brought in, and between his drinks of brandy cut off their [394] heads himself, being an hour in cutting off the twenty heads.

As Peter thought Sophia was implicated in this revolt, he ordered the arm of the ringleader of the plot to be cut off, and an address which he found, written to Sophia, to be placed in the stiffened hand, and by his order this ghastly relic was fastened to the wall in Sophia's apartment. When the trials were over, a decree was issued, abolishing the Streltsi; and they were all sent into exile. Peter was now involved in a war with Sweden for the possession of the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. At first, the Swedes were victorious; but in about a year the Czar gained possession of a considerable portion of the Baltic shore, and he thereupon determined to build a new city there, with the view of making it the naval and commercial capital of his kingdom. This plan was successfully carried out, and the building of the great city of St. Petersburg was one of the most important events in the reign of Peter the Great.

At length, Charles XII., king of Sweden, began to be alarmed at the increasing power of the Czar in that part of the country, and he invaded Russia with an army. The famous battle of Pultowa, by which the invasion of the Swedes was repelled, was fought in 1709; and this was almost the only serious danger from any foreign source which threatened the dominions of Peter the Great during his reign.

Peter, having been previously privately married to Catherine, determined, in 1712, to have a public ceremony. Peter's first wife had one son, Alexis, who occasioned his father the most serious trouble. Alexis was indolent and most vicious in his habits of life; and so outrageous was [395] his conduct that at last his father caused him to be imprisoned. It was then discovered that Alexis had been planning a revolt, and Peter referred his case to a grand council of civil authorities, and also a convocation of the clergy to determine upon the sentence to be pronounced upon this rebellious son. The council declared that he was worthy of death, and the Czar confirmed the judgment of the council, and a day was appointed on which Alexis was to be arraigned in order that sentence of death might be solemnly pronounced upon him. But before the appointed day arrived, Alexis was attacked with convulsions, caused by his terror; and the Czar visited him in the fortress where he was dying.

The dying prince besought forgiveness of his father with such prayers and tears that Peter and his ministers were overcome with emotion. The Czar gave Alexis his forgiveness and his blessing, and took his leave with tears and lamentations. Soon after, Alexis expired. The funeral rites were performed by the Czar and his family with much solemnity. At the service in the church a funeral sermon was pronounced by the priest from the appropriate text, "O Absalom! my son! my son Absalom!" Thus ended this dreadful tragedy.

The heir to the throne was now the little son of Catherine, Peter Petrowitz. The birth of this son, which occurred about three years before the death of Alexis, was such a delight to Peter the Great that he celebrated the event with public rejoicings. At the baptism of the babe, two kings—those of Denmark and of Prussia—acted as godfathers. The christening was attended with most gorgeous banquets. Among other curious contrivances were two enormous pies,—one served in the room of the gentlemen and the other in that of the ladies. From the ladies' pie, there stepped [396] out, when it was opened, a young dwarf, very small, and clothed in a fantastic manner. The dwarf brought out with him from the pie some glasses and a bottle of wine, and he walked around the table, drinking to the health of the ladies, who were intensely amused by his droll manners. In the gentlemen's room the pie was similar, from which a female dwarf stepped forth and performed the same ceremony. Peter the Great was much attached to his wife Catherine, whose romantic life we have not space to describe. Her influence over the Czar was most beneficial.

About a year after the death of Alexis, the little Peter Petrowitz, the idolized son of the Czar, also died. Peter the Great was completely overwhelmed with grief at this new calamity. Even Catherine, who usually had power to soothe his fits of frenzy, anger, or grief, and whose touch would often stop the contortions of his face, could not comfort him now; for the sight of her only reminded him more keenly of his loss. It was feared at this time that grief would kill the Czar; for he shut himself up alone, and would not allow any one to come near him for three days and nights. Peter the Great, however, lived sixteen years after this event. During these last years he continued the reforms in his empire and increased the power and influence of his government among surrounding nations. As both of his sons were dead, he determined to leave the government in the hands of Catherine, and she was crowned empress with most imposing ceremonies. In less than a year after this event, the Czar was attacked with a sudden illness during the ceremonies of rejoicings connected with the betrothal of one of his daughters to a foreign duke. His death took place on the 28th of January, 1725. Another of his daughters having [397]

died a short time after her father, their bodies were interred together. The funeral obsequies were so protracted, and were conducted with so much pomp and ceremony, that six weeks elapsed before the remains of Peter the Great were finally committed to the tomb. The fame of Peter the Great differs from that attained by other famous rulers of the world; for it was not consequent upon renowned foreign conquests, but the triumph which Peter achieved was the commencement of a work of internal improvement and reform which now, after a century and a half has passed, is still going on.

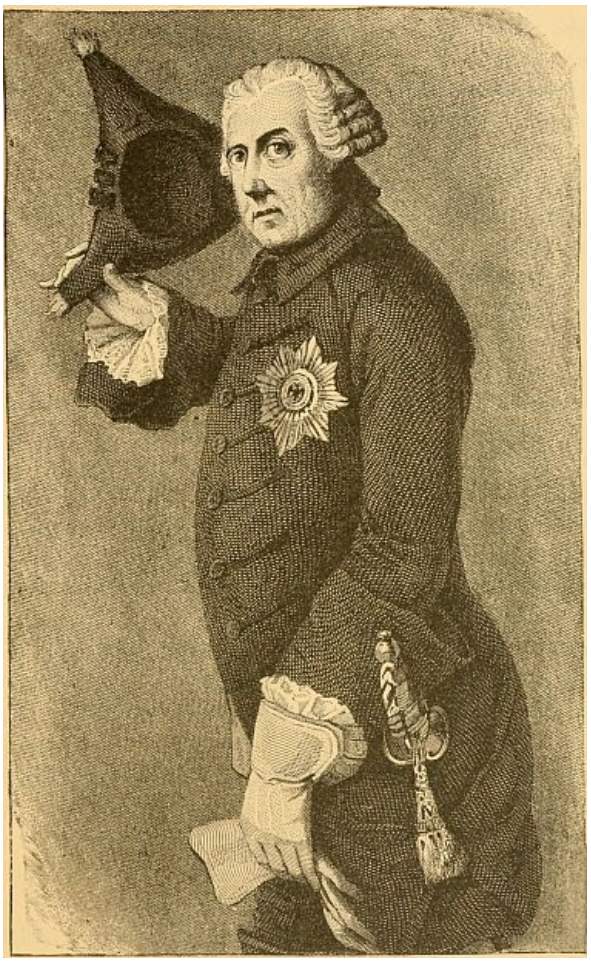
FREDERICK THE GREAT.
A.D. 1712-1786.

[398]

"Kings are like stars,—they rise and set, they have
The worship of the world, but no repose."—SHELLEY.

"A man's a man;
But when you see a king, you see the work
Of many thousand men."—GEORGE ELIOT.

CARLYLE accused Schiller of "oversetting fact, disregarding reality, and tumbling time and space topsy-turvy." That there is great danger of doing the latter, in condensing such a life as that of Frederick the Great into the small space allotted to these sketches, cannot be denied; but fiction itself could scarcely overstate the facts connected with this weird but most fascinating glimpse of historical events. Carlyle says: "With such wagon-loads of books and printed records as exist on the subject of Frederick, it has always seemed possible, even for a stranger, to acquire some real understanding of him; though practically, here and now, I have to own it proves difficult beyond conception. Alas! the books are not cosmic; they are chaotic."



FREDERICK II., KING OF PRUSSIA, ÆT. 58.

True it is, it is not want of material, but the overwhelming multiplicity of documents, which renders it difficult to trace out a clear-cut sketch of Frederick the Great; and that we may do it more concisely, and yet entertainingly, a series of panoramic pictures will perhaps be the best method of achieving the desired end.

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"About one hundred years ago there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci for a short time in the afternoon—or you might have met him elsewhere at an earlier hour, riding or driving in a rapid business manner on the open roads, or through the scraggy woods and avenues of that intricate, amphibious Potsdam region—a highly interesting, lean little old man, of alert though slightly stooping figure, whose name among strangers was *King Friedrich the Second*, or Frederick the Great of Prussia, and at home among the common people, who much loved and esteemed him, was *Vater Fritz*, Father Fred.

"He is a king, every inch of him, though without the trappings of a king. He presents himself in a Spartan simplicity of vesture: no crown but an old military cocked hat, generally old, or trampled and kneaded into absolute softness if new; no sceptre but one like Agamemnon's—a walking-stick cut from the woods, which serves also as a riding-stick; and for royal robes a mere soldier's blue coat with red facings, coat likely to be old, and sure to have a good deal of Spanish snuff on the breast of it; rest of the apparel dim, unobtrusive in color or cut, ending in high over-knee military boots, which may be brushed, but are not permitted to be blackened or varnished.

"The man is not of god-like physiognomy, any more than of imposing stature or costume: close-shut mouth with thin lips, prominent jaws and nose, receding brow, by no means of Olympian height; head, however, is of long form, and has superlative gray eyes in it; not what is called a beautiful man, nor yet, by all appearance, what is called a happy. The face bears evidence of many sorrows, of much hard labor done in this world. Quiet stoicism, great unconscious, and some conscious, pride, well tempered with a cheery mockery of humor, are written on that old face, which carries its chin well forward in spite of the slight stoop about the neck; snuffy nose rather flung into the air, under its old cocked hat, like an old snuffy lion on the watch, and such a pair of eyes as no man, or lion, or lynx, of that century bore elsewhere. Those eyes, which, at the bidding of his great soul, fascinated you with seduction or with terror; most excellent, potent, brilliant eyes, swift-darting as the stars, steadfast as the sun; gray, we said, of the azure-gray color; large enough, not of glaring size; the habitual expression of them vigilance and penetrating sense, and gives us the notion of a lambent outer radiance springing from some great inner sea of light and fire in the man. The voice, if he speak to you, is clear, melodious, and sonorous; all tones are in it: ingenuous inquiry, graceful sociality, light-flowing banter up to definite word of command, up to desolating word of rebuke and reprobation."

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Such is the picture of Frederick the Great in his later days; but now we will turn back our

panoramic views, and behold the setting of his early years: and, to a clearer understanding of those events, an aid may be found in glancing at his native country, Prussia. For many centuries the country on the southern coasts of the Baltic Sea was inhabited by wild tribes of barbarians, almost as savage as the beasts which roamed in their forests. After a time the tribes, tamed and partly civilized, produced a race of tall and manly proportions, fair in complexion, with flaxen hair, stern aspect, great physical strength, and most formidable foes in battle. Centuries passed, of which history notes only wars and woes, when from this chaotic barbarism order emerged. Small states were organized, and a political life began. In 1700 one of the petty provinces was [401] called the Marquisate of Brandenburg, whose marquis was Frederick, of the family of Hohenzollern. To the east of this province was a duchy, called Prussia, which was at length added to the domains of Frederick, the marquis of Brandenburg, and he obtained from the emperor of Germany the recognition of his dominions as a kingdom, and assumed the title of Frederick I. of Prussia. On the 16th of November, 1700, his ambassador returned triumphantly from Vienna. "The Kaiser has consented; we are to wear a royal crown on the top of our periwig." Thus Prussia became a kingdom. When Frederick was crowned king of Prussia, most gorgeous was the pomp, most royal was the grandeur, of the imposing ceremonies. Carlyle says:—

"The magnificence of Frederick's processionings into Konigsburg, and of his coronation ceremonials there, what pen can describe it! what pen need! Folio volumes with copper-plates have been written on it, and are not yet all pasted in band-boxes or slit into spills. 'The diamond buttons of his majesty's coat' (snuff-colored or purple, I cannot recollect) cost £1,500 apiece. By this one feature judge what an expensive Herr. Streets were hung with cloth, carpeted with cloth, no end of draperies and cloth; your oppressed imagination feels as if there was cloth enough of scarlet and other bright colors to thatch the Arctic Zone; with illuminations, cannon-salvos, fountains running wine. Frederick himself put the crown on his head, 'King here in my own right, after all,' and looked his royalest, we may fancy,—the kind eyes of him, almost fierce for moments, and the 'cheerfulness of pride' well blending with something of awful."

And now we must hang up the picture of Frederick the grandfather, for there has another Frederick come to claim our attention. "Courage, poor old grandfather! Poor old man! he got his [402] own back half broken by a careless nurse letting him fall, and has slightly stooped ever since, much against his will, for he would fain have been beautiful. But here is a new edition of a Frederick, the first having gone off with so little effect. This one's back is still unbroken. Who knows but Heaven may be kinder to this one? Heaven was much kinder to this one. Him Heaven had kneaded of a more potent stuff; a mighty fellow, this one, and a strange; of a swift, far-darting nature this one, like an Apollo clad in sunbeams and in lightnings, and with a back which all the world could not succeed in breaking."

Between the old grandfather and this famous Frederick there hangs the picture of still another Frederick, only a little less famous,—Frederick Wilhelm, crown prince of Prussia when his famous son was born, afterwards second king of Prussia, and withal most ferocious in his nature, part bear and part maniac; his picture is thus graphically sketched.

"The new monarch, who assumed the crown with the title of Frederick William, not with that of Frederick II., to the utter consternation of the court dismissed nearly every honorary official of the palace, from the highest dignitary to the humblest page. His flashing eye and determined manner were so appalling that no one ventured to remonstrate. A clean sweep was made, so that the household was reduced to the lowest footing of economy consistent with the supply of indispensable wants. Eight servants were retained at six shillings a week. His father had thirty pages; all were dismissed but three. There were one thousand saddle-horses in the royal stables; Frederick William kept thirty. Three-fourths of the names were struck from the pension list. For [403] twenty-seven years this strange man reigned. He was like no other monarch. Great wisdom and shrewdness were blended with unutterable folly and almost maniacal madness. Though a man of strong powers of mind, he was very illiterate. 'For spelling, grammar, penmanship, and composition, his semi-articulate papers resemble nothing else extant,—are as if done by the paw of a bear; indeed, the utterance generally sounds more like the growling of a bear than anything that could be handily spelled or parsed. But there is a decisive human sense in the heart of it, and such a dire hatred of empty bladders, unrealities, and hypocritical forms and pretenses, which he calls wind and humbug, as is very strange indeed.'

"His energy inspired the whole kingdom, and paved the way for the achievements of his son. The father created the machine with which the son attained such wonderful results. He commuted the old feudal service into a fixed money payment. He goaded the whole realm into industry, compelling even the apple-women to knit at the stalls.

"The crown lands were farmed out. He drained bogs, planted colonies, established manufactures, and in every way encouraged the use of Prussian products. He carried with him invariably a stout rattan cane. Upon the slightest provocation, like a madman, he would thrash those who displeased him. He was an arbitrary king, ruling at his sovereign will, and disposing of the liberty, the property, and the lives of his subjects at his pleasure. Every year he accumulated large masses of coin, which he deposited in barrels in the cellar of his palace. He had no powers of graceful speech, but spent his energetic, joyless life in grumbling and growling. He would allow no drapery, no stuffed furniture, no carpets in his apartments. He sat upon a plain wooden [404] chair. He ate roughly of roast beef, despising all delicacies. His dress was a close military blue coat, with red cuffs and collar, buff waistcoat and breeches, and white linen gaiters to the knee. His sword was belted around his waist. A well-worn, battered triangular hat covered his head. He walked rapidly through the streets which surrounded his palaces at Potsdam and Berlin. If he

met any one, he would abruptly inquire, ‘Who are you?’ When his majesty took a walk, every human being fled before him, as if a tiger had broken loose from a menagerie. If he met a lady in the street, he gave her a kick, and told her to go home and mind her children. If he saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced his pious advice by a sound caning administered on the spot. But it was in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious. His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends.”

And now we will turn this unlovely picture of the bearish Frederick William to the wall, while we examine a portrait of the young Fritz, afterwards Frederick the Great.

In the palace of Berlin, on the 24th of January, 1712, a small infant opened its eyes upon this world. Though small, he was of great promise and possibility, “and thrice and four times welcome to all sovereign and other persons in the Prussian court and Prussian realms in those cold winter days. His father, they say, was like to have stifled him with his caresses, so overjoyed was the man, or at least to have scorched him in the blaze of the fire, when happily some much suitabler female nurse snatched this little creature from the rough paternal paws, and saved it for the benefit of Prussia and mankind.”

Then they christened this wee fellow, aged one week, with immense magnificence and pomp of [405]
ceremony, Karl Frederick; but the Karl dropped altogether out of practice, and Frederick (*Rich in Peace*) became his only title; until his father became king of Prussia, and Fritz stepped into the rank of crown prince, and subsequently became the most renowned sovereign of his nation, and took his place in the foremost rank of the famous rulers of the world.

