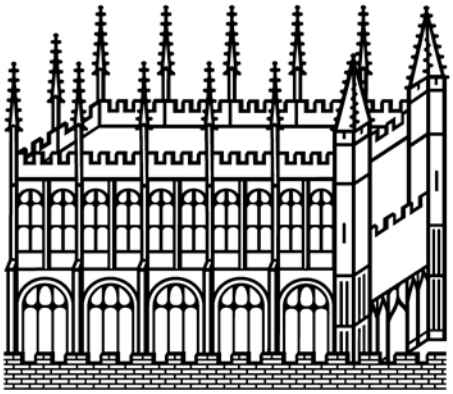

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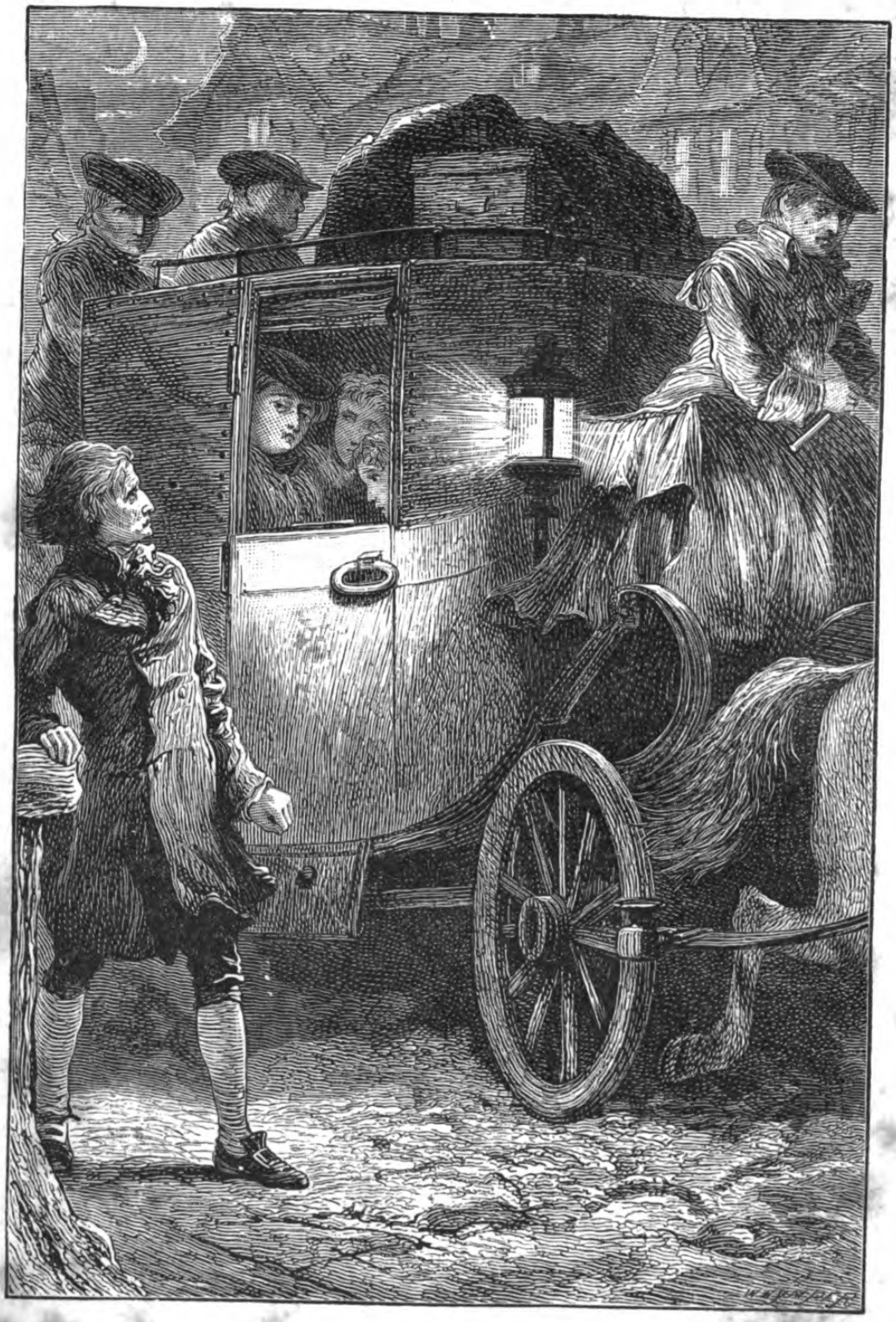
FRANCE

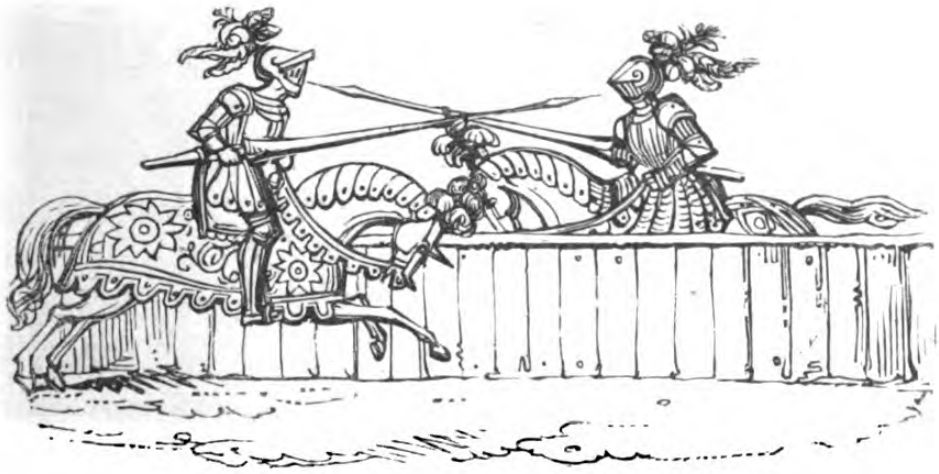


Arrest of the Royal Family. *Frontispiece.*

LITTLE ARTHUR'S

HISTORY OF FRANCE.

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE FALL
OF THE SECOND EMPIRE.



ON THE PLAN OF "LITTLE ARTHUR'S ENGLAND."

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

'LITTLE ARTHUR'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND' has been for many years one of the most popular of children's reading-books, and so many calls have been made on the publishers for works of a similar kind, that they have determined to issue a 'History of France,' written on the same lines and with the same object, namely of giving in simple language the more interesting facts of French history, without wearying the young reader with unnecessary details.

There can be no question that it is a good thing that children should know something of the history of our nearest neighbours on the Continent, for many centuries our rivals and enemies, and in later times our friends and allies; and in one sense French history is likely to be more popular with English children than even that of their own country, for, as a rule, it is more romantic and far more *personal*, and the French kings frequently play a part never sustained by any English sovereigns, except by those of the House of Tudor.

It is hoped that this little volume may to some extent supply the want of a history of France, which, without being too childish in itself, may yet interest a child. But, though written on the same plan as the previous 'History of England,' it will be found that the language and subject-matter of this volume is purposely more advanced, though not

beyond the comprehension of an intelligent boy or girl of ten or eleven. For it may be assumed that the "little Arthur," for whom it is intended, will be some two years older, and will have been promoted from the nursery to the school-room by the time that he is ready to turn from the history of England to that of France. The close connection of the history of the two countries will greatly assist him in passing from one history to the other, and his knowledge of the English sovereigns will enable him to associate different reigns with different epochs, and to compare the French kings with their English contemporaries, such as Philip Augustus and Richard Cœur de Lion, Louis XI. and Edward IV., Henry of Navarre and Queen Elizabeth, Louis XIV. and William of Orange.

November, 1884.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The ancient inhabitants of France; the Gauls; their manners, religion, and customs; how they were conquered by the Romans . . Page 1

CHAPTER II.

CLOVIS.—481 to 511.

How Clovis became King of France, and how he and his people became Christians 5

CHAPTER III.

THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS.—511 to 768.

Of the Sluggard Kings who reigned after Clovis; of the Mayors of the Palace; how Charles Martel won the Battle of Tours; how his son Pepin "the Short" became King of France 7

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLEMAGNE.—768 to 814.

How Charlemagne conquered the Saxons and the Saracens; how he became Emperor; his wise laws and love for learning; his fame and power; his death 10

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS THE DEBONNAIRE (A.D. 814) TO THE ACCESSION OF HUGH CAPET (A.D. 987).

How Louis' sons rebelled against their father; how his kingdom was divided and Charles the Bald became King of France; how the Normans attacked Paris; how Charles the Fat became king; how he was deposed and died; how Charles the Simple gave Normandy to Rollo; how he was dethroned and died in prison; how Hugh Capet became king 14

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF HUGH CAPET (A.D. 987) TO THE DEATH OF HENRY I. (A.D. 1060).

How Hugh Capet found the barons of France as strong as the king; how he made friends with the Church; how Robert the Pious was foolishly charitable; how he was excommunicated by the Pope; how a great terror fell upon men in the year 1000; how Henry I. made war on his barons; the terrible famine in 1031; the "Truce of God" Page 21

CHAPTER VII.

PHILIP I.—A.D. 1060 to 1108.

How Philip I. showed himself a weak and wicked king; how he made war with William I. of England; how the First Crusade was preached by Peter the Hermit; how the Crusaders took Jerusalem; how Philip I. repented of his sins . 27

CHAPTER VIII.

LOUIS VI.—A.D. 1108 to 1137; LOUIS VII.—A.D. 1137 to 1180.

How Louis the Fat subdued the barons near Paris and was helped by the people in the towns: how he gave them charters of freedom; how he unfurled the oriflamme: how Louis VII. went on a Crusade; how he was divorced from Queen Eleanor; how he made war on Henry II. of England 33

CHAPTER IX.

PHILIP AUGUSTUS—A.D. 1180 to 1223

How Philip Augustus did many wise and useful acts; how he joined Richard Cœur de Lion in a Crusade; how he made war upon King John and conquered Normandy . . 40

CHAPTER X.

PHILIP AUGUSTUS—*continued.* 1205 to 1223.

How Philip Augustus made war upon Flanders and won the battle of Bouvines; how he quarrelled with the Pope, and how the kingdom was placed under an Interdict; how a cruel war took place in Languedoc; and how a French army invaded England . . . . . Page 45

CHAPTER XI.

SOCIETY IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

Chivalry; knighthood 48

CHAPTER XII.

SOCIETY IN THE MIDDLE AGES—*continued.*

Hunting; tournaments; crests; Knight-Templars; monasteries; the Popes 53

CHAPTER XIII.

LOUIS VIII.—A.D. 1223 to 1226; LOUIS IX.—A.D. 1226 to 1270.

How Louis the Lion made war on Languedoc, and how he died after a short reign; how the kingdom was governed by Queen Blanche; how Saint Louis went on a Crusade; how his army was destroyed and he was himself taken prisoner; how he was ransomed and returned to France; how he reigned wisely and justly; how he set out on another Crusade, and died in Africa . 58

CHAPTER XIV.

PHILIP III.—1270 to 1285.

How Philip the Bold hung the traitor La Brosse; how the Frenchmen in Sicily were massacred; how Philip made war upon Pedro, King of Arragon 65

CHAPTER XV.

PHILIP IV.—1285 to 1314.

How Philip the Fair made war upon the Flemings; how he quarrelled with Pope Boniface VIII. and insulted him in his own palace; how the Popes came to live at Avignon; how Philip destroyed the Order of the Templars; how he plundered his subjects and debased the coinage 67

CHAPTER XVI.

LOUIS X.—1314 to 1316; PHILIP V.—1316 to 1322; CHARLES IV.—1322 to 1328.

How Philip IV.'s three sons reigned one after another; how their reigns were short and unhappy; how there was an insurrection of the peasants; how the Jews and lepers were cruelly treated . . . . Page 71

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOUSE OF VALOIS. PHILIP VI. (1328 to 1349.)

How Philip the Fortunate defeated the Flemish in a great battle at Cassel; how he quarrelled with the Count of Artois; how the Hundred Years' War began; how the English won the battle of Sluys; how Edward III. invaded France and won the battle of Crecy; how the English took Calais; how many thousand people died of the Black Death 75

CHAPTER XVIII.

JOHN—1350 to 1356.

How John quarrelled with Charles the Bad of Navarre; how the Black Prince won the battle of Poitiers; how King John was taken prisoner and carried to England; how France was in a wretched state and how the peasants rose against their masters; how Etienne Marcel caused a riot; how Edward III. made peace with France; how King John died in London; how the Black Death again appeared. . . . 80

CHAPTER XIX.

CHARLES V.—1364 to 1380.

How Charles V. showed himself a wise and learned king; how he made Du Guesclin his general; how the English lost by degrees all their conquests in France; how Charles V. made war against the Bretons; how Du Guesclin died; how Charles V. and Charles the Bad of Navarre died soon afterwards 85

CHAPTER XX.

CHARLES VI.—1380 to 1415.

How Charles VI.'s uncle, the Duke of Anjou, was Regent, and how the people of Paris rebelled against the taxes; how the Flemings were defeated at Rosbecque; how Oliver de Clisson was nearly murdered; how Charles VI. went mad; how some French nobles were defeated and slain by the Turks; how the Duke of Orleans was murdered; how quarrels arose between the Burgundians and Armagnacs Page 90

CHAPTER XXI.

CHARLES VI. *continued*—1415 to 1422.

How Henry V. invaded France and won the Battle of Agincourt; how a terrible massacre of the Armagnacs took place in Paris; how Henry V. entered Paris and married Charles VI.'s daughter Katherine; how Henry V. died, and how Charles VI. also died to the great sorrow of his people. 95

CHAPTER XXII.

CHARLES VII.—1422 to 1461.

How Charles VII. was called "the Victorious;" how the English defeated the French and besieged Orleans; how Joan Darc saved the city, and how Charles VII. was crowned at Rheims; how Joan Darc was betrayed to the English, and how she was burnt as a witch; how the English lost Paris and all their French possessions except Calais; how the king unjustly banished Jacques Cœur; and how the Dauphin plotted against his father 99

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOUIS XI.—1461 to 1475.

Of Louis XI., his appearance and character; how he broke up "the League of the Public Good," and how he fell into the power of Charles the Bold at Peronne; how Louis bought off the English and made peace with Burgundy . 106

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOUIS XI.—*continued*—1475 to 1483.

How Charles the Bold made war against the Swiss, and how he was defeated and killed at the battle of Nancy: how Louis tried to get possession of Burgundy, and how he arranged that Charles the Bold's grand-daughter should marry the Dauphin; how miserably Louis lived and died at Plessis-le-Tours. Page 111

CHAPTER XXV.

CHARLES VIII.—1483–1498.

How the Regent Anne governed the country well and wisely; how Charles VIII. invaded Italy and reached Naples in triumph; how he won a battle, but lost everything by his carelessness; how he reigned foolishly for several years, and died suddenly from an accident . . 115

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOUIS XII.—1498 to 1515—HOUSE OF VALOIS.

How Louis XII. divorced his wife and married Anne of Brittany; how he invaded Italy and made war with Spain; how the "Holy League" was formed against him by the Pope; how Gaston of Foix was killed at the battle of Ravenna; how Pope Julius died; how the English won "the Battle of the Spurs"; how Louis married a second time and died soon afterwards 119

CHAPTER XXVII.

FRANCIS I.—1515 to 1526.

How Francis I. invaded Italy and won the battle of Marignano; how Charles V. was elected Emperor instead of him; how he met Henry VIII. at the Field of the Cloth of Gold; how Bourbon deserted the French and served with the Spanish king; how Chevalier Bayard was killed; how Francis I. was defeated and taken prisoner at the battle of Pavia; how he signed the Treaty of Madrid and came back to France 125

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FRANCIS I.—*continued*—1526 to 1547.

How the French were again driven out of Italy by the Spaniards and Italians; how a revival of arts and letters took place; how Francis I. persecuted the Reformers; how Charles V. invaded France; how Francis I. allied with the Turks against Charles V.; how peace was made at Crespy and the Italian wars came to an end; how the Vaudois Protestants were persecuted . . . . . Page 130

CHAPTER XXIX.

HENRY II.—1547 to 1559.

How the Guises and Montmorencies had great power in the kingdom; how Charles V. again invaded France, but was forced to retreat; how he gave up his crown; how his son, Philip II., carried on the war against France; how peace was made at Château-Cambresis; how Henry II. was killed at a tournament 136

CHAPTER XXX.

FRANCIS II.—1559 to 1560.

How the Guises became still more powerful; how the Huguenots were persecuted, and how they entered into a conspiracy; how the plot was discovered, and how the Guises took a terrible vengeance; how Condé was arrested, and how the young king died suddenly . . 141

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHARLES IX.—1560 to 1574.

How Catherine of Medici became Regent; how the Religious Wars began; how Rouen was besieged, and how the Duke of Guise was assassinated; how Henry of Navarre became the Protestant leader; how the Huguenots were murdered on the Feast of St. Bartholomew; how Charles IX. repented and died . 144

CHAPTER XXXII.

HENRY III.—1574 to 1589.

How Henry III. showed himself a weak and worthless king; how Henry of Navarre escaped from Paris; how the Catholics formed a League; how another Religious War broke out; how the Duke of Guise was assassinated; how Henry of Navarre joined Henry III., and how they marched against Paris; how Henry III. was murdered by a monk . . . . . Page 152

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HENRY IV. (of Navarre).—1589 to 1593.

How Henry of Navarre became king; how he defeated the army of the League at Ivry; how he became a Catholic, and entered Paris . . 160

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HENRY IV.—*continued*—1593 to 1610.

How Henry IV. drove the Jesuits out of France; how he signed the "Edict of Nantes"; how Sully showed himself a wise and prudent minister; how Biron plotted against the king and was beheaded; how Henry was murdered by Ravaillac 165

CHAPTER XXXV.

LOUIS XIII.—1610 to 1643.

How the Queen-mother's favourite, Concini, was arrested and killed; how De Luynes became the king's chief adviser; how Cardinal Richelieu became Prime Minister; how he destroyed the Huguenot town of La Rochelle; how Gaston of Orleans rebelled; how Richelieu caused the French to take part in the Thirty Years' War; how Cinq Mars and his friends entered into a plot; how Cardinal Richelieu died . 170

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LOUIS XIV.—1643 to 1661.

How Mazarin became Prime Minister; how Condé and Turenne won many victories; how the War of the Fronde began; how the war in Spain ended with the Peace of the Pyrenees; and how Cardinal Mazarin died 178

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LOUIS XIV.—1661 to 1697.

How Louis XIV. got the name of "the Great;" how he held a splendid Court at Versailles; how Fouquet was disgraced and Colbert became Minister of Finance; how a Triple Alliance was formed against France; how Louis made war on Holland; how Turenne was killed; how the Treaty of Nimeguen was signed; how Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes; how a "Grand Alliance" was formed against France; how the war on the Rhine continued; and how the Peace of Ryswick was signed . . . . . Page 185

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LOUIS XIV.—1697 to 1715.

How the War of the Spanish Succession began, and how Marlborough won some famous victories; how the French were in great distress, and how the Peace of Utrecht was signed; how the Jansenists were persecuted and Port Royal was destroyed; how the king's son and grandson died; how Louis XIV. died himself after a long reign . 195

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LOUIS XV.—1715 to 1748.

How the Duke of Orleans became Regent, and Cardinal Dubois Prime Minister; how the country was in great distress, and how John Law tried to raise money and failed; how Orleans died and Bourbon became Prime Minister; how he was succeeded by Cardinal Fleury; how the War of the Austrian Succession began; how Louis XV. fell sick and recovered; how Marshal Saxe won some victories; how peace was made at Aix-la-Chapelle . . 202

CHAPTER XL.

LOUIS XV.—*continued*—1748 to 1789.

How Louis gave everything up to Madame de Pompadour; how there was much poverty and discontent in France; how war again broke out between France and England; how the "Family Compact" was made; how the Jesuits were banished; how Madame de Pompadour died; how Choiseul became Prime Minister; and how things went from bad to worse . . . . . Page 209

CHAPTER XLI.

LOUIS XVI.—1774 to 1789.

Of the character of Louis XVI. and his Queen, Marie Antoinette; how war still continued, and how the poverty and distress increased; how peace was made at last, and the States-General met at Versailles; how the National Assembly was formed; how the mob in Paris destroyed the Bastile 215

CHAPTER XLII.

LOUIS XVI.—*continued*—1789 to 1793.

How the National Assembly did away with the rights of the nobles and clergy; how a great banquet took place at Versailles; how the mob broke into the palace and murdered the Swiss guards; how the royal family were brought to Paris how they tried to escape; how the mob massacred the priests and royalists; how the National Convention abolished royalty; how Louis was tried and executed 220

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE REPUBLIC.—1793 to 1800.

How the Committee of Public Safety was formed; how Marat was assassinated; how a war took place in La Vendée; how the Reign of Terror began; how Marie Antoinette was executed; how the Feast of Reason was held; how Danton and Robespierre were executed; how the Reign of Terror came to an end; how a Directory was formed; how Napoleon Buonaparte showed great vigour on "the Day of Sections" 230

CHAPTER XLIV.

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE: FROM THE "DAY OF THE SECTIONS" (1795) TO THE EMPIRE (1804).

How Napoleon conquered the Austrians in several battles and conquered the north of Italy; how he made peace at Campo Formio; how he invaded Egypt and won the

battle of the Pyramids; how he was repulsed at Acre, and, after winning the battle of Aboukir, returned to France; how he expelled the Five Hundred and became First Consul of the Republic; how he crossed the Alps and won the battle of Marengo; how he passed many wise and useful acts of government; how he formed a scheme for invading England; how the Duke d'Enghien was executed; how Napoleon made himself Emperor Page 239

CHAPTER XLV.

NAPOLEON I.—*continued:* FROM 1804 TO 1812.

How the sovereigns of Europe entered into a league against Napoleon; how the English won the battle of Trafalgar; how the French defeated the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz; how Napoleon won the battles of Jena and Friedland and entered Berlin; how the Peninsular War began; how Napoleon defeated the Austrians at Wagram and married the Austrian Emperor's daughter 251

CHAPTER XLVI.

NAPOLEON I.—*continued*—1812 TO 1815.

How Napoleon invaded Russia with his "Grand Army"; how Moscow was burnt; how his army was destroyed by the Russian winter; how he made a final effort, but was defeated at Leipsic by the Russians and Prussians, who marched against Paris; how Napoleon gave up his empire and was sent to Elba . 257

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE HUNDRED DAYS (1815); LOUIS XVIII. (1815 to 1824).

How Louis XVIII. became king; how a Congress met at Vienna; how Napoleon escaped from Elba and entered Paris in triumph; how the Hundred Days began; how the battle of Waterloo was fought; how Napoleon was exiled to St. Helena; how Louis XVIII. was restored to the throne; how Marshal Ney was shot; how the Holy Alliance was formed, and how a war took place in Spain . . . . . Page 264

CHAPTER XLVIII.

CHARLES X. (1824 to 1830); LOUIS PHILIPPE (1830 to 1848).

How Charles X.'s ministers interfered with the freedom of the press; how a revolution took place, and how the king abdicated; how Louis Philippe became king; how the Red Republicans plotted against the king's life; how the French made war in Syria and Algeria; how another revolution took place, and how Louis Philippe abdicated 272

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE SECOND REPUBLIC (1848 to 1852); THE SECOND EMPIRE — NAPOLEON III. (1852 to 1870).

How the Second Republic was established; how Louis Napoleon became first President and then Emperor; how France and England made war on Russia; how Sebastopol was taken; how Napoleon III. made war on Austria; how he interfered in Mexico, and how Maximilian was killed 280

CHAPTER L.

NAPOLEON III.—*continued.* 1870—THE THIRD REPUBLIC.

How Napoleon III. made war on Germany; how the French armies were defeated in several battles, and how Napoleon and his army surrendered at Sedan; how a third Republic was established; how Paris was besieged, and at last surrendered to the Germans; how the Communists set fire to Paris and how vengeance was taken on them by the government; how M. Thiers became President 287

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

MAP OF FRANCE.

ARREST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY .. .. .. *Frontispiece*

CHARLEMAGNE AND THE BOYS .. .. *To face Page* 12

GODFREY DE BOUILLON AND THE CRUSADERS BEFORE JERUSALEM .. .. „ „ 31

DEATH OF SIMON DE MONTFORT .. .. .. „ „ 47

THE BLACK PRINCE AT CRECY .. .. „ „ 78

JOAN DARC .. .. „ „ 100

DEATH OF CHEVALIER BAYARD .. .. .. „ „ 128

MURDER OF THE DUKE OF GUISE .. .. .. „ „ 157

HENRY IV. AT IVRY .. .. „ „ 161

NAPOLEON'S ARMY CROSSING THE ALPS .. .. „ „ 245

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW .. .. „ „ 259

NAPOLEON AT WATERLOO .. .. „ „ 268

GAMBETTA ABOUT TO ESCAPE IN A BALLOON .. „ „ 291

Edwd Weller

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LITTLE ARTHUR'S

HISTORY OF FRANCE.

CHAPTER I.

The ancient inhabitants of France; the Gauls; their manners, religion, and customs; how they were conquered by the Romans.

THE country which we now call France and which, as you know, is only separated from England by the English Channel, used to be called Gaul many hundred years ago, before the Birth of Christ. But the Gaul of those times was not in the least like France as we see it now. Instead of the fine cities and noble rivers and rich corn-fields and vineyards, which you pass as you travel by the railway, the country then was almost covered with marshes and forests; instead of sheep and oxen, there were wolves and elks and wild boars; and Paris itself, which is now perhaps the most beautiful city in the world, was then nothing more than a few round huts, made of reeds and mud, on an island in the river Seine.

All writers agree that these ancient Gauls were fierce and brave—fearing nothing, it was said, except that the sky might fall on their heads. They were blue-eyed and yellow-haired, with huge limbs and bodies.

They wore golden chains and collars, and sometimes stained their yellow hair with red to give themselves a more terrible appearance. War was their delight, and one tribe or clan was continually fighting with another.

Like the ancient Britons, of whom you have read in English History, these Gauls had priests, whom they called Druids. They were usually the oldest and wisest men among them, and were greatly feared and reverenced. Every year these Druids went into the forests and cut the mistletoe, which was supposed to be sacred to their gods, from the oak-tree with a golden sickle. And they used to sacrifice the prisoners whom they took in battle, either by shooting them with arrows, or by killing them with long knives; and sometimes they even filled a large wickerwork figure with living men, and set it on fire, when the poor wretches inside it were burnt alive, in order to give pleasure to their gods. They thought, too, that a man's soul after death would pass into another body, and that in the future life a man would live over again the same life that he had lived upon earth; and so, when any of their great chieftains died, they either burned, or buried in his grave, all his servants and his armour, his horses and his dogs, that they might follow their master into the other world.

At first, these Gauls had no regular towns or villages, but lived in huts made of reeds and plastered with mud; nor had they any flocks or herds, but they lived on what they could get by hunting or fishing. Their greatest enemies in these early times were the Germans, who lived on the other side of the river Rhine. These Germans were even fiercer and more warlike than the Gauls themselves, and

not only defeated them in many battles, but also took a large portion of their land from them, and kept it for their own. The Gauls were so restless and fond of fighting that they could not stay in their own land, and about B.C. 300, large bodies of them crossed the Alps and invaded Italy. From that time for several centuries there was a constant struggle between them and the great Roman nation which was gradually making itself master of nearly all the then known world, and had already conquered part of Gaul as well as the countries near it. And about sixty years before the Birth of Christ, the Romans sent one of their greatest generals, called Julius Cæsar, to conquer the whole of Gaul. The Gauls fought bravely to defend their country for nearly ten years, and they were helped by their old enemies, the Germans. But the Romans were better armed and better disciplined; and besides this, Julius Cæsar was perhaps the greatest general in ancient history, and so it ended that, after nine years of incessant fighting, the different tribes of Gauls, one after another, submitted to Cæsar, and Gaul became a province of the great Roman Empire about B.C. 51.

After that the Gauls were at peace for nearly three hundred years, and their country improved under the Romans, who built cities and temples and schools, and made long, straight roads from one end of Gaul to the other, and aqueducts to carry the water from the rivers to the towns. Many of the Gauls joined the Roman Army, and formed a famous legion called the *Alauda*, from the lark they wore on their helmets. And many of them became rich, and changed their manner of life. They built walls round their villages, and dug for minerals and iron,

and sowed and ploughed their land. Many of them also became Christians, and gave up their human sacrifices and their belief in the Druids. It is even said that St. Paul preached the Gospel in Gaul as he was journeying to Spain; but whether this is true or not, we know that missionaries were sent from Rome who persuaded the Gauls to give up their old heathen faith, and it was not long before the Pagan temples were turned into Christian Churches, and bishops were appointed in the chief towns. One of these bishops, Saint Denis, suffered martyrdom on the Hill of Mars or Montmartre, near Paris, and became the patron saint of France; and two others were so famous that you should remember their names,—St. Hilary of Poitiers and St. Martin of Tours.

The Gauls were obliged to pay a large sum of tribute money every year to the Romans, and in return the Romans helped them against their enemies the Goths and Germans. But as time went on, the Romans began to want help themselves; for they had grown rich and idle, and cared for nothing but ease and pleasure, and their armies had lost their old courage in battle. And so all the fierce tribes of barbarians on the borders of the great Roman Empire began to invade it, and, if driven back one year, they only came again the next year in larger numbers, carrying fire and sword throughout Europe. The Goths and Vandals had taken Rome itself; but the most terrible of all these tribes was that of the Huns under their king Attila, who has been called "the Scourge of God." In A.D. 451, these Huns marched through Gaul with an immense army, burning and plundering and killing as they went along; and one of the greatest battles in history

took place at Châlons on the Marne, between Attila and the Romans with their allies. It is said that more than 160,000 men were killed on both sides, and the end of it was that the Huns left Gaul, and marched into Italy.

CHAPTER II.

CLOVIS—481-511.

How Clovis became King of France, and how he and his people became Christians.

SOME years before this battle of Châlons a tribe of Germans, called the Franks, had crossed the Rhine and driven out the small Roman army that was left, and conquered the Goths in the south of Gaul. In A.D. 481 their king, Clovis, completed this conquest of the country by a battle near Soissons; and from this time we may speak of Gaul as France, although these Franks were really more German than French, and it was not till many years afterwards that the French language was even spoken by the Franks themselves.

Clovis was a heathen himself, though his wife, Clotilda, was a Christian. But on the evening before one of his great battles he vowed that, if his troops should win the victory, he would be baptised in the name of the god of Clotilda, and after his victory he and three thousand of his soldiers were all baptised on Christmas Day, 496, in the Great Church of Rheims. "Bow thy head a suppliant," said the Bishop, as he baptised the King, "adore what thou hast burnt, and burn what thou hast adored." But though

Clovis was a Christian and a brave soldier, he was cruel and revengeful as well; and in his latter years we are told that he killed many of his own relations in order to make himself safer on the throne. There is one story told of him which will show you the fierce spirit of the man and of the time.

His soldiers once carried off from one of the churches a beautiful vase, and Clovis had promised the bishop that it should be sent back; and afterwards when the spoil was divided at a place called Soissons, Clovis asked that the vase might be given to him as well as his own share of the spoil. All the soldiers agreed to this, except one man, who broke the vase in pieces with a blow of his battle-axe, saying, "Never shalt thou have more than thy proper share." Clovis said nothing at the time, but a year afterwards, when he was reviewing his troops, he came up to the soldier who had broken the vase, and pretending that the man's battle-axe was not bright enough, took it from him and threw it on the ground. And then, as the man stooped to pick it up, Clovis, with a single blow of his own battle-axe, cleft his head in twain. "It was thus," said the King, "that thou didst cleave the vase at Soissons."

This story shows us how cruel and revengeful kings were in those days; but though Clovis was in many ways little better than a savage, we must remember that he created two things which have lasted till our own time. One of them is the French kingdom, and the other is a Christian France.

Almost the last act of Clovis was to call together a council of the Bishops and Clergy, in 511, and he gave the Church many rights and privileges; and one of the most important of these was the right

of asylum or protection to a man when pursued by his enemies. Just as the Jew was allowed by the law of Moses to fly to a City of Refuge, where he would be safe from the avenger of blood, so in France a man who had slain another, whether justly or unjustly, could fly to the nearest church or monastery, and there for the time being he was safe from his enemies. Soon afterwards Clovis died, and was buried in the church of St. Geneviève at Paris, which had been built by his wife, Clotilda.

CHAPTER III.

THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS—511-768.

Of the Sluggard Kings who reigned after Clovis; of the Mayors of the Palace; how Charles Martel won the Battle of Tours; how his son Pepin "the Short" became King of France.

CLOVIS held his throne by the right of conquest, as it is called, or, as he would have said himself, "with the help of God and my good sword." When he died, his kingdom—or rather his lands, palaces, flocks and herds, in fact his personal property—was divided among his four sons, Metz, Paris, Soissons, and Orleans, being the four centres of their possessions; but the three elder sons did not live long, and the kingdom again came under one king, the youngest son, Clotaire.

The history of the reigns that follow is nothing but a list of crime and bloodshed and terrible murders followed by terrible revenges. There is nothing good or useful to be remembered in the lives of the Merovingian kings,* and the women seem

* So called from Meroveus the grandfather of Clovis.

to have been almost more cruel and wicked than the men. Brunehilda and Fredegonda, two of the queens who married the grandchildren of Clovis, were two of the worst women we read of in history. They carried on continual war and intrigue in their rival provinces of the east and west,* with every kind of treachery and cruelty, till at last Brunehilda was betrayed into the hands of Clotaire, son of Fredegonda, and after being cruelly tortured, was torn to pieces at the tail of a wild horse (A.D. 613).

Clotaire was succeeded by his son, Dagobert, who came to the throne in 628, and he is the only king in these days whose name is worth your remembering; for he acted wisely and justly in many ways, and built churches, and went about the country himself to see that the laws were kept. But the kings who succeeded Dagobert are to us names and nothing more. They were called "the Sluggards" or "Fainéants," and we never hear of any great or noble action being done by any of them. As a punishment for their idleness and carelessness, they soon lost all the little power they once had, and were rarely seen by their subjects. It was only on some state occasions that they were brought out and carried through the streets in a waggon drawn by oxen; and when the ceremony was over, they were taken back again to their palace with the same dull solemnity. The real kings were the "Mayors of the Palace," who at first were only high stewards or keepers of the royal palaces, but who gradually obtained for themselves the chief power in the kingdom. One of these Mayors, called PEPIN, made himself master of France, and he handed on his power in 714, to his son, CHARLES MARTEL, or "Charles the

* *Austrasia* or Austria was the Eastern kingdom, and *Neustria*, not Eastern, was the Western kingdom.

Hammer," as men named him, from the crushing blows he gave his enemies in battle. He is famous for the great victory which he won over the Saracens or Arabs near Tours in 732. These Saracens are known to us under many names, Moors, or Arabs, or Turks, or Mahometans, from Mahomet, the false prophet in whom they believed. They were one of the fiercest and strongest races in history, and had at this time conquered the north of Africa and Spain; and they now poured through the passes of the Pyrenees into France, burning and plundering and killing as they went along, just as you may remember Attila and his Huns had done nearly 300 years before. Near Tours, the Saracens were met by the Frankish army under Charles Martel; and the battle which followed has been rightly called one of the decisive battles of the world. The Saracens were defeated with immense loss—indeed it is said that three hundred thousand of them were left dead upon the field. The survivors fled during the night southwards again to Spain; and thus Charles Martel saved not only his own country, but all Christian Europe from the terrible danger of being overrun by these fierce infidel followers of Mahomet.

Though he was a great captain and, as we have seen, saved his country, Charles Martel was never really a king himself, but only a duke and a "Mayor of the Palace," as his father had been before him. He left a son called PEPIN "the Short," who was small in stature, but a brave and able prince; and this Pepin thought he might as well be a king as one of the Sluggard kings who still reigned in name. And so he asked the Pope, whom he had helped and supported, if he might be crowned; and the Pope's answer was that "he who has the power ought to

have the name of king as well." Accordingly, poor Childeric, the last of these feeble Sluggard Merovingian kings, had his long hair, the sign of his royalty, cut off, and was shut up in a monastery, while Pepin became king in his stead in the year 752; and with him begins a new dynasty in French history, the CARLOVINGIANS taking that name from their founder, Charles Martel.

Pepin twice invaded Italy to help his friend the Pope, drove the Lombards out of Ravenna and Ancona, and offered the keys of these towns at the altar of St. Peter's in Rome. This Donation of Pepin (as it is called) was the beginning of the temporal power claimed by the Popes ever afterwards. Pepin also drove the Saracens out of Narbonne and Aquitaine after a seven years' war, but in A.D. 768 this brave and vigorous prince died of a fever.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARLEMAGNE—768-814.

How Charlemagne conquered the Saxons and the Saracens; how he became Emperor; his wise laws and love for learning; his fame and power; his death.

PEPIN was succeeded by his son, CHARLEMAGNE, a name which means Charles the Great, although he should more properly be called Karl, for he was more German than French, and his life belongs rather to the history of Germany than to that of France; still, as France was part of his empire, his reign is a part of French history.

The first thirty years of Charlemagne's reign were passed in continual war, first against the

Italians and Lombards, then against the Saxon tribes in the north of Germany. This war lasted more than thirty years, but at last Charlemagne routed the Saxons with great slaughter, in 779, and after much blood had been shed, he subdued their country and forced them to become Christians. Then he conquered the Huns, or Avars, who lived in what is now Bohemia and Hungary; and then he conquered a great part of Italy and made war upon the Saracens in Spain. It was while he was leading his army back through the passes of the Pyrenees, that the famous battle of Roncesvalles took place, where Roland (Charlemagne's nephew) and the Paladins, as they were called—the bravest nobles in his army—were surrounded by the Saracens and cut to pieces. It is said that the dying hero blew so loud a blast on his war-horn that it was heard by Charlemagne at Fontarabia, many miles away, and you may remember Sir Walter Scott's lines—

"O for a blast of that dread horn
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come;
When Roland brave and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer
In Roncesvalles died!"

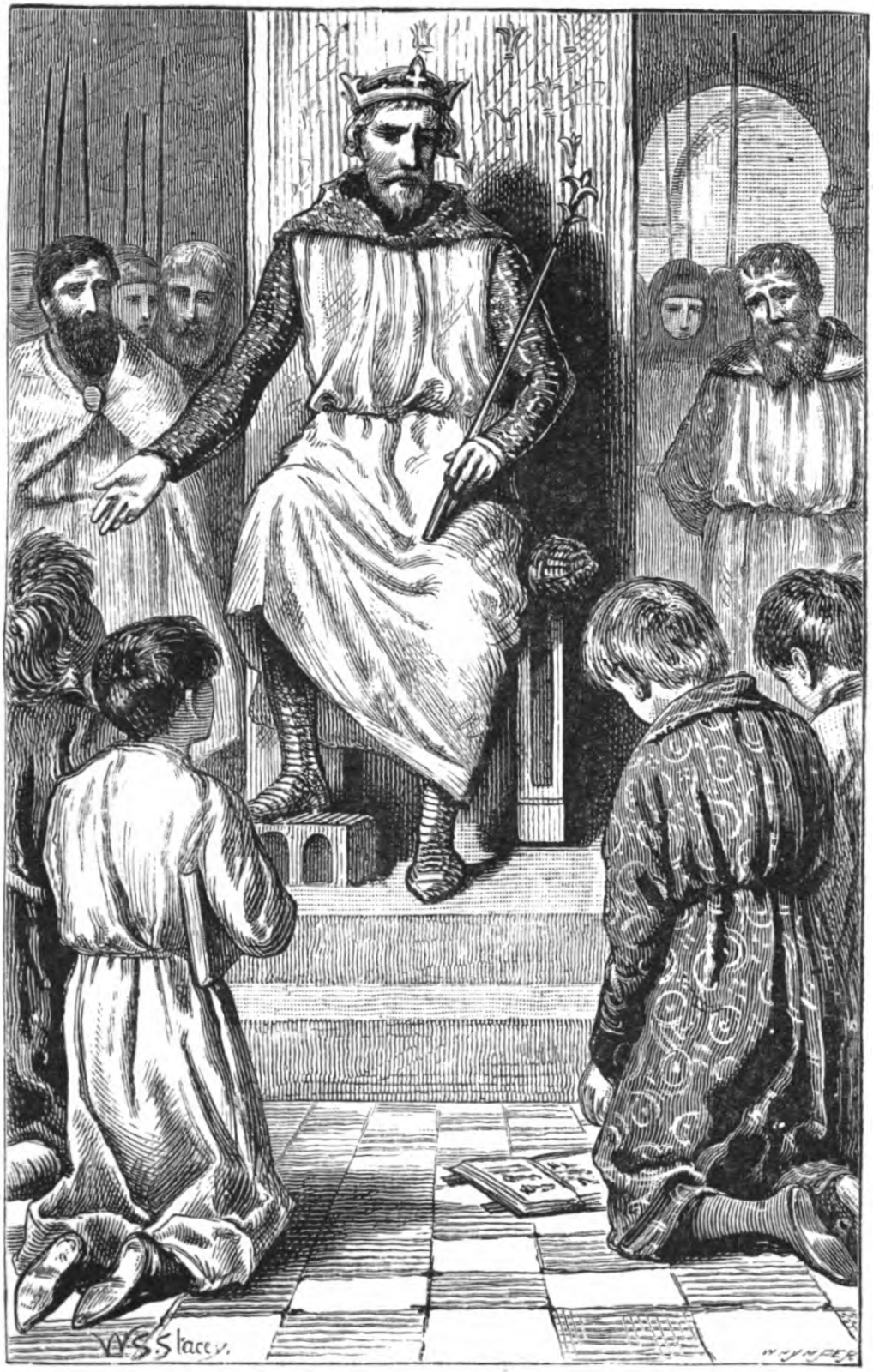
The 'Song of Roland' was always a favourite one with the French knights, and four hundred years after this, William the Conqueror's soldiers sang it as they marched to attack the Saxon lines at Hastings.

If you look at the map, you will see that Charlemagne's kingdom consisted of all the richest countries of Europe—France, Germany, Italy, and parts of Austria and Spain—and it was thought that he ought to be something more than a king with such

a vast empire. Accordingly, in the year 800, when he was hearing Mass in the great church of St. Peter's at Rome, suddenly, as the service ended, the Pope stepped forward, and poured the holy oil on his head and crowned him Emperor; and all the people that were there cried out: "Life and victory to Charles Augustus, crowned of God, the great and peaceful Emperor of the Romans!"

Then his empire was at rest for fourteen years, and he was as famous for what he did in peace as for his victories in war. He founded courts of justice and made a code of laws, and he also held yearly assemblies of the nobles, the bishops, and the counts and governors of the different provinces of the empire; and they talked over and settled state affairs, as men do now in our own Parliament. But above all, Charlemagne built schools, and encouraged the great teachers and scholars of his day, and he set them a noble example himself. For he learned Latin and studied grammar, astronomy, and music in the "school of the palace," under the famous Alcuin, an English priest; but, strange to say, he could never manage to write more than his own name, though he tried long and hard to learn.

There is one story told of this great and wise king, which ought to be remembered. He had a school near his palace, where some of the boys were rich and noble, while others were poor and of humble birth. Charlemagne paid the teachers himself, and took great interest in their work; and one day on his return from war, he visited the school and told the teachers to bring the boys before him and show him what they had done, while he was away. The sons of poor parents showed their exercises and copies beautifully written; but the young nobles



Charlemagne and the Boys.

had no work at all to show, for they had done nothing but amuse themselves. Then the great king called the poor but industrious boys, and put them on his right hand, and in a voice that sounded clear and loud as a trumpet, spoke thus to them —"I thank you, boys, for doing good work, and behaving well and honestly; and I bid you go on to perfection. I will give you rich abbeys and bishoprics, and all the good things of this world." And then he sternly turned to the idle young nobles on his left hand, and said to them, "As for you, the sons of the rich and great, who have been idle and careless and wasted your time, know that I think but little of your birth and rank, and be assured that unless you work harder in future, you will never get any good thing from King Charles."

It was this wisdom and greatness of mind that has procured for him the name of the Great, and which caused him to be respected and feared in his own day even by princes and nations that had never seen him. The famous Haroun Alraschid, of whom you read in the Arabian Nights, but who was a real living prince at that time, sent to Charlemagne, of his own accord, the keys of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem and many costly gifts as well—an elephant and eastern spices, and what was thought more curious than anything, a little water-clock of bronze with golden bells that struck the hours.

The last days of Charlemagne, like those of other great kings, were very sad ones. His strength failed him; he lost his two favourite sons, and he began to grow weary of his power and the cares of government. At last, finding himself so weak that he could not walk without support, and feeling that his death must be very near, he laid himself down and

made the sign of the cross, and said as he closed his eyes, "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit,"—and having said this, he died in the year 814.

He was buried in the Church of Aix-la-Chapelle, or Aachen, a town on the borders of France and Germany, near his favourite palace and hunting-grounds, still clothed in his Emperor's robes, with his good sword "Joyeuse" by his side, his crown on his head, and his shield and sceptre at his feet; a bible lay open on his knees, with the little purse which held his alms-money when he went on a pilgrimage to Rome.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS THE DEBONNAIRE (A.D. 814) TO THE ACCESSION OF HUGH CAPET (A.D. 987).

How Louis' sons rebelled against their father; how his kingdom was divided and Charles the Bald became King of France; how the Normans attacked Paris; how Charles the Fat became king; how he was deposed and died; how Charles the Simple gave Normandy to Rollo; how he was dethroned and died in prison; how Hugh Capet became king.

CHARLEMAGNE was succeeded by his son Louis, who is sometimes called "the Pious," but is better known as "the Debonnaire," which means easy and good-natured. This excessive easiness and good-nature was a great defect in his character, and made him quite unfit to rule a great empire; and after the first few years, in which he ruled wisely and sensibly, his reign is nothing but a history of defeats and humiliation.

His wife, the Empress Ermengarde, died in 823,

and Louis chose for his second wife, Judith, the daughter of one of his nobles, one of the cleverest and most beautiful women in the kingdom. But Louis' sons by Ermengarde, named Lothaire and Louis "the German," were indignant at the favour shown to their half-brother Charles, the king's son by Judith, and they conspired against their father. A civil war followed, but Louis' own troops deserted him on the eve of battle in a plain near Basle, known afterwards as "the Field of Liars." Louis fell into the hands of his rebellious sons, and they forced the poor weak king to sign a confession of crimes which he had never committed, and to walk barefooted and clothed in sackcloth through the streets of Aix-la-Chapelle, the same city where the great Charlemagne had been crowned. Even the common people, miserable as they were themselves, heard with horror and pity of the barbarous conduct of the unnatural sons, and before long the eldest of them, Lothaire, found himself deserted by his troops, and had to save himself by flight. Louis was restored to his throne, but in 835 a fresh quarrel broke out, and another son of the king, also named Louis, made war on his father, for he was indignant at being shut out from any share in the empire, which was to be divided between his brothers Lothaire and Charles the Bald.

War followed on the borders of the Rhine, but fifteen years of strife and unhappiness had broken the poor king's health, and he died in 840, worn out and heart-broken, on a little island in the Rhine. To the last he retained his gentle and pious character, and with his dying breath he sent his forgiveness to his wicked son, but bade him at the same time himself ask forgiveness of God for having brought his father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

After the unfortunate Louis' death in 840, his sons quarrelled among themselves over the division of his empire, each of them wishing to get the largest share. Charles and Louis united against their elder brother Lothaire, and defeated him in the great battle of Fontenoy, where nearly all the Frank men-at-arms were killed. A treaty was then signed (A.D. 843) at Verdun, which divided the great empire of Charlemagne among his three grandsons. Louis took all Germany; Lothaire took Italy and part of the south of France, with the name of Emperor; while CHARLES THE BALD took the provinces west of the Rhine and became King of France. Louis "the German" took his oath at this treaty in what is known as the Romance language, from which modern French is derived, so that his brother's French troops might understand him; while Charles repeated the oath in the German tongue.

Though Charles had the title of King of France, he had really very little power except over the country close to Paris. France, in those times, was a bundle of small states; and each of these states was ruled by its own count or baron, who had the power of life and death over his subjects, and made war, and coined money, and raised taxes, just as a king would do. Their lands were held by them on what is called the FEUDAL SYSTEM, that is, they were bound to do homage for them to the king, to help him in his wars, and to serve him in other ways; and they in their turn gave portions of their lands on similar terms to freemen who were called their vassals. These nobles lived in strong castles, the ruins of which may be seen to this day. They were defended by walls and towers of immense thickness, and could only be approached by a drawbridge, across the

moat or ditch which surrounded them on every side. These counts and barons, with their lands and revenues, and with their men at arms and vassals, all bound to them by feudal service, were the real masters of the kingdom. They passed their time in hunting, feasting, or fighting; and their lands were tilled by a large number of serfs or slaves, who were "bound to the soil," as it was called; that is, they might be bought or sold with the land, just the same as if they had been ploughs or reaping-hooks. Their life was a most wretched one. They were poorly clothed and badly fed, and they knew so little of what is called agriculture, that if they had a rainy season or a bad harvest, they used to starve in numbers. We read of no less than forty-eight famines within a hundred years.

To add to the miseries of France at this time, the Danes, or Northmen, or Normans, began to invade the country, landing at different places wherever they saw a chance of plunder; sailing up the rivers, burning the towns, killing all who made resistance, and carrying off in their long ships all the gold and silver they could find. It was not the first time that they had been seen on the shores of France, and it is said that the great Charlemagne himself shed tears when be once saw the black sails of a Norman fleet at the mouth of the Seine, and thought of the miseries which these pirates would bring upon his empire in days to come.

War was the delight and business of these fierce Northmen, and the god whom they chiefly worshipped was Odin, believed by them to delight in the blood of men. They thought that the warrior who slew many of his enemies and sent their souls to Odin, or who died in battle himself sword in hand, would

have a place in the Valhalla or hall of heroes in the other world, and would pass his days in fighting, and his nights in feasting on boar's flesh, and drinking mead poured out for him by beautiful maidens from cups of horn.

Year after year these heathen pirates came in increasing numbers to the French shores, getting bolder as they found that the people fled in terror at their approach; until at last they sailed up the Seine with a fleet of 120 galleys, burnt and pillaged Rouen, and besieged Paris itself in 875. Charles the Bald was too feeble or too cowardly to meet them in battle, so he bribed them to retreat by paying them seven thousand pounds of silver. But twelve years afterwards Paris was again attacked by them, and such numbers of the inhabitants were slain that it is said the islands in the Seine were white with their bones.

Though Charles the Bald was neither brave nor capable, he had a strong desire to extend his kingdom, and tried to force the Dukes of Aquitaine and Languedoc to submit to him. He also seized Lorraine, when his brother Lothaire, the German Emperor, died. Again, when Louis, Lothaire's son, died in 875, Charles actually crossed the Alps and prevailed on the Pope to crown him Emperor, as Charlemagne had been crowned before. But on his way back from Italy, Charles died suddenly, it was said of poison, in a miserable hovel on the Pass of Mount Cenis in the Alps (A.D. 877).

Little need be said of his son, LOUIS the Stammerer, who hardly reigned a year, and still less of his brother Carloman, who was killed in a boar hunt, after a short reign of two years.

The nobles then elected (885) CHARLES THE FAT, the German Emperor, to be King of France, and thus

nearly the whole of Charlemagne's empire was again united under one king. But Charles was quite unworthy of these vast possessions. He was not only lazy and sluggish, but cruel and treacherous as well; and by one cowardly act of his he brought a great misfortune on his country. He basely murdered a Danish chieftain who had trusted to his honour; and in revenge for this murder a large Norman fleet again sailed up the Seine under the famous Rolf or Rollo, and Paris was besieged by them for the third time. The citizens defended themselves bravely for a year and a half, and they were encouraged to resist by the skill and valour of Odo, Count of Paris. At last Charles the Fat, who had been in Germany, led an army to the rescue, and encamped on the heights of Montmartre, which overlook the town. But, instead of meeting the enemy in the field, he bribed them to retreat with 800 pounds of silver; "and thus," says an old writer, "he bought with gold the security he should have won with the sword." The men of Paris were so indignant at this cowardice of their king, that they would not let the Normans sail past the city walls, and so they were obliged to drag their ships overland for two miles before they could embark.

