

History of the United Netherlands, 1590b eBook

History of the United Netherlands, 1590b by John Lothrop Motley

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HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 62

History of the United Netherlands, 1590(b)

CHAPTER XXIII.

Philip's scheme of aggrandizement—Projected invasion of France— Internal condition of France—Character of Henry of Navarre— Preparation for action—Battle of Ivry— Victory of the French king over the League—Reluctance of the King to attack the French capital—Siege of Paris—The pope indisposed towards the League— Extraordinary demonstration of ecclesiastics—Influence of the priests—Extremities of the siege—Attempted negotiation—State of Philip's army—Difficult position of Farnese —March of the allies to the relief of Paris—Lagny taken and the city relieved—Desertion of the king's army—Siege of Corbeil—Death of Pope Sixtus V.— Re-capture of Lagny and Corbeil—Return of Parma to the Netherlands —Result of the expedition.



The scene of the narrative shifts to France. The history of the United Netherlands at this epoch is a world-history. Were it not so, it would have far less of moral and instruction for all time than it is really capable of affording. The battle of liberty against despotism was now fought in the hop-fields of Brabant or the polders of Friesland, now in the narrow seas which encircle England, and now on the sunny plains of Dauphiny, among the craggy inlets of Brittany, or along the high roads and rivers which lead to the gates of Paris. But everywhere a noiseless, secret, but ubiquitous negotiation was speeding with never an instant's pause to accomplish the work which lansquenettes and riders, pikemen and carabineers were contending for on a hundred battle-fields and amid a din of arms which for a quarter of a century had been the regular hum of human industry. For nearly a generation of mankind, Germans and Hollanders, Englishmen, Frenchmen,



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Scotchmen, Irishmen, Spaniards and Italians seemed to be born into the world mainly to fight for or against a system of universal monarchy, conceived for his own benefit by a quiet old man who passed his days at a writing desk in a remote corner of Europe. It must be confessed that Philip II. gave the world work enough. Whether—had the peoples governed themselves—their energies might not have been exerted in a different direction, and on the whole have produced more of good to the human race than came of all this blood and awe, may be questioned.

But the divine right of kings, associating itself with the power supreme of the Church, was struggling to maintain that old mastery of mankind which awakening reason was inclined to dispute. Countries and nations being regarded as private property to be inherited or bequeathed by a few favoured individuals—provided always that those individuals were obedient to the chief-priest—it had now become right and proper for the Spanish monarch to annex Scotland, England, and France to the very considerable possessions which were already his own. Scotland he claimed by virtue of the expressed wish of Mary to the exclusion of her heretic son.

France, which had been unjustly usurped by another family in times past to his detriment, and which only a mere human invention—a “pleasantry” as Alva had happily termed it, called the “Salic law”—prevented from passing quietly to his daughter, as heiress to her mother, daughter of Henry II., he was now fully bent upon making his own without further loss of time. England, in consequence of the mishap of the year eighty-eight, he was inclined to defer appropriating until the possession of the French coasts, together with those of the Netherlands, should enable him to risk the adventure with assured chances of success.

The Netherlands were fast slipping beyond his control, to be sure, as he engaged in these endless schemes; and ill-disposed people of the day said that the king was like Aesop’s dog, lapping the river dry in order to get at the skins floating on the surface. The Duke of Parma was driven to his wits’ ends for expedients, and beside himself with vexation, when commanded to withdraw his ill-paid and mutinous army from the Provinces for the purpose of invading France. Most importunate were the appeals and potent the arguments by which he attempted to turn Philip from his purpose. It was in vain. Spain was the great, aggressive, overshadowing power at that day, before whose plots and whose violence the nations alternately trembled, and it was France that now stood in danger of being conquered or dismembered by the common enemy of all. That unhappy kingdom, torn by intestine conflict, naturally invited the ambition and the greediness of foreign powers. Civil war had been its condition, with brief intervals, for a whole generation of mankind. During the last few years, the sword had been never sheathed, while “the holy Confederacy” and the Bearnese



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struggled together for the mastery. Religion was the mantle under which the chiefs on both sides concealed their real designs as they led on their followers year after year to the desperate conflict. And their followers, the masses, were doubtless in earnest. A great principle—the relation of man to his Maker and his condition in a future world as laid down by rival priesthoods—has in almost every stage of history had power to influence the multitude to fury and to deluge the world in blood. And so long as the superstitious element of human nature enables individuals or combinations of them to dictate to their fellow-creatures those relations, or to dogmatize concerning those conditions— to take possession of their consciences in short, and to interpose their mummeries between man and his Creator—it is, probable that such scenes as caused the nations to shudder, throughout so large a portion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will continue to repeat themselves at intervals in various parts of the earth. Nothing can be more sublime than the self-sacrifice, nothing more demoniac than the crimes, which human creatures have seemed always ready to exhibit under the name of religion.

It was and had been really civil war in France. In the Netherlands it had become essentially a struggle for independence against a foreign monarch; although the germ out of which both conflicts had grown to their enormous proportions was an effort of the multitude to check the growth of papacy. In France, accordingly, civil war, attended by that gaunt sisterhood, murder, pestilence, and famine, had swept from the soil almost everything that makes life valuable. It had not brought in its train that extraordinary material prosperity and intellectual development at which men wondered in the Netherlands, and to which allusion has just been made. But a fortunate conjunction of circumstances had now placed Henry of Navarre in a position of vantage. He represented the principle of nationality, of French unity. It was impossible to deny that he was in the regular line of succession, now that luckless Henry of Valois slept with his fathers, and the principle of nationality might perhaps prove as vital a force as attachment to the Roman Church. Moreover, the adroit and unscrupulous Bearnese knew well how to shift the mantle of religion from one shoulder to the other, to serve his purposes or the humours of those whom he addressed.

“The King of Spain would exclude me from the kingdom and heritage of my father because of my religion,” he said to the Duke of Saxony; “but in that religion I am determined to persist so long as I shall live.” The hand was the hand of Henry, but it was the voice of Duplessis Mornay.

“Were there thirty crowns to win,” said he, at about the same time to the States of France, “I would not change my religion on compulsion, the dagger at my throat. Instruct me, instruct me, I am not obstinate.” There spoke the wily freethinker, determined not to be juggled out of what he considered his property by fanatics or priests of either church. Had Henry been a real devotee, the fate of Christendom might

have been different. The world has long known how much misery it is in the power of crowned bigots to inflict.

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On the other hand, the Holy League, the sacred Confederacy, was catholic or nothing. Already it was more papist than the pope, and loudly denounced Sixtus V. as a Huguenot because he was thought to entertain a weak admiration both for Henry the heretic and for the Jezebel of England.

But the holy confederacy was bent on destroying the national government of France, and dismembering the national domain. To do this the pretext of trampling out heresy and indefinitely extending the power of Rome, was most influential with the multitude, and entitled the leaders to enjoy immense power for the time being, while maturing their schemes for acquiring permanent possession of large fragments of the national territory. Mayenne, Nemours, Aumale, Mercoeur longed to convert temporary governments into independent principalities. The Duke of Lorraine looked with longing eyes on Verdun, Sedan, and the other fair cities within the territories contiguous—to his own domains. The reckless house of Savoy; with whom freebooting and landrobbery seemed geographical, and hereditary necessities, was busy on the southern borders, while it seemed easy enough for Philip, II., in right of his daughter, to secure at least the duchy of Brittany before entering on the sovereignty of the whole kingdom.

To the eyes of the world at large: France might well seem in a condition of hopeless disintegration; the restoration of its unity and former position among the nations, under the government of a single chief, a weak and wicked dream. Furious and incessant were the anathemas hurled on the head of the Bearnese for his persistence in drowning the land in blood in the hope of recovering a national capital which never could be his, and of wresting from the control of the confederacy that power. which, whether usurped or rightful, was considered, at least by the peaceably inclined, to have become a solid fact.

The poor puppet locked in the tower of Fontenay, and entitled Charles X.; deceived and scared no one. Such money as there was might be coined, in its name, but Madam League reigned supreme in Paris. The confederates, inspired by the eloquence of a cardinal legate, and supplied with funds by the faithful, were ready to dare a thousand deaths rather than submit to the rule of a tyrant and heretic.

What was an authority derived from the laws of the land and the history of the race compared with the dogmas of Rome and the trained veterans of Spain? It remained to be seen whether nationality or bigotry would triumph. But in the early days of 1590 the prospects of nationality were not encouraging.

Francois de Luxembourg, due de Pincey, was in Rome at that moment, deputed by such catholic nobles of France as were friendly to Henry of Navarre. Sixtus might perhaps be influenced as to the degree of respect to be accorded to the envoy's representations by the events of the campaign about to open. Meantime the legate Gaetano, young, rich, eloquent, unscrupulous, distinguished alike for the splendour of his house and the brilliancy of his intellect, had arrived in Paris.



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Followed by a great train of adherents he had gone down to the House of Parliament, and was about to seat himself under the dais reserved for the king, when Brisson, first President of Parliament, plucked him back by the arm, and caused him to take a seat immediately below his own.

Deeply was the bold president to expiate this defence of king and law against the Holy League. For the moment however the legate contented himself with a long harangue, setting forth the power of Rome, while Brisson replied by an oration magnifying the grandeur of France.

Soon afterwards the cardinal addressed himself to the counteraction of Henry's projects of conversion. For, well did the subtle priest understand that in purging himself of heresy, the Bearnese was about to cut the ground from beneath his enemies' feet. In a letter to the archbishops and bishops of France, he argued the matter at length. Especially he denied the necessity or the legality of an assembly of all the prelates of France, such as Henry desired to afford him the requisite "instruction" as to the respective merits of the Roman and the reformed Church. Certainly, he urged, the Prince of Bearne could hardly require instruction as to the tenets of either, seeing that at different times he had faithfully professed both.