Frederick William had married, when eighteen years of age, his pretty cousin, Sophie Dorothee, daughter of George I. of England. Little Fritz had an elder sister, named Wilhelmina. There were several younger children afterwards, but our story mostly concerns Fritz and his sister Wilhelmina, for whom he showed greater affection than for any other person.

Frederick William was very desirous that Fritz should be a soldier, but the beautiful laughing Fritz, with his long golden curls and sensitive nature, was fonder of books and music than of war and soldiering, which much offended his stern father; and so great was his abhorrence of such a feminine employment as he esteemed music, that little Fritz and Wilhelmina must needs practice in secret; and had it not been for the aid of their mother, the Queen Sophie Dorothee, they would have been denied this great pleasure. But the music-masters were sent to the forests or caves by the queen, and there the prince Fritz and Wilhelmina took their much-prized music-lessons. But one day the stern king found Fritz and Wilhelmina marching around together, while the laughing prince was proudly beating a drum, much to his own and sister’s delight. The king was so overjoyed at this manifestation of supposed military taste in his son, that he immediately called [406]
the queen to witness the performance, and then employed an artist to transfer the scene to canvas. This picture still hangs upon the walls of the Charlottenburg Palace.

When Fritz was but six years old, a military company was organized for him, consisting of about three hundred lads. This band was called “The Crown Prince Cadets.” Fritz was very thoroughly drilled in his military duties, and a uniform was provided for him. An arsenal was built on the palace grounds at Potsdam, where he mounted batteries and practised gunnery with small brass ordnance. Until Fritz was seven years of age, his education had been under the care of a French governess; but at that age he was taken from his lady teachers and placed under tutors. These tutors were military officers of great renown.

The following directions were drawn up by Frederick William, regarding his son’s education:—

“My son must be impressed with love and fear of God, as the foundation of our temporal and eternal welfare. No false religions or sects of Atheist, Arian, Socinian, or whatever name the poisonous things have, which can easily corrupt a young mind, are to be even named in his hearing. He is to be taught a proper abhorrence of Papistry, and to be shown its baselessness and nonsensicality. Impress on him the true religion, which consists essentially in this: that Christ died for all men. He is to learn no Latin, but French and German, so as to speak and write with brevity and propriety. Let him learn arithmetic, mathematics, artillery, economy, to the very bottom; history in particular; ancient history only slightly, but the history of the last one hundred and fifty years to the exactest pitch. He must be completely master of geography, as also of whatever is remarkable in each country. With increasing years you will more and more, to an [407]
especial degree, go upon fortification, the formation of a camp, and other war sciences, that the prince may from youth upward be trained to act as officer and general, and to seek all his glory in the soldier profession.”

Frederick William took little Fritz with him from early childhood on all his military reviews, and in going from garrison to garrison the king employed a common vehicle called a sausage-car. This consisted of a mere stuffed pole, some ten or twelve feet long, upon which they sat astride. It rested upon wheels, and the riders, ten or a dozen, were rattled along over the rough roads through dust and rain, in winter’s cold and summer’s heat. This iron king robbed his child even of sleep, saying, “Too much sleep stupefies a fellow.” Sitting astride of this log carriage, the tender and delicate Fritz, whose love was for music, poetry, and books, was forced to endure all kinds of hardship and fatigue. When Fritz was ten years of age, his exacting father made out a set of rules which covered all the hours of this poor boy’s life. Not even Saturday or Sunday was left untrammelled by his stern requirements.

Fritz was a remarkably handsome boy, with a fine figure, small and delicate hands and feet, and flowing blonde hair. His father, despising all the etiquette and social manners of life and dress, ordered his beautiful hair to be cut off, and denied him every luxury of the toilet and adornment. Frederick William early displayed an aversion for his handsome son, which soon amounted to actual hatred. As Wilhelmina and the mother of Fritz both took his part against the angry and brutal king, the wrath of that almost inhuman monster was also meted out to them.

When Fritz was fourteen years of age, he was appointed by his father as captain of the [408] Potsdam Grenadier Guards. This regiment was the glory of the king, and was composed entirely of giants. The shortest of the men were nearly seven feet high, and the tallest nearly nine feet in height. Frederick William did not scruple to take any means of securing these coveted giants, and his recruiting officers were stationed in many places for the purpose of seizing any large men, no matter what their nationality or position. When the rulers of neighboring realms complained at this unlawful seizure of their subjects, the Prussian king pretended that it was done without his knowledge. If any young woman was found in his kingdom of remarkable stature, she was compelled to marry one of the king's giants. This guard consisted of 2,400 men.

The queen-mother, Sophie Dorothee, had set her mind upon bringing about a double marriage, between Wilhelmina and her cousin Fred, son of the king of England, and Fritz and his cousin, the princess Amelia, the sister of Fred. But though all her schemes came to naught, they occasioned much trouble in her family, and brought down upon the heads of poor Wilhelmina and Fritz much brutal persecution from their inhuman father.

Frederick William took his son Fritz to visit Augustus, king of Poland. This king was an exceedingly profligate man, and the young Fritz learned vicious habits at this court, which lured him into evil ways which ever after left their blot upon his character and morals. This fatal visit to Dresden occurred when Fritz was sixteen years of age, and the dissipation of those four weeks introduced the crown prince to habits which have left an indelible stain upon his reputation, and which poisoned his life. The king's previous dislike to his son was now converted into contempt [409] and hatred, as he became aware of his vicious habits; for though the iron king was a maniac in temper, and cruel as a savage, he had no weakness towards an immoral life. King Frederick William was now confined to his chair with gout, and poor Wilhelmina and Fritz were the victims upon whom his severest tyrannies fell. The princess Wilhelmina was very beautiful, and had it not been for his love for this sister, upon whom the whole weight of his father's resentment would then fall, Fritz would have escaped from his home and the terrible ill-treatment he there received.

We have not space to give the pictures of the family broils in this unhappy household. Now the crabbed old man would snatch the plates from the table at dinner and fling them at the heads of his children, usually at hapless Wilhelmina or Fritz; then, angered at Wilhelmina because she refused to take whatever husband her cruel father might select, irrespective of her inclination or wishes, he shut the poor princess up in her apartment, and tried to starve her into submission; for, as she writes, "I was really dying of hunger, having nothing to eat but soup made with salt and water and a ragout of old bones, full of hairs and other dirt." At last she yielded to her father's demands; but then she incurred the anger of her mother, who had set her heart upon the match with the prince of Wales.

So the poor princess' days were full of bitterness. But, fortunately, the prince of Baireuth, whom she married, turned out to be a kind husband; but as he was absent most of the time on regimental duty, and had but his small salary, and the old marquis of Baireuth, her husband's father, was penurious, irascible, and an inebriate, she often suffered for the necessaries of life. [410] The home of her step-parents was unendurable, and the home of her childhood was still more so. Unhappy princess! and yet, in the midst of all this misery, her bright and graphic letters form one of the greatest delights to students of history, and give true pictures of the home of Frederick the Great, which can be found nowhere else.

Fritz had now so seriously offended his father, that the king openly exposed him to contempt. He even flogged the prince with his rattan in the presence of others; and the young heir-apparent to the throne of Prussia, beautiful in person, high-spirited, and of superior genius, was treated by his father with studied insult, even in the presence of monarchs, of lords and ladies, of the highest dignitaries of Europe; and after raining blows upon his head, he exclaimed in diabolical wrath, as if desirous of goading his son to suicide: "Had I been so treated by my father, I would have blown my brains out. But this fellow has no honor. He takes all that comes."

But at last Fritz decided not to take longer all that came, and so he prepared for flight. On the 15th of July, 1730, the king of Prussia set out with a small train, accompanied by Fritz, to take a journey to the Rhine. When near Augsburg, Fritz wrote to Lieutenant Katte, one of his profligate friends, stating that he should embrace the first opportunity to escape to the Hague; that there he should assume the name of the Count of Alberville. He wished Katte to join him there, and to bring with him the overcoat and the one thousand ducats which he had left in his hands. Just after midnight the prince stole out to meet his valet, who had been commanded to bring some horses to the village green. But as Keith, the valet, appeared with the horses, he was accosted by one of the king's guard; and the prince, although disguised with a red overcoat, was recognized [411] and forced to withdraw to his own quarters and give up the attempt for that time. The king was informed of these things, and now the poor prince was put in the care of three of the guard, and they were informed if the prince was allowed to escape, death would be their doom. Upon the king's arrival at Wesel, he ordered his culprit son to be brought before him. A terrible scene

ensued. As the king would give no assurance that his friends who had aided him should be pardoned, the crown prince evaded all attempts to extort from him confessions which would implicate them. “Why,” asked the king, furiously, “did you attempt to desert?”

“I wished to escape,” the prince boldly replied, “because you did not treat me like a son, but like an abject slave.”

“You are a cowardly deserter,” the father exclaimed, “devoid of all feelings of honor.”

“I have as much honor as you have,” the son replied; “and I have only done that which I have heard you say a hundred times you would have done yourself, had you been treated as I have been.”

The infuriated king was now beside himself with rage. He drew his sword and seemed upon the point of thrusting it through the heart of his son, when General Mosel threw himself before the king, exclaiming, “Sire, you may kill me, but spare your son.” The prince was then placed in a room where two sentries watched over him with fixed bayonets. As the prince had held the rank of colonel in the army, his unjust father declared he was a deserter, and merited death. Frederick William, whose brutal cruelty exceeds our powers of belief, then sent a courier with the following despatch to his wife:—

“I have arrested the rascal Fritz. I shall treat him as his crime and his cowardice merit. He has [412]
dishonored me and all my family. So great a wretch is no longer worthy to live.”

His Majesty is in a flaming rage. He arrests, punishes, and banishes where there is trace of co-operation with deserter Fritz and his schemes. It is dangerous to have spoken kindly to the crown prince, or even to have been spoken to by him. Doris Ritter, a young girl who was a good musician, and whom the unfortunate Fritz had presented with music and sometimes joined in her singing in the presence of the girl’s mother, is condemned to be publicly whipped through the streets by the beadle, and to be imprisoned for three years, forced to the hard labor of beating hemp. The excellent tutor of the crown prince is banished, the accusation against him being that he had introduced French literature to the prince, which had caused him to imbibe infidel notions. The wicked old king never seemed to think that his own brutal conduct might have influenced the prince to be indifferent to the religion which he hypocritically professed to believe, but so poorly practised.

Meanwhile the crown prince was conveyed from Wesel to the castle of Mittenwalde, where he was imprisoned in a room without furniture or bed. Here Grumkow, one of the king’s ministers, was sent to interrogate him. Though the cruel old minister threatened the rack of torture to force him to confess, Fritz had the nerve to reply:—

“A hangman, such as you, naturally takes pleasure in talking of his tools and of his trade, but on me they will produce no effect. I have owned everything, and almost regret to have done so. I ought not to degrade myself by answering the questions of a scoundrel such as you are.” [413]

The next day the crown prince was sent to the fortress of Cüstrin, about seventy miles from Berlin.

“The strong, dungeon-like room in which he was incarcerated consisted of bare walls, without any furniture, the light being admitted by a single aperture so high that the prince could not look out of it. He was divested of his uniform, of his sword, of every mark of dignity. Coarse brown clothes of plainest cut were furnished him. His flute was taken from him, and he was deprived of all books but the Bible and a few devotional treatises. He was allowed a daily sum amounting to twelve cents for his food,—eight cents for his dinner and four for his supper. His food was purchased at a cook-shop near by and cut for him. He was not permitted the use of a knife. The door was opened three times a day for ventilation,—morning, noon, and night,—but not for more than four minutes each time. A single tallow candle was allowed him; but that was to be extinguished at seven o’clock in the evening.”

For long months this prince of nineteen was imprisoned in absolute solitude, awaiting the doom of his merciless father. But the savage king had reserved still greater torture for the unfortunate Fritz. By the order of the king, Fritz, who also had been condemned to die, was brought down into a lower room of the fortress, and there compelled to witness the execution of Lieutenant Katte, his friend, whom the king had condemned as guilty of high treason. As Fritz was led into the lower apartment of the fortress, the curtains which concealed the window were drawn back, and Fritz, to his horror, beheld the scaffold draped in black placed directly before the window. The frantic young prince was in an agony of despair, and exclaimed, with eyes full of [414]
tears, “In the name of God, I beg you to stop the execution till I write to the king! I am ready to renounce all my rights to the crown if he will pardon Katte.” But the attendants knew the iron will of the merciless monarch, and his cries and tears were unheeded. As the condemned was led by the window to ascend the scaffold, Fritz cried out to him, in tones of deepest anguish, “Pardon me, my dear Katte, pardon me! Oh, that this should be what I have done for you!”

“Death is sweet for a prince I love so well,” replied the heroic Katte with calm fortitude, and ascending the scaffold, the bloody execution was performed, while four grenadiers held Fritz with his face to the window so that he must perforce look upon the ghastly scene. But as Katte’s gory head rolled upon the scaffold, the prince fainted.

When the poor tortured prince regained his consciousness, his misery plunged him into a

fever, and in his wild delirium he sought to take his life. When the fever abated, he sank into hopeless despair, looking forward to nothing but a like horrible death.

With strange inconsistency, the ferocious king, who could thus torture the body and mind of the prince, expressed the greatest anxiety for the salvation of his soul. It is not strange that the example of such a father staggered the faith of his son, and failing to see that the religion professed by his father was bigoted fanaticism instead of the religion of the pure and saving truths inculcated by a sinless Christ, the crown prince became in after-life an infidel.

In accordance with a promise made by the king that his life should be spared if he would acknowledge his guilt, which word was brought to the lonely captive by Chaplain Müller, the [415] crown prince took an oath of submission to the king, and soon after wrote this letter to his father: —

“All-serenest and All-graciousest Father,—To your royal majesty, my all-graciousest father, I have, by my disobedience as their subject and soldier, not less than by my undutifulness as their son, given occasion to a just wrath and aversion against me. With the all-obedientest respect I submit myself wholly to the grace of my most all-gracious father, and beg him most all-graciously to pardon me, as it is not so much the withdrawal of my liberty in a sad arrest as my own thoughts of the fault I have committed that have brought me to reason, who, with all-obedientest respect and submission, continue till my end my all-graciousest king’s and father’s faithfully-obedient servant and son, Frederick.”

Though the prince had been brought by his terrors and sorrows to make such an humble appeal, his father’s anger was not entirely removed. The prince was still forced to dwell in the town of Cüstrin, in a house poorly furnished; and though allowed to wear his sword, his uniform was forbidden him. He was debarred all amusements, and was forbidden to read, write, or speak French, and was denied his flute, of which he was exceedingly fond. Three persons were appointed constantly to watch him. His only recreation was the order to attend the sittings of the Chamber of Counsellors in that district. At last, through the intercession of his sister Wilhelmina, the king consented to allow Fritz to come home.

In March, 1732, the crown prince was betrothed to Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of the duke of Bevern. The sufferings of this unhappy princess cannot now be related. The queen of [416] Prussia received her with bitter hatred because this match would crush her cherished plans of marrying her son to Princess Amelia of England; and Fritz himself, forced to be betrothed against his will, treated her with utter neglect.

In June, 1733, the crown prince was married to Elizabeth, she being eighteen, and he twenty-one years of age.

Frederick I. of Prussia had reared a very magnificent palace in Berlin; and in spite of all his stinginess in his household, Frederick William added masses of silver to the ornamentation of this palace, for he prided himself on his army and his money, as giving him power and influence in Europe. He had stored away many barrels of money in the vaults of his palace, and as there do not seem to have been banking institutions in his realms in those days, he ordered vast quantities of silver to be wrought into chandeliers, mirror-frames, and balconies, which gave him a great reputation for wealth, and could at any time be converted into money. This hoarded wealth saved his son from ruin, when involved in after wars which exhausted his treasury.