Soon after this, Charles the Fat was deposed—for it was felt that he was unfit to reign—and shortly afterwards he died miserably in a monastery near the lake of Constance.

The Empire of Charlemagne was again divided into several kingdoms, and the crown of France was offered to the brave defender of Paris, Count Odo, or Eudes, but he died after a short reign of ten years, passed in constant war with the Counts of Aquitaine and Poictiers, and CHARLES the III., called

THE SIMPLE (or more properly the Fool), became king (898). During his reign of twenty-four years, Charles seems to have done only one wise thing, and that was his giving to Rollo and the Normans that rich and fertile part of France which lies between the Seine and the sea, and has ever since been called Normandy. In return for this Rollo did homage to Charles, and he and his Normans became Christians and Frenchmen. Normandy was divided among them, and there they settled down and lived in peace. They fortified the towns, they rebuilt the churches, they sowed and ploughed the land, and their part of the country soon became the most flourishing and prosperous province in France.

The last years of Charles the Simple's reign were passed in war with some of his great nobles, among whom the most powerful were Robert, Count of Paris, and Duke of France, and Herbert, Count of Vermandois. These nobles defeated the king in a great battle near Soissons in 923, and though Count Robert was slain himself, his son, "Hugh the White," carried on the war and proclaimed the Duke of Burgundy as king. The unfortunate Charles was betrayed by his enemies, and was carried about for seven years from one dungeon to another, until at last he died miserably in the Castle of Peronne in 929. The Duke of Burgundy died soon afterwards, and Hugh the White might have easily made himself king, but he chose instead to make himself Duke of Burgundy, and allowed Charles the Simple's young son, Louis, to be crowned at Rheims. This Louis is known as LOUIS OUTREMER, or "Beyond the Sea," from his having been brought up in England. But Louis was not more fortunate than his father, for his short reign was passed in war with his nobles. Two

other kings followed, a Lothaire and another Louis; but still the nobles showed themselves more powerful than their sovereign; and at last, when Louis V. died childless, Hugh Capet, Count of Paris and Duke of France—the son of the famous Hugh the White—became king in 987. And thus the line of Carlovingians, or descendants of Charles Martel, came to an end.

CHAPTER VI.

From the accession of Hugh Capet (A.D. 987) to the death of Henry I. (A.D. 1060).

How Hugh Capet found the barons of France as strong as the king; how he made friends with the Church; how Robert the Pious was foolishly charitable; how he was excommunicated by the Pope; how a great terror fell upon men in the year 1000; how Henry I. made war on his barons; the terrible famine in 1031; the "Truce of God."

HUGH CAPET was the first of a long line of kings who reigned over France for more than seven hundred years; but though he was called a king, he had really very little more power than the great barons among whom France was divided at this time. They allowed him the name of king, and they allowed him also to hand on this name to his son after him, and some of them paid him homage as their feudal lord. But this was all they did; and for a long time the history of France cannot be called a *national* history at all: that is to say, it is not the history of the French nation, but rather an account of the King's wars with his great barons, or of his struggles with the clergy, or of his foreign wars, in which the barons either stood aloof or helped him, as they felt inclined. In fact, you

cannot be too often reminded that France, as we use the word now, did not exist at all, and that it was nothing more than a bundle of independent states—such as Burgundy, Normandy, Champagne, Toulouse, and Aquitaine—each with its own baron or count, who called himself a peer of France, that is, the king's equal, and ruled his province with his own little army of vassals and retainers, and who made peace or war just as he chose; while the King of France in those days was really only Count of Paris and Duke of France, the master of a small strip of land on either side of the Seine between the Somme and the Loire.

Almost from the day that he was made king, Hugh Capet found it difficult to hold his own against these great barons, whose kingdoms were as large as his own. Those in the south of France denied his title of king altogether. "Who made thee a Count?" the King asked the Count of Perigord, who had set himself up as an independent prince. "Who made thee a King?" was the Count's reply, for he looked on the Duke of France as only his peer and equal.

Hugh Capet tried to strengthen himself by making friends of the monks and clergy, and gave up to them all the rich abbeys which had come to him from his father; and in return for this he was called by them the Defender of the Church, and his last words to his son were to bid him cherish and protect the Church, and not lay hands on anything belonging to the abbeys or convents, lest he might incur the wrath of their founder, the great St. Benedict.

ROBERT THE PIOUS, who succeeded Hugh Capet in 996, was good, learned, and foolishly charitable,

for he gave money to all who asked him, without taking the trouble to find out if they were proper persons to receive it. He was constantly followed by a troop of beggars, who were fed with scraps of food from the royal table; he let them cut off the gold fringe from his robes without a question; and one day, when he saw a priest stealing the silver candlestick from the altar of a church, all he said was—"Run off, my friend, for thy life, to thy home in the country." A man so weak and so foolishly liberal was not likely to rule his kingdom or hold his own against the barons: and so we find nothing but trouble and distress throughout his reign.

His first trouble was on account of his marriage, for it was found out that his Queen, Bertha, was a distant cousin of his, and Pope Gregory V. ordered him to put her away on pain of being excommunicated. When Robert refused to do this, not only were he and his wife excommunicated—that is, cut off from all the services and sacraments of the Church, but the whole of France was laid under an Interdict, as it was called. The churches were closed; no services could be held; children could not be baptized; no one could be married; and the dead were buried without any prayers being said over the grave. At last Robert gave way, and put away Queen Bertha, and married instead Constance, daughter of the Count of Toulouse, who was as proud and overbearing as she was beautiful. And her influence over the king caused him to commit the only crime in his long reign. Two priests were charged with heresy, as it is called, that is, denying some of the articles of the Christian faith, and they were burnt alive. One of them was the Queen's confessor, and

it is said that she was cruel enough to strike out one of his eyes with an iron-pointed staff as he was being led past her to the place of execution. This was the first time in history that Christians had ever been put to death by other Christians on account of their denying a part of the Catholic faith.

The eleventh century, or the 1000th year after the birth of Christ, was now beginning, and it was believed throughout Europe that the world would come to an end this year, as being the last of the thousand years during which it was foretold in the Revelation that Satan would be kept in chains. People grew timid and alarmed, and fancied they saw signs of destruction in the heavens. The churches were crowded, and men were continually confessing their sins and doing penance. Many of them gave up their houses and lands to the Church, and went on pilgrimages. They did not even sow the corn-lands, for they thought they should not be alive to reap the harvest in the following year. When this dreaded year had passed and a new year came, we are told that men breathed again, and felt as if a new life had been given them. Still, their fear and terror brought some good with it, for during the next few years men gave large and splendid offerings to the Church, and grander abbeys and cathedrals were built in this eleventh century than in any other period of French history.

The end of King Robert's life was troubled by civil war and by the rebellion of his sons against him. They were urged on by their ambitious mother, Queen Constance, and though Robert reduced them to submission, he died himself shortly afterwards, heart-broken at such ingratitude, in the year 1031.

HENRY I. was, like his father, a weak and harmless prince, of whom little can be said that is either good or bad. He was almost forgotten even in his own time, and the great barons who ruled the provinces of Toulouse and Aquitaine, were far more powerful than the King of France. His brother Robert, the favourite son of his mother Constance, at once made war upon the king; but Henry sought the aid of the proudest and strongest of his barons, Robert the Magnificent, Duke of Normandy. The war showed that the Normans had lost nothing of the daring and spirit they had shown as pirates and sea-rovers in an earlier age; Prince Robert and his ally Eudes, Count of Blois, were defeated in three great battles; while Duke Robert's desperate valour made him such a terror to his enemies that he was always known afterwards as "Robert the Devil." Henry gave his brother the duchy of Burgundy, and gave a large territory between the rivers Seine and Oise to the Duke of Normandy, as a reward for helping him in his war. Queen Constance died shortly afterwards, and peace was restored to the kingdom.

About this time (1031) France suffered from a terrible famine, the like of which was never known before or since. For three years there was neither seed-time nor harvest, and no corn or food could be procured. The peasants lived on roots and grass, and thousands of them died of starvation; while wolves came from the forests in numbers and devoured the dead bodies, for the living were not strong enough to bury the dead. In one town human flesh was sold on the butchers' stalls, and near another town some travellers found in a lonely hut the skulls and bones of forty-eight persons whom the

owner had murdered and then eaten. This wretch was burnt alive in the market-place of Macon. At last, when men were beginning to despair and the misery and starvation was extreme, there came in the fourth year an abundant harvest, more plentiful (we are told) than that of three ordinary years, and so the country was saved.

This famine, and the war and violence, which seemed to increase instead of growing less, made the bishops and clergy think whether something could not be done to prevent things from becoming worse. So they proclaimed what was called the "Peace of God," which was to do away with war altogether. But this Peace was soon broken, and the barons went back to their old ways of fighting among themselves and ill-treating the peasants. Then the Pope and bishops proclaimed the "Truce of God," which forbade all fighting from Wednesday evening to Monday morning, as well as during Lent and Advent and the great Saints' days of the Church. Besides this, women were to be respected, and the labourers in the fields were to be let alone, and not robbed or beaten or carried off to the war, as in former years.

CHAPTER VII.

PHILIP I.—A.D. 1060-1108.

How Philip I. showed himself a weak and wicked king; how he made war with William I. of England; how the First Crusade was preached by Peter the Hermit; how the Crusaders took Jerusalem; how Philip I. repented of his sins.

PHILIP I. was the son of Henry I. by his third wife, a Russian princess; and it may be safely said of this king that he was one of the worst and weakest of all the kings of France. He was very young when his father died, and was carefully brought up, but he soon showed himself to be both wicked and extravagant. He cared for nothing but pleasure, and that he might have money for his pleasures he sold the richest Church property that he could lay his hands on to the highest bidder. Then he gave up his own wife Bertha, and took in her stead the wife of one of his great nobles — Bertrade, whose lawful husband was Fulk, the Count of Anjou. For this, both he and his new queen were excommunicated by the Pope, that is, they were excluded from the holy Sacrament and Christian privileges.

While Philip was thus doing everything that was wrong and foolish, the Normans, under their wise and brave leaders, were spreading themselves everywhere. One Norman count had taken Sicily from the Saracens and founded a kingdom of his own, to which he soon added the southern part of Italy as far as Naples; while William, Duke of Normandy (the son of Robert the Magnificent, who had died on a pilgrimage), won the battle of Hastings in 1066, and conquered England. But though he was

King of England as well as Duke of Normandy, he was in name the vassal of the French king, and Philip, growing jealous of his power, encouraged William's son Robert to rebel against his father. But, fortunately for Philip, the war that followed soon came to an end, for as William was riding through the burning town of Mantes, his horse reared and slipped among the embers; the king was thrown violently against the pommel of his saddle and died soon afterwards, in the year 1087, of the injury he received.

Soon after this, the only important event in this reign took place, and that was the first Crusade, or first Holy War undertaken by Christian soldiers to rescue the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord from the Turks. But in order to understand how this war came about, we must go back a little.

It had long been a custom for men, when oppressed by any danger or difficulty, to make a vow that if they were set free or obtained their wishes, they would go as pilgrims to the burial place of some saint or martyr, and make their prayers and offerings at his shrine. Naturally, the most sacred of all these shrines was that of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem; and so, long before the Saracens conquered Palestine, thousands of pilgrims had yearly visited the Holy Sepulchre and had gone there and come back without harm or danger, for the Jews respected their piety. Even the Saracens, unbelievers as they were, had still allowed the pilgrims to come and go, for they brought much profit to those who entertained them. But then the Turks conquered Jerusalem, and they looked on the Christian pilgrims as intruders and enemies of their own false prophet Mahomet. So they profaned the

holy places, and robbed, insulted, and even murdered both the pilgrims and the Christian inhabitants.

Gregory VII.—better known as Hildebrand—the same Pope who had excommunicated Philip I., had thought of leading an army from Europe and driving these infidel Turks from the Holy Land; but his life was passed in a long struggle with the German emperors, and it was not until some years after his death that the First Crusade was preached by a poor, ignorant, barefooted monk, called Peter the Hermit, in the year 1094. He had himself been a pilgrim, and had seen the cruelty of the Turks and the sufferings of the Christians; and he went about through Europe, proclaiming the Crusade everywhere, and moving the hearts of all who heard him by his eloquence, as if he were an apostle sent from heaven. A great council was held at Clermont, in France, in 1095, where the Pope (Urban II.) himself appeared with his bishops and cardinals. By his side was Peter the Hermit, with his coarse cloak, his leather scrip, and his pilgrim's staff. But, when he began to speak, men forgot his mean appearance, and their hearts burned within them as the hermit told them of all he had seen and suffered,—of the desolation of the holy place, and of the tortures and misery endured by the Christians. Then the Pope spoke in his turn, and urged on all who heard him to gird on their swords like men of valour, and take part in the holy war. Let them give up houses and lands, and wives and children; let them leave all, and follow the Cross; whoever did so, should be absolved from all his sins in this world, and should receive a hundred-fold reward in the world to come.

When the Pope had ended, a great cry went up from the vast crowd who heard him. "It is the

will of God," they cried, "it is the will of God!" Then all knelt down and received absolution; and then they tied a red cross upon their shoulders, and this was ever afterwards the sign of a Crusader. Men of all classes and degrees were eager to take a part in this great enterprise. The knights and nobles sold their lands; merchants left their business; the serfs and slaves bought their freedom by becoming soldiers; monks and priests left their churches; and even robbers and criminals sought to save themselves by joining the army of the Cross.

The first body of the Crusaders that set out under the guidance of Peter the Hermit, and a poor knight, called Walter the Penniless, numbered 100,000; but it was rather a rabble than an army. They were mostly poor ignorant worthless creatures, who hardly knew the name of the countries through which they had to travel. They thought that God would provide food for them, as He had provided manna for the Israelites in the wilderness; they mistook every stranger they met for a Turk, and if the towers of a town appeared in sight they would ask if it was not Jerusalem. There was much misery, and, it is feared, much crime among them. Thousands of them died of sickness and famine along the line of march; thousands more were killed by the wild Hungarians; and, when the remnant at last crossed the Straits of Constantinople and entered Asia Minor, they were attacked and slaughtered by the Turks, so that hardly three thousand of these wretched victims escaped.

Next year the grand army of the Crusaders followed; these were chiefly knights and men-at-arms, very different from the ignorant and undisciplined rabble who had followed Peter the Hermit and

Godfrey de Bouillon and the Crusaders before Jerusalem.

Walter the Penniless. They were in three bodies, and each body was commanded by a distinguished noble, two of whom have been singled out by the poet Tasso as "the mirrors of chivalry"—Tancred, Count of Toulouse, and Godfrey de Bouillon. At starting, the number of these Crusaders was above 600,000; but these numbers were terribly diminished on the march, and when, after various battles with the Turks, they at last came in sight of Jerusalem, in 1099, there remained not more than 60,000 under arms; the rest had perished on the way by famine, or pestilence, or the swords of the enemy. The city was bravely defended by the Turks, who poured stones and lead and what was called Greek fire—a mixture of burning oil and sulphur—upon the heads of the besiegers. But at last, after a siege of five weeks, Jerusalem was taken; all the defenders were massacred, and it was said that the knights rode in blood up to their horses' knees. Suddenly, in the midst of this slaughter, the mood of the Crusaders changed, and they remembered where they were and what they had come for. They dismounted from their horses, washed the blood from their armour, and humbly climbed the hill of Calvary on foot, and then with tears and prayers knelt before the tomb where as was supposed the body of the Saviour had lain.

A council was held to decide who should be the King of Jerusalem. Robert, Duke of Normandy, refused the crown, "choosing rather," says a chronicler, "to give himself up to indolence and repose in Normandy than to serve as a soldier the King of Kings; for which God never forgave him." Tancred only wished to be the first of knights. Then the choice of the Crusaders fell on Godfrey of Bouillon —the best and bravest soldier of them all. He

accepted the kingdom of Jerusalem, but he would never take the title of king, for he said that he was unworthy to wear a crown of gold where our Lord had worn a crown of thorns.

Philip of France was too fond of his ease and pleasure to join in this Crusade himself, although his brother led a large number of soldiers from France, and there were so many Franks among the Crusaders that the people in the East spoke of them all as "Franks," and called their language (as it is called to this day) *lingua Franca*, or the French tongue. And it was right that this should be so, for of the seven grand Crusades between the coronation of Godfrey de Bouillon in 1099 and the death of St. Louis in 1270, the first and last were begun and ended by French soldiers and under French chiefs; and they received in history the noble name of *Gesta Dei per Francos*, or "works of God done by French hands."

As years went on, Philip I. grew more lazy and incapable, and gave up his power to his son Louis, who was crowned king eight years before his father died. But Philip seems to have repented of his sins at the last: he did penance publicly, and was absolved by the Pope's legate; he gave alms to the poor, and wore a monk's dress; and at his death, in 1108, he begged that he might not be buried in the Abbey of St. Denis with the rest of the kings of France, for, being such a sinner, he thought himself unworthy to rest in such holy ground, and he feared lest the devil might carry his body away as he had carried away that of Charles Martel. So he was buried in a little church belonging to the Benedictines on the river Loire.

CHAPTER VIII.

LOUIS VI.—A.D. 1108-1137; LOUIS VII.—A.D. 1137-1180.

How Louis the Fat subdued the barons near Paris and was helped by the people in the towns; how he gave them charters of freedom; how he unfurled the oriflamme; how Louis VII. went on a Crusade; how he was divorced from Queen Eleanor; how he made war on Henry II. of England.

LOUIS VI., though called "the Fat," was not so lazy and indolent as you might suppose from his name, but was brave and active in spite of his great size, and proved to be one of the best and ablest kings of the time. He was also known as "Le Batailleur" or "The Fighter," and "L'Eveillé" or "The Wide-awake." His people admired and loved him, and his soldiers were very fond of him, for he shared their hardships and dangers, and was gay and cheerful in his manner.

As soon as he became king, he set himself to work to restore peace and order in the country, for the great barons had become robbers on a large scale, much like the Front de Bœuf of whom you read in 'Ivanhoe.' They imprisoned merchants and travellers in their castles, often torturing them and making them pay a large ransom for their freedom. They also robbed the churches, and ill-treated the clergy and peasants who lived near them. Even close to Paris no man could ride unarmed for fear of the barons of Montmorency on one side and of Montl'héry on the other. These great nobles levied toll upon all who passed their castles. They cared little for the king, and would own no authority except their own. One of the proudest of them

lived in his castle of Coucy—a fortress of surprising strength—and boasted—

> "Nor king, nor prince, nor duke, nor count, am I,
> I am the lord of Coucy."

Louis did his best to protect his subjects, and he was greatly assisted by the wise counsels of Suger, Abbot of St. Denis. He called on the bishops and abbots and the townspeople to help him, and they armed their vassals and servants, who were only too glad to turn against their old enemies. He also protected the pilgrims and merchants, and made the high roads safe for travellers; and by degrees the country between the Loire, the Seine, and the Marne—the royal domain in fact—grew orderly and peaceful. So one after another the barons were subdued by Louis, and had to give up their plunder and do homage to the king. In return for the help he got from the people in the towns, Louis gave them charters and privileges, and freed them from the hateful taxes which they used to have to pay to the barons. From this time trade increased, and the townsmen grew rich, and while the barons lost much of their power, the commons or middle classes (as we call them now) became strong and powerful. They were able to make their own laws, choose their own magistrates, and manage their own affairs so long as they paid tribute to the king and helped him in his wars.

Louis before long found himself at war with Henry I., the King of England, who was helped by his son-in-law, Henry V., Emperor of Germany, and as his own army was too small, Louis got together his vassals from all parts of France by unfurling the *oriflamme*. The oriflamme was a

sacred banner made of red silk covered with flames of gold, and was usually kept in the royal abbey of Saint Denis. It was never brought out except on some occasion of great danger, and as soon as it was known that this banner was unfurled, 200,000 fighting-men at once came to help their king. The German Emperor was dismayed at these preparations, and we are told that "he preferred the shame of retreating like a coward to the risk of exposing his empire and himself to certain destruction." He returned to Germany, and soon afterwards he died, and the war came to an end.

In 1131, Louis lost his eldest son, who was killed by a fall from his horse as he was riding through the streets of Paris. These streets were narrow, dirty, and full of pigs, which ran about in the gutters. One of these pigs ran against the young prince's horse and caused him to fall, and he was so severely hurt that he only lived a few hours afterwards.

Louis was greatly shocked at his son's death and could not take part in public affairs for some time; but he had his second son (also named Louis) crowned, though he was only twelve years old, and a few years later he died himself, greatly loved by his subjects, especially by the poor, whom he had protected against the barons, and by the people in the towns to which he had given peace and freedom.

Something ought to be said of two famous churchmen who lived in this reign, and whose names ought to be remembered. One of them was called Abelard, a powerful writer and preacher, who attracted large crowds by his eloquence, but he was accused of heresy by St. Bernard, and had to retire into the

monastery of the Paraclete, where he passed the rest of his life in prayer and study. St. Bernard himself was the most holy and learned man of the time, and has been called the "last of the Fathers of the Church." He was so earnest and eloquent, and so blameless of character, that he was consulted by nearly all the princes of Europe in their doubts and difficulties, and once had even to decide between two rival popes. He had no ambition himself, and refused even to be an archbishop, preferring to remain Abbot of Clairvaux, a monastery which he had founded on the model of those founded by St. Benedict.

LOUIS VII. was called "the Young," for he was only eighteen years old when he came to the throne in 1137. He was gentle and grave in character, and might have been as good a king as his father, if he had not made an unhappy marriage. His wife was Eleanor, daughter of the Duke of Aquitaine. Some of the richest provinces in France belonged to her, and became the king's property when he married her. But Eleanor was vain, careless, and fond of pleasure, and despised her husband because he was grave and pious, and said he was more like a monk than a king. They could not live happily together, and it was agreed at last that they should separate. So Eleanor became the wife of Henry II. of England, and thus the three great provinces of Anjou, Maine, and Aquitaine, which had been her marriage portion, became the English king's property, and for a time were lost to France.

Louis VII. was not a wise king himself, but he was fortunate in having for his prime minister, Suger, the Abbot of Saint Denis, who had been his father's minister, and who was so wise and able that foreigners called him the Solomon of France,

and Louis himself spoke of him as the father of his country.

Suger knew that it is the first duty of a king to live in his own country and watch over his own subjects; and therefore, when Louis wished to join the German emperor in another Crusade, Suger did all he could to make him give up this foolish enterprise. But Louis was bent upon going to the Holy Land; for, in 1142, while besieging the town of Vitry, belonging to the Count of Champagne, the church where the people had fled for refuge was burnt to the ground, and no less than 1300 of them, men, women, and children, were destroyed. The cries of these poor wretches so weighed upon the king's mind, that he determined to make a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land, by way of expiation. A few years later the news came that the Christian population of Edessa had been slaughtered by the Turks in a single night, and at Easter, 1146, a great assembly was held, where Louis and all his knights and nobles were present, with his beautiful queen Eleanor standing by his side, and near him St. Bernard, the Abbot of Clairvaux, in his monk's dress. Bernard addressed the assembly as eloquently as Peter the Hermit had done, when he preached the first Crusade, and no sooner had he ended than a cry of "crosses, crosses," broke from the multitude, and they tore strips from their dresses and put them on their shoulders as a sign that they would join the Crusade. Louis and his queen did the same, and in another year a large French army joined the German army under the emperor Conrad, and set out for the Holy Land.

The history of this Crusade, like that of so many others, is a very sad one to read; the more so when

one thinks how many lives were wasted in it, and of all the trouble and sorrow it brought upon the French. Louis and his soldiers marched across Europe, and reached Constantinople safely in 1147; but when they crossed over into Asia Minor, they were attacked by the Turks in a narrow valley, and lost many men in battle, besides all their baggage and provisions. Many more died of hunger and sickness on the march, and at last, when they reached Satalia, a little sea-port town on the coast of the Gulf of Cyprus, they found there was only room in the ships for Louis and his nobles. So the king and his knights sailed back to Antioch, leaving behind them the poor foot-soldiers, who were all killed by the Turks, except three thousand, and these only saved their lives by giving up the Christian religion and becoming Mahometans.

Louis, with the remnant of his army, at length reached Jerusalem, and was met there by the Emperor Conrad; but after a vain attempt to take Damascus, Conrad went back to Germany, and Louis returned to France in 1149, after being away two years, without honour or reward, and with only 300 left of the 150,000 brave soldiers who had set out on this miserable Crusade.

Queen Eleanor, as you know, when she was divorced from Louis, married Henry II. of England; and if you look at the map, you will see that except Brittany, nearly all Western France, then made up of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, as well as Aquitaine, now belonged to the English, and that a large slice of France was thus lost to the French king. As Henry had got so much French land, he naturally wished to have more, and for the next twenty years there was almost continual war between France and

England. Louis took the part of Thomas-à-Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had quarrelled with King Henry; and when Becket was murdered in his own cathedral, Louis persuaded the Pope to put England under an Interdict.* Then Henry's three sons rebelled against their father, and Louis helped them to carry on war in Normandy against the English. No great battles were fought, but many towns were besieged, and the country people suffered, as they always do when armies are fighting round them.

The only other thing that is worth telling you of Louis VII. is that in his old age he went on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas-à-Becket in the Cathedral of Canterbury; and though the King of England was his greatest enemy, he allowed him to come and go without harm. Becket was thought to be a saint and a martyr, and Louis hoped that if he prayed before his tomb his son might recover his health, for the young prince had been dangerously ill. But, as it turned out, Louis himself fell sick from the fatigue of his journey, and not long afterwards he died, after a long reign of forty-three years. He may have been a good man, but he was too weak and unstable to be called a good king.

* For the explanation of this word, see p. 23.

CHAPTER IX.

PHILIP AUGUSTUS—A.D. 1180–1223.

How Philip Augustus did many wise and useful acts; how he joined Richard Cœur de Lion in a Crusade; how he made war upon King John and conquered Normandy.

WE now come to the greatest King of France who had reigned since Charlemagne; and whatever else you forget in French history, you must remember PHILIP AUGUSTUS. He was the son of Louis VII. by his third wife, and was not born till his father was fifty years old, and the people were so delighted that a prince had been born at last, that they called him *Dieudonné*, or "the gift of God;" but he is better known to us as Philip *Augustus*, which probably means "the great" or "imperial," though some say he was called so because he was born in the month of August.

We call, or ought to call, a king *great*, not so much because he is brave in war and conquers other nations, but because he rules his people well, makes them prosperous and happy, upholds the law, and maintains peace and order in his kingdom. This is what Charlemagne did, and this is what you will find Philip Augustus did; and if you were to compare the state of France when he began to reign with what it was when he died, you would find it a different country altogether, so greatly was it improved and changed for the better; and above all he left it one united kingdom instead of a collection of little states.

All the first acts of Philip's reign were acts of peace. He built colleges and schools, as well as hospitals for the sick; he also built walls round Paris, and had the

streets paved, for they were little better than open gutters before his time. And he began to build the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and enlarged the famous palace of the Louvre, one of the finest in the world. Besides all this, he did much to check the power of the great barons, who still thought themselves kings in their own domains, and he forced the great Duke of Burgundy himself to pay him homage, and give back the lands which he had taken from the Church.

Philip was doing this good work, and reigning wisely and usefully, when he was induced by the English king, Richard I. (Cœur de Lion), to join him in a Crusade, in 1188. There was, perhaps, more reason for this Crusade than for the former one, since great troubles had come upon the Christians in Palestine. A famous Saracen king, named Saladin, had defeated their bravest knights in a great battle near Lake Tiberias; he had then taken the cities of Acre and Ascalon, and had laid siege to Jerusalem itself. The Christians inside the walls defended themselves bravely, and when Saladin offered them their lives and liberty if they would give up the city, they proudly refused—"We would rather," they said, "destroy the city ourselves, as well as the Mosque of Omar* and the Stone of Jacob, and, when nothing is left but a heap of ruins, we will sally forth, sword in hand, and not one of us shall enter Paradise without sending ten Mussulmans there before him." When, soon afterwards, the news came to Europe that Jerusalem was actually taken by the Saracens, a Crusade was proclaimed at once by the Pope, and three great armies, led by Richard of England, Philip Augustus, and the German Em-

* The Mosque of Omar was the great Saracen church, and was built on the site of Solomon's Temple.

peror, set out for the Holy Land. Knights and soldiers from every nation in Europe joined these armies, and so powerful did the Crusaders seem when assembled before Acre, that one of the knights exclaimed, "If God will only stand neutral, the day is ours."

You may have read in English history about this Crusade, of which Richard I. was the hero, and in which Philip Augustus only played a second part. He was, perhaps, jealous of the English king, whose courage and strength in battle gave him the name of the Lion-Hearted, and whose pride made him disliked by the other princes. The town of Acre was taken by the Crusaders, and soon afterwards Philip, angry that all the honour was given to Richard, and seeing that success was really impossible, set out for France, leaving, however, a large body of French troops behind him to help to carry on the war. But, before he went, he took a solemn oath that he would not attack Richard's land, or injure him while he was in Palestine. And, as the Pope obliged him to keep this oath, he did his best to do harm to Richard in other ways. So he made friends with Prince John, who was governing England while his brother was in the Holy Land, and who was his greatest enemy.

After Philip's departure, quarrels broke out among the Crusaders, and though their army reached Jerusalem, no real attempt was made to take the city, and Richard would not even cast his eyes upon its towers, but veiled his face in his mantle, exclaiming, "My God, let me not behold thy city, since I am unable to take it."

Then Richard fell sick, and soon afterwards gave up the Crusade, and set out for England; but on his way he was taken prisoner by Leopold, Duke

of Austria, with whom he had quarrelled, and who shortly afterwards gave his prisoner up to the Emperor of Germany, who shut him up in a castle. Philip hoped that he would have been kept there all his life, but the people of England raised a large sum of money, and ransomed their king, whereupon Philip wrote to John to bid him take care of himself, "for the devil was unchained."

When Richard was free (A.D. 1194), and had returned to England, he at once made war on Philip, and brought an army across into Normandy. But, after a few years, passed in trifling skirmishes and sieges, and winning a battle near Vendome, Richard was shot by an arrow while laying siege to a castle, and died of the wound. Thus Philip was delivered from his great enemy (A.D. 1199).

John then became King of England, and though Philip had been his friend and ally while his brother reigned, he now thought there would be a chance of getting back Normandy, and the other provinces held by the English, for he knew John's weak and cowardly character. So he took the side of Prince Arthur, the son of John's elder brother Geoffrey, and as most of the people in Normandy and Brittany hated John, they helped Philip to make Arthur king instead of his uncle.

After some fighting, Arthur fell into the hands of his cruel uncle, who shut him up in prison, and was said to have afterwards stabbed him with his own hand, and thrown his body into the Seine.

The people of Brittany were very angry at the death of their young prince, and called upon Philip to avenge his murder, and make war upon John. Philip summoned John to appear before him and answer for his crime, and when John refused to come,

he was tried in his absence, found guilty of murder, and condemned to forfeit all his French possessions, which he held by homage to the king of France, and then Philip at once invaded Normandy. John was no match for the French king in battle, and kept retreating from one place to another, while Philip took castle after castle, even the strongest fortress of the time—Chateau Gaillard, or the Saucy Castle—which stood high up on a hill looking over the Seine, and had such strong towers and walls, that it seemed as if no enemy could take it. In fact, it would probably not have been taken even by Philip, had not the ropes by which the buckets were let down into the well got worn out; and, as the besieged had no more ropes, and could get no more water, they gave up the castle.

At last, in 1204, Philip made himself master of Normandy, and all the other English possessions in France, except Gascony and Bordeaux; and perhaps it was just as well for the peace of our own country, that John was such a feeble king, and lost all these provinces, for there had been nothing but wars on account of them for the last hundred years.

CHAPTER X.

PHILIP AUGUSTUS (*continued*).—

1205-1223.

How Philip Augustus made war upon Flanders and won the battle of Bouvines; how he quarrelled with the Pope, and how the kingdom was placed under an Interdict; how a cruel war took place in Languedoc; and how a French army invaded England.

PHILIP was not content with conquering Normandy, but thought he would try to conquer England as well; and as King John was hated by his people, it is very likely that he would have succeeded. But, just when he had got together a fleet and an army, and was about to sail, the Pope stopped him, for John had put himself under his protection, and had consented to pay the Pope a yearly tribute of a thousand gold marks—in fact, England was now considered to be a part of the Pope's dominions. So Philip made war upon the Earl of Flanders instead, and, though the Flemish were helped by the German emperor, Otho, and by a large body of English soldiers as well, Philip defeated this great army in a battle near Bouvines (1214), the greatest victory that had yet been won by French troops fighting together under one king. Philip was unhorsed and nearly lost his life, and the German Emperor was only saved by the valour of his guards. But the glory of the day rests with the five hundred Brabant mercenaries who refused to surrender to the French and were cut to pieces sword in hand.

Like other French kings, Philip had a quarrel with the Pope on account of his marriage. His first wife had died, and he had promised to marry Ingel-

burgha, the daughter of the King of Denmark; but he suddenly took a dislike to her, shut her up in a convent, and married Agnes de Meranie, the daughter of one of his nobles. The Pope took the side of the Danish princess, and, when Philip refused to marry her, he laid the kingdom under an Interdict, just as Gregory V. had done in the reign of Robert the Pious. The fault of the king was again visited on his people. "It was horrible," says an eye-witness, "to see the doors of the churches closed and guarded, and Christians driven away from them like dogs. There was a deep sadness over the whole kingdom, while the organs and the voices of those who chanted God's praises were everywhere silent." This Interdict lasted eight months, and Philip in his anger declared that he would turn Mahometan; but at last he was obliged to yield, and took his lawful wife out of the convent, but their marriage was an unhappy one. Agnes de Meranie died of a broken heart.

Something must here be said about a great war which took place in 1208 in the South of France, in the fair and fertile country called Languedoc. The people there were said to have a strange form of worship, and to be heretics or enemies of the Church of Rome and of the Pope; so a Crusade was proclaimed against them, just as if they had been Turks or Infidels. A large army was collected from all parts of France, and was led by the famous Simon de Montfort, a fierce and ruthless Templar who had fought in the Crusades, and was father of the Simon de Montfort of whom you read in English history. This Albigensian Crusade (as it was called from a city called Albi) was really a cruel and barbarous war, and lasted nearly twenty years. The beautiful country of Languedoc was wasted by fire and sword;

Death of Simon de Montfort.

the houses were burnt, the people were killed, and not even the women and children were spared. Raymond, Count of Toulouse, did his utmost to defend the province, but his army could do little against the forces of De Montfort; and as an instance of the cruel way in which this war was carried on, we are told that when the town of Béziers was attacked by the Crusaders, one of the officers asked the Abbot of Citeaux how they were to distinguish the heretics from the true believers. "Slay them all," said the Abbot, "for the Lord knoweth those that are his." If the priests of the Church, whose duty it was to preach peace and goodwill to all men, were as cruel as this, you may easily suppose what savage deeds were committed by the rude and ignorant soldiers. The people of Béziers were all massacred, and their town was so utterly destroyed that not a living thing remained in it.

One is almost glad to read that a sudden punishment came upon Simon de Montfort, the leader of these cruel troops. As he was riding under the walls of Toulouse, which his soldiers were besieging, in 1218, a large stone was shot from an engine on the walls, and crushed him to death in a moment.

As not only Simon de Montfort but their great enemy, Pope Innocent III., was now dead, the people of Languedoc seemed to take heart, and they drove the Crusaders out of many of their towns; but though the war ceased for a time, you will find that there was another Albigensian Crusade in the next reign.

Philip himself took no part in this war, perhaps because he thought it was wasting men and money to employ them against people who would be his own subjects before long. But he was ready enough to make war when it suited him, and in 1216, when

the English barons asked him to send his son Louis to be their king instead of the tyrant John, Philip at once sent a French army, which landed, and marched to London. John retreated northwards, and, as you know, lost all his money and baggage while crossing the Wash, and died himself shortly afterwards of a fever, near Newark, in 1216. And, as the barons preferred his young son Henry to a foreign prince, they made him king, and drove Louis and his French troops out of England.

Shortly afterwards Philip Augustus died, after being king forty-four years, and one is glad to read that on his death-bed he felt some remorse for having ill-treated the Jewish merchants at the beginning of his reign, and gave back part of the treasure he had so unjustly taken from them.

CHAPTER XI.

SOCIETY IN THE MIDDLE AGES—Chivalry—Knighthood.

IT is said that two millions of Europeans found their graves in the East during the Crusades; but although the waste of life was enormous, these wars brought about many important changes for the better in society. Firstly, the condition of the poorer classes was much improved, as those serfs who volunteered to serve as Crusaders obtained their liberty, for none but a free man could be a Crusader. And a feeling of attachment and affection grew up between the noble and his vassals who had followed him to the Holy Land, and often guarded his life in battle at the risk of their own.

More than one serf could say to his master—"My lord, I found a cup of water for you in the desert—I shielded you with my body at the Siege of Antioch or Jerusalem." * Then again, the nobles required horses and armour and equipment for the expedition, and in many cases they sold or mortgaged their lands to the rich burghers of the towns, and it was a law in France that any man who bought an estate from a noble became a noble himself. Thus the large estates were subdivided, and a new class of nobility arose, who lessened the power of the great feudal barons.

Other nobles again, before leaving France for Palestine, gave up their lands and riches to the monasteries and abbeys, which thus became wealthy and the owners of large domains.

But most important of all was the growth of CHIVALRY. This word is connected with the French *chevalier* "a horseman," or knight, for the cavalry were the pride and flower of the feudal army. But the word also means knightly conduct, that is to say, those unwritten laws of honour which oblige every gentleman to be brave and truthful, loyal, and pure in heart,—to defend the weak and innocent, to be courteous to all, especially to women, and to be himself without fear and without reproach. All these virtues were supposed to be found in the knight of the Middle Ages, and when you read the romance of King Arthur, or Spenser's "Faëry Queen," or Tasso's "Deliverance of Jerusalem," or Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe" and "Talisman," you will understand all that is meant by chivalry; and instances in actual history, such as "The Chevalier

* Michelet II., iv.

Bayard" and Sir John Chandos and Du Guesclin, will show you that real knights could be as chivalrous as the heroes of romance.

Only a man of noble birth could be knighted at all; and even then he had first to go through a long training as a page and squire. He had to learn all noble and warlike exercises, such as riding and tilting, and to follow his lord when he went out hawking or hunting, or to attend him in the battle-field. Then the young squire had to show that he was himself worthy of the honour of knighthood by his courage or by some great feat of arms. And when at last he had "gained his spurs," and was thought worthy of being a knight, he had to watch the whole night through beside his armour, which was placed before the altar in some church or chapel. The next morning he entered a bath in token that his sins should be washed away: then he put on a snow-white tunic in token of his purity, and a crimson vest to show that he was ready to shed his own blood for the good cause; then a suit of black armour to signify the death for which he was always prepared. Then he girded on his sword, and the gold spurs were buckled on his heels, and, lastly, he knelt before the king or noble, who struck him thrice on the shoulder with his sword, and bade him be true, loyal, and faithful, and rise up a knight in the name of God and his patron saint. Then his horse was brought to the church door, and while the trumpets blew and the crowd shouted, the new-made knight rode forth scattering largesses of money right and left.

No doubt, there was much vanity—one might almost say much nonsense—in many of these out-

ward forms of chivalry; and no doubt also many of the knights broke their vows of chastity and honour, and were as cruel and brutal as the Front-de-Bœuf of whom you read in 'Ivanhoe.' Still, chivalry added (as has been said) an unbought grace to life; it softened the fierceness of the age; it taught men to respect truth and justice, to protect the weak, and also to fear God and honour the king. And besides this, it set up a noble ideal or pattern which all true knights strove to imitate, and kings themselves often set the example of generosity and courtesy which was followed by their nobles and captains. There is a story told us by the old chronicler, Froissart, which is worth remembering.

A body of French troops tried to retake Calais after it had been surrendered to Edward III. during his French war, and a furious battle took place just outside the gate of the town. Edward himself fought in plain armour, wielding a two-handed sword, and crying "Ha, St. George! Ha, St. Edward!" at every blow he struck. He singled out the strongest of his enemies, and at last encountered the Chevalier de Ribaumont—one of the best and strongest knights on the French side—who more than once forced the English king upon his knees. But at last the French were overpowered by numbers, and De Ribaumont yielded himself prisoner to the king "rescue or no rescue."

King Edward entertained his prisoners at a great banquet in the castle the same evening, and treated them with the greatest courtesy and politeness, but he praised the Chevalier de Ribaumont more than all. "Never," he declared, "did I find a man who gave me so much to do, body to body, as you have done this night. Therefore I adjudge to you this

chaplet as the prize of the tournament" (taking off the string of pearls he wore), "and I pray you to wear it for my sake at all festivals, and declare unto the ladies that it was given you by Edward of England as a token of your valour. I discharge you also of any ransom, and you are free to depart to-morrow, if such be your pleasure."

Yet, while reading this noble speech, we must remember that this is the same Edward who, shortly before this, could hardly be induced to pardon the six gallant burgesses of Calais, although their only fault had been to defend their city against the foreigner; and this disregard of men of humble birth and contempt for vassals and serfs, as if they were of different flesh and blood from themselves, was the great blot on chivalry. Those days were pleasant enough for the princes and nobles, with their fine armour and horses, their banquets, their hunting and their tournaments; but they were hard times for the poor peasants, who could hardly get bread enough to eat, and were dragged from their homes and firesides to serve in foreign wars; and they were hard too for the sick and aged, whose cottages might be burnt over their heads at any moment; hard also for the Jews, who were plundered and ill-treated, and for the travelling merchants, who were never sure that they might not have their money and goods taken from them by some rapacious baron.

Besides this, though there was much splendour in dress and equipment, there was very little of what we should call domestic comfort. There was no glass in the windows, and frequently no chimneys, even in the dwellings of the rich; the floors were uncarpeted and usually only strewn with rushes;

the rooms in the castles themselves, built only for strength, were cold, gloomy, and cheerless. As for the poor, they lived in hovels and cabins amid dirt and misery.

CHAPTER XII.

SOCIETY IN THE MIDDLE AGES (*continued*)—Hunting; Tournaments; Crests; Knight-Templars; Monasteries; the Popes.

TO turn to another subject, something must be said about the amusements in the Middle Ages. Among them, as may be supposed, hunting took the first place. Much of the country was open and unenclosed. Everywhere there were large forests where wolves and wild boars abounded. There were deer-parks carefully preserved by forest laws, where no one who was not of noble birth was allowed to kill a stag. Every baron kept his hounds and his hawks, and hardly stirred outside his castle without them; and to this day you will see on the tombs of knights who died anywhere but in battle, their figures sculptured with a greyhound at their feet and a hawk perched upon their wrists. Even the clergy hunted when they could, and so far back as the year 774, we find the Abbot of St. Denis asking permission of Charlemagne to kill some stags, on the ground that venison was good for sick monks, and that the skins would be useful to bind their books in the library.

Another favourite amusement was the TOURNAMENT, which has been mentioned above, and this was one of the most splendid spectacles that can be

conceived. The tournament was a trial of skill and strength between rival knights, who fought in full armour on horseback before a large assemblage, for a prize given by the ladies or for honour only. On a fixed day great wooden palisades or barriers were erected round a large open space with benches rising behind them, tier above tier, as in a modern circus. These were filled by all the lords and ladies in the neighbourhood in their richest dresses, and with their vassals and servants in attendance. Then the heralds sounded their trumpets; the knights entered the arena, and at a given signal each of them couched his lance, that is, rested it against a hook fastened to the back of his saddle, and rode full tilt against his adversary, directing his lance against his helmet, and striving to unhorse him by the force of the blow. These lances had their points blunted, but this rule was not strictly kept, and we hear of wounds and death caused in many of these tilting matches. Any day you may see in the Tower of London life-sized figures of knights mounted on horseback, and armed exactly as they appeared in a tournament.

The knights always wore vizors, or iron masks to protect their faces, both in a tournament and on the battle field; and in order that one knight might be distinguished from another, they wore some mark or crest upon their helmets, and would have the same embroidered on the surcoat which they wore over their armour. These crests were often intended to represent the wearer's achievements or supposed character; thus, a knight who had been in the Holy Land would choose a Saracen's head for his crest, or the figure of a savage man; while another would choose a lion as a sign of his courage, or a wild boar to show his fierceness; and, as you may remember,

our own Plantagenet kings wore a sprig of broom (the Latin of which is *planta genista*), supposed to show their lowly spirit.

If a knight wore a white mantle with a red cross upon it, he was always known to be Knight Templar, that is, a member of a famous military order, established in the time of the Crusades, and supposed to be the special guardians and protectors of the Temple or Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. They were half monks and half soldiers, bound by strict vows of chastity and temperance, which they did not, however, always keep; they were governed by peculiar laws drawn up by the great St. Bernard in 1128, and were under the absolute control of a Grand Master of their own. These Templars were the boldest soldiers in the Crusading armies, and much of the success of the Christians was due to their prowess in the field. But when the Crusades were over, the Templars rapidly became wicked and corrupt; and their pride and wealth brought a terrible punishment upon them in the reign of Philip the Fair, as you will read afterwards.* The Templars had possessions not only in France but in England, and the Temple Church in London takes it name from them, and was indeed founded by brethren of this powerful order.

There was another important influence besides chivalry which helped to soften and civilise the manners of the times, and this was the Church, especially by means of the monasteries. These, like other great institutions, had grown from small beginnings. A few men and women, who had grown weary of the world, and sought for peace and repose, separated themselves from society and retired into a monastery

* See page 70.

or convent, as it might be, where they passed the greater part of their time in prayer and fasting. Even kings and princes often desired to become monks, out of sheer weariness of life. William I. of Normandy would have retired into the Monastery of Jumiéges, if the abbot would have allowed him. Henry II., the German emperor, was hardly prevented from giving up his kingdom and becoming a monk at Verdun; and later on in history you will find the great emperor Charles V. actually resigning his throne to his son, and living for the rest of his life in the abbey of St. Just, in Spain. Often, as in the case of the monasteries founded by the great St. Benedict and St. Bernard, the lives of the monks were governed by the strictest rules. They wore sackcloth next their skin, slept on hard couches, lived on the coarsest food, and frequently passed the night on their knees before the altar.

By degrees, however, many of these monasteries became wealthy. One French king after another made them presents of land, and sent pictures and precious stones to adorn the altars and shrines of the saints. The Crusaders also sold or gave them their property before leaving France for Palestine. The children of rich parents always brought large presents with them when they became monks; and many wealthy men on their death-beds left handsome legacies to the monasteries on condition of prayers being said for the welfare of their souls. In fact, the Church property increased so enormously, that at the end of the twelfth century the monks and clergy are said to have owned half the soil of France. Besides this, the abbots and bishops had their tenants and vassals, their yeomen and men-at-arms, like the feudal barons; and many of them,

like the Prince-Bishops of Liège, owned small provinces of their own, and the Pope of Rome ruled over a much larger state.

No doubt, many of these monasteries became corrupt as they became wealthy, and the monks often forgot their vows, and became vicious and luxurious; but there is no doubt also that in their earlier days they did much good. They entertained strangers, they gave alms to the poor and sick, they educated the youth, they taught the people agriculture and cultivated waste lands, they preserved for us the writings and literature of ancient times, and, above all, they gave shelter to the weak and oppressed. In those wild and lawless days, when a man, as it is said, carried his life in his hands, these monasteries were like the green spots in the barren desert, where a man could find peace and rest, and say his prayers, and read his books, or tend his garden, without fear of injury. Indeed, a great writer says, that if it had not been for the monasteries, society in Europe in these Dark Ages would have consisted of beasts of burden and beasts of prey; that is to say, one class would have been the poor, wretched, and oppressed tillers of the soil, and the other the cruel and rapacious feudal barons.

The head of the Church in all countries at this time was the Bishop of Rome, or the Pope, for Rome was the most ancient and most dignified of all the bishoprics, and the Pope claimed to be the direct successor of St. Peter, and to be the supreme head of all Catholics in all lands. At first the Pope only claimed the right of deciding matters of religion; but by degrees, as one Pope after another grew more powerful, they began to interfere in the State affairs of other countries, and Gregory I., who was Pope

in A.D. 590, declared himself to be God's vice-gerent upon earth, and to have the right of controlling kings and emperors as he pleased.

This power, though not often used, was never lost sight of by the Popes, and five hundred years later, in 1073, another Pope, Gregory VII., better known as Hildebrand, went so far as to excommunicate the German Emperor, Henry IV., and deprive him of his kingdom, and forced him to sue for pardon on his knees. And, as you have read, in more than one case in French history the Pope for the time being forced the French king to obey him, by using the terrible weapons of an excommunication or an interdict.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOUIS VIII.—A.D. 1223–1226; LOUIS IX.—A.D. 1226–1270.

How Louis the Lion made war on Languedoc, and how he died after a short reign; how the kingdom was governed by Queen Blanche; how Saint Louis went on a Crusade; how his army was destroyed and he was himself taken prisoner; how he was ransomed and returned to France; how he reigned wisely and justly; how he set out on another Crusade, and died in Africa.

THERE is very little to say about Louis VIII., who succeeded Philip Augustus, and was called "Louis the Lion," though he had not much of the lion in his character, and of his two wars one was, as you will see, a very unfortunate one. This was another Crusade against the wretched people of Languedoc, who had been so cruelly treated in the last reign. But the Pope declared they were heretics and unbelievers, and ought to be rooted out of

the land. So Louis invaded Languedoc with a large army.

He took the town of Avignon after a long siege, and lost many of his soldiers from disease and want of food; and then he attacked Toulouse, another strong city, but the winter came on, and Louis himself caught the fever which had carried off so many of his troops, and he died on his way home, after a short reign of four years.

His young son, Louis IX., a boy of twelve, now became king (1226), but as he was too young to reign by himself, his mother, Queen Blanche, became Regent, and governed the country till her son came of age.

This Louis is always known as "Saint Louis," from his unselfish and blameless character, and after his death the Pope declared him to be a Saint, and had his name given to one of the Saint's-days in the Roman Catholic calendar.

The great barons did not like the idea of being governed by a woman, and they soon formed a league against Queen Blanche, and were headed by the Count of Brittany, Pierre Mauclerc. But they found that though she was a woman, she had the heart and courage of a king. She made them all submit to her, and was greatly helped by one of them called Thibault, the Count of Champagne, who much admired Queen Blanche, and gave up part of his own estates to her; for he said that he could deny her nothing: "By my faith, madam, my heart, my body, my life, my lands, are yours."

Even when Louis was twenty-one years old, and was married himself, Queen Blanche still continued to rule the kingdom, and she was so wise and good that the country became rich and prosperous. But

she was so jealous of power that she did not even like Louis to be with his wife Margaret unless she was there herself. "You will not let me speak to my husband," Margaret complained, "whether living or dying."

The English, who were helped by some of the French barons, tried again to get back Normandy, but they were defeated by Louis and his troops in a battle at Taillebourg (1242), and had to give up not only Normandy, but all their possessions in France except Gascony.

In 1244 Louis fell sick of a fever, and was almost given up for dead; but, as he was lying on his bed, he asked one of his attendants to put a cross upon his breast, and then he fell into a deep sleep, and when he awoke the fever had left him. Just then news of a terrible disaster had come from Palestine, and it seemed to him as if this cross had saved his life, and was a sign to him that God intended that he should lead a Crusade. And though his wife and mother and his friends begged him with tears to stay at home among his own people, he would not listen to them, but unfurled the Oriflamme, collected an army, and set sail for the East in the summer of 1248.

Since the last Crusade, troubles had again come upon the Christians in Palestine. Jerusalem had been taken by a tribe of Mongols or Tartars, who had spread over the whole of Asia, burning and destroying as they went, and were more fierce and cruel than the Turks themselves; and the Christian knights had been defeated in a great battle at Gaza, where they lost thirty thousand of their number. Only a few towns in Palestine, such as Tyre and Acre, now belonged to the true believers.