But while benches of bishops and doctors of the Sorbonne were burnishing all the arms in ecclesiastical and legal arsenals for the approaching fray, the sound of louder if not more potent artillery began to be heard in the vicinity of Paris. The candid Henry, while seeking ghostly instruction with eagerness from his papistical patrons, was equally persevering in applying for the assistance of heretic musketeers and riders from his protestant friends in England, Holland, Germany, and Switzerland.

Queen Elizabeth and the States-General vied with each other in generosity to the great champion of protestantism, who was combating the holy league so valiantly, and rarely has a great historical figure presented itself to the world so bizarre of aspect, and under such shifting perplexity of light and shade, as did the Bearnese in the early spring of 1590.

The hope of a considerable portion of the catholic nobility of his realm, although himself an excommunicated heretic; the mainstay of Calvinism while secretly bending all his energies to effect his reconciliation with the pope; the idol of the austere and grimly puritanical, while himself a model of profligacy; the leader of the earnest and the true, although false as water himself in every relation in which human beings can stand to each other; a standardbearer of both great branches of the Christian Church in an age when religion was the atmosphere of men's daily lives, yet finding his sincerest admirer, and one of his most faithful allies, in the Grand Turk,

[A portion of the magnificently protective letter of Sultan Amurath, in which he complimented Henry on his religious stedfastness, might almost have made the king's cheek tingle.]



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the representative of national liberty and human rights against regal and sacerdotal absolutism, while himself a remorseless despot by nature and education, and a believer in no rights of the people save in their privilege to be ruled by himself; it seems strange at first view that Henry of Navarre should have been for centuries so heroic and popular an image. But he was a soldier, a wit, a consummate politician; above all, he was a man, at a period when to be a king was often to be something much less or much worse.

To those accustomed to weigh and analyse popular forces it might well seem that he was now playing an utterly hopeless game. His capital garrisoned by the Pope and the King of Spain, with its grandees and its populace scoffing at his pretence of authority and loathing his name; with an exchequer consisting of what he could beg or borrow from Queen Elizabeth—most parsimonious of sovereigns reigning over the half of a small island—and from the States-General governing a half-born, half-drowned little republic, engaged in a quarter of a century's warfare with the greatest monarch in the world; with a wardrobe consisting of a dozen shirts and five pocket-handkerchiefs, most of them ragged, and with a commissariat made up of what could be brought in the saddle-bags of his Huguenot cavaliers who came to the charge with him to-day, and to-morrow were dispersed again to their mountain fastnesses; it did not seem likely on any reasonable theory of dynamics that the power of the Bearnese was capable of outweighing Pope and Spain, and the meaner but massive populace of France, and the Sorbonne, and the great chiefs of the confederacy, wealthy, long descended, allied to all the sovereigns of Christendom, potent in territorial possessions and skilful in wielding political influences.

“The Bearnese is poor but a gentleman of good family,” said the cheerful Henry, and it remained to-be seen whether nationality, unity, legitimate authority, history, and law would be able to neutralise the powerful combination of opposing elements.

The king had been besieging Dreux and had made good progress in reducing the outposts of the city. As it was known that he was expecting considerable reinforcements of English ships, Netherlanders, and Germans, the chiefs of the league issued orders from Paris for an attack before he should thus be strengthened.

For Parma, unwillingly obeying the stringent commands of his master, had sent from Flanders eighteen hundred picked cavalry under Count Philip Egmont to join the army of Mayenne. This force comprised five hundred Belgian heavy dragoons under the chief nobles of the land, together with a selection, in even proportions, of Walloon, German, Spanish, and Italian troopers.

Mayenne accordingly crossed the Seine at Mantes with an army of ten thousand foot, and, including Egmont's contingent, about four thousand horse. A force under Marshal d'Aumont, which lay in Ivry at the passage of the Eure, fell back on his approach and joined the remainder of the king's army. The siege of Dreux was abandoned; and Henry

withdrew to the neighbourhood of Nonancourt. It was obvious that the duke meant to offer battle, and it was rare that the king under any circumstances could be induced to decline a combat.



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On the night of the 12th-13th March, Henry occupied Saint Andre, a village situated on an elevated and extensive plain four leagues from Nonancourt, in the direction of Ivry, fringed on three sides by villages and by a wood, and commanding a view of all the approaches from the country between the Seine and Eure. It would have been better had Mayenne been beforehand with him, as the sequel proved; but the duke was not famed for the rapidity of his movements. During the greater part of the night, Henry was employed in distributing his orders for that conflict which was inevitable on the following day. His army was drawn up according to a plan prepared by himself, and submitted to the most experienced of his generals for their approval. He then personally visited every portion of the encampment, speaking words of encouragement to his soldiers, and perfecting his arrangements for the coming conflict. Attended by Marshals d'Aumont and Biron he remained on horseback during a portion of the night, having ordered his officers to their tents and reconnoitred as well as he could the position of the enemy. Towards morning he retired to his headquarters at Fourainville, where he threw himself half-dressed on his truckle bed, and although the night was bitterly cold, with no covering but his cloak. He was startled from his slumber before the dawn by a movement of lights in the enemy's camp, and he sprang to his feet supposing that the duke was stealing a march upon him despite all his precautions. The alarm proved to be a false one, but Henry lost no time in ordering his battle. His cavalry he divided in seven troops or squadrons. The first, forming the left wing, was a body of three hundred under Marshal d'Aumont, supported by two regiments of French infantry. Next, separated by a short interval, was another troop of three hundred under the Duke of Montpensier, supported by two other regiments of foot, one Swiss and one German. In front of Montpensier was Baron Biron the younger, at the head of still another body of three hundred. Two troops of cuirassiers, each four hundred strong, were on Biron's left, the one commanded by the Grand Prior of France, Charles d'Angouleme, the other by Monsieur de Givry. Between the Prior and Givry were six pieces of heavy artillery, while the battalia, formed of eight hundred horse in six squadrons, was commanded by the king in person, and covered on both sides by English and Swiss infantry, amounting to some four thousand in all. The right wing was under the charge of old Marshal Biron, and comprised three troops of horse, numbering one hundred and fifty each, two companies of German riders, and four regiments of French infantry. These numbers, which are probably given with as much accuracy as can be obtained, show a force of about three thousand horse and twelve thousand foot.



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The Duke of Mayenne, seeing too late the advantage of position which he might have easily secured the day before, led his army forth with the early light, and arranged it in an order not very different from that adopted by the king, and within cannon-shot of his lines. The right wing under Marshal de la Chatre consisted of three regiments of French and one of Germans, supporting three regiments of Spanish lancers, two cornets of German riders under the Bastard of Brunswick, and four hundred cuirassiers. The battalia, which was composed of six hundred splendid cavalry, all noblemen of France, guarding the white banner of the Holy League, and supported by a column of three thousand Swiss and two thousand French infantry, was commanded by Mayenne in person, assisted by his half-brother, the Duke of Nemours. In front of the infantry was a battery of six cannon and three culverines. The left wing was commanded by Marshal de Rene, with six regiments of French and Lorrainers, two thousand Germans, six hundred French cuirassiers, and the mounted troopers of Count Egmont. It is probable that Mayenne's whole force, therefore, amounted to nearly four thousand cavalry and at least thirteen thousand foot.

Very different was the respective appearance of the two armies, so far, especially, as regarded the horsemen on both sides. Gay in their gilded armour and waving plumes, with silken scarves across their shoulders, and the fluttering favours of fair ladies on their arms or in their helmets, the brilliant champions of the Holy Catholic Confederacy clustered around the chieftains of the great house of Guise, impatient for the conflict. It was like a muster for a brilliant and chivalrous tournament. The Walloon and Flemish nobles, outrivalling even the self-confidence of their companions in arms, taunted them with their slowness. The, impetuous Egmont, burning to eclipse the fame of his ill-fated father at Gravelines and St. Quintin in the same holy cause, urged on the battle with unseemly haste, loudly proclaiming that if the French were faint-hearted he would himself give a good account of the Navarrese prince without any assistance from them.

A cannon-shot away, the grim puritan nobles who had come forth from their mountain fastnesses to do battle for king and law and for the rights of conscience against the Holy League—men seasoned in a hundred battle-fields, clad all in iron, with no dainty ornaments nor holiday luxury of warfare—knelt on the ground, smiting their mailed breasts with iron hands, invoking blessings on themselves and curses and confusion on their enemies in the coming conflict, and chanting a stern psalm of homage to the God of battles and of wrath. And Henry of France and Navarre, descendant of Lewis the Holy and of Hugh the Great, beloved chief of the Calvinist cavaliers, knelt among his heretic brethren, and prayed and chanted with them. But not the staunchest Huguenot of them all, not Duplessis, nor D'Aubigne, nor De la Noue with the iron arm, was more devoted on that day to crown and country than were such papist supporters of the rightful heir as had sworn to conquer the insolent foreigner on the soil of France or die.

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When this brief prelude was over, Henry made an address to his soldiers, but its language has not been preserved. It is known, however, that he wore that day his famous snow-white plume, and that he ordered his soldiers, should his banner go down in the conflict, to follow wherever and as long as that plume should be seen waving on any part of the field. He had taken a position by which his troops had the sun and wind in their backs, so that the smoke rolled toward the enemy and the light shone in their eyes. The combat began with the play of artillery, which soon became so warm that Egmont, whose cavalry—suffering and galled—soon became impatient, ordered a charge. It was a most brilliant one. The heavy troopers of Flanders and Hainault, following their spirited chieftain, dashed upon old Marshal Biron, routing his cavalry, charging clean up to the Huguenot guns and sabring the cannoneers. The shock was square, solid, irresistible, and was followed up by the German riders under Eric of Brunswick, who charged upon the battalia of the royal army, where the king commanded in person.

