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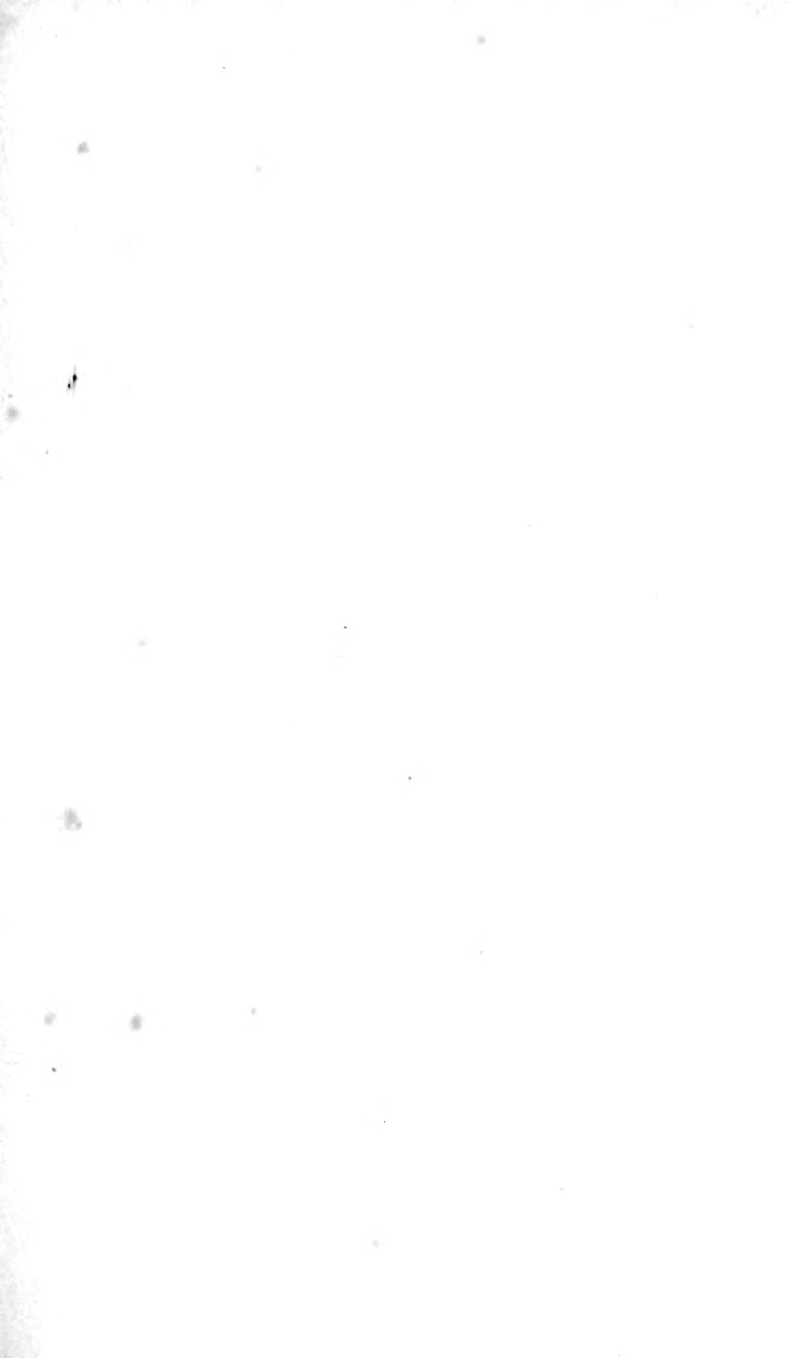


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A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLDEN TIME

VOL. II.



A GENTLEMAN
OF
THE OLDEN TIME

FRANÇOIS DE SCÉPEAUX, SIRE DE VIEILLEVILLE
1509—1571

Portraits and Stories of the Sixteenth Century
During the Reign of Henri II.

By C. COIGNET

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. II.



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CONTENTS.



CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
GERMAN EMBASSY.—ALARM OF VIEILLEVILLE.—EXPEDITION TO LORRAINE AND ALSACE.—METZ, TOUL, AND VERDUN.—PEACE OF PASSAU.—THE ADVENTURE OF LUMES	1

CHAPTER II.

CHARLES V. CROSSES THE FRONTIER.—VIEILLEVILLE AT VERDUN AND TOUL.—HIS ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE METZ CAMPAIGN	33
--	----

CHAPTER III.

THE SIEGE OF METZ.—THE DUC DE GUISE.—AMBROISE PARÉ.—THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY	61
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

	PAGE
VIEILLEVILLE APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF METZ.—HIS WIFE GOES TO JOIN HIM THERE.—DISCIPLINE RE-ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE CITY	95

CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTRY CLEARED.—TREASON OF THE PROVOST AND THE SERGEANT-MAJOR.—COMBAT OF ST. MICHEL. —PLOT OF THE CORDELIERS. — VIEILLEVILLE FOILS IT, AND DEFEATS THE IMPERIAL FORCES	115
--	-----

CHAPTER VI.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF METZ.—CAR- DINAL DE LÉNONCOURT.—JOURNEY OF VIEILLE- VILLE TO THE COURT. — THE SUITORS OF MADEMOISELLE DE VIEILLEVILLE	142
---	-----

CHAPTER VII.

CONTINUATION OF THE WAR.—THE TRUCE OF VAU- CELLES.—ABDICATION AND DEATH OF CHARLES V.	155
--	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

GUISE'S CAMPAIGN IN ITALY.—THE DEFEAT OF ST. QUENTIN. — THE VICTORY AT CALAIS. — GRAVE- LINES.—PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE.—THE SECRET CAUSES OF THE PEACE OF CATEAU-CAMBRESIS. —MARRIAGES AT COURT.—DEATH OF HENRI II.	196
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

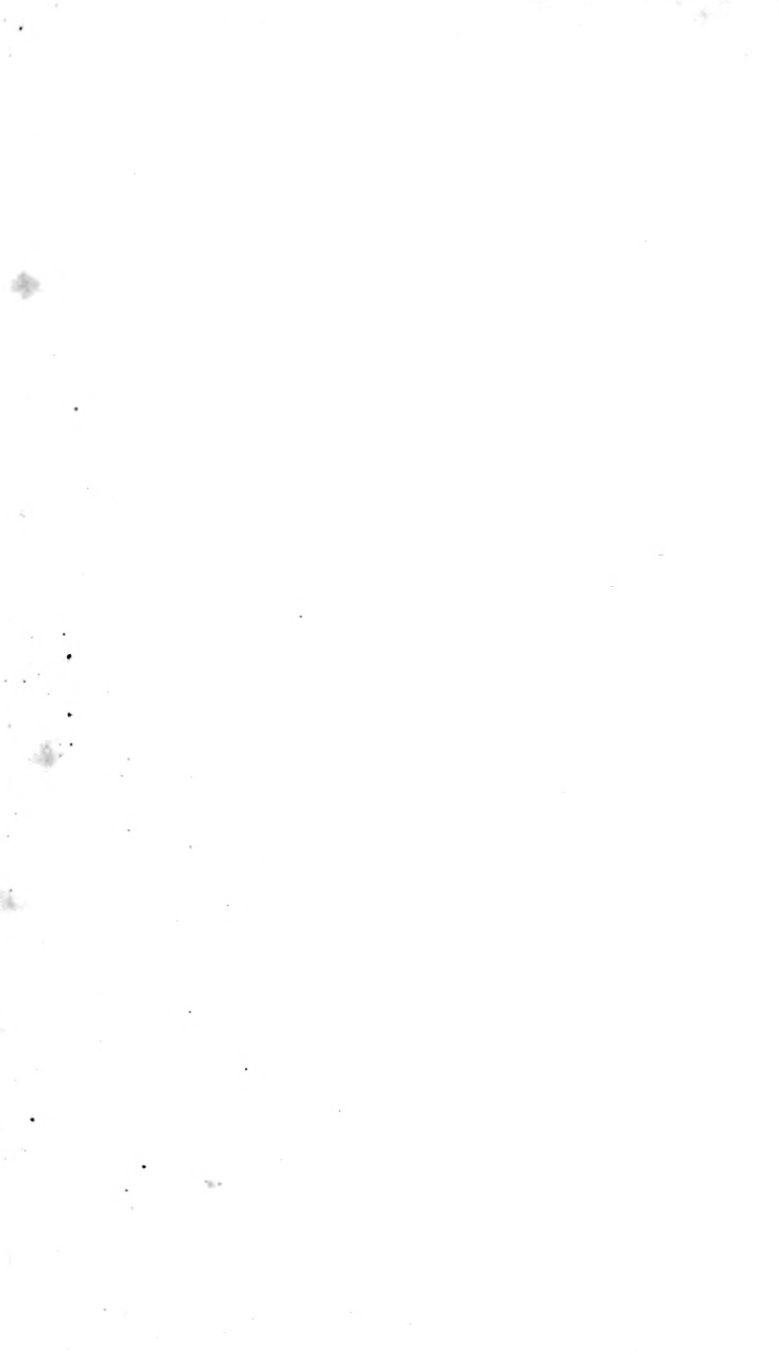
	PAGE
VIEILLEVILLE'S EXPEDITION TO REDUCE THE HUGUE- NOTS TO SUBMISSION.—HIS EMBASSY TO GER- MANY. — HIS RECEPTION BY THE EMPEROR. — HIS RETURN TO FRANCE. 	228

CHAPTER X.

RELIGIOUS DISTURBANCES.—THE BATTLE OF DREUX.— TRAGIC DEATH OF ST. ANDRÉ. — VIEILLEVILLE APPOINTED MARSHAL, HIS VARIANCE WITH VILLE- BON AT ROUEN. — HIS TOUR IN THE EASTERN PROVINCES 	257
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

MISSION OF VIEILLEVILLE TO SWITZERLAND. — THE BATTLE OF ST. DENIS.—DEATH OF THE CON- STABLE.—SIEGE OF ST. JEAN D'ANGELY.—DEATH OF VIEILLEVILLE 	278
CONCLUSION 	297





A

GENTLEMAN OF THE OLDEN TIME.



CHAPTER I.

GERMAN EMBASSY.—ALARM OF VIEILLEVILLE.
—EXPEDITION TO LORRAINE AND ALSACE.
—METZ, TOUL, AND VERDUN.—PEACE OF
PASSAU.—THE ADVENTURE OF LUMES.

FRANCE, being about to attack the Empire in concert with the Princes, had received, in the autumn of 1551, a mission from the Hanseatic towns and from a certain number of nobles, to seal the alliance.* The deputies, at the head of

* Vieilleville is the only contemporary writer who mentions this deputation, accompanying his notice of it with circumstances which do not harmonize with historical events. I only reproduce that part of his narrative which has an appearance of truth.

whom was Count von Simmerien, met at Strasburg in October, to the number of about a hundred horsemen. Being on their way to see the King at Fontainebleau, they entered France by way of St. Dizier, where they were met by the Comte du Rhin, attached to the King's household, who gave them a most cordial greeting on his master's behalf, and accompanied them all the way. From the moment they set foot on French soil they were treated as guests, and all their expenses were paid for them, while their own habits and ways were studied. In the morning they travelled five or six leagues, and then they remained at table from mid-day till nine or ten o'clock at night. Our wines were especially to their fancy; so much so, that they shaped their journey through the finest vineyards, so as to be able to take their fill of them.

Upon reaching Moret, they found their lodgings all ready for them; and upon the following morning Vieilleville arrived to take their instructions with regard to an audience with the King. They asked for two days'

rest to recover from the fatigue of the journey, to look over their memoranda and to prepare their speeches. They made a special request that the audience should take place in the morning, which, with such deep drinkers, was a wise precaution.

Upon the appointed day, the Constable, with a large following of nobles, came to fetch them, and conducted them to Fontainebleau, where the King was waiting to receive them in the grand ball-room. He greeted them very heartily, embracing the principal members of the deputation, and offering his hand to the others. After an exchange of harangues, he gave them a private audience to discuss the questions which had brought them to Fontainebleau; though, as everything had been settled in advance, this was a mere matter of form. After a stay of several days, the members of the mission prepared to return home; but before starting they were entertained at such a feast as could not be exceeded in magnificence at a wedding of a Princess of the Blood. After the dinner there was a ball, at which the Queen, her

daughters, and the ladies of the Court appeared in such rich and graceful attire as to excite the wonder and admiration of the German visitors. First of all there was a royal minuet, led by the King; then a German dance, and then a special French dance, the Gaillarde, in which none of them ventured to figure except the Prince of Orange, who acquitted himself very well, and would even have taken the prize, if, "with his grace and agility in pirouetting and turning upon his heel, he had kept the proper cadency."

After the dance was over, sweetmeats were served, and the Ambassadors mounted their horses to go back to Moret. The King accompanied them to the edge of the forest, and had a stag roused for them. After being chased for more than a mile, the stag was met by ten hounds, which drove him back upon his pursuers, while one hundred and twenty servants of the hunt announced his death with blasts of the horn. The Germans were much diverted by this mode of hunting, which was quite new to them; as at home

they made use of the arquebuss and the cross-bow. They were also much pleased at being given the deer to take away with them.

The King took leave of them on horseback; and when they resumed their journey they observed that some handsome presents were following in their train, under the conduct of the Sieurs de Crevecoeur and Soubise—viz., twelve Spanish hackneys, fully caparisoned; four silver dressers, each containing twenty-five pieces; thirty or forty gold chains, and a quantity of medals with the King's likeness; besides twelve pieces of silk, four of black velvet, four of violet satin, and four of white taffetas. All this was divided among them, according to their rank and quality;—even the lackeys, the grooms, and the lads of the kitchen receiving some small share of the royal gifts. The deputation left the next day, delighted at so much generosity, and with all they had seen.*

During this reception, on a Tuesday

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxix., pages 246—320.

evening, the day before the reception, Vieilleville, who was confined to his room by a slight indisposition, received a visit from M. de la Bourdasière, the Master of the King's Wardrobe, who informed him that the King wished him to attend his levée early the following morning.

Vieilleville supposed that it was to order him to conduct the German mission to the audience, but La Bourdasière informed him that the King had deputed the Comte de Crevecœur to do this, and that the latter had gone to sleep at Moret so as to be ready for an early start. He could not tell what the King wished to see Vieilleville about, all he knew being that Henri II. had given him very strict injunctions upon the point.

Vieilleville, though he knew that he had not committed any offence, could not help feeling somewhat uneasy on the subject, and as he met M. de la Roche-sur-Yon, when on his way to the palace early in the morning, he asked the latter to accompany him. The Prince shared his uneasiness, and said that

he would see him through the matter. But Vieilleville found that the King's object in sending for him was to confer on him the distinction of Privy Councillor, and letters-patent were drawn up and signed by the Chancellor and Secretary of State, D'Aubépine.* Before commencing hostilities against the Emperor, Henri published a manifesto, in which he recapitulated the various offences which had been put upon him since his accession to the throne, and upon the 12th of February, 1552, he held a "bed of justice" at Paris, informing his "true and loyal subjects" that he was making ready for war, and that as he must quit the kingdom, he should leave his wife as Regent with his children under age and his Council.†

Afterwards, in the course of a long speech, he set forth the state of his forces, and summoned his army to meet at Chalons on the

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxix., page 267.

† Establishment by Henri II., of a Council, in conjunction with the Regent Catherine de Médicis, on starting for Germany with his army.—"Fontanieu," 273—274; "Bibliothèque du Roi," "Colbert," vol. i.

10th of March. "There is no need to say with what alacrity and good will every man got ready for this war. The whole winter was spent in preparations, and there was not a town in which the drum was not beat to call out the young men, many of whom quitted father and mother in order to enlist. Most of the shops were emptied of their workmen, so great was the ardour among men of all ranks, to take part in this expedition, and to see the Rhine river."* The King arrived at Chalons, and Vieilleville having, out of regard for St. André, persisted in keeping his lieutenancy when a fresh company was offered him, the King placed him under his own standard, by the side of M. de Guise, so as to be able to confer with him whenever he wished to do so. This was a position of special favour.

Before commencing operations, the King held a grand review of his army upon the plain of Chalons, and from some statistics given in the Memoirs of Boyvin de Villars, it

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxix., page 322.

would appear that the force comprised 15,000 French infantry, 9,000 lansquenets (German foot soldiers), 7,000 Swiss, 1,650 lances, 3,000 light horse, 2,000 reserve men, six Scotch companies, one English company, 200 gentlemen of the King's household, 400 archers of the guard, and more than 500 volunteers.

The review was a magnificent one, and the King complimented each arm, addressing his special thanks to the volunteers, nearly all of whom were from Brittany, Normandy, and Marne, appointing as their leader M. d'Epinau. In doing so, he said: "You have no post in this army, and I wish you to commence with this one, as I also wish that Scépeaux, who was formerly one of the pages of the chamber, should bear the standard."

The King then had an essay made of his artillery, which numbered sixty pieces of various calibre, not including the arquebuses, and he expressed himself as very satisfied with it.*

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxix., page 321.

The intention was to march through Lorraine, so the first thing was to make sure of this province, which was the last great fief of the Crown, and was then governed by the Dowager - Duchess Christina of Denmark, niece of Charles V., and very Imperialist at heart, upon behalf of Charles III., her son, who was a minor.