Louis and his army landed at Cyprus, as Philip Augustus had done before; and after taking in stores and provisions they sailed to Damietta, a town at the mouth of the Nile; for Egypt as well as Palestine had been conquered by the Saracens, and Louis thought that this country would make a good stepping-stone to the Holy Land. The French drove the Saracens out of Damietta, but instead of pursuing them as they should have done, they waited five months until the waters of the Nile had gone down, for, as you know, the Nile overflows its banks and deluges the country of Egypt every year.

At last, in the spring of 1250, Louis and his army set out for Cairo, which the Crusaders in their ignorance supposed to be the ancient Babylon and to be full of treasures. They got as far as the town of Mansourah, but there a great misfortune came upon the French army, for one body of troops which had crossed a deep canal and attacked the Turks, were hemmed in on all sides. The enemy poured showers of stones and arrows from the walls, and threw down balls of what was called Greek fire. These flew through the air like fiery serpents and burnt everything they touched, and no water could extinguish the flame. And so all these Frenchmen, who were led by Robert of Artois, the king's brother, lost their lives.

Many others died from the heat, while the stench from so many unburied corpses caused fever and sickness to break out among them; and even those who were left grew so weak and feeble that they could hardly stand upright, much less fight the Saracens.

Louis now thought that if he could only reach

Damascus he might save what was left of his army; so he began to march towards that town. But the Turks pursued him, killing his men by hundreds; and at last Louis gave himself up as a prisoner, and all his soldiers were killed except those who were rich enough to ransom their lives.

The story of this wretched Crusade is told us by a brave knight, the Sieur de Joinville, who himself went through it all and was lucky enough to escape with his life; and he tells us how brave and patient Louis was, so that even the Saracens admired his courage. The Sultan was a gallant and generous foe, and offered to set Louis free if he would pay a million gold bezants (400,000*l.*) as a ransom for himself and what was left of his army. "I will gladly pay that sum," the king answered, "for the ransom of my army, and for my own life I will give up the town of Damietta to the Sultan, for my rank is too high to be valued in money." The Sultan was so struck by this noble answer that he at once gave up a fifth part of the ransom. But soon afterwards this generous Saracen was killed by his own soldiers, who rebelled against him; they even forced their way into Louis' tent, and for a time the king's life was in great danger. His courage, however, impressed even the Saracens, and after a while he was set free, when the ransom had been paid by his subjects, who even melted down the silver railings round Richard Cœur de Lion's tomb at Rouen, in order to raise the money. But even then, Louis did not return to France, for he thought he had done too little, and was perhaps ashamed to face his own people after losing so many brave soldiers. "Had I alone to endure the disgrace and misfortune," he said to a Bishop, "I should be resigned, but alas!

through me all Christendom has fallen into disgrace and confusion." So he went to Palestine and stayed there four years, repairing the walls of some of the cities which had been left in ruins by the Turks, and ransoming many Christians from slavery. But he would not visit Jerusalem itself, for he thought that it was unworthy of a Christian king to visit the Holy City as a simple pilgrim, without delivering it from the enemies of God.

At last he heard of the death of his mother, Queen Blanche, who had ruled France well and wisely in his absence, but whose heart had been broken by all the trouble that had come upon her son and his army. So Louis returned to his own kingdom in 1254, and for the next sixteen years he ruled wisely and justly, and these sixteen years were by far the best and most useful part of his reign. Many are the stories told of his piety, his goodness, and his unselfish love of justice, which caused him to be regarded as a saint upon earth. He would not, if he could help it, allow even the poorest of his subjects to suffer wrong, and he was so honest and upright that he gave back of his own accord the lands which had been unjustly taken by former kings; while at the same time, without making war, he contrived to add several provinces to France. In this way he gave back to Henry III. of England the north of Aquitaine, while Henry III. in his turn gave up his claims to Normandy, Touraine and Anjou. When his counsellors objected, Louis made them this noble answer; "Sirs," he said, "the ancestors of the king of England very justly lost the possessions which I keep; and the land which I give up, I give up not because he has a right to it, but to create love between his children and mine

who are first cousins. What I give to him, it appears I use right well. He was not formerly my vassal, but now he comes to do me homage." And as a proof that foreign princes admired his wisdom and honesty, Louis was often asked to judge in their disputes. Even Henry III. and the barons of England appealed to him to settle their differences.

It might have been thought that Louis had had enough of war with the Turks, but he still wore the cross upon his shoulder, and this was a sign that he had not given up the idea of another Crusade. So when he heard that the city of Antioch had been taken by the Mamelukes, a fierce Egyptian tribe, he once more, in the year 1270, set out for the East on the eighth and last Crusade that we hear of in history.

He first sailed to Tunis, in Africa, in the vain hope that he could induce the Sultan of Tunis to become a Christian, but this peaceful mission soon turned to war. His soldiers and Genoese sailors had heard of the riches of Tunis, and began by plundering the vessels in the harbour of the ancient city of Carthage. Then they attacked the city itself, and put the garrison to the sword. But the hot sun of Africa and the burning winds of the desert brought plague and sickness upon the troops. One of the king's sons died, and many of his bravest knights and barons, and at last Louis was himself seized by the same deadly sickness. He lingered on for three weeks, and then finding himself at the point of death, he bade his attendants lay him on a bed of ashes, and lying thus he died peacefully with the words on his lips: "I will enter into Thy House, O Lord; I will worship in Thy holy tabernacle."

While we may regret that he did not remain in

France, instead of wasting so many lives in the Crusades, we cannot help admiring the courage, the goodness, and the strong love of justice which gained for him the title of "Saint Louis."

CHAPTER XIV.

PHILIP III.—1270-1285.

How Philip the Bold hung the traitor La Brosse; how the Frenchmen in Sicily were massacred; how Philip made war upon Pedro, King of Arragon.

SAINT Louis's eldest son, Philip, had been in Tunis with his father, and after this sad end of the Crusade, he sailed back to France, bringing with him the bodies of his father, his brother, his uncle, his aunt, and that of his wife, who had died on the way home.

PHILIP III. was a just and well-meaning king, but he was unfortunately dull, simple, and easily deceived, and it is not clear why the French should have called him "the Bold." Still, his reign was fairly prosperous, and he may be reckoned among the good kings of France, of whom you will not find many in French history.

The person whom Philip liked and trusted most in the early part of his reign was his barber, Peter de La Brosse, whom he made a noble, but who abused his master's kindness. For he told him false stories about his queen, and even said that she had poisoned her step-son. At first Philip believed these false reports, but soon afterwards he found out that La Brosse was a traitor himself; so he had him hung upon the

great gibbet at Montfaucon. This gibbet was a square scaffold, and had four rows of arches on each of the four sides, with beams and nooses fastened to them, so that sixty-four men could be hung at once. This shows you how common the punishment of death was in those barbarous times.

Philip's uncle, Charles of Anjou, had made himself master of Naples and Sicily in the last reign, and was the most powerful prince in Italy. He was proud and fierce, very unlike his brother Saint Louis, and a writer says of him that "he smiled seldom, spoke and slept little, but did much." His cruelty and rapacity made him so hated by his subjects that they joined with Pedro, the King of Arragon, to get rid of Charles and the French altogether. On Easter Monday, in 1282, just as the bells were ringing for Vespers or evening service, and the streets of Palermo were filled with people in their holiday costume, a beautiful Sicilian maiden was insulted by a Frenchman close to one of the churches. Her lover stabbed the Frenchman to the heart, and instantly a cry arose through the city "Death to the French," and all through the island the Sicilians murdered every Frenchman they could find. This terrible massacre was called "the Sicilian Vespers," because it began as the vesper or evening bell was ringing.

Charles was furious when he heard of this (he was in Naples, his other kingdom, at the time), and he and his nephew Philip at once made war upon Pedro and the Sicilians. But his fleet was defeated and his own son taken prisoner, and his rage and grief threw him into a fever, of which he died (1285).

Philip then thought he would make war upon Pedro in his own kingdom in the north of Spain,

but his fleet with all the food for his army was taken by the Spaniards, and Philip was so mortified and cast down by the loss, that he too fell sick and died on his march back to France in 1285.

CHAPTER XV.

PHILIP IV.—1285-1314.

How Philip the Fair made war upon the Flemings; how he quarrelled with Pope Boniface VIII. and insulted him in his own palace; how the Popes came to live at Avignon; how Philip destroyed the Order of the Templars; how he plundered his subjects and debased the coinage.

PHILIP the Bold was succeeded by his son PHILIP, called "the Fair," from his good looks and fine person; but his mind was by no means so fair as his body, for though he was clever and able, he was also false and cruel, and greedy of money. He seems, indeed, not to have known what truth and justice meant, and during his long reign the country knew no peace.

Philip always preferred to gain his ends by craft, when he could, instead of by open force; and so he took advantage of a quarrel between some English and French sailors to make war upon Edward I. of England, and by a false promise he got possession of six towns in Guienne belonging to the English. Peace, however, was afterwards made by the help of the Pope, and Edward's son, afterwards Edward II., married Philip's daughter, Isabella, who seemed to inherit all her father's vices.

Philip's next scheme of ambition was to make himself master of Flanders, for he coveted the riches of that country, and thought that the Flemings would

be easy to conquer. He got the Duke of Flanders into his power by a piece of deceit, and then he invaded Flanders with a large army, and for a time he was master of it. But the Flemings found him so harsh, and had to pay him such heavy taxes, that they rose all through the country, and killed all the French. Soon afterwards they defeated the French army in a great battle at Courtray, in 1302; and killed so many French knights that 4000 of their gilt spurs were taken from the dead bodies and hung up in the great church at Courtray.

Although Philip revenged this defeat, yet he found the Flemings so brave and obstinate in defence of their liberty that he could not subdue them, so he made peace with them and let them alone.

From the first Philip sought to lessen the power of the Church. He forbade the clergy to sit in any of the courts of law, and also lessened the amount of gifts in *mortmain*—that is to say, money and property which might be legally left to the Church by a man on his death-bed.

There is one good thing which Philip did, though, as usual, he only did it because it suited his own ends and brought him money. He freed his country and the clergy of France from the power of the Pope of Rome, who, as you may remember, had up to this time been constantly meddling with French affairs. This Pope, with whom Philip quarrelled, was called Boniface VIII., and though a very old man he was as proud and overbearing as Philip himself. Philip wanted money and wished the clergy to pay him taxes like other people; but the Pope declared that the clergy were *his* subjects, and were not bound to pay money to the King of France. This quarrel went on for some years, and many angry letters and messages were sent between

Boniface and Philip, till at last the Pope published his famous Bull * or decree known as the "*Unam Sanctam*" (from the Latin words with which it began), in which he claimed absolute power over things temporal as well as spiritual, and threatened to excommunicate and depose the King of France.

Then Philip sent some hired soldiers under one of his captains, by name Nogaret, and an Italian prince called Colonna, who forced their way into the Pope's country-house, seized him and tied him on a horse with his face to the tail, and carried him off to prison. Colonna is even said to have struck the old man in the face with his mailed gauntlet. For two days Boniface would neither eat nor drink, and though the people of Rome delivered him from his persecutors, the insult and the terror which he had suffered actually drove him mad. He was found dead in his room, with his staff gnawed by his teeth, and with his grey hair covered with blood, as if he had dashed his head against the wall. It was said of this Pope that he entered the Church like a fox, ruled it like a lion, and left it like a dog.

The next Pope, Benedict XI., reigned only nine months, and was said to have been poisoned by some fruit sent him by one of his enemies. Then Philip induced the cardinals to elect the Archbishop of Bordeaux, who promised to submit to the king in various ways as the price of his election. This Pope became Clement V., and lived on French territory, first at Lyons and then at Avignon; in fact he was the subject and almost the prisoner of the King of France, and from this time (1305) for nearly seventy years, the popes continued to live at Avignon instead of Rome.

* So-called from the golden *bulla* or ball with the Pope's seal on it, which was affixed to the decree.

Philip had spent so much money in his war with Flanders that he tried to get more by unlawful means. First he turned upon the Jews, took all their riches from them, and drove them out of France. Then he agreed with his friend Pope Clement to seize all the property belonging to the Knight-Templars. These Templars, who have been described in a former chapter,* had many houses and much wealth in France, especially in Paris, where their large buildings and treasury of the Temple took up a third of the city. But as the Templars had grown rich, they had grown idle and luxurious, and had given up their simple habits of life, and indulged in feasting and riot of all kinds. Indeed, "to drink like a Templar" was a common saying in those times. Moreover, their pride and haughty manners had made them many enemies, and their power and wealth had up to this time enabled them to defy the royal authority.

On the 12th of October, 1307, Philip ordered all the Templars in France to be thrown into prison, accusing them of every kind of crime, and seized upon their lands and goods. Many of them were cruelly tortured, while others were burnt alive, and the Grand Master of the Order, with some of his companions, was burnt by a slow fire on an island in the Seine, close to the royal palace. It is said that, from the midst of the flames the aged Templar called on his cruel enemies, Philip and Pope Clement, to appear before the judgment seat of God, the one within forty days, and the other within a year, and there to answer for their crime. Whether this story is true or not, certain it is that both Philip and the Pope died within a year.

This was by far the worst of the many wicked

* See page 55.

actions done by Philip, but we find that even to the end of his life he treated his subjects like a tyrant, made them pay heavy taxes, seized their gold and jewels, and once took half the silver plate in the kingdom by way of a tax. Besides this, he meddled with their private life, even fixing the number of suits of clothes a man should wear, and the number of dishes he should have for dinner. Moreover, he debased the coinage by mixing with baser metals all the gold and silver that was coined. All these petty acts of tyranny made him hated and feared by his people, and he was rightly named by an Italian poet "the False Coiner," and "the Pest of France." In 1314 he died by a fall from his horse while hunting in the forest of Fontainebleau, and seems to have felt some remorse in his last moments, for he besought his son Louis to have pity on the people, to lessen the taxes, and to coin no base money.

CHAPTER XVI.

LOUIS X.—1314-1316; PHILIP V.—1316-1322; CHARLES IV.—1322-1328.

How Philip IV.'s three sons reigned one after another; how their reigns were short and unhappy; how there was an insurrection of the peasants; how the Jews and lepers were cruelly treated.

PHILIP IV. left three sons who reigned one after the other, but they all died young, and none of them left any sons to succeed him; and people thought it was the punishment of God on Philip IV. for his sins that his posterity should be thus cut off in the next generation.

LOUIS X. was the first of these short-lived kings. He was called "Hutin," which means fractious or noisy, but we have no means of knowing whether he deserved that name, for he can scarcely be said to have reigned at all. He left everything to his uncle, Charles of Valois, while he hunted and feasted and amused himself.

It was said of this Charles of Valois, as it was said of John of Gaunt in our own history, that he was son of a king, father of a king, and brother of a king, but was never king himself. Almost his first act was to revenge himself on the late king's minister, Enguerrand of Marigny, who was scarcely allowed to defend himself, but was hung like a thief on the great gibbet at Montfaucon without a fair trial.

The only thing worth remembering in this reign was a law which made all the serfs in France free, or rather obliged them to buy their freedom of the king with a sum of money. Up to this time they had been simply slaves, and belonged to the noble on whose estate they worked; but now it was declared that, according to the law of nature, each man ought to be born free, and that the kingdom of the Franks or Freemen should be so in reality.

Louis Hutin died after a short reign of two years, by overheating himself at tennis, and then going into a damp grotto and drinking iced wine to cool himself.

For three hundred years up to this time (1316) the crown of France had come direct from father to son, but now the question arose whether, as Louis Hutin's infant son was dead, his brother Philip or his aunt Joan should succeed him. Now, what is known as the SALIC LAW held good in France, and

part of this law was that no woman could ever hold lands of her own, but that they must go to the next male heir. Hence it is that there has never been a queen in French history. One reason for this law was that most of the lands in France were held on what is called the FEUDAL SYSTEM;* that is to say, they were given to the nobles by the king on condition that they and their followers should follow him to battle and fight for him, and this of course a woman could not do.

So Louis Hutin's brother, PHILIP V., known as "the Long," from his tall stature, became king, but his reign was a short and evil one. Troubles of all kinds came upon the French, and the country seemed to be going back to the Dark Ages.

The Franciscans or friars of the order of Saint Francis, who used to go about the country preaching and begging alms, were attacked for being enemies to the Pope, and numbers of them were burnt alive. Then the wretched peasants, who had been so brutally ill-treated, rose against their masters, and armed themselves with scythes and axes. Forty thousand of them set off on a wild journey towards the East, on a pretence of making a Crusade, and covered the country of Languedoc. They broke open prisons, and plundered the towns and churches, but were in their turn attacked by the soldiers sent by the king, and were slain in thousands.

The Jews were again most cruelly treated. All their wealth was seized by the king, and they were thrown into prison, tortured, burnt alive, or slain by the sword. Lastly, the lepers—poor people who suffered from a dreadful disease called leprosy—were accused of conspiring with the Jews and of poisoning

* See page 16.

the wells. Many of them were tortured and burnt alive; and those who were allowed to live, were shut up in little houses where food was brought to them, and were forbidden even to go outside the doors. If they died, they were to be buried in these huts and not in the churchyard.

There was nothing but misery and distress from one end of France to the other, and one is glad when Philip V.'s miserable reign came to an end in 1322.

He again left no sons, and as the Salic Law prevented his daughter coming to the throne, his brother CHARLES IV., known as "the Fair," succeeded him.

His sister Isabella, who was so wicked that she has been called "the She Wolf of France," was married to Edward II. of England; but, as you know, she made war on her husband, and had him murdered in Berkeley Castle. And, sad to say, her brother Charles helped her both with men and money to carry out her wicked designs.

Charles IV. died of a fever at the age of thirty-four, and though he had been married three times, he left no son to succeed him; and the long line of kings, descended from Hugh Capet, thus came to an end, and the succession passed to a younger branch of the family.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HOUSE OF VALOIS. PHILIP VI.—1328–1349.

How Philip the Fortunate defeated the Flemish in a great battle at Cassel; how he quarrelled with the Count of Artois; how the Hundred Years' War began; how the English won the battle of Sluys; how Edward III. invaded France and won the battle of Crecy; how the English took Calais; how many thousand people died of the Black Death.

PHILIP VI., called "the Fortunate,"—though nothing could be less fortunate than the events of his reign—was the first cousin of Charles IV., and a son of the Charles of Valois mentioned in the last chapter.

It is very doubtful whether Edward III. of England had not really a better claim to the throne than Philip, for Edward was the son of Isabella, and therefore a nephew of Charles IV.; but Edward was young at this time, while Philip was much older, and was a Frenchman, and so he became king. All the same, Edward did not give up his claim, and though he paid homage to Philip, he only waited till he should be strong enough to make himself King of France.

Philip was brave and generous, and fond of pomp and show, and did nothing for the first few years of his reign but give feasts, and dances, and tournaments to his nobles in his splendid castle of Vincennes. Among these nobles was the Count of Flanders, who asked the king to help him to subdue his subjects, for they had rebelled against him; so Philip raised an army of his feudal barons and their followers, "the fairest and greatest host in the world," we are told; and then he invaded Flanders and

almost destroyed the Flemish army in a battle near Cassel (1328), a victory which wiped out the memory of the great defeat at Courtray in Philip IV.'s reign.

Not long after this, Philip quarrelled with his favourite minister Robert, Count of Artois, who had married the king's sister, and who was "the man of all the world who had most helped the king to attain to his crown and heritage." Robert of Artois was accused of having forged some letters, and of using magical arts to kill the queen and her son. He was found guilty and was exiled for life, and fled to the English court; and Edward III. was only too glad of some excuse for making war on France.

Then began, in 1337, what was known as the HUNDRED YEARS' WAR between France and England, and, as you will see, the French lost many battles, and thousands of their best soldiers, while the country people suffered great distress, for their corn-fields and vineyards were trampled down and wasted, and the harvest could not be gathered in.

Edward III. had the Flemings for his allies at the beginning of the war, and a famous brewer, named Van Artevelde, helped them greatly. The first attack was by sea. One Sunday morning, while the people were at church, a French fleet crossed the Channel and sacked and burnt Southampton; but in June 1340, Edward sailed from London with a fine fleet, filled with his best seamen and soldiers, and attacked the French fleet at SLUYS, on the river Schelde. The fight lasted the whole day, and the ships grappled one another with chains and hooks of iron, while the sailors fought with swords and axes on the decks as if it had been a land battle. Sir Walter Manny, one of Edward's bravest captains, boarded and took the *Christopher*, the largest French vessel, which they had

once taken from the English; and at last the whole French fleet was captured or destroyed. No one at Paris dared to tell Philip the news of this great defeat, till his court-jester cried out that the English were all cowards, and when asked "Why so?" replied, "Because they did not dare to jump boldly into the sea, as our brave French and Normans did."

The next war arose out of a quarrel about the succession to the duchy of Brittany, which was claimed by John, Count of Montfort, and Charles of Blois, a nephew of the French king. Montfort was taken prisoner at Nantes, but his heroic countess, Joan, who "had the courage of a man and the heart of a lion," carried on the war in his behalf, put on armour, and defended the town of Hennebon with the utmost bravery. Edward III. promised her assistance, and sent Sir Walter Manny with a large force, who came just in time to raise the siege. A cruel act of Philip, who treacherously beheaded fifteen Breton knights without a trial, gave Edward an excuse for again declaring war, and in 1346 he himself sailed for France, bringing with him a large force. But he had lost his brave ally, Van Artevelde, who had been murdered by the Flemings on a charge of sending their public money to England.

Edward marched all through Normandy, taking city after city, almost up to the gates of Paris, "from whence," we are told, "could be seen the fire and smoke from burning villages." Then he marched northwards into Picardy, followed by the French army, and halted near the forest of CRECY, where was fought the famous battle of that name.

This battle was won by the English archers, who had always been famous for their skill with the long-bow: and we are told that their arrows came in such

thick flights that they seemed like flakes of snow; while the Genoese cross-bow men, who fought on the French side, found their bow-strings wet, and their arrows fell short of the mark. Indeed these foreigners seemed to do more harm than good to their own side, and the disorder was such that the French king called out, "Slay me these rascals of Genoese, since they do but trouble us." So the French knights began to trample down and kill their own bowmen, while at the same time the English archers poured volleys of arrows on them both, and stone balls discharged from cannon, then used for the first time in battle, disturbed them greatly. "You would have thought that you heard God's own thunders," says a writer of the time. The young Prince of Wales fought in the first line, while his father watched the battle from a windmill. The prince was hard pressed, and sent to his father for assistance; but the king refused. "Let the boy win his spurs," said he, "for by God's will, I desire that all the honour of the day shall be his." And he left him to fight it out. Then all was terror and confusion among the French, and they fled in a panic, leaving more than thirty thousand of their bravest soldiers dead upon the field. Among the slain was John, the blind old King of Bohemia, who had made two of his knights fasten the reins of their horses to his, and so rode into the midst of the enemy, and died fighting gallantly.*

* You will read some day, if you have not already read, Macaulay's "Lay of the Spanish Armada," and you will find in it some lines in which he describes the lion in the royal standard of England:

"So stalked he, when he turned to flight on that famed Picard field,
Bohemia's plume, and Genoa's bow, and Cæsar's eagle shield."

You will understand all this, if you remember that Crecy is in

The Black Prince at Crecy.

King Philip fought bravely himself, and was one of the last to leave the field. Late that same evening he reached the Castle of Broye, and when the warder asked, "Who comes here as a fugitive?" he replied, "Open your gates; I am the Fortune of France,"—meaning, perhaps, to rebuke those who had misnamed him "Philip the Fortunate."

After this great victory Edward laid siege to Calais, and every one knows how gallantly the garrison held out, all through the winter of 1346 till the midsummer of the next year; and how at last St. Pierre and his brave companions came out, bare-headed and with ropes round their necks, ready to be hung if their fellow-citizens' lives should be spared, and how their own lives were saved at the prayer of good Queen Philippa. Calais belonged to England for more than two hundred years, and was not taken by the French till the reign of Queen Mary.

Philip made a truce with Edward after the terrible defeat at Crecy, and the only other event in his reign worth mentioning is a plague known as the "Black Death," in 1348, which raged throughout Europe as well as in France and England. Young and old, princes and peasants died alike; deaths were so numerous that the living could hardly bury the dead. Medicines were of no use, and doctors could do nothing against this fatal pestilence, of which fifty thousand persons died in Paris alone. Philip died two years afterwards, in 1350, after a

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Picardy, that the King of Bohemia's crest was three feathers, now borne by the Prince of Wales, that the Genoese archers fought for France, and that the eagle was on the Roman standards and was, and is still, on the standards of the French army.

dark and melancholy reign, a record of shame, and defeat, and pestilence.

In the last year of this reign, the lord of Dauphiny sold his province to King Philip on condition that it should always belong to the king's eldest son and not be joined to the crown. Hence the heir of France was ever afterwards known as "the Dauphin."

CHAPTER XVIII.

JOHN—1350-1356.

How John quarrelled with Charles the Bad of Navarre; how the Black Prince won the battle of Poitiers; how King John was taken prisoner and carried to England; how France was in a wretched state, and how the peasants rose against their masters; how Etienne Marcel caused a riot; how Edward III. made peace with France; how King John died in London; how the Black Death again appeared.

THE next king was JOHN, called "the Good," but his only good qualities were his courage, his generosity, and his high sense of honour. In other ways he was rash, proud, cruel, and insatiably greedy of money, and his reign is nothing but a history of troubles of one kind or another.

Before he had been king long he quarrelled with his kinsman, Charles "the Bad," King of Navarre, who was one of the worst, as well as one of the ablest, princes of his time. There had been a dispute about some taxes which the king wished to levy, and John took Charles prisoner by surprise, as he was sitting down to dinner in his castle of Rouen; beheaded four of his friends, and then seized on some of his estates.

Edward III. took Charles's part, and his son, the

Black Prince, led an army from Bordeaux into the country of the Loire, burning and pillaging as he marched. John followed him with an army six times as large, and caught the English up near POITIERS (1356). Although his army was so small—little more than 8000—while the French was 50,000 strong, the prince refused to accept the terms offered by John, and chose rather to fight it out, saying that "God would defend the right;" and he posted his troops in a strong position on a hill not many miles from the town.

Luckily for the English, the vineyards and hedgerows threw the French cavalry into confusion, as they charged with their usual headlong valour; while the English archers poured on them a storm of arrows, as they had done at Crecy; and Sir John Chandos, one of the most skilful captains of the time, posted a body of men in ambush, who charged the French on the flank, and broke their ranks. Seeing this, Sir John called out to the Prince, "Ride forward, Sir, the day is yours," and the prince himself gave the word to attack: "Advance banners in the name of God and St. George!" Then the main body of the English knights charged in line with such fury that the French gave way on all sides. Many of them turned their horses and fled without striking a blow; many others were slain where they stood, and among them the knight who carried the Oriflamme of France. King John stayed to the last, fighting bravely, although twice wounded, and his youngest son, Philip, a boy of fourteen, kept close to the king's side, warning him "Father, strike to the right, now to the left." It was thus that he earned the name of Philip "the Bold," as he was afterwards called, when he became Duke of Burgundy.

At length King John gave up his sword, and yielded himself prisoner, and was brought to the Prince of Wales' tent, who showed him the greatest respect and kindness. During supper, the prince waited on the king, as if he had been his page, and seeing him sad and cast down, he tried to cheer him, saying, "Although, noble Sir, it was not God's will that you should win the day, yet you singly have won the prize of valour, since it was plain to every Englishman that none bore himself so bravely as you."

The slaughter among the French was terrible, and the number of prisoners was so large, that the English hardly knew what to do with them. So they ransomed them quickly, and then let them go free.

King John was himself carried to London, and rode through the streets mounted on a fine white horse, while the Prince of Wales rode on a little palfrey by his side. He was treated more like an honoured guest than a prisoner, and the Savoy Palace, close to the Strand, was given him for a residence.

Meanwhile, his eldest son, the Dauphin Charles—a weak, pale, mean-looking prince—governed France, and nothing could have been more wretched and miserable than the state of the country. Bands of "Free Lances,"—that is, soldiers who fought for any captain who chose to pay them, whether he was French or English,—roved hither and thither, and robbed and murdered as they pleased; while the nobles beat and ill-treated the peasants, and drove them, as if they had been wild beasts, to seek refuge among the woods and caves.

At last, these peasants, goaded to fury, turned

upon their cruel masters. A cry arose, "Death to the Lords," and they armed themselves with scythes and pitchforks, set fire to the castles of the nobles, and murdered all their families, even to the youngest infants. They even besieged the town of Meaux, where the Dauphin's wife and a number of noble ladies had taken refuge, and would have slain them all, if some English knights had not come to the rescue and put the peasants to flight. After this, the nobles took heart, and united to crush their rebellious serfs. They were hunted down as if they had been wolves, and great numbers of them were tortured and hung.

This rising of the peasants (1358) is always known as the JACQUERIE; for "Jacques Bonhomme," or, as we might say, "our good friend Hodge," was an insulting name given by the nobles to their serfs, and it was a saying among them that "Jacques Bonhomme has a broad back, and must bear the burden"—the burden, that is, of taxes and ill-treatment.

There were troubles in Paris, as well as in the country, about this time; for one Etienne Marcel stirred up the people to demand relief from the taxes, and claim a share in the government, and caused a riot in the city. He was even bold enough to insult the Dauphin in his own palace, and to murder two of his favourite ministers before his face; and not only this, but he plotted with Charles the Bad of Navarre to make him master of Paris and King of France instead of the Dauphin.

Marcel, however, was killed before he could carry out this treachery, and Charles the Bad gave up his attempt on Paris, though he still contrived to ravage

the country with his Free Lances, and did much mischief.

Meanwhile, King John was still prisoner in London, and the French naturally wished to obtain his release; but the terms asked by the English king were so hard, that the Dauphin would not accept them. So Edward invaded France a second time to enforce his claims.

This time, the French would not risk a battle, but kept retreating, while Edward advanced slowly, amusing himself on the way with his hawks and hounds. He marched through the country, burning and plundering as he went along, and encamped close to Paris itself. But his soldiers were suffering from want of food, and he was himself growing weary of the war, when a violent storm of thunder and lightning suddenly fell upon his army. This seemed to him a sign from heaven that he should listen to the prayers of France. So he made peace with the Dauphin at Bretigny (1360), and it was agreed that King John should be set free on payment of three millions of gold crowns, and that Edward should give up his claim to the throne of France for ever, but should keep Guienne and Gascony, as well as Calais, La Rochelle, and many other towns. Besides this, King John was obliged to give hostages to the English, and amongst them was his own son, Louis of Anjou, who promised to remain a prisoner at Calais until the ransom was paid, but who disgracefully broke his word.

Thus King John was set free, and came back to France; but, before a year had passed, he was so grieved that his son had broken his word of honour and made his escape, that he determined to surrender

himself again to the English king; and when some of his friends advised him against this, he made the noble answer that, "If faith and honour were banished from the rest of the world, they ought still to remain enshrined in the hearts of kings."

So King John returned to England in 1364, and was entertained most hospitably as before, but, not long after, he died in the Savoy Palace, and King Edward gave him a royal funeral in St. Paul's Cathedral.

The last three years of his reign were full of trouble and distress for his country. The terrible plague of the Black Death again broke out and swept away numbers of the inhabitants; there was mourning and sorrow everywhere; and bands of robbers and Free Lances, who were sometimes headed by the nobles themselves, plundered and burnt in all directions.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHARLES V.—1364–1380.

How Charles V. showed himself a wise and learned king; how he made Du Guesclin his general; how the English lost by degrees all their conquests in France; how Charles V. made war against the Bretons; how Du Guesclin died; how Charles V. and Charles the Bad of Navarre died soon afterwards.

CHARLES V. was always called "the Wise" and, as you will see, he well deserved this name. He was weak in body, and so was unfit for war himself, but he chose skilful generals to command his armies for him, while he lived quietly at home and looked after state affairs. He was studious and

fond of books, and he founded the great Library of Paris. Again, he was prudent and patient, and cared only to strengthen his kingdom without making fresh conquests, and there is a famous saying of his, that "Lordship is more than glory," by which he meant that the reality of power is more than the show of it.

His favourite and best general was a Breton knight, called Bertrand Du Guesclin, who showed such skill and courage that the king raised him from being a mere captain to be Constable of France, the highest title in the French army. Though short and ugly in appearance, Du Guesclin had marvellous bodily strength, and delighted in fighting, and the French were so proud of him, that they boasted they had the wisest king and the best general in Europe. But they were not quite right in this, for in his first war against the English for the province of Brittany in 1365, Du Guesclin was defeated and taken prisoner by Sir John Chandos, the same knight whose skill had won the battle of Poitiers. Charles V., however, could not afford to leave his good general in prison, so he paid a large sum of money as a ransom.

The "Free Lances" or "Free Companies," of whom we have spoken so often, and who were little better than land pirates, still gave great trouble; and Charles thought the best way of getting rid of them was to send them out of France into Spain to help in the civil war going on there. So he put them under the command of Du Guesclin, who was nothing more than a Free Lance himself, and they helped Prince Henry of Trastamare against his brother Pedro the Cruel, the King of Castile, an odious tyrant, who was hated by his subjects, and

had even murdered his own wife. At first, the French carried all before them; but the English under the Black Prince took the side of Pedro the Cruel, and defeated Du Guesclin and his Free Lances with great slaughter at Najara (1367), where Du Guesclin was a second time taken prisoner by the English, and was a second time ransomed by Charles V. Many of these lawless Free Lances had deserted to the Black Prince's side before the battle, and fought against their old comrades.

But misfortunes soon came upon the English. Pedro showed no gratitude for the help they had given him, and would not pay the soldiers, who became discontented and mutinous, and deserted in large numbers. The strange wines and the hot climate of Spain caused sickness to spread among the English troops, and the Black Prince himself was seized with a slow fever, and was said to have been poisoned by Pedro. His temper grew harsh and cruel during this sickness, and he began to oppress the people of the country, and made them pay such heavy taxes, that they longed to drive the English out of Spain.

Meanwhile, Charles V. grew so bold that he actually sent a defiance to the Black Prince, summoning him to Paris to defend himself against the charges of the people of Aquitaine. Prince Edward replied that he would indeed come to Paris, but it would be with his helmet on his head and sixty thousand men at his back.

Pedro the Cruel was killed in 1369 by his own brother Henry, and the war in Spain thus came to an end; but war still continued both in Normandy and the South of France, where everything went badly for the English. The English fleet was destroyed

at Rochelle; and the treasure ship carrying pay to the Gascon army was sunk. King Edward with another fleet was prevented from sailing from Southampton by the autumn gales. Then the gallant Sir John Chandos was killed in a skirmish; the Black Prince, who had been slowly wasting away of the fever he had caught in Spain, died in England in 1376, and his father, Edward III., broken down by age and sorrow, soon followed him to the grave.

John of Gaunt, the Black Prince's brother, now commanded the English army in France, but he was no match for Du Guesclin, who followed the advice of Charles the Wise, and would never risk a battle, but kept retreating and annoying the enemy by skirmishes and sallies from the fortified towns. The English marched through eastern France, losing men and horses daily without being able to strike a blow at the enemy, and when at last they reached Bordeaux, there was nothing left for them but to return to England. So one after the other the English lost all their possessions in France, except Bordeaux and a few strong towns in Normandy; while the French got so bold that they even sent a fleet which ravaged the south coast of England, where Richard II., a mere child, was now king.

In 1378 Charles tried to unite Brittany to the French crown, but the Bretons, headed by John of Montfort, at once rose in rebellion, and Du Guesclin was sent to subdue them. But he made such slow progress that a quarrel took place between him and the king, and he left Brittany for Languedoc. There he died (1380) while besieging a small fortress, which the governor had promised to give up to him on a certain day; and when he heard that the great soldier was dead, he desired to be led to the tent

where the body was lying, and put the keys of the fortress in the dead man's hand. Du Guesclin's last words to his soldiers before he died were to urge them never to forget, when making war, that the women and children and poor people were not their enemies. Perhaps the great Constable was thinking of the cruel slaughter of the people of Limoges when their town was taken by the Black Prince, and all the inhabitants were put to the sword. Charles V. was greatly grieved when he heard of Du Guesclin's death, and he ordered his body to be buried with royal state among the tombs of the kings of France in the Abbey of Saint Denis.

The king himself died shortly afterwards, and it was said that he was poisoned by his enemy Charles the Bad of Navarre, who was constantly plotting some evil against the French monarchy. But punishment soon came upon this wicked prince, whose life had been spent in doing all the harm he could to others, and he died himself in the most horrible manner. He had been sick for some time, and his doctors advised him to wrap himself in a gown soaked in spirits of wine, and to warm himself by placing a pan of charcoal under his bed; but, says an old chronicler, "by the pleasure of God, or of the devil, the fire caught to his sheets, and then to his body, wrapped as it was in a robe so highly inflammable." He was so dreadfully burnt, that he only lived a few days after this accident.

CHAPTER XX.

CHARLES VI.—1380-1415.

How Charles VI.'s uncle, the Duke of Anjou was Regent, and how the people of Paris rebelled against the taxes; how the Flemings were defeated at Rosbecque; how Oliver de Clisson was nearly murdered; how Charles VI. went mad; how some French nobles were defeated and slain by the Turks; how the Duke of Orleans was murdered; how quarrels arose between the Burgundians and Armagnacs.

CHARLES VI., called the "Well Beloved," was only twelve years old when he became king, and it may be safely said that his reign, which lasted more than forty years, was the most miserable period of French history.

Charles V., on his death-bed, had commended his young son to the care of his brother. "All my trust," he said, "is in you; the child is young and fickle-minded, and great need is there that he should be guided and governed by good teaching." So Charles VI.'s four uncles, "the Princes of the Lilies,"* all bold and ambitious men, became his guardians, and one of them, the Duke of Anjou, the most selfish and rapacious of the four, was made Regent. His first act was to seize all the plate and jewels belonging to the late king, as well as some treasure which had been carefully hidden in the walls of a castle; but, though he had all this money, he would not pay his soldiers, and levied fresh taxes on the citizens of Paris. There were great murmurs and discontent at the taxes; and at last the mob armed themselves with clubs and mallets, and then

* So called from the silver lilies, or *fleurs de lys*, sprinkled on a blue shield, which formed the royal arms of France.

attacked and murdered the tax collectors. The prisons were broken open, and there was nothing but riot and bloodshed in the streets. But at length the Regent put down this rebellion, and many of the chief rioters were tied up in sacks and thrown into the Seine.

Soon afterwards, the Duke of Anjou became King of Naples, and his brother, the Duke of Burgundy, was made Regent in his stead. Then there was a war in Flanders, where the people of the towns had risen against the nobles, and were headed by Philip Van Artevelde, a son of the great brewer who had helped Edward III. The French at once made war on the rebellious citizens of Ghent and Bruges, and defeated them in a great battle at Rosebecque (1382). Van Artevelde himself was among the slain, and it is said that 26,000 Flemish perished in the battle. The young King and his uncle, the Regent, were with the French army; but the real general was Oliver de Clisson, who had been made Constable of France after the death of the brave Du Guesclin, and who was so harsh and cruel, that he was always called "the Butcher."

When Charles and his army returned to Paris, they treated it as if it had been a conquered town, for Charles had not forgotten the rebellion of the citizens. Three hundred of the principal townsmen were beheaded; all the liberties of the city were taken away; and all the hateful taxes, especially the tax on salt, called the *gabelle*, were again levied on the unfortunate Parisians.

Charles was now sixteen years of age, and was thought fit to govern by himself, but he cared for nothing except hunting and amusements; and in 1385 he made an unhappy marriage with Isabella

of Bavaria, who was as wicked as she was beautiful, and never really loved her husband.

He was, however, fond of war, and collected an army and a fleet to invade England. He even built a wooden town, which was to be carried across and set up as a fortress on the English shore. But, for one reason or another, this great expedition never started, and, instead of the French invading England, the English ships sailed across the Channel, and destroyed Charles's fleet as it lay at anchor.

Charles blamed his uncles, the royal dukes, for this failure, and ordered them to leave his Court; and the Constable de Clisson, with three other nobles, now became the chief officers in the State. Clisson was nearly murdered by an assassin in the streets of Paris in 1392, and Charles marched into Brittany to punish the duke of that country, who had protected the would-be murderer; but, on the way, a great misfortune came upon him.

He was riding through the forest of Mans on a hot day in August, when suddenly a man with wild looks and a ghastly face rushed from a thicket, calling out, "Ride no further, Sir King, for thou art betrayed." Charles was greatly startled and terrified at this; and presently the heat of the sun, and the jingling of a lance against a helmet carried by his page, turned his brain, and made him lose his senses. He drew his sword and killed four of his escort, and grew so wild and violent, that his attendants had to use force, and tie his arms and legs, and in this wretched state the King of France was brought back to Paris.

He recovered his reason for a time, but in 1393 an accident brought on another fit of madness. At one

of the Christmas feasts, he and five young nobles came into the hall dressed like wild men of the woods, wearing shirts daubed with tar and then covered with tow. One of these supposed savage men was by an accident set on fire by a torch, and as they were all chained together, except the king, all of them were burnt but one, who broke his chain and threw himself into a tub of water.

Charles himself escaped unhurt, but the shock and terror of this scene brought on another fit of madness, and for the rest of his life he was rarely in his right mind. He did not even know his own children, and his wife, a selfish and wicked woman, took no trouble to comfort or relieve him; and the only person who could calm and soothe him in his madness was Valentina, the young and beautiful wife of the Duke of Orleans. The poor king used sometimes to think that he was tormented by an evil spirit, and would beg and implore his friends to deliver him; "If he who causes my suffering is among you, I pray him in the name of our Lord to cease, and to let me die." Sometimes, when he was not too ill, he was taken to see Mysteries or Sacred Plays, in which scenes from the Bible history were acted, and playing-cards are said to have been invented to amuse him.

About this time (1396) the Turks, under their great Sultan Bajazet, had spread over Hungary, and threatened to overrun Italy, where Bajazet boasted that he would give his horse a feed of oats on the altar of St. Peter's at Rome. A host of French knights and barons, with several royal princes, set out on a so-called Crusade to help the Hungarians; but they were surrounded by the vast army of the Turks, and so utterly destroyed, that only twenty-

eight escaped with their lives, and were ransomed by their friends.

It was one of the most terrible defeats that the French army had ever suffered, and there was hardly a noble family in the kingdom that was not in mourning. There was now really no king in France, and an incessant quarrel went on between the Duke of Orleans and the king's youngest brother, John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, each of whom wished to be regent of the kingdom. Burgundy was more popular with the people of Paris, for Orleans, though a handsome and clever young prince, did nothing but spend money and live riotously; and he even robbed the royal treasury. But his career was cut short, for he was treacherously murdered in the streets of Paris by some of the Burgundians in the winter of 1407.

His wife, Valentina, threw herself at Charles' feet and demanded justice on the murderers; but the poor king could do nothing but weep with her; and John of Burgundy even wrote out letters of pardon to himself for the murder in the king's name. The unhappy Valentina died soon afterwards of a broken heart.

Then the Count of Armagnac took up the quarrel, for the young Duke of Orleans had married his daughter; and from this time the Orleans party were known as "Armagnacs." A never ceasing feud went on between them and the Burgundians, and for many years we read of nothing but murders and outrages committed by these lawless men.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHARLES VI. (*continued*)—1415-1422.

How Henry V. invaded France and won the Battle of Agincourt; how a terrible massacre of the Armagnacs took place in Paris; how Henry V. entered Paris and married Charles VI.'s daughter Katherine; how Henry V. died, and how Charles VI. also died to the great sorrow of his people.

MEANWHILE, Henry V. of England had revived the old claim of Edward III. to the French crown, and landed in Normandy (1415). He took the town of Harfleur by storm, and then marched through Normandy, finding the bridges broken down everywhere, and suffering greatly from want of corn and provisions. At last he met a French army nearly five times more numerous than his own at AGINCOURT, on the road to Calais. The battle was begun by the French cavalry, as usual, but they were so rash and badly disciplined, so tired by a long night watch, and so hampered by the marshy ground, that they were soon thrown into confusion by the flight of arrows poured upon them by the English archers, and suffered immense loss. In fact, Agincourt was a worse defeat than either Crecy or Poitiers, for the French lost ten thousand of their bravest princes and nobles in the battle. Hardly any quarter was given, and they fell in heaps, the slain lying piled one above another, while all the prisoners were cruelly killed in cold blood by the English.

This disaster seemed to many persons to be a sign of God's anger against the French; and a monk, who wrote the history of these times, tells us that sober people said among themselves, "in what evil

days are we come into the world, that we should behold such confusion and shame!"

The Burgundians and Armagnacs still continued their feud, and nothing could have been more wretched than the state of Paris. The king was still insane, and the queen, Isabella, led such a shameful life that she was shut up in prison by the constable, Armagnac, and her treasures were seized by her son, the Dauphin.

Isabella, however, managed to escape from her prison in 1418, and made friends with John the Fearless (or the Pitiless, as he ought to have been called), Duke of Burgundy. His soldiers forced their way into Paris, and were joined by all the ruffians and butchers in the city. A terrible massacre of the Armagnacs followed, men, women, and children were killed alike, and the streets of the city flowed with blood. The murderers even cut strips of flesh from the dead bodies in mockery of the white linen band which the Armagnacs used to wear on their caps.

While all these horrors were going on in Paris, Henry V. landed a second time in 1419, forced Rouen to surrender after a long siege, during which 50,000 of the citizens are said to have died of hunger, and then he easily subdued Normandy. He now threatened to march on Paris itself.

It might have been thought that the two parties in Paris would have joined against their common enemy, the English; but, instead of this, a fresh crime was committed in 1419, which made things worse than ever. John the Fearless of Burgundy was invited by the Dauphin to a friendly meeting on one of the bridges of the Seine, and was there treacherously stabbed to death by some of the Ar-

magnacs. His son, Philip the Good, at once joined the English; Queen Isabella did the same; and even the people of Paris raised a cry "A hundred times rather the English than these murdering Armagnacs."

So a treaty was made at Troyes (1420), by which it was agreed that Henry V. was to become King of France after Charles VI.'s death, and was to marry his daughter Katherine. Henry entered Paris in state, riding between the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, and followed by all the lords and nobles. The clergy conducted him to the Church of Notre Dame, and his marriage took place at once with great magnificence.

The Dauphin, who was the rightful heir to the crown, did not, of course, agree to this treaty; but at once raised an army to drive the foreigners out of France. But, in the following winter (1422), Henry V. died while besieging a robber's stronghold; and within a few weeks the wretched Charles VI. also ended his unhappy life. He had wept and wrung his hands when told of King Henry's death, crying, "Ah, my good son Henry!" for the English king had been kinder to him than his own wife and children. His people mourned for their king with real sorrow—for his goodness and gentleness in the short intervals when his madness left him, had gained him his title of "the Well Beloved;" and we are told that when his body lay in state his subjects came in crowds to weep and pray over him, saying, "Ah, dear Prince, never shall we have any so good as thou wert; since thou dost leave us, we shall have nought but wars and sorrows. As for thee, thou goest to thy rest; as for us, we remain in tribulation and anguish." And the people

were right, for they had many trials and sorrows to pass through in the next reign.

When Charles's body had been carried to his tomb in the Abbey of Saint Denis, the heralds made proclamation "Long live Henry VI., Duke of Lancaster, and King of France and England!" But Henry was only an infant, nine months old, and long before he had become a man, France had passed for ever out of the hands of the English. For the time, however, the Duke of Bedford, Henry's uncle, became in name the Regent of France.

The last years of this reign, from 1418 to 1422, had brought great misery and unhappiness to France, especially to Paris. Not only had numbers of the citizens perished in the massacres caused by the Burgundians and Armagnacs, but there had been a plague as well, which is said to have carried off 80,000 of the inhabitants. Such numbers of the people died that the graveyards became full, and large trenches were dug into which the dead bodies were daily thrown by forty and fifty at a time, and were so thinly covered with earth that wolves entered the city at night and preyed upon the corpses. The streets swarmed with robbers and beggars, and little children wandered about crying "We are dying of hunger;" for in 1419 the harvest failed, and there was a famine, and the distress of the people became almost intolerable. But, happily for France, just when matters were at their worst, a way of deliverance was opened, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHARLES VII.—1422-1461.

How Charles VII. was called "the Victorious;" how the English defeated the French and besieged Orleans; how Joan Darc saved the city, and how Charles VII. was crowned at Rheims; how Joan Darc was betrayed to the English, and how she was burnt as a witch; how the English lost Paris and all their French possessions, except Calais; how the king unjustly banished Jaques Cœur; and how the Dauphin plotted against his father.

THE new king, CHARLES VII., was called "the Victorious," because in his reign the English were driven out of France, but this success was rather due to the Maid of Orleans, of whom you will read presently, and to the gallant Dunois, a son of the late Duke of Orleans, than to Charles himself; for he was careless and indolent; and, as an old chronicle says, "he did not readily put on his armour, and had no heart for war, if he could help it."

At first, his army consisted chiefly of foreigners, and there were many Scotchmen among them, who were highly honoured by the king, and their leader, the Earl of Buchan, was made Constable of France. But these brave allies were defeated by the English in two great battles, and the town of Orleans, the last important place which still held out for Charles, was closely besieged by the English forces in 1428, under the Earl of Salisbury and Sir William Glansdale. They built forts for their cannon, and surrounded the city on all sides. But Salisbury was killed by a shot from the walls; and then, happily for the besieged, the Duke of Burgundy quarrelled with the Regent Bedford, and withdrew all his

troops from helping in the siege, and soon afterwards the town was saved by what may almost be called a miracle. At this time (1429) a young girl, called Joan Darc, was living with her parents, who were peasants, in the little village of Domrémy, on the Meuse, in the East of France. She was good and simple, and was greatly moved by all the misfortunes of her country; and she had read in an old book of prophecies that it was fated that France should be saved by a virgin dwelling on the borders of Lorraine. This idea filled her mind night and day; and she seemed to hear voices in her dreams bidding her go forth and deliver her countrymen in Orleans, and lead the king to be crowned at Rheims. "My brothers in paradise," she said, "tell me to go."

So she made her way to the court of Charles at Chinon, and was brought into his presence, and stood before him, we are told, "the most simple shepherdess one could ever see." Then she spoke to him thus: "Gentle Dauphin, my name is Joan the Maid; the King of Heaven hath sent me to your help; if you please to give me troops, by the grace of God and the force of arms, I will raise the siege of Orleans, and will lead you to be crowned at Rheims in spite of your enemies." Charles believed her words, for her innocence and truth so impressed all who saw and heard her that she seemed to them a messenger from heaven. So she was clad in armour, and mounted on a war-horse, while a page carried her banner before her, and thus she reached the English camp before Orleans, and they let her pass through the lines into the city. When she appeared in the streets, we are told that the people crowded round her "with as great joy as if they had seen God come down upon them."

Joan Darc.

Her presence greatly encouraged the French soldiers, and they made several sallies, driving back the English from their forts and outworks. Joan always led the attack sword in hand, though she never shed blood herself, and even after a victory she would weep over the dead and wounded. But nothing daunted her in the hour of battle, and wherever she was seen, the enemy were panic-stricken and gave way. She was wounded more than once, but her heart never failed her. And at last the English lost so many men and were so disheartened that they gave up the siege. You will now understand why Joan Darc has always been called the Maid of Orleans.