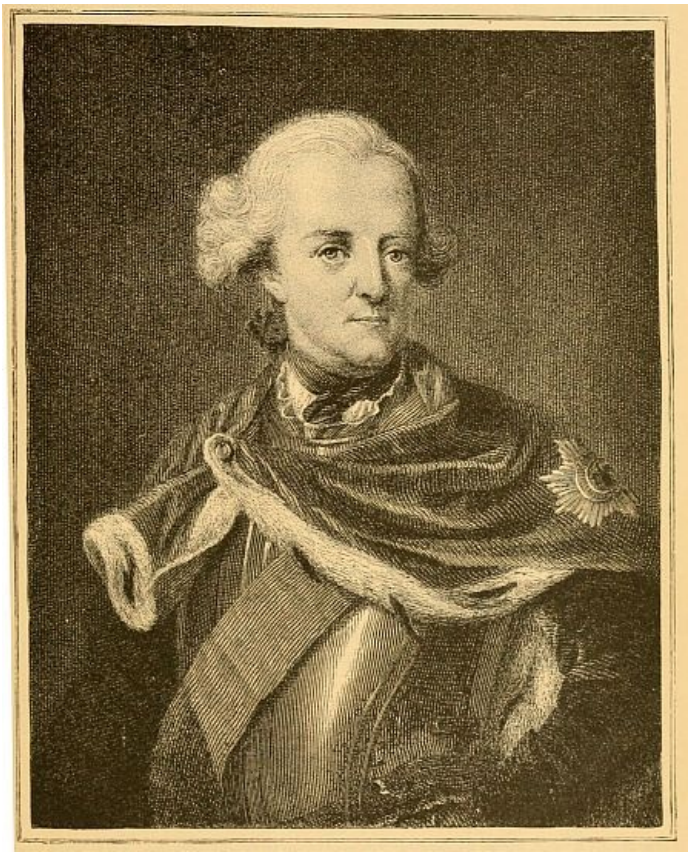
The crown prince having married a niece of the emperor of Germany, and being also of age, his father lost much of his control over him. Frederick was now the rising sun, and his father the setting luminary. All the courts of Europe were anxious to gain the favor of the coming king of Prussia. The king allowed his son a petty income, but the crown prince borrowed large sums of money from the empress of Germany, from Russia, and from England, who were quite ready to supply his wants, being assured of payment when he should receive the throne. Fritz did not forget his sister Wilhelmina, but gave her money to relieve her wants. War now broke out [417] between France and Germany, and Frederick William became an ally of the emperor.

The crown prince accompanied the king of Prussia to the siege of Philipsburg. The campaign continued for some time, but the prince saw little of active service. The king of Prussia being broken down in health by gout and intemperance, now became very ill, and was obliged to return home.

Though Frederick returned from this campaign neither socially nor morally improved, he had become very ambitious of high intellectual culture and of literary renown. He was now living at the village of Reinsburg, in a castle which the king had purchased and assigned to his son. He here gathered around him a number of scholarly men, and commenced and persevered in a severe course of study, devoting his mornings to his books, and the remainder of the day to recreation and music. The old king grumbled at his son’s studies and his recreations, but Frederick was now a full-grown man, whose heirship to the crown made him a power in Europe; and the snarling old king was confined to his room with dropsy and gout, growling away his last hours. The companions of Frederick’s hours of recreation were gay and profligate young men, who scoffed at religion and every virtue. No wonder that with such godless companions, and with such an inconsistent and irreligious example in his father, even while professing the most fanatical devotion to the church and religion, the mind of the talented young prince should have been turned into the wandering wilds of unbelief. Voltaire was at this time about forty years of age. His renown as a man of genius already filled Europe. Frederick became an ardent admirer of

Voltaire, and a correspondence was commenced between them.

But now the grim old king of Prussia is forced to meet a still grimmer antagonist, who will not take “no” for an answer. He has fought the world, fought all human affections, fought all feelings of humanity, fought every good spirit within his heart except a brutal fanaticism, which he ignorantly and superstitiously called religion; fought gout, dropsy, and manifold complaints of the flesh; fought his wife, fought his children, tried to fight the devil, but ended in being his slave; but he cannot fight grim Death, which now clutches him in his ghastly grasp. But not to be outdone, even by *this enemy*, while the death-gurgle was even rattling in his throat, he solemnly *abdicated* in favor of his son Frederick, and with his fingers trembling with the chill of the grave, he signed the deed, and falling back, expired. So the obstinate old king was determined that *his will*, not *death*, should hand over the crown of Prussia, which he could no longer clutch with his own cruel hands. [418]



FREDERICK THE GREAT.

Voltaire said of his reign, “It must be owned Turkey is a republic in comparison to the despotism exercised by Frederick William.”

Frederick the Great was twenty-eight years of age when he became king of Prussia. He was very handsome and of graceful presence. In rapid succession the young king announced certain sentiments which were so amazing in the eyes of the rulers of that age as to be considered phenomena. The day after his accession to the throne he summoned his ministers and declared, “Our grand care will be to further the country’s well-being, and to make every one of our subjects contented and happy.”

Strange ideas! when all sovereigns had hitherto thought only of their own contentment. Next, he abolished the use of *torture* in criminal trials. More wonderful still, the world said. Soon he issued this marvellous edict, which struck consternation in the midst of the upholders of bigotry and fanatical superstition:— [419]

“All religions must be tolerated, and the king’s solicitor must have an eye that none of them make unjust encroachments on the other; for in this country every man must get to heaven his own way.”

Europe was electrified, priests trembled, bigotry and religious persecution hung their heads and slunk away. But more surprises! “The press is free!” thundered forth this powerful young Frederick the Great; and all these phenomena accomplished in the first year of his reign. No wonder Europe turned their eyes to the rising monarch. Sad pity that he did not continue in this line of action, bringing blessings instead of woes upon mankind. But the angel of wise reform was soon driven from his heart and mind by the subtle and poisonous demon of selfish ambition.

The young king soon abolished the Giant Guards. He no longer coveted fine clothes, no longer indulged in the luxury of slippers and French dressing-gown, which had raised the ire of his ease-hating father. His hours were rigidly counted, and various duties assigned them, in regular routine.

Though he treated his nominal wife, Queen Elizabeth, politely in company, he utterly neglected her in his domestic life, and in later years rarely ever addressed a word to her.

On the south-west frontier of Prussia was an Austrian realm, Silesia. For more than a century it had been a portion of the Austrian kingdom. Maria Theresa had inherited the crown of Austria. Frederick, wishing to enlarge his own domains, determined to invade Silesia. History has severely condemned this unprovoked invasion. In January, 1741, the Prussian army were encamped before Neisse. On Sunday morning, Jan. 15, the deadly fire of shot and shell was opened upon the crowded city, where women and children, wounded and bleeding, ran to and fro, frantic with terror. For five days the deadly missiles rained down upon the city almost without intermission. [420]

Not wishing entirely to destroy the city, Frederick then converted the siege into a blockade, and leaving his troops before the place, returned to Berlin. Frederick, in this six weeks’ campaign, had let loose the dogs of war, and he must now meet the consequences. The chivalry of Europe were in sympathy with the young and beautiful Austrian queen. Every court in Europe

was aware of the fact that it was owing to the intervention of the father of Maria Theresa that the life of Frederick was spared, and that he was rescued from the scaffold, when the exasperated and ferocious Frederick William had condemned his own son to death. France had no fear of Prussia, but France did fear the supremacy of Austria over Europe; therefore, France was leaning towards the side of Frederick. England was the foe of France, therefore England sympathized with Austria. The puerile king of England, George II., hated his nephew, Frederick of Prussia, which hatred Frederick vigorously returned. Spain was at war with England and ready for alliance with her foes. The father of the infant czar of Russia was the brother of Frederick's neglected wife Elizabeth. Russia had not yet displayed her partisanship to either side. Minor powers might be constrained by terror or led by bribes.

Meanwhile the heroic Maria Theresa was resolved not to part with one inch of her territory, and the patriotism of the Austrian court, inspired by her, determined them to seek to drive the [421] Prussians out of Silesia. A rumor comes that England, Poland, and Russia are contemplating invasion of the Prussian realms. Frederick immediately despatched a force to Hanover to seize upon that continental possession of the king of England upon the slightest indication of hostility. This menace alarmed George II. Young Prince Leopold had assaulted and captured Glogau from the Austrians, which Frederick considered an important achievement, and sent Prince Leopold a present of ten thousand dollars.

Frederick next proceeded to push the siege of Neisse, but upon nearing that place, he found that General Neipperg, with a large force of Austrians, were coming against him. The siege of Neisse was abandoned, and the entire Prussian army gathered around the king. The night before the contemplated battle, Frederick wrote to his brother, Augustus William,—who, as Frederick had no children, was heir to the throne and crown prince of Prussia,—informing him of his danger, of the coming battle, and bidding farewell to himself and his mother in case of his death. No word of affectionate remembrance was sent to his neglected wife.

On the morrow, which was Sunday, a snow-storm raged so furiously that neither army could move. On Monday the battle began. The Prussians advanced boldly with waving banners and martial music, and valiantly charged the enemy. But the Austrians returned the charge with such fury that the Prussian right wing, where Frederick himself commanded, was routed and put to flight. Frederick, struck with terror, lost his presence of mind, and ingloriously fled with the rest. As with his little band of fugitives he rushed into the gloom of night, he exclaimed in despair, "O [422] my God, my God, this is too much!"

But as the crestfallen king waits under the shelter of a mill, a courier rides up and cries, *"The Prussian army has gained the victory!"* Thus the Prussian king had been galloping from the battle-field in fear and terror, while his valiant troops were achieving the victory. This incident caused unlimited merriment amongst the sarcastic foes of Frederick, and he himself was never known to allude to this humiliating adventure. The picture of the heroic and intrepid Maria Theresa encouraging her troops to patriotism and valor in the very face of her foes, and that of the terror-stricken Frederick rushing from the field of battle, do not form a comparison very flattering to the bravery of the young Prussian king. But as some actors on the stage who have had the worst stage-frights have afterwards made the most brilliant stars, so the ignominious flight of the king did not prevent him from becoming one of the greatest generals of the world. Gradually the secret alliance of France, Bavaria, and Prussia was made known. Under the threatening danger which menaced ruin, Maria Theresa, urged by her council and by the English court, consented to propose terms of compromise to Frederick. To the English ministers, sent from Vienna to offer a million dollars to the Prussian king if he would consent to relinquish this enterprise and retire from Silesia, Frederick answered: "Retire from Silesia, and for money? Do you take me for a beggar? Retire from Silesia in the conquest of which I have expended so much blood and treasure! No, sir, no! I am at the head of an army which has already vanquished the enemy, and which is ready to meet the enemy again. The country which alone I desire is already [423] conquered and securely held. If the queen do not now grant me all I require, I shall in four weeks demand four principalities more. I now demand the whole of Lower Silesia, Breslau included. With that answer you can return to Vienna."

These tidings caused consternation in the Austrian council. Again the high-spirited queen was forced by her circumstances and influenced by her council and England to accede to the compromise, and she agreed to surrender the whole of Lower Silesia to Frederick. But when such word was brought to the Prussian camp, the king replied, "I will not see the minister; the time has past. I will not now listen to a compromise." Now followed a dark and deceitful manœuvre on the part of Frederick, which even the stratagems of war cannot warrant. He entered into secret negotiations with Austria that if Silesia was delivered to him, he would form an alliance with them against the French, whose armies were already joined with his own; at the same time apparently keeping faith with the French, but promising to betray them to the Austrians, meanwhile stating that he must keep up sham attacks to deceive the French.

Frederick now invested Neisse, and pretending a sham attack, he really so vigorously assaulted it that it surrendered, and having thus obtained the last fortress in Silesia, he caused himself to be crowned sovereign duke of Lower Silesia, and returned to Berlin in triumph.

Having by this stratagem obtained Silesia, he assured the French of his unchanging fidelity, and denied that he had ever entered into any arrangements with Austria. In commencing this war he had said, "Ambition, interest, and the desire to make the world speak of me vanquished all, and war was determined on." He had indeed made the world speak of him. All Europe spoke of [424]

him. Some extolled him, others denounced his amazing perfidy. Admiration for his sagacity and fear of his power made many courts of Europe seek his alliance. Carlyle thus comments on these events:—

"Of the political morality of this game of fast-and-loose, what have we to say, except that the dice on both sides seem to be loaded; that logic might be chopped upon it forever; that a candid mind will settle what degree of wisdom (which is always essential veracity) and what of folly (which is always falsity) there was in Frederick and the others; and, in fine, it will have to be granted that you cannot work in pitch and keep hands evidently clean. Frederick has got into the enchanted wilderness populous with devils and their work. Alas! it will be long before he get out of it again; his life waning toward night before he get victoriously out."

This selfish rapacity of the Prussian king set the example to others. The whole world sprang to arms. Macaulay says: "On the head of Frederick is all the blood which was shed in a war which raged during many years, and in every quarter of the globe,—the blood of the column of Fontenoy, the blood of the brave mountaineers who were slaughtered at Culloden. The evils produced by this wickedness were felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown. In order that he might rob a neighbor whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other by the great lakes of North America."

In the winter of 1742 Frederick was engaged in a campaign to deliver Moravia, which was overrun by the Austrians. But in this he was not successful. On the morning of the 17th of May, 1742, Frederick again faced the Austrians at the battle of Chotusitz. In this famous battle [425]
Frederick was victorious, and the Austrians, under Prince Charles, were obliged to retreat. It required nine acres of ground to bury the dead after this bloody conflict.

Frederick did not pursue the Austrians after this victory, and on the 11th of June the treaty of Breslau was signed. By this treaty Silesia was ceded to Frederick, and he agreed to withdraw from the French alliance and enter into friendly relations with Maria Theresa. In 1744, however, Maria Theresa, having been joined by England, had been achieving so many victories on the field, that Frederick, deciding that she was gathering her forces to reconquer Silesia, again entered into an alliance with France and took the field against the Austrians. But in this campaign Frederick himself narrowly escaped being taken prisoner, and returned a defeated monarch, leaving a shattered army behind him. He had already exhausted nearly all the resources which his father had accumulated. Already the sumptuous chandeliers and silver balconies had been melted up. His disastrous Bohemian campaign had cost him three hundred and fifty thousand dollars a month. The least sum with which he could commence a new campaign for the protection of Silesia was four million five hundred thousand dollars. In spite of these apparently insurmountable difficulties, the administrative genius of Frederick made a way by which he succeeded in raising another army. On the 4th of June, 1745, the battle of Hohenfriedberg was fought, by which victory Frederick escaped utter destruction, and the Austrians were forced sullenly to retire. All Europe was now in war, caused by the personal ambition of one man, who did not pretend that it involved any question of human rights. Frederick had openly avowed that he drew his sword and led his hundred thousand soldiers to death and destruction that he might [426]
enlarge his territories and achieve renown. All the nations of Europe wished to borrow. None but England had money to lend, and England was fighting Frederick, and supplying his foes with aid and money. Frederick realized that Maria Theresa, whom he had despised as a woman, was fully his equal in ability to raise and direct armies and in diplomatic intrigue. Berlin was almost defenceless. All Saxony was rising behind Frederick. In this hour of peril, with an army of twenty-six thousand men, Frederick was obliged to meet his foes at Sohr. Defeat to Frederick would have been utter ruin; but the brave determination of the Prussian king animated his troops with desperate valor to conquer or die. And conquer they did, and the victory of Frederick was complete.

On the 25th of December, 1745, the peace of Dresden was signed. The demands of Frederick were acceded to. Augustus III. of Saxony, Maria Theresa of Austria, and George II. of England became parties to the treaty. Frederick now entered upon a period of ten years of peace. The Prussian king now constructed for himself a beautiful villa, on a pleasant hilltop near Potsdam, which he called *Sans Souci*, which Carlyle quaintly translates "No Bother." He had three other palaces, far surpassing Sans Souci in magnificence,—Charlottenburg, at Berlin, the new palace at Potsdam, and his palace at Reinsberg.

Voltaire made a long visit to the Prussian king. Frederick had been for many years greatly fascinated with that talented writer, but gradually Voltaire lost favor with the king. Frederick prided himself upon his literary abilities, and at first Voltaire flattered him; but on one occasion, [427]
when the king had sent him a manuscript to revise, he sarcastically exclaimed to the royal messenger, "When will his Majesty be done with sending me his dirty linen to wash?"

This speech was repeated to the king. Frederick did not lose his revenge. Voltaire had been made chamberlain. His duties were to give an hour a day to the Prussian king, and, as Voltaire said, "to touch up a bit his works in prose and verse."

But Voltaire used his sarcastic pen against the king, and especially against the president of the academy founded by the king at Berlin. A bitter pamphlet, entitled *La Diatribe du Docteur Akakia*, appeared, and the satire was so scathing that the Prussian king ordered all copies to be burned. Voltaire, though allowing the whole edition to be destroyed before his eyes, managed to send a copy to some safe place, where it was again published, and arrived at Berlin by post from Dresden. People fought for the pamphlet.

ARREST OF VOLTAIRE BY ORDER OF FREDERICK.

Everybody laughed; the satire was spread over all Europe. Frederick was enraged, and Voltaire thought it safe to leave Prussia. The king had previously presented him with a copy of his own poems, and fearing that Voltaire had him now in his power—as this volume contained some very wicked and licentious burlesques, in which Frederick had scoffed at everything and everybody—he ordered Voltaire to be arrested at Frankfort, and the book of poems recovered. Either by Frederick's malice or the stupidity of his agent, Freytag, Voltaire and his friends were subjected to an imprisonment for twelve days in a miserable hostelry. The intimacy between Frederick and Voltaire was thus destroyed, and a lasting friendship made impossible.