The Duchess, very much concerned as to what was going to happen, went to meet the King at Joinville, and asked him to ensure the neutrality of Lorraine. The King, though he received her very courteously, was very much on his guard, and sent his troops to occupy Nancy. The guardianship of the young Duke, then ten years of age, was entrusted to the Comte de Vaudemont, his uncle, who was entirely devoted to France, and the boy was sent to the French Court, to be brought up with the Dauphin. He was afterwards to marry the second daughter of the King, the Princess Claude, as soon as they were both of marriageable age, and he was then to assume the Government of the province. In the meanwhile, the unhappy

Duchess, separated from her son, was sent back to Germany to reside in one of her dower cities.*

The troops passed through Lorraine without any difficulty, and presented themselves before Metz, as allies of the German Princes whose liberty and rights they had come to maintain. The inhabitants refused to open the gates to them, but they were not unanimous on the point. The Cardinal-Bishop de Lénoncourt, a Frenchman by birth and a partisan of the Guises, taking advantage of the rivalry which existed between the upper and the middle classes, and making a free use of presents and promises, had succeeded in creating a French party among them. The inhabitants of the suburb of Heu accordingly agreed to make a concession and to open their gate, which was very scantily defended, but only to Tavannes, and that because his mother was a native of the county of Ferrette. Tavannes accordingly

* Paradin, "Continuation de l'Histoire de Notre Temps," page 31.

entered, and when a crowd had collected round him, he began to harangue it with his air of bravery and exuberant eloquence. Pointing out that the King was concerned solely for the liberty of Germany, he won over the one side and intimidated the other, eventually inducing them to receive the Constable with his guards and a small company of infantry, but only on condition that they were to pass through and go to lodge in the city.

Upon this, the company, which comprised the finest men in the army, began to pass through the gate, and when the burghers, taking alarm at the martial array, attempted to close it, Tavannes would not allow this to be done. He held it till the arrival of the Constable, and the town was then captured, the King making his entrance into it a few days afterwards.* Toul and Verdun also fell, almost without resistance, into the hands of the French.

* "Tavannes," vol. xxvi., pages 113—115. Paradin "Continuation de l'Histoire de Notre Temps," page 29.

This was a good start, but not without danger because of the very illusions which it raised in the minds of the victors. What they should have done was to reassure the minds of the Germans by showing the people of Metz deference and respect for their usages and privileges. Vieilleville saw this, and when the army was about to start, the King wished to appoint him Governor of the city. But he declined to accept the post, as he said that the right policy was to leave the government of the city in the hands of the Mayor and the Aldermen, and to confer upon them great honour and profit; to grant them a residence with a staff of servants, and to make them some presents.

He also advised the formation of a military government which would have control of the armed forces, but the commander of which, while being under the orders of the King, should, to spare the susceptibilities of the inhabitants, take the title of "Governor and Lieutenant-General of the City of Metz and of the Messine countries for

the Holy Empire, under the protection of Henri II., the very Christian King of France.”

The King heard what Vieilleville had to say, and after raising some objections which the latter had no difficulty in disposing of, submitted his proposals to the Council. The Duc de Vendôme, Antoine de Bourbon, the Duke and Cardinal de Guise, were disposed to acquiesce in them, but the Constable at once intervened, furious at any proposal coming from other than himself. He declared the idea to be absurd, and said that whoever had suggested it to the King did not know what he was talking about. He himself had commenced the work, and he hoped that he might be allowed to complete it. The inhabitants of Strasburg and of the other Rhine cities which had still to be taken, were not cleverer than the people of Metz, being of the same mould and habits. He would enter them as easily as he would plunge a piece of wood into butter. He then asked the King if the person to whom he intended to entrust the government of Metz had accepted it, and

upon the King replying in the negative, he continued:—

“This is of no consequence. I have here M. de Gonnor, a lieutenant in my company, and a relative of mine, who will, I guarantee, undertake and execute this duty in all fidelity. May it please your Majesty to instruct M. de l’Aubespine here present to confer upon him the necessary powers.”

The required order was at once given, and the following day, at the King’s levée, the new Governor took the oath in the presence of all the lords and princes.*

The army, which was already three miles from Metz, and quartered at Raucourt, continued its march. “As we pursued our route,” says Vieilleville, “we passed through the whole of Lorraine and the Vosges country without being exposed to any inconvenience, for the inhabitants had not abandoned their abodes or villages, and they were

* “Vieilleville,” vol. xxix., page 329; and vol. xxx., pages 1—4.

treated with the utmost respect, out of regard for M. de Lorraine, who was already looked upon as the King's future son-in-law. But, as soon as we had entered German territory the French at once displayed their insolence, and so terrified all they met, that henceforward we did not meet a single person to whom we could speak. Moreover, throughout the whole of our march, not a soul came to us with provisions, and we were obliged to go a distance of five or six leagues for forage and food, taking a good escort, too; for if even ten men went together they never came back—all which inflicted the utmost suffering on our troops." * The open towns were soon compelled to surrender, but Strasburg bristled with resistance. Provisions were only to be had on payment. It was in vain that the Sieur de Lésigny, the Commissary-General, while negotiating for supplies, endeavoured to obtain permission for a few men to enter the city. The magistrates "very abruptly rejected the proposal,

* "Vieilleville," xxx., pages 1-5.

saying that the men of Metz, speaking French, as they do, might let themselves be deluded by persons speaking the same language, but that those who speak German were not going to be humbugged by the French." *

The King, therefore, leaving Strasburg behind him, continued his march upon the 10th of May. He entered Hagenau, where he was very well received, and where he remained three or four days. "The inhabitants went to visit the camp, which was established all round the town; and the women crowded the parapets of the walls, the steeples, and the tallest houses to get a view of it."

Several German officers having some time before been put to death by the Emperor's orders because of their attachment to France, the King summoned to his tent all their relatives, male and female. He distributed ten thousand crowns among the oldest of them, and among the young girls for

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., page 8.

marriage portions; while he provided the young men with arms and accoutrements, and gave them appointments in the oldest companies of his troops. As there remained, in addition to these, nine boys of tender age, he selected four as pages of the stables, and he made over the five others to the Princes and lords of his suite, requesting them not to forget what hand had bestowed this favour upon them.

When the King resumed his march after leaving Hagenau, "it occurred to him to send to Spire, and sound the inhabitants as to how they would receive him if he presented himself at their gates with his army." Vieilleville, to whom this mission was entrusted, detached from his troop twenty gentlemen of distinction and two trumpeters, and, taking with him one of the King's interpreters, he made his way towards the city. Upon reaching the gates, which were closely guarded, he declared his titles, and asked to be allowed to deliver his message to the Diet. Two burgomasters on horseback came out to receive him and offer him compli-

ments in "the best of French;" after which they took him to "the Crown," so that he might refresh himself. From there they conducted him to the Town Hall, where the Lords of the Imperial Chamber had met to receive him in state.

Upon entering the Chamber, Vieilleville saw the sixty members of the Diet seated in a circle, wearing the gold chain of office slung across their chest, with the sword in a velvet sheath, and a silver hilt. The ten principal members were seated in the centre, wearing long robes, upon stools, and surmounted by a canopy.

When Vieilleville entered between the two burgomasters, they all rose without leaving their places, and, after saluting him with a simultaneous motion full of respect, resumed their seats. Vieilleville was then conducted to an arm-chair which had been placed opposite to them, of the same height as theirs, and also covered with crimson velvet and surmounted by a canopy. Just beneath, there was a long seat or bench for the gentlemen of his suite. The whole

formed a "circle very magnificently decorated."

Vieilleville then proceeded to summon his interpreter, Baptiste Praillon, Abbot of Bourgmoyen, but the sixty, with one voice, begged him to speak in French, as there was not one of them but understood that tongue.

The speeches commenced by Vieilleville proclaiming the understanding which existed between his master and the German Princes, saying that the King had done nothing, either at Metz or elsewhere, except at the request of Duke Maurice. If he had taken possession of that city, it was to prevent its falling into the hands of the Imperial forces in the Duchy of Luxemburg. His only object in making war was to restore to the people the ancient Germanic liberties. Vieilleville, therefore, entreated the members of the Diet "to open their hearts and their gates" to the King, than whom they had no better friend or more trusty confederate.

Doctor Colius replied to Vieilleville, and he reproached him with the mischief done by

the French troops, which had behaved in Germany as if they were in an enemy's country. While delighted at an alliance with His Most Christian Majesty, the Germans will never allow his army to come and encamp beneath their walls. But if the King likes to pay them a friendly visit, with forty or a hundred gentleman of his suite, he will be received with all enthusiasm and honour.

Vieilleville accepted this offer, and thanked them for it, only asking that, in order to assure for the King full liberty in entering and leaving the city, he might be allowed to have a guard of a hundred men at one of the gates.

At this the sixty rose in indignation, exclaiming: "Not at all! not at all! We are not going to be treated as the people of Metz were!" So the meeting broke up in confusion, everybody speaking at once, and the members of the Diet being very angry.

So Vieilleville returned, much discomfited, to his lodging at the Crown, still

accompanied by the two burgomasters, who wished to pay his expenses. But he would not permit this, and, taking leave of them, he mounted his horse and started with his suite to return to the King. All along the route, on his way out of the town, he was astonished to see the streets full of soldiers, armed to the teeth, while upon the square was a strong body of horsemen. Salvoes of artillery were fired as he left, the meaning of which could not possibly be mistaken.*

A few days later, Vieilleville had rejoined the King, and he found that in the meanwhile a great change had come over the state of affairs.

The Emperor, seeing that the whole of Germany was leagued against him, and fearing, moreover, an invasion of the 'Turks, who had already excited much alarm in Hungary, had brought himself to agree, at Passau, to the demands of Maurice, viz., the release of the Landgrave, and liberty for the Princes to settle the religious question among them;

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., page 24.

selves until the Council had effected a general agreement upon the point. Maurice, upon his side, had undertaken to march against the Turks in concert with Charles V. The only mention made of France in the treaty was to refer to her friendly intervention with a view to the re-establishment of religious liberty in Germany, and to invite her to make an explicit statement of her cause of complaint against the Emperor, so that she might participate in the general peace and harmony.*

Duke Maurice, moreover, fearing that the occupation by France of the Imperial towns might endanger his credit with the Germanic Body, affected to regard it as temporary. Pending the signing of peace—August 2nd—he, therefore, sent to Henri a deputation of German prelates, in which the Swiss Cantons

* With regard to the treaty of Passau, see a letter from Charles V. to Ferdinand, dated Villach, June 7th, 1552.—“Papiers de Granville,” vol. iii., page 635. The Bishop of Bayonne, Jean de Fresse, who represented the King at the Conference, feeling himself powerless, had offered no opposition to this peace speech, delivered at Passau by Jean de Fresse, Bishop of Bayonne, June 4th, 1552.

were represented, to beg him to suspend his march. This entreaty contained, by implication, a threat of abandonment.

The King saw this clearly enough, but feeling himself powerless to resist an united Germany, and having, moreover, acquired three bishoprics, he determined to withdraw with a good grace. So taking leave of the deputation, after having let the horses of his army slake their thirst in the waters of the Rhine, he re-entered Lorraine upon the 13th of May.

The retreat of the four army corps was not exempt from difficulty, and Vieilleville, who was in the train of the Duc d'Aumale, writes :

“At many points, the pioneers and sappers had to widen the roads for the mules and the rest of the baggage, all of which caused us a great deal of trouble. We encamped along the hill-sides, for there was very little plain, and none of the villagers or peasants would bring us any refreshments. There were certainly a few castles, but they were scarcely any of them inhabited, and

there was nothing to be got there. We marched in this way for twelve days in great discomfort, and many of the men fell ill from being obliged to sleep in the open air and encamp under the hedgerows. It was only a few of the chiefs of the army who were able to sleep in beds, which they had carried on the march; the main body of the army were never able once to take their clothes off. On the fourteenth day, we came in sight of the plain, and were so delighted that all our past sufferings were soon forgotten. It was covered from end to end with tall firs, higher than any to be seen in Savoy or in the Alps, and amidst this vast woodland were a number of large and well-found villages. We were two days going through this charming forest.”*

The army rallied at the frontier of Luxemburg, into which it had been resolved to make an incursion. Rodemaker was captured without resistance, as well as Damvilliers and Ivoy, where Vieilleville was

* “Vieilleville,” vol. xxx., page 48.

appointed Marshal of the camp; while Montmédy surrendered at the first summons. Wherever he went, Montmorency, having failed to enter Germany without striking a blow, treated the inhabitants with the utmost rigour. He gave over the towns and villages to pillage, reserving the principal spoils for his favourites, thereby exciting the anger of the troops.

The King then achieved the conquest of the Duchy of Bouillon, and made it over to its ancient possessors, from whom it had been taken by the Emperor. A curious incident occurred in connection with this affair. Near Sedan, upon the Meuse, was a small fortress called Lumes, the Lord of which, one Buzancy, was the boldest and most daring brigand in all Christendom. Some years before this, in 1534, he had refused permission for the King's officers to enter his castle, and it had been found necessary to send for cannon to enforce the order. Taken prisoner, he would have been beheaded if Robert de Lamarck, his powerful neighbour, had not obtained a pardon

for him. As his castle was situated upon the marches of Champagne, in the direction of the Low Countries, the merchants who were proceeding from Antwerp to Frankfort were obliged to pass at the foot of it. Whether they were friends or enemies, Buzancy made them all suffer, and M. de Nevers, the Governor of Champagne, was constantly receiving complaints on the subject. The latter declared that if ever he caught him, he would hang him at the door of his castle. But he never did catch him, and Buzancy was destined to die in his bed, for he was so vexed when he heard of the arrival of the French, that, suffering already from the effects of an old wound, he expired almost immediately afterwards.

The wife of Marshal de Lamarck, who was not less avaricious than her mother, knowing how full of riches the castle was, arrived in haste at Sedan and asked, through the Queen, that the King would be pleased to order their confiscation, by way of compensation for the pillage and robberies which the garrison of Lumes had committed upon

her property for the last ten years "without discretion or mercy." The King having granted her request, she begged him to order Vieilleville to undertake the task, and upon being asked why she made this selection, she said that not only had he already shown great kindness to her mother by reconciling her with Marshal de St. André, but that he was the only person she could trust to take possession of the riches in the castle, and render a faithful account of them.

Vieilleville, accordingly, was ordered by the King to take two companies of light cavalry, and with his twenty-five gentlemen and a trumpeter to summon the castle to surrender.

Malberg, the nephew of Buzancy, who was the keeper, having only servants and women as a garrison, obeyed the summons, and being brought before Vieilleville, begged him to take under his protection the heiress, Mdle. de Bourlèmont, his first cousin, who had shut herself up in one of the rooms. At the same time he handed him the keys of the rooms in which all the treasure was stored.

Vieilleville took them from him and invited Malberg to dine with him, asking him to bring the inventory. After having looked over it he selected a trustworthy person as guardian, and sent for Madame de Lamarck, who arrived in haste the next day. She was delighted to find everything in perfect order, and gave the guardian a chain which she was wearing round her neck with a small ruby in the centre.

“You will not miss it,” observed the keeper, “for you will find more than twenty thousand crowns worth of similar ones.” He then handed her the inventory of the casket, asking her to look over it as quickly as possible, for M. de Vieilleville was waiting to see her after dinner. The latter took her into the room where the treasure was, and observed: “This is a fine present, Madame, that the King has given you, as it represents at least sixty thousand crowns. But have pity on this poor heiress, and remember that we have only a life interest in this world’s goods. She and her three serving women are yours; and I am going to take Malberg

with me and present him to the King. As you have brought a sufficient number of persons with you to keep watch over the castle until the King has had it dismantled, I shall go and see about preparing to start for the camp.”

She in vain pressed him to accept a third of the King's present, but he would not hear of this and took leave of her. He rejoined the camp at Douzy, and upon the following day, the 29th, he was at Sedan, where he found that Madame de Lamarek had arrived in the morning. After the departure of Vieilleville she had all the treasure hurriedly loaded upon carts, and, spreading the report that they contained provisions and ammunition for the camp at Douzy, had travelled with them all night. Speaking in the highest terms of M. de Vieilleville, she presented to his second daughter, Mdle. de Scépeaux, who was in the Queen's household, a necklace and bracelets made of delicate Eastern pearls, a piece of crimson velvet, and a gold belt weighing two hundred crowns. Mdle. de Bourlemont was, at her

request, appointed one of the Queen's maids of honour.*

This expedition to Germany had lasted three months and a half. Henri seized a few more forts and he then made over half his forces to M. de Vendôme in order to go into Picardy and capture Hesdin, disbanding the rest. In dismissing the nobles who had volunteered, he thanked them for their help and gave them certificates testifying to their loyal and valiant service — certificates by which they set considerable value, some because they were “anxious to show them to their fathers, in order that they might not regret the expense they had incurred, and others because they were proud to exhibit them to their mistresses or friends.”

Vieilleville rested for six days at Vervins, where the Duc de Nemours sent him a very valuable Spanish hackney, magnificently caparisoned, which he had named Ivoy, in

* “Vieilleville,” vol. xxx., page 74. Brantôme mentions Mdle. de Bourlemont as one of the maids of honour to Catherine de Médicis. He does not mention Mdle. de Scépeaux, but he says himself that his list is not a complete one.


memory of "a rescue of his person," effected by Vieilleville before that town. He received from Vieilleville in exchange a beautiful gold chain, and a sword, with dagger and belt, the sheath being made of crimson velvet, with the hilt gilded and wrought at Milan.

Vieilleville went on from there to his domain of Duretal, where he spent a part of the summer in his own family. He had intended to make a longer stay, but on the 15th of September the King summoned him back to Court.



CHAPTER II.

CHARLES V. CROSSES THE FRONTIER.—VIEILLEVILLE AT VERDUN AND TOUL.—HIS ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE METZ CAMPAIGN.

HILE Maurice, in the course of an expedition in which he was destined to meet with his death, was advancing with his Saxon army against the Turks, Charles V. was venting his rage upon France.* He was making ready to cross the frontier, but he could not decide at what point to commence the struggle, as appears from a letter written to Montmorency by the King. In this letter the King says: "I am

* Letter from M. de Selves, our Ambassador at Venice, to the Constable de Montmorency, October 26th and 27th, 1552.—"Négociations dans le Levant," vol. ii., page 235. Letter from Charles V. to Ferdinand.—"Correspondance des Kaisers," vol. iii., page 514.

writing to you now because, from the road which the Emperor is taking, he can have but one of three objects in view : to besiege Metz or Verdun, or to enter French territory.”*

At the same time, the King despatched François de Guise to Metz, and the latter set up his defence there on the 17th of August with a strong body of troops and the numerous nobles of his suite. The King also ordered St. André to Verdun, and sent for Vieilleville, in order to entrust him with a highly honourable and important mission. He did not say what the mission consisted of, and this was the nature of the summons which reached him at Duretal.