So Charles was crowned king in the cathedral at Rheims, as the Maid had promised him, and when he entered the city, Joan rode between the Archbishop and her best friend, the gallant Dunois. As they talked together, she said, "I have done what the Lord commanded me,—to raise the siege of Orleans, and have the gentle king crowned. I would like it well, if it should please Him to send me back to my father and mother, to keep their sheep and their cattle, and do that which was my wont." It would, indeed, have been well for Joan if she could have done this and gone back to her old peaceful life now that she had saved her country; for from this time her good fortune seemed to have deserted her, and she was no longer certain of a victory as before. She was hated by the great nobles, who were angry because she was honoured by Charles, while the English looked upon her as a sorceress and a witch, and she knew that if she fell into their hands she could expect no mercy. That evil day came at last, for she was basely deserted by

her own French troops, and so was taken prisoner by the Burgundians, while making a sally from the fortress of Compiégne. Soon afterwards she was sold by the Duke of Burgundy to her English foes for a sum of ten thousand francs. She was then carried to Rouen and chained in an iron cage; and after a long and cruel trial before forty judges, this young and innocent girl, whose only crime was her love for her country, was condemned to be burnt to death, as being a witch and a heretic. So she was burnt at the stake in the market-place of Rouen, her last cry, as she perished in the flames, being "My voices have not deceived me." (1431). Even some of the brutal soldiers, who had mocked her sufferings at first, were moved to tears by her patient courage; and one of the English nobles said to a friend, "We are lost, we have burnt a saint." But it is sad to read that the king, whom Joan had crowned, never wrote a letter or made an effort to save her at the time; and it was not till many years afterwards that he seems to have felt some remorse and shame for his cowardly desertion of the maiden to whom he owed his kingdom. Then, at last, the unjust sentence passed upon Joan was publicly done away with; and two solemn processions in her honour took place at Rouen, in the two large squares of the city where she had been condemned and executed.

Nothing prospered with the English in France after their barbarous execution of Joan Darc. Their old ally, the Duke of Burgundy, deserted their cause, and made a separate peace with Charles at Arras (1435). Then Paris was taken by the French, and the English garrison were forced to leave the Bastille, while Charles entered his own capital for the first time since he had been carried out of it

while a child, nineteen years before, for fear of the Burgundians.

Though Paris was once more the French capital, the country round it was still in a disturbed state; for bands of soldiers and brigands, known as "the Flayers," robbed and murdered in all directions. Charles, however, showed unusual vigour in dealing with these brigands, and he is said to have been roused to action by Agnes Sorel, called the Queen of Beauty, a woman with great virtues as well as great faults. He saw that an army without pay must live by plunder, so he got the States-General—an assembly something like our Parliament—to let him raise fifteen regiments of six hundred men each, forming a body of nine thousand men-at-arms, besides sixteen thousand free archers (one from each parish in the kingdom), and pay them regularly; and this large force was placed in various towns throughout the kingdom to maintain the laws and the royal authority.

It was a great thing for the King of France to have thus created a standing army, well paid and well fed, instead of depending on the vassals of his nobles, or worse still on the lawless Free Companies, when he wanted to make war; and this was perhaps the wisest act in Charles's reign. His great nobles were of course indignant at the change, for they were forbidden any longer to have soldiers of their own, and lost much of their power. Many of them rebelled, but Charles, with the help of his Constable Richemont, soon forced them to submit.

Once more the English lost all their French possessions; Normandy and Aquitaine were reconquered by Charles; the great Lord Talbot was killed in a skirmish; Bordeaux, the chief port of France, sur-

rendered to the French; the English troops sailed back to England, and thus the hundred years' war came to an end in 1453. It must be said that England had gained little by this war except some barren victories. She had wasted much blood and treasure in useless attempts at conquest, and the only results in the end had been defeat and disgrace abroad, while at home the Civil Wars of the Roses were desolating the kingdom.

There is one important person, the most useful of all Charles's ministers, of whom something must be said. This was the merchant prince, Jacques Cœur, who was what we should call the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and managed the royal treasury. He provided money for all the expenses of the war, and even lent Charles large sums of his own money when the treasury was empty. "Sir, all that I have is yours," he said to the king, and gave up his wealth without a murmur. But Charles, though called "the Well-Served," was never grateful to those who served him well, and he allowed his honest and faithful minister to be imprisoned and banished on a false charge of stealing the public money, and, as in the case of Joan Darc, Charles never made an effort to save him.

Though there is nothing to love or admire, there is much to respect in this king's character, especially in the latter part of his reign. As we have seen, he had driven the English out of France, and had subdued the lawless soldiers who had infested the country. Besides this, he restored peace to the towns, made the roads safe from robbers, and made the taxes more just and equal than they had been before. And this wise conduct brought him much fame and power among the nations of Europe.

His latter days, however, were unhappy ones, owing to the trouble given him by his eldest son, Louis. This prince had joined the great nobles, in 1439, in an attack on his father. Then he was reconciled to him, and was sent to govern Dauphiny, the province which belonged to Louis as Dauphin ;* but soon afterwards he again offended his father by marrying a princess of the house of Savoy, for his first wife, Margaret of Scotland, had died of a broken heart. Charles suspected him of plotting another rebellion, and Louis then took refuge in Brussels, where he was kindly welcomed by the Duke of Burgundy. "My cousin does not know," said Charles, "that he is harbouring the fox which will some day eat up his chickens."

Louis, however, remained five years at the court of the Duke of Burgundy, and his father was continually tormented by the idea that his son was plotting against him. And there was some reason for his suspicions; for John the Good, who was the Duke of Burgundy, was one of the most powerful princes in Europe, and had made himself master of Flanders with all its rich towns, such as Bruges, and Ghent, and Liége. His pride and power seemed to have no limits; he kept a splendid court, where there were continual feasts and tournaments; and his order of knighthood, called the Golden Fleece, was the most famous of the time. Though in name the Duke of Burgundy was the vassal of the French king, he was really an independent sovereign, and the great rival of France. It may be easily imagined, therefore, that the Dauphin's presence at his court made his father think that he was conspiring with his enemy to seize the

* See p. 80.

crown. This terror haunted Charles and almost drove him mad; and at last he refused to eat or drink, and died miserably after a few days' illness, in 1461.

Yet, though his death was a sad one, his reign was on the whole a fortunate one for France, and those who knew the temper and character of the new king foresaw that an evil time was coming upon them. The great nobles especially had good reason for their fears, and when the Count of Dunois stood by the late king's grave, his warning was, "The king our master is dead; let each of us look out for himself."

CHAPTER XXIII.

LOUIS XI.—1461-1475.

Of Louis XI., his appearance and character; how he broke up "the League of the Public Good," and how he fell into the power of Charles the Bold at Peronne; how Louis bought off the English and made peace with Burgundy.

NO one could be more unlike a king in appearance than Louis XI. Up to this time the French had been accustomed to gallant and handsome princes with a train of nobles, and the state and splendour of a royal court; but they now saw a king with a mean and common looking figure, shabbily dressed in an old doublet, and with a cap stuck full of leaden images of the saints. Indeed, Louis despised all the outward pomp and show of royalty, and he so feared and distrusted his great nobles that he would have none of them about his Court if he could help it. The Duke of Burgundy had himself

escorted Louis from Flanders to Rheims, where the coronation took place, and then he attended the King to Paris with a splendid train of knights and nobles, and he kept such princely state there in his hotel, and was so magnificent and generous, that the people could not help comparing him with their own king; "Look at this kind prince whom any one might wish to serve! Happy are those whom he loves! Ah, he is not like our king, who wears an old great coat and a rosary, and hates nothing but joy." His chief friends and advisers were Balue, a priest of low birth, whom he had caused to be made a Cardinal; his barber, Oliver le Dain, or Oliver the Devil, who was as mean and cunning as his master, and his "gossip," Tristan l'Ermite, his provost-marshal, or chief hangman. And if you want to read a description of these persons, you should get Sir Walter Scott's novel of "Quentin Durward."

Louis lived in a gloomy palace in Paris called the Hotel des Tournelles, without any state and with only a few servants, incessantly plotting and scheming how he could humble the power of his nobles and increase his own. He even forbade them to hunt in their own forests; and these and other acts of tyranny made him so hated by the great nobles, that five hundred of them joined in what was called "the League of the Public Good," headed by the Duke of Burgundy's son, Charles, Count of Charolais, and marched against Paris with four large armies of sixty thousand men. Louis knew that he could not subdue them by force, for he had only his little paid army to oppose them with. After fighting one indecisive battle against the Count of St. Pol and the Burgundians, in which both sides showed great cowardice and ignorance of war, Louis retreated within Paris, which was besieged by an overwhelm-

ing force. Louis then began to treat with his foes singly; acting like the woodman in the fable, who broke up the bundle of faggots one by one. He flattered one noble and deceived another, and then made a treaty in which he made a great many promises which he never intended to keep, giving some towns to one prince and a province to others. And the end of it was that the nobles quarrelled over their share of the spoil, the League was broken up, the Burgundians and Bretons dispersed, and by degrees Louis found means to get back all that he had given up, especially the two great provinces of Normandy and Brittany. But one of these nobles was not so easily duped and deceived as the others. This was Charles the Bold, who succeeded Philip the Good as Duke of Burgundy in 1467, and who all his life remained the great rival and enemy of Louis XI.

Unlike Louis, Charles of Burgundy was generous and princely in habit and appearance; fond of learning, and yet a gallant soldier in battle; but all these great qualities were spoiled by his pride, his passionate temper, and his obstinate ambition.

The territory of Burgundy lay in a huge curve stretching from Flanders to Switzerland, with all the rich provinces of Alsace, Lorraine, Luxemburg, Hainault, and what are now the Netherlands. Though in name Charles was vassal of the Emperor as well as of Louis, he was in reality the most powerful prince in Europe. But his ambition passed all bounds, and he wished to found an empire on the Rhine, and join to it the title of the King of the Romans.

Louis foresaw that sooner or later a struggle must come between him and his powerful rival, so he began to collect forces, and prevailed on his States-General, an assembly somewhat like our own

parliament, to assist him; while Charles sought for allies in foreign states, and got England and Spain to take his side.

A large Burgundian army was collected ready for war, when Louis thought that he would try his usual policy of flattery and persuasion, instead of meeting his enemy in the field. So, after getting a promise from Charles that he should go and return unharmed, "come what might," he set out for Peronne, in Burgundy, with a few attendants and some of the archers of his guard, in October, 1468. But this time he was nearly caught in his own snares; for while the friendly interview was going on between him and the Duke, the news came that the people of Liége (a town belonging to Charles) had risen in revolt, and had murdered the Bishop and chief men of the city, though the last part of this news turned out to be false. But it was known that Louis had sent secret messengers to Liége, and he was thought therefore to be the cause of this massacre.

Charles burst into a fury of passion when he heard the news, and at once ordered Louis to be shut up and closely guarded in the castle, where his rooms looked out on the tower in which another King of France, Charles the Simple, had been murdered in ancient times.

At first Charles decided that Louis should be killed then and there; but his counsellors persuaded him against this crime, and Louis was set at liberty after signing a treaty in which he promised to give up a large province to his brother the Duke of Berry, and to march with the Duke of Burgundy to witness the punishment of the people of Liége, whom he had himself excited to revolt.

Liége was taken by storm, and the town was sacked and pillaged by Charles's army, the inhabitants were mercilessly slaughtered, and the walls razed to the ground; and Louis then returned to France, full of rage and shame at this unlucky expedition. He at once imprisoned Cardinal Balue, whom he suspected of having betrayed his designs to Charles, and kept him for eleven years in an iron cage, which the Cardinal is said to have himself invented for the discomfort of prisoners. Louis is also said to have poisoned the Duke of Berry, his own brother, to whom he had promised the province of Champagne by the treaty of Peronne. In any case the prince died, and Louis seized his territory.

Charles, indignant at the bad faith kept by Louis, crossed the Somme with his army, and took the little town of Nesle, but was repulsed at Beauvais by the heroism of the inhabitants. He then induced Edward IV. of England to invade Normandy through "the ever-open gate of Calais." As usual, Louis would not fight, but bought off the English with a large yearly tribute, treating "his good brother Edward" and his nobles with great courtesy, and arranging that the dauphin should marry Edward's daughter, the Princess Elizabeth.

Charles was greatly displeased that Edward should have made peace with France, but, as he was deserted by his ally, he made a truce with Louis, one of the conditions being that the Count of St. Pol, who had been a traitor both to France and Burgundy, should be given up; and though St. Pol was one of the richest and proudest nobles in the kingdom, he was tried and beheaded in the Place de la Grève, at Paris, in 1475.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LOUIS XI. (*continued*)—1475-1483.

How Charles the Bold made war against the Swiss, and how he was defeated and killed at the battle of Nancy; how Louis tried to get possession of Burgundy, and how he arranged that Charles the Bold's grand-daughter should marry the Dauphin; how miserably Louis lived and died at Plessis-le-Tours.

OTHER countries besides France were jealous of the increasing power of Charles the Bold, and the Emperor of Germany and the Swiss cantons now united to oppose him. Charles invaded Switzerland, but his Burgundian army—the finest in Europe—was utterly defeated in three successive battles by the Swiss mountaineers. The very sight of these tall peasants, with their two-handed swords and spears eighteen feet long, advancing with huge strides and blowing great war-horns, struck terror into the Burgundians. In the first of these battles, at Granson, Charles lost all his treasures, even his sword of honour, his famous diamonds, and his collar of the Golden Fleece. At Morat, his artillery was taken, and ten thousand of his best troops were killed or drowned in the marshes; and at NANCY, fought in January, 1477, Charles was betrayed by an Italian, Campobasso, who commanded his artillery; his troops were utterly defeated, and he was himself killed, fighting bravely to the last. His body was found three days after the battle, covered with wounds, and lying in a pool of frozen water. Even his enemies were struck with pity at the sad end of the mighty duke; and the young René of Lorraine, whom he had wronged the most, said, with tears in his eyes as he looked upon the body,

"Fair cousin, God receive thy soul; thou hast done me many wrongs and griefs." And we are told that, when the knights of the Golden Fleece met together for the first time after Charles' death, and saw his collar of the Order lying on a black cushion, and his shield with the word "Dead" inscribed upon it, they wept aloud.

Louis was, of course, full of joy when he heard of his great rival's death; and he at once sent his troops to seize upon the towns of Burgundy; and as Charles's daughter Mary was now heiress to his kingdom, which reached from Flanders to the Alps, Louis proposed that she should marry the Dauphin of France. But Mary and her subjects hated the idea of this marriage with the son of her enemy; and, after many schemes and plots, in which Louis did his best to force her to give way, she married Maximilian, son of the Emperor of Germany. Louis made war on Maximilian, and enlisted six thousand Swiss infantry in his service; but the French troops were defeated at Guingate, chiefly owing to their rashness and love of plunder; and not long afterwards Louis made peace at Arras (1482).

Mary of Burgundy died by a fall from her horse; and it was agreed that her infant daughter, Margaret, should be betrothed to the dauphin, and bring with her a large part of Burgundy as her dowry, although, if you remember, the dauphin was engaged to marry the daughter of the King of England. Fortunately for Louis, Edward IV., who would certainly have avenged this insult, died himself in 1481, before he had time to collect an army.

Louis XI. had now, by one means or another, obtained all that he had been scheming for. He had outlived his two great rivals—Charles the Bold and

Edward IV.; he was master of Burgundy; he had added several great provinces to his kingdom; and, by fair means or foul, he had got rid of the great nobles whose power seemed dangerous. And yet, though he had satisfied his ambition, he was probably the most unhappy man in his kingdom. Every year he grew more cruel and suspicious; he shut himself up in his castle of Plessis, near Tours, which was strongly fortified and surrounded with deep moats, and was guarded by his Scotch Archers, who had orders to shoot any stranger who came near the walls. In this gloomy castle, which was a prison rather than a palace, Louis passed his days, "looking more like a dead man than a living, so thin was he that no one could have believed it." His children and his servants feared and hated him, and the only man who ventured to speak his mind without fear of consequences was his doctor, Coitier. "I know," this man would say to the king, "that some fine morning you'll send me where you have sent so many others; but you'll not live a week after my death." Louis was so timid and superstitious, that, instead of showing anger, he loaded Coitier with honours and rewards.

He was so haunted by the fear of death that his servants were forbidden even to name the word. "Speak little," and "Confess," was all that they might say, when they knew that he must die. But one day, as he was sitting at dinner, he had a fit, and lost his speech and senses; and, though he partly recovered, it was clear that he had not long to live. But to the last he clung to life, sending gifts and offerings to the shrines of his favourite saints, and having himself anointed with holy oil. He even got the Pope to send him a poor hermit,

and begged him to prolong his life; but the hermit told him that kings must die like other men, and bade him seek comfort by repenting of his sins. He thought much of the miserable state of the common people. "Had God but given me a few more years," he said, "I would have got the State in order." After lingering some weeks in a wretched state of weakness, he died with a prayer on his lips to "his good mistress, Our Lady of Embrun."

As you have seen, Louis had many great faults. He was cruel, selfish, utterly false and deceitful, and yet, in spite of these faults, he was in many respects a great king. The historian of these times, Philip de Commines, who had left the service of Charles of Burgundy for that of Louis, knew his master's character well, and he tells us that "Louis was more wise, liberal, and full of manly virtue, than the princes who reigned with him and in his day, and who were his enemies and neighbours." No doubt there is something of flattery in this praise, for Commines was writing his history at the French Court; still, we must allow that Louis, in spite of his acts of falseness and cruelty, had the greatness of France at heart. We have seen him at his worst in his false and crafty dealings with foreign princes, now let us see him at his best in his home government. He increased the French territory; he did much for trade and commerce; he encouraged the breeding of silk-worms, and silk, as you know, was and is one of the chief manufactures in France. He founded a university, and created new courts of justice; and when he died, he not only left France one of the most powerful states in Europe, but he also left the French king the absolute master of France.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHARLES VIII.—1483-1498.

How the Regent Anne governed the country well and wisely; how Charles VIII. invaded Italy and reached Naples in triumph; how he won a battle, but lost everything by his carelessness; how he reigned foolishly for several years, and died suddenly from an accident.

CHARLES VIII. was only thirteen when he succeeded his father, Louis XI. He was feeble and sickly and very ignorant, and it was quite clear that he was not fit to reign by himself till he became a man; so his eldest sister Anne, known as the Lady of Beaujeu, or "Madame la Grande," became regent, and was in fact the Queen of France in all but the name.

Anne had much of her father's cleverness and sagacity, without his falseness and cruelty; indeed, Louis had himself said of her that, "she was the least foolish woman he knew, for there was no such thing as a wise woman."

She showed great skill and prudence in her government; giving high offices of state to many of the great nobles, who disliked the idea of a woman being at the head of affairs; and she released many of those who had been imprisoned by Louis, and got rid of some of his hated favourites; and one is glad to find that Oliver le Dain was hung, and that Coitier, the doctor, had to give up fifty thousand crowns out of his ill-gotten wealth.

Her cousin, the Duke of Orleans, was jealous of Anne's power, and thought he should have been regent himself; so he plotted with the people of Brittany and raised an army against her. But

Anne defeated his troops, and took Orleans himself prisoner, and had him shut up in an iron cage. And, as Brittany was now the only great state in France that was left independent, she contrived that King Charles, her brother, should marry Anne, the daughter and heiress of the Duke of Brittany. And though the young duchess herself at first disliked the idea of the match, and was even actually married by proxy to Maximilian, the Archduke of Austria, Charles at last persuaded her to marry him, and so this important state of Brittany was for ever joined to France in 1491.

Although, as has been said, Charles was very ignorant, he had read many of the romances of chivalry, and he had a great desire to make a name for himself by some gallant enterprise. So he determined to raise an army and win back, if he could, the kingdom of Naples which the Spaniards had got from the French, and then go on a crusade to the East. It must be confessed that Italy was a prize worth fighting for, with her wealth, her fertility, her noble cities, with her paintings and sculptures and fine churches and cathedrals. But it was a rash expedition, and Charles's wise sister Anne did all she could to persuade him to stay at home. Charles, however, persisted in setting out for Italy with what was a grand army in those times —Swiss and German infantry and Scotch archers, ten thousand cavalry, and a long train of artillery. But he had very little of the necessary money and provisions; and wasted much of what he brought with him in foolish debauchery at Lyons. Strange to say, he was more fortunate than he deserved to be. He crossed the Alps in 1494, and marched through Northern Italy, proclaiming himself the

friend of freedom and the enemy of tyrants. All the great cities opened their gates to him, and he entered Rome in state, and made peace with the Pope, and from Rome he marched southwards to Naples.

King Alphonso—a Spaniard—was then King of Naples, and it was said of him by Commines (the French historian of whom we have heard before) that "no man was ever more cruel than he, or more wicked, or more vicious and tainted, or more gluttonous." He was feared and hated by his subjects, and when he heard the French were coming, he fled from Naples in terror, gave up his crown to his son Ferdinand, and became a monk.

Up to this time Charles had made his way so easily that it was said he had brought no arms with him, but only chalk to mark the door of his lodgings in the different towns. He entered Naples in triumph, and the people welcomed him with shouts of joy, so glad were they to be rid of their tyrant Alphonso. But Charles took very little trouble to secure his throne in Italy, or even to gain the good will of his subjects, but gave his whole time to feasting and amusements.

Meanwhile a great league was being formed against him by the chief Italian States, headed by Venice; while Ludovic "the Moor," Prince of Milan, collected a large army to cut off his return to France. Even the Pope and the King of Spain turned against the French. At last Charles was alarmed, and set out on his homeward march, leaving a garrison behind him in Naples. He had crossed the Apennines, and nearly reached Parma, when he found the allied forces blocking his retreat in the pass of Fornovo. But though the French were

greatly outnumbered, they won a brilliant victory (July 6, 1495), and cut their way through the enemy with such desperate valour, that "French fury" became a proverb. Charles, however, lost all his Italian spoils, as well as the provisions for his troops, and they suffered terribly from hunger and thirst on their march home. Commines tells us that he was himself for two days without a morsel of bread to eat.

At length Charles reached Lyons safely after a fourteen months' campaign; but he took no trouble to send any troops to the assistance of the garrison which he had left in Naples; and Ferdinand soon got back his kingdom by the help of a Spanish force under the famous Gonsalvo de Cordova, always known in history as "the Great Captain." Only a few French soldiers out of the ten thousand left behind in Italy ever reached their country again. So ended this strange enterprise, rashly begun and still more rashly carried out. Commines, who describes it, cannot account for the sudden change from victory to defeat. "It was a mystery," he says—"God did it and not men."

Charles did not take his failure much to heart. He was too careless and frivolous to be affected by a misfortune which would have saddened the heart of a more serious king. He went from place to place, doing nothing but amuse himself in one way or another for the next few years. Then a change suddenly came over him, and he began to live quietly and soberly, and busy himself about the good of his subjects. But he was suddenly cut off by death when he was only twenty-eight years old. He struck his head against a low archway, which led from a chamber to his tennis-court; and though

the blow seemed trifling, it brought on a fit of apoplexy which caused his death.

He had no great qualities either of mind or heart; but he was gentle, kind and courteous to all, and, as Commines tells us, "he never knowingly gave pain to any living thing." He was so beloved by his queen Anne of Brittany, that for several days after his death she would neither eat nor sleep, but declared she would follow her husband into the grave.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LOUIS XII.—1498-1515.

HOUSE OF VALOIS.

How Louis XII. divorced his wife and married Anne of Brittany; how he invaded Italy and made war with Spain; how the "Holy League" was formed against him by the Pope; how Gaston of Foix was killed at the battle of Ravenna; how Pope Julius died; how the English won "the Battle of the Spurs"; how Louis married a second time and died soon afterwards.

AS Charles VIII. had left no children, for his only son died when quite an infant, his cousin, the Duke of Orleans now became king under the name of Louis XII., called "the Father of his People;" for his wisdom and moderation in matters of government endeared him to his subjects, and had it not been for his foreign wars his reign would have been a prosperous and happy one.

As you may remember, he had been imprisoned by Anne of Beaujeu, and even shut up in an iron cage, but he showed no resentment for this, and treated Anne with great respect and kindness. So, too, when the magistrates of his own town of Orleans feared that he might punish them for the way

they had treated him in the last reign, and asked his pardon, he made them the noble answer that "It did not become the King of France to resent the injuries of the Duke of Orleans."

Louis had been married in the reign of Louis XI. to the king's daughter, the Princess Joan; but though she was a good, patient, and faithful wife, she had borne him no children, and Louis wished that there should be an heir to the crown of France. So he applied to the Pope for leave to put her away, and as this Pope was Alexander VI.—one of the most wicked men known in history—he was easily bribed to dissolve the marriage "for reasons of state." The unfortunate Joan retired into a convent, and Louis then married the late king's widow, Anne of Brittany. But it was agreed at the same time that her large estates should go, on the death of Louis, not to his eldest but to his second son, if there should be one.

Unhappily for himself as well as for France, Louis could not forget the old claims to the kingdom of Naples which Charles VIII. had vainly tried to make good. And he claimed not only Naples but Milan as well, where Ludovic Sforza, or "the Moor," was the reigning prince. Louis, however, showed more prudence than Charles, and contrived to make friends with the other kings of Europe before he invaded Italy. Then he collected his army at Lyons, crossed the Alps, and entered Milan without a blow being struck. But, no sooner had he gone back to France, than the people of Milan revolted, drove out the French, and replaced their old prince, Ludovic Sforza, on the throne.

Louis at once sent a new army to take Milan, and as it happened that half the troops both in

Sforza's army and his own were Swiss mercenaries, they declined to fight against their own countrymen, and were easily bribed to betray Ludovic, and give him up to the French. He was carried off to France and imprisoned in the gloomy dungeons of Loches; and for the second time the French found themselves masters of Milan, in the year 1500.

Louis, having been so far successful, thought that he would try to conquer Naples as well, and he made a shameful and unjust arrangement with Ferdinand, King of Spain, to divide this kingdom between them, Louis taking the northern part, including the city of Naples, and Ferdinand taking the southern part near Sicily. This treacherous plan was carried out with the consent of the Pope, and the unfortunate King of Naples had to give up all his rights and take a duchy in France, where he lived till his death.

Then Louis and Ferdinand quarrelled about the division of the kingdom of Naples, for Ferdinand was as grasping and ambitious as Louis himself: a war soon followed, and Ferdinand's captain, Gonsalvo de Cordova, stormed Naples, and the Spaniards took possession of it.

But Louis was not discouraged; he at once raised three great armies, and sent two of them against Spain and one into Italy. But his troops were unfortunate and were badly led, and were defeated in a great battle at Garigliano in 1503, by the Spanish and Italian troops under Gonsalvo de Cordova. Thus Naples and Milan were again lost to the French.

Louis had to make an ignominious peace with Spain, but still did not give up the idea of his Italian conquests. He entered into several treaties

and alliances with various states, but the details of these treaties are not interesting, or indeed worth remembering. At last, however, the famous "League of Cambray" was formed (Dec. 10, 1508), by all the great powers in Europe—France, Austria, Spain, and the Pope—to crush the power of the Venetians, for Venice at this time was one of the proudest and richest states in Europe, and her fleets and commerce were so important that this city was known as "the Queen of the Adriatic."

The Venetians, however, chiefly employed hired soldiers or mercenaries, and their army was no match for the allied troops of all these great states united by the "League of Cambray." Hence it happened that the Venetians were defeated in a great battle, and lost for a time several of their cities in the north of Italy.

So far the French had been fortunate in this Italian war; but about this time Louis lost his wise and prudent minister, the Cardinal Amboise; and his friend, Pope Alexander VI., had died in 1502, by drinking some poisoned wine which he had intended for one of his enemies. The new Pope was Julius II., an old man of seventy, but with the spirit and boldness of a youth. Though he had joined the "League of Cambray," he soon left it, for he hated the French, and was determined to drive "the barbarians," as he called them, out of Italy. He induced Ferdinand of Spain, known as "the Catholic King," and the Venetians, to join him in a "Holy League," and he entered upon war himself with as much ardour as if he had been a soldier instead of the Head of the Church —indeed it was said of him that he had thrown the keys of Saint Peter into the Tiber in order to

gird on the sword of Saint Paul. At the siege of Bologna, the brave old man rose from his sick bed in the dead of winter, and was carried on a litter across the frozen moat and through the breach made by his cannon.

Although Louis had two of his old allies in arms against him, he did not shrink from the danger, but at once sent an army into Italy under the command of his nephew, Gaston of Foix, a most gallant young officer. The French defeated the Venetians and the Pope's troops in battle after battle, and many of the cities in northern Italy fell into their hands. At last, in a great battle fought at RAVENNA, on Easter Sunday, A.D. 1512, after being six times repulsed in an attack upon the town, the French defeated the allied forces with great slaughter; but in the very moment of victory, the brave Gaston of Foix was surrounded by the retreating enemy, and died fighting desperately and pierced by twenty sword wounds. When the French soldiers gathered together after the victory, and the trumpets were sounding, they sought everywhere for their gallant young captain, but could not find him. At last the cry went through the ranks, "Gaston is dead," and their shouts of joy were changed into bitter lamentation. When Louis heard of the battle of Ravenna he said, "I would give up every inch of land in Italy, if I could bring back to life my nephew Gaston, and all the gallant knights who perished with him. God keep us from often gaining such victories!"

And Louis was right, for after Gaston's death nothing but disasters happened to the French, for there was no general fit to replace him. The Italians were helped by a large force of Swiss, and the

French lost ground everywhere, till, in the end, the remnant of the gallant army, which had won Ravenna, escaped through Savoy into France, and thus Pope Julius accomplished the design of the "Holy League," and drove "the barbarians" out of Italy. But the old Pope did not long survive his triumph. He died in 1513, after causing his statue to be set up in the market-place of Bologna as a Cæsar in full armour. He was succeeded by Leo X., who only resembled Julius II. in his hatred of the French.

Meanwhile, Louis had other enemies to contend against. Ferdinand of Spain had allied himself with Henry VIII. of England, who landed at Calais with twenty thousand men, and soon afterwards defeated the French in what has been called "the Battle of the Spurs," from the hasty flight of the French cavalry.

Louis had now grown weary of war, and found means to make peace, not only with Henry and Ferdinand, but with the German Emperor and the Pope. And one condition of his peace with England was that he should marry Henry's sister, Mary, for his wife, Anne of Brittany, had lately died; and this marriage took place accordingly. But Louis had long been in feeble health, and was obliged to observe early hours, dining at eight in the morning, and going to bed at six in the evening. To please his young bride he gave up these regular habits, and would dine at twelve, and then sit up to banquets and dances till midnight. His health soon gave way under the fatigue of these late hours, and he died within a year of his third marriage.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FRANCIS I.—1515-1526.

How Francis I. invaded Italy and won the battle of Marignano; how Charles V. was elected Emperor instead of him; how he met Henry VIII. at the Field of the Cloth of Gold; how Bourbon deserted the French and served with the Spanish king; how Chevalier Bayard was killed; how Francis I. was defeated and taken prisonor at the battle of Pavia; how he signed the Treaty of Madrid and came back to France.

AS Louis XII. had left no sons, his cousin, the Duke of Valois, also of the house of Orleans, became king, under the name of FRANCIS I. He was, says a chronicler, "a fair prince, if ever there was one in this world;" gallant and handsome, gay, joyous, and brave in battle, and from the first he was popular with all classes of his subjects.

Though Francis was twenty-one, he was completely under the control of his mother, Louise of Savoy, a narrow-minded and selfish woman, and nothing was done by him without her consent or approval; but it cannot be said that her influence over her son was a good one, for she seems to have carefully trained him in habits of vice and perfidy; and, in spite of his brilliant qualities, his long reign was a history of disaster, and often of disgrace.

As may be supposed, the first thought of Francis was to regain those Italian provinces of Milan and Naples which had already cost the French so much blood and treasure. So he entered gaily upon an Italian war, named his mother Regent, and crossed the Alps in July, 1515, with a large army—Gascons and French archers, German and Swiss mercenaries, and two thousand of the nobles and gentlemen of France. Among them was the famous Chevalier

Bayard, so gallant and noble a character, that he has always been known as "the knight without fear and without reproach."

Francis crossed the Alps at an unexpected point, and descended on the plains of Lombardy, where he met with the Italian troops of the Holy League and their Swiss mercenaries at MARIGNANO, near Milan, in October, 1515. The battle which followed was so long and obstinate, and such valour was shown by both sides, that an old officer who had fought in eighteen pitched battles, declared Marignano to be a "combat of giants." At last the Swiss were driven back with great slaughter, and Francis was knighted on the field by the Chevalier Bayard.

The Swiss, we are told, returned to their mountains, "ragged, gaunt, disfigured, wounded, and with funeral dirges instead of festal songs;" but Francis was so struck by their desperate courage, that he made an alliance with their nation, known as "the Perpetual Peace." From that time they formed part of the body-guard of the French kings, and three hundred years later, the Swiss guards gave their lives to protect Louis XVI., so that this alliance lasted as long as the French monarchy itself.

Then Francis made peace with the Pope Leo X., and it was agreed between them that the Pope should receive the "first fruits," or a year's income, from all Church appointments, but that the King of France should appoint the bishops and abbots. This agreement was greatly disliked by the French clergy, and Francis found much difficulty in making them submit to it.

In 1519, the Emperor Maximilian of Austria died, and Francis was eager to be named emperor in his place. "I will have it," he declared, "even though

it costs me three millions of crowns; and I swear that three years after my election, I will either be in Constantinople or my grave." But though he spent much money in bribes, the electors chose Maximilian's grandson, Charles, who was already King of Spain and the Netherlands, and who now became the most powerful prince in Europe. Francis was jealous of his rival's power and large dominions, and tried to get Henry VIII. of England to take his side in the struggle, which he saw must come sooner or later; so he arranged a meeting with Henry at the famous "Field of the Cloth of Gold," so called for its marvellous splendour. The tents were of satin, embroidered with gold, and the nobles and princes wore costly robes of silk and velvet, with collars of gold and precious stones. For three weeks there was a succession of fêtes and banquets. But though Henry and Francis were thus apparently the best of friends, the crafty Charles had an interview with the English king, before he recrossed the channel, and persuaded Cardinal Wolsey to take his side, and through this great minister's influence, before a year had passed, Henry himself declared war against France.

Several other misfortunes happened to Francis about this time. Milan was again recovered by the Italians, who rose upon the French and drove them back across the Alps. Then the king's mother, Louise, quarrelled with the Constable Bourbon, one of the proudest and richest nobles in France, and descended on his mother's side from St. Louis. He was so powerful that Henry VIII. declared, at the Field of the Cloth of Gold, that if he had such a subject in his kingdom, his head would not long be on his shoulders. Bourbon had offended Louise of

Savoy by rejecting her offer of marriage with scorn; her love at once turned to hatred, and in revenge she induced her son Francis to take all his estates from him. Then Bourbon, in his rage and vexation, left the French service, and went over to the Spaniards. The emperor was glad enough to receive such a good general, and Bourbon was at once given the command of part of the imperial army in Italy, and he defeated his countrymen in a battle in which the gallant Bayard was mortally wounded. As he lay dying, with his face still turned to the enemy, Bourbon rode up in pursuit of the flying French and expressed his pity to Bayard, and hoped that he might recover of his wound. "My Lord," answered Bayard, "for *me* no pity is wanted; I die, having done my duty; but I have pity for *you*, to see you serving against your king, your country, and your oath." Bourbon turned away without waiting to answer; and three hours afterwards the noble Bayard was dead.

Next year (1525), Bourbon and his force crossed the Alps and besieged Marseilles, but this time they were forced to retreat before the French, and were pursued as far as Milan. Then Francis wasted his time before PAVIA, while Bourbon collected fresh troops, and a great battle took place (February 24, 1525). Francis was hemmed in with the Germans on one side, and the Spaniards on the other; but the French fought bravely, and the battle was so fierce at one time, that it was said "you could see nothing but heads and arms flying in the air." The king was separated from his men, and surrounded by the enemy. His horse was killed under him, and then he gave up his sword to a Spanish officer, and surrendered himself as a prisoner. His troops were

Death of Chevalier Bayard.

utterly defeated, and half the nobility of France died upon the field. The slaughter was terrible; and the wretched survivors of Francis's gallant army escaped with difficulty into Lyons. "Nothing is left me," he wrote to his mother, "except my honour and my life."

His mother, the Regent, acted wisely in this terrible difficulty, and induced all the great powers of Europe, including the Pope and Henry VIII., to join her in forming a secret alliance, and in doing their best to procure the release of the French king. In fact, they were themselves alarmed by the increasing power of Charles V.

Meanwhile, Francis was carried prisoner to Spain, and shut up in a gloomy tower of the Alcazar palace at Madrid: but the terms asked by the emperor were so harsh and exacting, that for a long time Francis refused to accept them. At last, his spirit was broken by long confinement; he became ill, and was ready to give up anything and everything for his liberty. So he signed a treaty, by which he bound himself to surrender all his right over Burgundy, Flanders, and Artois, to forgive Bourbon, and give him back his estates, to restore to Henry VIII. the French provinces held by his ancestors, and to leave his two little sons as hostages in Spain till these conditions were fulfilled. He also promised to marry Charles V.'s sister.

This "TREATY OF MADRID" was signed in 1526, and then Francis was allowed to return to France. When he had crossed the little stream that divides France from Spain, he joyfully sprang on his horse, drew his sword, exclaiming, "I am once more a king!" and rode away; while his two little sons were carried off to Madrid instead of their father.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FRANCIS I. (*continued.*)—1526-1547.

How the French were again driven out of Italy by the Spaniards and Italians; how a revival of arts and letters took place; how Francis I. persecuted the Reformers; how Charles V. invaded France; how Francis I. allied with the Turks against Charles V.; how peace was made at Crespy and the Italian wars came to an end; how the Vaudois Protestants were persecuted.

THOUGH Francis had signed this humiliating treaty, he had only done so, as he declared, under compulsion, and his first act was to summon his States-General as well as the nobles, bishops, and deputies from the towns, for them to consider if such a treaty ought to be kept. And they decided that a king of France had not the right, even if he wished it, to give up part of his kingdom without their consent; and so he offered a large sum of money to Charles V. instead of the province of Burgundy. Charles indignantly refused this offer, and accused Francis of treachery and falsehood; Francis in his turn called Charles a liar, and dared him to single combat. Then a fresh war broke out, and Bourbon invaded Italy at the head of the Emperor's troops, many of them fierce and barbarous men, and more like savages then Christian soldiers. They attacked the city of Rome, and though Bourbon was himself killed by a shot from the walls, his soldiers forced their way into the city, plundered the houses and massacred many of the inhabitants; while the unfortunate Pope Clement was kept a prisoner in the castle of St. Angelo and was grossly insulted by these ruffians. These scenes of violence lasted for seven months, until at last France and England sent an army to free the

Pope, and he was restored to liberty by the Emperor Charles, on payment of an enormous ransom.

The French army under Lautrec won several battles in the north of Italy, but in an evil moment Francis insulted his faithful ally Andrea Doria, the great Genoese Admiral, who thereupon went over to the Emperor's side with all his ships. The French were now outnumbered, and were defeated by the Spaniards and Genoese both by sea and land; the brave Lautrec and nearly all his army in Italy died either of pestilence or by the sword.

Both Charles and Francis had grown weary of the struggle, and at last it ended in what is known as "the Ladies' Peace," so called because the terms of the treaty, made at Cambray in 1529, were settled by two women, Francis's mother Louise, and Margaret, the aunt of Charles V. They agreed that Francis should keep Burgundy, but should give up his Italian claims, and should marry Charles's sister, Eleanor of Austria. The young French princes, who had been kept in Spain all this time, were at last set at liberty.

The few years of peace which followed this treaty were, in one respect, the most useful part of Francis's reign. He had a natural taste for the grand and beautiful, and he encouraged and protected the poets and painters of his day. Leonardo da Vinci, the great Italian painter, and Benvenuto Cellini, the Italian sculptor, lived at his court. He also built stately palaces, such as Fontainebleau and St. Germains, and so general was the taste for beautiful works and designs in building, in furniture, and in painting and sculpture, that this period is always known as the *Renaissance*, or the revival of classical art and letters.

With this revival of taste and learning, people began to read and question for themselves in matters of religion, instead of taking for granted all that the clergy had told them as in former times. In Germany, Martin Luther had denounced the errors and abuses of the Romish Church, and the wicked lives led by many of the monks and clergy. He had pointed out the falseness of the doctrine of Indulgences, as it was called, which meant that a pardon for all sins could be bought from the Pope, and that any man, however wicked, could buy the salvation of his soul out of the large store of good works, done by the saints and holy men of the Church. Luther's followers, who protested against these false doctrines, and who wished to reform the abuses of the Church, were called *Reformers* or *Protestants;* and in spite of the efforts made by the Pope to crush this heresy, as he called it, these Reformers had spread over a great part of Europe. In England, as you may remember, Henry VIII. had taken up their cause, had denied the supremacy of the Pope, and had suppressed all the abbeys and monasteries in his kingdom. In France, John Calvin wrote and preached against the Papal power, and the Reformers had made many converts, and were protected by the king's sister Margaret. Some of them in their zeal became fanatics, and broke the images of the saints in the churches, and posted placards on the walls of Paris, denouncing the offering up of masses or prayers for the dead. Francis was induced by his minister, Cardinal Duprat, to take strong steps to check these new doctrines, and he caused many of the chief reformers to be strangled and burnt at the stake. The Princess Margaret fled to Béarn, and John Calvin escaped to Geneva,

where he continued preaching and writing till his death.

But though Francis had thus cruelly persecuted Reformers, he had done so only from motives of policy, and not from any sincere religious feeling; and when he found that many of the German princes took the Protestant side, he protected them himself, and gave them liberty to preach their doctrines. At the same time he allied himself with their enemy the Pope, and even married his second son Henry, Duke of Orleans, to the Pope's niece, Catherine of Medici, of whom you will hear a good deal later on.

Louise of Savoy died in 1531, and left a million and a half crowns of gold to her son, and with this money to pay his army Francis felt himself strong enough to make war against his old enemy Charles V. on some pretext of claiming the Duchy of Savoy. Charles in his pride declared that he would bring the French king as low as the poorest gentleman in his kingdom, collected a large army, drove the French back across the frontiers, and invaded Provence. The French general, Montmorenci, would not risk a battle, but retreated before Charles's army, laying waste the country that the enemy might not be able to live in it. His soldiers had orders "to break up the bake-houses and mills, burn the wheat and forage, pierce the wine-casks, and ruin the wells by throwing the wheat into them to spoil the water." The fertile plains of Provence were thus turned into a desert, where neither food nor water could be found; and after vainly pursuing the French for two months, Charles was forced to retreat into Italy, after losing half his army from famine or disease.

The young dauphin of France died during this

campaign, and his father in his rage and grief accused the Emperor Charles of having caused him to be poisoned. One of the prince's officers was actually tortured and executed on a charge of having given the poison.

Peace, however, was once more made between Charles and Francis in 1538, and Charles even paid a visit to the French court, where he was most hospitably entertained by his old enemy. It is said that at this visit Francis's court jester put the Emperor's name at the head of his list of fools, for having been rash enough to venture into his enemy's palace. "And what if I allow him to depart freely?" asked Francis. "Then," replied his jester, "I shall cross out the Emperor's name and put yours in its place." In spite of this, Francis acted like a man of honour, and let Charles go in peace. But though the two princes parted with many expressions of good will, Charles would promise nothing, and shortly afterwards gave the duchy of Milan, the great object of Francis's ambition, to his own son Philip.

Thereupon, war broke out again for the third time in 1542; and Francis, in his desire to injure the emperor, allied himself with the Turkish Sultan, Solyman the Magnificent,—a strange alliance for a Christian prince in those times. The Turkish fleet, under the famous pirate Barbarossa, ravaged the coasts of Italy, burnt and sacked Nice, and carried off fourteen thousand Christians to the slave-market at Constantinople. By land, the French army won a victory at Cerisolles in Piedmont, almost as famous as that of Marignano in the earlier part of this reign. But this was a barren victory, and the enemies of France were increasing in strength and

numbers, while Francis had lost all his allies outside his kingdom.

Henry VIII. was so indignant that Francis should have allied himself to the infidel Turks, that he invaded France and besieged Boulogne; while a German army under Charles marched through the province of Champagne and threatened Paris itself. Francis was now forced to make terms at any cost, and a treaty of peace was accordingly signed at CRESPY (A.D. 1544), by which Francis bound himself to give up Savoy and his Italian claims, and to join with Charles in putting down the Reformers, and restoring unity to the Church. He also promised to help Charles in defending Christendom from the Turks.

Thus the Italian wars, begun nearly fifty years before by Charles VIII., at last came to an end. Francis had not gained an inch of ground in the struggle, but had made and broken forty truces or treaties, and had lost two millions of his bravest troops, to say nothing of the misery and distress caused by the war to his subjects.

The war with Henry VIII. still continued; several naval battles were fought; but Francis lost his son the Duke of Orleans by a fever, and had not much heart to continue the struggle. So peace was made at last between France and England in 1545.

The last years of Francis's reign are disgraced by a cruel persecution of the Vaudois Protestants—a simple and inoffensive people, who lived in a few villages near Avignon, on the borders of the Alps. It was declared that they were dangerous heretics, and orders were sent to the magistrates of the province to utterly exterminate them. All their

villages were destroyed by the soldiers; three thousand of these peasants, including women and children, were butchered in cold blood; and the remainder were condemned to the galleys for life. This cruelty was the way in which Francis showed his intention of carrying out the terms of the Peace of Crespy, in which he had bound himself to maintain the Catholic Church. But his temper had been soured by an illness, of which he died not long afterwards. Though he had gained nothing by his foreign wars, and had only wasted the lives and money of his subjects, there is one title to fame which he certainly deserved, and by which he has always been remembered—this was "the Father of Arts and Letters."

CHAPTER XXIX.

HENRY II.—1547-1559.

How the Guises and Montmorencies had great power in the kingdom; how Charles V. again invaded France, but was forced to retreat; how he gave up his crown; how his son, Philip II., carried on the war against France; how peace was made at Chateau-Cambresis; how Henry II. was killed at a tournament.

HENRY II. was a dull and honest king, with none of the brilliant qualities of Francis I., except his bravery; and he was completely under the control of one of the ladies of his court, Diana of Poitiers, whose wit and brilliant beauty had fascinated him; while his own queen, Catherine of Medici, remained neglected and unnoticed throughout his reign.

Next to Diana of Poitiers, the most important

personages in France were the two families of the Montmorencies and the Guises, who divided all the honours and commands in the kingdom between them. The Montmorencies had among them a Constable of France, an Admiral, the governments of several provinces, and the command of thirty companies of soldiers. But the Guises were still more powerful, as they governed Burgundy and Champagne, and had under them many companies of cavalry and foot soldiers. Besides this, they claimed royal descent from the princely house of Lorraine, and two of them, the Duke of Guise and his brother the Cardinal Lorraine, both able and ambitious men, had almost as much influence with Henry as Diana of Poitiers herself. One of the Guises, Mary of Lorraine, had married James V. of Scotland, and became the mother of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. The Guises were anxious that this young princess should marry the Dauphin of France instead of Edward VI. of England, to whom she was betrothed, for they thought that in this way the crown of Scotland might be added to that of France, and their own influence increased. So Mary Stuart was brought to the French Court, to the great indignation of the English, and in due time she married the Dauphin, who afterwards became Francis II.

Another of the ambitious schemes of the Guises was to renew the war against the Emperor Charles V., who was at this time at the summit of his power, and had made himself absolute master of the German Empire in spite of the resistance of many of the Protestant princes. Some of them were so jealous of his power that they entered into a league against him in 1522 to free their country, and this league was headed by Maurice, the Elector of

Saxony. Henry was induced by the Guises to join this league, and took the title of "Protector of the Liberties of Germany;" and as this war was very popular, he soon collected a large army; "there was no good town in which the drums were not heard for the levy of footmen." He marched through the country of Champagne into the territory of the "Three Bishoprics," as it was called, and easily took the towns of Metz, Verdun, and Toul, on the borders of the Rhine. Then he marched into Lorraine, and attacked Luxemburg.

Meanwhile, the German princes made peace with the Emperor on their own account in the famous treaty of Passau, and Henry was left to carry on the war alone. Charles at once crossed the Rhine with 60,000 men and besieged Metz, which was gallantly defended by the Duke of Guise and the Constable Montmorency. For two months the Emperor's forces did their best to batter down the walls with cannon, and to take the town by assault; but the garrison was strong, and was well supplied with provisions, and repulsed every attack. As the winter came on, the besiegers suffered greatly from cold and famine, and Charles at last gave up the siege in despair, and led his troops back across the Rhine.

This repulse and other misfortunes made Charles V. decide to give up the government of his great empire to his brother Ferdinand and to his son Philip in 1555. Ferdinand became Emperor of Germany, and Philip became King of Spain and the Netherlands. Charles himself retired into a monastery in Spain, where he lived quietly and peacefully for the few remaining years of his life, occupying himself with his garden and his books, and striving

by continual prayer and fasting to atone for the wrongs and misery caused by his incessant wars while he was an emperor.

But though Charles had himself retired from the struggle with France, his son Philip II. took up the quarrel, and was helped both with men and money by his wife, Queen Mary of England. One Spanish army was sent into Italy, and another, commanded by Philip himself, invaded France.

Henry sent the Duke of Guise with a large force into Italy (1556) at the request of the Pope (Paul IV.), who hated the Spanish; but Guise could do nothing against the Duke of Alva, the Spanish governor of Naples, and kept retreating from one position to another till Rome itself was at the mercy of the Spaniards. Suddenly Guise was recalled to France by Henry, and the Pope was indignant that the French should have done so little to help him. "Go then," he said, "having done little for your King, less for the Church, and nothing for your own honour." So Guise went back to France, and found that matters had gone badly for the French during his absence.

Philip had sent a large force of Spaniards, Flemish, and English, under the Duke of Savoy, who besieged the town of Saint Quentin in 1557, and then defeated the Constable Montmorency in a great battle near this town, which proved to be the worst defeat since Agincourt. Half the nobility in France were either killed or taken prisoners, amongst them Montmorency himself; all their stores and artillery were lost; and the road to Paris lay open to the Spaniards. Philip was too cold and cautious to follow up his victory, and when, as his father said, "he ought to have been under the walls

of Paris," he wasted time in besieging the town of Saint Quentin, which held out for another fortnight, and meanwhile the Duke of Guise returned from Italy.

Guise's arrival gave fresh spirit to the French; money was raised, mercenaries were hired, nobles and men-at-arms flocked to the rescue, and, though the town of Saint Quentin was taken and sacked by the Spaniards, the Duke of Guise, by a sudden attack, stormed Calais, which had belonged to the English for more than two hundred years. The loss of this place was a terrible blow to Queen Mary, and she declared that, if her body were opened after her death, the word Calais would be found graven upon her heart.

Queen Elizabeth, who succeeded Mary, had no sympathy with the Spaniards, and though the war lasted another year, terms of peace were finally settled at Chateau-Cambresis in 1559. France had to give up nearly two hundred towns or fortresses in Flanders or Italy; but she kept the "Three Bishoprics"—the frontier towns of Metz, Verdun, and Toul, and above all she kept Calais, although there was some sort of promise made that the English might be allowed to redeem it after eight years. But the money was never paid, and Calais was never restored to them.

This treaty, like most treaties in those times, was to be ratified by marriages. The French king's daughter was to marry Philip of Spain, and his sister Margaret was to marry the Duke of Savoy, whose military skill had won the battle of St. Quentin for the Spaniards.

Great rejoicings took place at Paris in honour of these royal marriages, and a grand tournament was

held in the open space near the Bastille. The king with the Duke of Guise and two other nobles held the field against all comers, and acquitted themselves most gallantly. But at the end of the day, Henry challenged Montgomery, the captain of his Scotch guards, to tilt with him, and though Montgomery would have excused himself, the king insisted on it, and they tilted accordingly. Both broke their lances skilfully enough, but a splinter of wood from Montgomery's lance pierced Henry's eye, and penetrated to the brain. He lingered for eleven days in great agony and then died, at the age of forty.

CHAPTER XXX.

FRANCIS II.—1559-1560.

How the Guises became still more powerful; how the Huguenots were persecuted, and how they entered into a conspiracy; how the plot was discovered, and how the Guises took a terrible vengeance; how Condé was arrested, and how the young king died suddenly.

FRANCIS II. was a weak and sickly boy of fifteen, and was, as you know, already married to Mary Queen of Scots, a niece of the Duke of Guise. As may be supposed, the Guises now became more powerful than ever, and "there was nothing," we are told, "but fear and trembling at their name."