There was a panic. The whole royal cavalry wavered, the supporting infantry recoiled, the day seemed lost before the battle was well begun. Yells of “Victory! Victory! up with the Holy League, down with the heretic Bearnese,” resounded through the Catholic squadrons. The king and Marshal Biron, who were near each other, were furious with rage, but already doubtful of the result. They exerted themselves to rally the troops under their immediate command, and to reform the shattered ranks.

The German riders and French lancers under Brunswick and Bassompierre had, however, not done their work as thoroughly as Egmont had done. The ground was so miry and soft that in the brief space which separated the hostile lines they had not power to urge their horses to full speed. Throwing away their useless lances, they came on at a feeble canter, sword in hand, and were unable to make a very vigorous impression on the more heavily armed troopers opposed to them. Meeting with a firm resistance to their career, they wheeled, faltered a little and fell a short distance back. Many of the riders being of the reformed religion, refused moreover to fire upon the Huguenots, and discharged their carbines in the air.

The king, whose glance on the battle-field was like inspiration, saw the blot and charged upon them in person with his whole battalia of cavalry. The veteran Biron followed hard upon the snow-white plume. The scene was changed, victory succeeded to impending defeat, and the enemy was routed. The riders and cuirassiers, broken into a struggling heap of confusion, strewed the ground with their dead bodies, or carried dismay into the ranks of the infantry as they strove to escape. Brunswick went down in the melee, mortally wounded as it was believed. Egmont renewing the charge at the head of his victorious Belgian troopers, fell dead with a musket-ball through his heart. The shattered German and Walloon cavalry, now pricked forward by the lances of their companions, under the passionate commands of Mayenne and Aumale, now fading back before the furious charges of the Huguenots, were completely overthrown and cut to pieces.



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Seven times did Henry of Navarre in person lead his troopers to the charge; but suddenly, in the midst of the din of battle and the cheers of victory, a message of despair went from lip to lip throughout the royal lines. The king had disappeared. He was killed, and the hopes of Protestantism and of France were fallen for ever with him. The white standard of his battalia had been seen floating wildly and purposelessly over the field; for his bannerman, Pot de Rhodes, a young noble of Dauphiny, wounded mortally in the head, with blood streaming over his face and blinding his sight, was utterly unable to control his horse, who galloped hither and thither at his own caprice, misleading many troopers who followed in his erratic career. A cavalier, armed in proof, and wearing the famous snow-white plume, after a hand-to-hand struggle with a veteran of Count Bossu's regiment, was seen to fall dead by the side of the bannerman: The Fleming, not used to boast, loudly asserted that he had slain the Bearnese, and the news spread rapidly over the battle-field. The defeated Confederates gained new courage, the victorious Royalists were beginning to waver, when suddenly, between the hostile lines, in the very midst of the battle, the king galloped forward, bareheaded, covered with blood and dust, but entirely unhurt. A wild shout of "Vive le Roi!" rang through the air. Cheerful as ever, he addressed a few encouraging words to his soldiers, with a smiling face, and again led a charge. It was all that was necessary to complete the victory. The enemy broke and ran away on every side in wildest confusion, followed by the royalist cavalry, who sabred them as they fled. The panic gained the foot-soldiers, who should have supported the cavalry, but had not been at all engaged in the action. The French infantry threw away their arms as they rushed from the field and sought refuge in the woods. The Walloons were so expeditious in the race, that they never stopped till they gained their own frontier. The day was hopelessly lost, and although Mayenne had conducted himself well in the early part of the day, it was certain that he was excelled by none in the celerity of his flight when the rout had fairly begun. Pausing to draw breath as he gained the wood, he was seen to deal blows with his own sword among the mob of fugitives, not that he might rally them to their flag and drive them back to another encounter, but because they encumbered his own retreat.

The Walloon carbineers, the German riders, and the French lancers, disputing as to the relative blame to be attached to each corps, began shooting and sabring each other, almost before they were out of the enemy's sight. Many were thus killed. The lansquenets were all put to the sword. The Swiss infantry were allowed to depart for their own country on pledging themselves not again to bear arms against Henry IV.



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It is probable that eight hundred of the leaguers were either killed on the battle-field or drowned in the swollen river in their retreat. About one-fourth of that number fell in the army of the king. It is certain that of the contingent from the obedient Netherlands, two hundred and seventy, including their distinguished general, lost their lives. The Bastard of Brunswick, crawling from beneath a heap of slain, escaped with life. Mayenne lost all his standards and all the baggage of his army, while the army itself was for a time hopelessly dissolved.

Few cavalry actions have attained a wider celebrity in history than the fight of Ivry. Yet there have been many hard-fought battles, where the struggle was fiercer and closer, where the issue was for a longer time doubtful, where far more lives on either side were lost, where the final victory was immediately productive of very much greater results, and which, nevertheless, have sunk into hopeless oblivion. The personal details which remain concerning the part enacted by the adventurous king at this most critical period of his career, the romantic interest which must always gather about that ready-witted, ready-sworded Gascon, at the moment when, to contemporaries, the result of all his struggles seemed so hopeless or at best so doubtful; above all, the numerous royal and princely names which embellished the roll-call of that famous passage of arms, and which were supposed, in those days at least, to add such lustre to a battle-field, as humbler names, however illustrious by valour or virtue, could never bestow, have made this combat for ever famous.

Yet it is certain that the most healthy moral, in military affairs, to be derived from the event, is that the importance of a victory depends less upon itself than on the use to be made of it. Mayenne fled to Mantes, the Duke of Nemours to Chartres, other leaders of the League in various directions, Mayenne told every body he met that the Bearnese was killed, and that although his own army was defeated, he should soon have another one on foot. The same intelligence was communicated to the Duke of Parma, and by him to Philip. Mendoza and the other Spanish agents went about Paris spreading the news of Henry's death, but the fact seemed woefully to lack confirmation, while the proofs of the utter overthrow and shameful defeat of the Leaguers were visible on every side. The Parisians—many of whom the year before had in vain hired windows in the principal streets, in order to witness the promised entrance of the Bearnese, bound hand and foot, and with a gag in his mouth, to swell the triumph of Madam League—were incredulous as to the death now reported to them of this very lively heretic, by those who had fled so ignominiously from his troopers.



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De la None and the other Huguenot chieftains, earnestly urged upon Henry the importance of advancing upon Paris without an instant's delay, and it seems at least extremely probable that, had he done so, the capital would have fallen at once into his hands. It is the concurrent testimony of contemporaries that the panic, the destitution, the confusion would have made resistance impossible had a determined onslaught been made. And Henry had a couple of thousand horsemen flushed with victory, and a dozen thousand foot who had been compelled to look upon a triumph in which they had no opportunity of sharing: Success and emulation would have easily triumphed over dissension and despair.

But the king, yielding to the councils of Biron and other Catholics, declined attacking the capital, and preferred waiting the slow, and in his circumstances eminently hazardous, operations of a regular siege. Was it the fear of giving a signal triumph to the cause of Protestantism that caused the Huguenot leader—so soon to become a renegade—to pause in his career? Was it anxiety lest his victorious entrance into Paris might undo the diplomacy of his catholic envoys at Rome? or was it simply the mutinous condition of his army, especially of the Swiss mercenaries, who refused to advance a step unless their arrears of pay were at once furnished them out of the utterly empty exchequer of the king? Whatever may have been the cause of the delay, it is certain that the golden fruit of victory was not plucked, and that although the confederate army had rapidly dissolved, in consequence of their defeat, the king's own forces manifested as little cohesion.

And now began that slow and painful siege, the details of which are as terrible, but as universally known, as those of any chapters in the blood-stained history of the century. Henry seized upon the towns guarding the rivers Seine and Marne, twin nurses of Paris. By controlling the course of those streams as well as that of the Yonne and Oise—especially by taking firm possession of Lagny on the Marne, whence a bridge led from the Isle of France to the Brie country—great thoroughfare of wine and corn—and of Corbeil at the junction of the little river Essonne with the Seine—it was easy in that age to stop the vital circulation of the imperial city.

By midsummer, Paris, unquestionably the first city of Europe at that day, was in extremities, and there are few events in history in which our admiration is more excited by the power of mankind to endure almost preternatural misery, or our indignation more deeply aroused by the cruelty with which the sublimest principles of human nature may be made to serve the purposes of selfish ambition and grovelling superstition, than this famous leaguer.

Rarely have men at any epoch defended their fatherland against foreign oppression with more heroism than that which was manifested by the Parisians of 1590 in resisting religious toleration, and in obeying a foreign and priestly despotism. Men, women, and children cheerfully laid down their lives by thousands in order that the papal legate and

the king of Spain might trample upon that legitimate sovereign of France who was one day to become the idol of Paris and of the whole kingdom.



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A census taken at the beginning of the siege had showed a populace of two hundred thousand souls, with a sufficiency of provisions, it was thought, to last one month. But before the terrible summer was over—so completely had the city been invested—the bushel of wheat was worth three hundred and sixty crowns, rye and oats being but little cheaper. Indeed, grain might as well have cost three thousand crowns the bushel, for the prices recorded placed it beyond the reach of all but the extremely wealthy. The flesh of horses, asses, dogs, cats, rats had become rare luxuries. There was nothing cheap, said a citizen bitterly, but sermons. And the priests and monks of every order went daily about the streets, preaching fortitude in that great resistance to heresy, by which Paris was earning for itself a crown of glory, and promising the most direct passage to paradise for the souls of the wretched victims who fell daily, starved to death, upon the pavements. And the monks and priests did their work nobly, aiding the general resolution by the example of their own courage. Better fed than their fellow citizens, they did military work in trench, guard-house and rampart, as the population became rapidly unfit, from physical exhaustion, for the defence of the city.