Another, and a secret missive, came immediately after: The secretary, Malestroit, informed Vieilleville that the situation had undergone a complete change. The important post which the King had in view for him was the governorship of Toul, but St.

* Letter from the King to Montmorency.—“Clairambault,” 345, folio i.

André having learnt of this, and being, with his usual selfishness, anxious to keep Vieilleville at the head of his company, set to work to prevent the project being carried through. On his way to Verdun, he passed through Rheims, the residence of M. de Nevers, Governor of Champagne, and, under pretext of the necessities of war, induced him to start for Toul and assume the government of that place. Having thus forced the King's hand, he would have him believe that he had acted for the good of the country, and that it would be much better for M. de Vieilleville to come and help him at Verdun.

While the latter was reading this second despatch, a third arrived from St. André, announcing his nomination at Verdun, and that of the Duc de Nevers at Toul, and appealing to him, out of regard for their old friendship, to come and join him at once. At first Vieilleville was much irritated at what he regarded as a ruse, but he was mollified by the belief that St. André was anxious to have him with him, and began to make prepara-

tions for starting. But Madame de Vieilleville, who saw but little of her husband, was very much upset at this fresh departure, and with the whole of her family, protested, though in vain. Vieilleville left it to his daughter, Madame d'Epinaÿ, to say good-bye, promising to be back in a short time, and repaired to Fontainebleau, where he found the palace very deserted and melancholy, all the young men of the Court having followed M. de Guise to Metz. The King received him very kindly, and blamed M. de Nevers very much for the Toul incident, but attributed his conduct to his zeal for the public good, and did not like to inflict upon him the humiliation of a recall. He assured Vieilleville of his future good will, and despatched him to Verdun.

Vieilleville, who had regained his usual good humour, did not say anything to the King about what had been told him as to St. André's motives, and during the two days he was at Fontainebleau, he went with him through all the despatches, memoirs, etc., relating to the affair on hand. Having then

taken leave of the King, he started to rejoin the army of St. Mihiel, on the Meuse, about ten leagues from Metz.*

Vieilleville, upon his arrival at Chalons, transmitted to the Deputy-Governor of the town, to the Treasurer-General of Champagne, to the Officers of Law, the Mayors, and the Aldermen, the detailed orders of the King with regard to the distribution of money and the execution of justice. The payments and receipts are to be reserved for MM. de Guise, Nevers, St. André, and the payments are to be made regularly. The officers of justice are to assist the captains "in maintaining good order upon the highways, and in punishing robbers and evil-doers," while they are to keep upon good terms with the guards of the towns, and to receive the co-operation of the mayors and aldermen. He added that the King was well pleased with them, and placed full confidence

* Letter to M. d'Aramon, dated Rheims, November 23rd, 1552, upon the plan of campaign. This letter also asks for the intervention of Soliman's fleet in the Mediterranean.—"Ribier," vol. ii., page 708.

in their ability and honesty. This communication elicited their hearty thanks, and upon the following day, without waiting for his suite, which had reached Château-Thierry, he took the post for Verdun.

Just after passing through Clermont-en-Argonne, when within three leagues of his destination, he was surprised by a salvo of two hundred arquebusiers, these being no other than St. André and his men, who simulated an attack upon him, the imaginary combat being kept up all the way into Verdun.

The next day, Vieilleville mounted his horse to go round the outside of the town. He altered the plan of the fortifications, much to the indignation of the Italian engineer, who was persuaded that his own countrymen alone understood the science of fortification. They even declared that they were the inventors of it. Vieilleville, however, did not pay any heed to his fuming, and by the afternoon he had all the provosts, archers, pages, lackeys, and his own household, to say nothing of a thousand pioneers and

others of the inhabitants, out at the work. The peasants, who had taken refuge in the town with their wives and families, earned a little money by carrying away the earth, and the enterprise was conducted with such diligence, that in three weeks' time the platform was raised above the walls of the town all the way round, the zeal of the workmen being stimulated by the example set them from above.

This unflagging energy lasted until news came that the Duke of Alva had decided to attack Metz; that he was making reconnaissances around the city pending the Emperor's arrival, and that the army was even beginning to throw up trenches. This piece of news was very distasteful to the nobles who had come to Verdun in the hope of having to stand a siege, especially as there was now no chance of getting into Metz. Vieilleville, however, made them feel rather happier by proposing that they should scout the country between Pont-à-Mousson and Nancy, where they would be certain to have the opportunity of meeting some portion of

the Imperial army. This proposal being readily accepted, Vieilleville started on the 22nd of November, at the head of 600 good horsemen, 600 arquebusiers, 200 picked corslet-wearers, and the flower of the veteran companies and legions of Champagne. Vieilleville had with him also 200 pioneers to level fences and cut down bushes, as well as to fill up ditches and dig any trenches which might be required. St. André accompanied him for four leagues, as far as the gates of Frêne, upon the road to Metz, and they parted as effusively as if they were never to meet again. Upon entering the village, the Mayor, a subject of the Duke of Lorraine, came to inform him that two hundred Walloons were encamped close by, and were preparing to occupy Frêne. He also offered to show the way to their encampment; which he did so well, that the Walloons were surprised and cut to pieces, Vieilleville not losing a single man.

The inhabitants of the district, stimulated by the gift of ten crowns which Vieille-

ville had made the mayor, kept him well informed as to the movements of the Imperial army, which, being treated as neutrals, they were easily able to do. Thus, the mayor of Villesaleron came to tell him that at four o'clock on a given afternoon a hundred chariots of provisions, escorted only by five squadrons of light cavalry, under the command of one Mondragon, were to leave the town of Malatour. Vieilleville, putting forty crowns into his hand, asked him if he knew of a way to his village between Malatour and Metz which they could take without being seen. The mayor said that he did, and took them to Villesaleron without their having been observed. All the persons they met on the road, men, women, and children, were arrested, and compelled to follow, so that the enemy might get no intelligence of what had occurred. Vieilleville then drew up his troops; some in the village itself, some a little way outside, under cover; and in an hour's time the enemy arrived, and was at once attacked by the advance guard. The French attacked them with so much fury,

that they attempted to fly into the village, where they found the second part of Vieilleville's troops ready to fall upon them. In this way six hundred were killed, and half as many made prisoners. The French had only one killed and forty wounded, and they captured all the provision waggons. They then returned to Frêne; and the next morning Vieilleville sent to Verdun the wounded, the prisoners, the standards, and twenty waggons loaded with wines from Aussois and Bar, which he presented to St. André, keeping the same number for himself and his men. The rest of the provisions, consisting of flour, bacon, salt beef in barrels, and other things, were used for the camp. One whole waggon, with its team of six horses and two measures of wine, was given to the Mayor of Villesaleron, who kept a tavern in his village.

Vieilleville passed twelve days at Malatour scouring the country, which was densely wooded; and having heard that some forty or fifty Spaniards were occupying, a few leagues off, the Château of Conflans, he

suddenly appeared before it, and called upon them to surrender. The Spaniards, dispirited by the defeat of Mondragon and the affair of Malatour, asked for four hours to deliberate. But Vieilleville, afraid of being discovered and taken by surprise, summoned them a second time to surrender at discretion. At the same time, his soldiers surrounded the castle, crying out "Escale! Sape!" and firing at the windows, making so much noise that the Spaniards asked to treat for terms, and were promised that their lives should be spared. After this, Vieilleville, having learnt that the Lorraine town of Etain was assisting the enemy by procuring him provisions, determined to take it by surprise; and he left Conflans, followed by a picked body of men, which was to remain in concealment until they heard the trumpet sound. He then advanced, with twelve horsemen and four soldiers dressed as lackeys, and with arms concealed beneath their clothes. When he reached the gates, he sent for the mayor and bailiff, and reproached them with supplying provisions to

the Imperial forces. The bailiff, who owed his appointment to the Regent of Lorraine, replied that he was only executing his mistress's orders, and that the inhabitants, who were poor, were obliged to sell their provisions to earn a livelihood. Upon Vieilleville saying that the authority of the Regent could not weigh against that of M. de Vaudemont, the governor of the province, the bailiff replied that he did not recognize the latter, being under the orders of the Dowager Duchess. Vieilleville then asked him if he would supply him with provisions if he paid for them; and when the bailiff said that he would, Vieilleville told him to fetch six crowns' worth. He also ordered the trumpeters to sound a blast, and, while the men disguised as lackeys forced their way into the town, the rest of the troops came up and-gained possession of the town. A dozen Spaniards, who were lodged with the bailiff, took to flight and got over the walls, while Vieilleville pursued them. He failed, however, to capture them, and this incensed him so much, as there was a relative of the Duke

of Alva and a nephew of the Duke de l'Infantado among them, that he had the bailiff's nephew hung for favouring their escape. He, nevertheless, had public proclamation made throughout the town, that no violence should be offered the inhabitants, under pain of death.

Dining and sleeping at Etain, he started the next day for Conflans, leaving M. de Bois Jourdan there with a troop of light horse, and, after a few days' rest, he asked his men if they were ready for another expedition. They replied that "If he was going to make an attack on hell itself, they were ready to follow him."

His object was to make a sudden attack upon Rougerieules, a village in the mountains, about a league from Metz, which was defended by a small force of infantry and horse. As the enterprise was a risky one, Vieilleville sent for M. de Bois Jourdan and his company, and after a careful distribution of his forces, reached the village in the evening by four different routes. The inhabitants had retired for the night, and the French entered the

village so suddenly, with such a din of trumpets and muskets, that the Germans fled in dismay. They were slaughtered wholesale, and even the fugitives were not spared for fear of their giving the alarm to the camp of the Marquis Albert, which was not far off. The rest of the night was spent in collecting the spoil and loading it on the waggons.

From this village could be distinctly descried the town of Metz, below in the plain, with all the Emperor's army encamped, just as London can be seen from the heights of Hampstead.

The position was too dangerous to be held, so Vieilleville and his forces evacuated it at daybreak, and when the Marquis Albert, who was furious at the march which had been stolen upon him, arrived there the next day with a strong body of troops, he found the village in ruins and the enemy gone.

On his return to Verdun, Vieilleville received a message from the King, enjoining him to go to Toul, as it was said that the Emperor, abandoning in despair the enter-

prise at Metz, was about to march against that place, and the Duc de Nevers would require help.*

The Duc de Nevers, a younger prince of Clèves, allied through his wife to the House of Bourbon, had entered the King's service.† Knowing Vieilleville, and being very attached to him, he gave him a very friendly reception, and after carefully examining the situation, they determined, as the enemy made no sign, to assume the offensive. Vieilleville had brought with him two spies, one of whom, a man named Sulligny, he sent to Pont-à-Mousson, with instructions to say that he belonged to the Duchess of Lorraine's party, and that he was proceeding, on her part, to the Imperial camp.

* Letter from the King to the Duc de Nevers about Toul, during the siege of Metz. Note to be sent to M. de Nevers as to the fortifications of Toul.—“Clairambault,” 346, folios 815—827.

† The county of Nevers, which he inherited through the marriage of one of his ancestors with Isabelle de Bourgoyne, had been converted by François I. into a duchy, by letters-patent of February 17th, 1538.—“Rabutin,” vol. xxxvii., page 110.

He started late enough to have an excuse for not going further than Pont-à-Mousson the same evening. About three o'clock he reached the gates of the town. He was, of course, stopped and asked what his business was, and what letters he had on him. He asked to be allowed to see the commanders of the town, Don Alfonso d'Arbolangua, and the Roman Signor Fabrizio Colonna, and upon being brought before them, answered all the questions put to him so adroitly that no suspicions were entertained as to his veracity. He then offered to take any message which their lordships might have for His Majesty the Emperor, whom he hoped to see the next day. One of them having asked him if he had come by way of Toul, and knew anything of the Verdun troops under the command of one Vieilleville, he exclaimed: "Oh! the vile French toad? He has just had one of my brothers, nephew of the bailiff, hung at Etain, because he favoured the escape of the Spaniards over the walls. A plague upon him, and I will have my revenge, or die for it!"

This gave the two commanders of Pont-à-Mousson, who were acquainted with the incident described, all the more confidence in him, and they promised to aid him in his revenge if he would aid them. This he readily consented to do after he had discharged his mission to the Emperor, and he accounted for not having any letter from his mistress on the ground that he had been entrusted with matters of such importance that if he had been captured with it in his possession, not only would he be hung himself, but the information would get into the hands of the enemy. This explanation was accepted, and the next morning he left for Metz, where he managed so to delude the Duke of Alva, that he brought back a letter to the two commanders at Pont-à-Mousson, describing him as very attached to his mistress and to the Emperor. They did not need any such recommendation, being fully convinced of his good faith, and Don Alfonso, embracing him with effusion, put round his neck a chain worth fifty crowns. Sulligny indignantly refused it, saying that he had no

interest in the killing of Vieilleville save that of avenging his brother's death; and that, after delivering the Emperor's reply to his mistress, he would return at once. So thoroughly had he gained their confidence, that they would have picked a quarrel with anyone who cast a doubt upon the matter.

Sulligny then went back to Vieilleville, who thought that he had been killed, and returned to Pont-à-Mousson to inform the two commanders there, as if on the part of the Duchess of Lorraine, that Vieilleville would be going the next day to Condé to confer with her about her son, and that he would be accompanied by one hundred and twenty horsemen.

Delighted at this piece of news, the two commanders ordered out a force of three hundred horsemen to take him by surprise, and started to effect the capture of Vieilleville, which they regarded as being to all intents and purposes done. He, in the meanwhile, had called together all the leading men of the forces in Toul, and had asked if he could count upon them for an enter-

prise which would have to be carried through in ten hours. A shout of assent was the unanimous answer.

Reaching a bridge near the wood of Rouzière, close to the village of Lorraine, Vieilleville placed his troops in ambush, and went in advance with the one hundred and twenty horsemen, of which the spy had spoken. He seized all the persons who were on the road, so that no intelligence could reach the enemy; and after waiting three hours, he saw the body of horsemen bearing down upon him. Feigning alarm at their superior numbers, he pretended to retreat, but as soon as he had fallen back upon the force he had in ambush, the enemy, which had come charging on, confident of victory, was met with a terrific onslaught; the cry of "victory" being soon changed into that of "treason." The carnage lasted some time, but Vieilleville at length ordered it to cease, the Spaniards having lost two hundred and thirty in killed and twenty-five in wounded, while among the prisoners was Fabrizio. Vieilleville sent him, under the

escort of M. de Clavolles, to Toul, as a present to the Duc de Nevers. He had the wounded and prisoners taken to a place of safety, but he kept the standards of the enemy, as he had thought of a fresh enterprise, in which they would be useful. He said nothing about this, however, until after the departure of M. de Clavolles, when he sent for the spy Sulligny, whom he despatched to Pont-à-Mousson, accompanied by four trusty men.

Upon getting within sight of the town, Sulligny began to gallop towards the gates, shouting :—

“Victory, victory! The wretched French dog and all his troops have licked the dust! Signor Fabrizio is bringing him in a prisoner to Don Alfonso. Here are his armlets and standard. More than a hundred of his followers have been killed.”

Great was the rejoicing in the town, and Don Alfonso, when he saw what he took to be the spoils stripped from Vieilleville, mounted his horse and went out with thirty horsemen to meet Fabrizio. A multitude of

horsemen and footmen followed. They saw in the distance what they took to be a body of their own men coming towards them, but what proved in reality to be Frenchmen dressed up in the Spanish uniforms. A mêlée ensued, and the French troops entered the town with them, and were soon masters of it. Vieilleville took up his quarters there, while Don Alfonso, who had been made prisoner, was found dead the next morning. He was lying on his bed, fully dressed, and the cause of his death was mortification at having allowed himself to be so grossly deceived, coupled with the dread of appearing before the Emperor, who was very irritated by the difficulties he was encountering at Metz. Vieilleville was much disappointed when he heard of his death, as he had intended making a present of him to St. André.

M. de Nevers, after hearing of the success which had attended the enterprise, arrived in haste, and heartily congratulated Vieilleville upon it, while he took from round his neck the collar of St. Michael, and vowed that he

would not dine with Vieilleville unless the latter wore it during the meal.

The next day, the scouring of the country was resumed, and the Duc de Nevers insisted upon Vieilleville taking the command. After going some distance, they captured, almost without resistance, a convoy of provisions near the river Seille, about two leagues from the Emperor's camp, which were being taken in there. As this capture was made on the 22nd of December, the weather being bitterly cold and night falling rapidly, it was a very welcome one; so they took up their quarters in the village of Corney, the inhabitants of which had fled, and there they lighted their fires and passed a merry evening, taking care to keep a strong guard against anything like a surprise.

At eight the next morning they resumed their march, and after going two leagues, they captured another convoy, which the Duchess of Lorraine was sending to her uncle, the Emperor. This consisted of six carts, loaded with wines and choice provisions, including twelve Rhine salmon, half of which were in

pasties. The men in charge of the convoy, seeing the red flags which Vieilleville had ordered his troops to display, took them for an escort sent to meet them, and advanced without any suspicion. They were soon undeceived, and Vieilleville's body of men were soon regaling themselves with the salmon and choice wines. While they were doing so, one of the prisoners, named Vignancourt, asked whether they were not Vieilleville's troops.

"Why do you ask that?" said Vieilleville, without disclosing his identity.