There were now two great parties in the state; on one side the Guises and Lorraines, with all the Catholics and Romish Clergy, and on the other side the Protestants or *Huguenots*, as they were now called, from a German word, meaning partners in an

oath or covenant. These Huguenots had greatly increased in power and numbers during the latter part of the last reign; and, although Henry II. had done his utmost to suppress them with fines and banishment, as well as by torture and burning at the stake, there were now more than two thousand churches in France belonging to the reformed faith, where the Bible was read in French, and psalms were sung by the people instead of prayers in Latin being chanted by the priests. Many of the great nobles had turned Huguenots, and among them were the King of Navarre, and his brother, Prince Louis of Condé, as well as the three nephews of the Constable Montmorency, the brothers Coligny, all brave soldiers and able men. Of the three, Admiral Coligny was the finest character, from his courage, generosity, and nobleness of heart. Anthony, King of Navarre, was frivolous and unstable; and his wife, Joan, was the more masculine of the two.

The Guises denounced the Huguenots as heretics from the true faith, and as rebels to the king, and did their best to crush them by a new persecution. The Protestants were forbidden to meet together for prayer, and those who ventured to disobey were imprisoned, banished, or put to death.

These harsh measures caused a general rising among the Huguenots, and they entered into a secret conspiracy to seize the king's person, imprison the Guises, and make one of the Bourbons king. Condé was the real leader of this plot, but as he would not give any sign of approval till it had succeeded, he was known as "the dumb Captain." But one of the conspirators betrayed the secret, and the Guises moved the Court to Amboise, and

took measures to suppress the conspiracy. The Huguenots were suddenly attacked by surprise, and then the Guises took a terrible vengeance on all whom they took prisoners. For a whole month they were tortured, hung, or beheaded, and their bodies thrown into the Loire. The streets of Amboise flowed with blood, while the young king, with the ladies of the court, looked on from the palace windows as the victims were being executed. One of the Huguenots as he was led to the block dipped his hands in the blood of his murdered friends, and held them up to heaven, exclaiming, "Lord, behold the blood of Thy children; surely Thou wilt take vengeance for them."

But the Guises were not even satisfied with their barbarous revenge; they determined, if possible, to strike a blow at the Prince of Condé, whom they rightly suspected to have been the secret leader of the rebellion. They summoned him and the King of Navarre to attend a meeting of the States-General, and then arrested them both on a charge of high treason. Condé would have been beheaded, had it not been for the courage of the Chancellor, L'Hopital, who found means to delay the king's signature of the death warrant. Anthony of Navarre's life was also in danger, for the Guises had arranged to kill him at a signal from the king. But this signal was never given, for Francis was gradually dying from an abscess in his head; and his death, after a short reign of eighteen months, saved the lives both of Navarre and Condé.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CHARLES IX.—1560-1574.

How Catherine of Medici became Regent; how the Religious Wars began; how Rouen was besieged, and how the Duke of Guise was assassinated; how Henry of Navarre became the Protestant leader; how the Huguenots were murdered on the Feast of St. Bartholomew; how Charles IX. repented and died.

AS Francis II. had died at the early age of eighteen, and left no children, his brother, Charles IX., now became king; and, as he was only ten years old, his mother, Catherine of Medici, became Regent, and, as a matter of fact, governed the kingdom.

Catherine had her portrait painted so often that we know exactly what her appearance was at this time. She was fat and fair, with fine dark eyes, and with graceful manners. She had great powers of mind, and was in fact one of the craftiest and cleverest women in history. Her only weakness was her excessive superstition, which made her believe in witchcraft, and practise magical arts. She was an Italian by birth, and in her conduct always carried out the saying of an Italian statesman, who declared that he who knew not how to deceive knew not how to reign. Hence, she carefully concealed her real motives for most of her actions, and tried by playing off one party against another to weaken them both, and leave herself in the end stronger than either. Thus, she would not quarrel with the Guises, much as she feared and hated them; nor at first would she openly persecute the Huguenots.

Meanwhile, the Prince of Condé had been set free, and was once more at the head of his party,

though his brother Anthony, King of Navarre, deserted the Protestants, and went over to the Catholic side.

Catherine had given some privileges to the Huguenots, and taking advantage of this they daily grew bolder, and began to insult the Catholics by breaking the images of the Saints, and taking possession of the Churches for their own worship. The Catholics in their turn retaliated, and there was nothing but outrages and murders committed, first by one party and then by the other. Catherine vainly tried to restore peace, but the Guises took up arms and assembled their followers. A brawl took place in the little town of Vassy between some of Guise's soldiers and some Protestants who were worshipping in a barn. Stones were thrown, and Guise was himself struck in the face, and his soldiers in revenge fired into the barn and killed sixty of the Protestants, besides wounding many more.

This "Massacre of Vassy" (A.D. 1562) was the first blood spilt in the RELIGIOUS WARS, which lasted twenty years, and caused such a waste of life throughout the kingdom.

The Huguenots now broke into open rebellion under Condé, seized the town of Orleans, and formed a Protestant League "for the defence of the King's honour and liberty, and the maintenance of the pure worship of God." They were helped by Queen Elizabeth of England with men and money, while Philip of Spain sent six thousand of his best soldiers to assist the Catholics.

Normandy was at first the seat of war; and nearly every town and village was divided against itself, part being Catholic and part Protestant, and unspeakable misery was caused to the people by the

continued outrages and bloodshed that took place. The monasteries were sacked; the monuments and painted glass in the churches were broken; the tombs of the saints and kings were destroyed by the Huguenots; while the Catholics revenged themselves with fire and sword. Rouen was besieged by Guise, and was taken and sacked after the third assault. Anthony of Navarre was killed by a shot from the walls, and his young son, Henry (afterwards Henry IV.), became the head of his family. Lyons and Orleans were now the only two large cities left to the Huguenots.

In 1562 the Huguenots were defeated at Dreux with great slaughter, and Condé was himself taken prisoner. Then Guise besieged Orleans, and was on the point of taking the town, when he was waylaid and shot by a Protestant, named Poltrot, with a pistol loaded with poisoned bullets. Guise had many fine points in his character in spite of his religious bigotry, and with his dying breath he implored Catherine to make peace with the Huguenots, and he forgave his assassin in some noble words.

Poltrot, however, was put to death, after being cruelly tortured; but even in his torments he did not conceal his joy at having slain his enemy. "For all that," he exclaimed, "he is dead and gone, the persecutor of the faithful, and will return no more to vex us."

Catherine was wise enough for the time to follow Guise's advice, and she made peace with the Huguenots, granting them full liberty of worship, and inviting their leaders to her court at Paris. She wished to lull them with a false sense of security; she bewitched and ensnared them by the thousand

pleasures of her brilliant court; and Condé and his friends only too easily fell into the trap, and forgot their honour and virtue and religion among the temptations and vicious pleasures with which Catherine beguiled them.

The young king, Charles, was now fourteen years of age (A.D. 1566), and was considered old enough to reign by himself; and Catherine took him with her in a royal progress through his kingdom to show him to his subjects. At Bayonne she met the Duke of Alva, Philip of Spain's favourite general and minister, and various secret interviews took place between Alva and the Queen-mother. Catherine is said to have boasted to Alva of her success in wasting the strength of Condé and other Huguenots; and Alva hinted in reply that if she had the Protestant chiefs in her power, it would be easy to dispose of the rabble in a second Sicilian Vespers.*

Soon afterwards, Alva began that terrible persecution of the Protestants in the Netherlands, which drove the whole nation to rebellion, and ended in Holland being freed from the Spaniards. The news of these barbarities greatly disquieted the French Huguenots, for they thought that Catherine had agreed with Alva to carry out the same wholesale slaughter in France.

For some time there was nothing but plots and intrigues, and the Huguenots were said to have threatened the Queen-mother's life. Charles IX. did not conceal his distrust and dislike of the Protestant leaders, and said that he "believed Alva was right; their heads were too high."

At last the Huguenots rose openly in rebellion, and as before, Condé headed the army, intending to

* See p. 66.

seize the king and change the government. He was so confident of success that he even had coins struck with his own image and superscription, "Louis XIII., first Christian King of France." His army advanced on Paris, and a desperate battle took place between them and the Catholics in the plain of St. Denis, in September 1567. The Huguenots were defeated, but the Catholics paid dearly for their victory with the loss of the aged Constable Montmorency, who was killed in this action.

Next year (A.D. 1568) there was another war, and in the first battle, fought at Jarnac, the gallant Condé was killed while charging with his cavalry to rescue Admiral Coligny, who was hard pressed by the enemy. The Catholic party were delighted at his death, and thanksgiving services were sung in their churches and cathedrals. But, though their leader was dead, the Huguenots did not lose heart. Young Henry of Navarre now became the chief of the party, and took a solemn oath that he would never desert the Protestant cause.

In the autumn of the same year the Huguenots suffered another severe defeat at Moncontour on the Dive, and their cause now seemed almost hopeless, when to the surprise and indignation of the Catholics, Catherine once more made peace with them, granting them a general pardon and full liberty of worship, except in Paris itself. She also gave them back all the offices and property which had been taken from them in the war, and handed over to them four towns as a pledge that this promise should be kept.

It seemed, indeed, as if Catherine could not honour the Huguenots too highly. She gave her own daughter, Margaret, in marriage to Henry of

Navarre, and loaded Admiral Coligny with favours and rewards. The Guises were deeply incensed at the indulgence shown to their enemies by the court, and the Pope himself wrote to Catherine, strongly rebuking her. "As there can be no communion between Satan and the children of light, so it ought to be taken for certain that there can be no compact between Catholics and heretics save one full of fraud and deceit."

Whether Catherine's friendship for the Protestants was sincere, or whether it was part of a deep laid scheme to throw them off their guard and then crush them at a blow, can never be known; but this apparent peace and friendship between the two parties had a sudden and terrible ending.

The Huguenots had several warnings of impending danger. First, Queen Joan of Navarre (Henry IV.'s mother) died suddenly in Paris, it was said of poison given her by the court perfumer; then, three days after the marriage of Henry and Margaret, Admiral Coligny was shot at and wounded by one of Guise's attendants from a window of the palace; and though both Catherine and Charles professed horror at the crime, and promised to avenge it, before a day had passed they had determined on a general massacre of the Huguenots.

Charles had been attached both to Coligny and Henry of Navarre, so far as he could feel affection for any one, and for a long time he refused to sanction such cruel treachery; but Catherine and the Guises declared the Huguenots were rebels and traitors, and had designs on the crown, and at last Charles burst out into one of his fits of wild passion, and exclaimed: "Kill all; kill all,—let none be left to reproach me."

Accordingly, on the Feast of St. Bartholomew (A.D. 1572), the great bell of St. Germain's Church, close to the Louvre, rang at midnight, and the sound was repeated from every steeple in Paris. This was the signal for the work of death. Lights flashed from the windows, and bands of assassins collected in the streets, all armed to the teeth and wearing the white cross of Lorraine in their hats. Admiral Coligny was one of the first victims, but the grand old hero showed no fear when the murderers entered his bed-chamber. "Young man," he said to one of them who approached him with his sword drawn, "you ought to reverence these grey hairs; but do what you think proper, my life can be shortened but a very little." He was stabbed to death by their daggers, and his bleeding corpse was flung from the window into the street below, where Guise was waiting, and he spurned it with his foot. The head was cut off and carried to Catherine, who is said to have embalmed it and sent it as a welcome present to the Pope of Rome.

During all that day and for nearly a week afterwards, the Huguenots were slaughtered by thousands in the streets and in their houses. Neither women nor children were spared, and Henry of Navarre himself only escaped by renouncing the Protestant faith. Catherine and her ladies looked on while the murderers despatched their victims, and Charles called for his long fowling-piece and amused himself by firing from his window upon the wretched fugitives as they tried to escape across the Seine. The real authors of this massacre were the Guises and the mob of Paris, but the most guilty criminal of all was undoubtedly Catherine of Medici.

The same horrors took place in several towns in

the provinces, but we are told that, when the Governor of Bayonne received orders to massacre the Huguenots in his city, he flatly refused, saying, "Your majesty has many faithful servants in Bayonne, but not a single executioner."

At Philip II.'s court at Madrid, and in Rome, the news of this massacre was received with the greatest joy. The Pope and his cardinals went in solemn procession to St. Peter's and held a thanksgiving service for what they called the victory of the true Church; and a medal was even struck to celebrate the event, with the Pope's head on one side of it, and an angel slaying the Huguenots on the other.

But, while in France the Catholics could not restrain their joy at the disasters which had befallen their enemies, the Huguenots were almost beside themselves with rage and grief, and took up arms at once to defend their rights; and their city of Rochelle offered such a stout resistance to the royal troops that Catherine was once more obliged to come to terms, and granted the same liberty of worship to the Huguenots which they had enjoyed before.

Charles himself had known no peace either of mind or body since the fatal day of St. Bartholomew. His body wasted by a slow decline, and his food ceased to nourish him. He was haunted night and day by the memory of the terrible scenes he had witnessed; his sleep was broken by frightful dreams, and in the morning his couch was often found bathed in blood. His old nurse, one of the few remaining Huguenots in Paris, whose life had been spared in the massacre and who slept in the king's room, would find him weeping and moaning to himself; "Ah, *ma mie!* my nurse! What blood! What murders! Ah, I have followed a wicked

counsel! O my God, forgive me, have mercy upon me, if Thou wilt!"

Worn out at last by remorse and disease, Charles IX. ended his miserable life at the early age of twenty-four, with his last breath thanking God that he left no son to inherit the throne.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HENRY III.—1574-1589.

How Henry III. showed himself a weak and worthless king; how Henry of Navarre escaped from Paris; how the Catholics formed a League; how another Religious War broke out; how the Duke of Guise was assassinated; how Henry of Navarre joined Henry III., and how they marched against Paris; how Henry III. was murdered by a monk.

HENRY III. had been elected King of Poland during his brother Charles's lifetime, and was there when the news came that he was now King of France; and so eager was he to get away from Poland, that he started off at midnight and escaped into Italy. He amused himself there for some months, and at length arrived in Paris.

It may be shortly said of Henry III. that, as he was the last, so was he the worst king of the House of Valois. He was weak, vicious, and so unmanly, that he painted his face and dyed his hair. He cared nothing about his government, but would pass whole days shut up in his palace, playing with his lap-dogs and surrounded by a troop of young favourites as shameless as himself, who varied their idle lives by occasionally fighting duels and shedding one another's blood. Indeed, the wickedness of his

Court was such that it was said by foreigners, that it was only by the steeples of their churches that the people of Paris were known to be Christians. Sometimes Henry had a fit of penitence, and then he and his companions would parade the streets, barefooted and clothed in sackcloth, and scourging one another by way of penance. But when this was over, they went on as badly as before.

The wickedness of the Court disgusted both Catholics and Huguenots. The Duke of Guise deserted the royal cause and made a party for himself; and Henry of Navarre, who had been living idly and luxuriously in Paris for the last four years, made his escape at a hunting-party and joined his followers. "They have put my mother to death at Paris," he said, "they have slain the admiral (Coligny) there, and all my best friends; I will never return thither, unless I am dragged there by force." As a matter of fact, when he did return to Paris, it was as King of France.

From this time, Henry of Navarre began to show his great talents and his noble nature, and became the real leader on whom the Huguenots depended, and he was supported by Henry of Condé, a grave and able prince, and by Montmorency, who was the son of the old Constable of France, killed at St. Denis, and who had quarrelled with the Catholics. The king's own brother, the Duke of Alencon, also joined Henry of Navarre, and their party was now so strong that Catherine and her son were forced to come to terms with them, giving more power, honours and privileges to the Huguenots than they had ever enjoyed in the last reign. This treaty was called "the Peace of Monsieur" (1576), for the king's brother was usually called Monsieur, and

by this treaty Henry's brother, Alencon, received the Duchy of Anjou.

The Catholics regarded this treaty as a disgrace both to the king and to their country, and they joined together in a great LEAGUE throughout France, binding themselves to maintain the supremacy of the Pope and the Catholic religion, and to crush by force all resistance on the part of the Huguenots. The Pope approved of their League, and Philip of Spain promised to help them with money and soldiers.

A great rising now took place in all parts of France, and several armies were raised under the command of the Duke of Guise and his brothers, the Dukes of Mayenne and Aumale. Henry III. had only his Swiss and Scotch guards to meet this rebellion, and his first thought was to make peace with the League on any terms. So he signed a treaty granting all their demands, giving the highest posts in the kingdom to the Catholic leaders, and declaring that the Catholic faith must be established everywhere.

But Henry III. had made himself so hated and despised by the honours and rewards which he heaped upon his unworthy favourites, that men began to question his right of reigning at all. His court had become worse than ever, and the Guises and their friends maintained that he was as weak and worthless as any of the long-haired kings of the Merovingian line;* and the Duchess of Montpensier (Guise's sister) used to carry about a pair of golden scissors at her girdle, with which she declared she should cut off the king's hair when he was shut up in a convent and made a monk. Moreover, Henry was childless, and his only brother,

* See p. 10.

the Duke of Anjou, had lately died, and as Henry of Navarre was a heretic, it was clear to the Catholic party that the Duke of Guise, being of royal descent, was the fittest person to reign when the House of Valois came to an end.

The Huguenots now took up arms again in what was the eighth Religious War (A.D. 1587), known generally as the "War of the Henries," because Henry III., Henry, Duke of Guise, and Henry of Navarre, all took part in it. The Catholics were defeated in the first battle, at Coutras, and their leader, the Duke of Joyeuse, was killed; but Henry of Navarre did not follow up his victory, and soon afterwards the Huguenots and their German allies were twice defeated, and Henry III. returned in triumph to Paris. He found, however, that he was coldly received, and that his people gave all the credit of the success to their favourite, the Duke of Guise. "Saul has slain his thousands," they said, "but David his ten thousands." And when Guise himself entered Paris, he was welcomed with as much joy and triumph, as if he had been really king of France. He was supported by the learned doctors of the Sorbonne,* who decided that it was lawful to depose even a king, if he did not fulfil his duties, and by a secret council of the League, called "the Sixteen." His power and influence increased daily, and his demands were so insolent, that Henry summoned his Swiss guards to enter Paris and drive out his enemies.

But the royal troops found all Paris up in arms

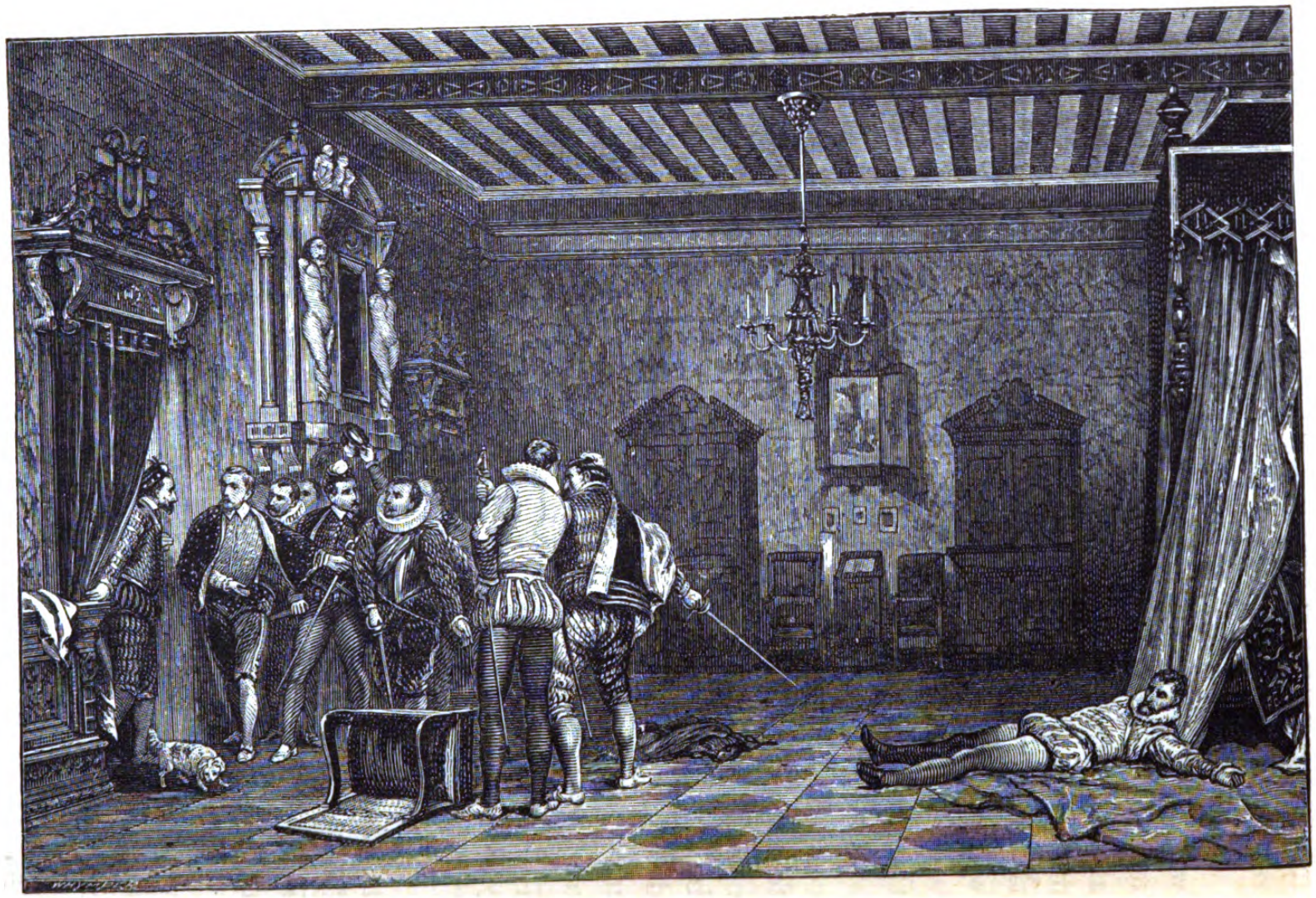
* The *Sorbonne* was a learned society of priests founded by one Robert de Sorbon in 1252. They devoted their lives to study and to teaching, and they were often appealed to in questions of law and divinity.

when they entered the city. Barricades, made of carts and timber and paving-stones, had been stretched across the streets, even close up to the Louvre itself, and behind them stood the citizens and Leaguers armed with pikes and muskets.* The royalists were furiously attacked by the mob, and driven back in all directions; then the angry citizens rushed towards the palace, and Henry found himself left without protection, and at the mercy of the League.

Guise, however, stopped the bloodshed by riding unarmed among the people, and bidding them cease fighting. Catherine of Medici then tried to mediate between him and the king; but Guise asked such large concessions, that Henry could not bring himself to accept them, but escaped from Paris with a few attendants, and made his way to Chartres, leaving Guise and the Leaguers masters of his capital.

Once more, however, Guise opened negotiations with Henry, and this time the king gave way, granting all that was asked of him; even appointing Guise to be lieutenant-governor of the kingdom, and promising, as he had twice promised before, to extirpate the Huguenots, and establish the Catholic religion. But, though he thus gave way, Henry secretly determined to rid himself of his great rival, who treated him more as a master than as a subject. "He must fall or I," he cried, "with the snake the poison dies." He therefore arranged with some of his attendants that Guise should be assassinated

* This is always known as "the Day of the Barricades." It was the first time—but far from being the last—that barricades were used in a rebellion or revolution of the people of Paris.



Murder of the Duke of Guise.

in his castle of Blois, where the Court was then residing.

The duke received several warnings that his life was in danger, but, with his usual fearlessness, he took no notice of them. "They will not dare," was all he said. He came to the castle of Blois with a few of his friends to attend a council, and was told that the king wished to see him in his own room. He was passing along a passage which led to it, and was just lifting up the tapestry which hung over the door of the king's bed-chamber, when he was stabbed in five places by the assassins who had been concealed there, and fell mortally wounded at the foot of the king's bed. Henry came out from a closet, where he had stayed while his enemy was being murdered, and it is said that he spurned the dead body with his foot. Then he went to his mother Catherine's room. "Madam," he said, "I am once more master of France, for I have to-day put to death the king of Paris." "Take care, lest you find yourself master of nothing," she replied; "you have cut—can you sew up again?"

Guise's brother, Cardinal Lorraine, was murdered the next morning; and a fortnight later, Catherine of Medici herself died, having outlived her power and influence, and seen all her schemes and crafty policy defeated and brought to nothing.

The fury of the people in Paris passed all bounds when they heard that their favourite hero, Guise, had been thus basely murdered. The doctors of the Sorbonne declared that Henry had forfeited his crown, and released all his subjects from their allegiance: the Pope excommunicated him; and nearly all the great towns in the provinces rose in arms under Guise's brothers, Aumale and Mayenne. In

fact, so far from being king of France, Henry found himself, as his mother had prophesied, "master of nothing." All the support he had to meet the general rebellion of his subjects were the people of Bordeaux, and a few towns which still remained loyal, and his Swiss and Scotch guards.

Then, in despair, he turned for help to his old enemy, Henry of Navarre, and it was the wisest thing he could have done. A meeting took place between them, and Henry of Navarre promised to defend the monarchy against the rebels of the League. He made a wise proclamation, appealing to all true Frenchmen to support him, if they loved their country better than their party. Then the two kings marched upon Paris with a large army of the royalist troops, and their new allies, the Huguenots, and encamped at St. Cloud. From the windows of his house Henry III. could see the towers of his own fair city—"Yonder," he said, "is the heart of the League, and it is there the blow must be struck. 'Tis a great pity to lay in ruins so beautiful and goodly a city; still, I must settle accounts with the rebels who are in it, and who so shamefully drove me away." And, in fact, the people of Paris knew that they had no mercy to expect from the king if the town was taken; but they were excited and encouraged to resist by the appeals of the Duchess of Montpensier, and others who hated the murderer of Guise, and an unexpected deliverance came to them just when they feared the worst.

On the day before the assault, a young monk, named Clement, who had been persuaded that he was the instrument of God's vengeance on a worthless king, made his way to Henry's chamber, on

pretence of bringing him a private letter; and, while the king was reading it, the monk drew a knife from his sleeve and stabbed him in the body. The king called out, "The villain monk has slain me — kill him;" then drew the knife from the wound, and stabbed his murderer in the face with it. The monk was at once killed by the attendants, but the king's wound proved to be mortal, and he died in the early morning of August 2nd, A.D. 1589; but before he expired, he sent for Henry of Navarre and gave him his hand; "See, my brother," he said, "how my subjects have treated me; therefore take good heed for your own safety. May my crown flourish on your head. I have commanded all the great officers of state to take the oath of allegiance to you." And then, the nobles who were present took the oath accordingly. With Henry III. ended the long line of the Valois kings. There had been thirteen of them, all of them, except the two last—Charles IX. and Henry III.—brave and generous princes; but they had wasted the strength of the country in foreign war, and had oppressed their subjects by unjust taxation.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HENRY IV. (of Navarre).—1589-1593.

How Henry of Navarre became king; how he defeated the army of the League at Ivry; how he became a Catholic, and entered Paris.

GREAT was the joy of the Parisians when they heard of Henry III.'s murder; the murderer, Clement, was looked upon as a saint; the bells were rung and bonfires were lighted, while the Duchess of Montpensier drove about the streets calling out, "Good news, my friends, good news! the tyrant is dead." But neither the Guises nor the Catholics were willing to accept "the man of Béarn," as they called Henry IV. from his birthplace in Gascony, as their king, and they proclaimed his uncle, Cardinal Bourbon, as Charles X. This Cardinal, however, was old and infirm, and was never anything more than the shadow of a king, and his death, which took place not long afterwards, was little regretted even by his own party.

In the royalist camp at St. Cloud, opinions were divided even among Henry's own allies; for the Catholics were unwilling to accept him as their king, unless he would abjure the Protestant faith. "Better to die a thousand deaths," they declared, "than obey a heretic prince." Henry would not turn Catholic at present, but he bound himself to support their religion and respect their churches, and thus a kind of compromise was made.

But the League had lost nothing of its strength, and had received large reinforcements both from the provinces of France and from Spain, and the united forces were so powerful that Henry thought

Henry IV. at Ivry.

it prudent to break up his camp before Paris, and marched into Normandy. Here most of the towns submitted to him, and he defeated the forces of the League under Mayenne at Arques, although they were five times his own number, and in spite of Mayenne's proud boast that he "would either drive the man of Béarn into the sea or bring him back in chains." Then Henry again marched upon Paris, but still he was not strong enough to take the city, and only pillaged the suburbs, where his soldiers slew all the Catholics they found, with cries of—"Remember St. Bartholomew!"

This success encouraged his friends, and many of the provinces in the South and East of France now acknowledged him as their king. Queen Elizabeth of England sent him 22,000*l.* to help him to pay his troops—"more money," as he said, "than he had ever before seen in his life." Next year (1590) he took the field with good heart, and met the army of the League in the plain of IVRY, near Mantes. Before the battle began, Henry rode along the lines and encouraged his men; "My friends," he said, "I am your king; you are Frenchmen; yonder is the enemy, let us charge. If you lose your standards, follow my white plume; you will always find it in the path of honour and of victory." His soldiers eagerly answered this appeal, and although the Catholics were far more numerous, the Huguenots charged with such fury that they won a brilliant victory, and wherever the fighting was thickest, Henry of Navarre's white plume was to be seen in the midst of it. The Count of Egmont was killed, and his Spanish and German soldiers cut to pieces, for the Huguenots would give them no quarter, though they spared the lives of their French pri-

soners. And the Swiss were also spared, for Henry remembered the ancient friendship between them and the crown of France, and took them into his own service. The fugitives were pursued as far as Mantes, and Mayenne himself only escaped by a miracle.

Instead of marching straight upon Paris, Henry wasted time in taking various cities along his route, and when he at last reached Paris, he found that thirty thousand volunteers had joined the Duke of Mayenne, and that the citizens were resolved to resist to the last. Thirteen hundred of the Catholic priests and monks formed a regiment, and marched to defend the walls in their clerical dress, but with pikes and muskets on their shoulders. Paris was then closely besieged by the royalists, and the people suffered terribly from famine, being reduced to eat the flesh of dogs and horses, and even a horrible sort of bread made of bones, ground and baked like flour, when all other food had failed. Henry, however, allowed six thousand of the old and weak to pass through his lines, that they might escape starvation. "Paris must not become a grave-yard," he said; "I do not wish to reign over the dead."

His troops easily made themselves masters of the suburbs, and the city was on the point of being taken by assault, when a large body of Spanish troops arrived under the Duke of Parma, who carried provisions into the town in spite of Henry, and he was then forced to abandon the siege, and lead off his army.

The Duke of Parma then hastened back to Flanders, having done his work of relieving Paris and defeating Henry without drawing a sword.

Disputes now arose among the Leaguers in Paris, who were in fact divided into two factions, the French League and the Spanish League; and "the Sixteen," the extreme Catholics, actually offered the crown of France to the Spanish king, Philip II. They also hung several of their enemies who belonged to the French League. A reign of terror prevailed; there were assassinations and murders daily, and no respectable citizen felt that his life was safe. But Mayenne soon returned with his French troops, seized and executed four of "the Sixteen," and dispersed their followers. And thus Paris was freed from their tyranny.

Meanwhile, the war still continued in Normandy, and the Royalists besieged Rouen; but Parma returned with his Spanish troops, and by his science and military skill out-manœuvred Henry, and relieved Rouen. Then he made a brilliant passage across the Seine in the face of the French, and carried his army back safely to Flanders, where he died shortly afterwards.

By this time the country had grown weary of this war, and the States-General met in Paris to decide who should be King of France. The party of the League were divided, some of them preferring Mayenne, and others the young Duke of Guise. Then Henry decided that the only chance of securing their support was for himself to abjure the Protestant faith, and become a Catholic. Accordingly, he attended mass in the Abbey of St. Denis, and was met at the door by the Archbishop and clergy in procession. "Who are you?" enquired the Archbishop. "The King of France," was the reply. "What want you?" "To be received into the bosom of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman

Church." "Do you desire it?" "Yes, I both will and desire it." Then Henry knelt down, and was solemnly absolved of his heresy; the Te Deum was sung, and the church echoed with the shouts of the people who had thronged to see the ceremony.

Whether it was right or wrong of Henry thus to change his religion, as a man changes his coat, simply because another suits him better, need not be discussed here. It was "a perilous leap," as he called it himself, but, as he added, "Paris, was well worth a Mass," and his act was applauded by many of his own Huguenots, who saw in it the only way to restore peace to a country which had been so long torn asunder by civil war, while the Catholics welcomed the king who had thus reconciled himself with the old Church. City after city now came over to his side, so quickly indeed that it was said the Leaguers had left the keys of France behind them at the Louvre, and that Henry had picked them up. By the end of the year (1593) a great part of France had recognised him as their king.

Henry was crowned with great state in the Cathedral of Chartres, and soon afterwards entered Paris at the head of his troops. The people flocked round him with shouts of *Vive le Roi;* and Henry showed his nobleness of nature by granting a free pardon to all the Leaguers, even to his bitterest enemies, such as the Duchess of Montpensier. He allowed the Spanish troops to leave the city uninjured, and as they marched past the window where he was seated, they saluted him with their swords. "Go, gentlemen," said Henry, taking off his hat to them; "go, and commend me to your master. Go in peace—but return no more."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HENRY IV. (*continued*)—1593-1610.

How Henry IV. drove the Jesuits out of France; how he signed the "Edict of Nantes"; how Sully showed himself a wise and prudent minister; how Biron plotted against the king and was beheaded; how Henry was murdered by Ravaillac.

THERE was, however, one class of his subjects whom Henry IV. felt it would be dangerous to pardon, and these were the Jesuits. This Order of Jesus had been founded in 1540 by a young Spanish soldier, Ignatius Loyola, and was intended "for the greater glory of God," and to increase the power of the Pope. Since then, the Jesuits had increased rapidly in numbers and influence, and many of them were so clever and unscrupulous that they knew all the state secrets of Europe, and were constantly plotting and scheming how they could best destroy the Protestant religion. They were said to have caused several of the crimes in the last reigns, such as the massacre of St. Bartholomew and the murder of Henry III.; and they had even preached the doctrine that it was no crime to kill a heretic king, and had twice tried to have Henry IV. assassinated. Henry felt that his life would not be safe while they remained in France, and he caused them to be banished from the kingdom in 1594. They found means, however, to return in the next reign.

Soon after his conversion, Henry was formally absolved by the Pope, and received into the bosom of the Church. Even Mayenne now made his submission, and then other great Catholic nobles followed his example, most of them receiving large

pensions and grants of lands. From this time the League ceased to exist.

Henry was now free to devote all his energies to the war with Spain. At first, in spite of some brilliant cavalry skirmishes, the French lost ground before the Spanish, and even Calais was threatened with capture; but Henry soon threw his whole strength into the war. "My friends," he said, "I have long enough played the King of France, it is high time for me now to play the King of Navarre." The strong fortress of Amiens, not far from Paris, had been taken by the Spaniards, but Henry vigorously besieged it, and forced it to surrender, and with the fall of Amiens the war came to an end. Philip of Spain made peace, and surrendered all his French conquests, except Cambrai; and his death took place not long afterwards.

In the same year (1598) Henry rejoiced the Huguenots by signing the famous Edict of Nantes, a decree which gave liberty of worship and equality of civil rights to all the Protestants in France, and besides this secured to them two hundred towns in which they had already garrisons, with their "temples," schools, and colleges.

Then Henry finding himself at peace both at home and abroad, set to work to restore order and economy in the finances of his kingdom. Up to this time the taxation had been grossly mismanaged. Out of the enormous sum levied yearly in taxes, hardly more than a sixth part had found its way into the royal treasury. The rest had gone into the pockets of the tax-collectors, or of the nobles who had "farmed the revenue" (as it was termed)—that is, paid a certain fixed amount to the king and kept the rest for themselves. One noble alone was said

to have made 60,000*l.* a-year by levying private taxes. Moreover, the royal domains were so deeply in debt that Henry had scarcely enough money himself to pay his tailor or his cook, much less his soldiers.

The man who carried out the new schemes of economy and reform was Sully, Henry's greatest friend and wisest minister, who was clear-headed, sagacious, and of the highest honour and integrity. He at once abolished all the rights of the nobles to levy private taxes of their own; he freed the royal domains from debt, and reduced the general taxation to little more than a million of livres a-year. Moreover, commerce and agriculture were encouraged; marshes were drained; roads, canals, and bridges were made; mulberry trees were planted, and silk-looms again set up in many of the towns.

The result of all these wise measures was a great increase in the comfort and well-being of the people, who had never been so prosperous and contented as they now found themselves under their good king, Henry IV.; and thus a famous saying of his was realised, that "every peasant shall have his fowl in the pot on Sundays," meaning that there should be comfort and plenty in every cottage of the kingdom.

In all this, Henry showed his real goodness of heart; and his honest and generous character, as well as his simplicity and humanity, made him more beloved by his subjects than any king of France ever was before or since his time. Even to this day his name is dear to every Frenchman who knows anything of the history of his country.

One only wishes that it was possible to say as much good of Henry's private life, but he had many

faults as well as many virtues. He had been brought up roughly and hardly in his boyhood, running wild without training or education, and his youth had been passed in the evil and vicious court of Catherine of Medici, who had done her best to spoil all that was good and noble in his nature. The ill-effects of this training showed themselves in his after-life. Not only was he ignorant and boastful, a gambler and a spendthrift, but he had no scruples of morality, so long as he could gratify the passion of the moment. He was the slave first of one beautiful woman, then of another; and would actually have married one of his worthless favourites had not his faithful minister, Sully, prevented him. This lady was furious when she heard of Sully's interference, and wished Henry to dismiss his minister. "Madam," said the king, "let me tell you that were I compelled to choose between you and the duke, I could more easily part with ten persons like you than with one faithful servant like him."

In the year 1600, a dangerous conspiracy was formed against Henry by the Duke of Savoy, and many of the old Leaguers; and among them was Marshal Biron, one of the king's most trusted friends, who had fought by his side at Ivry. Henry easily crushed this rebellion, and took possession of a great part of Savoy, and he had full proofs of Biron's connection with the rebels. Biron had received a broad hint from Queen Elizabeth, when he was ambassador in England, that he was in danger. The queen pointed out the heads of traitors fixed on the archway of the Tower of London; Essex, she told him, had thus suffered for his treason—"and if my brother Henry would believe my words, there should heads fall in Paris as well as London."

But, when questioned by Henry as to his treachery, Biron denied his guilt, and Henry then left him to his fate. "Adieu, *Baron* of Biron," he said, implying that he had forfeited his other titles by his treachery. Biron was tried by the Parliament of Paris, was found guilty, and was at once executed in a courtyard of the Bastille in 1602.

Three years of peace followed this useless rebellion, and Henry devoted his energies to forming a scheme for uniting all the states of Europe in a great Christian republic, where all disputes were to be settled by a grand council, and each state was to be secured from foreign war, and from the attacks of its more powerful neighbours. The real object of this scheme (if it ever existed) was intended to humble the pride of the House of Austria both in Austria and Spain; for, if it had been carried out, both these countries would have had to give up a large slice of territory. The result would probably have been not a general peace, but a general European war, for it was not likely that Austria would tamely submit to lose her outlying provinces. In fact, war was on the point of breaking out, for a dispute arose between Austria and France as to the possession of the Duchy of Cleves, which bordered on the Rhine.

In April, 1610, Henry had collected three great armies which were to attack both Spain and Austria. All his preparations were complete, and he was on the point of setting out, when he was delayed by the coronation of his queen, Mary of Medici, whom he had married on his divorce from the wicked Margaret of Navarre.

The coronation took place at St. Denis in May, 1610, and as Henry was going the next day to visit

Sully, his coach was stopped by some carts in a narrow street of Paris. A man named Ravaillac suddenly jumped upon the wheel and twice stabbed the king in the body. Henry called out "I am wounded," then sank back in the coach, and almost instantly expired. The coach drove on to the Louvre, and might be tracked the whole way by the blood which poured from it.

The grief of the people was intense. They ran about the streets calling out, "the good King Henry is dead." The assassin, Ravaillac, was put to death with most cruel tortures.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LOUIS XIII.—1610-1643.

How the Queen-mother's favourite, Concini, was arrested and killed; how De Luynes became the king's chief adviser; how Cardinal Richelieu became Prime Minister; how he destroyed the Huguenot town of La Rochelle; how Gaston of Orleans rebelled; how Richelieu caused the French to take part in the Thirty Years' War; how Cinq Mars and his friends entered into a plot; how Cardinal Richelieu died.

THE young king LOUIS XIII. was only nine years old when his father died; so his mother, Mary of Medici, became Regent, and, though she was not false and cruel like Catherine of Medici, she was a weak and dull woman, and fell completely under the influence of two Italian favourites, an adventurer named Concini and his wife Leonora.

These Italians, being strong Catholics themselves, encouraged an alliance with Spain and Austria; and it was agreed that Louis was to marry the

Emperor's daughter Anne, as soon as he was old enough, while his sister Elizabeth was to marry the Prince of Asturias, the heir of Spain.

These marriages were violently opposed by Condé, a great prince, himself nearly related to the king, and many of the nobles, who thought the time had come for a rising. "The day of kings is past," they said, "that of grandees and princes has arrived; we must make hay while the sun shines." But the queen's party was greatly helped by Richelieu, who afterwards became so famous, and who at this time had obtained a seat in the royal council by his ability and eloquence. By his advice, strong measures were taken against the rebellious nobles; their ringleader, Condé, was himself arrested, and many of his friends were banished. Richelieu was rewarded for his services by being made Secretary of State.

There was general discontent in the country, and in 1615 the States-General had been called together to discuss some means of lessening the taxes; but, after three months of useless debate, they were dissolved, and the deputies returned home. They never met again till just before the Great Revolution in 1789.

Concini had been made marquis of Ancre and a marshal of France, and grew more powerful than ever; while the faithful old Sully saw the treasures collected in the Bastille for a reserve-fund in case of war wasted on bribes and luxury; he was himself insulted and neglected by these haughty Italians, and at last he left the Court for good, and lived the rest of his life in retirement at his country house.

Louis was now sixteen years old, and resolved to rid himself of Concini and his wife. A young page,

Albert de Luynes, aided and abetted the king in this scheme, and Concini was suddenly arrested by Vitry, Captain of the Guards, and when he cried for help, was shot dead—"by order of the king." De Luynes hurried into the palace to congratulate Louis; "Sir, from this time you are really King of France." The people of Paris showed a savage joy at Concini's death. They tore his body from the grave into which it had been hastily thrown, dragged it through the streets and burnt it to ashes. Concini's wife, Leonora, was soon afterwards executed on a charge of sorcery; while the queen regent was exiled to Blois.

De Luynes now became the favourite minister, and was created a duke, and then Constable of France. But he had none of the qualities of a general or statesman, and soon showed himself to be as greedy and worthless as the Italian Concini, and thought of nothing but procuring honours and rewards for himself. He grew so unpopular that a rising took place among some of the nobles, who wished to bring Mary of Medici into power again. But peace was made, and a civil war averted, by the help of Richelieu; the nobles were conciliated; and the queen-mother received the government of Anjou.

In the following year (A.D. 1621) Louis was persuaded to make war on the Huguenots of the little province of Béarn, Henry IV.'s birthplace, who had revolted in defence of their religious liberties. At first this campaign was a failure; Louis lost many of his troops, and De Luynes himself died of fever, regretted by none, not even by his mother. The Huguenots, however, were gradually subdued by the royal troops, and lost all their fortified towns

in France, except Montauban and La Rochelle, which became their cities of refuge for the time.

Louis was so dull and feeble in character that it was clear he must soon fall again under the influence of some stronger mind, and the minister who now ruled him as completely as if he had been the master and the king his subject, was the famous Cardinal Richelieu. This statesman had great ambition and vast abilities, and never scrupled about the means he used so long as he could carry out his ends. Up to this time, he had cleverly temporised between the rival parties in the state, siding first with Queen Mary and then with De Luynes, and then leaving both when he thought he could secure his own position; working his way by degrees in the royal council till he took the foremost place, which he ever afterwards kept. From first to last, Richelieu's policy was to destroy the Huguenots, to weaken the power of the nobility, and to humble the House of Austria; and, as you will see, he succeeded in carrying out these schemes, and in leaving the French monarchy almost an absolute despotism.

Like Cardinal Wolsey in English history, Richelieu was fond of display and magnificence, and delighted in putting on a soldier's dress and riding at the head of his troops. In fact there was very little of the priest about him, except the name of Cardinal.

As soon as he came into power (1624), Richelieu had sent an army against the Spanish and Austrians in the Tyrol, and the French troops had captured some fortresses; but the Cardinal's plans were upset by a general rising of the Huguenots in 1625, as well as by a dangerous plot against his own life, in which Gaston, duke of Anjou, the king's brother and heir, and many of the great nobles, had joined.

Richelieu, however, quickly suppressed the plot; the leading conspirators were executed or banished; while Gaston, who had betrayed his party, was rewarded with a large pension and the duchy of Orleans. The young queen, Anne of Austria, had been mixed up in the affair, and both she and Richelieu cordially hated one another from that time. Her admirer, the Duke of Buckingham, was also a personal enemy of Richelieu's, and now brought an English fleet and army to help the Huguenots of Rochelle, on purpose to spite the Cardinal.

But Richelieu showed unusual vigour, and blockaded La Rochelle by sea and land, even building an immense dyke of stone across the mouth of the harbour to keep out Buckingham and the English fleet. The people of La Rochelle defended themselves gallantly for more than a year, and their governor is said to have laid his dagger on the table and declared that he would plunge it into the heart of the first man who spoke of surrender. It was not until half of them had died of hunger, and all hope of succour from the English had gone (for Buckingham had been assassinated just as he was setting out on a second expedition to their relief), that they at last surrendered. When the French troops entered the city, they found the streets and houses full of corpses, for the survivors had not even strength to bury the dead. The lives of the brave little garrison were spared, but the walls of La Rochelle were levelled with the ground, and the people in it were deprived of all their civil and religious rights.

A quarrel arose (A.D. 1629) between France and Spain about the duchy of Mantua, which Richelieu wished to secure for the Duke of Nevers, while the

King of Spain and the Emperor of Austria wished to confer it on a favourite of their own, a Spanish duke. Louis led an army across the Alps in person, and forced the pass of Susa. Pignerol and several other fortresses were taken by the French; Savoy was reduced to submission, and then a treaty was made by which the Duke of Nevers was left in possession of Mantua.

While Richelieu was thus triumphant abroad, his enemies at home were plotting his ruin. King Louis was dangerously ill, and the queen-mother induced him to make a promise that he would dismiss the Cardinal. A stormy scene took place between Richelieu and Mary of Medici; Louis left the palace abruptly, and every one thought that the great minister's fall was certain. The queen-mother and Anne of Austria were triumphant. But they were sadly mistaken in their hopes, for Richelieu had another interview with the king, and it ended in his being restored to confidence and favour, while the queen-mother was banished from the Court. This sudden change was like a scene in a comedy, and the day (November 11th, 1630) has always been known as the "Day of Dupes."

Then Gaston of Orleans, the most mischievous conspirator of the time, induced some of the nobles, who were jealous of Richelieu's influence, to take up arms against him. Among them was Montmorency, a noble and gallant soldier, whose father and grandfather had been Constables of France. But the rebels were utterly defeated by the Cardinal's force, and Montmorency was himself taken prisoner, fighting desperately, and covered with wounds. His guilt was too clear for him to be pardoned, and he was executed accordingly, dying

with the greatest firmness and courage, and pitied even by his enemies. The selfish Gaston, who had again betrayed his friends, had his life spared, partly because he was the king's heir, and partly because he was too weak and cowardly to do any serious mischief. In 1639, Anne of Austria bore a son to Louis, and thus all danger of Gaston's succession to the crown was removed.

The Thirty Years' War was now raging in Germany. It had arisen from a religious dispute between the Protestant princes in Germany and their Catholic Emperor, and Richelieu took the side of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, and the Protestant princes, against the emperor. Even after the heroic death of Gustavus at Lutzen, Richelieu did not give up the struggle, but entered into a fresh treaty with Sweden, Holland, and the German princes, by which he engaged to raise four armies, amounting to 120,000 men. At first matters went badly for the French, as the greatest generals of the time—Tilly and Wallenstein—were opposed to them; but in 1638, they won several battles near the Rhine and in Italy. Turin was taken by them, and Artois and Roussillon were added to the French kingdom. A young French general named Turenne, who afterwards became so famous, won his first battle in this war.

In spite of these foreign successes, Richelieu was both hated and feared by the French generally, and scarcely a year passed in which there was not some plot or intrigue against his life. The last and most dangerous of these plots was headed by a young favourite of Louis, called Cinq Mars. But Richelieu had spies and agents everywhere, and soon discovered all the plans of the conspirators, who had

even made a secret treaty with Spain; Gaston of Orleans was again mixed up in this plot, and again betrayed his friends: Cinq Mars and his friend, De Thou, were beheaded at Lyons in 1642.

Richelieu was now at the summit of his power both at home and abroad. He had carried out all his schemes of policy. The Huguenots and great nobles in France had been crushed and humbled; and the House of Austria had suffered defeats and disgrace in all directions. But the Cardinal himself was now sickening of a mortal disease, and though his head and mind were as strong as ever, he could only move from place to place in a litter carried by his guards. He grew weaker and weaker, and at last asked his doctors how long he had to live. Most of them, wishing to please him, told him that God would not let a man die who was so necessary to France; but one of them had the courage to tell him that in twenty-four hours he would be either cured or dead. "That is what I call plain speaking," said Richelieu, "I understand you." He died shortly after his return to Paris in 1642. When the sacrament was brought him on his death-bed, he said: "Behold my Judge, before whom I shall soon appear; I pray Him to condemn me, if I ever meant aught save the welfare of religion and the State; I have this satisfaction, that I have never deserted the king, and that I leave his kingdom exalted and his enemies abased."

Richelieu left many useful memorials of his power behind him. He built the Palais Royal in Paris, and founded the French Academy, the King's Press, and the Botanical Gardens by the side of the Seine. And it is said that Peter the Great, when he saw Richelieu's monument in the Sorbonne, exclaimed,

"I would give half my dominions for one Richelieu to teach me how to govern the other half."

Louis XIII. did not survive his great minister more than six months; and perhaps the best thing we can say of this king is that he was wise enough to recognise Richelieu's genius, and allow him to govern France for eighteen years. It has been well said by a French historian, that "the minister made his sovereign play the second part in the monarchy, and the first in Europe; he abased the king, but he exalted the throne of France."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LOUIS XIV.—1643-1661.

How Mazarin became Prime Minister; how Condé and Turenne won many victories; how the War of the Fronde began; how the war in Spain ended with the Peace of the Pyrenees; and how Cardinal Mazarin died.

LOUIS XIV. was only four years old when his father died, so his mother, Anne of Austria, became regent, and, to the surprise of every one, she made Cardinal Mazarin her Prime Minister, though he had been the faithful servant of her life-long enemy, Richelieu.

So unlike in character were the two cardinals, that there was a saying, "After the lion, comes the fox." From the first there were troubles and intrigues against the new minister: for the great nobles, who had remained passive and obedient under the iron rule of Richelieu, did not care to submit to an Italian stranger like Mazarin, who could not even speak French with a proper accent,

but pronounced "union" as if it were "oignon" (*onion*). Mazarin's rapacity and falseness increased the general hatred of him, and before long a plot was formed against his life; but the scheme was discovered, and the chief conspirators were banished.

The war with Austria still continued, and, three days after the new king came to the throne, the French won a great battle at ROCROY, under the young Duke of Enghien, afterwards known to us as "the Great Condé." In this battle, the famous Spanish infantry, supposed up to this time to be invincible, were slain in thousands as they stood, for they would neither retreat nor ask for quarter. Their general, the old Count of Fuentes, who had fought against France for fifty years, was found dead, seated in an arm-chair in front of his troops. "Were I not to conquer," said Enghien, "it is thus that I would die." Two years later, Enghien and Turenne, another famous French general, won two brilliant victories at Freiburg and Nordlingen, and in this last action Enghien fought with such reckless valour, that he had two horses killed under him; but his rashness nearly lost the battle for the French, and the victory was really owing to the superior skill of Marshal Turenne.