The young Duke of Nemours, governor of the place, manifested as much resolution and conduct in bringing his countrymen to perdition as if the work in which he was engaged had been the highest and holiest that ever tasked human energies. He was sustained in his task by that proud princess, his own and Mayenne's mother, by Madame Montpensier, by the resident triumvirate of Spain, Mendoza, Commander Moreo, and John Baptist Tasais, by the cardinal legate Gaetano, and, more than all, by the sixteen chiefs of the wards, those municipal tyrants of the unhappy populace.

Pope Sixtus himself was by no means eager for the success of the League. After the battle of Ivry, he had most seriously inclined his ear to the representations of Henry's envoy, and showed much willingness to admit the victorious heretic once more into the bosom of the Church. Sixtus was not desirous of contributing to the advancement of Philip's power. He feared his designs on Italy, being himself most anxious at that time to annex Naples to the holy see. He had amassed a large treasure, but he liked best to spend it in splendid architecture, in noble fountains, in magnificent collections of art, science, and literature, and, above all, in building up fortunes for the children of his sister the washerwoman, and in allying them all to the most princely houses of Italy, while never allowing them even to mention the name of their father, so base was his degree; but he cared not to disburse from his hoarded dollars to supply the necessities of the League.



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But Gaetano, although he could wring but fifty thousand crowns from his Holiness after the fatal fight of Ivry, to further the good cause, was lavish in expenditures from his own purse and from other sources, and this too at a time when thirty-three per cent. interest was paid to the usurers of Antwerp for one month's loan of ready money. He was indefatigable, too, and most successful in his exhortations and ghostly consolations to the people. Those proud priests and great nobles were playing a reckless game, and the hopes of mankind beyond the grave were the counters on their table. For themselves there were rich prizes for the winning. Should they succeed in dismembering the fair land where they were enacting their fantastic parts, there were temporal principalities, great provinces, petty sovereignties, to be carved out of the heritage which the Bearnese claimed for his own. Obviously then, their consciences could never permit this shameless heretic, by a simulated conversion at the critical moment, to block their game and restore the national unity and laws. And even should it be necessary to give the whole kingdom, instead of the mere duchy of Brittany, to Philip of Spain, still there were mighty guerdons to be bestowed on his supporters before the foreign monarch could seat himself on the throne of Henry's ancestors.

As to the people who were fighting, starving, dying by thousands in this great cause, there were eternal rewards in another world profusely promised for their heroism instead of the more substantial bread and beef, for lack of which they were laying down their lives.

It was estimated that before July twelve thousand human beings in Paris had died, for want of food, within three months. But as there were no signs of the promised relief by the army of Parma and Mayenne, and as the starving people at times appeared faint-hearted, their courage was strengthened one day by a stirring exhibition.

An astonishing procession marched through the streets of the city, led by the Bishop of Senlis and the Prior of Chartreux, each holding a halberd in one hand and a crucifix in the other, and graced by the presence of the cardinal-legate, and of many prelates from Italy. A lame monk, adroitly manipulating the staff of a drum major, went hopping and limping before them, much to the amazement of the crowd. Then came a long file of monks—Capuchins, Bernardists, Minimes, Franciscans, Jacobins, Carmelites, and other orders—each with his cowl thrown back, his long robes trussed up, a helmet on his head, a cuirass on his breast, and a halberd in his hand. The elder ones marched first, grinding their teeth, rolling their eyes, and making other ferocious demonstrations. Then came the younger friars, similarly attired, all armed with arquebusses, which they occasionally and accidentally discharged to the disadvantage of the spectators, several of whom were killed or wounded on the spot. Among others a servant of Cardinal Gaetano was thus slain, and the event caused much commotion, until the cardinal proclaimed that a man thus killed in so holy a cause had gone straight to heaven and had taken his place among the just. It was impossible, thus argued the people in their simplicity, that so wise and virtuous a man as the cardinal should not know what was best.



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The procession marched to the church of our Lady of Loretto, where they solemnly promised to the blessed Virgin a lamp and ship of gold—should she be willing to use her influence in behalf of the suffering city—to be placed on her shrine as soon as the siege should be raised.

But these demonstrations, however cheering to the souls, had comparatively little effect upon the bodies of the sufferers. It was impossible to walk through the streets of Paris without stumbling over the dead bodies of the citizens. Trustworthy eye-witnesses of those dreadful days have placed the number of the dead during the summer at thirty thousand. A tumultuous assemblage of the starving and the forlorn rushed at last to the municipal palace, demanding peace or bread. The rebels were soon dispersed however by a charge, headed by the Chevalier d'Aumale, and assisted by the chiefs of the wards, and so soon as the riot was quelled, its ringleader, a leading advocate, Renaud by name, was hanged.

Still, but for the energy of the priests, it is doubtful whether the city could have been held by the Confederacy. The Duke of Nemours confessed that there were occasions when they never would have been able to sustain a determined onslaught, and they were daily expecting to see the Prince of Bearne battering triumphantly at their gates.

But the eloquence of the preachers, especially of the one-eyed father Boucher, sustained the fainting spirits of the people, and consoled the sufferers in their dying agonies by glimpses of paradise. Sublime was that devotion, superhuman that craft; but it is only by weapons from the armoury of the Unseen that human creatures can long confront such horrors in a wicked cause. Superstition, in those days at least, was a political force absolutely without limitation, and most adroitly did the agents of Spain and Rome handle its tremendous enginery against unhappy France. For the hideous details of the most dreadful sieges recorded in ancient or modern times were now reproduced in Paris. Not a revolutionary circumstance, at which the world had shuddered in the accounts of the siege of Jerusalem, was spared. Men devoured such dead vermin as could be found lying in the streets. They crowded greedily around stalls in the public squares where the skin, bones, and offal of such dogs, cats and unclean beasts as still remained for the consumption of the wealthier classes were sold to the populace. Over the doorways of these flesh markets might be read "Haec runt munera pro iis qui vitam pro Philippo profuderunt." Men stood in archways and narrow passages lying in wait for whatever stray dogs still remained at large, noosed them, strangled them, and like savage beasts of prey tore them to pieces and devoured them alive. And it sometimes happened, too, that the equally hungry dog proved the more successful in the foul encounter, and fed upon the man. A lady visiting the Duchess of Nemours—called for the high pretensions

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of her sons by her two marriages the queen-mother—complained bitterly that mothers in Paris had been compelled to kill their own children outright to save them from starving to death in lingering agony. “And if you are brought to that extremity,” replied the duchess, “as for the sake of our holy religion to be forced to kill your own children, do you think that so great a matter after all? What are your children made of more than other people’s children? What are we all but dirt and dust?” Such was the consolation administered by the mother of the man who governed Paris, and defended its gates against its lawful sovereign at the command of a foreigner; while the priests in their turn persuaded the populace that it was far more righteous to kill their own children, if they had no food to give them, than to obtain food by recognising a heretic king.

It was related too, and believed, that in some instances mothers had salted the bodies of their dead children and fed upon them, day by day, until the hideous repast would no longer support their own life. They died, and the secret was revealed by servants who had partaken of the food. The Spanish ambassador, Mendoza, advised recourse to an article of diet which had been used in some of the oriental sieges. The counsel at first was rejected as coming from the agent of Spain, who wished at all hazards to save the capital of France from falling out of the hands of his master into those of the heretic. But dire necessity prevailed, and the bones of the dead were taken in considerable quantities from the cemeteries, ground into flour, baked into bread, and consumed. It was called Madame Montpensier’s cake, because the duchess earnestly proclaimed its merits to the poor Parisians. “She was never known to taste it herself, however,” bitterly observed one who lived in Paris through that horrible summer. She was right to abstain, for all who ate of it died, and the Montpensier flour fell into disuse.

Lansquenets and other soldiers, mad with hunger and rage, when they could no longer find dogs to feed on, chased children through the streets, and were known in several instances to kill and devour them on the spot. To those expressing horror at the perpetration of such a crime, a leading personage, member of the Council of Nine, maintained that there was less danger to one’s soul in satisfying one’s hunger with a dead child, in case of necessity, than in recognizing the heretic Bearnese, and he added that all the best theologians and doctors of Paris were of his opinion.

As the summer wore on to its close, through all these horrors, and as there were still no signs of Mayenne and Parma leading their armies to the relief of the city, it became necessary to deceive the people by a show of negotiation with the beleaguering army. Accordingly, the Spanish ambassador, the legate, and the other chiefs of the Holy League appointed a deputation, consisting of the Cardinal Gondy, the

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Archbishop of Lyons, and the Abbe d'Elbene, to Henry. It soon became evident to the king, however, that these commissioners were but trifling with him in order to amuse the populace. His attitude was dignified and determined throughout the interview. The place appointed was St. Anthony's Abbey, before the gates of Paris. Henry wore a cloak and the order of the Holy Ghost, and was surrounded by his council, the princes of the blood, and by more than four hundred of the chief gentlemen of his army. After passing the barricade, the deputies were received by old Marshal Biron, and conducted by him to the king's chamber of state. When they had made their salutations, the king led the way to an inner cabinet, but his progress was much impeded by the crowding of the nobles about him. Wishing to excuse this apparent rudeness, he said to the envoys: "Gentlemen, these men thrust me on as fast to the battle against the foreigner as they now do to my cabinet. Therefore bear with them." Then turning to the crowd, he said: "Room, gentlemen, for the love of me," upon which they all retired.