"Because," replied the prisoner, "the Emperor is furious with him for the ruse he employed in capturing Pont-à-Mousson. I was at his levée yesterday, and I heard him swear that if ever he caught him he would have him impaled. He called him that 'traitor and fox, Vieilleville,' and also accused him of having had Don Alfonso cruelly put to death."

Vieilleville then said who he was, and declared that Don Alfonso had died in his bed, and that he was ready to break a lance

with any Spanish prince who maintained the contrary.

The force was then preparing to return to Corney, when two spies, one of them the mayor of Villesaleron, arrived, one after the other, to inform Vieilleville that the Emperor had placed a large body of troops in concealment, in order to surprise them at Corney, the Prince of Infantado being at the head of them, and having promised to bring in Vieilleville, dead or alive, so that he might be impaled. The prisoner Vignancourt exclaimed at this that he did not wonder at Vieilleville's successes, seeing how well served he was by his spies. Only yesterday he had seen the man they called Habert in the Emperor's chamber, saying he came from Colonel Scharlet, and the other selling wine and bread in the camp of the Marquis of Brandenburg.

Vieilleville laughed very much at this, as did several of the others who heard the remark, and the expedition then returned to Pont-à-Mousson, capturing a third convoy on the way.

The next day was Christmas, and as Vieilleville came out from mass the mayor of Villesaleron met him with the following story of the mishap which had befallen the Imperial troops. He said :

“Last evening my brother and myself went up, with four of our neighbours, to the top of the steeple, where, after we had been watching for three hours we saw a troop of men in the plain, the moon being very bright, advancing at a rapid pace towards the village. We at once came down, and having saddled my horse I rode off in the direction which they were taking. When they saw me, they called out to me in French to stop, which I did, whereupon they asked me where I was going and what I was doing out at that hour of the night. I said that I was the mayor of Villesaleron, two leagues the other side of the river, that I had been to see my father who was ill at Corney, and that I was returning at night for fear of having my horse stolen by some soldiers. They then asked me how it was that the French, who were in the village, had not

taken it. I said there was not any one in the village, to which they replied that I was making sport of them, as they knew that there were seven hundred in the place under the command of one Vieuxville. I said that I had never heard of such a person, but that I knew only too well a certain Vieilleville, as the accursed fellow had burnt down my barn when he defeated Mondragon at Malatour. They said they belonged to M. de Brabançon's force, and that they were on the look out for Vieilleville to hang him. I informed them that they were too late, as he and M. de Nevers had left at three that afternoon with all their forces for Toul, and that they had evidently received a warning of danger as they had gone off in great haste. After this there was an outburst of such blasphemy as never I heard. They thought I was humbugging them, and they sent a trumpeter and two other men to verify my statement, with orders to run me through the body if it turned out to be false. When we returned there was a fresh outbreak of blasphemy, and I heard such

remarks as these exchanged: 'Ah! Prince de l'Infantado, you have lost your twenty thousand crowns, for you will not be able to deliver Vieilleville over to the Emperor!' 'How unlucky to have missed capturing M. de Nevers. His ransom would have been worth at least fifty thousand crowns!' 'A plague upon those who suggested this expedition!' 'The best thing we can do is to turn round and go back again!'' *

At Pont-à-Mousson the Christmas holidays were spent in rejoicing and good cheer, for everyone had received a share of the spoils and the ransom. Horses were to be had for the asking, clothes cost next to nothing, and there was a wonderful abundance of provisions. This easy life and the amusements in which the army indulged, after so many

* These warlike incidents are so characteristic of the epoch that I have thought it worth while to quote them. It is true that they all tend to glorify Vieilleville, and are only to be found in his memoirs, but they bear the imprint of truth, and it was the custom of the authors of memoirs to confine their eulogies to the subject of their biography. Thus, Rabutin, who was through the same campaign, makes M. de Nevers the central figure, while Tavannes and Montluc speak only of themselves.

combats and hardships, brought about a great relaxation in discipline. There was a great laxity of morals, and gambling, which, though nominally forbidden, was always winked at, assumed very formidable proportions; the furore for the games of "la chance à trois dés" and raffling being very great. When money ran short the players gambled for anything they could stake, especially horses, and when these were lost they played for their furniture, jewellery, clothes, and other necessaries, even prisoners being staked in the hope of getting money for their ransom.

Vieilleville, finding to what a pitch this gambling had attained, got very angry, and put a stop to it, declaring that it was "converting the Christians into Turks." He set at liberty the prisoners who had been staked at play, and he dismissed from his circle the most hardened of the gamblers, threatening them with the lash if they did not mend their ways. This severity soon restored discipline.*

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., pages 98—206.



CHAPTER III.

THE SIEGE OF METZ.*—THE DUC DE GUISE.
— AMBROISE PARÉ. — THE EMPEROR OF
GERMANY.



IN the beginning of August, the Duc de Guise left the Court for Metz. Passing close to Toul, where "the plague was then raging," he entered the town, regardless of the risk, in order to see how the repair of the walls, then in progress, was getting on. Thence he went to Metz, and on the day following his arrival, the 18th, he began to prepare for the siege.

The work of defending the city was an

* The main incidents relating to this siege are taken from Bertrand Salignac, who entered Metz in the suite of M. de Goutant-Biron, an eye-witness of all that occurred. His *relation* is considered to be the most accurate. The first edition was published by Estienne, Paris, 1553, in quarto; the second at Brussels, by Collignon, in 1665, also in quarto.

arduous one, for the circumference of the town was between nine thousand and ten thousand paces, and there was not a single yard of rampart behind the wall, nor any space to erect one, for the whole of the ground was covered with houses, churches, and other buildings. The only platform was that of St. Marie, and the sole boulevard was that of the Porte de Champagne, which was circular, and of very ancient construction. The ditches of the town were also very defective, and it was easy of attack, being commanded by the neighbouring mountains. Peter Strozzi, who was very expert in all relating to siege affairs, arrived a few days after M. de Guise. He made a careful inspection of the place, and after taking account of its defects and weaknesses, he began to make sketches of platforms, ramparts, trenches, flanking towers and other defensive works deemed necessary. The difficulty was to get hold of a sufficient number of workmen, owing to the approaching vintage, which took away so many labourers and peasants.

However, orders were given to commence without delay the most urgent works, such as the raising of the entrenchments facing the Bellecroix mountain, which would doubtless be the point from which the enemy would open the attack.

The ground near the Porte des Allemands, which was also considered to be a dangerous point, was also strengthened, and in order to set a good example, M. de Guise himself, together with several of the nobles in his suite, set to work for several hours each day, showing that a commander should be able to "give personal proof of hard labour and fatigue, as well as of a vigilant mind."

As corn was scarce, and as wheat was generally threshed late, the mayors of the different villages received orders to expedite the work. Moreover, as corn was paid for at a reasonable rate, there was soon a good supply of it, and it was the same with oats, hay, straw, and other cereals. Cattle were brought into the town by the peasants for safety, and without any compulsion being used, so there was no lack of them. M. de

Guise also had an inventory taken of the ammunition available, and finding that it was running short, he ordered the gentlemen of his household to see that this deficiency was made good, so that, by the time appointed, there was no lack of earthen and woollen sacks, beams, barrels, gabions, arms, etc.

The troops had lost no time in demolishing the buildings abutting upon the walls, so as to have plenty of space to draw up the troops, erect ramparts, and sink trenches, In the same way, a clean sweep was made of the houses outside the walls, and it was wonderful to see how tractable the people of Metz were in submitting to this serious damage to their houses. So full of tact was M. de Guise in his conduct of these operations, that no one grumbled, and many of the people lent a hand to the demolition of their own houses, "regarding it as being for the public good, and for their own security." And yet the time was so short, and the work had to be done in such a hurry, that over two hundred persons were buried beneath the ruins.

M. de Guise was so anxious to spare the churches, both internally and externally, that he had the pillars which supported the arches cut through, and propped up with wood, so that they might be demolished in a day or two if absolutely necessary.

St. Arnoul alone, being situated upon an eminence outside the town, and having a wide arch which might have been used by the enemy as a formidable cavalier * for the Porte Champenoise quarter of the town, was immediately demolished. At the same time, M. de Guise did his best for the Abbot and the clergy who were given accommodation in other churches, where the church ornaments and plate were also deposited. He also had transferred, with much solemnity, the bodies and relics of the saints interred there, and also the coffins of Hildegarde, the wife of Charlemagne, of Louis-the-Mild, of the sisters of these sovereigns, and of other great personages. He himself accompanied

* A technical term used in fortifications to denote an earthen mound, the summit of which makes a platform upon which a battery of guns is placed.

the procession, bare-headed, and with a torch in his hand, together with the other princes and nobles, from the Church and Abbey of St. Arnoul to that of the Dominican Friars.

M. de Guise also saw to the drilling of twelve bodies of newly-recruited infantry, and he issued orders with regard to the soldiers' food, so as to avoid any disputes, and to protect the inhabitants. Knowing how prone the French nobles were to make for any point where there was a chance of fighting—a very risky habit when in a besieged place—he ordered all the volunteers who were serving under him, whether gentle or simple, not to take any step of their own, but to choose as their leader one of the captains of horse or foot, to lodge in his quarters, and to follow him wherever he led them, just as if they were in receipt of pay, and had taken the oath of fidelity to the King under him.

M. de Guise then allotted the different sections of the walls to the various princes and captains, and he also laid down instructions as to the companies which were to turn

out at the first call, and to keep watch over the gates.

About the 20th of September, M. de Guise sent Pietro Strozzi a second time to the King, asking him for reinforcements, as he did not consider that the forces he had at Metz were sufficient, to which the King said they should be sent on to him from St. Mihiel, where the Constable was drilling the army; but whether from negligence, or, as was said, from the Constable's jealousy, M. de Guise got no more troops.

Finding by the month of October that no attack had been made, M. de Guise was beginning to doubt whether the Emperor would expose his army to the risks of the winter, when he heard that it had passed Deux-Ponts, and was getting close to the Moselle, being swollen each day by arrivals from Germany and the Low Countries. M. de Guise then sent out to reconnoitre.*

The fog was too thick for much to be

* Rabutin says that the Duke of Alva and the Marquis de Marignan strongly advised the Emperor to put off the siege of Metz until the following spring. We also know by

seen at a distance, but the enemy's approach was announced by a few disbanded soldiers whom the French succeeded in capturing, and two days later the Duke of Alva and the Marquis de Marignan advanced to reconnoitre the town. The Seigneur de la Brosse, who was keeping watch from a lofty tower, saw them about nine in the morning, and at once informed the Duc de Guise, who sent a few companies to try conclusions with them; but finding them to be in great force and ready to charge within thirty paces of the draw-bridge, the French sharpshooters thought it prudent to re-enter the town under cover of the walls, which they were able to do without loss of life. The Duke of Alva and the Marquis de Marignan then ascended the heights of Belle-Croix, whence they were able to get a better view of the town and select the most favourable spots for the encampment and the attack.

Soon after this several Spaniards tried to

the Emperor's letter to Ferdinand (October 15, 1552), that he did not feel much confidence in this expedition.—“Lanz,” vol. iii., page 518.

sound two fords of the river and obtain possession of an island, but M. de Guise sent over to it a part of the company under the command of M. de la Roche-sur-Yon, who, after a sharp skirmish, prevented them. The struggle was a severe one, and the enemy at once saw that our troops were not to be trifled with.

The next day the Señor Don Luis d'Arvilla, General of the Spanish cavalry, wrote to M. de Guise to ask for the surrender of a slave who had given himself up to us, and who, he said, had stolen his master's horse and money. M. de Guise replied that the slave had gone further inland into French territory, and that as the French custom was to grant their liberty to all persons entering the country, he could not in any case have done as requested.

At about midnight of that same day there arrived in haste the two brothers of M. de Vendôme, MM. d'Enghien and de Condé, with MM. de Montmorency and de Damville, the sons of the Constable, and they proved a very welcome addition to the forces.

A few days after this a body of Spaniards and Italians having come down rather close to the Porte Saint-Barbe, exclaiming "Escale! Escale!" the alarm was sounded from the steeple, and there was great uproar in the town. M. de Guise, much vexed, ordered that henceforth the bell should only be rung for the curfew, and that the alarm should only be given upon drums in the quarter where it arose.

The enemy was encamped first at the Pont de Magny, and afterwards at St. Clement, no delay occurring in their throwing up earthworks. They formed a cavalier, or earthwork, to accommodate seven guns, to the right of the hill of St. Arnoul, and another, for six guns, to the left, with a trench verging upon the St. Thibaut gate. Seeing that they were concentrating their efforts in this direction, our troops raised a fresh rampart there.

Upon November 9th, at eight in the evening, the weather being very clear, they were distinctly seen to be bringing up their trenches quite close to the parapets and walls.

The French soldiers often went out at night to attack them, and they replied, but there was very little harm done on either side.

One of the most curious episodes of the siege was, the introduction of Ambroise Paré into the city to tend the wounded. The early life of this distinguished surgeon is hidden in obscurity. All we know of him is that, born at Rouen in 1517, his father was a trunk-maker, and that he lived at Angers in 1525, his brother being a surgeon at Vitré. When only fifteen years of age, he came to Paris, and probably entered as an apprentice to some surgeon-barber.*

The barbers and doctors originally formed two quite distinct corporations. It was only in the thirteenth century that they united, the doctors finding it convenient to make over to the barbers the task of blood-letting. But the barbers then bled their patients with such a vengeance that in the next century the

* "Œuvres Complètes d'Ambroise Paré," published by Malgaigne-Baillière, 1840. See the Introduction, in which the author quite disposes of the legendary stories about the youth of Paré, page 227.

two corporations were at loggerheads again. There was great rivalry between them, each appealing either to the Provost, or to the University, or to Parliament, for the supremacy. This rivalry still existed in the sixteenth century, and as a matter of fact, the public support was divided pretty equally between the two. Ambroise Paré, as an apprentice, had to shave and brush hair, make lances, and assist his master in dressing wounds. A popular publication gives the following graphic sketch of the life led by a barber's apprentice:—

“By cockerow, the young man must be astir to sweep out and open the shop, so as not to lose the small gratuity which some workman, on his way to business, may give him for shaving him. From that time till two in the afternoon, he has to visit some fifty customers, and comb out their wigs, wait in the ante-room or upon the staircase till they are ready, put the hair of some in curl-papers, singe that of others, and shave them all. Towards evening, if he is of a studious turn, he will take up a book. But

fatigue and the weariness which study always causes those who are not accustomed to it, soon bury him in deep sleep, from which he is often aroused by a pull at the bell, which tells him that some peasant is waiting to be shaved. . . . No negro is made to do more for his meagre pittance than a barber's apprentice. Their masters will not even allow them to go out and attend the public lessons of an afternoon for fear of losing a single client who may want to be shaved. This is why the doctors were moved to give these young men lessons in surgery at four o'clock in the morning."*

A life of this kind could not suit the ingenious mind and studious tastes of young Ambroise, who appears to have soon left the barber to enter the Hôtel-Dieu.

This hospital, founded in the seventh century by St. Landry, Bishop of Paris, was still managed in the sixteenth by a double

* "Le Chirurgien-Médecin," Paris, 1796.—"Œuvres d'Ambroise Paré," Introduction, page 230.

community of men and women attached to the chapter of Nôtre Dame. The dressers, which it had at first received as surgeons' apprentices, had been gradually transformed, as circumstances required, into resident students, and Ambroise, who entered the hospital as one, was at the end of three years received as master barber and surgeon. When he left the Hôtel-Dieu, at the age of nineteen, the Imperial forces were then invading Provence, and our army was marching against them. Marshal de Montéjan, who was General-in-Chief of the French army, attached him to his staff as surgeon, which was a great thing for so young a man.

Without entering into details as to the career of Ambroise Paré, who soon became celebrated, it may be mentioned that in 1545 he assisted at the siege of Boulogne, where the Duc de Guise received the thrust from a lance which earned for him the title of *Le Balafré* (the scarred one). It is said that he himself drew the splint of the lance out of his cheek without damaging

his eye, which was in itself a clever bit of surgery.*

In the expedition of 1552, he accompanied M. de Rohan to Germany, and so distinguished himself by his cures, that M. de Vendôme afterwards took him with him into Picardy. The expedition was confined to a few skirmishes, but the Prince took a great fancy to the young surgeon, and spoke so highly of him to the King that the latter sent for him, and attached him to his person as surgeon, with the promise of promotion.

Paré has left us the following account of how he reached Metz:—"M. de Guise and the Princes asked the King to send me to them with drugs, believing, from the number of wounded who died that their men were poisoned; though I think the only poison was the severity of the wounds and the biting cold. . . . The King wrote to Marshal St.

* This fact is related in detail in the "Vie de Gaspard de Coligny," published at Cologne in 1636, page 63. Paré, in speaking of his visit to the camp during the siege, refers to this operation without specifically saying that he carried it out; though this is to be inferred from his narrative.—"Œuvres de Paré," vol. iii., page 696.

André, his lieutenant at Verdun, asking him to find means of getting me into Metz. Whereupon the Marshal and M. de Vieilleville bribed an Italian captain, who undertook to do it for fifteen hundred crowns. The King then sent for me, and bade me take from his apothecary whatever drugs I might deem necessary, which I did without losing an hour. On reaching Verdun, a few days afterwards, Marshal St. André provided me with horses for myself and my man, as well as for the Italian captain, who spoke German, Spanish, and Walloon as well as he did his own language. When we got to within eight or ten leagues of Metz we travelled only at night; and upon approaching the camp I saw so many fires alight that one might have fancied the whole earth was ablaze. It seemed to me that we could never get through without being seen; and if we were caught we should either be put to death or held to ransom for a large sum. I confess to having felt that I should gladly be in Paris; but Providence so protected us that we entered the city at midnight by

means of a certain signal which the Italian had arranged with a captain in the company of M. de Guise, whom I went to see in his bed, and who received me with great satisfaction at my arrival. He ordered me to be well lodged and cared for, and told me that upon the following day I should have to go out into the breach with the Princes and nobles and several of the captains, who received me with great joy, and did me the honour of embracing me, and of saying that they were now no longer afraid of dying, should they receive a wound.