In 1756 Frederick invaded Saxony. Thus was commenced the Seven Years' [428] War, which proved to be one of the most bloody and cruel strifes ever waged. It gave Frederick the renown of being one of the ablest generals of the world. In 1757 France, Russia, Austria, Poland, and Sweden were combined against Frederick. The entire force of the Prussian king did not exceed eighty thousand men. There were marching against him combined armies amounting to four hundred thousand men. On the battle-field of Leuthen Frederick met and conquered his foes.

But still, peace was out of the question without further fighting. England, at last alarmed at the growing power of France, came to the aid of Frederick. But France, Austria, Sweden, and Russia prepared for a campaign against him.

On Aug. 25, 1758, occurred the bloody battle of Zorndorf, between the Russians and the Prussians. It was an awful massacre. The stolid Russians refused to fly. The Prussians sabred them and trampled them beneath their horses' feet. It is considered the most bloody battle of the Seven Years' War, and some claim it was the most furious ever fought. Frederick was again victorious. But in October, 1758, on the field of Hochkirch, Frederick was defeated by the Austrians. Just after the dreadful defeat came the tidings of the death of his sister Wilhelmina. Thus ended the third campaign in clouds and darkness for the Prussian king.

The destinies of Europe were now held in the hands of three women: Maria Theresa, who by common consent had good cause for war, and was fighting in self-defence; Madame de Pompadour, who, virtually sovereign of France, by reason of her supreme control of the infamous Louis XV., as Frederick had stung her by some insult, did not hesitate to deluge Europe in blood; [429] and Catherine II., empress of Russia, who was also Frederick's foe on account of personal pique.

Frederick himself was undeniably an unscrupulous aggressor, and some call him "a highway robber."

The cause of Maria Theresa alone could have been called honorable. In the fourth campaign of 1759 the terrible battle of Kunersdorf was fought in August. At first the Prussians were victorious, but the Russians at length routed them with fearful loss. So great was the despair of Frederick that it is said he contemplated suicide.

For a year the struggle continued. The Prussian army left in Silesia was utterly destroyed by the Austrians. But at length the tide turned, and Frederick routed the Austrians at the battle of Liegnitz. But the position of Frederick was still most hazardous. He was in the heart of Silesia, surrounded by hostile armies, three times larger than his own. Weary weeks of marching, fighting, blood, and woe, passed on. Sieges, skirmishes, battles innumerable, ensued.

At length the allies captured Berlin; whereupon Frederick marched quickly to the rescue of his capital. At his dread approach the allies fled. Frederick followed the Austrians.

We have no space to give details of the end of the bloody war. Frederick attacked the Austrians, under Marshal Daun, at Torgan, saying to his soldiers:—

"This war has become tedious. If I beat him, all his army must be taken prisoners or drowned in the Elbe. If we are beaten we must all perish."

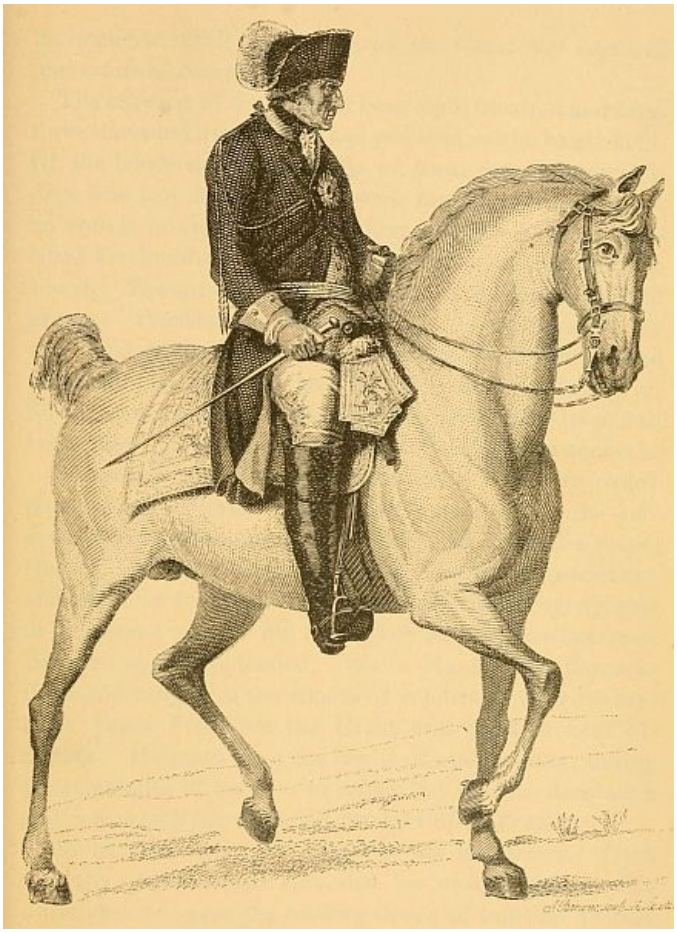
After a day of hard fighting the Prussians held the field. Frederick, who was a very profane

man, replied to a soldier, who inquired if they should go into winter quarters, “By all the devils I shall not till we have taken Dresden.” But Dresden he did not take at that time, and went into winter quarters at Leipsic. The fifth campaign of the Seven Years’ War closed with the winter of 1760. [430]

The Russians and Austrians had concentrated in Bohemia. The summer and autumn wore away with little accomplished; the allies feared to attack Frederick, and the Russians retreated for winter quarters. But the Austrians captured Schweidnitz and so could winter in Silesia. This was a terrible blow to Frederick, but no word betrayed the anguish of the hard-pressed Prussian king. Taking his weary, suffering troops to Breslau, Frederick sought shelter for the winter of 1761-62. At this dark time he wrote:—

“The school of patience I am at is hard, long-continued, cruel; nay, barbarous. I have not been able to escape my lot. All that human foresight could suggest has been employed, and nothing has succeeded. If Fortune continues to pursue me, doubtless I shall sink. It is only she that can extricate me from the situation I am in. I escape out of it by looking at the universe on the great scale like an observer from some distant planet. All then seems to me so infinitely small, and I could almost pity my enemies for giving themselves such trouble about so very little.”

Poor blinded Frederick! He could not even see that his own selfish ambition had tempted him to commence an unjust war, and thus to bring upon his own head all these sorrows.



EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT, ÆT. 73.

On the 24th of November, 1762, the belligerents entered into an armistice until the 1st of March. All were exhausted. On the 15th of February, 1763, peace was concluded. The bloody Seven Years’ War was over, and its immense result was, *Frederick the Great had captured and retained Silesia*. [431]

The expense of the war had been eight hundred and fifty-three thousand lives, which had perished on the battle-field. Of the hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children who had died from exposure, famine, and pestilence, no note is taken. The population of Prussia had diminished five hundred thousand. The world had run red with blood. The air had resounded with wails and cries and groans. Prussia was laid waste by the ravages of the war; and what had been accomplished? Frederick had achieved his renown; he had made himself *talked of*. Silesia had been captured, and Frederick the Great had been placed in the foremost ranks of the world’s generals.

Compared with the achievements of Gustavus Adolphus, whose victories had laid the foundation for the success of the Reformation, how petty had been the prize! One, a Christian king, upholding liberty of conscience and religious freedom; the other, an infidel king fighting in an unjust war for his own glory and aggrandizement. But the world applauded. Berlin blazed with illuminations and rang with the shouts of rejoicing. For twenty-three years Frederick the Great still lived to bear his honors. He must have the credit of endeavoring, during the remainder of his life, to repair the terrible desolation and ruin which his wars had brought upon Prussia.

We have but space to glance at his last hours. Dark was the gloom which shrouded his closing days. His worst enemies were the scoffing devils of unbelief he had let loose within his own soul. No Christian hopes illuminated the vast unknown into which he must so soon pass. To him the grave was but the awful portal to the direful abyss of annihilation.

To his patient, cruelly neglected wife, he penned these last cold words: “Madam, I am much obliged by the wishes you deign to form, but a heavy fever I have taken hinders me from answering you.” [432]

With no companions near him but his servants and his dogs, he awaited the coming of his last despairing end. And thus this lonely, hopeless old man fought his last battle of life; and on the 17th of August, 1786, the fight was ended, the battle lost, and Frederick the Second—Frederick the Great—was carried to the tomb, and laid by the side of his father. What a warning to the world! What a warning to parents! The inconsistent, brutal life of his father made him an infidel.

His own selfish ambition made him more of a curse than a blessing to mankind. In the eyes of the Great and Just Judge of the world, both lives were *terrible failures*.

History has decreed that Frederick the Great gained a foremost place amongst the famous rulers of the world, and that his name stands in the first rank of the world’s conquerors.

But history has also written over his career the verdict,—He was an ambitious aggressor in an unjust war, which plunged all Europe into the horrors of famine, pestilence, bloody conflicts, and desolated battle-fields piled up with heaps of ghastly corpses, above which rose the direful wails of anguished hearts and the relentless flames of ruined homes.

NAPOLEON I.
1769-1821 A.D.

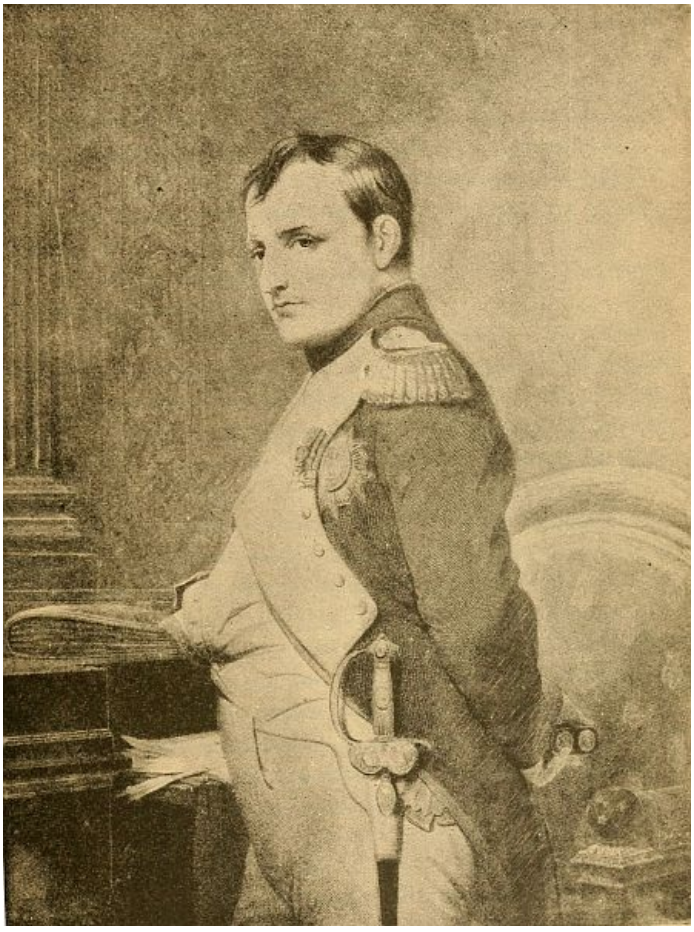
[433]

"He doth bestride the narrow world like a Colossus."
SHAKESPEARE.

"Fame comes only when deserved, and then is as inevitable as destiny; for it is destiny."—LONGFELLOW.

IT was not physical force, it was the magnetic majesty of mind, which looked forth from those awe-inspiring eyes, and gave him Jovesque grandeur and dignity and sovereign pre-eminence among mankind. No merely mortal man stands beside him upon the same level on the heights of fame. Upon the highest mountain peak of human achievement and earthly greatness he stands alone, looking with calm, deep eyes and eagle glance upon the rolling centuries which preceded his marvellous career.

In spite of all the contradictory views which have been presented of Napoleon; in spite of hostile historians who have stigmatized him as a usurper; in spite of foes who have denounced him as a tyrant, inexorable as Nero; in spite of calumny which has proclaimed him a blood-thirsty monster; in spite of English literature and English criticism, which have denounced him as a scourge of the race, as a "*cook* roasting whole continents and populations in the flames of war"; in spite of many a Judas, such as Bourrienne, Augereau, Marmont, Berthier, Bernadotte, Moreau, and others among those whom his own genius had lifted into prominence and power; in spite of [434] obstacles, such as no other mortal man ever conquered, Napoleon the Great stands forth the most amazing phenomenon of human achievement, personal magnetism, and mortal greatness.



NAPOLEON.

"A man who raised himself from obscurity to a throne; who changed the face of the world; who made himself felt through powerful and civilized nations; who sent the terror of his name across seas and oceans; whose will was pronounced and feared as destiny; whose donatives were crowns; whose ante-chamber was thronged by submissive princes; who broke down the awful barrier of the Alps, and made them a highway; and whose fame was spread beyond the boundaries of civilization to the steppes of the Cossack and the deserts of the Arab,—a man who has left this record of himself in history has taken out of our hands the question whether he shall be called great. All must concede to him a sublime power of action, an energy equal to great effects."

"Whether we think of his amazing genius, his unparalleled power of embracing vast combinations, while he lost sight of none of the details necessary to insure success, his rapidity of thought and equally sudden execution, his tireless energy, his ceaseless activity, his ability to direct the movements of half a million of soldiers in different parts of the world, and at the same time reform the laws, restore the finances, and administer the government of his country, or whether we trace his dazzling career from the time he was a poor, proud charity boy at the military school of Brienne to the hour when he sat down on the most brilliant throne of Europe, he is the same wonderful man,—the same grand theme for human contemplation."

In this short sketch we have no space for arguments; nor does Napoleon need arguments to substantiate his claims to greatness. Facts only can prove the supremacy of his fame, and *facts* [435] proclaim him unparalleled in history. *Lies* only defame him and make him out a tyrant. That he was without fault or blemish we would not maintain; that sad mistakes brought upon him evil consequences which he himself was the first to trace to their source, we do not deny. But that amongst all these famous rulers of the world, his is the greatest name, unprejudiced history has decreed.

Of all these mighty conquerors of the world, Napoleon stands second to none.

"When the sword of Alexander overthrew the Persian throne and subjugated the East as far as the Indus, he did but extend the civilization of Athens. The refinement of the age of Pericles, the

acquirements of Attica, the philosophy of the academy and the lyceum, followed in the train of his victories.

"When Cæsar subjugated Parthia and Germany, and carried the Roman eagles from the summit of Caucasus to the hills of Caledonia; when he passed from Gaul to Italy, from Rome to Greece, from the plains of Pharsalia to the shores of Africa, from the ruins of Carthage to the banks of the Nile and the Euxine; when he traversed the Bosphorus and the Rhine, the Taurus and the Alps, the Atlas and the Pyrenees,—in all these triumphal courses lie propagated under the protection of his personal glory, the name, the language, and manners of civilized Rome. If Alexander carried with him the Age of Pericles, and Cæsar that of Augustus, if they were accompanied in their triumphs by the genius of Homer and of Sophocles, of Plato and Aristotle, of Virgil and Horace, Napoleon carried with him an age that the arts, sciences, and philosophy have rendered equally illustrious, and his enterprise is no less than that of his predecessors."

Though the aristocracy of Europe denounced him as an odious despot and an insatiable [436] conqueror, in the hearts of his people—the artisan, the laborer, and the soldier—he is still cherished as the "Man of the people, as the personification of that spirit of equality which pervaded both his administration and the camp." His name is still religiously respected by the peasant in his cottage. His tomb is still cherished as the most sacred spot on earth by the French people. Never did mortal man inspire such love and adoration in the hearts of his soldiers. This unprecedented idolatry of a nation is the best refutation of the malign accusations of his enemies, "that Napoleon *usurped* the sovereignty of France; that having attained the supreme power, he was a tyrant, devoting that power to the promotion of his own selfish aggrandizement; that the wars in which he was incessantly engaged were provoked by his arrogance."

Should the testimony of disappointed sycophants, whose pens are dipped in the venom of thwarted ambition and vanity, or the accusations of bitter foes, whose opinions are biassed by political intrigues, be believed against the character of Napoleon, rather than his own noble utterances, and the testimony of his incorruptible friends?

That his invasion of Egypt was aggressive and unjust, we will admit; but should England be the one to make the loudest outcry against this expedition, when it was only following her own policy when she increased her possessions by her conquests in India? And even the superiority of English literature and English writers should not make us blind to the unjust prejudices of English critics. Had Napoleon not quelled the insurrection, and given the final death-blow to the Revolution, how can any monarchy in Europe be certain that all thrones in Europe might not have [437] tottered and fallen; that all European kingdoms might not have had to face a revolution? Had Napoleon died upon the throne of France, even his English foes, who feared the lonely exile, whom their duplicity and treachery had banished to the dreary rock of St. Helena, more than they feared any European monarch, would doubtless have joined the plaudits of the world in honor of the *Hero of Success*, irrespective of methods or motives. It is only because Napoleon outlived his marvellous and almost miraculous success that the world condemns, and his enemies malign him. Had our own Washington been unsuccessful, then would he have been hung as a rebel, and our own glorious Revolution would have been called a rebellion, and none would have been so loud in the outcry against us as England.