Then Enghien, aided by the Dutch fleet under their gallant admiral, Tromp, took Dunkirk, an important seaport town on the German Ocean; and shortly afterwards Spain made peace with Holland (1647).

Enghien now returned to France, and as his father was dead, he became Prince of Condé. His ambition, his wealth, and his skill in war made him the most formidable noble in France; and Mazarin hated and feared him so greatly, that he sent him

off to command an army in Spain to get him out of the way. Here, however, Condé was unlucky, and was defeated by the Spaniards at the siege of Lerida. But the following year he again won a great victory at Lens in Artois (1648), and almost destroyed the Imperial army.

The emperor was now so humbled by defeat, that the Thirty Years' War was concluded by the Peace of Westphalia (1648), one of the most important treaties of modern times. By this treaty France got nearly the same territory which she kept, except under Napoleon I., up to the German War of 1871. All Alsace and Lorraine, except the city of Strasburg, were given up to her, as well as the "Three Bishoprics" of Toul, Metz, and Verdun, which had been really conquered in Francis I.'s time, and the Rhine now ceased to be a German river.

In spite of these successes abroad, matters were going on badly for France at home. Mazarin daily became more unpopular both with the nobles and the citizens of Paris, for his rapacity and extortions seemed endless. He wasted all the treasures accumulated by Richelieu, and then had to impose fresh taxes to get money for the war. One of these taxes, levied on all merchandise brought into Paris by land or water, was especially hateful; and at last the Parliament of Paris, chiefly composed of lawyers, or "men of the gown," as the nobles termed them, refused to sanction this last tax, and openly resisted the royal authority. Anne of Austria gave way at first, but then suddenly changed her mind, and arrested three of the principal town councillors, among them one Broussel, a great favourite of the people.

The citizens were furious; barricades, as usual, were put up across the streets, and armed bodies of rioters went about, shouting "Liberty and Broussel!" And so violent was the feeling in Paris, and so threatening were the rioters, that Anne of Austria again had to give way, and grant all the demands of the Parliament, as well as release Broussel, who re-entered Paris in triumph.

From this time, 1648 (the same year as the Peace of Westphalia), may be said to have begun the War of the FRONDE. It got this name from the sling or catapult (*fronde*), used by a street boy who shoots a stone from it, and then runs away. And the name is in some respects a fitting one; for nothing could have been more childish and absurd than many of the events in this war, although it caused much bloodshed and confusion. It was utterly unlike the Civil War in England that was going on at the same time; and the grim Puritans, under Cromwell, who killed their king, bore no resemblance to the gay heroes and heroines of the Fronde, who fought half in sport and half in earnest, and abused one another in song and caricature, and were one day fighting and the next day feasting or engaged in some romantic love adventure.

Among the chief leaders of the Fronde was Gondy, afterwards Cardinal of Retz, a clever and restless schemer, never happy unless engaged in some mischievous intrigue; then there was the handsome Duke of Beaufort, a grandson of Henry IV., and so popular with the mob that he was called the "King of the markets." Besides them, there were two ladies, who did much to help their party, one of them being Condé's sister, the beautiful Duchess of Longueville, and the other the daughter of Gaston of

Orleans, and first cousin of Louis XIV.—Mademoiselle de Montpensier, always known in history as "La Grande Mademoiselle."

The great Condé liked the Frondeurs almost as little as he liked Mazarin, so he made a separate party for himself of the young and discontented nobles, and these are generally known as the "Young Fronde." But the history of his quarrels, first with Mazarin and then with the Parliament, is neither interesting nor important, and few of the details of this confused struggle are worth remembering.

Mazarin and the Court, with the young king, twice fled from Paris and twice returned in triumph. Turenne first joined the Fronde, and then went over to Anne of Austria's side; while Condé levied an army on his own account, and marched against Paris, where a battle took place between his forces and the royal troops under Turenne, in the streets near the Bastille. The royalists drove back the Frondeurs in spite of Condé's gallantry, and he would probably have been either killed or captured had not his ally, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, helped him by turning the cannon of the Bastille upon the royal troops, and then opening the gate of St. Antoine to the Frondeurs, who thus escaped within the walls.

Condé was now master of Paris (1651), but his pride and overbearing temper turned even the Frondeurs against him, and Cardinal de Retz used all his influence to cause his downfall. The result was that the king and Anne of Austria re-entered Paris, and Mazarin came back from exile; while Condé, in his rage, openly joined the Spaniards. He was proclaimed a traitor, and condemned to death

by the Parliament of Paris; soon afterwards, the arch-conspirator, Cardinal de Retz, was arrested and banished from France, with the other leaders of his party; and thus the War of the Fronde, so confused in its details, and so barren in its results, came to an end in 1653, and Mazarin quietly returned to Paris. A few years later, when the Parliament were debating as to whether some fresh taxes should be levied, the young king came in with his hunting-whip in his hand, and addressed them sharply: "Gentlemen, your meetings have given trouble enough already, and from henceforth there must be no discussion of my edicts." The lawyers who composed the Parliament humbly submitted, and there was no further struggle against the royal authority.

War still continued in Spain and Flanders, where Condé and Turenne now fought on opposite sides; but Turenne's great military skill was more than a match for his opponent's impetuous attacks, even with superior forces. Condé, indeed, won a brilliant victory over one division of the French army in 1656; but soon afterwards Mazarin made a treaty with the Protector Cromwell, and thus Spain had England as well as France in arms against her. The final battle of the war was fought on the sand-banks, or dunes, near Dunkirk, where Turenne surprised the Spanish troops under Condé, and completely defeated them. The blame of this defeat rested more with the army than with their general; and before the battle began, Condé asked the young Duke of Gloucester, Charles I.'s son, who was serving as a volunteer, "if he had ever been in a battle before;" and when the young prince replied that he had not, "Well," said Condé, "in half an

hour's time you will see us lose one;" for he knew that he could not depend on his Spanish troops, and the result showed that he was right.

By this time Spain had grown tired of the war, and as all her allies had been induced by the crafty Mazarin to desert her, she was glad to give up the struggle. So in the following year (1659) peace was at last made between France and Spain, known as the Treaty of the Pyrenees, where Louis XIV., attended by his mother and Cardinal Mazarin, met Philip II. of Spain on the Isle of Pheasants, in the little river Bidassoa, which marks the boundary between Spain and France.

It was arranged that Louis should marry the Infanta (as the eldest daughter of the King of Spain is called), but that no child or descendant from this marriage should ever succeed to the Spanish crown. Spain gave back all her conquests, and France thus got Artois, and many places in Hainault and Flanders.

This peace was the work of Mazarin, but he hardly survived it more than a year. He had long been disabled by gout, and he died in 1661, leaving his enormous wealth, amounting, it is said, to ten millions of pounds in our money, partly to his nieces, and partly to a college and library in Paris, which still bears his name.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

LOUIS XIV.—1661-1697.

How Louis XIV. got the name of "the Great;" how he held a splendid court at Versailles; how Fouquet was disgraced and Colbert became Minister of Finance; how a Triple Alliance was formed against France; how Louis made war on Holland; how Turenne was killed; how the Treaty of Nimeguen was signed; how Louis revoked the Edict of Nantes; how a "Grand Alliance" was formed against France; how the war on the Rhine continued; and how the Peace of Ryswick was signed.

THE day after Mazarin's death, Louis XIV. was asked to whom the ministers should refer official questions in future. "To me," was his reply; and this answer showed what was to be his future policy, expressed in his famous saying, "I am the State" (*l'Etat c'est moi*). He was then twenty-three, and from that time to the day of his death, fifty-four years later, he was his own prime minister, working five or six hours a day as hard as if he had been a clerk in an office, instead of being the King of France. Not a document or a warrant was allowed to be issued unless he had first signed it, and probably no king in history, except Frederick the Great of Prussia, ever even attempted thus to carry on the whole business of the State single-handed. As Mazarin had prophesied of him when he was quite a child, "there was stuff enough in him to make four kings, and one honest man."

This industry was perhaps the best and strongest point in Louis' character; for he was badly educated, and had no brilliant qualities either as a soldier or a statesman; but he had, what was perhaps more important, a firm belief in himself,

and a strong resolve to carry out the two great ideas of his life, namely, to make himself the absolute master of France, and to make France the most powerful state in Europe.

In appearance, Louis was every inch a king. His fine person, his stately presence, his grace of manner, and the dignity which he knew how to give to his slightest words or actions, made him as conspicuous among his courtiers as the queen-bee of the hive. As an English statesman said of him at the time, "if he was not the greatest king, he was the best actor of majesty ever known." Even his own sons and grand-daughters, the princes and princesses of the blood royal, were awe-struck, and trembled in his presence; and the proudest nobles of his court thought it a high honour to hold the king's candlestick when he went to bed, or to hand him a towel when he washed his hands.

Louis turned the hunting-box built by his father at Versailles into a magnificent palace, with endless suites of rooms, with the walls and ceilings covered with pictures by the most famous painters of the time, and with the windows looking out upon stately gardens, with terraces and fountains. At Versailles Louis collected all the most noble and gallant men of the day, as well as great poets and dramatists; for France was then full of famous and brilliant writers, and many of them might be seen in the court of Versailles—such as dramatists like Corneille and Racine, and Molière, the author of the most amusing comedies ever put upon the stage: great preachers like Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Massillon; and philosophers like Pascal and La Bruyère.

Almost the first act of Louis, after taking the government into his own hands, was to inquire into

the state of the finances, especially of the taxation, which pressed heavily on the poorer classes; and he found that Fouquet, the minister of finance, had falsified his accounts, and wasted the revenue, while he had amassed a large private fortune for himself. Fouquet's country house at Vaux was one of the most splendid palaces in France, with beautiful gardens, and rooms filled with paintings and statues, of which he had imported three ship-loads from Italy. Louis was entertained at Vaux with such magnificence, that he became jealous of so much wealth and display on the part of one of his subjects; and shortly afterwards Fouquet was tried on a charge of high treason, for it was said that among his papers had been found evidence of a plot to dethrone the king; and, though his life was spared, he was condemned to life-long imprisonment in the dungeons of Pignerol.

Colbert now became minister of finance, and his industry and talent for business did for France much what Sully had tried to do under Henry IV., that is, he increased the revenue while he lessened the taxation. In six years' time he doubled the amount paid in to the royal treasury, while he diminished the expenditure by one-half. He saw that the true wealth of a country lies in its productions, and he encouraged arts and manufactures of every kind—such as those of silk, cloth, china, glass, and tapestry; and he carried out many useful and important works besides. He built a large fleet for the defence of the coast; he made roads and harbours; and had a canal cut through the province of Languedoc to join the Atlantic to the Mediterranean.

Colbert was greatly distressed at the luxury and

extravagance of the Court, and at the immense sums wasted by Louis on his palaces at Marly and Versailles. "A useless banquet which costs a thousand crowns gives me incredible pain," he wrote to the king; "but when it is a question of millions of gold for any good purpose, I would sell all my property, I would pawn my wife and children, and go a-foot all my life, to provide it, if necessary." But Louis was deaf to all the remonstrances of the minister when he urged economy, and before long he entered on those foreign wars which lasted nearly to the end of his reign, and which caused an incredible waste both of the lives and money of his subjects.

When the King of Spain (Philip IV.) died in 1665, Louis set up a claim to the Spanish Provinces of Flanders and Brabant, as being the property of his wife, the Spanish king's daughter. After two years of useless negotiations, a French army under Turenne overran the whole of Flanders almost without opposition; while Condé, who had become reconciled to his country after the Peace of the Pyrenees, subdued Franche-Comté, as Burgundy was now called.

Great alarm was excited in Europe by these ambitious schemes of Louis, and in 1668 a TRIPLE ALLIANCE was formed by the three great Protestant powers, England, Holland, and Sweden, who bound themselves to force Louis to make peace with Spain and cease from further aggressions. Louis, accordingly, made peace at Aix-la-Chapelle the same year, and gave back Franche-Comté to the Spaniards, receiving instead some towns on the Flemish frontiers.

But this peace did not last long, for Louis could not forgive Holland for joining the Triple Alliance,

and he made a secret treaty with Charles II. of England, who hated the Dutch as cordially as Louis did himself. Charles promised to join Louis in an invasion of Holland, and was to receive 120,000*l.* a year while the war lasted.

Then in 1672 Louis declared war against Holland. There was no sort of pretext or excuse for this war. It was like the League of Cambray against Venice,* at an earlier period of French history. The Dutch were a proud and wealthy republic, and had dared to resist the ambitious schemes of the French king, and Louis determined they should suffer for their insolence. So he crossed the Meuse with a magnificent army, attended by his war minister, Louvois, the great Condé, and Vauban, the most skilful engineer of the time, who has been called "the soul of sieges." The Dutch fleet was powerful enough, but on land they could hardly muster 25,000 men to meet the French. Moreover, the different states of Holland were divided among themselves, some of them being attached to Prince William of Orange, and others devoted to their chief magistrate, John de Witt. Louis rejected all their terms of peace, crossed the Rhine, and took all the frontier towns; whereupon the Dutch populace, in their rage and terror, murdered John de Witt and his brother Cornelius, suspecting them of having conspired with the French king.

The young Prince of Orange, afterwards William III. of England, and the life-long enemy of Louis, now become Stadtholder, or President of the Dutch Republic, and he at once ordered the flood-gates and sluices to be opened in the dykes, and let the sea in, which soon covered the country up to the walls of

* See p. 122.

Amsterdam. The Dutch fleet sailed in to help the land forces, and they were soon reinforced by a large German army, sent by the Austrian Emperor, Leopold, and commanded by the famous Montecuculi, a general who was almost as great a master of the art of war as Turenne himself.

The war lasted several more years, and the French, under Turenne, won several battles; but Louis might now be said to stand alone against Europe, for in 1674 the English Parliament forced Charles II. to give up the French alliance and make peace with Holland, and thus the Dutch Republic was saved.

Louis, however, showed no signs of giving way. He again reduced Franche-Comté to submission; while Turenne crossed the Rhine, defeated the German army, and cruelly ravaged the Palatinate. Then in the winter of 1674, he made a brilliant march across the Vosges mountains, routed the Germans in battle after battle, and finally drove them out of Alsace.

Up to this time matters had gone well with the French, but in 1675 Turenne again met the German army under Montecuculi in front of the town of Sassbach. He was riding in front of his lines and giving his last orders for the battle. "I have them," he cried, "they shall not escape again;" but he had hardly uttered the words, when a cannon shot struck him and he fell dead from his horse. So died the greatest soldier and the most excellent man of his time. His soldiers were greatly dismayed at his death, and were forced to retreat before the Germans.

The next campaign was the last ever waged by the great Condé, for his health had been broken by the fatigues and hardships of a life of incessant war,

and he left the army, and retired to his palace at Chantilly, where he lived peacefully till his death, surrounded by the great poets and writers of the time.

The Duke of Luxembourg now commanded the French army on the Flemish frontiers, and he was almost as great a general as Turenne, but without his noble qualities. He defeated William of Orange in a great battle at Cassel, while the French fleet defeated the Dutch in a sea-fight off the isle of Stromboli. But the war was costing enormous sums both to France and Holland, and both countries were eager for peace. In 1678 Louis made a sudden march into Holland and took the towns of Ghent and Ypres, and the Dutch were so dismayed at these fresh victories that they decided to make peace at once. In the summer of this year the TREATY OF NIMEGUEN was signed between France and Holland, and soon afterwards Spain also acceded to it, giving up to France all Franche-Comté and eleven Flemish fortresses. Two years later, the Austrian Emperor also made peace with France.

Louis was now at the height of his glory, and took the title of "the Great." He was almost worshipped by his subjects, and a statue was erected to him in one of the great squares of Paris, representing him throned, with the conquered nations in chains at his feet, and triumphal arches were covered with sculptures of his victories. One thing greatly disturbed his mind at this time, and this was the recent marriage of his enemy, William of Orange, with the Princess Mary, daughter of the Duke of York, brother of Charles II. The marriage was so sudden that Louis was aghast at the intelligence. "The first news I had of it," he wrote, "was through the bonfires lighted in London."

Something must here be said about Louis' private life, and nothing could have been less worthy of a prince who styled himself "The most Christian King." He neglected his own wife, the Spanish princess whom he had married after the Peace of the Pyrenees, and he attached himself to one mistress after another, by whom he had many sons and daughters; and he always treated these children with far more favour and affection than he ever showed to the children of his lawful wife.

His queen died, after an unhappy life, in 1683, and soon afterwards Louis was secretly married to the woman who for many years past had exercised the greatest influence over him. This was Madame de Maintenon, the daughter of a Huguenot gentleman and the widow of a deformed poet named Scarron. She had been governess to some of the king's children, and her wit and powers of conversation had so fascinated Louis that he had for many years past devoted himself to her society and consulted her in all State matters. After the queen's death, Madame de Maintenon became Queen of France in all but the name, and almost every important event from this time may be traced directly or indirectly to her influence.

She was an extreme Catholic, and it was by her advice, added to that of the Jesuits, who were all-powerful at this time, that Louis was led to commit the worst as well as the most impolitic action of his reign, namely the REVOCATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES in 1685. By this act he took away all the religious and civil privileges which the Huguenots had enjoyed since the reign of Henry IV., forbade the Protestant worship, and banished all Protestant ministers from France. But the Huguenots themselves were forbidden, under the severest penalties,

to leave the country. Those who would not obey this harsh decree were imprisoned and tortured, and suffered every kind of outrage short of death. But numbers of them found means to escape, and fled from the country, carrying with them their skill and labour, for they were the best and most industrious artisans of the time, to Holland and England. Many of them set up their looms in the Spital Fields in London; and many others, among them Marshal Schomberg, entered foreign armies. In fact, by this cruel and foolish policy, France is said to have lost 300,000 of her best inhabitants.

The indignation on the Continent against this barbarous act of the French king was extreme, and the princes of Europe joined together in the so-called LEAGUE OF AUGSBURG against their common enemy. Even the Catholic King of Spain joined this League, as well as Sweden, Austria, and the German princes. So far, however, from shrinking before these formidable odds, Louis himself began the attack. He set up a frivolous claim to the Palatinate, in the heart of Germany; his troops, under Luxembourg, overran the country as before, and being unable to keep it, they burnt and wasted everything they took, destroying farms and orchards and vineyards, and blowing up with gunpowder the grand palace of the Elector at Heidelberg. The peasants were driven from their homes, and wandered about starving and houseless, invoking the vengeance of heaven on the tyrant who had caused their misery.

This second wasting of the Palatinate caused furious indignation in Germany, and a GRAND ALLIANCE was now formed, with William of Orange at the head of it. He was now King of England, for James II. had been driven from his throne by his

subjects, and was an exile in France, where Louis generously gave him the palace of St. Germain as his residence, and besides this sent a fleet and an army to help him to recover his kingdom. But nothing followed from this expedition. William III. defeated the Irish and French forces at the battle of the Boyne in 1690, and two years later the French fleet was defeated at Cape la Hogue, and this was the last attempt made by Louis to recover the English crown for James II.

The war on the Rhine still continued, and Luxemburg fought battle after battle against William III., defeating him both at Steinkirk and Neerwinden, but never able to reap any advantage from his victories, owing to the skilful generalship of the English king. Louis himself took part in the war, and captured several towns, including Namur, a fortress of great strength; indeed, he preferred sieges to pitched battles, and, from his unwillingness to fight in the open field, got the name of "the king of reviews."

But in 1694, Luxembourg died, and the next year William III. recaptured Namur; and so great was the expense and misery caused by his continued war both to France and to England, that the PEACE OF RYSWICK was signed in 1697. By this treaty Louis was forced to give up all his conquests in the Netherlands and beyond the Rhine, and to acknowledge William III. as the lawful King of England. Strasburg was the only important frontier town left to France, and it was now strongly fortified by Vauban.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LOUIS XIV.—1697-1715.

How the War of the Spanish Succession began, and how Marlborough won some famous victories; how the French were in great distress, and how the Peace of Utrecht was signed; how the Jansenists were persecuted and Port Royal was destroyed; how the king's son and grandson died; how Louis XIV. died himself after a long reign.

AS we have seen, Louis XIV. had given up most of his conquests at the Peace of Ryswick. Indeed, the French frontier had been moved back for the first time since the death of Richelieu. But Louis was induced to make these easy terms by the hope of succeeding, before long, to a still more important possession, namely, the kingdom of Spain; for the King of Spain, Charles II., whose life for thirty years had been one long disease, was now evidently dying. He had neither brothers nor sons to succeed him; but the elder of his two sisters had married Louis XIV., and the younger one had married the Emperor Leopold of Austria, and it was probable that the immense kingdom of Spain, on which it was said the sun never set, with Flanders, Lombardy, Naples, Sicily, Mexico, and Cuba, would go either to a French or an Austrian prince,—to the House of Bourbon, or to the House of Hapsburg.

Even in Charles II.'s lifetime, several secret treaties had been made by which Louis XIV. and other sovereigns had agreed to divide the Spanish kingdom at his death; but just before Charles actually died, he was persuaded by the Jesuits and by Harcourt, the French ambassador, to make a will,

by which he left his kingdom to Louis XIV.'s grandson, the Duke of Anjou, since the other heir, the young Duke of Bavaria, to whom the kingdom was originally left by will, had died a few years previously.

On Charles's death in 1700, this will was made known, and Louis, after consulting his ministers, decided to accept the Spanish throne for his grandson, although he had renounced all claim to it at the Treaty of the Pyrenees. Accordingly, the Duke of Anjou, a dull, uncouth youth of seventeen, set off at once for Madrid, to take possession of his kingdom under the name of Philip V. "Go, my son," said Louis, when he set out, "The Pyrenees exist no longer;" meaning that the barrier between France and Spain was taken away, and that the two countries were now really one kingdom.

It was not likely that the great powers of Europe would submit without a struggle to see Spain under the control of Louis, and William III. would have declared war at once, but public opinion in England was divided, and Philip V. might have succeeded peaceably to the Spanish throne had not Louis given fresh offence by sending French troops to seize the fortresses on the borders of Flanders. Then, in 1701, James II. died at St. Germain, and Louis was so imprudent as to recognise his son "the Pretender," as King of England, though he had expressly promised at the treaty of Ryswick to recognise William III. He thus roused the anger of the English nation, and a second GRAND ALLIANCE was formed against him.

William III. died in 1702, but, says a historian, his spirit still animated the Grand Alliance, while his friend Heinsius, the great banker of Amsterdam, supplied the Allies with money, and Queen Anne sent

an English army under the Duke of Marlborough to carry on the war in Flanders and Italy.

Nothing could have been worse than the position of France at this time. Half her wealth had been destroyed in the last war; trade and commerce had languished; and throughout the country the distress and poverty of the people were extreme. Moreover, all the great ministers and generals of the old school were dead, such as Colbert and Louvois, Condé, Turenne, and Luxembourg. Their successors were feeble and incapable, and, excepting Villars and Vendome (a grandson of Henry IV.), there was not a captain of any eminence on the French side; while against them they had such masters of the art of war as Marlborough and Eugene of Savoy, another personal enemy of Louis. Prince Eugene had been born in Paris, and his mother was one of the beautiful nieces of Cardinal Mazarin. When a young man, he had wished to serve in the French army, but Louis rejected him, and so he went over to the Germans, who were glad enough to give him the command of their army. He had already won great renown in war, and was considered to be one of the best generals of the time.

As might be expected, this WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION is nothing more than a history of defeats and disasters suffered by the French: but as the campaigns of Marlborough are part of English history, it is not necessary to describe them fully here.

From the first, Marlborough carried everything before him, and recaptured most of the frontier fortresses of Flanders, while the French and Spanish fleets were defeated and burnt by Admiral Rooke in the bay of Vigo in 1702.

Villars won some battles in Bavaria in the following year, and would have invaded Austria, had he been supported by the Bavarians; but soon afterwards the French were deserted by one of their few remaining allies, the Duke of Savoy, and in 1704 was fought the famous battle of BLENHEIM, when the French army under Marshal Tallard was utterly defeated by Marlborough and Prince Eugene.

In Spain, Gibraltar and Barcelona were taken by the English, and Philip V. had to fly from Madrid. Then in 1706 Marlborough defeated the French under Villeroi in another of his great battles at RAMILIES, and the whole of Flanders was now lost to them; while in Italy the French suffered a severe defeat near Turin, and were driven out of Lombardy.

In 1707, Villars won some successes in Flanders; but in the following year Vendôme was defeated at Oudenarde; Lille, the strongest fortress in France, was captured by the allies; and in 1709 was fought the most murderous battle of the war at MALPLAQUET, where, though the French were defeated, the victors lost more than the vanquished.

The distress in France at this time was terrible. The country looked as if it had been wasted by war and pestilence; the peasants were seen in rags, half starved, and stripped of all they possessed, living on herbs, black bread, and water. To add to their distress, the cold in the winter of 1708 was so severe that rivers like the Seine and Rhone were frozen over; half the olive-trees and vines in France were killed by the frost, and the cattle died in hundreds for want of food.

So fearful indeed was the state of the country, that Louis had twice made offers of peace; but the Allies demanded that he should give up all his fron-

tier fortresses and should himself depose his grandson from the Spanish throne. Louis refused these humiliating conditions. "I am a Frenchman, as well as a king," he declared; "and if I must make war it shall be against my enemies, not against my own children." And then he appealed to his own subjects to make fresh efforts to raise money and men for the war, and they responded eagerly to his call. The nobles sent their gold plate to be melted down and coined into money; fresh taxes were imposed and cheerfully paid; ships laden with treasure arrived from Mexico and Peru, and volunteers joined the army in numbers.

From this time the French cause prospered. Vendôme won two brilliant victories in Spain, and Philip V. re-entered Madrid in triumph; and in 1710 the enemies of Marlborough at the English court, who were jealous of his fame and power, succeeded in disgracing him and in having him recalled from the seat of war. Fresh negotiations were then opened, which led to the PEACE OF UTRECHT in 1713, and the terms of it were far more reasonable than those which Louis had refused two years before. It was settled that the King of France could never be King of Spain as well, that Naples and Milan should be given up to Austria, that England should keep Gibraltar and Newfoundland, and that Louis should recognize Queen Anne and the Protestant succession, and give up his support of the Pretender. The Austrian Emperor made a separate treaty in the following year; and thus, after nearly thirty years of almost incessant war, and an incalculable waste of blood and treasure, France was at peace at last. This war is said to have cost the country two millions of men,

to have swelled the national debt to eighty-six millions of livres, and to have reduced a tenth of the population to beggary, and all to gratify the selfish ambition of one man; but, as you will see later on, the people of France took a terrible revenge on their king and his nobles in a later reign for all the misery and oppression under which they had suffered so long.

There were troubles at home as well as abroad during these last years of Louis XIV.'s long reign. The peasants of the Cevennes mountains, who still followed the Huguenot faith, were so oppressed and ill-used that they rebelled against the royal authority, and were only subdued by armed force after their houses had been burnt, and the country wasted by fire and sword.

Then a new religious sect, called the Jansenists from their founder Jansenius, had disputed the authority of the Pope, and had attacked the doctrines of the Jesuits. Early in the present reign they had established a sort of college at the monastery of Port Royal, near Versailles, and many men of learning and piety had retreated there, passing their time in prayer and study. Among them was a famous mathematician and philosopher, named Blaise Pascal, and it was from Port Royal that he had written his 'Provincial Letters,' which exposed the errors and false doctrines of the Romish Church. For sixty years the quarrel between the Jansenists and Jesuits had continued, and at last, in 1709, after a terrible persecution in which thirty thousand persons are said to have suffered torture or death, Father Tellier, the king's Jesuit confessor, persuaded Louis to destroy the convent of Port Royal, where there were now only a few aged nuns left of the once

famous community. Accordingly, the nuns were driven out, the convent was so utterly demolished that not one stone was left upon another, and even the bodies were taken from the graveyard and the ground ploughed up.

Louis lived only two years after the Peace of Utrecht, and these years were very sad ones. His only son, the Dauphin, or "Monseigneur," as he was called, had died suddenly in 1711 of small-pox; then the Duke of Burgundy, the pupil of the wise and excellent Fénélon, became Dauphin and showed great ability and promise. But in the next year (1712) he died of fever, with his young wife and their eldest child; and the heir of France was now the Duke of Anjou, the king's great-grandson, a feeble and sickly child only four years old. So uncertain were the chances of this child ever living to succeed to the throne, that Louis declared the Duke of Maine, his son by Madame de Montespan, to be legitimate, and the next heir in case of the young Dauphin's death.

A fortnight later, Louis was himself attacked by a mortal sickness, and it was clear that he had not long to live. He kept up his kingly dignity to the last, showing courage and calmness even in the agonies of death. "Why do you weep?" he said to some of his attendants, "did you think that I should never die?" He bade farewell to the officers and servants of the household, and then he ordered the little Dauphin to be brought to his bedside and embraced him tenderly. "My child," he said, "you are going to be a great king; do not imitate me in the taste I have had for building and for war; but strive to be at peace with your neighbours. Render to God what is His due, and cause your

subjects to honour Him. Follow good advice, and strive to be a comfort to your people, which unfortunately I have never been myself."

Louis died on September 1st, 1715, at the age of seventy-seven, after a reign of seventy-two years, the longest and most eventful reign in French history.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

LOUIS XV.—1715-1748.

How the Duke of Orleans became Regent, and Cardinal Dubois Prime Minister; how the country was in great distress, and how John Law tried to raise money and failed; how Orleans died and Bourbon became Prime Minister; how he was succeeded by Cardinal Fleury; how the War of the Austrian Succession began; how Louis XV. fell sick and recovered; how Marsha Saxe won some victories; how peace was made at Aix-la-Chapelle.

LITTLE regret was shown by the people of Paris at Louis XIV.'s death. His body was hurried to St. Denis with hardly any pomp, and no tears were shed at his funeral. As the young king was only five years old, it was necessary to appoint a Regent until he came of age. Louis XIV. had in his will named the Duke of Maine as governor to the young king, but this will was at once set aside, and the Duke of Orleans, who had married one of Louis XIV.'s daughters, became Regent, with a council of ministers to help him to govern the kingdom.

The regent's character was such a medley of virtues and vices that his mother had described it in a fable. All the fairies (she said) had come to

her son's birth, and each had given him some talent, so that he possessed them all. But one envious old fairy, whom they had forgotten to invite, came too late, and, indignant at being neglected, she had made all the fairies' talents and good qualities perfectly useless to him. Thus, while Orleans was brave, clever, generous, and good-natured, he was also weak, indolent, unstable, and wicked. And he assembled round him in the Palais Royal at Paris a set of courtiers who were as vicious and wicked as himself. Among them the worst, as well as the ablest, was his former tutor the Abbé Dubois; and this man, by taking advantage of Orleans' weak nature, raised himself by degrees to be a bishop, a cardinal, and finally Prime Minister of France.

Though Dubois was false and base, he was perhaps the ablest statesman since Richelieu; and he showed both skill and vigour in his management of affairs. He saw that the chief danger to France was the hostility of Spain, for the Spanish king, Philip V., hated the Duke of Orleans; so Dubois set to work, and by his clever negotiations he persuaded England and Holland to join France in a TRIPLE ALLIANCE (1717); and the next year Austria joined these three States, and thus made up the QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE.

Soon afterwards Dubois relieved Orleans from a danger in his own kingdom; for he discovered a plot against the regent's life, headed by Cellamare, the Spanish minister at Paris, and by the Duke of Maine and his wife, who was much the stronger character of the two. The conspirators were arrested, some of them being imprisoned and others banished.

Then followed a war with Spain, owing to the

ambition of Cardinal Alberoni, the Spanish minister, who completely ruled his master Philip V., and who hated the Quadruple Alliance. But the English fleet and the French army were too powerful for the Spaniards, and before a year had passed, Philip V. was obliged to make peace and banish Cardinal Alberoni from Madrid.

At home, France was in a terrible state owing to the poverty and distress which prevailed everywhere. The national debt amounted to 120 millions of our money, and it seemed as if general ruin must follow. The regent tried to raise money in various ways, but all his schemes failed. Then, at last, a Scotchman named John Law founded a bank, and declared that he would double the money of the country, if the people would put their gold and silver into his bank and receive his bank-notes in exchange; for the supply of gold, he said, was limited, but the supply of paper money was inexhaustible. He also started a Mississippi Company which had gold and silver mines in Louisiana, and which promised fabulous wealth to all who would take shares in it. At first there was a perfect craze to take shares in Law's bank, and the bank-notes fetched twenty times their value. But Law and his friends forgot the old rhyme that

> "The actual worth of anything
> Is just as much as it will bring."

So many of these notes were issued that they lost their value; people began to take their gold and silver from the bank; and no money was left to pay the unfortunate holders of the notes who had not exchanged them in time. Hundreds of families

were thus ruined, and Law himself had to escape from France.

From this time the regent gave himself up almost entirely to his disgraceful pleasures, and left the affairs of the nation in the hands of Cardinal Dubois, whose chief object seems to have been to secure as much wealth and as many offices for himself as he could. Meanwhile, the young king, who had been carefully educated by the good Abbé Fleury, came of age in 1723, and was betrothed to the eldest daughter of the Spanish king, Philip V. Orleans now resigned the regency, but neither he nor the infamous Cardinal Dubois survived long. Dubois, after reaching the summit of his ambition and making an enormous fortune, died suddenly of a painful illness in the year 1723, without even time to receive the last sacraments; and two years later, Orleans himself died of apoplexy.

The Duke of Bourbon, a grandson of the great Condé, then became Prime Minister, but he was a dull and ignorant man, and the real power lay with his favourite, Madame de Prie. By her influence the marriage which had been arranged between Louis XV. and the Infanta of Spain was broken off, and the king was married in 1725 to Maria Leczynski, daughter of Stanislaus, who had been king of Poland, but had been driven out of his kingdom by the Russians and had taken refuge in France. Philip V. of Spain was so indignant at the insult, that he allied himself with Austria against France and England, and it was clear that there must be another European war before long.

Shortly afterwards Bourbon fell into disgrace, and Cardinal Fleury, the king's former tutor, a wise and gentle old man, became Prime Minister, and

set himself to work to restore order and peace to France. For some years nothing disturbed the general tranquillity; but in 1733 the throne of Poland became vacant, and the Poles selected Stanislaus, father of Louis XV.'s queen, to be their king. France supported Stanislaus, while Russia, Austria, and Denmark, all took up arms against him. They drove Stanislaus from Warsaw, and made his rival, Augustus III. of Saxony, king of Poland.

Though the French had failed to place Stanislaus on the throne of Poland, they determined to carry on the war against Austria on their own account. They accordingly sent two armies, one to the Rhine under the Duke of Berwick, a son of James II. of England, and the other, under Marshal Villars, now an old man of eighty-two, to drive the Austrians out of Northern Italy. But Berwick was killed by a cannon-ball while besieging Philipsburg; and in the same year (1733) the brave old Villars died of age and fatigue at Turin. He heard of Berwick's death just before he expired himself. "That fellow was always lucky," he said.

Peace was made at Vienna in the following year, and the treaty which followed was more important than the war; for Don Carlos, the king of Spain's son, got Naples and Sicily, while France got the Duchy of Lorraine, which was to be ruled by Stanislaus till his death, on condition that he gave up his claims to the crown of Poland.

In 1740 the Emperor of Austria, Charles VI., died, and though it had been expressly agreed by what is called the PRAGMATIC SANCTION, a family agreement among the princes of the House of Austria, that his daughter, the young and beautiful Maria Theresa, should succeed him, no less than

five different princes laid claim to different parts of the Austrian Empire. The first to act was Frederic II. of Prussia (generally known as Frederick the Great), who seized upon the province of Silesia; and then a French army invaded Austria and threatened to take Vienna. Thus began the WAR OF THE AUSTRIAN SUCCESSION.

But Maria Theresa showed great courage and spirit in this extremity. She fled into Hungary, called together the nobles of the country, and appeared before them in her mourning dress and carrying her little child in her arms. "I am deserted by my friends," she said in Latin, "I am pursued by my foes and attacked by my relations; I have no hope left except in your fidelity and courage; and we, that is my son and I, look to you for safety." She had hardly finished speaking when all the nobles present drew their swords and waved them above their heads, exclaiming like one man; *Moriamur pro rege nostro, Maria Theresa*—"Let us die for our king, Maria Theresa!"

The nobles collected their followers, and all the wild tribes of Hungarians, with strange names, such as Magyars and Croates, Pandours and Hussars, poured down from the mountains and attacked and massacred the French in all directions, so that scarcely half of them escaped. And thus Maria Theresa saved her empire.

Shortly afterwards, in 1743, Cardinal Fleury died, and Louis XV. now took the government into his own hands. He said to his courtiers the day after his old tutor's death; "Here am I, gentlemen, my own prime minister;" but though he called himself his own master, he was really governed by a beautiful woman called the Duchess of Châteauroux. She

had both spirit and ambition, and did her best to persuade Louis to shake off his indolence, and take the command of his army in person.

By this time the English king, George II., had determined to help Maria Theresa against the French, and he led an army to her assistance. The French under the Duke of Noailles were defeated in 1743 by the English and Hanoverian army at Dettingen, which was the last battle in which a king of England personally took part.

The following year Louis himself joined his army, which was commanded by the celebrated Marshal Saxe, the best general of the time. But at Metz Louis fell ill of a fever, and for some days his life was despaired of; and, strange as it may seem, this worthless king was so beloved by his subjects that nothing could exceed their grief so long as he was in danger. And when the news of his recovery came, thanksgiving services were held in all the churches, and the people even kissed the boots of the courier who brought the glad tidings. It was from this that Louis got the title, which he so little deserved, of "The Well-Beloved," and he might well ask, "What have I done for them that they should love me so much?"

In 1745, the German Emperor Charles VII. died, and Maria Theresa's husband, Francis, Grand Duke of Tuscany, became emperor in his stead. Peace might now have been made, for the question of the Austrian succession was now settled, but the haughty queen, Maria Theresa, wished to revenge herself on France, and would not hear of peace.

So the war continued, and in 1745, Marshal Saxe defeated the English and Dutch army at FONTENOY after six hours of desperate fighting; and the

principal cities of Flanders surrendered to him almost without a struggle. But in this same year the French were driven out of Italy by the Austrian forces.

During the two following years Marshal Saxe continued to take fortress after fortress in Holland and Flanders. Antwerp and every strong town along the Dutch frontier surrendered to him, till at last peace was concluded at AIX-LA-CHAPELLE in 1748, by which it was agreed that all conquests made during the war should be given up, that Francis I. should be recognised as Emperor, and Maria Theresa should remain Queen of Hungary; but that Frederic of Prussia should keep Silesia, which he had seized at the beginning of the war. France had gained nothing by this struggle, but had ruined her navy and commerce, and greatly increased her national debt.

CHAPTER XL.

LOUIS XV. (*continued*)—1748-1789.

How Louis gave everything up to Madame de Pompadour; how there was much poverty and discontent in France; how war again broke out between France and England; how the "Family Compact" was made; how the Jesuits were banished; how Madame de Pompadour died; how Choiseul became Prime Minister; and how things went from bad to worse.

LOUIS had showed something of the courage and spirit of a king during the late war; but he now sank into indolence and vice, shutting himself up in his palace at Versailles, and caring nothing for his government or people. His favourite,

Madame de Pompadour, a clever and extremely beautiful woman, ruled him completely, and for twenty years she was practically mistress of France, just as Madame de Maintenon had been in the reign of Louis XIV. All the business of the State passed through her hands, and she sold all the chief offices both in the church and the government to the highest bidder.

Meanwhile, nothing could be more wretched than the general condition of the country. The peasants were worse off than they had been even in the last reign. Not only did the tax-gatherers and tithe collectors take from them a great part of their income, but the lords of the manors in whose fields they worked had the right of using their labour in harvest time, and taking toll of all that grew in their fields. Then they had to pay *octroi*, a tax on everything they carried to market, and *gabelle*, a tax on salt (whether they used it or not), levied on every member of a family, even on newly-born infants. The greater part of this money was squandered by the king's favourites and courtiers, and their extravagance and luxury seemed to increase every year. Hence one is not surprised to read in histories of the time, that in some provinces the peasants were "dying like flies" of starvation, and eating herbs and grass instead of bread, while the nobles were feasting in their palaces. And we are told that the Duke of Orleans (a good and pious man, very unlike his father the wicked Regent) once threw down a loaf made of sawdust and fern upon the king's council-table, saying, "See, Sire, what food your subjects are eating." But Louis was so indolent and wrapped up in his own pleasure that he cared nothing for the sufferings of his people.

"After me, the deluge may come," he is reported to have said,—"Things will last my time."

But there were signs even in this reign that a great crisis in French history was near at hand. Not only were manners and morals growing worse each year, while the nobles were losing gradually all the influence of their rank; but besides this, there was a deep feeling of discontent among the lower classes, and their discontent was openly expressed by a new school of writers, headed by the famous Voltaire, and followed towards the end of this reign by the equally famous Jean Jacques Rousseau. These writers attacked *authority* in every shape, whether in law or government or religion. In their eyes, everything that existed was evil, and the only remedy was to destroy all existing powers, and to rebuild society on a new basis and system. These "new opinions" were hailed with delight by men of almost every rank in society, for they were becoming angry and discontented at the intolerable abuses and oppression under which the nation suffered; and it was this suffering and oppression, increased and intensified during the last thirty years of Louis XV.'s long reign, which caused at last the great Revolution described in the next chapter.

But to return to foreign affairs. After eight years of peace, a new war broke out in 1756 between England and France. It arose from a quarrel as to the boundaries of the English and French possessions in Canada, but it soon spread to Europe, and nearly every European State took part in it. But these States had changed sides since the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, for France, Austria and Russia were now allied against England and Prussia. The secret of this change was said

to be that Frederic II. had spoken contemptuously of Madame de Pompadour, while Maria Theresa of Austria had written her several courteous letters, and addressed her as her "dear sister." Be this as it may, Frederic II. had all Europe against him, excepting England. As he said himself, "I have no allies left except valour and perseverance." These qualities, however, stood him in good stead throughout this SEVEN YEARS' WAR (as it was called), and he showed marvellous qualities as a general. He forced every man in Prussia to become a soldier, and though his kingdom was only a small one, he levied an army of sixty thousand men, perfectly drilled and disciplined, and with this army he defied both French and Austrians. Though often defeated, he was never dismayed, even when Prussia was invaded by four armies at once, and Berlin itself was in the possession of the enemy. He defeated the French at Rosbach, and repulsed the Austrians in battle after battle, sometimes attacking and sometimes retreating, but always showing the greatest military skill.

While this war was going on in Europe, the French and English were still fighting in Canada, and in 1759 the French forts on the river St. Lawrence were taken by General Amherst, and soon afterwards General Wolfe made the famous assault on Quebec, in which he lost his life. The French surrendered Quebec and retreated to Montreal, but in 1760 that city surrendered to the English, and thus all Canada was lost to France.

The Duke of Choiseul was now Prime Minister of France, and in 1761 he made a treaty, known as the FAMILY COMPACT, by which the French and Spanish kings bound themselves in the closest alli-

ance to defend their possessions mutually throughout the world. But the only result of this alliance was that England at once proclaimed war against Spain, and the English fleet attacked and seized all the islands in the West Indies belonging both to France and Spain.

Europe generally had grown weary of this seven years' war, and a treaty was made at Paris, in 1763, which was most humiliating to the French, for they gave up to England nearly all their American possessions, such as Canada and the West India Islands, as well as all their conquests in India, except a few factories on the coast.

No sooner was peace established abroad than troubles began at home. The Jesuits had become the most powerful religious order in Christendom, and exercised a vast and secret influence, not only in foreign courts, but in almost every noble family in France. They had sent missionaries into almost every quarter of the globe, and had amassed great wealth in their trading enterprises. Their power, their riches, their ambition, and the false and dangerous doctrines which they professed, caused them to be both feared and hated. They had been attacked and denounced by Pascal in the last reign, and recently by Voltaire and other free-thinkers of his school. Moreover, they had deeply offended Madame de Pompadour, by exposing the wickedness of her life and conduct, and she and the Duke of Choiseul, who hated them equally with her, persuaded the Parliament of Paris to pass a decree in 1762, by which the Order was formally suppressed in France, and all their wealth confiscated to the State.

Five years later they were banished from Spain, and in 1773 the Pope and Cardinals of Rome pro-

nounced that "for the welfare of Christendom it was better that the Order should cease to exist."

Madame de Pompadour, however, did not long survive her triumph over the Jesuits. She died in 1764, having ruled both the king and the kingdom up to the hour of her death. To show how cold and selfish Louis XV. had become, it is said that, as her funeral procession passed the palace windows on its way to Paris in a heavy shower of rain, the king's only remark was, "The Marchioness has a very unpleasant day for her journey."

In the following year the Dauphin, a blameless and excellent young prince, died of consumption; his wife soon followed him; and in 1768 the patient and neglected queen, Maria Leczinski, also died. Louis showed some real sorrow at his wife's death, and for a time it seemed as if he intended to lead a new life himself. But he soon relapsed into his old habits of vice, and fell completely under the control of another wicked and abandoned woman, Madame du Barry, who ruled him as completely as Madame de Pompadour had done before.

The last years of this miserable reign were taken up by a quarrel between the Duke of Choiseul and the rival minister the Duke of Aiguillon. It ended in the disgrace of Choiseul, who then retired to his country estate, where he lived surrounded by the best and most brilliant society of the time.

After Choiseul's retirement, there was nothing but misgovernment, misery, and oppression throughout France; and the king's ministers were so feeble and incapable, that they allowed the ancient kingdom of Poland to be broken up and divided by Frederic the Great and Catherine, the Empress of Russia. Even Louis XV. felt the shame and injustice of

thus abandoning this brave little State. "Ah! if Choiseul had been here," he exclaimed "this would never have happened."

In 1744 Louis died of the small-pox, hated and despised by the people who had once called him "The Well-Beloved;" and his long reign of fifty-four years was certainly the most miserable and calamitous in French history. With him may be said to end "the Old Régime" (as it is called), that is, the almost despotic monarchy which had been built up with such care by his predecessors.

CHAPTER XLI.

LOUIS XVI.—1774-1789.

Of the character of Louis XVI. and his Queen, Marie Antoinette; how war still continued, and how the poverty and distress increased; how peace was made at last, and the States-General met at Versailles; how the National Assembly was formed; how the mob in Paris destroyed the Bastille.

LOUIS XVI. was only twenty years old when he began to reign, and when the news of his grandfather's death was brought to him, he and his young wife fell upon their knees, exclaiming, "O God, direct us and protect us! we are too young to reign."

Louis himself was full of good intentions, pious and honest, and was everything that is morally good; but he was weak and irresolute, and wanted the strength of mind necessary to a king in such troublesome times. Moreover, he was clumsy and awkward in appearance, and had none of that

natural dignity which the French looked for in their kings. His tastes were simple, and hunting was the only amusement he cared for; and, when he could not hunt, nothing pleased him better than to shut himself up in his own room and make locks and keys like a common workman.

His queen, Marie Antoinette, was a very different character. She was the daughter of Maria Theresa, the famous Austrian Empress, and had much of her mother's spirit and courage, but she had been married when she was only fifteen, and had little experience or knowledge of the world. She was too fond of dress and foolish extravagance, and passed her time in amusements of every kind, banquets and balls and fêtes without end; and the consequence was that all the misery and wretchedness which prevailed in France was set down to her wasting the public money on her own pleasures. It was said that she had persuaded the king to give her a diamond necklace of incalculable value, at a time when the people were starving for want of food. And so by degrees she became hated as no woman has been hated by a people before or since, and the mob of Paris invented a hundred nicknames for her: "the Austrian," "the Baker's wife" (in allusion to the scarcity of bread), and "Madame Deficit," because the deficiency of money was thought to be owing to her extravagance.

This want of money was the most serious trouble of the times. The national debt was increasing, and the income obtained from taxation was not sufficient to meet the yearly expenses of the court and government. One minister after another tried to put matters straight and restore some order in the finances, but all failed. Turgot, Malesherbes,

and Maurepas all proposed wise schemes of economy and reform, but the fact still remained that there was scarcely enough money to pay the army, while the peasantry and even the poorer classes in Paris were almost starving for want of food.

At last, in 1777, Necker, a wealthy Swiss merchant, became minister of finance, and by his wise measures he soon effected a great saving in the public expenditure; but in the following year additional expenses were incurred by a new war, for France unwisely allied herself with the North American States in their rebellion against England.

A French fleet was fitted out, and several naval battles were fought between the French and English; while many young nobles, such as La Fayette and Noailles, served as volunteers in the American armies, and fought under Washington. In 1781 the French and American fleets blockaded the English army under Lord Cornwallis in York Town and forced him to surrender, and on the same day the English Government recognized the independence of the United States.

In the West Indies the French were not so fortunate, for their fleet was utterly defeated by Admiral Rodney, and their largest ship, "The City of Paris," was taken by the English.

Spain as well as France took part in this war against England, and in 1782 the famous siege of Gibraltar took place, when the fortress was most gallantly defended by General Elliott with a small army against 40,000 French and Spanish. Large floating batteries were moored under the rock, and kept up an incessant fire; but the English general fired red hot cannon-balls, which blew up the powder magazines and destroyed the batteries. And though

this siege lasted till the end of the war, Gibraltar was never taken, and remains to this day an English possession.

In 1782 there was a change in the English Government, and the new ministry made peace with France. This peace (concluded at Versailles in 1783) was far more favourable to the French than the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle made twenty years before, for they got back some of their possessions in the East Indies as well as some of their West India Islands.

Necker had been dismissed from office, although he was a wise and prudent minister, but his successor Calonne, a great friend of Marie Antonette, was so foolish and extravagant, that Necker was recalled. He returned to office in 1789, and he persuaded the king to call together the States-General, which had not met since the reign of Louis XIII., a hundred and seventy years before. Its members were elected by the people much as our members of Parliament are, but with the difference that there were nobles and priests among them as well as the "Third Estate" or Commons. But there were nearly 600 members of the third estate, who thus doubled the number of the nobles and clergy.

Accordingly, on May 5th, 1789, the States-General met at Versailles, and this day may be said to be the last day of the old monarchy of France, for from that time the real power in the State passed from the king to the people. At first little was done by the States-General, for the Third Estate were resolved to have everything their own way, and refused to be guided by the nobles. Their great orator was Mirabeau, and after several violent speeches, he persuaded them to take the name of the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, as they really represented the French

nation. Then the king became alarmed, and closed the great hall at Versailles, where the deputies of the Commons had been accustomed to meet; but instead of separating, the deputies met in the tennis-court close by, and, when the king sent one of his officers to command them to disperse, Mirabeau made the famous answer: "Return and tell your master that we are here by the will of the people, and that we will only be driven out at the point of the bayonet."

Louis then, by the advice of the queen, took the unwise step of trying to maintain his power by force, and sent forty thousand troops into Paris; but this only provoked a dangerous riot. The mob rose in arms at once, tore up the pavement and made barricades, armed themselves with pikes and muskets, and broke into the Hôtel de Ville (or Town Hall) and seized the treasure that was kept there. All the shops were closed, and the rioters paraded the streets wearing ribbons of red, white, and blue, or the tricolour, which has been the emblem of the Republic ever since. The royal troops could do nothing against them—in fact, many of them joined the insurgents.

The following day (July 14th) a body of rioters attacked the Bastille, a royal fortress and prison, defended by a moat and walls of great thickness. The little garrison bravely defended themselves; but the rioters brought up cannon and forced an entrance into the prison, where, however, only a few poor debtors were found. The building was destroyed and the walls levelled to the ground, while the governor and his officers were murdered, and their heads were fixed on pikes and carried in triumph about the streets.

While these terrible scenes were taking place in Paris, Louis was still in his palace at Versailles, when one of his courtiers came to tell him of the taking of the Bastille. "Why, this is a revolt," said the astonished king. "No, sire," replied the nobleman, "it is a revolution."