“The Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon was the first to greet me, and he asked me what was said at Court about the city of Metz. After having told him what I knew, he asked me to go and see one of his followers who had had his leg fractured by the bursting of a cannon. I found him in bed, with his leg all bent up, and with no apparatus on it, some one having persuaded him that he could cure him by saying some fancy words and putting his name upon his belt. The unfortunate gentleman had not had any sleep

for four days ; and I was able to arrange his leg so promptly and dexterously, that he was free from pain, and slept the whole night. He was soon cured, and is now in the King's service. His master sent me a hogshead of wine larger than a pipe of Anjou, and told me that when it was all gone I should have some more. Each one vied in kind treatment of me."

The Seigneur de Piennes was trepanned ; and Paré, describing this operation, said : "I tended him, and God cured him." Speaking of the ramparts, he says : "The work upon them was carried on day and night, and the highest nobles and princes shouldered the pickaxe and carried away the earth, by way of setting a good example. Even the ladies lent a hand, and those who had no baskets brought bags, cauldrons, and any kind of utensil which would hold the earth ; so that, no sooner had the enemy demolished a wall than he was confronted by a rampart still stronger. Our soldiers called out to the enemy, 'Fox! fox!' and addressed all kinds of insults to them. They

impaled live cats upon the ends of their pikes, and flourished these over the walls, imitating the plaintive mew of the poor animals, which the enemy, roused to fury, fired at, of course. Our troops made frequent sorties; and it was deemed a great favour among the young nobles to be allowed to take part in them. The force also consisted of about a hundred or a hundred and twenty men, well armed with arquebuses, pistols, pikes, halberts, etc. The engagements which followed upon these sorties were always very severe, and many of our men came back wounded. If any horse was wounded, he was killed and eaten by the soldiers, who were short of beef and pork. I had a great deal to do in looking after the wounded."

An unfortunate incident in connection with the siege was the desertion of the Marquis Albert of Brandenburg. The Marquis was a regular brigand chief, like the ancient Italian condottiere, making war for the purposes of pillage. As he had refused to combine with the Princes at the Treaty

of Passau, Henri had engaged his services, thinking to make him useful against the Emperor. But the Marquis, though he received much money, would not act, and, encamped with his troops between the Imperial army and the town of Metz, he did not declare himself for either side. While constantly applying to M. de Guise for provisions, and sending his sick to be treated in the Metz hospitals, he was negotiating with Charles V., and, having come to an agreement with him, he made a sudden attack on the Comte d'Aumale, who was operating in the open country at the head of a detachment, killed more than one hundred and fifty of his men, and sent him a prisoner into Germany.*

Upon the 28th of November the enemy made a breach at the Tour d'Enfer, which was the weak point of the wall, close to a chimney. About noon a small breach was effected, and two hours later all this part of the fortification fell in. The enemy uttered

* The Comte d'Aumale only recovered his liberty on payment of sixty thousand gold crowns.

a shout of joy, thinking that they had overcome the real obstacle, but when the dust had cleared away they found themselves face to face with the rampart, eight feet above the breach, so they soon laughed the wrong side of their faces.

One of our soldiers named Montilly then went, out of bravado, down into the breach, just to show the enemy how little the French troops cared whether they mounted it or not. The enemy gradually advanced, however, close to the walls, and as all the prisoners declared that the Emperor had made up his mind to capture it at any cost, M. de Guise, fearing that the siege would drag on, issued fresh orders as to the distribution of provisions. He ordered a house-to-house examination to be made, and decided that the provisions found in them should be measured out as carefully as if they belonged to the army. He also had the wine placed in two or three cellars, with orders for the captain on duty to distribute two pints a day to each soldier, and made similar arrangements as to the rations

of bread and forage. In order to reduce the population as much as possible, he ordered the gendarmerie to get rid of all the unnecessary train and baggage service, keeping only two serving men and two horses for each man-at-arms. All the other ineffectives were treated in the same way. He also pointed out to the inhabitants that it would be useless for them to undergo the dangers of what would perhaps be a very long siege, and that they would do well to retire to some town of France or Luxemburg, taking with them their gold, silver, jewellery, linen, and most valuable furniture. The rest, placed under the care of commissaries of supply, would be kept and given back to them intact after the siege. Upon this a great many of the inhabitants withdrew, but as the number remaining was still too large he enrolled the able-bodied men, the armourers, blacksmiths, barbers, surgeons, priests and monks, and ordered the others to evacuate the town the next day. Then, in order to prevent an epidemic breaking out owing to the impurity of the air, he ordered the

Provost to have the town well cleansed and the streets kept well scavenged. Two hospitals also were placed in order, one for the soldiers and the other for the pioneers.

M. de Guise also took precautions against a waste of ammunition, and as the supply of powder was running short he had some more made, and in order to be able to pay the soldiers he had some money coined in the King's name and increased its nominal value, undertaking to redeem it later at the same rate.

Upon the 6th of December it was seen that a large number of ladders had been brought in to the Emperor's camp, and early on the morning of the 7th the drums sounded, while about eight o'clock two large bodies of infantry approached the trenches in the direction of St. Arnoul.

Although M. de Guise did not think that there was much danger, owing to the strength of the rampart, he had the troops distributed along the walls, guarding the trenches, flanking towers and other points of vantage. Their numbers were but small,

considering the extent of the fortress, but they were all full of valour and resolution, from M. de Guise and the Princes in his suite downwards. He was never at a lack, moreover, for one of those lofty utterances which often determine the issue of a combat.*

This alert did not lead to anything, as the Imperial troops, it is said, were in such a state of destitution that they refused to make the assault. The heavy rain had soaked into the heavy clay land of Montferrat to such an extent that the platforms of the artillery sunk in everywhere. The huts occupied by the soldiers were inundated, and it was almost impossible to bring up a sufficient quantity of provisions. Several epidemics broke out, and the sight of so many dead and dying had a most depressing effect upon the army. The Emperor was confined to his litter, and

* M. de Thou puts a very eloquent speech into the mouth of the Duc de Guise, but Salignac's narrative seems to me the most natural, and Channatz does not allude to this speech in his "Ephémérides." Ronsard makes the Duc de Guise harangue his troops in verse.—"Œuvres Complètes," edition of 1623, in folio, vol. ii., page 291.

he is said to have exclaimed: "Fortune is like a woman, and prefers a young King to an aged Emperor."*

Upon the 16th, the enemy overthrew the Tour des Charpentiers; and on the 22nd, after a plunging fire upon the Tour d'Enfer, did it considerable damage. As in the course of the night the subterranean works were evidently advancing very rapidly, M. de Guise, at great personal risk, went down into the counter-mine, where the enemy could be distinctly heard at work. He discovered, too, that the arches supporting the grand boulevard were sinking, and he had them propped up with heavy beams until a more permanent repair could be effected. A successful sortie was made on the 23rd, and upon Christmas night, the guard at the breaches in the wall was reinforced, so that the men-at-arms might get a little rest at this solemn season, M. de Guise being very particular about religious matters. After the

* "Histoire de Metz," by the Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Vanne. Collignon, Metz, 1775.—"De Thou," book ii.; "Malthieu," book ii, page 94.

midnight service, he paid a visit to all the men on guard, and on Christmas Day itself, the religious ceremonies were duly observed, only a few shots being exchanged.

On the following day, the sixty-fifth since the arrival of the enemy, and the forty-fifth of the siege, though the walls were demolished, the ramparts behind them were intact, and the number of the garrison had undergone very little diminution. They showed as bold a front, moreover, as at the beginning of the siege, while the Imperial forces were in such a direful state of confusion that they commenced their retreat, as it really was, though cloaked by various devices.

First of all, several pieces of artillery were sent across the Moselle, and the Marquis Albert had them placed near his regiments in the plain, as if to have a better command of the bridges in the possession of the French. Not understanding this manœuvre, the Duc de Guise sent out some troops to reconnoitre, but the Marquis Albert succeeded in repulsing them by means of his

artillery, but without leaving his camp. The next day, the ensign of M. de Guise, having occasion to go in the direction of St. Pierre des Champs, where the Italians were quartered, found the place deserted, and St. Estèphe, upon going to the trenches near the Porte St. Thibaut, saw that the ground beyond was occupied only by a few Germans, who threw down their arms and fled at his approach. This seemed to show that the enemy was raising the siege, and confirmation of this was brought in the next day by a lad of ten, who had been among the enemy. It is true that a sortie made the next day was repulsed, but the retreat continued, and MM. de la Rochefoucauld and de Rendan, while scouring the country in the direction of Thionville, saw a part of the camp marching away, among the departing forces being a number of wounded Spaniards, who were being removed on waggons. While on this expedition they captured a page, a valet, and a lackey belonging to the Duke of Alva, whom M. de Guise courteously sent back to him.

On the 1st of January, the Emperor left

the Château de la Horgne for Thionville, and on this same day, a troop of French cavalry attacked the Spaniards who were escorting him near the St. Martin Bridge. One of the Spaniards having called out to the French arquebusiers and asked what they wanted, and having been informed that they wanted to break a lance, the Spaniard said that they were not in a condition to join in the fray, and only asked to be allowed to retreat in peace. After the Emperor's departure, the two camps were raised on the 2nd January at about eleven p.m.

“So it was,” writes Paré, “that the worthy Imperial troops withdrew from Metz, to the great contentment of the besieged, and much to the credit of the Princes, nobles, captains, and soldiers who had withstood the fatigues of a two months' siege. Not that all who had come to the siege returned home, for upwards of twenty thousand had perished in combat, or from disease, cold, and hunger. The Duc de Guise had the dead buried and the sick cared for, sending plenty of provisions to all of them, and bidding me go with other

surgeons to tend the wounded and prescribe for them ; which I did with the best will in the world. A few days after this, he sent a messenger to Thionville, requesting the enemy to fetch their wounded, and as they had not a sufficient number of carts, he lent them some of his own.

“ After the camp had been broken up, I distributed my wounded among the surgeons of the city to complete their cure, and, taking leave of M. de Guise, I returned to the King, who received me with the utmost cordiality.”

Vieilleville, after the successful raids described in a previous chapter, had remained at Pont-à-Mousson, watching the course of events, when, on New Year's Day, three soldiers, who said they were Italians from Naples, presented themselves at the gates and asked to be admitted. They were very exhausted, and looked half-starved. Vieilleville being informed of their presence, came out to question them as to where they came from, and they told him that they were from the camp of the Emperor, who was raising

the siege and starting for Thionville. They also asked to be enrolled in the French service.

Vieilleville could not believe that the siege of Metz was raised, but they assured him that they were speaking the truth, and that the Emperor, who had an escort of fifteen hundred horsemen, would be followed the next day by the Dukes of Alva and Brabant; and that on Tuesday the Marquis Albert would leave, he remaining to the last, in order to protect the retreat of the army across the Moselle. They added that it would be necessary to leave the tents and pavilions of the Duke of Alva, together with the artillery train and the wounded, behind, and that the Emperor had declared that he would rather have died than have witnessed such a scene of desolation as the camp presented.

Vieilleville did not doubt the truth of what they had told him; and, turning round to M. de Nevers, he said to him, in allusion to the name of Metz, which was known as the "Maiden Fortress," "I always thought the

Emperor was too old and gouty to carry off so handsome a young girl.*

Vieilleville handed over the Italian soldiers to the Sieur Leroux, and in recognition of the good news brought in by them, they were invited to sup at the Prince's table. About six the next morning, a gentleman named Courteville arrived, on his way to convey to the King the news of the Emperor's retreat. He said that the Duc de Guise might have marched out of the town the day before, but in view of a possible surprise, he preferred to await the departure of the Dukes of Alva and Brabançon, who, upon starting the same morning, had destroyed the Pont-à-Moulin behind them, to prevent pursuit. The Emperor had lost at least thirty thousand men, and he was out of heart for any undertaking of consequence for some time. Courteville then resumed his journey, and would not even stop to dine.

M. de Nevers was very impatient to see

* M. de Vieilleville's own expression was too strong to be quoted verbatim.—Vol. xxx., p. 209.

the Duc de Guise at once, and wanted to start for Metz without delay, but Vieilleville advised him to wait until the Duke had had time to look about him a little, and they did not leave until Thursday.

M. de Guise, who was expecting them, sent a body of nobles to meet them, and when they entered the city they numbered seven hundred in all. There was a joyous meeting, and the Duc de Guise threw himself into the arms of Vieilleville, and said to him, with a laugh:—

“Am I to impale or embrace the Emperor’s lion-fox?”

Affairs were set in order during the next few days, and there was an immense quantity of horses, ammunition, and provisions to dispose of. The only dark side to the picture was the horrible aspect of the camp, for the dead and the dying, horses as well as men, were lying about in all directions. The whole encampment resembled one vast cemetery.

“We found,” says Vieilleville, “whole bodies of troops lying at death’s door—some

prone in the mud, others seated on large stones with their feet up to the knees in so deplorable a condition that they entreated us to put an end to their misery.”

Then there were the tents, the arms, and other articles of camp furniture all left in disorder, the whole scene being such a terrible one as to excite the commiseration even of the enemy. M. de Guise and his followers showed the greatest kindness to the wounded, and their example was followed by the inhabitants of Metz, subscriptions being raised to inter the dead and relieve the sick and wounded, most of the latter having a limb amputated.

All the débris of the camp, including bedsteads, rusty swords, helmets, and pikes, were distributed among the camp followers, while the large quantity of arms in good condition were divided among the soldiers.

On Sunday, the 15th, a grand thanksgiving service was held, and on the following day a proclamation was issued, authorising the inhabitants to return, and reviving the police regulations, which had been suspended

during the siege. The Duc de Guise also ordered the breaches in the walls to be repaired, and the fortifications put into good order. Having paid off the troops, he held a general review, and on the 24th made over the city to M. de Gonnor, the Governor, and returned to the Court, the King ordering a handsome medal to be struck in commemoration of his valiant defence.*

Vieilleville had already started for Verdun, where he spent two days with St. André, and thence proceeded to Duretal for the remainder of the winter.

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., pages 206—244. Bertrand de Salignac's "Siège de Metz," vol. xxxix., pages 379—442, and vol. xl., pages 1—178. "Briefs discours du Siège de Metz en Lorraine, rédigés par escript de jour en jour par un soldat, à la requête d'un sien amy," first published at Lyons in Italian, 1553.—"Archives curieuses de l'Histoire de France," year 1835, vol. iii., page 119.—"Paradin," pages 190—233.—Letter from M. de Selves to Henri II., dated from Venice, describing the impression caused in Italy by raising the siege.—"Négociations avec le Levant," vol. ii., page 59.—"Histoire des Bénédictins," vol. iii., page 53.



CHAPTER IV.

VIEILLEVILLE APPOINTED GOVERNOR OF METZ.—HIS WIFE GOES TO JOIN HIM THERE. — DISCIPLINE RE-ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE CITY.



HE circumstances amid which Vieilleville had refused the governorship of Metz the year before had entirely changed. At the outset the King, allied with the German Princes, had taken possession of the three bishoprics as the lieutenant of the Holy Empire. Since then, as the Princes in question had not included him in the peace which was signed, he acted quite independently of them, and kept the bishoprics upon the ground that they formed part of France under the kings of the first two dynasties. Vieilleville therefore

could no longer object to being Governor of Metz under the King, and he had doubtless gone into the matter with the Ducs de Guise and Nevers, for immediately after the siege was over they applied to the King to appoint him, dwelling in very eulogistic terms upon his fitness.* They were all the more anxious that he should have the appointment because they wanted to get rid of M. de Gonnor, who was a protégé and relative of the Constable, with whom M. de Guise was just then upon very bad terms.† The King, who liked Vieilleville, readily granted the request, but Montmorency at once offered the most violent opposition to this. He said that it would be most unjust to recall Gonnor after undergoing the hardships and fatigues of the siege, and that Vieilleville must be rewarded in some

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., page 245.

† The Duc d'Aumale, Guise's brother, who commanded the cavalry in Piedmont under Brissac, had absented himself; and Brissac, being anxious to curry favour with the Constable, had taken advantage of this to put in his place the Constable's second son, Damville. The Duc d'Aumale failed to get reinstated.—"Boivin de Villars;" "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., page 444.

way, suggesting that he should be given the Governorship of Brittany, M. d'Etampes, the present Governor, being very aged and decrepit.

Vieilleville, instructed of all this, upon receiving the patent of succession, and being made aware of how the oracle was being worked, wrote back a very measured but resolute reply, saying that, apart from M. d'Etampes being a friend upon whose death he should be sorry to speculate, he was also in enjoyment of excellent health. Moreover, he, Vieilleville, had too many relatives and friends in Brittany to admit of his being free to have the King's ordinances and decrees strictly obeyed. He felt, too, that at forty-two he was in the prime of life, and better fitted to occupy a post of danger than a pacific post where there was little to do. Finally, he should not care to be under the orders of M. de Gié, the deputy of M. d'Etampes, with whom he had already had serious difficulties about their properties, which adjoined each other, and who held a fief under him. He reminded the King, too,

that the Governorship of Metz had already been offered to him, and that as M. de Gonnor had only accepted it after his refusal, the latter might be regarded as in one sense his lieutenant. He knew that the King had promised the Ducs de Nevers and de Guise that he should have the appointment, and he was surprised that by a subtle ruse his Majesty should have been induced to revoke his promise and send him, Vieilleville, to lodge in a cemetery till he could step into a dead man's shoes. He concluded by saying that as he should shortly have the honour of appearing in the King's presence, he would defer the rest of his remonstrances till then. This letter was written at Duretal on May 1st, 1553.