The deputies then stated that they had been sent by the authorities of Paris to consult as to the means of obtaining a general peace in France. They expressed the hope that the king's disposition was favourable to this end, and that he would likewise permit them to confer with the Duke of Mayenne. This manner of addressing him excited his choler. He told Cardinal Gondy, who was spokesman of the deputation, that he had long since answered such propositions. He alone could deal with his subjects. He was like the woman before Solomon; he would have all the child or none of it. Rather than dismember his kingdom he would lose the whole. He asked them what they considered him to be. They answered that they knew his rights, but that the Parisians had different opinions. If Paris would only acknowledge him to be king there could be no more question of war. He asked them if they desired the King of Spain or the Duke of Mayenne for their king, and bade them look well to themselves. The King of Spain could not help them, for he had too much business on hand; while Mayenne had neither means nor courage, having been within three leagues of them for three weeks doing nothing. Neither king nor duke should have that which belonged to him, of that they might be assured. He told them he loved Paris as his capital, as his eldest daughter. If the Parisians wished to see the end of their miseries it was to him they should appeal, not to the Spaniard nor to the Duke of Mayenne. By the grace of God and the swords of his brave gentlemen he would prevent the King of Spain from making a colony of France as he had done of Brazil. He told the commissioners that they ought to die of shame that they, born Frenchmen, should have so forgotten their love of country and of liberty as thus to bow the head to the Spaniard, and—while famine was carrying off thousands



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of their countrymen before their eyes—to be so cowardly as not to utter one word for the public welfare from fear of offending Cardinal. Gaetano, Mendoza, and Moreo. He said that he longed for a combat to decide the issue, and that he had charged Count de Brissac to tell Mayenne that he would give a finger of his right hand for a battle, and two for a general peace. He knew and pitied the sufferings of Paris, but the horrors now raging there were to please the King of Spain. That monarch had told the Duke of Parma to trouble himself but little about the Netherlands so long as he could preserve for him his city of Paris. But it was to lean on a broken reed to expect support from this old, decrepit king, whose object was to dismember the flourishing kingdom of France, and to divide it among as many tyrants as he had sent viceroys to the Indies. The crown was his own birthright. Were it elective he should receive the suffrages of the great mass of the electors. He hoped soon to drive those red-crossed foreigners out of his kingdom. Should he fail, they would end by expelling the Duke of Mayenne and all the rest who had called them in, and Paris would become the theatre of the bloodiest tragedy ever yet enacted. The king then ordered Sir Roger Williams to see that a collation was prepared for the deputies, and the veteran Welshman took occasion to indulge in much blunt conversation with the guests. He informed them that he, Mr. Sackville, and many other strangers were serving the king from the hatred they bore the Spaniards and Mother League, and that his royal mistress had always 8000 Englishmen ready to maintain the cause.

While the conferences were going on, the officers and soldiers of the besieging army thronged to the gate, and had much talk with the townsmen. Among others, time-honoured La None with the iron arm stood near the gate and harangued the Parisians. “We are here,” said he, “five thousand gentlemen; we desire your good, not your ruin. We will make you rich: let us participate in your labour and industry. Undo not yourselves to serve the ambition of a few men.” The townspeople hearing the old warrior discoursing thus earnestly, asked who he was. When informed that it was La Noue they cheered him vociferously, and applauded his speech with the greatest vehemence. Yet La Noue was the foremost Huguenot that the sun shone upon, and the Parisians were starving themselves to death out of hatred to heresy. After the collation the commissioners were permitted to go from the camp in order to consult Mayenne.

Such then was the condition of Paris during that memorable summer of tortures. What now were its hopes of deliverance out of this Gehenna? The trust of Frenchmen was in Philip of Spain, whose legions, under command of the great Italian chieftain, were daily longed for to save them from rendering obedience to their lawful prince.

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For even the king of straw—the imprisoned cardinal—was now dead, and there was not even the effigy of any other sovereign than Henry of Bourbon to claim authority in France. Mayenne, in the course of long interviews with the Duke of Parma at Conde and Brussels, had expressed his desire to see Philip king of France, and had promised his best efforts to bring about such a result. In that case he stipulated for the second place in the kingdom for himself, together with a good rich province in perpetual sovereignty, and a large sum of money in hand. Should this course not run smoothly, he would be willing to take the crown himself, in which event he would cheerfully cede to Philip the sovereignty of Brittany and Burgundy, besides a selection of cities to be arranged for at a later day. Although he spoke of himself with modesty, said Alexander, it was very plain that he meant to arrive at the crown himself: Well had the Bearnese alluded to the judgment of Solomon. Were not children, thus ready to dismember their mother, as foul and unnatural as the mother who would divide her child?

And what was this dependence on a foreign tyrant really worth? As we look back upon those dark days with the light of what was then the almost immediate future turned full and glaring upon them, we find it difficult to exaggerate the folly of the chief actors in those scenes of crime. Did not the penniless adventurer, whose keen eyesight and wise recklessness were passing for hallucination and foolhardiness in the eyes of his contemporaries, understand the game he was playing better than did that profound thinker, that mysterious but infallible politician, who sat in the Escorial and made the world tremble at every hint of his lips, every stroke of his pen?

The Netherlands—that most advanced portion of Philip's domain, without the possession of which his conquest of England and his incorporation of France were but childish visions, even if they were not monstrous chimeras at best—were to be in a manner left to themselves, while their consummate governor and general was to go forth and conquer France at the head of a force with which he had been in vain attempting to hold those provinces to their obedience. At that very moment the rising young chieftain of the Netherlands was most successfully inaugurating his career of military success. His armies well drilled, well disciplined, well paid, full of heart and of hope, were threatening their ancient enemy in every quarter, while the veteran legions of Spain and Italy, heroes of a hundred Flemish and Frisian battle-fields, were disorganised, starving, and mutinous. The famous ancient legion, the *terzo viejo*, had been disbanded for its obstinate and confirmed unruliness. The legion of Manrique, sixteen hundred strong, was in open mutiny at Courtray. Farnese had sent the Prince of Ascoli to negotiate with them, but his attempts were all in vain. Two years' arrearages—to be paid, not in cloth at four times what the contractors



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had paid for it, but in solid gold—were their not unreasonable demands after years of as hard fighting and severe suffering as the world has often seen. But Philip, instead of ducats or cloth, had only sent orders to go forth and conquer a new kingdom for him. Verdugo, too, from Friesland was howling for money, garrotting and hanging his mutinous veterans every day, and sending complaints and most dismal forebodings as often as a courier could make his way through the enemy's lines to Farnese's headquarters. And Farnese, on his part, was garrotting and hanging the veterans.

Alexander did not of course inform his master that he was a mischievous lunatic, who upon any healthy principle of human government ought long ago to have been shut up from all communion with his species. It was very plain, however, from his letters, that such was his innermost, thought, had it been safe, loyal, or courteous to express it in plain language.

He was himself stung almost to madness moreover by the presence of Commander Moreo, who hated him, who was perpetually coming over from France to visit him, who was a spy upon all his actions, and who was regularly distilling his calumnies into the ears of Secretary Idiaquez and of Philip himself. The king was informed that Farnese was working for his own ends, and was disgusted with his sovereign; that there never had been a petty prince of Italy that did not wish to become a greater one, or that was not jealous of Philip's power, and that there was not a villain in all Christendom but wished for Philip's death. Moreo followed the prince about to Antwerp, to Brussels, to Spa, whither he had gone to drink the waters for his failing health, pestered him, lectured him, pried upon him, counselled him, enraged him. Alexander told him at last that he cared not if the whole world came to an end so long as Flanders remained, which alone had been entrusted to him, and that if he was expected to conquer France it would be as well to give him the means of performing that exploit. So Moreo told the king that Alexander was wasting time and wasting money, that he was the cause of Egmont's overthrow, and that he would be the cause of the loss of Paris and of the downfall of the whole French scheme; for that he was determined to do nothing to assist Mayenne, or that did not conduce to his private advantage.

Yet Farnese had been not long before informed in sufficiently plain language, and by personages of great influence, that in case he wished to convert his vice-royalty of the Netherlands into a permanent sovereignty, he might rely on the assistance of Henry of Navarre, and perhaps of Queen Elizabeth. The scheme would not have been impracticable, but the duke never listened to it for a moment.

If he were slow in advancing to the relief of starving, agonising Paris, there were sufficient reasons for his delay. Most decidedly and bitterly, but loyally, did he denounce the madness of his master's course in all his communications to that master's private ear.



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He told him that the situation in which he found himself was horrible. He had no money for his troops, he had not even garrison bread to put in their mouths. He had not a single stiver to advance them on account. From Friesland, from the Rhine country, from every quarter, cries of distress were rising to heaven, and the lamentations were just. He was in absolute penury. He could not negotiate a bill on the royal account, but had borrowed on his own private security a few thousand crowns which he had given to his soldiers. He was pledging his jewels and furniture like a bankrupt, but all was now in vain to stop the mutiny at Courtray. If that went on it would be of most pernicious example, for the whole army was disorganised, malcontent, and of portentous aspect. "These things," said he, "ought not to surprise people of common understanding, for without money, without credit, without provisions, and in an exhausted country, it is impossible to satisfy the claims, or even to support the life of the army." When he sent the Flemish cavalry to Mayenne in March, it was under the impression that with it that prince would have maintained his reputation and checked the progress of the Bearnese until greater reinforcements could be forwarded. He was now glad that no larger number had been sent, for all would have been sacrificed on the fatal field of Ivry.

The country around him was desperate, believed itself abandoned, and was expecting fresh horrors everyday. He had been obliged to remove portions of the garrisons at Deventer and Zutphen purely to save them from starving and desperation. Every day he was informed by his garrisons that they could feed no longer on fine words or hopes, for in them they found no sustenance.