CHAPTER XLII.

LOUIS XVI. (*continued*)—1789-1793.

How the National Assembly did away with the rights of the nobles and clergy; how a great banquet took place at Versailles; how the mob broke into the palace and murdered the Swiss guards; how the royal family were brought to Paris; how they tried to escape; how the mob massacred the priests and royalists; how the National Convention abolished royalty; how Louis was tried and executed.

LOUIS did his best to appease his angry subjects. He came to Paris himself, escorted by the same rioters who had destroyed the Bastille, and showed himself at the windows of the town hall with a tricoloured cockade in his hat. But this was of little use, and almost the next day, Foulon, one of the ministers, who was said to have raised the price of bread, was hung by the mob from the iron fastenings of a lamp or lantern at the corner of the street; and from this time the dreadful cry of *à la lanterne*—"to the lantern with him"—was the signal that some victim was to be hung by the people without a trial.

In the country matters grew daily worse, and the hunger and distress of the people were increased by the bad seasons which came year after year. In

1788, a terrible hailstorm, which came on about harvest time, had destroyed all the crops and beaten down the corn and vine-trees, and this winter was almost the severest ever known. Driven to despair, at last, the peasants rose against their landlords, who were forced to fly for their lives, and on the 4th of August, 1789, the National Assembly abolished all the feudal rights of the nobility as well as their titles. Every one was now addressed as "citizen" or "citizeness," as it might be. There were to be no more dukes or princes, and even the king's cousin, the Duke of Orleans, who was one of the most bitter of the revolutionary party, called himself simply *Egalité* (Equality) Orleans. All church tithes were taken away from the clergy, and the Assembly decided that no ministers of the Church should be paid by the State in France for the future, and that the clergy must live as they best could. Many of the richer people were alarmed by this, and gave up their jewelry and other valuables for the public good. In spite of his unwillingness, Louis was obliged to accept and confirm all these changes, simply because he could not help himself; and he was also obliged to accept a new "Constitution" or form of government, which took nearly all the power from the king and placed it in the hands of the National Assembly.

Queen Marie Antoinette had far more spirit than her husband, and was indignant at seeing the royal authority thus slighted and made of no account; and at a great banquet given by the officers of the guards in the theatre at Versailles, she appeared in one of the boxes with the king and her children. All the guests at once rose to their feet and welcomed them with loud shouts; and then they sang

a famous national song, beginning, *O Richard, O mon roi, l'univers t'abandonne*—"O Richard, O my king, all the world deserteth thee." Then they trampled the tricolour—the republican emblem—under their feet, and put the white cockade, the badge of the Bourbon family, in their hats.

When the news of this banquet reached Paris, the mob was again roused to fury at what they thought an insult to the people; and a number of the lowest rabble, headed by some of the fierce fish-wives from the markets, set out at once for Versailles. They burst into the Hall of Assembly, where the deputies were sitting, and cried out loudly for bread; and though the king, by his presence and kindly manner, appeased them for the moment, early the following morning they forced their way into the palace, and killed some of the Swiss guards, who tried to bar the doors. The queen had only just time to escape from her bedroom through a narrow passage which led to the king's room, when some of the rioters forced their way in, and pierced with their pikes the bed from which she had just risen. Happily, Lafayette, who had great influence with the mob, prevented them from doing further mischief; but they insisted on the royal family coming back to Paris; and Louis and his family were accordingly escorted thither by the same rabble who had come out to Versailles. The fish-wives exulted over their captives; "We shall not die of hunger now," they cried, "for we have got the baker, and the baker's wife, and the little apprentice."

Louis was now, as he must have felt himself, a prisoner in his own palace of the Tuileries. He could not stir outside the gates without an escort of

the national guards; and he was almost deserted by the nobles of his court, many of whom had fled for safety across the frontiers. Even the princes of his own family thought their lives no longer safe, and sought shelter in Germany or England.

On the 14th of July, 1790 (the day on which the Bastille had been taken in the previous year), a great meeting was held in the Champs de Mars at Paris, when all the members of the Assembly, the national guards, and a vast multitude of people were present; and in their presence Louis took a solemn oath that he would be true to the new constitution of the country, and in their turn the deputies swore that they would be faithful to the king. Queen Marie Antoinette was present, and she held up the little dauphin in her arms that it might be seen that he was included in this mutual agreement between the king and his people. There were great rejoicings after the ceremony, and in the evening the people danced upon the spot where the Bastille had stood a year before.

But though these events gave a faint gleam of hope that quiet might be restored, troubles soon broke out again, and in the following year Mirabeau, the only man who could have saved the monarchy, died of an illness caused by the excesses of his life. Not only was he the greatest orator of the day, but he had more just and reasonable views than most of his party, and was trusted alike by the court and by the republicans. Had he lived, he might have been able to have checked the revolution and helped the king to remain on his throne, while greater powers were given to the National Assembly. But his death left everything in the hands of the more violent republicans;

and Louis knew that his last hope was gone. His only thought now was how to escape from France, for he felt that his life was no longer safe in the midst of his blood-thirsty enemies. Arrangements were made for his flight, and at midnight, on the 20th of June, 1791, Louis and his family, disguised as Germans, left the Tuileries in one of the heavy coaches used at the time, and actually got as far as Varennes on their way to the German frontier. But they had been recognised by a post-master's son, as they stopped in a small town, and an armed force was sent to arrest them and bring them back to Paris. Unfortunately, the royal coach was delayed on the road, and the escort of soldiers who should have protected them missed their way. The end of it was that the royal family were brought back prisoners in charge of the guards sent by the Assembly, five days after they had left Paris, as they hoped, for ever.

The National Assembly was dissolved at the end of this year, and a new body of deputies, known as the LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, now took the government into their hands. Though they were all republicans—that is, in favour of a government by the people instead of by a king—they were of different opinions as to the best way of establishing it. Those who sat on the right side of the president—the *Côté Droit*—were the most moderate in their views, and would have liked to have maintained a show of monarchy; those on the left side were more violent republicans, and were known as the *Girondins*, from the department of the Gironde, where many of these deputies came from; but the most violent of all were those who sat high up on the benches on the extreme left, and were known as the

Mountain, and among them were the three terrible revolutionists, Danton, Marat, and Robespierre. Most of this last party belonged to the Club of the Jacobins, who met in a church belonging to the convent of the Jacobins, and were the fiercest and most violent of the Red Republicans; and it was to them that all the horrors of the Reign of Terror, described in the next chapter, were mainly owing.

The other princes of Europe viewed the condition of France with horror and alarm, and the kings of Austria and Prussia demanded that Louis should be restored to his throne, and their confiscated property given back to the French clergy. But instead of yielding, the Girondins, who were now in power, at once declared war against Austria and Prussia, and sent three large armies to defend their frontiers. Louis was obliged to consent to this, although he might have exercised his right of veto, or refused his approval. But when the Assembly proposed to declare all the emigrant nobles (that is, those who had fled out of the country for safety) traitors, and to arrest and banish all the clergy who would not submit to the new constitution, the king resolutely refused to sanction these acts of tyranny. Thereupon, the mob of Paris again rose, and armed themselves with pikes, scythes, and axes, and carried banners inscribed "death to tyrants" and "liberty or death." One of them even carried a bullock's heart on the end of his pike, labelled "the heart of an aristocrat." These ruffians, headed by a brewer named Santerre, forced their way into the Tuileries and rushed up the grand staircase into the chamber where Louis was standing with a few of his friends. But the king never lost his courage for a moment, and when the foremost of the rioters insolently

demanded that he should banish the priests and choose his ministers from the Republicans, he simply answered: "This is neither the time nor the place for such demands; I will do all that is required by the constitution." The king's firmness impressed the mob, and after a while they retired from the palace. But on the 10th of August in the same year, 1792, the mob rose again in overwhelming numbers, and brought with them fifty pieces of cannon, which they mounted along the quays of the Seine opposite the Tuileries. The national guards joined them, and only the Swiss guards were left to defend the palace. Louis saw that resistance was hopeless, and he left the Tuileries with his family and sought safety in the hall of the National Assembly, where the members were then sitting. The brave Swiss guards, whom he had left at the palace, were slaughtered at their posts after a heroic resistance; and Paris was now in the hands of the Jacobins and their terrible leaders, Danton, Marat, and Robespierre.

The king and his family were taken to the gloomy prison of the Temple—an ancient fortress of the Knight Templars—and were closely guarded night and day. Except to walk in the narrow strip of garden, they were not allowed to stir beyond the walls.

A "Committee of General Security" was now formed by the Jacobins, and Danton declared that it was necessary to strike the royalists with terror. All persons suspected of being friendly to the monarchy were arrested and imprisoned: the barriers at the gates of the city were closed and guarded so that none of the victims could escape; and on the 2nd of September a band of ruffians, hired and paid by

the Jacobins, went round from prison to prison, dragged out the wretched prisoners, and barbarously murdered them in the courtyards outside. More than two hundred priests were among the victims, and we are told by an eye-witness that they met their death with as much joy as if they were going to a marriage feast. These terrible scenes of slaughter lasted four days, and women as well as men were put to death. Even the beautiful Duchess of Lamballe, Marie Antoinette's friend, was cut to pieces by the ruffians, who fixed her head upon a pike and carried it beneath the windows of the Temple. It is said that the queen fainted with horror at the sight.

The same terrible scenes took place in Lyons and Orleans and other cities. Everywhere the peasants rose against the nobles, burnt their country houses and destroyed their property; while in the principal towns a new instrument of death was set up, known as the guillotine, from a Doctor Guillotine, a member of the National Assembly, who had invented it, or rather, had first proposed its use. A knife was suspended by a weight in a wooden frame mounted on a scaffold; the victim's head was fixed in a groove beneath the knife, a spring was touched, the knife descended, and the head was severed in a moment. It was really a merciful mode of death, although put to such a terrible use; but it is said that the inventor was so overwhelmed with grief when he saw the number of victims who daily perished by the guillotine, that he retired from public life, and devoted himself to his work as a physician.

Meanwhile, the allied armies of Prussia and Austria had entered France and taken some of the fortresses on the borders of Belgium; and great consternation

was caused in Paris. The French general, La Fayette, was denounced as a royalist and had to fly for his life to the Austrian camp. He was detained as a prisoner of war for five years. The Assembly now appointed Dumouriez to the chief command, and he showed such vigour and military skill that he defeated the Prussians at Valmy and again at Jemappes (October 23rd, 1792). Then he entered Brussels in triumph, and the Belgians at once threw off their allegiance to their king and declared themselves Republicans.

A new assembly called the NATIONAL CONVENTION had now taken the place of the Legislative Assembly, and was divided into two parties—the Girondins and Jacobins. Their first act was to declare that Royalty was abolished in France, and that the day of their first meeting was the year one of the French Republic. Next, they determined that the king should be tried for his life—in fact, Danton and Marat would have had him put to death without a trial.

Accordingly, at the end of the year (1792) Louis was brought before the Convention, and accused of being a tyrant and of destroying the liberties of the French people. And though he was ably defended by his advocates, and some of the more moderate Girondins would have saved his life if they could, the mob of Paris demanded his blood, and daily surrounded the hall of Convention uttering savage cries of "death to the tyrant," "death to him or to us." At last, after nearly a month of suspense, the question of the king's guilt and punishment was put to the vote; and it was decided by a large majority that "Louis Capet" (as they termed him) was guilty of conspiring against the liberty of the

nation; and then it was decided, though by a much smaller majority, that the punishment should be death. Even his own kinsman, the Duke of Orleans, or Philip Egalité, as he called himself, voted for the king's death, to the horror even of the republicans who sat near him, and exclaimed, "the monster!" when he gave his vote.

Louis was carried back to the prison of the Temple and allowed to say farewell to his wife and children, and on the morning of January 21st, 1793, he was brought in a tumbril, strongly guarded by soldiers, under the command of the brewer Santerre, to the "Place de la Révolution," formerly known as the Place Louis XV., where the guillotine had been erected. Louis showed the same courage and patience as our own King Charles I. at his execution:

> "He nothing common did nor mean
> Upon this memorable scene."

He spoke a few words to the vast multitude who thronged the space round the scaffold, "Frenchmen, I die innocent; I pardon my enemies; and I pray that France"—but here Santerre ordered the drums to beat, and his voice was drowned by the noise. The executioners then seized him and placed him under the knife of the guillotine; and just as his friend, the Abbé Edgeworth, who had not left his side, was uttering the words, "Son of Saint Louis ascend to Heaven!" the knife fell, and his head was severed in a moment. The executioner held it up still bleeding, that the people might see it, and they welcomed the sight with shouts of "Long live the Republic—*Vive la Liberté*—hurrah for Freedom!"

Louis XVI. was only in his thirty-ninth year when his ill-starred reign came thus to an end; he

left a son of eight, Louis Charles, and a daughter, Maria Theresa, afterwards the Duchess of Angoulême.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE REPUBLIC.—1793-1800.

How the Committee of Public Safety was formed; how Marat was assassinated; how a war took place in La Vendée; how the Reign of Terror began; how Marie Antoinette was executed; how the Feast of Reason was held; how Danton and Robespierre were executed; how the Reign of Terror came to an end; how a Directory was formed; how Napoleon Buonaparte showed great vigour on "the Day of Sections."

GREAT horror and indignation was felt by every prince in Europe at the king's death, and the French seemed by this act to have made themselves the enemies of society and humanity. In England, the French ambassador was told to leave London at once—a step which is usually taken before war is declared between two nations—and the Empress of Russia ordered all Frenchmen to leave her dominions in twenty days. The Austrian army again prepared to invade France, and the French general, Dumouriez, after losing one battle, began to treat with the enemy, and wished to lead his army back to Paris and overthrow the Republic. But his soldiers would not obey him, and he was forced to fly for his life to the Austrian camp, as La Fayette had done before; and soon afterwards he escaped to England, where he remained an exile to the end of his life.

A COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY was now formed by the Jacobins in Paris, who met and consulted in

secret, and had the power of judging and condemning to death any one whom they suspected of being ill-disposed to the Republic. There were nine members at first, and the most violent and bloodthirsty of them were Danton, Marat, and the odious Barrère. They were soon joined by Robespierre, and, as will be seen, he surpassed the rest in ruthless cruelty. Almost the first act of the Committee was to surround with troops the Tuileries, where the meetings of the Convention were held, and to arrest the Girondins, who were the most temperate of the deputies, and were suspected of being in favour of monarchy, though they had been too weak and cowardly to raise their voices in defence of the king. They were expelled from the Assembly, and most of them were afterwards executed.

But punishment soon came upon Marat, who was perhaps the most odious of the Jacobins, and who had taken a leading part in the September massacres and in the murder of the king. A young girl, named Charlotte Corday, was so incensed by his cruelty to the Girondins, that she made her way into his house on pretence of giving him a letter, and stabbed him with a knife, as he lay in his bath, so that he died almost without a struggle. She was at once arrested and executed, but she showed great courage to the last, and gloried in what she had done.

It was not likely that all France would submit tamely to the tyranny of the Committee of Public Safety, and a revolt broke out against the Republic in Brittany, and that part of Anjou known as La Vendée. The peasants there were a simple, brave, and loyal race, and were attached both to the king and the nobles of their province. They armed them-

selves under their famous leaders La Rochejacquelin and Charette, and for some months kept up a gallant struggle against the republican troops among the hills and forests of Brittany. But, in the end, they were overpowered by numbers, and had to submit to their fate, and, as may be supposed, they could expect no mercy from such bloodthirsty enemies. Numbers of them perished under the guillotine; numbers more were placed in rows and shot down by muskets and cannon-shot; others were bound together hand and foot, and thrown into the Loire, and boat-loads of victims were taken into the middle of the river and drowned. A man named Carrier ordered these executions at Nantes, and it is said that fifteen thousand innocent persons perished there in the last three months of 1793.

The great and wealthy city of Lyons had also resisted the republican troops, but it was besieged and taken, and the same scenes of slaughter took place as at Nantes. Two thousand of the citizens were executed, and all the finest buildings in the city were levelled with the ground. A pillar was set up above the ruins bearing the inscription, "Lyons has offended against liberty: Lyons is no more."

Toulon, the great port and arsenal near Marseilles, was also besieged by the republican troops, and was taken by them, although the citizens were helped by an English fleet. And here also a terrible vengeance was taken on such of the royalists as had not been able to escape by sea. It was at this siege that Napoleon Buonaparte, then a young lieutenant of artillery, first came into notice. He was a Corsican by birth, but as the French had conquered the island of Corsica in Louis XV.'s reign, Napoleon

might be considered a Frenchman as well, and he had been educated in a French military school. He showed such skill in directing the fire of his cannon upon Toulon that the success of the republicans was mainly owing to him, and from this time he began to rise in rank and public reputation.

Meanwhile the Jacobins at Paris had made themselves masters of the government, and what is known as the REIGN OF TERROR now began. The terrible Council of Ten, of which Robespierre was the chief, passed a law ordering that all suspected persons should be at once arrested and imprisoned; and the prisons were soon filled with numbers of unfortunate victims of all classes, ages, and ranks of society. The guillotine was kept ceaselessly at work, and batches of prisoners, seventy or eighty at a time, were carried from the prison to the scaffold, after a mock trial before the "Committee of Public Safety." No man's life was safe in those days, for no one could trust his servants or his nearest friend, or could tell who would accuse him, or of what he would be accused. The innocent suffered equally with the guilty, and noble ladies and young girls found themselves thrown into prison with the most hardened criminals.

One of the first to suffer was Queen Marie Antoinette. She had remained in prison since the king's death, some months before. Her hair had turned white and her beauty was gone, but she still kept her grace and dignity of manner, and never allowed a reproach or complaint to pass her lips. She passed her time in working embroidery and in giving lessons to her young son and daughter. But in July of this year (1793) the poor little prince was taken from her, and given in charge to a brutal shoe-

maker, named Simon, who did his best to destroy him soul and body. The innocent child was taught to drink and to swear; he was left in a foul room, without any change of clothes; and at last his health gave way, and he became sickly and diseased and almost an idiot. A year afterwards some attempt was made to restore him to health, and the brutal Simon was replaced by a kinder gaoler; but it was too late, and this poor child, whom the royalists called Louis XVII., ended his miserable life in 1795.

Marie Antoinette was almost beside herself with grief when her son was torn from her. She would sit for hours together watching silently to see her child pass at a distance. But soon afterwards she was removed from the prison of the Temple to the Conciergerie—a dark and gloomy dungeon near the Hall of Justice,—where she was not allowed any lamp or candle; even her needlework was taken from her by her cruel gaolers, and she passed the long hours in silence and darkness. At last, in October of the same year she was brought before the Tribunal and sentenced to the guillotine. She remained brave and patient to the end, and perhaps, after so much suffering, death was a release to her.

Other victims soon followed. The king's sister, the saint-like Madame Elizabeth, then the Girondist deputies, and among them the beautiful Madame Roland, the wicked "Egalité" Orleans, who had voted for the death of his relation the king, and the equally wicked Madame Dubarry, Louis XV.'s favourite, were one and all hurried to the scaffold after a trial which was the merest mockery of justice. And day after day a certain number of victims were carried to the guillotine, until even the executioners grew weary of the continual bloodshed.

Not content with destroying royalty and bringing the best and bravest Frenchmen to the scaffold, the republicans now attempted to destroy the Christian Religion itself. They ordered that no prayers should be offered up in the churches, and that Sundays were to be abolished altogether. A shameless woman, under the name of the Goddess of Reason, was enthroned on the high altar in the Cathedral of Notre Dame and a great festival held in her honour. An inscription was written over the cemeteries "Death is an eternal sleep," and all through France the churches were plundered of their sacred vessels, and the bells melted down into cannon. Even the royal tombs in the Abbey of St. Denis were opened, and the bodies of the French kings dragged out with every species of insult. New and fanciful names were now given to the months, and January was called *Nivose*, or "the snowy;" February, *Pluviose*, or "the rainy;" July, *Thermidor*, or "the hot month;" November, *Brumaire*, or "the foggy month," and so on.

But quarrels soon arose among the Jacobins themselves. Danton and his friends thought that enough had been done, and that it was now time to check the bloodshed. "The innocent," said Danton, "must not be confounded with the guilty." But Robespierre was jealous of the power and influence of Danton, and caused him and his friends to be seized and dragged before the Tribunal. They were executed on the 6th of April, 1794, in spite of their angry protests; and Danton declared that it would not be long before Robespierre followed him.

For the present, however, Robespierre was almost supreme in Paris, and no man dared oppose or contradict him; but instead of diminishing, the massacres

daily increased in number, and no less than 1400 persons were executed in six weeks of this summer. On the slightest pretence,—and the gravest charge of all was that of being an "Aristocrat,"—any one might be denounced as the enemy of the Republic and thrust into prison. He was then brought before the Tribunal, when no witnesses were called and no defence was allowed him, and the victim, however innocent, was at once condemned to the guillotine. The public prosecutor, Fouquier-Tinville, even proposed to erect the guillotine in the town-hall, to save the trouble of carrying the victims to the usual place of death in the Place of the Revolution.

At last Robespierre's cruelty wearied even the Tribunal and the members of the Convention, who thought that their own lives were hardly safe with such a monster among them; and on June 1st, 1794, several Deputies, who were bolder than the rest, openly accused Robespierre of being a tyrant, and demanded his arrest. One of them, named Tallien, denounced Robespierre as a second Cromwell, and then drew a dagger which he declared he would plunge into the heart of the tyrant, unless the Assembly ordered his arrest. And though Robespierre's friends in the Faubourg of St. Antoine (the Jacobin quarter of Paris) tried to rescue him, his house was surrounded by troops, and he and his friends were all arrested. Robespierre tried to shoot himself, but the bullet only broke his jaw; and the next morning, after a short trial, he was condemned and executed. This revolution of the 9th Thermidor, or the 27th of July, put an end to the Reign of Terror, and no less than ten thousand innocent persons were at once released from the prisons.

Everywhere there were cries for vengeance against the Jacobins, and a body of young men, calling themselves the *Jeunesse Dorée*, or "Gilded Youths," armed themselves and attacked the famous Jacobin Club, which had so long been the headquarters of the blood-thirsty republicans. The members of it were driven out, and their hall closed for ever. All the more odious of the Jacobins—such as Barrère, Collot d'Herbois, and Fouquier-Tinville—justly suffered the same punishment which they had inflicted on thousands of innocent persons; and though the rabble of St. Antoine attempted resistance, they were beaten back, after desperate fighting, and all their pistols and muskets taken from them.

Whilst these bloody scenes had been taking place in Paris, the republican armies, under Jourdan and Pichegru, had been gaining victory after victory against the allied force of Austrians and Prussians, who were driven back across the Rhine. The French also defeated the Dutch and English army at Nimeguen, and took possession of Holland. Their only check was a sea-fight off the island of Ushant, which was won by the English Admiral, Lord Howe, in 1795.

In this same year, the Vendean royalists made another brave but useless attempt to resist the army of the Republic. But they, as well as the French emigrants and the "Chouans," or "night owls," a name given to the Breton peasants, were forced to lay down their arms and submit to General Hoche, the republican general. Eight hundred of them were shot in the town of Auray alone, and their gallant leader, Charette, was hunted for days through the marshes and forests, and was at last taken prisoner and executed at Nantes. And thus the civil

war in La Vendée, in which 100,000 Frenchmen are said to have perished, came at last to an end.

Meanwhile, fresh disturbances broke out in Paris, where the government was now placed in the hands of a Directory of five members and a Grand Council of State. The royalists joined with those of the Girondins who had escaped the Reign of Terror, and formed armed bodies called "sections," in order to overthrow this new Republican Government. But Barras, one of the Directors and Minister of War, selected Napoleon Buonaparte to command the republican troops, and the young general placed cannon so as to sweep all the streets and bridges leading to the Tuileries, and when the "sections" made their attack, they were mown down by musketry and cannon. The revolt was crushed in a few hours; and Napoleon showed such skill and vigour on this "DAY OF THE SECTIONS" (October 5th, 1795), that the Directory appointed him to the command of the army which had been sent to invade Italy, and the result showed the wisdom of their choice. Napoleon himself felt no doubt as to the issue of the campaign. "In three months," he said, "I shall be either in Milan or in Paris;" and, when some of the Directors hesitated and objected, "You are too young to command an army,"—"In a year," he answered, "I shall be either old or dead."

CHAPTER XLIV.

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

FROM THE "DAY OF THE SECTIONS" (1795) TO THE EMPIRE (1804).

How Napoleon defeated the Austrians in several battles and conquered the north of Italy; how he made peace at Campo Formio; how he invaded Egypt and won the battle of the Pyramids; how he was repulsed at Acre, and, after winning the battle of Aboukir, returned to France; how he expelled the Five Hundred and became First Consul of the Republic; how he crossed the Alps and won the battle of Marengo; how he passed many wise and useful acts of government; how he formed a scheme for invading England; how the Duke d'Enghien was executed; how Napoleon made himself Emperor.

FROM this time for nearly twenty years the history of France is really the life of Napoleon Buonaparte, who soon proved himself the greatest master of the art of war in all French history. He gave up the formal and old-fashioned rules by which Condé and Turenne had won their battles. His system was to surprise his enemy by forced marches, to mass his troops and hurl them on the weakest point of the enemy's lines, and when he was outnumbered by superior forces, to attack them one by one. Tents and baggage were left behind in his rapid marches. The soldiers slept in hovels or in the open air, and lived on whatever provisions they could lay their hands on in the country they were marching through. Napoleon himself shared all their hardships and privations; indeed he took the utmost pains to win the affections of his troops, who blindly trusted him, and would follow him wherever he chose to lead them. He talked to them on the march, tended them in sickness, and

made them little speeches to arouse their enthusiasm before the battle began. In his earlier battles he was always himself in the thickest of the fire, pointed cannon with his own hand, and at Lodi and Arcola charged at the head of his grenadiers as recklessly as if he had been a common soldier. It was no wonder, therefore, that his troops adored and almost worshipped him, and in their delight at his courage and success, gave him the pet nickname of "the little corporal." Napoleon himself knew well the strength of this popularity, and saw that if it came to a struggle between himself and the Directors, he could depend upon his army to support him.

In the spring of 1796, Napoleon was appointed by the Directors to command the French army in Italy, which he found in a wretched state, and almost without food or money. "Soldiers," he said, "you are hungry and naked; the Republic owes you much, but she has not the means to pay your debts. I am come to lead you to the most fertile plains and the richest towns which the sun beholds. All shall be yours. Soldiers! with such a prospect before you, can you fail in courage and constancy?"

These stirring words restored hope and courage to the French, and such was the marvellous skill of their young general, and so well did his troops support him, that before the end of the year he had defeated five Austrian armies, each of them larger than his own, in more than a dozen battles, of which Lodi, Rivoli, and Arcole are among the most famous. The last of these battles was only won after three days' hard fighting. The French were again and again driven back by the Austrians, until at last Napoleon himself charged at the head of his grenadiers

and won the bridge of Arcole, which was the key of the enemy's position. Then he led his army into Verona in triumph.

All the Italian princes in the north of Italy had to buy peace of their conqueror by paying a heavy fine, and by giving up their finest pictures and statues, which were sent to adorn the Louvre in Paris. Mantua, Padua, Milan, Modena, were all plundered in this way; even the Pope suffered like the rest, and had to pay a large sum of money to the French, and give up the finest paintings from his palace of the Vatican. Then, on some trivial pretext, Venice was seized by the French troops; the Doge and Senators were deprived of their power, and a republic established; the city had to pay a fine of six millions of francs, and the famous horses of gilded bronze (the work of the Greek sculptor Lysippus), which had been brought to Venice from Constantinople by the Doge Dandolo, were carried off to Paris, where they remained till after the battle of Waterloo.

Having thus defeated the Austrians in all directions and made himself master of Northern Italy, Napoleon determined to carry the war into Austria itself, where the French armies under Moreau and Jourdan had been defeated in more than one battle. Napoleon reached Leoben, not far from Vienna, and then the Austrians, fearing lest their capital might be taken by him, offered terms of peace; and a treaty was accordingly signed at CAMPO FORMIO on the 17th of October, 1797, by which France obtained Belgium and the country bordering on the Rhine, while Austria got Venice and her islands. A Republic was established in all the northern cities of Italy.

Napoleon now returned to Paris, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm by the people, although the Directors were jealous of his increasing power and popularity, and were anxious that he should be employed again on foreign service as soon as possible. They wished him to invade England, and an army was actually collected for that purpose; but Napoleon decided that an invasion was difficult, and that the best way to strike a blow at England was by attacking her commerce and conquering Egypt, which was the high road to India. Accordingly, in 1798 he sailed from Toulon with an army of 36,000 picked soldiers, and was fortunate enough to escape the English fleet under Nelson, which was cruising about the Mediterranean on the look out for him. After taking Malta on his way, Napoleon landed near Aboukir, and easily took Alexandria. Egypt was then, as now, in name a province of Turkey, but was really held by a warlike tribe called the Mamelukes, said to be the finest cavalry in the world. They were all armed to the teeth, and mounted on Arabian horses, which they managed with surprising skill.

After a toilsome march across the desert, Napoleon found the Egyptian army and the Mamelukes in a strong position near Cairo, not far from the ancient Pyramids, which gave their name to the battle. "Soldiers," said Napoleon, before the action began, "from the summit of yonder pyramids, forty centuries are watching you." The Mameluke horsemen dashed furiously upon the French infantry, who were drawn up in a square, and received them with a steady fire of musketry. And after charging again and again, the Mamelukes fled in all directions, and the French won a complete victory. It was from this that

Napoleon got the name of Sultan Kebir, or "the lord of fire," from the terrible slaughter caused by the French infantry.

Shortly after this victory, however, the French suffered a great disaster, for their fleet, which had been left in the bay of Aboukir, was attacked and completely destroyed by Nelson at the BATTLE OF THE NILE; and thus Napoleon's return to France seemed hopelessly cut off. He took this disaster with his usual calmness, and after doing much to establish order and good government in Egypt, he marched into Syria and took the towns of Gaza and Jaffa. After the capture of the latter place, 3000 Turks who had laid down their arms were barbarously put to death by the French. Then Napoleon laid siege to the ancient city of Acre, which was bravely defended by the Turks, aided by an English squadron under Sir Sidney Smith, a naval officer; and after the siege had lasted sixty days and several assaults had been repulsed, Napoleon in despair gave up his attempt to take the place, and led back the remainder of his troops to Egypt. He felt this repulse deeply at the time, and said afterwards of Sir Sidney Smith, "That man made me lose my destiny." This retreat from Syria to Egypt was a terrible one, for the French had to march across the burning sands of the desert, and many of the soldiers died of the plague and the want of water.

Once more Napoleon defeated the Turks in a pitched battle at ABOUKIR, when Murat, known as the *Beau Sabreur*, or "handsome swordsman," made a famous cavalry charge, and routed the enemy with tremendous slaughter, many of them throwing themselves into the sea to escape the French,

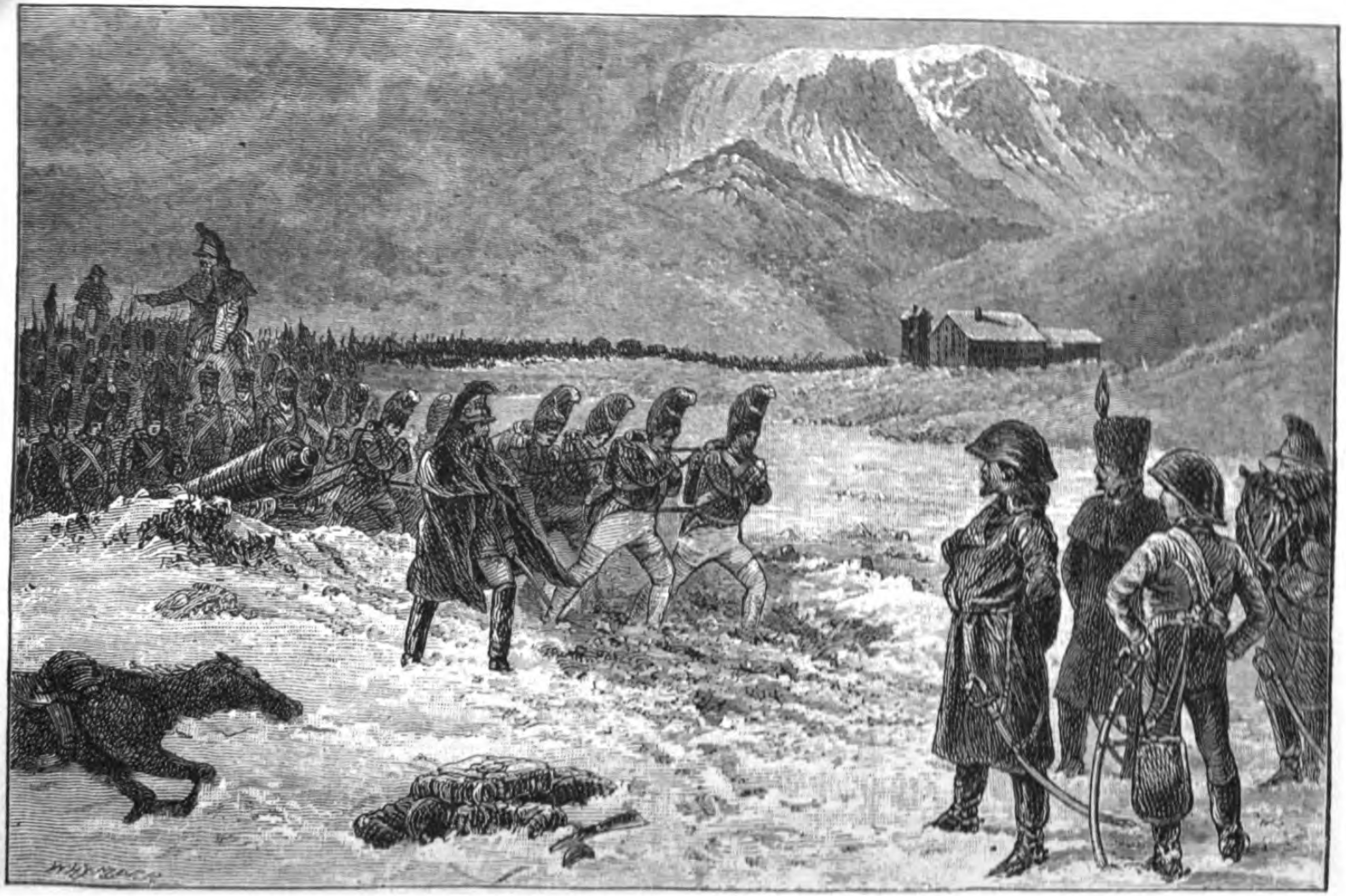
so that the waters were covered with floating turbans.

This was the last of Napoleon's battles in Egypt. At home the Directors had been growing more and more unpopular, while abroad the French generals had lost all Northern Italy, and Napoleon thought it better to leave his army in Egypt under General Kleber, and himself return to France. He found nothing but troubles and disputes among the Directors and the Councils of State, and he determined to take matters into his own hands.

On the 9th of November, 1799, Napoleon entered the hall where the "Council of Five Hundred" were sitting at St. Cloud, but he was received with cries of "Death to the tyrant! Down with the Dictator!" and he was even struck by some of the deputies. But he had his grenadiers ready at hand, and with Murat at their head they entered the room with their bayonets fixed ready for a charge; and the Five Hundred fled in terror through the doors and windows, leaving the floor covered with fragments of their scarves and gowns.

The Directory and the two Councils were now abolished, and a government known as the "CONSTITUTION OF THE YEAR EIGHT (of the Republic)" was established in its place. The chief power was placed in the hands of three Consuls, and Napoleon, as may be supposed, was named FIRST CONSUL, with almost supreme authority. He named as his two colleagues Cambacérès and Lebrun.

Napoleon now lived in the Tuileries, the ancient palace of the French kings, and kept up all the state and dignity of a court. His wife, Josephine, whom he had married just before his Italian campaign, was a beautiful and highly accomplished



Napoleon's Army crossing the Alps.

woman, and greatly helped him by her brilliant conversation and charming manners. "I conquer provinces," he said, "but Josephine wins hearts."

Napoleon's first step in his new office was to write a letter to the king of England with a proposal of peace; but the English government replied that there could be no peace till the Bourbons were restored to the throne, and Austria made almost the same reply.

War began again in 1800, and Napoleon at once set out to reconquer Italy, which had been lost by the French generals during his absence in Egypt. He decided to march through Switzerland, cross the Alps, and descend on the plains of Piedmont; and his army ascended the pass of the Great St. Bernard, covered as it was with snow and ice. The cannon were taken off their carriages, which were packed on mules, and were dragged by main force up the precipices, a hundred soldiers being sometimes harnessed to a single gun. The descent was almost more difficult than the ascent had been, but in less than a week Napoleon's advanced guard, commanded by the gallant Lannes, reached the level plains of Piedmont; while another army crossed the St. Gothard pass and descended into Lombardy. Then the two forces united and entered Milan.

A great battle soon followed between the French and Austrians in the plains of MARENGO (June 14th, 1800), and the Austrians, who were double the number of the French, had the best of it in the earlier part of the action. But the young French general Desaix arrived with fresh forces, and by a desperate charge drove back the Austrians in all

directions, but fell mortally wounded in the moment of victory.

The day after the battle the Austrians made peace, and gave up to France all the fortresses which had been retaken, such as Milan, Turin, and Genoa; and thus by a single battle Napoleon gained back all Northern Italy.

When he returned to Paris after this brilliant campaign he was received with greater enthusiasm than ever. The whole city was illuminated, and crowds surrounded the Tuileries in the hope of getting a glimpse of their victorious general. But, in spite of his popularity, he had many enemies to fear, for the royalists hated him for being an upstart and an usurper, and the Jacobins hated him no less for having become the Dictator of the Republic. In the autumn of 1800, a plot was formed against his life by the most discontented republicans, and as he was driving to the opera, a barrel filled with gunpowder and bullets was placed on the road which his carriage had to pass. Luckily, Napoleon drove past before this infernal machine exploded; but the explosion killed or wounded fifty innocent persons who were looking on. The would-be assassins were tried and executed. In this interval of peace, Napoleon passed many wise laws and measures of reform, such as founding schools and colleges, as well as ordering roads, bridges, and canals to be made in the provinces. He also caused a code of laws to be drawn up by the first lawyers in the kingdom, which has always been known as the *Code Napoléon.* And furthermore, he made an agreement with the Pope, known as the *Concordat*, by which the Roman Catholic religion was again established as the national religion of France, al-

though the appointment to bishoprics and church livings was left in the hands of the state. Lastly, he instituted the famous "Legion of Honour"—a cross and a red ribbon, given as a reward for distinguished merit to soldiers or civilians. This gave great offence to the republicans, who called ribbons and crosses "the playthings of monarchy;" but it proved to be a wise measure, for this distinction was highly prized, and was open to the meanest soldier as well as to his officer; and it became a saying in the army that "every French soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack." As a matter of fact, several of his own marshals, such as Junot and Lannes, had risen from the ranks, and owed their promotion to their skill and courage in the field.

All these acts of Napoleon were wise and useful, and if he could have been content to have rested here and set some bounds to his ambition, he would have left a nobler name behind him, and would not have ended his days an exile in St. Helena. But two thoughts seem to have incessantly filled his mind; to make himself the first of a line of French emperors, and to found a French empire like that of Charlemagne.

The war with Austria still continued, and in 1800 the army of the Rhine under Moreau defeated the Austrians with great loss at HOHENLINDEN, a forest of Bavaria near Munich. This battle was fought in a snowstorm, which fell so thickly that the combatants could hardly see one another's faces. This defeat forced Austria again to make peace with France, much on the same terms as the Treaty of Campo Formio.

The English, however, still carried on the war. They sent a fleet and army to Egypt under Sir

Ralph Abercromby, and defeated the French in a desperate battle near Alexandria, in which Abercromby was himself killed; and soon afterwards the remnant of the French army was allowed to leave Egypt.

William Pitt was now prime minister of England, and had always shown himself the bitter enemy of France; but when he retired from the ministry in 1801, the Whigs, who succeeded him, made terms with the French, and the PEACE OF AMIENS was signed in 1802. England gave up all her conquests during the war, except Trinidad and Ceylon; Egypt was restored to the Turks; and France gave up all claims to the southern part of Italy.

But it was clear from the first that this peace could never be a lasting one, for the English people hated the very name of Napoleon, and he was denounced by the English newspapers as a tyrant and the enemy of liberty. Even in Parliament itself, speeches were frequently made full of bitter hostility to the "Corsican usurper," as he was termed. "Buonaparte," said Mr. Wyndham, "is the Hannibal who has sworn to devote his life to the destruction of England;" and another brilliant orator, Sheridan, declared that "the destruction of this country is the first vision that breaks on the French Consul in the gleam of the morning; this is his last prayer at night, to whatever deity he may address it, whether to Jupiter or Mahomet, to the Goddess of Battle or the Goddess of Reason."

Napoleon deeply resented these attacks, and before long an event happened which gave him an excuse for again declaring war. In 1793 the negroes in the island of St. Domingo, the most important West India possession of France, revolted

against their masters, and murdered all the white population. Some French troops were sent to quell the rebellion, but more than half of them were destroyed by yellow fever, and then an English fleet easily took possession of the island.

Napoleon was deeply incensed at this, and determined to avenge himself on "perfidious Albion," as he called England. He grossly insulted the English ambassador, Lord Whitworth, who immediately left Paris, and war was at once declared by the English government under William Pitt, who was now again prime minister. The English seized all the French vessels they could find in English ports; while Napoleon imprisoned every Englishman he could find in France. Then he renewed his favourite scheme of invading England, and formed a vast camp along the shore between Calais and Boulogne, besides collecting a quantity of boats, which were to carry his troops across the Channel.

But the spirit of the English people was roused, as it had been in the days of the Spanish Armada. Besides increasing the regular army to 100,000 men, volunteers enrolled themselves so rapidly that before long there were 350,000 of them under arms: while the English fleet of 500 ships, under Lords Nelson and Cornwallis, scoured the Channel and watched the French coasts so narrowly that a fishing-boat could not put out without risk of capture. The harbours of Spain and Italy were blockaded with equal vigour by our ships, and it was clear that an invasion of England was, as Nelson called it, the scheme of a madman.

In 1804, another conspiracy against Napoleon's life was detected in Paris, and the chief conspirator, George Cadoudal, and his associates, were justly

executed; but Napoleon now went out of his way to commit the most cruel act of his life. He pretended that the young Duke of Enghien, a prince of the family of Condé, was mixed up in the plot; and though the young prince was living in Baden, on the other side of the Rhine, he had him arrested, and carried to the fortress of Vincennes, near Paris. A mock trial was held there, and he was found guilty, and shot at midnight in one of the moats of the fortress.

Then Napoleon declared that it was necessary for his own safety, and for that of France, that he should take the supreme power in the country, and hand it down to his children after him. The French Senate and the deputies readily agreed to this, and he was accordingly crowned Emperor of the French at a grand ceremonial in the cathedral of Notre Dame, in December 1804. The Pope himself came from Rome to Paris, for the special purpose of crowning the Emperor; but at the last moment Napoleon seized the crown and placed it on his head, and then crowned Josephine as Empress. In the following year he set out for Italy, and placed on his own head in the cathedral of Milan the iron crown of Lombardy, using the same words as the old Lombard kings had been accustomed to use at their coronation: "God hath given it me; beware who touches it." From this time he called himself Emperor of the French and King of Italy.

CHAPTER XLV.

NAPOLEON I.—(*continued*).

FROM 1804 TO 1812.

How the sovereigns of Europe entered into a league against Napoleon; how the English won the battle of Trafalgar: how the French defeated the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz; how Napoleon won the battles of Jena and Friedland and entered Berlin; how the Peninsular War began; how Napoleon defeated the Austrians at Wagram and married the Austrian Emperor's daughter.

NAPOLEON was now at the summit of his power. Every country in Europe, England alone excepted, seemed to lie at his feet. He got himself named President of the Republic which he had formed in the north of Italy, and gave the kingdom of Naples, first to his brother, Joseph Buonaparte, and then to his favourite general, Murat, "the handsome swordsman." And, later on, he even joined Rome to the French empire, and called it the second city of France.

But his ambition and usurpations, which seemed endless, caused a league to be formed against him by the emperors of Austria and Russia, and the kings of England and Sweden. The princes of Bavaria and Baden alone took the side of France; while Prussia remained neutral for the present.

Napoleon lost no time in opposing this league, and in 1805 he entered Austria with an immense force, called "the Grand Army," and in three weeks, by a marvellous display of military skill, he baffled and out-manœuvred an Austrian army of 80,000 men, and entered Vienna in triumph.

But in this same year (1805) a great disaster befell the French navy, which had joined with the Spanish fleet to protect the flotilla of boats which were still lying at Boulogne ready for the invasion of England. The English fleet, under Lord Nelson, attacked them off Cape Trafalgar, and twenty-four out of the forty French and Spanish vessels were either sunk or captured by the English. This victory was saddened by the death of the gallant Nelson, who was struck by a shot fired by a marine from the masthead of a French vessel, and died of his wound. This battle was a death-blow to the naval power of France, and made Napoleon give up his long-cherished idea of invading England; although he had previously felt so certain of success, that he had a medal struck with the inscription *Frappée à Londres,* "struck at London," which was to be issued as soon as he had taken our capital.

The month after Trafalgar, Napoleon won another of his splendid victories, defeating two great armies of Austrians and Russians at AUSTERLITZ. The Russians were strongly posted on some hills, but Napoleon enticed them into the plain below, and when he saw them leave their strong position he exclaimed, "In twenty-four hours they are mine." On the morning of the battle there was a brilliant sunrise, and "the sun of Austerlitz" became a proverb with the French soldiers. The charge of the French cavalry under Murat, and the impetuous gallantry of Lannes, helped to secure the victory for the French. The Austrians were completely routed, and the Emperor Francis and the Russian Emperor Alexander only saved themselves by flight. The French took 20,000 prisoners, and most of the artillery and baggage.

The ancient German kingdom, which had been known as the "Holy Roman Empire," now came to an end, and several of the states which had composed it, such as Bavaria and Wurtemburg, formed the *Confederation of the Rhine*, which was placed under the protection of France.

The victory of Austerlitz seemed to make Napoleon stronger than ever, and the news of it so preyed upon the mind of the English minister, William Pitt, who was already in failing health, that he died shortly afterwards of a broken heart.

Prussia had stood aloof during the last campaign, but her king, Frederic William, now allied himself with Russia and declared war against France. A Prussian army of 150,000 men, under the Duke of Brunswick, at once took the field, but they were utterly defeated by Napoleon at JENA on October 4th, 1806, and the Duke of Brunswick was himself mortally wounded. His soldiers ever afterwards wore black uniforms as a sign of mourning for their gallant chieftain, and his son vowed eternal vengeance against the French—a vow which he fully carried out in the campaign of 1815.

After his victory at Jena, Napoleon marched through Prussia, letting his men burn and plunder as they pleased. He then took the strong fortress of Magdeburg and entered Berlin in triumph. It was here that he issued his famous "Berlin Decrees," which declared the British Islands to be under blockade, and forbade any English-made articles to be introduced into any of the seaports of his empire. By this means he hoped to destroy the commerce of England, which was then, as it has ever since been, one great source of her wealth and strength. Napoleon grudged us this source of power, and used

to speak disdainfully of the English as "a nation of shopkeepers." He tried to get the other princes of Europe to join in this "continental system" as it was called; but English goods were too valuable to be kept out of Europe by any decrees, and were frequently smuggled into France itself, in spite of Napoleon.

The seat of war was now changed to Poland, where Napoleon was popular among the people, as he had half promised to restore their ancient kingdom. Four regiments of Polish cavalry joined his army, and were among the best of his soldiers.

Early in 1807, the Russian army entered Poland, and after one hard-fought battle at Eylau, where nearly 30,000 French were killed, the Russians were defeated at FRIEDLAND with great loss, although they managed to retreat in good order. Napoleon then made peace with the Emperor Alexander, and they apparently became warm friends, and held many secret interviews in which it was said that they agreed to divide Europe between them. The king of Prussia had to give up all his territory west of the Elbe, and the kingdom of Westphalia was formed out of it, with Napoleon's brother Jerome as its king.

A short interval of peace now followed, and Napoleon devoted his time to the affairs of his empire, arranging all the smallest details of government himself, and making all the prefects and magistrates in the provinces hold their offices directly from him. Indeed he was fond of saying, as Louis XIV. had said, "I am the State," and claimed absolute power over every part of it. The most oppressive part of his government was the system of *conscription*, which obliged every man in France between eighteen and

twenty-five to serve as a soldier, if his name was drawn in the ballot held once a year. Nobles and peasants had to serve alike; and there was often a second or even a third conscription in the same year.

Napoleon was too restless to remain long at peace, and in 1807 he formed a scheme for making Spain and Portugal a French province. His excuse for attacking them was that they had refused to obey his "Berlin Decrees" and exclude English goods from their country. So he sent an army under Marshal Junot, who easily made himself master of Portugal, and took several Spanish fortresses; and then Napoleon, by a long and crafty negotiation, induced the King of Spain to resign his crown, and make the Spanish Cortes (or Senate) name his own brother Joseph as King of Spain. But the Spaniards, who are one of the proudest and fiercest races in the world, could not endure a foreign king being set over them in this off-hand manner. They and the Portuguese rose throughout the country; massacred the French wherever they could find them, shut the gates of their towns, and declared "war to the knife" against the foreign invaders.

Then they appealed to the English to help them, and this was the beginning of the famous PENINSULAR WAR, which lasted till the fall of Napoleon. A body of troops was sent under Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, who defeated Junot and his army at Vimiera, and drove the French out of Portugal. Napoleon now hastened to take the command in Spain himself. He defeated three Spanish armies, and entered Madrid in triumph; but he was then recalled to France, and

left Soult to command the French, bidding him drive the English leopards into the sea. Sir John Moore, arriving with fresh troops from England was so greatly outnumbered by the French, that he was forced to retreat before them, and was himself killed in an action at CORUNNA, where, however, the French were repulsed, and the English thus enabled to re-embark for England. But Wellington still remained in Spain, and kept the French army under Massena at bay, defeating them with great loss at Busaco, and then, on the approach of winter, retiring into Portugal, and entrenching himself behind the strong earthworks of Torres Vedras, which he had carefully made without the knowledge of the French, and which guarded the approach to Lisbon. And instead of either Soult or Massena "driving the English leopards into the sea," as Napoleon had ordered them, the French had to withdraw from Portugal, and were pursued in their turn by Wellington, who stormed the two strong fortresses of Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo, besides winning two hard-fought battles at Talavera and Albuera.

Meanwhile, in 1809, Napoleon again invaded Austria, defeated their army, and a second time entered Vienna in triumph. Once more the Austrians collected an army under their Archduke Charles, and a desperate battle took place at WAGRAM near the Danube, which ended in the total defeat of the Austrians, who left all their artillery and baggage, as well as 20,000 prisoners, in the hands of the French.

The Austrian emperor was now completely at Napoleon's mercy, and had to accept his terms of peace. He had to give up all his territory along the Adriatic to France, and (what was probably a

greater blow to his pride) he had to consent to a marriage between his daughter Marie Louise and his conqueror Napoleon; for Josephine had borne no children, and Napoleon wished to marry a princess who would bring him heirs to the throne. The unhappy Josephine was accordingly divorced, and Napoleon married the Austrian emperor's daughter. She bore him a son in 1811, who received the empty title of "King of Rome." This title had reference to Napoleon's grand idea of reviving the Holy Roman Empire as it had been in the days of Charlemagne.

CHAPTER XLVI.

NAPOLEON I.—(*continued*).
(1812–1815.)

How Napoleon invaded Russia with his "Grand Army"; how Moscow was burnt; how his army was destroyed by the Russian winter; how he made a final effort, but was defeated at Leipsic by the Russians and Prussians, who marched against Paris; how Napoleon gave up his empire and was sent to Elba.