The King, after having had it read to him, quite entered into Vieilleville's views of the matter, and he flew into a great passion with the Constable, his anger, like that of most persons of weak character, increasing in proportion to the very great effort required to arouse it. He said that he felt it was time that Vieilleville should receive

an important post, and that he had only refused the Governorship of Metz the year before, out of patriotism. He ascertained, too, that it was quite true that M. de Gié held his estate of Vergier under the Barony of Mathefelon which belonged to Vieilleville; whereupon he sent for the Constable, declaring that it would be equivalent to setting Brittany by the ears to put Vieilleville and Gié, who were at loggerheads, into the same post, and making some very satirical observations about the persons who were always ready to sacrifice the interests of their master to oblige their friends.

When the Constable arrived, the King, still in a towering passion, said to him:—“I have quite made up my mind to give the Governorship of Metz to M. de Vieilleville, as I promised to do a year back in your presence. It is his by right, and if his advice had been followed, the interests of my kingdom would have been much better served. You are really doing good work for me in Brittany. Read this letter and hear what the Lieutenant of Anjou has to say.

Let me beg of you to take care that my purposes are not again crossed, and that nothing be done to incense me any further. It is my pleasure that the orders I have given shall be carried out, and if Gonnor does not at once quit Metz, that shall not prevent Vieilleville from entering it."

The Constable, seeing how angry the King was, did not attempt to reply after hearing Vieilleville's letter read; all he said was that he was ignorant of there being any difference between the two houses, and that he would at once apprise Gonnor of the King's desire; and, as a matter of fact, he at once forwarded him a very explicit despatch, in which he advised him to offer his resignation upon the ground of ill-health, and with a good grace to hand over his powers to his successor.

M. de Gonnor followed this advice, and as there were only twenty-four posts between Paris and Metz, his resignation came to hand the very day that Vieilleville had audience of the King. The first words that the King said to him, therefore, were that he was now

Governor of Metz.* Henri added a special mark of favour, for, the pay of the troops being two months in arrear, and the money not forthcoming, he took the sum from his privy purse and gave it to Vieilleville, so that he might be well received. He also gave him two thousand pounds for the repair of the walls, and ten thousand crowns as a present, all these sums being taken to Metz in carts, under the care of men made responsible for their safe arrival.

Nothing could well have been more brilliant than the reception which awaited Vieilleville at Metz. The troops, in full uniform, were drawn up in the plain, about half a league from the city, near the Porte St. Thibaut, M. de Gonnor and the officers at their head. There was a grand display of rich swords in velvet sheaths with silver belts, of Biscay pikes, richly decorated uniforms with gold embroideries and velvet

* The Governorship of Metz comprised that of the three Bishoprics.—“*Histoire Générale de Metz*,” by the Benedictines of the congregation of St. Vanne. Collignon, Metz, 1795, vol. iii. page 56.

sashes, each officer sporting the colours of his mistress. Vieilleville himself looked very well, in full armour, mounted upon his handsome horse Ivoy, and with his bodyguard composed of fifty of the boldest and bravest lansquenets, made over to him by the Comte de Nassau. They carried right gallantly their halberds and long new-fashioned daggers, attired in the black and yellow of their master, who had derived these colours from his wife, then Mademoiselle de la Tour, and had always worn them since.

Needless to add that salutes were fired and pikes brandished, while a flourish of trumpets greeted Vieilleville, who, though he had the reputation of being a severe disciplinarian, was known by the troops to be a model of justice, bravery, and honour. The fact of his bringing the back pay with him was not calculated to lessen the sense of satisfaction.

Upon entering Metz, his first visit was to the Cardinal Bishop de Lénoncourt, who awaited him at the main entrance to the

episcopal palace, and had prepared a grand banquet in his honour.

The next day, he convoked all the authorities of the city, and read them the letters-patent giving him a power of life and death which his predecessor did not possess. M. de Gonnor then made over to him the inventory of the material, which they went through together, and six days afterwards left Metz.

Vieilleville had a severe task to get through, for the utmost disorder prevailed in the city and in the army. The captains, distributing themselves the pay to their men, were in the habit of doing as they pleased with it. In some cases they gave the larger share to their favourites, to the detriment of the rest, and in others they dressed up servants and shopmen as soldiers, and sent them on parade, keeping the pay for themselves.

The officers had, moreover, but scant authority over the soldiers, who, in consequence of the success which had attended them during this long siege, had become so

insolent, that there was no doing anything with them, and that quarrels were constantly breaking out among them.

They were continually fighting with one another, and did not scruple to go out of the city without leave, and, under the pretence of searching for game, pillaged anything they could lay their hands upon. They robbed the merchants who were bringing provisions into Metz, and when they did not steal, they took goods on credit, which amounted to much the same thing.

The greatest sufferers from their brutality, however, were those of the inhabitants who had to lodge them, as they respected neither age nor sex, while, if a husband, father, or brother proved troublesome, they killed them without scruple, and said that they had met with their death in the open field.

Complaints to the late Governor had proved futile, as he had been afraid to act, while he himself set the men a wretched example by living openly with a girl whom he had taken away from her parents,

and who coolly called herself Madame de Gonnor.

All this drove the inhabitants to despair, when they called to mind their ancient liberties and customs gone, as they feared, for ever.

Vieilleville was not the man to tolerate disorder of this kind, but in order to put a stop to it, the co-operation of the officers who countenanced it was necessary; and this was the most difficult part of the business. He accordingly invited them all to a grand banquet and explained to them his ideas and plans. He told them that he had determined upon some new regulations for the garrison and the town, and hoped he could count upon their ready co-operation. These regulations, which he had read out to them, were very severe, as they struck at every kind of abuse, and left no loophole for any injustice or violence. The officers looked at each other in consternation, but they admitted the good intentions by which their commander was animated, and assured him of their obedience. But could he not

mitigate a little the severity of the regulations, especially in regard to money matters.

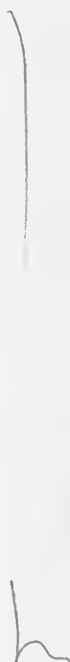
“What!” exclaimed Vieilleville, “are you the slaves of money! I tell you that you will never do a good act if this vice has the mastery of you, for avarice and honour cannot go hand in hand. Be but faithful in your service to the King, and trust to me to reward you.”

These words, uttered with much warmth, brought the officers into sympathy with their chief, and they not only promised him fidelity but asked him to issue the regulations as soon as possible, undertaking that their men should comply with them.

The first reforms related to the military organization, commissaries being appointed to check the list of men enrolled, and see that they were all really present. With regard to debts, the pay of the men was to take place in the presence of the commissaries, and creditors would be allowed to enforce their claims, the commissaries paying them in part or in whole. Quarrels and duels between individual soldiers were forbidden

under pain of death. No one was to be allowed to leave the town without a passport, and the gatekeepers were to be held responsible. Any attempt upon the honour of the women or the liberty of the male inhabitants, or even any insolent gesture or remark, would be severely punished, and any complaints would be entertained by the military authorities.

These regulations having been passed they were published with much solemnity, first at the gate of the Governor's house and afterwards at the street crossings and upon the public squares, in the presence of the troops, the Governor and the officers being at their head. The effect was such that the most intractable of the men were awed into respect and bade their comrades submit to orders. For two months there was not a single quarrel in the army; and though after this there was a slight relaxation of discipline, it was repressed with terrible severity. Two soldiers having fallen out while gambling together, one of them killed his comrade. The assassin and his victim were both seized



and beheaded. Three others were accused of theft and arrested at midnight in their beds. They confessed their guilt and denounced several others as their accomplices, who were at once arrested as well. The whole of them were confronted with the merchants whom they had robbed, and who identified them. Three of them were then sentenced to be broken upon the wheel, and the others to be hung or garrotted. In order to avoid being pressed by their respective captains to spare their lives, Vieilleville had them executed at eight the next morning, so that the fact of their arrest and execution became known at one and the same time.

This rigorous administration of justice was not departed from, even in favour of the persons in the service of the Governor. One of his servants having raised an alarm in the town by attempting to effect a forcible entrance into a house of ill-fame, was hung the next day opposite the house in question; and one of his cooks, who was a married man and kept a tavern, having infringed one of the market regulations, was so severely

flogged that he never fully recovered from it. The inhabitants, reassured by these acts of justice, were emboldened to appeal directly to the Governor. They informed him that during the siege about one hundred and twenty women and girls had been carried off and were still detained in the houses of the captains and soldiers, who met all inquiries by saying that they were dead. The fathers and husbands had, therefore, determined to lay their case before Vieilleville, who, in his reply, asked them why they had waited nearly six months since his arrival to demand reparation for one of the greatest wrongs that could be inflicted upon any man. They replied that they had not dared to do so for fear of having their complaints treated with contempt, as they were by M. de Gonnor.

“Really,” replied Vieilleville, “I do not feel very pleased with you for having put me on a par with my predecessor. However, you may be easy in your mind, for I will see that the stain upon your honour is wiped out.”

Towards the close of the following day,

Vieilleville, having distributed his troops and established guards all over the town at intervals of four hundred yards, took the petitioners with him to point out the houses in which they suspected the women to be, as well as a company of arquebusiers to surround the houses.

The first house visited was that of Captain Royddes, who had in it the young and beautiful wife of a notary, named Lecoq. Vieilleville had the door burst open, and the captain, who was inside with the woman, attempted to resist, but the guards informed him that the Governor in person was below. The captain, thinking, that he was accused of some offence, came down and threw himself at Vieilleville's feet, asking what offence he had committed.

Vieilleville, playing upon the husband's name, replied in a bantering tone that he must give up a hen he had been detaining for the last eight months. The captain, who did not perceive the joke, swore that he had never had any poultry in his house, whereupon the whole company present began to

laugh, Vieilleville himself joining in it. Vieilleville then told him what he meant, and swore that unless he delivered the woman up at once, he would have his head off by the next morning. While all this was going on, an affray had been going on inside the house, amid which the woman escaped, and made off to her husband's house, and Vieilleville, upon learning this, released Royddes, who cut a very foolish figure.

The news of this having spread like wildfire, all the guilty persons opened their doors, and there was a regular exodus of women and girls returning to their homes. Among them were twenty-two nuns, who found their way back to their convent.

Order being thus restored, the Governor was able to send for his family, who were very anxious to rejoin him. His wife and daughter, having made their preparations for starting, set out in the spring of 1554, escorted by a troop of gentlemen from Brittany and Avignon. Vieilleville went as far as Bassigny with an escort to meet them, and though he would willingly have avoided a

state reception, the army and the population at large would not hear of it. All the officers, cavalry as well as infantry, were so anxious to do honour to the wife and daughter of their Governor that, without having received any orders to do so, they went out to Corney, three leagues off, with their troops, which were drawn up in battle array. Two thousand foot soldiers were ranged in line throughout the plain, and the women and maidens of the town came out with bouquets and garlands.

Even the clergy wanted to come out and join the procession, while the abbesses and their nuns were ready to start, when Vielleville, who had got wind of what was being done, declared with some indignation that he would have nothing of the sort, these being honours that should be reserved for the Sovereign, or, at all events, for the first men of the State.

Loud were the salvoes which greeted the coming of the two noble ladies, and when they drew near to the city and met the female cortége, they dismounted from their

horses, while the ladies of their suite got out of the coaches, so as to return the compliments. After a due exchange of greetings, and the necessary presentations had been made, Madame de Vieilleville and the other ladies reached the gates of the town, followed by three carts loaded with flowers, fruit, and other products of the district, which had been brought in by the peasant women from as far off as Pont-à-Mousson, and in such quantities that it was impossible to know what to do with them. The cortége was preceded by drums beating, flags flying, and arquebuss-men firing, and it entered the city by the Porte St. Thibaut, where M. de Marillac, the President of Metz, the head Alderman and his thirteen colleagues, the Commissaries of War and Supply, all the Controllers, and a great number of gentlemen and burgesses, were waiting to receive them and conduct them to their residence. Vieilleville had preceded them, and, together with the parish priests, the camp masters, the sergeant-major, and eight or ten of the senior captains and


gentlemen of his household, gave them a splendid reception. So loud was the din in the town and suburbs, with the trumpets blowing, the guns firing, and the bells ringing—including the big bell, called *La Muette*, because it was so rarely rung—that it was no easy matter to hear oneself speak.

The supper was equally splendid, though, owing to its being Rogation week, it was what French Roman Catholics call “maigre.” Upon the tables were thirty Rhine salmon, forty pike, and about sixty enormous carp, all brought from Strasburg; not to say anything of the tribute offered by the rivers Moselle and Seille, and two horse loads of sea fish, brought all the way from Antwerp by order of M. de Duilly, who was the head of one of the oldest families in Lorraine, and who was Seneschal of the Province. During the meal, the firing of cannon was stopped, and music substituted for it, and as soon as supper was over, dancing began, and was kept up all night.



CHAPTER V.

THE COUNTRY CLEARED.—TREASON OF THE
PROVOST AND THE SERGEANT-MAJOR.—
COMBAT OF ST. MICHEL.—PLOT OF THE
CORDELIERS.—VIEILLEVILLE FOILS IT, AND
DEFEATS THE IMPERIAL FORCES.

F order was re-established inside Metz, the greatest possible anarchy prevailed in the surrounding country, which harboured such a number of thieves and vagabonds, most of whom were deserters from the army, that it was very unsafe to travel. Possessed of several standards, they described themselves to the French as belonging to the Imperial army, and to the Imperial forces as belonging to the French army. Vieilleville, as Governor of Metz, and M. de Mansfeld, as Governor of Luxemburg, having an equal interest in

putting an end to these robberies, concluded an agreement to that end. It was arranged that any captain, sergeant, corporal, or other, leading soldiers into the field to "try their fortune," should be required to have his men described by name and enrolled, with a certificate from the Governor, stating that they were in his pay. When soldiers possessing such a certificate were made prisoners, they should be kept for three days, and the ransom exacted should not exceed a month's pay; while men who could not exhibit such a certificate should be treated as marauders, and broken on the wheel, hung, or garrotted. These conditions having been well understood, Vieilleville had a list prepared of sixty helmet-wearers and two hundred arquebusiers, whom he intended to send out each week to scour the country, under the conduct of the most trustworthy of his officers. He selected the men himself from among the bravest in the army, and gave them their orders in person each evening, besides being generally at the gate when they left the town at daybreak. He com-

mended them specially to their captain, calling each of them by their name—"the which exalted their courage and animated their virtue."

These well-organized sorties were very successful, and in nearly every case the men returned at the end of a few days with plenty of loot—which was given them as a reward for their work—and several prisoners. When the latter did not belong to the regular army, they were, in accordance with the agreement, made over to the provost and sergeant-major. For some time Vieilleville had reason to suspect their honesty, but he had not cared to carry his investigations very far, for they rendered him considerable service. Nicholas, the sergeant-major, had not his equal for "teaching a soldier how to carry himself and to shoulder his arms, and for instructing him in his duty." There was no one like him for drawing up a battalion when some grandee whom Vieilleville was anxious to honour was about to visit Metz. He was never afraid to go, day or night, to inspect the guard-rooms upon the walls or

in the city, and repress any disorder. As to the provost, no one could be more adept than he was at drawing up a process of trial or entrapping a criminal in his own statements; besides being very bold, and always ready to risk his life in thief-catching. Having upon one occasion come upon four soldiers who had cut the throat of a woman of bad character, after having maltreated her, he captured them with the assistance of a few arquebusiers, brought them back into the city, and had them executed off-hand.

It is easy to understand how useful such men were in troublous times; but an incident occurred which made it impossible for Vieilleville to appear blind to what was going on any longer.

During one of the sorties, Captain La Cahusière, having captured twenty marauders dressed up as soldiers, made them over to the sergeant-major and provost for execution. The latter sent in their report to the Governor, stating that they had them drowned, and as the executions were very numerous, this was not doubted. But soon

after this, Captain La Cahusière captured another band of marauders, among whom he recognized one of the men he had taken the time before. The man who was the leader of the band, upon being questioned by the captain, confessed that he had been released by the sergeant-major at Metz upon payment of a ransom of a thousand crowns. Since then he had earned at least six times as much, and was prepared to pay accordingly. He added that they were all soldiers of fortune, and that their principal place of refuge was the archbishopric of Trier. Captain La Cahusèrie, very indignant, returned to Metz, and leaving his troop at Rouge-rieules, went on in advance to acquaint Vieilleville with what had occurred. The latter, after hearing what he had to say, told him to keep the matter secret, and detain the prisoners in his own house, instead of handing them over to the provost. The captain carried out his instructions to the letter, being very curious to see what Vieilleville would do. At the expiration of three days, he found that Vieilleville had sent to

M. de Nevers for the provost of Champagne to draw up the indictments, as the provost of Metz, he said, was incriminated; and in the meanwhile he was making out another case. A prisoner named Trousse, who had been sentenced to death some two months before, had not been executed; and in addition to this, the provost had asked that he might be pardoned, and had connived at his corresponding with his friends at large; both of which things were contrary to his duties. Just after this conversation, in the course of which Vieilleville assured the captain that full justice should be done, the sergeant and provost arrived, whereupon Vieilleville complained very much of the delay which had occurred in the execution of La Trousse, and said that if it was not carried out in the next twenty-four hours they would suffer for it. They assured him that this should be done; and at two o'clock the next day the condemned man was led out to Champassaige, the place of execution. But, curiously enough, under the pretence that he was a Huguenot, he was excused from

carrying the cross, there was no rope round his neck, and he was wrapped up in a long mantle, so that it was impossible to see if his hands were tied. The sergeant-major, whose duty it was to assist at all these executions with a squad of soldiers, was absent, and the provost was represented by his registrar.

However, the lugubrious ceremony began, and La Trousse ascended the scaffold surrounded by the crowd, while the registrar read out the sentence. But when the executioner came to seize the prisoner, the latter, by a sudden and rapid movement of the arms, which remained at liberty, left his cloak in the hands of the executioner and ran down the ladder, the crowd opening to let him escape. He ran to his quarters, the Porte Moselle, and his comrades, who had given up all hope of seeing him again, helped him to get away.