But Philip told him that he must proceed forthwith to France, where he was to raise the siege of Paris, and occupy Calais and Boulogne in order to prevent the English from sending succour to the Bearnese, and in order to facilitate his own designs on England. Every effort was to be made before the Bearnese climbed into the seat. The Duke of Parma was to talk no more of difficulties, but to conquer them; a noble phrase on the battle field, but comparatively easy of utterance at the writing-desk!

At last, Philip having made some remittances, miserably inadequate for the necessities of the case, but sufficient to repress in part the mutinous demonstrations throughout the army, Farnese addressed himself with a heavy heart to the work required of him. He confessed the deepest apprehensions of the result both in the Netherlands and in France. He intimated a profound distrust of the French, who had, ever been Philip's enemies, and dwelt on the danger of leaving the provinces, unable to protect themselves, badly garrisoned, and starving. "It grieves me to the soul, it cuts me to the heart," he said, "to see that your Majesty commands things which are impossible, for it is our



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Lord alone that can work miracles. Your Majesty supposes that with the little money you have sent me, I can satisfy all the soldiers serving in these provinces, settle with the Spanish and the German mutineers—because, if they are to be used in the expedition, they must at least be quieted—give money to Mayenne and the Parisians, pay retaining wages (*wartgeld*) to the German Riders for the protection of these provinces, and make sure of the maritime places where the same mutinous language is held as at Courtray. The poverty, the discontent, and the desperation of this unhappy country,” he added, “have, been so often described to your Majesty that I have nothing to add. I am hanging and garrotting my veterans everywhere, only because they have rebelled for want of pay without committing any excess. Yet under these circumstances I am to march into France with twenty thousand troops—the least number to effect anything withal. I am confused and perplexed because the whole world is exclaiming against me, and protesting that through my desertion the country entrusted to my care will come to utter perdition. On the other hand, the French cry out upon me that I am the cause that Paris is going to destruction, and with it the Catholic cause in France. Every one is pursuing his private ends. It is impossible to collect a force strong enough for the necessary work. Paris has reached its extreme unction, and neither Mayenne nor any one of the confederates has given this invalid the slightest morsel to support her till your Majesty’s forces should arrive.”

He reminded his sovereign that the country around Paris was eaten bare of food and forage, and yet that it was quite out of the question for him to undertake the transportation of supplies for his army all the way—supplies from the starving Netherlands to starving France. Since the king was so peremptory, he had nothing for it but to obey, but he vehemently disclaimed all responsibility for the expedition, and, in case of his death, he called on his Majesty to vindicate his honour, which his enemies were sure to assail.

The messages from Mayenne becoming daily more pressing, Farnese hastened as much as possible those preparations which at best were so woefully inadequate, and avowed his determination not to fight the Bearnese if it were possible to avoid an action. He feared, however, that with totally insufficient forces he should be obliged to accept the chances of an engagement.

With twelve thousand foot and three thousand horse Farnese left the Netherlands in the beginning of August, and arrived on the 3rd of that month at Valenciennes. His little army, notwithstanding his bitter complaints, was of imposing appearance. The archers and halberdiers of his bodyguard were magnificent in taffety and feathers and surcoats of cramoisy velvet. Four hundred nobles served in the cavalry. Arenberg and Barlaymont and Chimay, and other grandees of the Netherlands, in company with Ascoli and the sons of Terranova and Pastrana, and many more great lords of Italy and Spain were in immediate attendance on the illustrious captain. The son of Philip’s Secretary of

State, Idiaquez, and the nephew of the cardinal-legate, Gaetano, were among the marshals of the camp.



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Alexander's own natural authority and consummate powers of organisation had for the time triumphed over the disintegrating tendencies which, it had been seen, were everywhere so rapidly destroying the foremost military establishment of the world. Nearly half his forces, both cavalry and infantry, were Netherlanders; for—as if there were not graves enough in their own little territory—those Flemings, Walloons, and Hollanders were destined to leave their bones on both sides of every well-stricken field of that age between liberty and despotism. And thus thousands of them had now gone forth under the banner of Spain to assist their own tyrant in carrying out his designs upon the capital of France, and to struggle to the death with thousands of their own countrymen who were following the fortunes of the Bearnese. Truly in that age it was religion that drew the boundary line between nations.

The army was divided into three portions. The vanguard was under the charge of the Netherland General, Marquis of Renty. The battalia was commanded by Farnese in person, and the rearguard was entrusted to that veteran Netherlander, La Motte, now called the Count of Everbeck. Twenty pieces of artillery followed the last division. At Valenciennes Farnese remained eight days, and from this place Count Charles Mansfeld took his departure in a great rage—resigning his post as chief of artillery because La Motte had received the appointment of general-marshal of the camp—and returned to his father, old Peter Ernest Mansfeld, who was lieutenant-governor of the Netherlands in Parma's absence.

Leaving Valenciennes on the 11th, the army proceeded by way of Quesney, Guise, Soissons, Fritemilon to Meaux. At this place, which is ten leagues from Paris, Farnese made his junction, on the 22nd of August, with Mayenne, who was at the head of six thousand infantry—one half of them Germans under Cobalto, and the other half French—and of two thousand horse.

On arriving at Meaux, Alexander proceeded straightway to the cathedral, and there, in presence of all, he solemnly swore that he had not come to France in order to conquer that kingdom or any portion of it, in the interests of his master, but only to render succour to the Catholic cause and to free the friends and confederates of his Majesty from violence and heretic oppression. Time was to show the value of that oath.

Here the deputation from Paris—the Archbishop of Lyons and his colleagues, whose interview with Henry has just been narrated—were received by the two dukes. They departed, taking with them promises of immediate relief for the starving city. The allies remained five days at Meaux, and leaving that place on the 27th, arrived in the neighbourhood of Chelles, on the last day but one of the summer. They had a united force of five thousand cavalry and eighteen thousand foot.

The summer of horrors was over, and thus with the first days of autumn there had come a ray of hope for the proud city which was lying at its last gasp. When the allies, came

in sight of the monastery of Chellea they found themselves in the immediate neighbourhood of the Bearnese.



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The two great captains of the age had at last met face to face. They were not only the two first commanders of their time, but there was not a man in Europe at that day to be at all compared with either of them. The youth, concerning whose earliest campaign an account will be given in the following chapter, had hardly yet struck his first blow. Whether that blow was to reveal the novice or the master was soon to be seen. Meantime in 1590 it would have been considered a foolish adulation to mention the name of Maurice of Nassau in the same breath with that of Navarre or of Farnese.

The scientific duel which was now to take place was likely to task the genius and to bring into full display the peculiar powers and defects of the two chieftains of Europe. Each might be considered to be still in the prime of life, but Alexander, who was turned of forty-five, was already broken in health, while the vigorous Henry was eight years younger, and of an iron constitution. Both had passed their lives in the field, but the king, from nature, education, and the force of circumstances, preferred pitched battles to scientific combinations, while the duke, having studied and practised his art in the great Spanish and Italian schools of warfare, was rather a profound strategist than a professional fighter, although capable of great promptness and intense personal energy when his judgment dictated a battle. Both were born with that invaluable gift which no human being can acquire, authority, and both were adored and willingly obeyed by their soldiers, so long as those soldiers were paid and fed.

The prize now to be contended for was a high one. Alexander's complete success would tear from Henry's grasp the first city of Christendom, now sinking exhausted into his hands, and would place France in the power of the Holy League and at the feet of Philip. Another Ivry would shatter the confederacy, and carry the king in triumph to his capital and his ancestral throne. On the approach of the combined armies under Parma and Mayenne, the king had found himself most reluctantly compelled to suspend the siege of Paris. His army, which consisted of sixteen thousand foot and five thousand horse, was not sufficiently numerous to confront at the same time the relieving force and to continue the operations before the city. So long, however, as he held the towns and bridges on the great rivers, and especially those keys to the Seine and Marne, Corbeil and Lagny, he still controlled the life-blood of the capital, which indeed had almost ceased to flow.

On the 31st August he advanced towards the enemy. Sir Edward Stafford, Queen Elizabeth's ambassador, arrived at St. Denis in the night of the 30th August. At a very early hour next morning he heard a shout under his window, and looking down beheld King Henry at the head of his troops, cheerfully calling out to his English friend as he passed his door. "Welcoming us after his familiar manner," said Stafford, "he desired us, in respect of the battle every hour expected, to come as his friends to see and help him, and not to treat of anything which afore, we meant, seeing the present state to require it, and the enemy so near that we might well have been interrupted in half-an-hour's talk, and necessity constrained the king to be in every corner, where for the most part we follow him."



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That day Henry took up his headquarters at the monastery of Chelles, a fortified place within six leagues of Paris, on the right bank of the Marne. His army was drawn up in a wide valley somewhat encumbered with wood and water, extending through a series of beautiful pastures towards two hills of moderate elevation. Lagny, on the left bank of the river, was within less than a league of him on his right hand. On the other side of the hills, hardly out of cannon-shot, was the camp of the allies. Henry, whose natural disposition in this respect needed no prompting, was most eager for a decisive engagement. The circumstances imperatively required it of him. His infantry consisted of Frenchmen, Netherlanders, English, Germans, Scotch; but of his cavalry four thousand were French nobles, serving at their own expense, who came to a battle as to a banquet, but who were capable of riding off almost as rapidly, should the feast be denied them. They were volunteers, bringing with them rations for but a few days, and it could hardly be expected that they would remain as patiently as did Parma's veterans, who, now that their mutiny had been appeased by payment of a portion of their arrearages, had become docile again. All the great chieftains who surrounded Henry, whether Catholic or Protestant—Montpensier, Nevers, Soissons, Conti, the Birons, Lavradin, d'Aumont, Tremouille, Turenne, Chatillon, La Noue—were urgent for the conflict, concerning the expediency of which there could indeed be no doubt, while the king was in raptures at the opportunity of dealing a decisive blow at the confederacy of foreigners and rebels who had so long defied his authority and deprived him of his rights.