IT might have been thought that Napoleon's ambition was satisfied at last, but he seemed bent on making fresh conquests every year. He joined the kingdom of Holland to France, and seized the three free cities of Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck, on the coast of Germany, lest they should keep up their trade with England, so that his empire now touched the Baltic. Then he quarrelled with the Russian emperor, and again the quarrel was on account of the obnoxious "Berlin Decrees"; and in spite of the remonstrance of his ministers, Talleyrand

and Fouché, Napoleon determined to invade this vast and barbarous country. "The states of Europe," he declared, "must be melted into one nation, and Paris must be the capital."

In the autumn of 1812, he mustered his "Grand Army," of 450,000 men, and marched through Saxony and Poland into Russia. The Russian generals retreated before him, burning their own towns and wasting the country as they retired; but at last they met the French at Borodino, on the banks of the Moskowa, on the high road to Moscow. It was one of the most obstinate battles in which Napoleon had ever been engaged, and although he won the victory, it was with the loss of 12,000 of his best troops, while the Russians retreated in good order.

But the Russian general knew that there was a more terrible enemy awaiting the French than any army he could bring against them, and that was the cold of a Russian winter. So he decided not to risk another battle, but left the road open, and allowed Napoleon to enter Moscow without opposition. He found the city almost deserted, for all the inhabitants had fled, except a few poor wretches and the criminals from the gaols. Napoleon took up his quarters in the ancient palace of the Kremlin, and his soldiers began to plunder the houses; but the same evening fires broke out in all directions, and the next day the whole city was in flames. The Russians had purposely done this to prevent Napoleon remaining in their ancient capital. There was nothing left for the French but to retreat; but, even as it was, they had lingered in Moscow too long, for it was now late in October, and the Russian winter began in all its severity. The roads were almost impassable with snow and ice; the supplies failed, and the

The Retreat from Moscow.

weary and hungry soldiers perished by thousands on the line of march. The Cossacks, from the plains of the Don and Volga, hung upon their rear, and killed all who loitered or strayed from the main body, and every morning the watch fires were surrounded by the corpses of soldiers who had been frozen during the night. All the artillery and the waggons, laden with the spoils of Moscow, were deserted in the snow, for the horses died of hunger, and were frequently devoured by the troops in want of other food. The gallant Ney, who well deserved his title of "the Bravest of the Brave," commanded the rear guard, and did his utmost to protect the retreat; but at last, when they reached the Beresina, and were crossing two bridges which had been hastily thrown across the river, one of them gave way, and the other was blown up, and the most terrible scene of the campaign took place. Thousands were drowned in the dark and half-frozen river—the sick and wounded, the weak and helpless, perishing alike—while the Russians, who lined the banks, poured an incessant fire of musketry upon the struggling bodies of French. An eye-witness, who was present, declares that the cry that rose from these victims did not leave his ears for weeks, and that it was heard clear and loud above the hurrahs of the Cossacks and the roar of artillery.

When, at last, the remnants of the "Grand Army" reached the shelter of a friendly town in Poland, it was found that hardly 12,000 men were left out of the immense number who had started; 250,000 had been slain in battle or perished of cold, or had been drowned in the Beresina, while the Russians had made above 190,000 prisoners.

Napoleon himself did not remain with his army

to the last, but left it to its fate after reaching the frontiers of Poland, and galloped to Paris as fast as post-horses could carry him. The people there had been prepared for the worst by his famous "twenty-ninth bulletin"—a despatch in which he at last told the true story of the campaign, though he laid the blame of the disaster on the Russian winter. But terrible and almost overwhelming as this destruction of the Grand Army seemed, Napoleon never lost heart himself, and so strong was the influence of his name over the French, that a new "conscription" at once took place, and in 1813 he was again at the head of 350,000 soldiers, besides the army still engaged in Spain. Every youth of sixteen, either in France or Italy, who could carry a musket, was now compelled to serve in this second Grand Army.

Prussia now joined Russia in an alliance against France, and their armies took the field at once. The Prussian army was commanded by Blücher, or "Marshal Forwards," as his soldiers called him—a rough and ready old officer, idolised by his men, and the mortal enemy of Napoleon; and his soldiers were as eager as their general to wipe out the memory of their defeats at Jena and Wagram.

Napoleon won two hard-fought battles in Saxony, at Lutzen and Bautzen, but each time the Allies retreated in good order, and no guns or prisoners were taken by the French. His headquarters were at Dresden, and Prince Metternich, the Austrian minister, met him there with proposals of peace. But one of the conditions was that Napoleon should give up all his conquests on the other side of the Rhine, and this he would not hear of for a moment. Thereupon, the Austrian army joined the Allies, and two desperate battles took place near Dresden, in

which Napoleon forced the Allied Army to retreat after heavy losses. But he was afraid of being cut off from France, and retreated himself to LEIPSIC, and there, on the 16th of October, 1813, the longest and deadliest of all his battles took place. This battle lasted two days, and the French fought with heroic valour: but they were greatly outnumbered by the enemy, and were forced back into the town at all points; their ammunition failed them, and their Saxon allies deserted them in the heat of the battle.

There was nothing left now but to retreat in the face of the enemy along a narrow bridge which crossed the three small rivers and marshes near the city. By some unhappy mistake, this bridge was blown up before the whole army had crossed, and thousands of men perished in the stream and thousands more were taken prisoners. The gallant Polish prince, Poniatowski, cut his way through the enemy and tried to swim his horse across the river, but he was swept away by the stream and drowned.

After this crushing defeat at Leipsic, all Napoleon's foreign empire fell to pieces at once. Holland, Hanover, and the German States near the Rhine drove out their French masters; while in Spain Lord Wellington defeated the French in a great battle at Vittoria, and finally drove them out of the Peninsula. Still Napoleon, in his pride and obstinacy, again refused the terms of peace offered by the Allies, and began to raise a new army by conscription. But this was not such an easy task as in former years, for even the French had grown weary of this incessant bloodshed, which was draining the very life-blood of their country. Many conscripts deserted and refused to serve. Murmurs

and outcries were heard on all sides, and the royalists in La Vendée and the exiled Bourbon princes began to pluck up courage and plot against the Emperor. Even his own councillors remonstrated, and the chief of them, Talleyrand, when he observed the signs of the time, declared that "it was the beginning of the end."

Napoleon, however, did not lose heart. He set free his two illustrious prisoners, the Pope and Ferdinand VII. of Spain, and allowed them to go back to their own capitals, and then set out himself on his last desperate campaign; for it was no longer a question of foreign conquest, but of preserving France from foreign invasion. Three great armies of Austrians, Prussians, and Russians, were advancing upon the frontiers in three directions, and Napoleon's only hope was to keep them separated, and attack them one by one. He showed all his old military skill, and in a fortnight he had defeated them in four successive battles, which were won entirely by his marvellous strategy. But the Austrian and Prussian armies at last got between Napoleon and his capital, and before he could catch them up they had reached the heights of Montmartre, close to Paris. The empress, Marie Louise, fled for safety to Blois, but Marmont and the National Guards made a gallant resistance. They were, however, soon overpowered by numbers and surrendered the city, and on March 31st, 1814, the Allied Armies, with the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia at their head, entered Paris.

Their troops encamped in the parks and gardens, and the inhabitants, so far from resenting their presence, actually welcomed them with delight. Cries were heard on all sides of "Long live the

Bourbons! Long live the Emperor Alexander! Down with the tyrant!" and all the statues of Napoleon were broken and trodden under foot by the fickle populace.

Napoleon retired to Fontainebleau when he found that all was lost, for the Allies refused even to treat with him or consider him a reigning sovereign. The French Senate declared him to be deposed, and on April 5th, 1814, he signed an act of abdication by which he gave up all claims to the French empire for himself and his heirs. Before leaving Fontainebleau for the island of Elba, to which he was banished, Napoleon took an affecting farewell of his Old Guard, who were themselves moved to tears at the separation, and then he kissed the eagle of France on their standard, exclaiming, "Dear eagle, may this last embrace thrill for ever in the hearts of all my faithful soldiers." Then by the advice of Talleyrand, who had deserted his master's cause, it was decided that a Bourbon prince, the Count of Provence, who was a brother of the unfortunate Louis XVI., should ascend the throne under the title of LOUIS XVIII.,* and he accordingly entered Paris in the following month. Peace was then made with all foreign countries, and France was left with almost the same old boundaries as before the Revolution.

Napoleon still kept the title of emperor, and was allowed to keep the little island of Elba, close to the coast of Italy, and there he took up his residence. But the army in France still remained faithful to him,

* There is really no "Louis XVII." in French history. The royalists gave this empty title to the poor little son of Louis XVI., who died of ill-usage in 1795, and who was never really king. See page 234.

and were discontented with the change of government. Bunches of violets, a flower which has always been the badge of the Buonapartes, were handed about among the soldiers with the whisper "He will return to us in the spring."

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE HUNDRED DAYS (1815); LOUIS XVIII. (1815-1824).

How Louis XVIII. became king; how a Congress met at Vienna; how Napoleon escaped from Elba and entered Paris in triumph; how the Hundred Days began; how the battle of Waterloo was fought; how Napoleon was exiled to St. Helena; how Louis XVIII. was restored to the throne; how Marshal Ney was shot; how the Holy Alliance was formed, and how a war took place in Spain.

ON the same day that Napoleon started for his place of exile in the little island of Elba, Louis XVIII. left the country house in England where he had lived during his exile, and travelled to Paris. The royalists gave him a hearty welcome, but most of the people looked coldly on, as his carriage passed through the streets on its way to the Cathedral of Notre Dame; and the soldiers especially could hardly conceal their dislike of the new monarch. Indeed, no greater contrast could be formed than between the active and fiery Napoleon and this Bourbon king, who was stout, elderly, and infirm, and so fond of eating that a pun was made upon his name, and instead of *Louis Dix Huit* (Louis XVIII.), they nicknamed him *Louis des Huîtres*, or "Louis of the oysters." But he was shrewd and clever, in spite of his indolence, and had something of Louis XIV.'s fondness for state and etiquette,

and he is said to have been the first to use the expression that "punctuality is the courtesy of kings."

As has been said, a treaty was made between France and the Allied Sovereigns, and she got back her colonies which had been lost in the war, though her boundaries in Europe were fixed as they had been before the conquests of Napoleon. The Allied Armies left France, and a Congress met at Vienna to settle the affairs of Europe. All the great statesmen of the time attended this Congress, and Prince Metternich appeared for Austria and Prince Talleyrand for France. They held several meetings, and were in full debate, when suddenly, on March 15th, 1815, the news came that Napoleon had escaped from Elba and had landed in France. Thereupon the ministers assembled at the Congress declared him an outlaw, and "a fit object of public vengeance," and each statesman, on behalf of his own nation, promised to bring a vast army to expel the usurper from France. Russia alone was to contribute 200,000 men.

Napoleon had, in fact, landed at Antibes, in the south of France, with a few friends and 400 grenadiers; but as he marched towards Paris, the soldiers of every town he passed threw off their allegiance to Louis XVIII. as soon as they saw the well-known figure of their emperor in his green coat with the star of the Legion of Honour on his breast. Even at Lyons, which was held by a strong garrison, the troops refused to fire on him, and when he at last drew near Paris, seated alone in his travelling carriage and only attended by a few Polish lancers, the troops drawn up to oppose him rent the air with shouts of *Vive l'Empéreur*, and trampled the white cockade of the Bourbons under

foot. Above all, Marshal Ney, who had promised the king that "he would bring the Corsican to Paris in an iron cage," forgot his vows of loyalty, and joined Napoleon with all the troops under his command.

Louis XVIII. fled in haste from his capital, and Napoleon was received with shouts of joy by the crowd, and was carried up the grand staircase of the Tuileries in the arms of his devoted friends. And thus began what is called "THE HUNDRED DAYS"—the brief period of Napoleon's restoration to his empire—from March 20th to June 29th, 1815.

Napoleon's first step was to raise an army and fortify Paris, for he knew that he would soon have all Europe in arms against him, and that if he kept his empire at all it must be by crushing his enemies at once. In a month or so he had raised an army of 200,000 men, with a splendid force of cavalry and a train of artillery; and probably, had he been able to put off fighting for a few months, he would have raised four times as many troops, and made (as he declared) "a wall of brass which no earthly power could break through."

But the English army, under the Duke of Wellington, and the Prussians, under Marshal Blucher, were already assembling in Belgium, and Napoleon was eager to meet them at once, before the Austrian and Russian forces could join them: so he crossed the Belgian frontier on June 15th, sending Ney to attack the English and Hanoverians, while his own division attacked the Prussians at Ligny. The battle at Ligny was long and desperate, for the Prussians and French hated each other so intensely that no quarter was asked or given; but at last the Prussians were driven back, and retreated in good order to Wavre.

Meanwhile Ney had attacked Wellington's army at QUATRE BRAS, and easily drove back the Belgians; but the English, though most of them were young soldiers, held their ground so stubbornly that the French had to retreat themselves. The young Duke of Brunswick was killed in this action, fighting gallantly at the head of his troops.

Wellington now drew back to the little village of WATERLOO, to bring his forces nearer the Prussians and to cover the road to Brussels: and here, on June 18, 1815, was fought the most memorable battle of modern times.

The English army were drawn up in a line stretching about a mile, with the village of Mont St. Jean in their centre, and with the farm-house of Hougomont on their right wing, and another farm-house, La Haye Sainte, on their left, near the road to Wavre, about twelve miles distant, where the Prussian army had remained.

Napoleon's great object was to defeat the English and drive them from their position before the Prussians could come up, while Wellington's object was simply to hold his ground. The battle began about 11 in the morning with a furious attack made by the French on Hougoumont; but the farm-house and orchard was so bravely defended by the English guards that, in spite of repeated attacks, the French were unable to take it. Then they attacked the other farm-house, La Haye Sainte, with infantry and cavalry, but the English formed squares and held their ground, while our dragoons and life guards under Lord Uxbridge made a gallant charge, and almost destroyed the French cuirassiers. Our troops, however, pursued the enemy too far, and lost many men, among them the gallant Sir Thomas Picton.

For five hours the battle continued to rage, a murderous fire being kept up by the French artillery, while the cavalry made repeated charges on the English infantry, who were drawn up in squares. At last, about four o'clock in the afternoon, the sound of cannon was heard on the French right, and the Duke of Wellington then knew that the Prussians were coming to his aid; and Napoleon, growing desperate, ordered his Imperial Guard, who had been kept in reserve, to charge the English lines. The French guards came on in two great columns, but they were met with such withering volleys of musketry that they fell back in confusion, and the English Guards then charged them in turn, and drove them back far down into the valley. Then Wellington ordered his whole army to advance. The French broke their ranks and fled, and thus the victory was won. Napoleon, who had seen the repulse of his Imperial Guard, grew pale, and exclaimed, "All is lost: save himself who can!" and then he galloped off the field.

The Prussians came up in time to pursue the flying enemy, for the English troops were wearied out by the long day's battle. No quarter was given to the unfortunate fugitives, and hundreds who had escaped from the battle were killed by the Prussian cavalry before they could reach the frontiers.

Napoleon returned to Paris, but saw himself that his cause was hopelessly lost, and he resigned his empire of his own accord—in fact, his spirit was completely crushed by this last terrible defeat at Waterloo. He would have escaped to America, but knew that he would be seized by some English vessel. "Wherever wood can float," he said, "there am I sure to find the flag of England." So he gave

Napoleon at Waterloo.

himself up as a prisoner to Captain Maitland of the *Bellerophon*, an English man-of-war, exactly a hundred days after he had landed from Elba. The Allied Sovereigns determined to send him to St. Helena, a lonely and rocky island in the Atlantic Ocean, where escape would be almost impossible. He was sent there accordingly as a prisoner of state, and guards were placed at different points of the island, to prevent his escaping or communicating with his friends.

He remained at St. Helena six years, and proved a most restless and unhappy captive, fretting over his misfortunes, and quarrelling with the governor of the island, Sir Hudson Lowe. At length he died on May 5th, 1821, of an internal disease from which he had long suffered, and was buried under a willow-tree near his house of Longwood ; but in 1840 the English Government allowed his body to be brought to France, and it now rests under the splendid dome of the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris. Thus the wish expressed by Napoleon in his will, which he made before his death, was fulfilled: "I wish my ashes to repose on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people, whom I have loved so well."

Of Napoleon's private character the less, perhaps, that is said the better. He was cruel, selfish, not a gentleman, and utterly unscrupulous in the means which he used to gain his ends, and his ambition caused incalculable misery and waste of life to his country. Yet, with all these faults, it must be confessed that few have shown such genius for ruling men, or such a mastery of the art of war.

Paris now saw her streets again occupied by foreign soldiers, this time full of wrath and resent-

ment against the fickle populace. The Prussians were especially bitter against the French, and could hardly be prevented by the Duke of Wellington from blowing up the bridge of Jena and destroying Napoleon's Column in the Place Vendôme. All the pictures and statues carried off by the French from the various capitals of Europe were now packed up and sent back to their lawful owners. The country was condemned to pay twenty millions of pounds in our money to defray the expenses caused by the war; and to prevent any further outbreaks, it was decided that the Allied Armies should garrison the frontier towns of France during the next three years.

Louis XVIII. had returned, but met with a cold welcome from his subjects—in fact, neither he nor his family were ever popular in Paris, and it was said of them, with some truth, that "the Bourbons had forgotten nothing and had learned nothing during their exile." They had not forgotten the wrongs their family had suffered, and they had not learned to be wise and moderate on their restoration to power.

Louis XVIII. was the most sensible man of his family, and would have been content to allow the past to be forgotten, but he was urged on by the extreme royalists, and consented that the chief of Napoleon's party "should be delivered up to the vengeance of the laws." Two distinguished generals suffered death accordingly: one was Labédoyère, Napoleon's bosom friend, and the other was Marshal Ney, "the bravest of the brave," and the hero of the Russian campaign, who was arrested and shot as a traitor in the gardens of the Luxemburg palace. In

the same year, Murat, the ex-king of Naples, made a useless attempt to recover his throne, was arrested, tried by court-martial, and was also shot as a traitor.

Louis XVIII. was childless himself, but his brother Charles, Count of Artois, had two sons. The elder, the Duke of Angoulême, had married Maria Theresa, the daughter of Louis XVI., and she inherited much of the spirit of her mother, Marie Antoinette; indeed Napoleon himself had declared of her "that she was the only man in the family." But she had no children, and the hopes of the royalists turned to the Duke of Berry, the second son of the Count of Artois. Unhappily, he was murdered on the steps of the opera house in 1820, and the royalist party took advantage of his death to procure the dismissal of Decazes, the prime minister, who was too moderate in his views to suit their policy. The Duke of Richelieu took his place, and several harsh and unpopular laws were passed by his influence. Among them was one which allowed the ministry to arrest and imprison any person suspected of disloyalty, and many persons began to fear that instead of a limited monarchy, there would soon be a return to the despotism of Louis XIV.

About this time there was much trouble and discontent in several countries of Europe, especially in Spain and Italy, where the Bourbon princes who had been restored to their thrones had proved such tyrants, that their subjects had revolted and expelled them. The three great sovereigns of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, feared lest this revolutionary spirit might spread to their own countries, and they entered into a league, known as the "Holy Alliance," by which they bound themselves to uphold monarchy throughout Europe. They prevailed on

Louis XVIII. to send an army into Spain, to restore the Bourbon King Ferdinand VII., and the Duke of Angoulême commanded the French troops. This prince showed much courage and capacity, stormed the fortress of Cadiz, and soon forced the Spanish to restore their king; and these foreign successes did much to render the Bourbon monarchy more popular in France. But Louis XVIII. was now slowly dying of gout and other maladies, and, after great suffering, he breathed his last on September 16th, 1824. His last words to his brother, the Count of Artois, were, "The Charter is the best inheritance I can leave you." This was the Charter of French Liberties which Louis had himself promised to observe at the beginning of his reign; and, in spite of unwise advisers, he had certainly done his best to do so. How far the Count of Artois followed this advice, will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

CHARLES X. (1824–1830); LOUIS PHILIPPE (1830–1848).

How Charles X.'s ministers interfered with the freedom of the press; how a revolution took place, and how the king abdicated; how Louis Philippe became king; how the Red Republicans plotted against the king's life; how the French made war in Syria and Algeria; how another revolution took place, and how Louis Philippe abdicated.

THE Count of Artois, who now became king under the title of CHARLES X., had not the same good sense and shrewdness as his brother Louis XVIII., and had unfortunately very high ideas of

kingly power. But he was frank, generous, and warm-hearted, and had he been less superstitious and less easily led by others, his reign might have been a peaceful and a happy one.

From the very first, however, he gave his consent to the harsh and vexatious measures proposed by his ministers, especially a law which was to interfere with the liberty of the press, and force all books and writings to be approved of by the government before they were published. Now a free press is always one of the dearest privileges of a free people, and the freedom of the press had been expressly provided for in the charter which Louis XVIII. had signed when he was placed on the throne, and which on his death-bed he had so strongly advised his successor to observe. There was great discontent among the people at this interference with their liberties, and when Charles appeared at a grand review of his National Guards in the Champs de Mars, nothing was heard but shouts of "Long live the Charter!" and "Down with the Ministers and Jesuits!" who were supposed to have advised the king to pass these unpopular laws. In his anger at these outcries, Charles disbanded all the National Guards of Paris, and then dissolved the Chamber of Deputies.

For a time matters remained quiet, but in 1829 the king chose three of the most unpopular men in France to be his ministers. The chief of them was Prince Polignac, whose great object was to restore the power of the crown as it had been in the days of Louis XIV., and whose very name was hated by the French, for his family had been "aristocrats" in the time of the Great Revolution, and the Abbé Polignac was the trusted adviser of Marie Antoinette.

Great discontent now prevailed both in Paris and the provinces, and violent debates took place in the Chamber of Deputies. But Charles was resolved to support his ministers, and declared there should be "no compromise, no surrender." A royal edict forbade any journal or newspaper to appear without a licence from government, and the Chamber of Deputies was at once dissolved in order to prevent this act of tyranny being even discussed by them. General Marmont was sent with a large body of troops to prevent any disturbance in Paris; but on June 27th the mob rose as they had done before, tore up the pavement, cut down the trees on the Boulevards, and made barricades of carts and paving-stones across the streets. The great bell of Notre Dame was rung to call the citizens to arms, and every house became a little fortress, from which not only shots were fired, but stones and boiling water were showered upon the heads of the troops. Marmont and his soldiers did what they could, but they were driven back in all directions, and many of the soldiers threw away their arms and ammunition and joined the mob. At last a body of rioters burst into the Louvre and the Tuileries, broke all the splendid furniture and threw it into the Seine. Such was the Revolution of the "three glorious days of July," as they were called, the 27th, 28th, and 29th of July, 1830.

Charles X. heard of these scenes in Paris while he was hunting near his palace of St. Cloud, and he was ready to dismiss his ministers and revoke the edicts which had caused this outbreak. But it was then too late, for the chief citizens in Paris had resolved to depose him, and offer the crown to his cousin the Duke of Orleans. On hearing this, Charles saw that

there was nothing left for him but to abdicate, and in August he left France for England, never to return. He lived for a while in Holyrood Palace in Edinburgh; but afterwards he left our country for the continent, and finally died an exile in Austria.

There are two foreign events in this reign which ought to be mentioned; one is the BATTLE OF NAVARINO, fought in 1827, when a squadron of French, Russian, and English vessels destroyed the Turkish fleet and secured the independence of Greece; and the other is the CONQUEST OF ALGIERS in 1829 by a French army under Marshal Bourmont. Algeria still belongs to France, and is one of the most important and valuable of her colonial possessions.

The Duke of Orleans, who now took the title of LOUIS PHILIPPE, King of the French, was the son of "Égalité" Orleans, the wicked and infamous prince who had been guillotined during the Great Revolution.* But he was a very different man from his father. He had been carefully educated by the celebrated Madame de Genlis, and had proved himself a brave soldier at Valmy and Jemappes. When the revolution broke out, he had escaped to Switzerland, and afterwards visited both England, where he had supported himself as a school-master, and America. On the restoration in 1814 he had returned to Paris, and lived in the Palais Royal. He was suspected by the Court, but was popular with the liberals and moderate royalists, who elected him now to be their king, instead of the weak and tyrannical Charles X.

From the first, Louis Philippe wished to be re-

* See page 234.

garded as a "citizen king," elected by the free voice of the people; he wished to maintain the proper mean—*le juste milieu*, as he called it—between royal and popular power, and he declared that the charter of French liberties should now be a reality, and that as far as possible the English idea of a constitutional monarchy was to be carried out—namely, that the king reigns, but does not govern. As far as Louis Philippe was concerned, he was probably quite sincere in his wishes to govern his kingdom in a just and liberal fashion, leaving his people as far as possible free and independent; but he was as unfortunate as Charles X. had been in his choice of ministers, besides which, France was divided into three great parties whom it was impossible to reconcile.

Firstly there were the Orleanists, Louis Philippe's own friends and supporters, from whom he naturally chose his ministers; then there were the "Legitimists," or the extreme Bourbon faction, who looked upon Charles X.'s grandson, the Count of Chambord, as their lawful sovereign; and, thirdly, there were the Democrats or Red Republicans, so called because they disowned alike the white flag of the Bourbons and the tricolour of the more moderate republicans. These "Reds" were by far the most dangerous party in the State. They formed a secret society, and were continually plotting against the government, and even made several attempts to assassinate the king. In 1835 a ruffian named Fieschi constructed an infernal machine of twenty-four gun-barrels fixed in a wooden frame, which he fired from a window upon the royal carriage in which the king was driving to review his troops. Louis Philippe fortunately escaped, but several of his

officers and many bystanders were killed upon the spot.

In this same year an insurrection took place at Lyons; while in Brittany the mother of the young Count of Chambord, the Duchess of Berry, made a foolish attempt to excite the peasants of La Vendée to rise against the government; but the attempt failed, and the duchess herself, after many romantic adventures, was arrested and imprisoned.

In 1836, a rebellion was threatened in another quarter. Louis Napoleon, the son of Napoleon I.'s brother, the King of Holland, suddenly appeared in Strasburg and tried to excite the troops there to revolt, but he was at once arrested and banished to America. He made another attempt at Boulogne in 1840, but was again arrested and imprisoned in the Castle of Ham, whence he managed to escape in the disguise of a workman, and took refuge in London.

Louis Philippe wished to avoid foreign wars as much as possible, but, in spite of himself, he was forced to interfere in the affairs of other nations. In 1830 the Belgians had followed the example of France, and revolted against the King of Holland, and it was settled at last, though not until a French army had taken Antwerp, that Belgium should be a separate kingdom for the future, and should have a king of its own. Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, who married our Princess Charlotte, was chosen as the first King of the Belgians.

In 1840, France interfered in the affairs of Syria, which Mehemet Ali, the Viceroy of Egypt, had seized, in defiance of his lawful sovereign, the Sultan of Turkey. The French supported Mehemet Ali, and wished him to retain Syria, but the other

powers of Europe sent a fleet, which drove Mehemet Ali and his Egyptian troops out of Syria in a single campaign. The French were furious at this, and so likely did it seem that there would be another European war, that Louis Philippe had Paris strongly fortified in case of a siege, and these fortifications, which cost an immense sum, were perhaps the most important work of his reign.

A war went on for some years in Algeria, where the Arab tribes rose against the French, and were headed by the famous Abd-el-Kader, a chieftain of great courage and spirit; but in 1842 this rebellion was at last put down, and Abd-el-Kader himself surrendered, and was brought a prisoner to France.

The king's eldest son, the Duke of Orleans, was killed in 1842 by leaping from his carriage when the horses ran away, and his death was a great blow to the Orleanist party, as it made the succession to the throne so doubtful. The duke's son, the Count of Paris, now became the heir, but he was only a child. Again at home there were great troubles and discontent, for the king's chief ministers, Guizot and Thiers, two distinguished historians, were most unpopular statesmen, and opposed every scheme for reform in the government. The harvest of 1847 was a bad one, work was scarce, and wages had fallen, and this caused great distress among the poorer classes. Meetings were held everywhere, and speeches made against the government, and when at last a reform banquet, which was to have taken place at Versailles, was forbidden by the ministers, the popular discontent increased tenfold. Crowds assembled in the streets, shouting, "Long live Reform," and "Down with the ministers!" and

then they sang in chorus the *Marseillaise*, that famous hymn of the Great Revolution.

The troops were called out to disperse the mob, and, unhappily, a chance shot was fired from a house which wounded one of the soldiers, whereupon they fired a volley into the crowd, killing or wounding some fifty persons. The people then became furious, and placing the dead bodies on a cart, they paraded them through the streets of Paris, calling upon all the people to rise against the government. Cries of vengeance were heard on all sides, and, as usual, barricades were erected in all the principal streets, while the soldiers refused to fire on the mob, and in many cases joined the insurgents.

Then, when it was too late, Guizot resigned his office, and Thiers became prime minister. He tried to pacify the people by withdrawing the troops, and giving way to the popular demands; but nothing would now satisfy the mob short of the king's abdication.

Louis Philippe accordingly gave up his throne, as Charles X. had done, and on February 24th, 1848, he set off for England, and lived quietly at Claremont House, near Windsor, which was lent him by our Queen, until his death in the following year.

He had named the Duchess of Orleans Regent, hoping that his little grandson, the Count of Paris, might, in the course of time, become king; but the Chamber of Deputies would not agree to this, and decided to have another Republic. For the present some of the most distinguished of their body acted as a "Provisional Government."

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE SECOND REPUBLIC (1848–1852); THE SECOND EMPIRE—NAPOLEON III. (1852–1870).

How the Second Republic was established; how Louis Napoleon became first President and then Emperor; how France and England made war on Russia; how Sebastopol was taken; how Napoleon III. made war on Austria; how he interfered in Mexico, and how Maximilian was killed.

A REPUBLIC was now established for the second time in France, and Lamartine was the most famous member of the new government; but there was still great dissatisfaction in Paris, for the extreme republicans—"the Reds"—thought that not enough had been done for the people, and that the money of the rich should be taken from them and divided among the poor. Disturbances arose in the city, and in June 1848 the red republicans again set up barricades, and street fighting went on for several days. Many innocent citizens were killed, and among them the Archbishop of Paris, who was shot on one of the barricades as he was trying to appease the fury of the mob. At last the Republican General Cavaignac brought his troops up and restored order, though not without much bloodshed.

Then the Assembly decided to elect a President for four years, as in the United States of America, by "universal suffrage"—that is, by the vote of the whole nation; and though General Cavaignac might have been the best man, they chose the nephew of the Great Napoleon, LOUIS NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE, who had already, as you have seen, made two unsuccessful attempts at a revolution in Louis Philippe's reign.

Louis Napoleon became President in December 1848, and swore that he would do his best to preserve the Republic, but he soon found that the Democrats opposed and thwarted him at every step, and made a moderate government impossible. In 1851 he resolved to take the government into his own hands, and made secret arrangements for carrying out his design. Then suddenly, at midnight on December 2nd, he arrested and imprisoned several of the most eminent citizens, and among them General Cavaignac and M. Thiers, fearing that they would oppose his election. Meanwhile, he had posted placards all over Paris announcing that the Assembly was dissolved, and that he was to be elected President of the Republic for ten years, just as Napoleon I. had been. The mob, as usual, rose in revolt and erected barricades; and then, at Napoleon's orders, his soldiers marched up and down the streets of Paris, shooting all persons who opposed them, and thus by a sudden stroke of policy, called a *coup d'état*, Louis Napoleon made himself master of France.

He then persuaded the people to approve of this bold stroke by a *plébiscite*, or vote of the whole nation, and in a year's time (December, 1852) he got himself proclaimed Emperor under the title of NAPOLEON III., though, as a matter of fact, there had never been a Napoleon II., for Napoleon I.'s little son, the King of Rome, had never reigned, and only bore an empty title.

The English nation had watched these events with great distrust and alarm, for they feared that Napoleon III. would follow his uncle's example and soon involve Europe in another war. The *coup d'état* had shown that he had no scruples about

his oath, and he was known to be crafty and not very sincere, and though he professed a great regard for England, where he had lived so long as an exile, it was not at all certain that he would not attack us, if it suited his schemes of ambition. So general was this alarm in England, that volunteers were again enrolled to defend the country in case of invasion, as they had been in Napoleon I.'s time; and our present large army of volunteers was first formed during this panic of 1852.

Napoleon III. married a Spanish lady, Eugenie de Montijo, a good and beautiful woman, who is still living in England a sad and lonely life, for her husband and her only son are dead, and she is an exile from France. But for eighteen years the Empress Eugenie's court at the Tuileries was the most splendid and brilliant in Europe, and all that was beautiful in the way of dress and decoration came to England from Paris. The city itself became one of the wonders of the world, for the old-fashioned houses were pulled down, the narrow streets were widened, and new and handsome houses were built in all directions. Paris lost much of its old picturesque beauty, but became instead the stateliest capital in Europe.

But though Napoleon III. declared that "the Empire was Peace," he saw that if he wished to keep his power he must employ his army and do something to wipe out the memory of all the defeats France had suffered in the last year of Napoleon I.'s reign; and his policy was to attack, if he could, the great powers of Europe one after the other, and, if possible, to secure a strong ally in each of his wars.

His first war arose out of what is called "the Eastern Question" in 1854. There had long been a

quarrel about the holy places in Palestine, such as the church at Bethlehem and the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, the question being whether the monks of the Greek or the Latin Church were to have the charge of these places, which were in the Turkish empire. The Emperor of Russia was the head of the Greek Church, and the King of France had always been regarded as the head of the Latin Church; but the real reason for a war lay in the growing ambition of the Russian Emperor Nicholas, who was clearly doing his best to break up the Turkish empire and add part of it to his own immense dominions. And both France and England were determined to protect Turkey and check the advances of the Russian Czar. The Russians attacked Turkey in 1853, and their fleet had destroyed the poor little Turkish fleet in the harbour of Sinope. This cruel and cowardly attack had excited great anger both in France and England, and after a long and useless negotiation, war was declared against Russia by both these countries, and an allied army of French and English, with a powerful fleet, was assembled at Varna, near the mouth of the Danube, and thence sailed across to the peninsula of the Crimea in order to attack the great Russian arsenal and seaport of Sebastopol. It was forty years since England had been at war, and now her soldiers were fighting side by side with their old enemies the French, the English army commanded by Lord Raglan and the French by Marshal St. Arnaud.

The first battle took place on the river ALMA, where the Russians under Prince Mentschikoff were strongly posted on some hills: but the English and French crossed the river in the face of a heavy fire from the

Russian batteries, and drove the enemy from their position. Our soldiers fought gallantly, but it was a scramble rather than a battle; little generalship was shown on either side, and there was no pursuit.

Had the Allies marched on to Sebastopol at once they might have taken the city; but instead of doing so they moved round to Balaclava, on the south side of the great fortress; but they thought that they had not men enough to take the city by storm, and were obliged to besiege it by opening trenches and throwing up earthworks, from which cannon were fired against the city night and day. Our troops were encamped opposite Sebastopol for more than a year, and suffered terribly from the cold and want of food as well as from cholera; in fact, more men died of disease than were killed by the enemy.

The Russians poured in their armies from all parts of the empire to defend Sebastopol, and made several attempts to drive the French and English from their position. Once they tried to take Balaclava, but were driven back with great loss; and it was then that the famous charge of the Light Cavalry Brigade took place. By some mistake of orders, six hundred lancers and hussars were sent to take the Russian batteries in front of them; they gallantly charged up the valley of Balaclava in a storm of shot and shell; they took the batteries, slew the gunners, and cut their way through a collected mass of Russian cavalry 5000 strong, but of the six hundred hardly a third escaped.

In November, the Russians again tried to surprise the Allies on the heights of INKERMAN, and were again splendidly repulsed after a desperate battle. All through the winter of 1854, and late into the

autumn of the following year, the siege continued, the troops, both French and English, losing men daily from sickness and from the fire of the Russian batteries. At length, in September 1855, a joint attack was made by the Allies upon two of the strong forts which defended the city. The English were repulsed in their attack upon the Redan, but the French stormed the tower of the Malakoff, the strongest point of the Russian position; and then the Russian general, seeing it hopeless to attempt to defend the city any longer, withdrew his army from Sebastopol, but before leaving he blew up the forts and his own ships of war in the harbour, and set fire to Sebastopol itself.

The Emperor Nicholas had died, it was said, of a broken heart, at the defeat of his army at Alma and Inkerman, and the new Emperor, Alexander, felt it hopeless to carry on the war. In February, 1856, a Congress met at Paris and settled terms of peace. It was agreed that Turkey should be left in full possession of her empire, and that no ships of war, either Russian or foreigners, were to enter the Black Sea. France and England had gained little by the war, while they had lost many thousands of their best troops; but they had checked for a time the advance of Russia.

For some years after this, the French Emperor made no foreign war, though he was constantly plotting and scheming against the peace of Europe; but in 1859 he was persuaded by the Italian statesman, Count Cavour, to join the King of Sardinia, Victor Emmanuel, in an attempt to drive the Austrians out of Italy. Louis Napoleon made war this time, as he said, "for an idea." "Austria," he declared, "has brought things to such a pass that she must

lord it up to the Alps, or else Italy must be free up to the Adriatic."

Napoleon himself took the command of his army, and crossing the Alps in the month of June, he surprised the Austrians near MAGENTA, and won a brilliant victory. Then he pressed on, and again defeated their best general, Benedek, at SOLFERINO; but he then found himself between four great fortresses, and thought it prudent to make peace at Villa Franca. Lombardy was given up to Sardinia, while France got Nice and Savoy, but for the present Austria kept Venetia. Before many years had passed, however, the whole of Italy, even the Pope's dominions near Rome, was united into a single kingdom, and Victor Emmanuel became King of Italy.

In 1862, Louis Napoleon took upon himself to interfere in the affairs of Mexico, and set up an Austrian prince of his own choosing, the Archduke Maximilian, as emperor; but the people of Mexico preferred a Republic, and rose against their emperor, who was only kept on his throne by the aid of French troops. But these troops were soon withdrawn in consequence of the threatening attitude of the United States, and the unfortunate Maximilian was then left to hold his own, as he best could, against the rebels. After some fighting, Maximilian was betrayed and taken prisoner, and was then shot as a traitor by his own subjects. Great horror was felt in Europe at his death, and it was a fatal blow to the power and popularity of Louis Napoleon, who had allured this unfortunate prince to Mexico, and then left him to his fate. Mexico has been well called "the Moscow of the Second Empire."

CHAPTER L.

NAPOLEON III.—(*continued*).

1870—THE THIRD REPUBLIC.

How Napoleon III. made war on Germany; how the French armies were defeated in several battles, and how Napoleon and his army surrendered at Sedan; how a third Republic was established; how Paris was besieged, and at last surrendered to the Germans; how the Communists set fire to Paris and how vengeance was taken on them by the government; how M. Thiers became President.

IN 1866 a war broke out between the two great German powers of Prussia and Austria, who had long been rivals; but the campaign, which hardly lasted a fortnight, ended in the crushing defeat of the Austrians at SADOWA, one of the most decisive battles of modern times.

Napoleon III. had been persuaded by the great Prussian minister, Count Bismarck, to remain neutral during the war; but France had been always jealous of Prussia since the days of the first Napoleon, and recently this jealousy had been increased by the Prussian victories over Austria in 1866, and Louis Napoleon saw that Prussia was rapidly becoming as powerful under Count Bismarck as she had been in the days of Frederick the Great. He longed, therefore, for some opportunity of making war against Prussia, especially as there was great discontent in France, and some brilliant victory was needed to recover his popularity with the people and the army.

This opportunity came in 1870. Queen Isabella of Spain had just been deposed by her subjects, and the Spanish crown was offered to Prince Leopold of

Hohenzollern, a cousin of the King of Prussia. Louis Napoleon seized upon this as a pretext of war, and though Prince Leopold withdrew his claim, the French ambassador made a further demand, which was refused, and war was then declared against Prussia.

Napoleon hoped that the south of Germany would have joined him in this war against Prussia; but every German state, including Saxony, Wurtemburg, Bavaria and Hanover, sent bodies of troops to help their fellow-countrymen, and the war became, in fact, one between France and Germany.

The French minister, M. Ollivier, felt so sure of success, that he declared that he entered on the war "with a light heart," and the French troops themselves were full of hope and confidence, and boasted openly that they would march to Berlin. But, as a matter of fact, their armies were not ready for war; the artillery were badly supplied with shot and shell; the soldiers were badly disciplined, and the officers did not know their duty, and were so ignorant of the country, that many of them wandered about in search of their troops.

The Germans, on the contrary, did not boast, but they were thoroughly drilled and disciplined; their officers knew their duty; and their generals—such as Blumenthal, Manteuffel, and Steinmetz—knew well how to manage armies in the field. Above all, they had the greatest strategist of the age, Von Moltke, to arrange the plan of the campaign, and settle exactly the points to which each of the three German armies were to march. The King of Prussia, and his son, the Crown Prince, and the foreign minister, Count Bismarck, all took part in the campaign.

The Emperor Napoleon and his young son, the

Prince Imperial, joined the French army, which had mustered on the Rhine in the beginning of August, and the first cannon was fired at Saarbruck by the young prince, who then and there, as his father pompously wrote home to the Empress, "received his baptism of fire."

But in a few days the French suffered two terrible defeats, first at Wissemburg, and then at WÖRTH, where Marshal MacMahon was attacked by the Germans under the Crown Prince. They lost all their guns and stores, and many thousands of prisoners. MacMahon retreated towards Chalons, and the French main army now collected near the fortress of Metz under Marshal Bazaine, to whom the Emperor had resigned his command. And it was hoped that if Bazaine could join MacMahon, their united army might withstand the Germans.

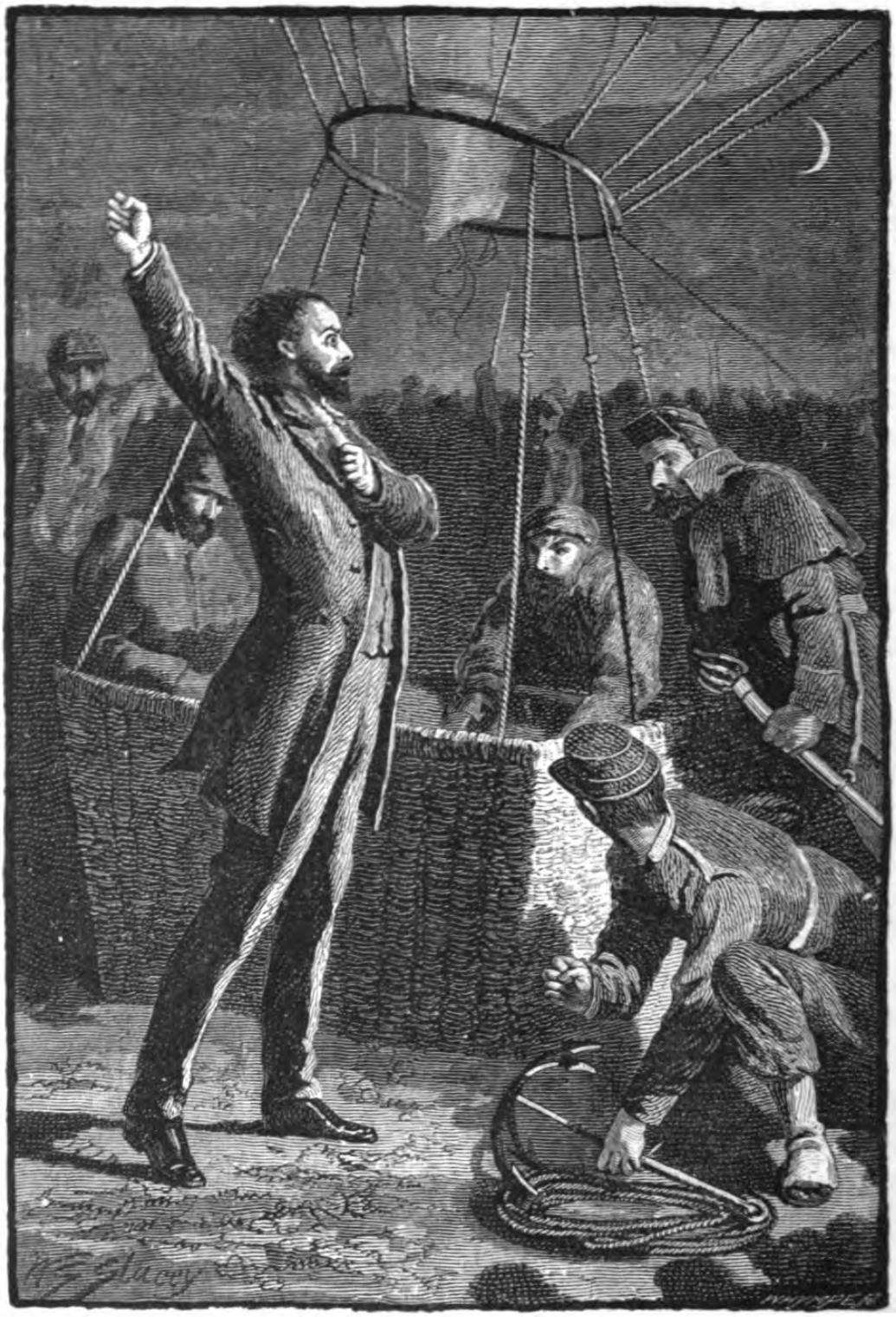
But Bazaine did not move fast enough, and his army was attacked during its retreat by Steinmetz, and hopelessly defeated in two battles at Rezonville and GRAVELOTTE. The slaughter in this second battle was something terrible; two regiments of French cuirassiers, who had charged the Germans, were shot down almost to a man. The fortress of Metz, whither Bazaine had led the remains of his army, was now closely besieged by the Germans; and in an evil moment the Emperor ordered MacMahon to leave his strong position at Chalons, and march to Metz to raise the siege.

But, as before, the French troops did not move fast enough, and the German army, under the Crown Prince, soon caught up MacMahon's rear-guard, and the decisive battle of the war took place at SEDAN, on September 1st, 1876. The French fought gallantly, and made desperate attempts to break

through the German lines ; but they were hemmed in as it were by a circle of iron, thousands of their men were killed, and MacMahon himself was severely wounded. At last the whole French army, 100,000 men, were forced to surrender, and the Emperor Napoleon gave himself up as a prisoner of war to the Germans.

Up to this time the French newspapers had been filled with lying accounts of victories won by their army, but the truth could no longer be concealed, and the people of Paris now heard of the disaster of Sedan. They were furious against the Emperor,—"the man of Sedan," as they called him,—who, they declared, had betrayed them and caused their defeat ; and they broke into the Hall of the Assembly, and demanded that a Republic should be proclaimed at once. No resistance was offered ; all the Emperor's friends and ministers took flight ; and the Empress Eugénie herself escaped to England.

A Provisional Government, or Committee of National Defence, was formed at once, and the most conspicuous members of it were Jules Favre, Gambetta, and Rochefort, all of them great orators and violent republicans. General Trochu was charged with the defence of Paris, for it was clear that the German armies would now besiege the city. The trees in the Bois de Boulogne, the beautiful forest close to the city walls, were cut down and made into barricades ; the fortifications were strengthened : quantities of provisions were brought in ; and all the troops that could be collected in the neighbourhood were brought inside the walls. Besides this, volunteers were enrolled in large numbers, and the tradesmen and working men shouldered muskets and helped in the defence of the city.



Gambetta about to escape in a balloon.

Meanwhile the German armies had steadily advanced towards Paris, leaving troops behind them to besiege the fortresses of Metz and Strasburg. When they had got as far as Ferriéres, thirteen miles from Paris, Jules Favre came out from the city and had an interview with Count Bismarck, to try to arrange terms of peace. But the German terms were too hard, and nothing came of the meeting, for Jules Favre declared that the French would never give up an inch of their land or a stone of their fortresses.

The Germans then began the siege, placing batteries on all the heights round the city, and keeping such a strict blockade that no provisions could enter and no inhabitant could escape. The King of Prussia and his staff fixed their headquarters at Versailles, in and about the famous palace of Louis XIV.

The French made several desperate attempts to break through the German lines which encircled Paris, and Gambetta, who had escaped in a balloon from the city, reached Tours and began to collect "the army of the Loire," as it was termed, which was to attack the Germans and force them to raise the siege. But the army, which consisted of young and undisciplined soldiers, under General Aurelle de Paladines, was easily defeated by the steady discipline and skilful attack of the Germans, and was at last driven across the frontiers into Switzerland and disarmed: while the two generals inside Paris, Ducrot and Trochu, who made several gallant sorties, were driven back with severe loss. There was now no French army existing except a few line regiments in Paris and the troops under Marshal Bazaine, who was still shut up in Metz. At last,

towards the end of 1870, this army surrendered to the Germans, and 170,000 French troops laid down their arms without striking a blow.

It was now clear that the state of Paris was hopeless. Provisions had become so scarce that the inhabitants had eaten the cats and rats and even the wild animals in their Zoological Gardens, and many were starving for want of food, while the German batteries rained shot and shell upon the city night and day, shattering the walls of the houses and driving the wretched inhabitants into the cellars for safety. Moreover, the winter had set in, and the extreme cold and the want of fuel caused intense misery. There were constant disputes and quarrels between the national guards and the "Red Republicans," who mutually hated each other, and altogether the state of things in Paris was growing intolerable. At last, M. Thiers, who was now an old man of seventy-three, but whose spirit and patriotism were untouched by age, came out to Versailles, and after a long negotiation arranged terms of peace with Count Bismarck. They were exceedingly hard conditions for France, for she had to give up all the territory of Alsace and Lorraine, which had been conquered by Louis XIV., as well as the important fortresses of Metz and Strasburg. Besides this, the French nation had to pay the enormous sum of two hundred millions of pounds in our money to defray the expenses of the war. But, hard as these terms were, there was nothing left for the French but to accept them.

On March 1st, 1871, the German army entered Paris, and marched in triumph down the avenue of the Champs Elysées. Then they broke up their

camp and returned to Germany. And thus this great war, so fatal both to France and to her Emperor, came to an end.

Napoleon III. was now solemnly deposed; but he was set free by the Germans, and came to live in England, where he remained till his death in January, 1873.

But, though the Emperor was deposed and a Republic had become for the third time the government of France, the "Red Republicans" were full of rage at the treaty with the Germans, and declared they had been betrayed and sold by their generals. The mob again armed themselves, closed the gates of the city and declared war against M. Thiers and the new government, who were at Versailles. Most of these insurgents belonged to the working classes, and are called COMMUNISTS from their avowed wish and object being to divide all land and property in common among the people. Paris was for a time completely in their power, and during their short reign they committed the wildest excesses. They tore down the famous column in the Place Vendôme, which was made of the cannon taken in war by the Great Napoleon. They murdered some of the generals of the National Guard, as well as the Archbishop of Paris and many of his clergy; and at last, by an insane act of vengeance, they set fire to Paris itself, and burnt the magnificent Hotel de Ville and the palace of the Tuileries. Women joined the men in these frantic outrages, and poured petroleum oil upon the houses and public buildings.

But on May 2nd the regular troops under Mac-Mahon forced their way into Paris, and after desperate fighting they enforced a terrible punishment on the Communists. Hundreds of these wretched

men were shot down by the soldiers, and hundreds more were transported to the colonies.

Peace was at last restored after these bloody scenes, and M. Thiers became the first President of the Third Republic. Many of his colleagues in the government were very distinguished men, such as Jules Favre, Casimir Perier, and De Remusat.

M. Thiers resigned his office of President in 1873, and was succeeded by Marshal MacMahon, who was in his turn followed by the great republican orator, M. Gambetta, removed soon after by an early death. All these events are so near our own time that they have hardly yet become matters of history.

Since those days France has remained at peace, slowly recovering from the terrible disasters of the German invasion, and paying off by instalments the enormous fine imposed by Count Bismarck. Most of the houses and public buildings, burnt by the Communists or shattered by the German shells, were gradually rebuilt and restored; while the natural wealth of France is so great that a few years have been sufficient to restore her old prosperity.

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