Vieilleville, when the news of this affair was brought to him was discussing the plans of the Metz citadel with the engineers, and he at once ordered the captain of the guard, Beauchamp, and La Cahusière, who happened

to be present, to seize the provost and sergeant-major in place of La Trousse, and put them on their trial forthwith. When the marauders, whom they had allowed to escape were brought up as witnesses, the sergeant-major turning to the provost, said: "We are lost. I told you that after the Governor had got wind of this affair we ought to have sent after them into the woods and had them killed. You would not listen to me, and so we are done for." And, as a matter of fact the one was hung and the other garrotted upon the day following, to the great delight of La Cahusière.*

In addition to these expeditions, Vieilleville made frequent sorties against the Imperialist forces, as we gather from a manuscript letter written to the Duc de Guise soon after his arrival at Metz.† Very well versed in the art of maintaining spies, he was always kept informed of a favourable opportunity for making a sudden swoop. There was not a fair,

° "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., page 352.

† Gagnières, French MS., 20,577.

market, or public festival held within a radius of twenty leagues on the Flanders side, to which he did not despatch two or three hundred horsemen and as many arquebusiers, and if the Comte de Mansfeld tried to intercept them he sent fresh forces to relieve them. Carts loaded with Holland linen, wine, woollen cloths, and silks, were always being brought into Metz, to say nothing of merchants and soldiers who were taken prisoners. The Count de Mansfeld, seeing "how badly fortune served him," and that nothing he did succeeded, resigned his post upon the plea of illness, leaving it in the hands of his lieutenant, the Comte de Mègue, who accepted his succession with alacrity, but did not fare any better.*

As an instance of this, it may be mentioned that, soon afterwards, the President Marillac being desirous of returning to France after having spent two years at Metz, Vieilleville had him escorted by a picked body of cavalry and mounted sharp-

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., page 306.

shooters. The Comte de Mègue, hearing of this, thought that the opportunity would be a favourable one for making a raid upon the cattle which were feeding around Metz, under the French guns. Vieilleville, however, got wind of this, and he sent his son-in-law, M. d'Épinay, to reconnoitre in the direction of Thionville. M. d'Épinay found that the enemy was in great force, having eight regiments of infantry and eight or nine hundred horsemen, all well mounted. The small body of men sent out by Vieilleville was not, of course, strong enough to resist a force of this kind, so they took refuge in the Château de la Dompchamp and sent to Vieilleville for instructions. He, not liking the idea of having to order a retreat, determined to go out to the rescue of the small troop. So he donned his finest uniform and mounted his charger Ivoy, determined to do or die. He left the command of the town in the hands of the valiant Sieur de Boisse, in case of his being killed.

The troops whom he took with him were full of military ardour, and he conceived the

ingenious idea of mixing up the arquebusiers and the cavalry—an idea which, as it turned out, proved his salvation. The Imperial forces, which were far the strongest in numbers, were so disconcerted by the unexpected appearance of the arquebussmen among the cavalry when the latter charged, that a panic ensued. The chiefs were among the first killed, and Vieilleville, giving them no time to realize what had occurred, charged them furiously, while the small troop which had taken refuge in La Dompchamp fell upon them from behind and on the flank. They were completely routed, leaving one thousand five hundred dead on the field, while the others were made prisoners, except a few fugitives whom Vieilleville would not have pursued because of his numerical weakness. The Comte de Mègue was among those who escaped, and he managed to make his way through the woods to the Moselle, where a fishing boat took him across to Thionville. The prisoners were so numerous and flabbergasted that on the way back to Metz a woman was seen driving four in front of her

with a stick as if they were so many sheep, which much amused the onlookers. The battle was named St. Michel, having been fought on the 29th of September.*

At Metz there was a monastery of Grey Friars belonging to Nivelles in the Low Countries. The brother door-keeper of this monastery—Imperialist at heart—often went to his native town, and took the opportunity of paying his court to the sister of Charles V. who was acting as Governor of that town, and whom he always regarded as his sovereign. The latter, seeing how readily he came to and fro, thought that he might possibly be made useful to the Imperial cause, and asked him one day if it would not be possible to make a descent upon Metz, and how it could be done.

The monk, who was no fool, at once entered into her ideas, and said that it would not be a difficult task. Vieilleville had against him, upon the one hand, all the nobility of Metz and the leading burgesses whom he had

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., page 334.

debarred from aldermanic functions, and, upon the other hand, part of the army which was irritated at his severe discipline. Executions, the monk said, were frequent among the soldiers; and the comrades of the men who were executed, and who felt themselves in danger of a like punishment, were boiling over with discontent.

He said that if they spoke insolently to one of the burgesses they were sent to prison, and if they assaulted him they were flogged. The monk accordingly proposed that his sovereign, as he regarded her, should let him have some thirty well-trying and trusty soldiers. He would introduce them into the city attired as grey friars, two at a time, so as not to attract notice, and conceal them in the monastery. At a given time, they would set fire to the town in several places, and while the soldiers and the rest of the population were busy in putting it out. the Comte de Mègue would present himself at the gate of the Pont Iffroy, where he would be met by the soldiers, disguised as grey friars, who would aid him to enter the city.

“The town,” he added, “would soon be yours, for upon this side the walls are very low, and the soldiers themselves would mutiny when they heard the shouts of ‘Liberty! Liberty! To death with the cruel Vieilleville!’”

The monk’s arguments carried conviction with them, and, after receiving a handsome ring and five hundred crowns as a present, he returned to Metz with three captains who were disguised as grey friars. This monk was so successful, too, in his appeals to the other monks, that, by dint of promises of abbeys and what not, he won them all over to his side, and within three weeks, he had introduced twenty more soldiers in the ecclesiastical garb without exciting the least suspicion.

Vieilleville, however, who was always on the alert, heard through his Luxemburg spies, that the Queen of Hungary had reinforced the garrison of Thionville by 1,200 sharpshooters and 800 horse, and that the Comte de Mègue had ordered 20,000 loaves of bread at least, as if he was meditating some important expedition. He

had also been seen in conversation with two Cordeliers who said that they had come from Brussels.

Vieilleville, accordingly, without saying anything, went with some of his officers to the Monastery of the Cordeliers. He put some questions as to the number of monks, made a personal inspection as far as the nave of the chapel, and saw nothing to excite his suspicion. He then went to the house of the Observants of the same order, and put some fresh questions. He was told that the doorkeeper was at Nivelles for his brother's funeral. He then began to verify the number of monks, and was told that three were out in the town collecting alms.

Vieilleville, in the meanwhile, struck by the scared look and embarrassed attitude of the brothers, had all the doors closed and the rooms searched. In one of them he soon found two sham friars in bed with their coloured pourpoints exposed to view. They were at once seized, and under the threat of being put to the torture, they acknowledged that, in spite of their tonsure, they were

soldiers, and that they had come there by order of the Queen of Hungary, to execute some *coup de main*, but what, they did not know.

Vieilleville then placed the monastery in the charge of one of his captains, ordering him to admit and arrest anyone who wanted to enter it, but to let no one leave. He then went to the gate of the Pont Iffroy, whence he sent word to Madame de Vieilleville not to wait dinner for him. He dismissed all his body-guard, and sent word to Captain Salcède, a southerner, who was keeper of the gate, that he would share his dinner, even if it consisted only of garlic and Spanish radishes. He added that they would take their dinner under the gateway, and that he would not leave until he had seen some one enter whom he was expecting. Perhaps even he should pass the night in the guard-room.

Salcède, much perplexed as to what this could mean, brought down his dinner—which, by the way, was a very good one—and they had hardly finished it when the sentinel announced that two grey friars were coming

along at a good trot on the road from Thionville. Vieilleville at once took up a halberd, as if he was keeping guard over the gate, and, followed by two soldiers, went up to the barrier. The monk, who was doorkeeper in the monastery, arrived in front of his companion, and was surprised to find himself face to face with Vieilleville, who ordered him to go, with his companion, into Salcède's room. Vieilleville followed them, and having dismissed all eye-witnesses, he looked him straight in the face and said: "So, you hypocrite, you have been holding a confabulation with the Comte de Mègue! You will have to tell me the whole truth, or die this very moment. If you confess the whole truth, I will spare your life, even if you have been conspiring against mine. It is no use thinking of going back to your monastery, for it is full of soldiers, and all the monks are prisoners, while some of them have confessed that they are not monks at all, but soldiers sent by the Queen of Hungary. So tell me the truth at once, or else shrive one another, for you will both have to die!"

The monk alarmed at this, but attempting to put Vieilleville off with a ruse, threw himself at his feet, and declared that these sham monks were relatives of his who had slain their brother in order to inherit his property, and that he had brought them into Metz disguised as friars, so as to save them from being hung. No sooner had he said this, than Captain Damezan brought word that since Vieilleville had withdrawn from the gate, six other so-called friars had arrived, wearing uniform under their monkish robes.

“I suppose,” said Vieilleville to the door-keeper, “that they have killed their brother too? I swear by the living God that if you do not at once tell me what all this means, I will make you pay for it before you are put to death.”

He then ordered Captain Ryolas to take him and bind him with cords before putting him to the question. The friar, finding that the whole of his treachery was discovered, threw himself at Vieilleville's feet and promised to reveal the whole truth to

him if his life was spared. This promise being repeated, he informed Vieilleville that the enterprise was to be carried out that same evening; that the Comte de Mègue was then six leagues from Metz; that he would arrive at nightfall; and that, advised by fire breaking out in the town, he would make an attack upon the gate of the Pont Iffroy about nine o'clock. The men disguised as monks were to be on the ramparts to assist the assailants, who were bringing with them twelve cart loads of ladders, which, it had been carefully ascertained, were of the right length.

Vieilleville was not long in deciding what to do. After having had the monks put under lock and key, he sent for M. de Guyencourt, his lieutenant, and told him to have the whole of his company mounted on their horses at once, and he transmitted the same orders to M. d'Épinay and the Chevalier de Lancque. He then ordered the Captains St. Marie and St. Colombe to take three hundred arquebusiers and twenty drummers, and the Captains La Cahusière and La Mothe-

Gondrin to assemble two hundred men bearing halberds : the whole of them to meet at the gate of the Pont Iffroy, and to be ready to follow him.

While these preparations were in progress, Vieilleville ordered his new sergeant-major, Captain St. Chamans, who was not less able and more trustworthy than his predecessor, to collect about fifty faggots over four of the principal gates and set fire to them between six and seven, neither sooner nor later. The fact of the garrison being so suddenly called to arms, excited much wonder in the town, but the troops soon reached their place of rendezvous, where they found Vieilleville awaiting them, mounted upon his horse Ivoy, and surrounded by ten or twelve gentlemen of his suite. He told them to march quickly and with as little noise as possible, and in less than four hours he would show them something very wonderful, if it so pleased Providence.

They then started in the direction of La Dompchamp, and, on the way, Vieilleville informed them of the plot laid by the

Imperialists, and of his own plan for foiling it.

Upon reaching the castle, he sent for Captain La Plante, who was the best guide to be found between Metz and Brussels, speaking Walloon, Flemish, and Spanish, and asked him to take them to a wood where he could place his troops in ambush. La Plante took them to a long and deep wood, at the extremity of which, nearest to Metz, there was a large village. Vieilleville made a careful reconnoissance of the place, as well as of the avenues and roads leading out of it, after which he placed M. de Guyencourt at the entrance to the wood with one half of his company, and the other at some distance off, allotting fifty arquebusiers and four drummers to each troop. He posted in the village one hundred and fifty arquebusiers and eight drummers, who were to emerge from the rear of the houses, and fifty arquebusiers and one hundred javelin men in a narrow road between the forest and the village. He also placed M. d'Epinay with half his company a little further on, and M. de Thevalle with

the other half elsewhere, so that when the enemy arrived from the direction of Thionville, they could not go a thousand paces without being surrounded, while the din of the drums would so confuse them that they would not know where they were, and would think that they had got the whole garrison attacking them.

These things being so ordered, La Plante was sent to reconnoitre, and in the course of an hour he returned to announce that the enemy was advancing in the plain. The vanguard was soon in the wood, but Vieilleville's troops were well concealed, and could hear the men talking to each other, and boasting of what a fine time of it they would have in Metz. The main body followed, and the Comte de Mègue, who was with the force, pressed them to go forward more quickly, saying that he had seen the signal fires in Metz. When the whole force was well advanced into the wood, M. de Guyencourt, who was upon the flank, advanced at full gallop with his troop, shouting, "France! France! Vieilleville! Charge!"

The nobles of the Imperial force, taken by surprise, called to their valets to come and fasten on their armour, but in the meanwhile the arquebuss men started up out of the wood and shot them down like rabbits. The halberd men rushed in and prevented them from rallying, and the drums made such a din that they could not hear one another speak. The Spanish arquebuss men who were in front turned round and tried to come to the relief of the nobles, but they were taken in ambuscade and obliged to defend themselves. The din of the drums continued, and the Comte de Mègue, not knowing what he was about, exclaimed, "By heavens! we are betrayed!"

It was in vain that he endeavoured to resist, for the enemy headed him in every direction, and there was a general flight through the wood. The Imperialists left 1145 men dead on the ground and a great number of prisoners, while the French loss was only fifteen. M. de Mègue once more succeeded in making his escape.

It was about midnight when Vieilleville

sent two men into Metz to announce his victory and return. One of them was to wake up the canons of the cathedral, so that public thanks might be offered to God; while the other was to advise his wife and daughter. Both of them got up and went to the cathedral, accompanied by the greater part of the population. The whole town was astir and much overjoyed; while, despite the lateness of the hour, many of the burghesses spread a table before their doors and made the passers-by drink after the fashion of their country, which is called "carrouse."

This victory occurred on a Thursday in October, 1555, and on the following day the Comte de Mègue sent a trumpeter to treat as to the prisoners. Vieilleville sent for the messenger and asked him whether his master had not had enough of monks. Upon the man hesitating to answer, Vieilleville bade him not be afraid to speak, but to unloose his tongue; whereupon the messenger exclaimed:—"In sooth, we have; accursed be they, and may the devil take

them when they concern themselves with aught else but praying to God. Monsieur le Comte, my master, is in bed ill, and he said this morning, before I started, that it was so many men lost to undertake anything against that lion-fox Vieilleville.”

The trumpeter then produced a list of gentlemen, friends of M. de Mègue and the Queen of Hungary, in order to ascertain whether they were among the prisoners. Vieilleville had the whole of the latter drawn up in order between his own men, the name of each being called out while the trumpeter from M. de Mègue went down the ranks. But not one of them answered. So it was clear that they had all been killed, and the trumpeter shed tears as he said how many loyal servitors the Queen and M. de Mègue had lost.

While all this was taking place, the guilty friars had been kept in close confinement to mourn over their sins until their fate was decided upon.

They sent to remind Vieilleville of his promises, which did not, however, ex-

tend to the soldiers disguised as monks, whom, according to the usages of war, he might have had hung as spies. But he would not do this, as, after all, they had only acted in obedience to orders. He could not well let them off scot-free, so he made them march from the Cathedral, three and three, bareheaded, with a white staff in their hands, wearing the long robe of the grey friars, carrying their frock under their arms as the canons did their "aulemuse," and go through the town, under the escort of the archers, as far as the gate of Pont Iffroy, whither they were preceded by a trumpeter on horseback, who proclaimed at each crossway, in a loud voice:—

“Here are the monks of the Queen of Hungary, who were to have taken this city by surprise and despoiled it. But by God’s grace they were forestalled, and for this, their treacherous attempt, they are for ever banished from the city of Metz and the district belonging to it, under pain, if they are caught, of being hung and garrotted.”

The trumpeter of the Comte de Mègue had been detained in order that he might be a witness of the spectacle, and give an account of it to his master.*

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., page 376.



CHAPTER VI.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF METZ.
—CARDINAL DE LÉNONCOURT.—JOURNEY
OF VIEILLEVILLE TO THE COURT.—THE
SUITORS OF MADEMOISELLE DE VIEILLE-
VILLE.



THREE days after the defeat of the Comte de Mègue, Vieilleville sent to the King, in order to give him a full account of what had occurred, the faithful Duplessis, his vassal, who was born close to Duretal. He also applied, through Duplessis, for two months' leave of absence, the only reason he alleged being that he had not seen the King for three years, and that he was desirous of thanking him for his favours. During this period, the King had conferred upon him the Order of St. Michael; at the death of M. de Humières, he had promoted him to the command of his company, and after that he had made M. d'Epinay

commander of light horse, all this being done in opposition to the Constable. The latter, in fact, anticipating the intentions of the King when M. de Humières fell ill, had got the young Dauphin to ask the King that the company should be handed over from father to son, putting him up to say that this was his first request. The King, whose paternal instincts were thus appealed to, was inclined to give way, but he held firm for the sake of Vieilleville. It was the same with the Order of St. Michael, though the Constable maintained that it was contrary to usage to send it to persons who were absent, unless they were either foreigners or Princes.*

Several other reasons also induced Vieilleville to proceed to Court. In spite of his promises to the friars, he could not make up his mind to spare their lives, and, by a very subtle train of reasoning, he argued to himself

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxx., pages 313 and 347.—They continued, however, to remain on friendly terms, as we learn by a letter from Vieilleville to the Constable, in which he gives him an account of the works he is executing, and asks him for a good engineer.—"Clair.," page 344, folio 985.

that as his successor would have given no promise to them, his hands would be free. He also had in his mind a scheme for providing Metz with a citadel and a whole system of fortifications which would render it impregnable, for the hurried works carried out by the Duc de Guise were quite insufficient to protect it. Metz was the boulevard of France against the Empire, the sole guarantee of security for the recent conquests which had been made, and it was at the mercy of a *coup de main*. In order to obtain the necessary money, in the embarrassed condition of the exchequer, his presence at Court was indispensable, while his third reason for going was of a more complex character, and had to do with the misunderstandings between himself and the Cardinal - Archbishop de Lénoncourt, the origin of which was comparatively ancient.*

The city of Metz had from time immemorial been governed by an upper bourgeoisie, or a burgher nobility, at the head of which were "seven races" of gentlemen, so

* "Vieilleville," vol xxx., page 409.

called, very wealthy, and of very ancient birth, who held all the chief offices of the city. These families, which bore the name of "parraiges," exercised the most tyrannical authority over the rest of the people, and they were so puffed up with their own greatness that when one of their sons was baptized, his godfathers and godmothers emitted their wish that he might once in his life be Alderman of Metz, or at all events King of France.