Stafford came up with the king, according to his cordial invitation, on the same day, and saw the army all drawn up in battle array. While Henry was "eating a morsel in an old house," Turenne joined him with six or seven hundred horsemen and between four and five thousand infantry. "They were the likeliest footmen," said Stafford, "the best countenanced, the best furnished that ever I saw in my life; the best part of them old soldiers that had served under the king for the Religion all this while."

The envoy was especially enthusiastic, however, in regard to the French cavalry. "There are near six thousand horse," said he, "whereof gentlemen above four thousand, about twelve hundred other French, and eight hundred reiters. I never saw, nor I think never any man saw, in prance such a company of gentlemen together so well horsed and so well armed."

Henry sent a herald to the camp of the allies, formally challenging them to a general engagement, and expressing a hope that all differences might now be settled by the ordeal of battle, rather than that the sufferings of the innocent people should be longer protracted.



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Farnese, on arriving at Meaux, had resolved to seek the enemy and take the hazards of a stricken field. He had misgivings as to the possible result, but he expressly announced this intention in his letters to Philip, and Mayenne confirmed him in his determination. Nevertheless, finding the enemy so eager and having reflected more maturely, he saw no reason for accepting the chivalrous cartel. As commander-in-chief—for Mayenne willingly conceded the supremacy which it would have been absurd in him to dispute—he accordingly replied that it was his custom to refuse a combat when a refusal seemed advantageous to himself, and to offer battle whenever it suited his purposes to fight. When that moment should arrive the king would find him in the field. And, having sent this courteous, but unsatisfactory answer to the impatient Bearnese, he gave orders to fortify his camp, which was already sufficiently strong. Seven days long the two armies lay face to face—Henry and his chivalry chafing in vain for the longed-for engagement—and nothing occurred between those forty or fifty thousand mortal enemies, encamped within a mile or two of each other, save trifling skirmishes leading to no result.

At last Farnese gave orders for an advance. Renty, commander of the vanguard, consisting of nearly all the cavalry, was instructed to move slowly forward over the two hills, and descending on the opposite side, to deploy his forces in two great wings to the right and left. He was secretly directed in this movement to magnify as much as possible the apparent dimensions of his force. Slowly the columns moved over the hills. Squadron after squadron, nearly all of them lancers, with their pennons flaunting gaily in the summer wind, displayed themselves deliberately and ostentatiously in the face of the Royalists. The splendid light-horse of Basti, the ponderous troopers of the Flemish bands of ordnance under Chimay and Berlaymont, and the famous Albanian and Italian cavalry, were mingled with the veteran Leaguers of France who had fought under the Balafre, and who now followed the fortunes of his brother Mayenne. It was an imposing demonstration.

Henry could hardly believe his eyes as the much-coveted opportunity, of which he had been so many days disappointed, at last presented itself, and he waited with more than his usual caution until the plan of attack should be developed by his great antagonist. Parma, on his side, pressed the hand of Mayenne as he watched the movement, saying quietly, "We have already fought our battle and gained the victory." He then issued orders for the whole battalia—which, since the junction, had been under command of Mayenne, Farnese reserving for himself the superintendence of the entire army—to countermarch rapidly towards the Marne and take up a position opposite Lagny. La Motte, with the rearguard, was directed immediately to follow. The battalia had thus become the van, the rearguard the battalia, while the whole cavalry corps by this movement had been transformed from the vanguard into the rear. Renty was instructed to protect his manoeuvres, to restrain the skirmishing as much as possible, and to keep the commander-in-chief constantly informed of every occurrence. In the night he was to entrench and fortify himself rapidly and thoroughly, without changing his position.



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Under cover of this feigned attack, Farnese arrived at the river side on the 15th September, seized an open village directly opposite Lagny, which was connected with it by a stone bridge, and planted a battery of nine pieces of heavy artillery directly opposite the town. Lagny was fortified in the old-fashioned manner, with not very thick walls, and without a terreplein. Its position, however, and its command of the bridge, seemed to render an assault impossible, and De la Fin, who lay there with a garrison of twelve hundred French, had no fear for the security of the place. But Farnese, with the precision and celerity which characterized his movements on special occasions, had thrown pontoon bridges across the river three miles above, and sent a considerable force of Spanish and Walloon infantry to the other side. These troops were ordered to hold themselves ready for an assault, so soon as the batteries opposite should effect a practicable breach. The next day Henry, reconnoitering the scene, saw, with intense indignation, that he had been completely out-generalled. Lagny, the key to the Marne, by holding which he had closed the door on nearly all the food supplies for Paris, was about to be wrested from him. What should he do? Should he throw himself across the river and rescue the place before it fell? This was not to be thought of even by the audacious Bearnese. In the attempt to cross the river, under the enemy's fire, he was likely to lose a large portion of his army. Should he fling himself upon Renty's division which had so ostentatiously offered battle the day before? This at least might be attempted, although not so advantageously as would have been the case on the previous afternoon. To undertake this was the result of a rapid council of generals. It was too late. Renty held the hills so firmly entrenched and fortified that it was an idle hope to carry them by assault. He might hurl column after column against those heights, and pass the day in seeing his men mowed to the earth without result.

His soldiers, magnificent in the open field, could not be relied upon to carry so strong a position by sudden storm; and there was no time to be lost. He felt the enemy a little. There was some small skirmishing, and while it was going on, Farnese opened a tremendous fire across the river upon Lagny. The weak walls soon crumbled; a breach was effected, the signal for assault was given, and the troops posted on the other side, after a brief but sanguinary straggle, overcame all, resistance, and were masters of the town. The whole garrison, twelve hundred strong, was butchered, and the city thoroughly sacked; for Farnese had been brought up in the old-fashioned school of Alva; and Julian Romero and Com-. wander Requesens.



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Thus Lagny was seized before the eyes of Henry, who was forced to look helplessly on his great antagonist's triumph. He had come forth in full panoply and abounding confidence to offer battle. He was foiled of his combat; and he had lost the prize. Never was blow more successfully parried, a counter-stroke more ingeniously planted. The bridges of Charenton and St. Maur now fell into Farnese's hands without a contest. In an incredibly short space of time provisions and munitions were poured into the starving city; two thousand boat-loads arriving in a single day. Paris was relieved. Alexander had made his demonstration, and solved the problem. He had left the Netherlands against his judgment, but he had at least accomplished his French work as none but he could have done it. The king was now in worse plight than ever. His army fell to pieces. His cavaliers, cheated of their battle; and having neither food nor forage, rode off by hundreds every day. "Our state is such," said Stafford; on the 16th September, "and so far unexpected and wonderful, that I am almost ashamed to write, because methinks everybody should think I dream. Myself seeing of it methinketh that I dream. For, my lord, to see an army such a one I think as I shall never see again—especially for horsemen and gentlemen to take a mind to disband upon the taking of such a paltry thing as Lagny, a town no better indeed than Rochester, it is a thing so strange to me that seeing of it I can scarce believe it. They make their excuses of their want, which I know indeed is great—for there were few left with one penny in their purses—but yet that extremity could not be such but that they might have tarried ten days or fifteen at the most that the king desired of them From six thousand horse that we were and above, we are come to two thousand and I do not see an end of our leave-takers, for those be hourly.

"The most I can see we can make account of to tarry are the Viscount Turenne's troops, and Monsieur de Chatillon's, and our Switzers, and Lanaquenettes, which make very near five thousand. The first that went away, though he sent word to the king an hour before he would tarry, was the Count Soissons, by whose parting on a sudden and without leave-taking we judge a discontentment."

The king's army seemed fading into air. Making virtue of necessity he withdrew to St. Denis, and decided to disband his forces, reserving to himself only a flying camp with which to harass the enemy as often as opportunity should offer.

It must be confessed that the Bearnese had been thoroughly out-generalled. "It was not God's will," said Stafford, who had been in constant attendance upon Henry through the whole business; "we deserved it not; for the king might as easily have had Paris as drunk, four or five times. And at the last, if he had not committed those faults that children would not have done, only with the desire to fight and give the battle (which the other never



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meant), he had had it in the Duke of Parma's eight as he took Lagny in ours." He had been foiled of the battle on which he had set his heart, and, in which he felt confident of overthrowing the great captain of the age, and trampling the League under his feet. His capital just ready to sink exhausted into his hands had been wrested from his grasp, and was alive with new hope and new defiance. The League was triumphant, his own army scattering to the four winds. Even a man of high courage and sagacity might have been in despair. Yet never were the magnificent hopefulness, the wise audacity of Henry more signally manifested than now when he seemed most blundering and most forlorn. His hardy nature ever met disaster with so cheerful a smile as almost to perplex disaster herself.

Unwilling to relinquish his grip without a last effort, he resolved on a midnight assault upon Paris. Hoping that the joy at being relieved, the unwonted feasting which had succeeded the long fasting, and the consciousness of security from the presence of the combined armies of the victorious League, would throw garrison and citizens off their guard, he came into the neighbourhood of the Faubourgs St. Jacques, St. Germain, St. Marcel, and St. Michel on the night of 9th September. A desperate effort was made to escalade the walls between St. Jacques and St. Germain. It was foiled, not by the soldiers nor the citizens, but by the sleepless Jesuits, who, as often before during this memorable siege, had kept guard on the ramparts, and who now gave the alarm. The first assailants were hurled from their ladders, the city was roused, and the Duke of Nemours was soon on the spot, ordering burning pitch hoops, atones, and other missiles to be thrown down upon the invaders. The escalade was baffled; yet once more that night, just before dawn, the king in person renewed the attack on the Faubourg St. Germain. The faithful Stafford stood by his side in the trenches, and was witness to his cool determination, his indomitable hope. La None too was there, and was wounded in the leg—an accident the results of which were soon to cause much weeping through Christendom. Had one of those garlands of blazing tar which all night had been fluttering from the walls of Paris alighted by chance on the king's head there might have been another history of France. The ladders, too, proved several feet too short, and there were too few, of them. Had they been more numerous and longer, the tale might have been a different one. As it was, the king was forced to retire with the approaching daylight.