But our success has compelled her recognition, and our marvellous growth in strength, power, and resources has gained her reluctant admiration. It is hardly to be expected that England should ever forget how Napoleon made her tremble, and how near she came to being the conquered rather than the conqueror.

From an earthly point of view, his was the greatest life of mortal man; but from a heavenly standpoint, even his greatness crumbles into dust, and his own higher nature was true enough to realize and acknowledge the instability of earthly renown, and the failure of even such phenomenal greatness as his own, to satisfy the higher cravings of the immortal soul.

To properly estimate the genius of Napoleon, and his achievements in behalf of France, a glance must be given to the bloody background of the Revolution, which rises up with all its ghastliness and horrors. The rights and liberties of the French people had been trampled under [438] foot by despotic and profligate kings and nobles; and then brute force arose against oppression; and brute force for a time conquered.

Mobs surge like a mighty ocean through the streets of Paris. Men, women, and children are turned into wild beasts of fury, thirsting only for blood. And blood they get—till Paris runs red like a river, and all the demons of hades seem to have been let loose upon the world. Such was the hydra-headed monster of bloody, lawless license and ignorant defiance which confronted the dawning manhood of Napoleon Bonaparte. Such was the ferocious fury which the genius of this small, slender, pale-faced, smooth-cheeked youth of twenty-five encountered with such dauntless courage and quelled by his irresistible foresight and execution.

The monarchy of France had been dethroned. Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette had paid with their lives the forfeit of oppression which was not all their own. The Royalists and the Jacobins had joined the howling mob of insurgents, and all together were rushing onward to attack the Convention, which was the only representative of government then in France. The troops of the Convention had been sent to meet the mob, but retired in fear and panic. The mob advanced with demoniacal shouts of menace. The Convention trembled. In the midst of the terror and confusion one member exclaims,—

“I know the man who can defend us if any can. It is a young Corsican officer, Napoleon Bonaparte.” The Convention immediately sent for him. All expected to see a stalwart soldier, of gigantic frame and imperious bearing. Their surprise was unbounded, when a young slender man of boyish presence appeared before them. The astonished president incredulously inquired,—

“Are you willing to undertake the defence of the Convention?” [439]

“Yes,” was the laconic and calm reply. With half-disdainful contempt the president continued,—

“Are you aware of the magnitude of the undertaking?”

Sweeping the assembly with his magnetic glance, and fixing his eagle eye upon the president, Napoleon replied, “Perfectly; and I am in the habit of accomplishing what I undertake.”

And accomplish he did. But how? By the same measures he had declared should have been taken when, a short time before, he had watched the furious mob rush unrestrained through the palace of the imprisoned monarch. Then he had exclaimed, “They should have swept down the first five hundred with grapeshot, and the rest would have soon taken to flight.” And his own successful quelling of the insurgents proved the correctness of his plans and the marvellous executive force of his genius. So Napoleon established the new government of France called the Directory. We have space only for a glance at his boyhood. He was born upon the island of Corsica, on the 15th of August, 1769. His father died while Napoleon was quite young, and his mother, Madame Letitia Bonaparte, was left with small means to provide for eight children,—Joseph, Napoleon, Lucien, Louis, Jerome, Eliza, Pauline, and Caroline.

When Napoleon was about ten years of age, Count Marbœuf obtained his admission to the military school at Brienne, near Paris. Regarded as a charity student by his companions, he was here subjected to neglects and taunts which stung his sensitive nature to the quick. When Napoleon was fifteen, he was promoted to the military school at Paris. On one occasion a [440] mathematical problem of great difficulty was given to his class. Napoleon secluded himself in his room for seventy-two hours and solved the problem. Napoleon did not blunder into greatness. His achievements were not accidents. That he possessed native genius cannot be denied; but he also possessed that perseverance and application which alone can win the success which genius aspires to, but which only energy and perseverance can make possible. When Napoleon was sixteen years of age, he was examined for an appointment in the army. At the close of this examination, one of the professors wrote opposite the signature of Napoleon, “This young man will distinguish himself in the world, if favored by fortune.”

Napoleon secured the position of second lieutenant in a regiment of artillery. He was ordered to Lyons with his regiment. While there, the Academy at Lyons offered a prize for the best dissertation upon the question, “What are the institutions most likely to contribute to human happiness?” Napoleon won the prize. The English, uniting with the Royalists of France, had seized Toulon, a naval depot and arsenal of France. The Convention, the revolutionary government, promoted Napoleon to the rank of brigadier-general, and gave him the command of the artillery train at Toulon. It was here that his military abilities were noticed by the member of the Convention who afterwards proposed him as being the only man who could defend them against the mob, as we have already narrated. After quelling this formidable insurrection, Napoleon was enthusiastically received by the Convention. Five Directors were now chosen by the Convention, who should constitute the new Directory, and the Convention dissolved itself, surrendering the government into the hands of the Directory. Napoleon was appointed by them [441] commander-in-chief of the Army of the Interior, and intrusted with the military defence and government of the metropolis. Having attained this high dignity, Napoleon placed his mother and the rest of his family in comfort.

Famine was great in Paris. The Revolution had left all industries paralyzed. The poor were perishing.

Napoleon immediately organized the National Guards, established order, and distributed wood and bread to the perishing citizens. It was at this time that he met his future wife, Josephine. She was a widow with two children. Her husband, the Viscount Beauharnais, had perished on the scaffold during the Revolution. On the 6th of March, 1796, Napoleon and Josephine were married. Napoleon was twenty-six years of age, Josephine being two years older. This marriage was one of ideal love. When Napoleon was crowned Emperor, he was privately married again by Cardinal Fesch, in accordance with the forms of the Church, which the Emperor had re-established.

Napoleon turned with disgust from the profligacy and dissipation which ever disgrace an army. To the defamations of his enemies who endeavored to malign his character, by accusing him of immorality, let his own words answer: “When I took command of the army of Italy, my extreme youth rendered it necessary that I should evince great reserve of manners and the utmost severity of morals. My supremacy could be retained only by proving myself a better man than any other man in the army. Had I yielded to human weaknesses, I should have lost my power.”

Napoleon was temperate in the extreme, and manifested the strongest disapproval for gaming. [442] Napoleon’s first campaign in Italy was one of self-defence on the part of the French. France had renounced a monarchy and established a republic. The kings of Europe trembled. England was hovering around the coasts of France assailing every available point. Austria had marched an army of nearly two hundred thousand men to the banks of the Rhine. She had called into requisition her Italian possessions, and in alliance with the British navy the armies of the king of

Sardinia together with the legions of Naples and Sicily, prepared to attack the French Republic.

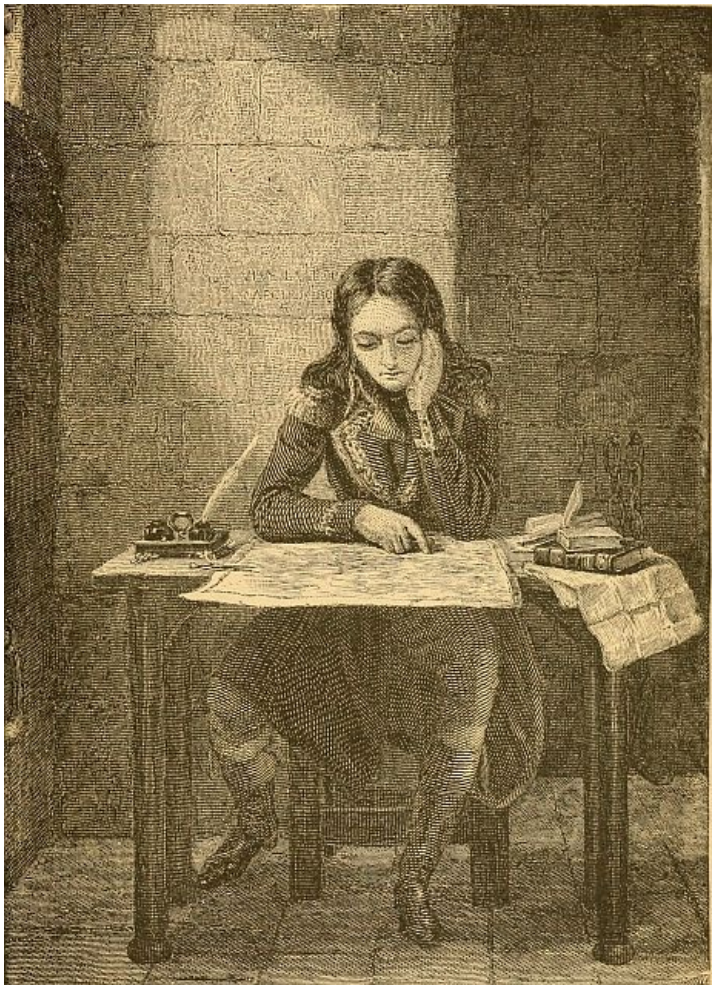
The Directory said to the young commander-in-chief: “We can furnish you only men. The troops are destitute of everything, but we have no money to provide supplies.”

“Give me only men enough,” replied the undaunted Napoleon; “I will be answerable for the result.”

Leaving his bride in Paris, Napoleon hastened to Nice, the headquarters of the army of Italy.

Now the first of those wonderful proclamations rings out in the ears of the astonished troops. “Soldiers, you are hungry and naked; the government owes you much, and can pay you nothing. I come to lead you into the most fertile plains the sun beholds. There you will find abundant harvests, honor, and glory. Soldiers of Italy, will you fail in courage?”

This apparent stripling then assembles his generals, all war-worn chiefs. Amazed and speechless, they listen to his plans.



NAPOLEON IN THE PRISON OF NICE, 1794.

“The time has passed in which enemies are mutually to appoint the place of combat, advance, hat in hand, and say, ‘*Gentlemen, will you have the goodness to fire?*’ The art of war is in its infancy. Experienced generals conduct the troops opposed to us. So much the better, so much the better. It is not their experience which will avail against me. Mark my words: they will soon burn their books on tactics and know not what to do. Yes, gentlemen, the first onset of the Italian army will give birth to a new epoch in military affairs. As for us, we must hurl ourselves on the foe like a thunderbolt, and smite it. Disconcerted by our tactics, and not daring to put them into execution, they will fly before us as the shades of night before the uprising sun.” [443]

And fly before him they did at the battle of Montenotte, regarding which Napoleon afterwards proudly said, “My title of nobility dates from the battle of Montenotte.”

The Austrians fled in one direction, the Sardinians in another, before this invincible conqueror, and Europe, amazed, inquired, Who is this young general who has blazed forth in such sudden and appalling splendor?

Meanwhile Napoleon issues this stirring proclamation:—

“Soldiers, you have gained in fifteen days six victories, taken one-and-twenty standards, fifty-five pieces of cannon, many strong places, and have conquered the richest part of Piedmont. You have gained battles without cannon; passed rivers without bridges; made forced marches without shoes; bivouacked without bread. The phalanxes of the republic, the soldiers of liberty, were alone capable of such services.”

The humiliated king of Sardinia sued for peace. It was the evening of the 10th of May, 1796. The Austrians had intrenched themselves on the banks of the River Po. As the French were making the terrible passage of the bridge of Lodi, in the face of the enemies’ fire, Napoleon seized a standard, shouting to his men, “Follow your general!” and plunging through the blinding smoke, he led his bleeding column forward, and the bridge was carried. [444]

“This beardless youth,” said an Austrian general, indignantly, “ought to have been beaten over and over again; for whoever saw such tactics! The blockhead knows nothing of the rules of war. To-day he is in our rear, to-morrow on our flank, and the next day again in our front. Such gross violations of the principles of war are insufferable.”

And more insufferable still would his enemies find the tactics of the invincible Napoleon. Some of the veterans of the army jocosely promoted Napoleon to the rank of corporal, in honor of his bravery at the bridge of Lodi. When their general next appeared before his army, he was greeted with the shouts, “*Long live our little corporal!*” and even in the dignity of consul and emperor, Napoleon never lost this affectionate nickname amongst his troops, of whom he was the idol.

We have no space for details; the battles of Castiglione, Arcola, and the bloody conflict of Rivoli

had been fought. The imperial court had sent out five armies against the French Republicans, and had encountered defeat and destruction at the hands of the beardless general, who they had disdainfully declared knew nothing about war tactics. Mantua had fallen, and the Austrians were driven from Italy. The Pope implored the clemency of the conqueror. But the Italian people everywhere hailed him as their deliverer. Still Austria refused to make peace with republican France, and the march to Vienna was commenced. Again one of those soul-stirring, inspiring proclamations was issued to his troops.

"Soldiers, the campaign just ended has given you imperishable renown. You have been victorious in fourteen pitched battles and seventy actions. You have taken more than a hundred [445] thousand prisoners, five hundred field-pieces, two thousand heavy guns, and four pontoon trains. You have maintained the army during the whole campaign. In addition to this, you have sent six millions of dollars to the public treasury, and have enriched the National Museum with three hundred masterpieces of the art of ancient and modern Italy, which it has required thirty centuries to produce. You have conquered the finest countries of Europe. The French flag waves for the first time upon the Adriatic, opposite to Macedon, the native country of Alexander. Still higher destinies await you. I know that you will not prove unworthy of them. Of all the foes that conspired to stifle the Republic in its birth, the Austrian emperor alone remains before you. To obtain peace we must seek it in the heart of his hereditary state. You will there find a brave people, whose religion and customs you will respect, and whose property you will hold sacred. Remember that it is liberty you carry to the brave Hungarian nation."

As he had to the Italian people, so also to the Austrian people Napoleon issued one of his glowing proclamations, assuring them that he was fighting not for conquest but for peace; that the *people* of Austria would find in him a protector, who would respect their religion and defend all their rights.

All was consternation in Vienna. The people clamored for peace, and the Austrian emperor sent ambassadors to Napoleon. A treaty was signed, and Austria was conquered. Not a year had elapsed since this nameless young man of twenty-six, with thirty thousand ragged, starving troops, had dauntlessly undertaken this seemingly impossible enterprise. Now Italy was at his [446] feet. Austria was forced to come to terms. All his foes were stunned into terror-stricken inaction.

Before the treaty of Campo Formio was signed, every possible endeavor was made to bribe Napoleon to make terms which should conduce to the advantage of his foes. The wealth of Europe was laid at his feet. Millions upon millions of gold were offered to him, but his noble spirit could not thus be tarnished.

Napoleon arrived in Paris on the 7th of December, 1797, having been absent about eighteen months. The Directory, jealous of Napoleon's power and popularity, were forced by the enthusiasm of the people to prepare a triumphal festival for the delivery of the treaty of Campo Formio.

The magnificent palace of the Luxembourg was adorned for this gorgeous show. The walls were hung with glittering trophies; the vast galleries were crowded with those illustrious in rank; martial music rang out upon the air, and the thunders of the cannon mingled with the enthusiastic shouts of the rejoicing multitudes. Napoleon was introduced by Talleyrand in an eloquent speech. Calmly the great hero stood before the assembled multitude. His imposing presence required not the trappings of the bedecked and bejewelled grandees of the court. Majestic was his calm dignity as he addressed the people:—

"Citizens! the French people in order to be free had kings to combat. To obtain a constitution founded on reason, it had the prejudices of eighteen centuries to overcome. Priestcraft, feudalism, despotism, have successively, for two thousand years, governed Europe. From the peace you have just concluded dates the era of representative governments. You have succeeded [447] in organizing a great nation, whose vast territory is circumscribed only because Nature herself has fixed its limits. You have done more. The two finest countries in Europe—formerly so renowned for the arts, the sciences, and the illustrious men whose cradle they were—see with the greatest hopes genius and freedom issuing from the tomb of their ancestors. I have the honor to deliver to you the treaty signed at Campo Formio, and ratified by the emperor. Peace secures the liberty, the prosperity, and the glory of the Republic. As soon as the happiness of France is secured by the best organic laws, the whole of Europe will be free."

A wild burst of enthusiasm filled the air as Napoleon ceased speaking. The people shouted, "Live Napoleon, the conqueror of Italy, the pacificator of Europe, the saviour of France!"

Napoleon now laid aside the dress of a soldier. He attended constantly the meetings of the Institute, and immediately assumed a pre-eminence amongst those distinguished scholars as marked as he had already attained as a general.