The characteristics of the great commander of the Huguenots and of the Leaguers' chieftain respectively were well illustrated in several incidents of this memorable campaign. Farnese had been informed by scouts and spies of this intended assault by Henry on the walls of Paris. With his habitual caution he discredited the story. Had he believed it, he might have followed the king in overwhelming force and taken him captive. The penalty of Henry's unparalleled boldness was thus remitted by Alexander's exuberant discretion.



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Soon afterwards Farnese laid siege to Corbeil. This little place—owing to the extraordinary skill and determination of its commandant, Rigaut, an old Huguenot officer, who had fought with La Noue in Flanders—resisted for nearly four weeks. It was assaulted at last, Rigaut killed, the garrison of one thousand French soldiers put to the sword, and the town sacked. With the fall of Corbeil both the Seine and Marne were re-opened.

Alexander then made a visit to Paris, where he was received with great enthusiasm. The legate, whose efforts and whose money had so much contributed to the successful defence of the capital had returned to Italy to participate in the election of a new pope. For the “Huguenot pope,” Sixtus V., had died at the end of August, having never bestowed on the League any of his vast accumulated treasures to help it in its utmost need. It was not surprising that Philip was indignant, and had resorted to menace of various kinds against the holy father, when he found him swaying so perceptibly in the direction of the hated Bearnese. Of course when he died his complaint was believed to be Spanish poison. In those days, none but the very obscure were thought capable of dying natural deaths, and Philip was esteemed too consummate an artist to allow so formidable an adversary as Sixtus to pass away in God’s time only. Certainly his death was hailed as matter of great rejoicing by the Spanish party in Rome, and as much ignominy bestowed upon his memory as if he had been a heretic; while in Paris his decease was celebrated with bonfires and other marks of popular hilarity.

To circumvent the great Huguenot’s reconciliation with the Roman Church was of course an indispensable portion of Philip’s plan; for none could be so dull as not to perceive that the resistance of Paris to its heretic sovereign would cease to be very effective, so soon as the sovereign had ceased to be heretic. It was most important therefore that the successor of Sixtus should be the tool of Spain. The leading confederates were well aware of Henry’s intentions to renounce the reformed faith, and to return to the communion of Rome whenever he could formally accomplish that measure. The crafty Bearnese knew full well that the road to Paris lay through the gates of Rome. Yet it is proof either of the privacy with which great public matters were then transacted, or of the extraordinary powers of deceit with which Henry was gifted, that the leaders of protestantism were still hoodwinked in regard to his attitude. Notwithstanding the embassy of Luxembourg, and the many other indications of the king’s intentions, Queen Elizabeth continued to regard him as the great champion of the reformed faith. She had just sent him an emerald, which she had herself worn, accompanied by the expression of her wish that the king in wearing it might never strike a blow without demolishing an enemy, and that in his farther progress he might put all his enemies to rout and confusion. “You will remind the king, too,” she added, “that the emerald has this virtue, never to break so long as faith remains entire and firm.”



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And the shrewd Stafford, who was in daily attendance upon him, informed his sovereign that there were no symptoms of wavering on Henry's part. "The Catholics here," said he, "cry hard upon the king to be a Catholic or else that he is lost, and they would persuade him that for all their calling in the Spaniards, both Paris and all other towns will yield to him, if he will but assure them that he will become a Catholic. For my part, I think they would laugh at him when he had done so, and so I find he believeth the same, if he had mind to it, which I find no disposition in him unto it." The not very distant future was to show what the disposition of the bold Gascon really was in this great matter, and whether he was likely to reap nothing but ridicule from his apostasy, should it indeed become a fact. Meantime it was the opinion of the wisest sovereign in Europe, and of one of the most adroit among her diplomatists, that there was really nothing in the rumours as to the king's contemplated conversion.

It was, of course, unfortunate for Henry that his staunch friend and admirer Sixtus was no more. But English diplomacy could do but little in Rome, and men were trembling with apprehension lest that arch-enemy of Elizabeth, that devoted friend of Philip, the English Cardinal Allen, should be elected to the papal throne. "Great ado is made in Rome," said Stafford, "by the Spanish ambassador, by all corruptions and ways that may be, to make a pope that must needs depend and be altogether at the King of Spain's devotion. If the princes of Italy put not their hands unto it, no doubt they will have their wills, and I fear greatly our villainous Allen, for, in my judgment, I can comprehend no man more with reason to be tied altogether to the King of Spain's will than he. I pray God send him either to God or the Devil first. An evil-minded Englishman, tied to the King of Spain by necessity, finding almost four millions of money, is a dangerous beast for a pope in this time."

Cardinal Allen was doomed to disappointment. His candidacy was not successful, and, after the brief reign—thirteen days long—of Urban VII, Sfondrato wore the triple tiara with the title of Gregory XIV. Before the year closed, that pontiff had issued a brief urging the necessity of extirpating heresy in France, and of electing a Catholic king, and asserting his determination to send to Paris—that bulwark of the Catholic faith—not empty words alone but troops, to be paid fifteen thousand crowns of gold each month, so long as the city should need assistance. It was therefore probable that the great leader of the Huguenots, now that he had been defeated by Farnese, and that his capital was still loyal to the League, would obtain less favour—however conscientiously he might instruct himself—from Gregory XIV. than he had begun to find in the eyes of Sixtus after the triumph of Ivry.



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Parma refreshed his army by a fortnight's repose, and early in November determined on his return to the Netherlands. The Leaguers were aghast at his decision, and earnestly besought him to remain. But the duke had given them back their capital, and although this had been accomplished without much bloodshed in their army or his own, sickness was now making sad ravages among his troops, and there was small supply of food or forage for such large forces as had now been accumulated, in the neighbourhood of Paris. Moreover, dissensions were breaking out between the Spaniards, Italians, and Netherlanders of the relieving army with their French allies. The soldiers and peasants hated the foreigners who came there as victors, even although to assist the Leaguers in overthrowing the laws, government, and nationality of France. The stragglers and wounded on Farnese's march were killed by the country people in considerable numbers, and it was a pure impossibility for him longer to delay his return to the provinces which so much against his will he had deserted.

He marched back by way of Champagne rather than by that of Picardy, in order to deceive the king. Scarcely had he arrived in Champagne when he heard of the retaking of Lagny and Corbeil. So soon as his back was turned, the League thus showed its impotence to retain the advantage which his genius had won. Corbeil, which had cost him a month of hard work, was recaptured in two days. Lagny fell almost as quickly. Earnestly did the confederates implore him to return to their rescue, but he declined almost contemptuously to retrace his steps. His march was conducted in the same order and with the same precision which—had marked his advance. Henry, with his flying camp, hung upon his track, harassing him now in front, now in rear, now in flank. None of the skirmishes were of much military importance. A single cavalry combat, however, in which old Marshal Biron was nearly surrounded and was in imminent danger of death or capture, until chivalrously rescued by the king in person at the head of a squadron of lancers, will always possess romantic interest. In a subsequent encounter, near Baroges on the Yesle, Henry had sent Biron forward with a few companies of horse to engage some five hundred carabineers of Farnese on their march towards the frontier, and had himself followed close upon the track with his usual eagerness to witness or participate in every battle. Suddenly Alphonse Corse, who rode at Henry's aide, pointed out to him, not more than a hundred paces off, an officer wearing a felt hat, a great ruff, and a little furred cassock, mounted on a horse without armour or caparisons, galloping up and down and brandishing his sword at the carabineers to compel them to fall back.

This was the Duke of Parma, and thus the two great champions of the Huguenots and of the Leaguers—the two foremost captains of the age—had met face to face. At that moment La Noue, riding up, informed the king that he had seen the whole of the enemy's horse and foot in battle array, and Henry, suspecting the retreat of Farnese to be a feint for the purpose of luring him on with his small force to an attack, gave orders to retire as soon as possible.

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At Guise, on the frontier, the duke parted with Mayenne, leaving with him an auxiliary force of four thousand foot and five hundred horse, which he could ill spare. He then returned to Brussels, which city he reached on the 4th December, filling every hotel and hospital with his sick soldiers, and having left one-third of his numbers behind him. He had manifested his own military skill in the adroit and successful manner in which he had accomplished the relief of Paris, while the barrenness of the result from the whole expedition vindicated the political sagacity with which he had remonstrated against his sovereign's infatuation.

Paris, with the renewed pressure on its two great arteries at Lagny and Corbeil, soon fell into as great danger as before; the obedient Netherlands during the absence of Farnese had been sinking rapidly to ruin, while; on the other hand, great progress and still greater preparations in aggressive warfare had been made by the youthful general and stadtholder of the Republic.

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Divine right of kings
Ever met disaster with so cheerful a smile
Future world as laid down by rival priesthoods
Invaluable gift which no human being can acquire, authority
King was often to be something much less or much worse
Magnificent hopefulness
Myself seeing of it methinketh that I dream
Nothing cheap, said a citizen bitterly, but sermons
Obscure were thought capable of dying natural deaths
Philip II. gave the world work enough
Righteous to kill their own children
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