Republican France was now at peace with all the world, England alone excepted. The Directory raised an army for the invasion of England, and gave Napoleon the command. Republicans all over Europe, England included, adored Napoleon as the great champion of popular rights. England trembled. It was necessary that the people should be taught to hate this man whom they now worshipped. The English press came to the rescue of the English government. The most malign and atrocious lies were published regarding Napoleon. He was represented as a demon in human form; a monster of profligacy and tyrannical ambition; a [448] robber, plundering the nations for his own selfish aggrandizement. Regarding these bitter and

false libels Napoleon said: “There is not one which will reach posterity. When I have been asked to cause answers to be written to them, I have uniformly replied, ‘My victories and my works of public improvement are the only response which it becomes me to make.’ When there shall not be a trace of these libels to be found, the great monuments of utility which I have reared, and the code of laws that I have formed, will descend to the most remote ages, and future historians will avenge the wrongs done me by my contemporaries.” Napoleon deeming an attack upon England too hazardous, the project was abandoned.

Then followed Napoleon’s expedition into Egypt. Volumes could be written upon each one of Napoleon’s marvellous campaigns, but we can merely give a slight outline. The famous battle of the Pyramids made Napoleon the undisputed conqueror of Egypt. “Soldiers!” he exclaimed, as he rode along the ranks, “from those summits forty centuries contemplate your actions.”

The name of Napoleon became suddenly as renowned in Asia and Africa as it had previously become in Europe. But twenty-one days had elapsed since he landed at Alexandria, and now he was sovereign of Egypt. The Egyptians welcomed him as a friend and liberator. He disclaimed all sovereignty over Egypt, and organized a government to be administered by the people themselves. In the mean time Lord Nelson learned that the French had landed in Egypt. He immediately proceeded thither. The famous battle of the Nile followed, in which the English were victorious. The French fleet had been destroyed, and Napoleon was cut off from Europe. All [449] monarchical Europe rejoiced; all republican Europe mourned. Napoleon now undertook the Syrian expedition. With ten thousand men he commenced his march over the desert. We cannot describe their weary march through the burning sands, their sufferings from want, and the dreadful plague which soon broke out in the army. We can only note the siege of Acre. The subjugation of this fortress would have made Napoleon master of Syria. Sir Sidney Smith conducted the defence with the combined English and Turkish troops. It was here that the marvellous affection of Napoleon’s soldiers for their general was tested. Sir Sidney Smith circulated a proclamation, offering to convey every French soldier safely to France who would desert Napoleon. It is not known that a single man was false to Napoleon, whom all adored as a being seemingly more than mortal.

The siege had continued for sixty days. Napoleon had lost three thousand men by the sword and the plague. At this time fresh Turkish troops arrived to join his enemies; and deeming the enterprise hopeless, Napoleon abandoned the siege. Napoleon was as great in defeat as in success. Speaking of his power to endure trials, he said: “Nature seems to have calculated that I should endure great reverses. She has given me a mind of marble. Thunder cannot ruffle it. The shaft merely glides along.”

At midnight, on the 25th of July, 1799, Napoleon, with six thousand men, arrived within sight of the camp of the Turks, upon the shores of the Bay of Aboukir. Napoleon knew that the Turks were awaiting the arrival of the Mameluke cavalry from Egypt and of re-enforcements from Acre and other parts of Syria. Defeat to Napoleon now would have been utter ruin. But the terrific [450] conflict which followed was not a defeat, but a victory so complete that the whole Turkish army was destroyed. Sir Sidney Smith fled in terror to his ships. Not a foe remained. In the enthusiasm of the moment, Kleber, who had just arrived with a division of two thousand men, for whom Napoleon had not waited, threw his arms around the neck of his adored chieftain, exclaiming, “Let me embrace you, my general; you are great as the universe!”

Napoleon now learned that France was in a terrible state of confusion. The imbecile government was despised. Plots, conspiracies, and assassinations filled the land. Napoleon determined to return to France. As he had no fleet, he could not take his army. The matter was therefore concealed from them. With a small retinue, Napoleon embarked, and sailed to France. Then followed the overthrow of the Directory. France had tried republicanism, and the experiment had failed. The people were too ignorant to govern themselves. The next morning after the overthrow of the Directory, the three consuls, Napoleon, Sièyes, and Ducos, met in the palace of the Luxembourg.

There was but one arm-chair in the room. Napoleon had seated himself in it. Sièyes exclaimed, “Gentlemen, who shall take the chair?”

“Bonaparte, surely,” said Ducos; “he already has it. He is the only man who can save us.”

“Very well, gentlemen,” said Napoleon, promptly; “let us proceed to business.”

And important business he soon despatched. The revolutionary tribunals had closed the churches and prohibited the observance of the Sabbath. Napoleon recalled the banished priests, [451] opened the churches, and restored religious worship. The treasury was bankrupt. Napoleon replenished it. The army was starving and ragged. Napoleon addressed them with his thrilling words of sympathy, and clothed and fed them. The navy was dilapidated. In every port in France, at the magic word of this magnetic man, the sound of the ship-hammer was heard, and a fleet was prepared to send to Egypt to convey to France his soldiers left there. The Constitution was framed and adopted, and Napoleon was elected First Consul of France. Civil war was now at an end. Napoleon wrote two letters, one to the king of England, and the other to the emperor of Germany, endeavoring to arrange a general peace. Austria was inclined to listen to this appeal, but England demanded war. She would have no peace while France continued a republic. So Napoleon was forced to prepare for war.

“Moreau was sent with a magnificent army into Swabia, to drive back the Austrians towards

their capital; Massena was appointed over the army of Italy, while Napoleon himself swept down from the heights of San Bernard, upon the plains of Lombardy.

"At the fierce-fought battle of Marengo he reconquered Italy, while Moreau chased the vanquished Austrians over the Danube. Victory everywhere perched on the French standards, and Austria was ready to agree to an armistice, in order to recover from the disasters she had suffered. The slain at Montibello, around Genoa, on the plains of Marengo, in the Black Forest, and along the Danube are to be charged over to the British government, which refused peace in order to fight for the philanthropic purpose of giving security to governments.

"Austria, though crippled, let the armistice wear away, refusing to make a treaty because she [452] was bound for seven months longer to England. Bonaparte, in the mean time, was preparing to recommence hostilities. Finding himself unable to conclude a peace, he opened the campaign of Hohenlinden, and sent Macdonald across the Splugen. Moreau's victorious march through Austria, and the success of the operations in Italy, soon brought Austria to terms, and the celebrated peace of Luneville, of 1801, was signed. The energy and ability, and above all, the success of the First Consul had now forced the continental powers to regard him with respect, and in some cases with sympathy, while England, by her imperious demands, had embroiled herself with all the northern powers of Europe."

At length a general peace was concluded at Amiens, and the world was at rest. Napoleon was now the idol of France. Although his title was only that of First Consul, and France was nominally a republic, yet he was in reality the most powerful monarch in Europe. He ruled in the *hearts* of forty millions of people. In 1803 the peace of Amiens was broken, and all impartial historians admit, and even English writers cannot deny the responsibility of this rupture rests with England. In that treaty it was expressly stipulated that England should evacuate Egypt and Malta, while France was to evacuate Naples, Tarento, and the Roman States. Napoleon had fulfilled his part of the agreement within two months after the peace. But the English were still in Alexandria and Malta. Napoleon was right, and England was entirely wrong. If a violation of a solemn treaty is a just cause for war, Napoleon was free from blame. England now drew Russia into this new alliance, then Austria and Sweden. Prussia refused to join the alliance, and sided with France. [453] The bloody conflict began. For the slain left on the plains of Italy, for the tens of thousands strewn on the battle-field of Austerlitz, who is chargeable? Neither Napoleon nor France. Napier, in his "Peninsular War," says:

"Up to the peace of Tilsit, the wars of France were *essentially defensive;* for the bloody contest that wasted the continent for so many years was not a struggle for pre-eminence between ambitious powers, nor for the political ascendency of one or other nation, *but a deadly conflict to determine whether aristocracy or democracy should predominate,—whether equality or privilege should henceforth be the principle of European governments*."

"But how much does this 'up to the peace of Tilsit' embrace? First, all the first wars of the French Republic,—the campaigns of 1792, '93, '94, '95, and the carnage and woe that made up their history; second, eleven out of the eighteen years of Bonaparte's career,—the campaigns of 1796, in Italy and Germany, the battles of Montenotte, Millesimo, Dego, Lodi, Arcola, Castiglione, and Rivoli, the campaigns of 1797, and the bloody battle-fields that marked their progress. It embraces the wars in Italy and Switzerland while Bonaparte was in Egypt; the campaign of Marengo, and its carnage; the havoc around and in Genoa; the slain thousands that strewed the Black Forest and the banks of the Danube, where Moreau struggled so heroically; the campaign of Hohenlinden, and its losses. And yet this is but a fraction to what remains. This period takes in also the campaign of Austerlitz and its bloody battle, and the havoc the hand of war was making in Italy; the campaign of Jena, and the fierce conflicts that accompanied it; the campaign of Eylau and the battles of Pultusk, Golymin, Heilsberg, crowned by the dreadful slaughter of Eylau; the [454] campaigns of Friedland and Tilsit, and the multitudes they left on the plains of Europe. All these terrible campaigns, with their immense slaughter, does an English historian declare to be the result of a defensive war on the part of France, not merely a defence of territory, *but of human rights against tyranny*. Let republicans ponder this before they adopt the sentiments of prejudiced historians, and condemn as a monster the man who was toiling over battle-fields to save his country from banded oppressors."

The 2d of December, 1804, dawned clear and cold. It was Sunday, and upon this day Napoleon was to be crowned emperor at the church of Nôtre Dame. All Paris assembled to witness this imposing ceremony. The church was draped in costly velvet of richest hues. At one end a gorgeous throne was erected. The Emperor left the Tuileries in a splendid carriage, whose sides were of glass, thus allowing his magnificent robes to be seen. He wore a golden laurel wreath upon his head.

The acclamations of the immense crowds thronging the streets filled the air. As Napoleon entered the church, five hundred musicians intoned a solemn chant. The Pope anointed the Emperor and blessed the sword and the sceptre. Then Napoleon lifted the crown and placed it upon his own head. Napoleon then took up the crown intended for the Empress, and approaching Josephine as she knelt before him, he placed it tenderly upon her brow. Their eyes met for one moment in a long and loving gaze of mutual affection, and tears filled the eyes of the beautiful Josephine as she glanced with undisguised adoration upon the husband she so reverenced and worshipped. And the lofty arches of Nôtre Dame resounded with shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

The Cisalpine Republic had witnessed the change of France from a republic to an empire with [455] great satisfaction. A deputation from Italy was now sent to Napoleon, begging him to assume the

crown of Charlemagne. On the 20th of May, the coronation took place in the Cathedral of Milan. The ceremony was conducted with a magnificence not exceeded at Nôtre Dame. The iron crown of Charlemagne had reposed for a thousand years in the church of Monza. The Empress first appeared gorgeously dressed and glittering with jewels. Then Napoleon entered, arrayed in imperial robes, with the diadem upon his brow and the sceptre and crown of Charlemagne in his hands. He placed the crown upon his own head, saying, solemnly, “God has given it to me; woe to him who touches it!”

Meanwhile, hostilities had commenced in the midst of Germany. Austria and Russia had united with England. The Austrians had passed the Inn; Munich was invaded; war was inevitable.

Then followed the campaign of Ulm. Napoleon writes to Josephine, Dec. 5, 1805:—

“I have concluded a truce. The Russians have implored it. The victory of Austerlitz is the most illustrious of all which I have gained. We have taken forty-five flags, 150 pieces of cannon, and twenty generals. More than 20,000 are slain. It is an awful spectacle. I have beaten the Russian and Austrian armies commanded by the two emperors.”

In 1806 England, Russia, and Prussia formed a new alliance against the French. Then followed the bloody battles of Jena and Auerstadt. On the 28th of October Napoleon made a triumphal entry into Berlin, and established himself in the king’s palace. While there he visited the tomb of [456] Frederick the Great, at Potsdam. The sword of the Prussian was suspended over his grave. Napoleon took it down, saying, “I will send it to the governor of the Invalides.” General Rapp ventured to reply, “Were I in your place, I should not be willing to part with this sword. I should keep it for myself.”

Napoleon jestingly answered, “*Have I not then a sword of my own, Mr. Giver of Advice?*” The Prussian monarchy was destroyed upon the fields of Jena and of Auerstadt. But England and Russia were yet clamorous for war. Again Napoleon tried to make overture for peace, again he was repulsed. Then followed the terrible battle-field of Eylau. Amid winter’s snow and ice and storms this famous battle was won. As Napoleon passed over the gory field after the awful carnage, he exclaimed with deep emotion, “To a father who loses his children victory has no charms.”

A dragoon, dreadfully shattered and bleeding from the effects of a cannon ball, raised his head from the bloody snow, and faintly said, “Turn your eyes this way, please your Majesty. I believe that I have got my death wound. I shall soon be in the other world. But no matter for that; *vive l’Empereur!*”

Napoleon immediately dismounted from his horse and took the hand of the wounded man, telling his aids to carry him to the ambulance. Large tears rolled down the cheeks of the dying dragoon, as he fixed his eyes upon that loved face, fervently exclaiming, “I only wish I had a thousand lives to lay down for your majesty.” Amidst a heap of dead, a feeble voice was heard crying, “*Vive l’Empereur!*” Half-concealed beneath a tattered flag lay a young officer. As Napoleon approached, he raised himself upon his elbow, though pierced with numerous wounds, [457] and faintly cried: “God bless your majesty! farewell, farewell! Oh, my poor mother! To dear France my last sigh!” and falling back, was dead. Upon this dreadful battle-field, though it was after midnight, he wrote this fond note to Josephine:—

> My Love,—There was a great battle yesterday. Victory remains with me, but I have lost many men. The loss of the enemy, still more considerable, does not console me. I write these two lines myself, though greatly fatigued, to tell you that I am well, and that I love you. Wholly thine,
>
> Napoleon.

The peace of Tilsit was finally concluded, and Napoleon returned to Paris.

The French government at this time was composed of three houses,—the Senate, the Tribunate, and the Legislature. Napoleon blended the Tribunate and the Legislature in one. He formed the Council of State, or Cabinet, with the greatest care, choosing the most able men in every department. The meetings of the Council were held in the palace of the Tuileries or at St. Cloud. The most perfect freedom of discussion prevailed in the Council.

In September, 1808, occurred the memorable meeting of the emperors at Erfurth. Kings, princes, and courtiers came from all parts of Europe to witness the extraordinary spectacle. Napoleon was the gracious host who received them as his guests. No more gorgeous retinue had ever followed a monarch of the blood royal than surrounded the Emperor Napoleon as he left Paris for the appointed place of meeting. Amid all the royal magnificence which attended these imperial sovereigns, none appeared so majestic, so supremely commanding in their personal presence as Napoleon the Plebeian Monarch, who had raised himself by his own surprising and [458] irresistible genius to the proudest place amidst the courts of Europe.

All the other sovereigns trembled before his amazing power; the imperialism of mind and genius compelled the homage of royal titles and royal blood.

We do not uphold that Napoleon’s career was free from error, and no greater blot tarnishes the brightness of his fame than his divorce of Josephine. From that moment Napoleon fell. From that moment Josephine mounted an eminence of self-sacrificing, unselfish devotion, of heart-

martyrdom, never reached by woman before. Women have died for their husbands; but this was worse than death. Women have slaved and toiled, and been down-trodden by brutal husbands; but this was worse than that. Never before had woman stepped from so high an eminence of bliss into so deep an abyss of heart-desolating woe, and with self-renouncing, almost inconceivable, womanly devotion, allowed her royal place as wife to be taken by another, that thus a supposed political power might be gained by the idolized object of her affection; who, even though his cruel demand thus shattered her hopes, her heart, and her life, she was still unselfish enough to glory in her self-renunciatory sacrifice, for the still adored object of her love. No political excuse can cover this crime committed by Napoleon at the instigation of Fouché and other ambitious adherents, and worst of all, at the instigation of his own relations, whom historians acknowledge were the bitter enemies of his wife. No laxity of the times, in the sacred laws of marriage, which are the most solemn vows that human beings can take upon themselves, next to their vows to God, can excuse this blot upon Napoleon's fame. By the very eminence of his genius above all [459] other men, by the very exaltation of his lofty position, should he have made himself the model as an *upholder*, not a *desecrator*, of the most sacred human relation ever ordained by God.

"What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder!" was a weightier obligation than any supposed political advantage, more binding than any patriotism, more encumbent upon him than any duty of state or country. No political reasons can palliate in the least degree this crime; they only weakly *explain*, but do not in any manner excuse it. That Napoleon, with his marvellous self-sufficiency of will, and genius, and wise forethought, and keen-eyed intuition, could have been led into such a deplorable act, is past all comprehension. That it was the cruel and bitter mistake of his life, he himself has acknowledged. Napoleon said afterwards, "In separating myself from Josephine, and in marrying Maria Louisa, I placed my foot upon an abyss which was covered with flowers."

It was an abyss deep and awful; and from this dark and direful abyss issued forth the horrible reptiles of disappointment, sorrow, and remorse, which thrust their cruel fangs into the quivering heart of the lonely exile at St. Helena. Perchance, in the silent anguish of his agonized but heroic soul, a dumb wail broke forth, "Ah, Josephine! my only love! bright star of my destiny! when I no longer gazed upward to thy heavenly light, but tempted by the demons of false counsel, followed an *ignis fatuus* o'er the treacherous quicksands of political ambition, then did I find myself ingulfed in sorrows, and my heart was shrouded in the black darkness of a rayless night of hopeless despair. Had I been true to thee, perchance a just and righteous Providence might have been more merciful to me. Thou wert my star of hope and love! Thou wert ordained by heaven, [460] my star of destiny! Bitterly do I remember thy prophetic words upon that memorable night, when the tie which bound us together was shattered by my blind ambition, 'Bonaparte, behold that bright star; it is mine! and remember, to mine, not to thine, has sovereignty been promised. Separate, then, our fates, and your star fades!'

"Ah, Josephine, you were right! It is to you alone that I owe the only few moments of happiness I have known in the world!"

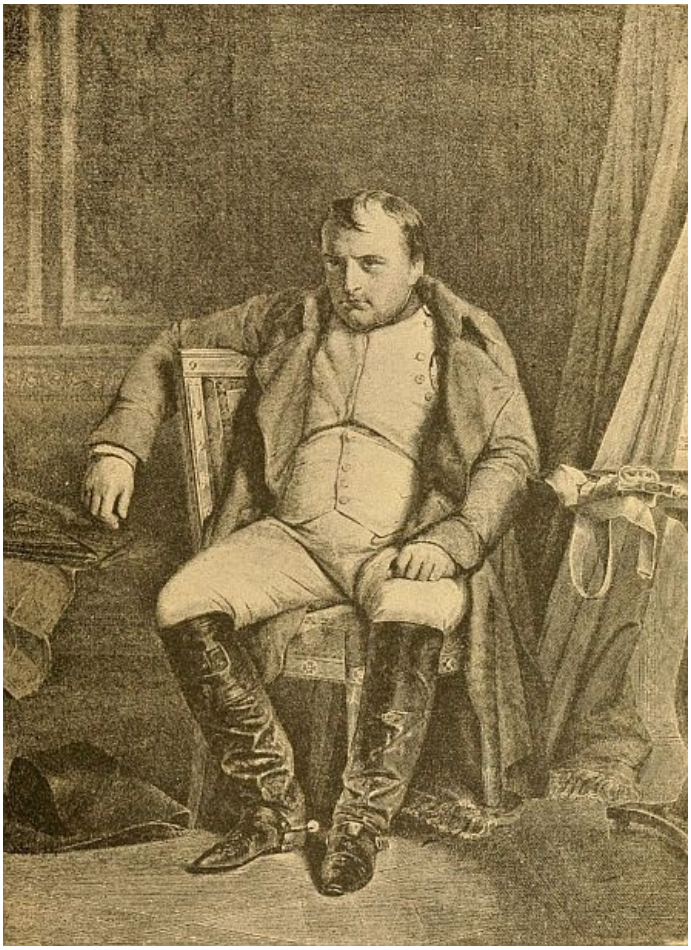
Yes, Josephine was right; that hour marked the commencement of the downfall of Napoleon. His star, which once blazed forth in matchless splendor in the heavens, was soon to sink forever. The two greatest errors of Napoleon were the conquest of Spain and the invasion of Russia. The first was unjust, the second was unfortunate. We can but give one picture of the Russian campaign. Napoleon and his army had marched in triumph more than two thousand miles from his capital. Victory had accompanied him. He had taken the metropolis of the most powerful nation on the continent, though that nation had been aided by England, Spain, Portugal, and Sweden. Moscow was in the possession of the French. Napoleon was established in the Krémlin.

It was the 16th of September, 1812. At midnight the cry of "Fire!" resounded through the streets. Moscow was in flames! Mines were sprung, shells burst, cannons were discharged, wagons of powder exploded; earthquake succeeded earthquake; volcano followed volcano of flame and smoke and burning projectiles, until the whole vast city was wrapped in one wild ocean of flame. Napoleon said of this awful sight: "It was a spectacle of a sea and billows of fire, a sky [461] and clouds of flame; mountains of red rolling flames, like immense waves of the sea, alternately bursting forth and elevating themselves to skies of fire, and then sinking into the ocean of flame below. Oh! it was the most grand, the most sublime, the most terrific sight the world ever beheld."

Nothing was left of Moscow save the remembrance of its former grandeur. Then followed the terrible retreat of the French army, through the cold and snow and winter storms. During this unfortunate expedition the entire army of Napoleon had been destroyed. "During the Russian campaign France is believed to have lost about three hundred and fifty thousand soldiers: a hundred thousand were killed in the advance and retreat, a hundred and fifty thousand died from hunger, fatigue, and the severity of the climate, and about a hundred thousand remained prisoners in the hands of the Russians, not more than half of whom ever returned to France."

Still, notwithstanding the enormous wars in which Napoleon had been engaged, he had expended in works of public improvement, for the embellishment of France, in the course of nine years, more than two hundred millions of dollars. "These miracles," says a French writer, "were all effected by steadiness of purpose, talent armed with power, and finances wisely and economically applied. If a man of the age of the Medici, or of Louis XIV., were to revisit the earth, and at the sight of so many marvels, ask how many ages of peace and glorious reigns had been required to produce them, he would be answered, '*Twelve years of war, and a single man!*'"

But the war was not over. With an army formed of fresh recruits, again Napoleon was forced to meet his foes. Then followed the battle of Lützen, which is regarded as one of the most brilliant [462] proofs of Napoleon’s genius. But now many a Judas appeared in the midst of his supposed friends. General Jomini deserted the staff of Marshal Ney, and went over to the Emperor Alexander. Bernadotte, of Sweden, took up arms against the French; and General Moreau went over to the camp of the Allies.



NAPOLEON AT FONTAINEBLEAU.

After the disaster of Leipsic, and the losses sustained by different divisions of the army in that campaign, and the mortality which thinned so dreadfully the French armies on the Rhine, France felt herself exhausted and weak.

In this depressed state, the civilized world was preparing its last united onset upon her. From the Baltic to the Bosphorus, from the Archangel to the Mediterranean, Europe had banded itself against Napoleon. Denmark and Sweden had struck hands with Austria and Russia and Prussia and England; while, to crown all, the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine put their signatures to the league, and *one million and twenty-eight thousand men* stood up in battle array on the plains of Europe to overthrow this mighty spirit that had shaken so terribly their thrones. And all this resistless host were pointing their bayonets towards Paris. What man or nation could meet such an overwhelming foe? Never did Napoleon’s genius shine forth with greater splendor than in the almost super-human exertions he put forth in this last great struggle for his empire. The Allies entered the capital, and Napoleon was compelled to abdicate, preferring exile, rather than involve France in more terrible bloodshed. He then penned this memorable abdication:—

“The allied sovereigns having declared that the Emperor Napoleon is the sole obstacle to the re-establishment of a general peace in Europe, the Emperor Napoleon, faithful to his oath, [463] declares that he renounces, for himself and his heirs, the throne of France and Italy; and that there is no personal sacrifice, not even that of life itself, which he is not willing to make for the interests of France.”

Then followed his mournful farewell to his soldiers.

“As Napoleon arrived at the landing of the grand staircase, he stood for a moment and looked around upon the Guard drawn up in the court, and upon the innumerable multitude which thronged its surroundings. Every eye was fixed on him. It was a funereal scene, over which was suspended the solemnity of religious awe. Acclamations in that hour would have been a mockery. The silence of the grave reigned undisturbed. Tears rolled down the furrowed cheeks of the warriors, and their heads were bowed in overwhelming grief. Napoleon cast a tender and a grateful look over the battalions and the squadrons who had ever proved so faithful to himself and to his cause. Before descending to the courtyard, he hesitated for a moment, as if his fortitude were forsaking him. But immediately rallying his strength, he approached the soldiers. The drums commenced beating the accustomed salute. With a gesture Napoleon arrested the martial tones.” A breathless stillness prevailed. With a voice clear and firm,—every articulation of which was heard in the remotest ranks,—he said:—

“Generals, officers, and soldiers of my Old Guard, I bid you farewell. For five and twenty years I have ever found you in the path of honor and of glory. In these last days, as in the days of our prosperity, you have never ceased to be models of fidelity and of courage. Europe has armed against us. Still, with men such as you, our cause never could have been lost. We could have [464] maintained a civil war for years. But it would have rendered our country unhappy. I have therefore sacrificed our interests to those of France. I leave you; but, my friends, *be faithful to the new sovereign whom France has accepted*. The happiness of France was my only thought; it shall ever be the object of my most fervent prayers. Grieve not for my lot; I shall be happy so long as I know that you are so. If I have consented to outlive myself, it is with the hope of still promoting your glory. I trust to write the deeds we have achieved together. Adieu, my children! I would that I could press you all to my heart. Let me at least embrace your general and your eagle.”

“Every eye was now bathed in tears. At a signal from Napoleon, General Petit, who then commanded the Old Guard, advanced and stood between the ranks of the soldiers and their emperor. Napoleon, with tears dimming his eyes, encircled the general in his arms, while the veteran commander, entirely unmanned, sobbed aloud. All hearts were melted, and a stilled moan was heard through all the ranks.

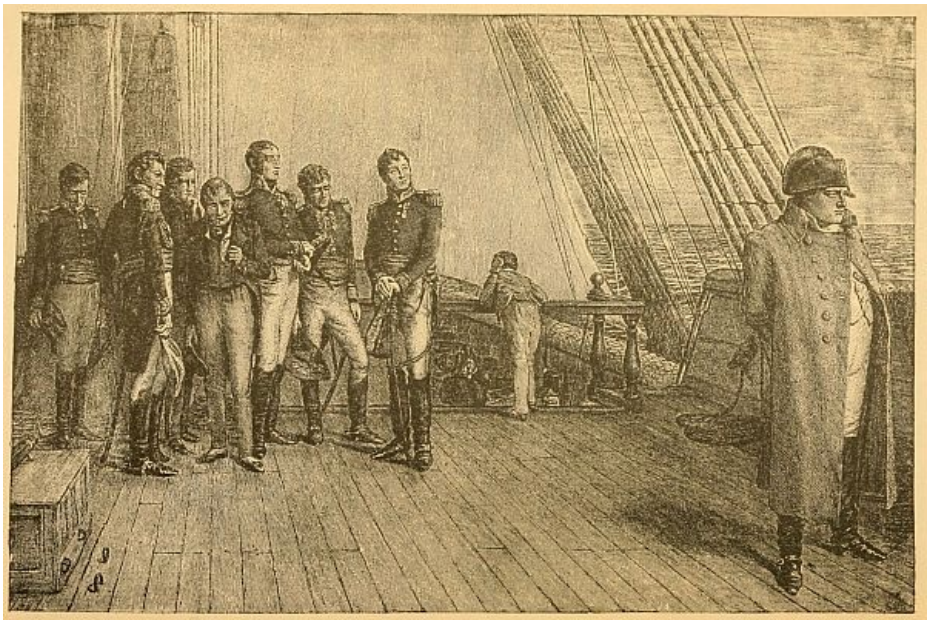
“Again the Emperor recovered himself, and said, ‘Bring me the eagle.’ A grenadier advanced, bearing one of the eagles of the regiment. Napoleon imprinted a kiss upon its silver beak, then pressed the eagle to his heart, and said, in tremulous accents, ‘Dear eagle, may this last embrace vibrate forever in the hearts of all my faithful soldiers! Farewell, again, my old companions, farewell!’”

But Elba could not long hold that daring, restless spirit. The next year he again unrolled his standard in the capital of France, and the army opened its arms to receive him. He at length staked all on the field of Waterloo. There the star of his destiny again rose over the horizon, and [465] struggled with its ancient strength to mount the heavens of fame. The battle-cloud rolled over it, and when it again was swept away, that star had gone down, sunk in blood and carnage, to rise no more forever.

“Volumes have been written on this campaign and last battle; but every impartial mind must come to the same conclusion,—that Napoleon’s plans never promised more complete success than at this last effort. Wellington was entrapped, and with the same co-operation on both sides, he was lost beyond redemption. Had Blücher stayed away as Grouchy did, or had Grouchy come up as did Blücher, victory would once more have soared with the French eagles. It is in vain to talk of Grouchy’s having obeyed orders. It was plainly his duty, and his only duty, to detain Blücher or to follow him.”

Even yet Napoleon could have placed himself at the head of fifty thousand men in a few hours. He was entreated by his friends to grasp these powerful resources and again attack the foe. But treachery had already invaded the Chamber of Deputies. The wily Fouché—the same who had largely instigated the divorce of Josephine—had obtained the control, and joining with the Bourbons, persuaded the Chamber to demand the second abdication of the Emperor.

“Two regiments of volunteers from the Faubourg St. Antoine, accompanied by a countless multitude, marched to the gates of the Elysée. A deputation waited upon the Emperor, stating that the traitorous Chamber of Deputies was about to sell France again to the Bourbons, and entreating him to take the reins of government into his own hands, as on the 18th Brumaire.” The Emperor replied, “You recall to my remembrance the 18th Brumaire, but you forget that the circumstances are not the same. On the 18th Brumaire the nation was unanimous in desiring a [466] change. A feeble effort only was necessary to effect what they so much desired. Now it would require floods of French blood, and never shall a single drop be shed by me in defence of a cause purely personal. Putting the brute force of the mass of the people into action would doubtless save Paris and insure me the crown without incurring the horrors of civil war, but it would likewise be risking thousands of French lives. *No! I like the regrets of France better than her crown.*”



NAPOLEON ON BOARD THE BELLEROPHON.

And so Napoleon, sacrificing himself to save the lives of the French people, dictated his second act of abdication, and resigned himself with amazing calmness to this overwhelming disaster. But when he threw himself upon the generosity of England, she treacherously entrapped him on the *Bellerophon*, and afterwards conveyed him as a captive to the desolate island of St. Helena, where she set spies over him to torture and insult him, and gloated with demoniacal cruelty over the reports they gave of his sufferings.

But England, with all her cunning and her base treachery, could not imprison the matchless

mind and soul of the great Napoleon. Though his body was chained to a dreary rock-prison, his genius was still the royal emperor of the world. His wondrous sayings at St. Helena have become the text-books for the students of all climes.

An English writer, who holds the position of a professor in the University at Cambridge, in a work lately published, thus gives to Napoleon his place in history: “There are times—and these are the most usual—when the most wonderful abilities would not have availed to raise any man from such a station as that in which Napoleon was born to the head of affairs. But the last years [467] of the eighteenth century formed an exceptional period, in which such an ascent was not only possible in France, but was quite possible without very extraordinary abilities. That particular part of Napoleon’s career to which the Alexanders and Hannibals can show nothing parallel, is, in fact, just the part which, in that exceptional time, was within the reach of an ordinary man. Thus the miracle of Bonaparte’s rise to power lies not so much in his personality as in the time.”

What a pity that this *English professor* could not have happened to have lived when *ordinary* men might have become so great!

One great secret of Napoleon’s success was the union of two striking qualities which are not often found together. His imagination was as ardent, and his mind as impetuous, as the most rash warrior; at the same time his judgment was as cool and correct as the ablest tactician. “His mind moved with the rapidity of lightning, and yet with the precision and steadiness of naked reason.” This power of thinking quick and thinking right is one of the rarest and yet most important qualities to insure success. As a military leader he has no superior in ancient or modern times. Instead of following what was then considered the scientific mode of warfare, he fell back upon his own genius, and originated tactics which filled his foes with horrified surprise. His power of combination was unequalled; his mind seemed vast enough for the management of the globe. And yet so perfect was the system and arrangement of his plans and thoughts that the slightest detail was never overlooked. His bravery amounted to rashness where his own life was concerned. He feared neither shot nor shell, and carelessly exposed himself whenever he thought his presence [468] was needed, replying to his soldiers, who often besought him not to risk his life so recklessly, “Courage! the bullet that is to kill me is not yet cast.”

As a thinker and statesman, Napoleon was as remarkable as he was as a politician and general. His genius was universal. Had he not been a Napoleon, he might have been a Shakespeare or a Bacon. He condensed a volume into a sentence; his words were as keen as the blade of a Damascus sword, and as freighted with ominous meaning as the tides of the ocean. He knew men; he knew books; he knew nature. In twenty-five lessons Napoleon became so familiar with the English language that he could read any English book without difficulty.

Another remarkable trait in Napoleon was his self-sufficiency. That self-confidence, which in smaller men would have been mad folly, was in him the most far-seeing wisdom. He needed no opinions of other men to govern his actions. He was sufficient unto himself. He took counsel only of his own genius and reason and marvellous intuitions.

His self-reliance was his power in the midst of danger and difficulties. He believed God had given him a great part to play in the world’s drama, and he meant to play it well. His plans were almost the inspirations of prophetic foreknowledge.

Napoleon was also the greatest of statesmen. His conversations at St. Helena display his wonderful knowledge of men and governments and laws and administrative legislation. Nowhere else can be found such profound thoughts upon politics, war, sciences, arts, or religion. He has been accused of infidelity. But few declarations of the Divinity of Christ, ever uttered by mortal lips, have equalled in far-reaching apprehension, and also acknowledgment of the divine [469] incomprehensibility of the mystery of the Godhead, as the sayings of Napoleon. Conversing with General Bertrand at St. Helena, Napoleon said:—

“I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ is not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and all other religions whatsoever the distance of infinity. Paganism was never accepted as truth by the wise men of Greece, neither by Socrates, Pythagoras, Plato, Anaxagoras, nor Pericles. But on the other side, the loftiest intellects since the advent of Christianity have had faith, a living faith, a practical faith, in the mysteries and doctrines of the Gospel. Paganism is the work of man. What do these gods so boastful know more than other mortals? these legislators, Greek or Roman? this Numa? this Lycurgus? these priests of India or of Memphis? this Confucius? this Mohammed? Absolutely nothing. They have made a perfect chaos of morals. There is not one among them all who has said anything new in reference to our future destiny, to the soul, to the essence of God, to the creation. As for me, I recognize the gods and these great men as beings like myself. They have performed a lofty part in their times, as I have done. Nothing announces them divine. On the contrary, there are numerous resemblances between them and myself,—foibles and errors which ally them to me and to humanity.

“It is not so with Christ. Everything in him astonishes me. His spirit overawes me, and his will confounds me. Between him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison; his birth, and the history of his life; the profundity of his doctrine, which grapples [470] the mightiest difficulties, and which is of those difficulties the most admirable solution; his Gospel, his apparition, his empire, his march across the ages and the realms,—everything is to me a prodigy, an insoluble mystery, which plunges me into a reverie from which I cannot escape,

a mystery which is there before my eyes, a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain. Here I see nothing human.

"Jesus borrowed nothing from our sciences. His religion is a revelation from an intelligence which certainly is not that of man. One can absolutely find nowhere, but in him alone, the imitation or the example of his life. He is not a philosopher, since he advances by miracles, and from the first his disciples worshipped him. He persuades them far more by an appeal to the heart, than by any display of method and of logic. Neither did he impose upon them any preliminary studies or any knowledge of letters. All his religion consists in *believing*. In fact, the sciences and philosophy avail nothing for salvation. He has nothing to do but with the soul, and to that alone he brings his Gospel. The soul is sufficient for him, as he is sufficient for the soul. I search in vain in history to find a parallel to Jesus Christ, or anything which can approach the Gospel. Neither history, nor humanity, nor the ages, nor nature, can offer me anything with which I am able to compare it or explain it. The more I consider the Gospel, the more I am assured that there is nothing there which is not beyond the march of events, and above the human mind.

"You speak of Cæsar, of Alexander, of their conquests, and of the enthusiasm they enkindled in the hearts of their soldiers; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests with an army faithful and entirely devoted to his memory? My armies have forgotten me, even while living, as [471] the Carthaginian army forgot Hannibal. Such is our power! A single battle lost crushes us, and adversity scatters our friends.

"Can you conceive of Cæsar, the eternal emperor of the Roman Senate, from the depths of his mausoleum governing the empire, watching over the destinies of Rome? Such is the history of the invasion and conquest of the world by Christianity. Such is the power of the God of the Christians, and such is the perpetual miracle of the progress of the faith and of the government of his Church. Nations pass away, thrones crumble, but the Church remains. In every other existence but that of Christ, how many imperfections! From the first day to the last he is the same, always the same, majestic and simple, infinitely firm and infinitely gentle. Christ proved that he was the Son of the Eternal by his disregard of time. All his doctrines signify one and the same thing,—*Eternity*.

"The Gospel is not a book; it is a living being, with an action, a power which invades everything that opposes its extension. Behold it upon this table, this Book surpassing all others" (here he solemnly placed his hand upon it); "I never omit to read it, and every day with the same pleasure. Nowhere is to be found such a series of beautiful ideas, admirable moral maxims, which defile like the battalions of a celestial army, and which produce in our soul the same emotion which one experiences in contemplating the infinite expanse of the skies, resplendent in a summer's night with all the brilliance of the stars. Not only is our mind absorbed; it is controlled, and the soul can never go astray with this Book for its guide. Once master of our spirit, the faithful Gospel loves us. God even is our Friend, our Father, and truly our God. [472]

"What a proof of the divinity of Christ! With an empire so absolute, he has but one single end, —the spiritual amelioration of individuals, the purity of conscience, the union to that which is true, the holiness of the soul. So that Christ's greatest miracle undoubtedly is the reign of charity.

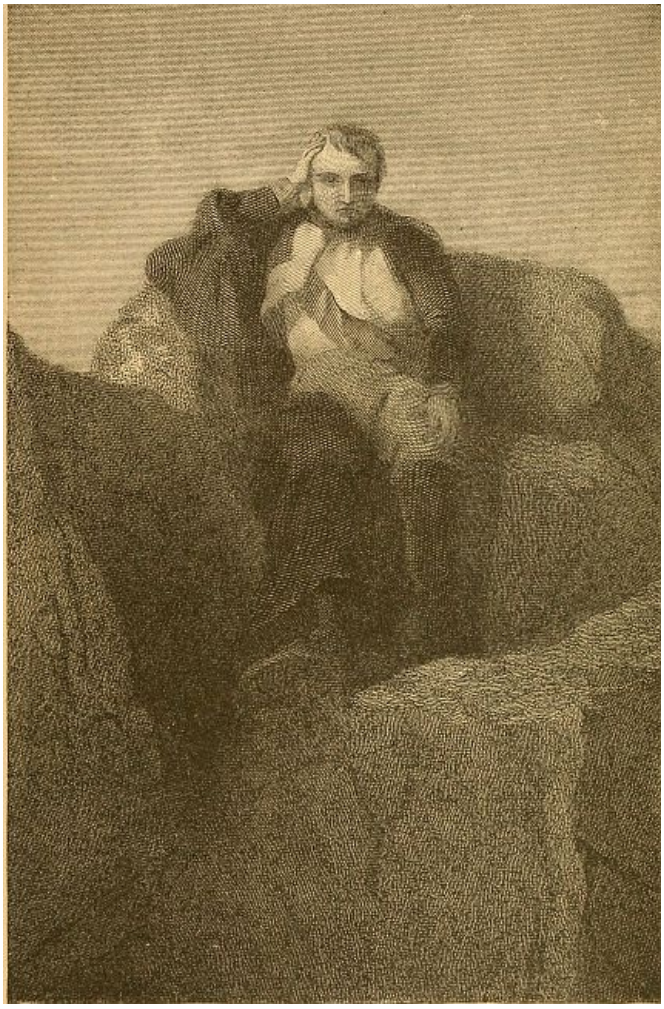
"Behold the destiny near at hand of him who has been called the great Napoleon! What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal reign of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending over all the earth. Is this to die? Is it not rather to live? The death of Christ! It is the death of God." Turning to General Bertrand, "If you do not perceive that Jesus Christ is God, very well; then I did wrong to make you a general." At length came the last, though to Napoleon most welcome, summons. A few days before his death, he awoke one morning, saying, "I have just seen my good Josephine, but she would not embrace me. She disappeared at the moment when I was about to take her in my arms. She was seated there. It seemed to me that I had seen her yesterday evening. She is not changed. She is still the same, full of devotion to me. She told me that we were about to see each other again, never more to part."

The disease progressed rapidly, and the dying hour drew near. It was the month of May, 1821. A violent storm raged with wild fury on that rocky prison-isle, as the spirit of the great Napoleon was freeing itself from its earthly fetters. His few faithful friends who shared his exile, stood weeping around his couch. In the solemn silence of that sacred hour his loved voice was once more faintly heard: "*France! Army! Head of the Army! Josephine!*" and the heart of Napoleon I. [473] ceased to beat. "*Isle of Elba! Napoleon!*" had been the last words of the loving and forgiving Josephine. "France! the Army! Josephine!" were the last images which lingered in the heart, and the last words which trembled on the lips of the dying emperor.

"When the prejudice, and falsehood, and hatred of his enemies shall disappear, and the world can gaze impartially on this plebeian soldier, rising to the throne of an empire, measuring his single intellect with the proudest kings of Europe, and coming off victorious from the encounter, rising above the prejudices and follies of his age, 'making kings of plebeians, and plebeians of kings,' grasping, as by intuition, all military and political science, expending with equal facility his vast energies on war or peace, turning with the same profound thought from fierce battles to commerce, and trade, and finances; when the world can calmly thus contemplate him, his amazing genius will receive that homage which envy and ignorance and hatred now withhold.

"And when the intelligent philanthropist shall understand the political and civil history of

Europe, and see how Napoleon broke up its systems of oppression and feudalism, proclaiming human rights in the ears of the world, till the continent shook with the rising murmurs of oppressed man; study well the changes he introduced, without which human progress must have ceased; see the great public works he established, the institutions he founded, the laws he proclaimed, and the civil liberty he restored; and then, remembering that the bloody wars that offset all these were waged by him in self-defence, and were equal rights struggling against exclusive despotism, he will regret that he has adopted the slanders of his foemen and the falsehoods of monarchists." [474]



THE ROCK AT ST. HELENA.

Alexander's conquests were only for selfish glory; he cared not for his people, and little for his soldiers. Cæsar's triumphs were for his own personal honor and power. The wars of Frederick the Great were nearly all unjust and aggressive, and he openly asserted his selfish ambition. But Napoleon, equalling them all in the brilliancy of his conquests, stands so far above them, as the idol of his people and his soldiers, as a man of incorruptible character, in the midst of temptations as great as any which have beset mortal men, as an intellectual genius, with a mind so phenomenal as to make him almost a miracle in far-seeing intuitions and marvellous accomplishment,—that he must be acknowledged, not only as the most famous of all the rulers of the world, but as the greatest uninspired man that ever lived. The history of most men terminates with the grave. But Napoleon's story ended not with his lonely death upon the dreary Isle of St. Helena. Each year his memory was growing brighter. Each year the French people realized more and more the irreparable loss they had sustained. The heart-melting story of his hardships at St. Helena was told over and over again in his beloved France, till at last the nation rose as one man to do his memory honor. Just twenty-five years from the time when Napoleon was landed a captive upon the Island of St. Helena, his sacred remains were brought from their humble resting-place upon that rocky isle, and placed in the magnificent mausoleum prepared for them in the Church of the Invalides. On the anniversary of the great victory of Austerlitz, the two funeral frigates entered the harbor of Cherbourg. Three ships of war, the *Austerlitz*, the *Friedland*, and the *Tilsit*, immediately encircled [475] the ship which bore the sacred remains. All the forts, batteries, and warships fired a salute. All France flocked to the cities and villages through which the funeral cortège was to pass.

At four o'clock, on the afternoon of the 14th of December, 1840, the flotilla arrived at Courbevoie, a small village four miles from Paris. Here the remains were to be transferred from the steamer to the shore. As the funeral barge sailed up the Seine, a colossal statue of Josephine, which had been erected on the shore, offered an appropriate and fitting welcome. Her fair form and face seemed to greet the return of her idolized husband. Maria Louisa, the daughter of the Cæsars, was then living ingloriously at Parma. No one thought of her. But at last Josephine and Napoleon were united together in sacred memories on earth, as their spirits had already been reunited in heaven.

"A Grecian temple one hundred feet high was constructed at the termination of the wharf, under which the body was to lie in state until transferred to the funeral car. Here Sergeant Hubert, who for nineteen years had kept watch at the solitary grave of Napoleon at St. Helena, landed. All the generals gathered around him, and he was welcomed by the people with deep emotion. The imperial funeral car was composed of five distinct parts, the basement, the pedestal, the Caryatides, the shield, and the cenotaph. The basement rested on four massive gilt wheels. It was profusely adorned with rich ornaments which were covered with frosted gold. Upon this basement stood groups of cherubs, seven feet high, supporting a pedestal eighteen feet long, covered with burnished gold. This pedestal was hung with purple velvet embroidered with gold. Upon it stood fourteen Caryatides, antique figures larger than life, and entirely covered [476] with gold, supporting with their heads and hands an immense shield of solid gold. This shield was of oval form, and eighteen feet in length, and was richly decorated. Upon the top of this shield, nearly fifty feet from the ground, was placed the cenotaph, an exact copy of Napoleon's coffin. It was slightly veiled with purple crape embroidered with golden bees. On the cenotaph, upon a velvet cushion, were placed the sceptre, the sword of justice, the imperial crown, in gold and

embellished with precious stones.

“The Church of the Invalides had been magnificently adorned for the solemn ceremony. Thirty-six thousand spectators were seated upon immense platforms on the esplanade of the Invalides. Six thousand spectators thronged the seats of the spacious portico. In the interior of the church were assembled the clergy, the members of the Chambers of Deputies and of Peers, and all the members of the royal family and other distinguished personages from France and Europe.

“As the coffin, preceded by the Prince de Joinville, was borne along the nave upon the shoulders of thirty-two of Napoleon’s Old Guard, all rose and bowed in homage to the mighty dead.” Louis Philippe, surrounded by the great officers of state, then stepped forward to receive the remains.

“Sire,” said the prince, “I present to you the body of the Emperor Napoleon.”

“I receive it,” replied the king, “in the name of France.” Then taking from the hand of Marshal Soult the sword of Napoleon, and presenting it to General Bertrand, he said, “General, I charge you to place this glorious sword of the Emperor upon his coffin.”

Beneath the lofty dome of the church, where the massive tomb of Napoleon has since been [477] erected, a magnificent cenotaph in the form of a temple had been reared. Within this richly decorated catafalque the coffin of Napoleon was reverently and solemnly placed, thus fulfilling the last wish of the Emperor, expressed in these memorable words, “It is my wish that my ashes may repose on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people whom I have loved so well.”

“He who united in himself alone the glory of Alexander, of Cæsar, of Charlemagne, and of Louis XIV., took his place in the Invalides, which, during his life, he had marked as the place of heroes.” His devoted Generals Bertrand and Duroc now lie beside him. A few aged veterans of the Old Guard still watch over him. The sunlight, softened by the rich tints of the costly windows, falls lovingly upon his tomb, and his cherished memory lives in the hearts of his beloved people, growing more beautiful, more triumphantly venerated, and sacredly respected with each passing year. As his faithful veterans cast their crowns of flowers at the foot of his coffin, with trembling voices they lovingly though mournfully cried, “*Vive l’Empereur!*” and this loved Emperor still lives in the hearts of his people, royally enshrined in a nation’s undying love.

Transcriber’s Notes:

Obvious punctuation errors repaired. Warenne, Earl of Surrey, was spelled both as Warren and Warrene throughout the text. This was retained. Varied hyphenation retained as printed.

Page xi, “Kremlin” changed to “Krémlin” (The Krémlin of Moscow)

Page 15, “Aphrodite” changed to “Aphrodité” (mother, Aphrodité, caught him)

Page 80, “enthusiam” changed to “enthusiasm” (enthusiasm of Alexander’s)

Page 157, “guantlets” changed to “gauntlets” (garnished with gauntlets)

Page 160, “Debonnaire” changed to “Débonnaire” (called Louis le Débonnaire)

Page 163, “Debonnaire” changed to “Débonnaire” (his son Louis le Débonnaire)

Page 272, “seige” changed to “siege” (and commenced its siege)

Page 279, “cortége” changed to “cortège” (brilliant *cortège* glittering)

Page 372, illustration caption, “KREMLIN” changed to “KRÉMLIN” (THE KRÉMLIN OF MOSCOW)

Page 441, “endeavord” changed to “endeavored” (enemies who endeavored)

Page 442, “Sardina” changed to “Sardinia” (king of Sardinia together)

Page 445, “pontroon” changed to “pontoon” (and four pontoon trains)

Page 446, “striction” changed to “stricken” (terror-stricken inaction)

Page 454, “Friendland” changed to “Friedland” (of Friedland and Tilsit)

Page 454 “Tuilieries” changed to “Tuileries” (Tuileries in a splendid)

Page 460, “Kremlin” changed to “Krémlin” (established in the Krémlin)

Page 461, “Lutzen” changed to “Lützen” (of Lützen, which is)

Page 473, “falshood” changed to “falsehood” (prejudice, and falsehood)

Page 475, “cortege” changed to “cortège” (funeral cortège was to pass)

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