The middle-class burghers were somewhat jealous of this pre-eminence, but they had no means of destroying it, as the burgo-master and his council had complete control over the electors, and only admitted their own friends. If any of the inhabitants sought to appeal to the Imperial Chamber at Spire, the "seven" formed a league against him, and were not satisfied until they had ruined him.

Only one person had, up to the time of the Conquest, dared to withstand the "parraiges," and this was Cardinal de Lénoncourt, who was, though small of stature, very

ambitious, of a turbulent and domineering temper, and very determined to have his own way. As he failed to domineer over this ancient and strongly-constituted body, he had, out of ill temper, thrown in his lot with the middle-class burghers, by the aid of whom he had created the French party in Metz. When the city was captured by the King, he regarded himself as the master, and, owing to the weakness of M. de Gonor and the consternation of the burghers, he did pretty much as he pleased. When the time came for the creation of the thirteen — so called from their number — he chose the persons whom he pleased, and he assigned to the head alderman as councillors and assessors four of the canons of the cathedral.*

When Vieilleville succeeded M. de Gonor, matters assumed a very different aspect. The former, not being the man to brook any one sharing power or responsibility with

* "Histoire Générale de Metz," by the Benedictines of the Congregation of St. Vanne, published by J. B. Collignon, Metz, 1775, vol. iii., page 59.

him,* told the Bishop to confine himself to the management of ecclesiastical affairs when he attempted to interfere, and the Bishop then reverted to the "parraiges," with which he was, in fact, connected by birth. The latter overlooked the past, and formed an alliance with him in order to jointly oppose the plans of the Governor. There ensued a marked hostility against him, which hampered his action in a hundred ways, and Vieilleville, much irritated, was only waiting for a favourable opportunity to annihilate this party. This opportunity was not long in coming, and it was furnished by the nomination of burgomaster, or head alderman, which took place every year with great pomp, all classes of the citizens

* We see, by the instructions addressed to Vieilleville, Lénoncourt and Marillac, from June 13th to 21st, 1553, and by the letters of MM. de Vieilleville, de Vannes, and de Lénoncourt, to the Constable, with the replies of the last named in June, July, and August, 1553, that M. de Lénoncourt had much to do with the relations between Metz and the German Princes.—"Clair," pages 346 and 347. See also in "Fontanieu," pages 265 and 266, the collection of letters from the King and M. de Lorraine to M. de Vieilleville, with his answers, during the same period.

sharing in it. The populace indulged in noisy demonstrations of "delight and drunkenness." There were fireworks and music in the streets, the bells were rung, especially the big bell, *La Murette*, which belonged to the town, and not, as the others did, to the Canons and Chapter. After the election at the Town Hall, the newly-elected burgomaster, as he returned to his residence, scattered handfuls of silver about the streets and into the shops, while the people shouted, "Vive Monsieur le Maistre Eschevin!"

But Vieilleville, instead of allowing the gentlemen of the seven "parraiges" to elect the Sieur de Maleroy as their burgomaster, insisted upon their accepting one Michel Brailon, who was devoted to the French cause; and though they protested against being thus deprived of their privileges, they all attended the banquet which he gave on the following day, the only conspicuous absentee being Cardinal de Lénoncourt, uncle of the Sieur de Maleroy, whose election Vieilleville had refused to recognize.

The Cardinal, hoping that by going to Fontainebleau and intriguing with the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine, who were the bitterest opponents of Vieilleville, he would be able to gain the King's ear, preceded him there; but Henri was not disposed to listen to his complaints, and granted Vieilleville the leave of absence which he applied for, nominating M. de la Chapelle-Biron deputy-governor of the city in his absence. Vieilleville, having installed him into office, and given him special instructions with regard to the trial of the grey friars, then started for Fontainebleau, and after a journey lasting a week, he reached that place, being met by the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon and Marshal de St. André, whom the King had sent to greet him. The King received him with the utmost cordiality, and invested him with the Order of St. Michael. Not only that, but when the dispute between Vieilleville and the Cardinal de Lénoncourt was submitted to the King, the latter attending at Court to present his own case, Henri cut the matter very short by saying, "I approve of everything

done by M. de Vieilleville in his government of Metz, and declare that all his actions redound to the welfare and profit of my State, to the glory of my Crown, and to the maintenance of my friendship with the Princes and States of the Empire." So Cardinal de Lénoncourt withdrew in high dudgeon, and Vieilleville spent some little time at Court; during which period the marriage of his second daughter, who had been brought up in the Queen's household, with M. de Duilly, the son of the Seneschal of Lorraine, was celebrated. Vieilleville himself would have preferred that his daughter should marry the young Comte de Sault, a native of Provence, whom he had attached to his suite, and for whom he had a great partiality. The Court influences, however, were all brought to bear in favour of M. de Duilly, who had also arrived at Court with his father the Seneschal, and Vieilleville, rather than offend the Princess Claude, who begged him to give way, allowed his daughter to follow the bent of her own inclinations. All he asked was that the King should send for the

Comte de Sault, and inform him that it was by his Majesty's desire that Vieilleville had ceased to insist upon the marriage taking place, and this Henri agreed to do. The King made him a present of ten thousand crowns to compensate him for his disappointment, and the Comte de Sault, though rather vexed at first, consoled himself with the thought that he had, at all events, received a handsome present, and returned to Provence, leaving his rival to be affianced to M. de Duilly by the Archbishop of Vienne, Grand Almoner of France, the ceremony taking place in the Queen's apartment, and in the presence of all the Court.* The marriage was celebrated a few days later, and before that day the King took part in eight tilting matches. As soon as the festivities in connection with the wedding were over, and Lent had begun, the King once more devoted his attention to affairs of State, and Vieilleville deemed the opportunity a

* As M. de Duilly was strongly accused of being a Protestant, this marriage, according to Brantôme, made many people think that Vieilleville had tendencies that way.

favourable one for asking the King to provide the money required for the fortifying of Metz.* The King readily assented to his proposal, but the difficulty was to find the forty-four thousand pounds which Vieilleville estimated would be necessary. The King, however, determined that they should be forthcoming, and he negotiated a loan to that amount through the First President of the Paris Parliament and two wealthy merchants, Marcel and Aubret. A sum of sixteen thousand pounds was paid down at once, to be applied to the fortification of the three towns, Metz, Verdun, and Toul, and to the subsidies of the German Princes.

Vieilleville, accordingly, returned in high good humour to Metz, where, in his absence, the unhappy grey friars had been put to death by his deputy, in spite of the promise which he had given them that their lives should be spared. His satisfaction, however, was not of long duration, for he had scarcely got back when he discovered a serious con-

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxxi., pages 38—56.

spiracy which had been commenced in his absence to seize Metz for the Regent of the Queen of Hungary, and he had no sooner, with his customary subtlety, foiled this and had the leaders put to death than he fell ill. This was in the winter of 1557, and for several months he laid between life and death, while the deputies who were sent to act in his place were so inefficient that the King at last acceded to the prayer of Vieilleville's principal officers and appointed his son-in-law, M. d'Epinay, to fill the post until he should recover. This he did not do for a considerable period, though as the spring advanced he was able to leave his bed and be moved, by slow stages, for his domain of Duretal. He remained there all the summer, and in the early part of the autumn he felt himself well enough to return to Metz. His presence was urgently needed there, as during his absence great disorder had prevailed among the undisciplined troops from Champagne and Picardy, which had been sent to take the place of the veteran forces despatched to the Duc de Guise in Italy.

Several acts of mutiny had been committed, and when Vieilleville returned to Metz he had once more to show the utmost severity, the garrison being literally terror-stricken by the unsparing executions which took place. Those of the leaders of the mutinous legions who had not been put to death then offered their submission, and Vieilleville, after making them take a fresh oath of fidelity to the King, promised them to overlook the past, great rejoicings marking this reconciliation.*

° "Vieilleville," vol. xxxi., pages 95—130.



CHAPTER VII.

CONTINUATION OF THE WAR.—THE TRUCE OF VAUCELLES.—ABDICATION AND DEATH OF CHARLES V.



AFTER the disaster of Metz, Charles V.'s situation seemed a desperate one, with the road to Brussels open and the Flemish provinces unguarded, and he owed his safety to the incapacity of Montmorency, who, instead of following up the victory rested on his oars and allowed the Imperialists to recruit their forces.

“Even before the raising of the siege,” says the Venetian Ambassador Capello, “the Constable had a reputation for pusillanimity, but now he appears to be a regular coward, for he was afraid to follow up a beaten enemy who was in full flight. He was taunted with

his cowardice everywhere, and at the Court, as well as in the public streets, Latin verses were circulated in which his lack of courage were lampooned. Everyone is agreed that there will be no hard fighting as long as he is at the head of the army.”*

Henri II. was about to marry his natural daughter Diane with Horace Farnèse, Duke de Castro, the brother of the Duke of Parma. The Court was engrossed with tournaments, dancing, and other rejoicings, when, at the end of April 1553, it was suddenly ascertained that Charles V. was not dead. In the course of a few months he had raised in the Low Countries a fresh army and had invested Théroouanne, which had been left undefended. Upon the receipt of this news the spirit of the nobles was aroused, and while François de Montmorency and d'Essé Montalembert hastened to get inside Théroouanne, Horace Farnèse left his young wife to go to the relief of Hesdin. But the French reaped the fruit of their heedlessness, for

* Baschet, “Diplomatic Vénitienne,” page 450.

Thérouanne was taken, Montalembert being killed, and Montmorency made prisoner, while Hesdin was carried by assault, and Farnèse, after only a month's wedded life massacred with all the rest of the garrison.*

The Constable still remained inactive, the reason, it was said, being that he was afraid that in an open battle he would make too glaring a display of his incapacity. In spite of this, however, the Imperialists, being very inferior in numbers, did not advance, and the approach of winter soon led to a suspension of hostilities.

In the spring of the following year (1554) they were resumed, King Henri himself collecting an army at Crécy-en-Laonnais, under the command of the Constable and of St. André, and stationing several detachments of it along the frontier. Marienburg capitulated, and the Duc de Nevers penetrated into the district of Liège and La Roche-sur-Yon into the Artois. The King captured Bovine and Dinant, and the army

* "Complainte sur la mort du Duc Horace Farnèse." Joachim du Bellay. Edition of 1573, page 344.

crossed the Meuse and entered Hainault. Binch was burnt and pillaged, and an advance was made on Brussels. The advance was retarded, however, by the siege of Renty, and as he failed to dislodge the Imperialists from their positions, and as disease began to decimate the army, the King lost heart, raised the siege on the 15th of August, and returning to Fontainebleau, disbanded his soldiers.

In the meanwhile, Charles V., too ill to put himself at the head of the troops, followed them in a litter, after having made over the command to Philibert of Savoy. Duke Charles, the father of Philibert, had died at Verceil the year before, having been for eighteen years deprived of his States and compelled to wander through Europe like a chevalier d'industrie. Philibert, aged twenty-five, proved himself a true scion of the House of Savoy. Always in quest of some opportunity for restoring his fallen fortunes by an act of daring, it was he who had carried Hesdin, and though the numerical inferiority of the Imperial forces did not admit of his

risking a battle in the open, he followed the French at a day's march, picking up the stragglers and losing no chance of a skirmish. The siege of Renty having been raised he ravaged the whole of Champagne, while Charles V., whose condition continued to get worse, returned to Brussels.

The same alternations of success and of reverses marked the course of the Italian campaign. Henri II., persevering in the policy of François I., kept two ambassadors at Constantinople to make sure of the co-operation of the Turks.* In the summer of 1553, the two fleets combined, but the frequent quarrels between the leaders paralysed all action.†

* In a letter dated from Rheims, November 23rd, 1552, the King offered Soliman to let his fleet winter at Toulon.—“Négociations avec le Levant,” vol. ii., page 243; “Ribier,” vol. ii., page 408.

† Letter from Baron de la Garde, dated from off Sardinia, July 31st, 1553, and giving an account of their early operations in the Mediterranean. M. de la Garde explains that he has the greatest difficulty in preventing Dragut from ravaging the coasts, and that he cannot stop him altogether.—“Négociations avec le Levant,” vol. ii., page 271; “Ribier,” vol. ii., page 442.

The Turks landed in Calabria, despite the opposition of the French, burning the villages, cutting down the olive-trees and carrying off the peasants. After an endless number of difficulties, the commanders of the two fleets eventually agreed to make a descent upon Corsica, and they captured Bastia.* Bonifacio capitulated; but as Baron de la Garde refused to let the Turks pillage the town, Dragut turned round upon him, seized the spoils and the artillery, together with several of his men, and made off. André Doria thereupon reconquered Corsica in the name of the Emperor.

Around Siena, a desperate struggle was

° In two letters to the King, August 3rd, from Port Hercules, and the Island of Elba, Baron de la Garde, in giving him an account of what has been done, says that he has at last succeeded in getting Dragut to sail with him upon Corsica.—“Ribier,” vol. ii., page 450. See also a letter from M. de Termes, dated August 30th, relating to the Cardinal de Ferrara, the operations in Corsica, and the difficulties which had arisen between the two admirals, together with another from M. de Séves, dated December 31st, speaking of the avidity of Dragut, and of the difficulties which it occasions in the conduct of operations.—“Ribier,” vol. ii., page 452; “Négociations avec le Levant,” vol. ii., page 277.

in progress. The inhabitants made the town over to the French. Termes, Montluc, and Strozzi, in turn, defended it, seconded by the population, notably the female portion, which behaved with true heroism. Receiving no relief from outside, Siena was retaken by the Imperial forces on April 21st, 1555. Piedmont, upon the other hand, valiantly defended by Brissac, without troops or money, remained true to France, and at Rome, the French party succeeded in electing, under the title of Pope Paul IV., the monk Caraffa, who was a sworn enemy of the Spaniards.

In the year 1553, the premature death of Edward VI. gave the throne to the Catholic Mary, and Charles V., seeing in her an adversary of the Protestant doctrine, brought about, after long negociations, a marriage between her and his son Philip of Spain.*

* See, with regard to this marriage, and the difficulties it provoked, the correspondence of Charles V. with his ambassadors in England and France, and with the Bishop of Arras.—“Papiers d’Etat de Granville,” vol. iv., from June 9th, 1553, to August 6th, 1554. See also the marriage contract of Philip and Mary. Ancient French, 3253.

This marriage was very unpopular in England, and Philip, cordially detested by the nation, failed to exercise the smallest influence.*

In the East, Hungary remained in the hands of the Turks, and Soliman's forces were constantly threatening Vienna. Germany, too, was slipping from the Emperor's grasp, and he could not even secure the integrity of his own territory. By a singular irony of fate, the death of his great rival, François I., instead of handing over the whole of Europe to him, as it seemed likely to do, marked the decline of his power; for Henri II., weak-minded though he was, devoid of force of character and energy, succeeded in stirring up Europe against him, and seizing three important towns, which he held, as it were, in the aged Emperor's face.

If, abroad, the enemies of Charles V.

* Letters from Englishmen to Henri II., complaining of the tyranny to which they were subjected, and pointing out to him how he could deliver them from it, May 11th, 1555.—“Brionne,” page 368.

were still in arms, ready to attack him once more, his policy at home had resulted in nothing but ruin, as the condition of the peoples subject to his sway, will testify. Even Spain, his native country, which had been preserved from invasion, had lost, with its free institutions, its ancient energy, and the inhabitants had exhausted the fertility of its soil, and did nothing to develop the growth of industry. Charles V., less wealthy and less popular than the ancient Kings of Aragon and Castille, was reduced to live upon the gold derived from the New World. Italy, subjugated again and again, was only kept in submission by the most odious forms of tyranny, exaction, pillage, prison, and torture. The Emperor's lieutenants, such as d'Avalos, Leyve, Gonzagua, Marignan, Don Pedro of Toledo, the Duke of Alva, and the Marquis de Piadena, were like so many executioners, and under their malignant sway, the beautiful kingdom of Naples, the rich plains of Lombardy, and the brilliant province of Tuscany, were changed into a desert.

In the north, the once prosperous Low Countries saw their towns and villages, like those of Italy, reduced to ruins, their cattle butchered, their inhabitants executed, and their maritime trade destroyed by corsairs. The heretic doctrines of Germany alone saved her, and this was the most cruel rebuff of all for Charles V., who, the ardent promoter of Catholicism, was defeated by the Reformation in his own States, as he was shortly to be in his own family.

The treaty of Passau, imposed on Charles V. by the Protestant Princes, had stipulated that a Diet should assemble within six months to settle the measures to be taken. The Emperor sought to defer this meeting, in the hope that fortune might change, and when he was disappointed in this hope, he sent his brother Ferdinand, being too ill to go himself, to preside at the Diet, which met at Augsburg, in the beginning of 1555. It so happened that Ferdinand, who had already had some differences with Charles V. regarding the succession to the Empire, was very tired

of his yoke,* and having, moreover, need of the services of the Princes in the matter of the Imperial inheritance, he opened the Diet with a declaration that no Council is capable of re-establishing religious liberty, and that it behoves the Council, therefore, to keep clear of all theological questions, and to endeavour to solve existing difficulties by a policy of toleration.

This speech, which was circulated throughout the whole of Germany, came like a thunderclap. Charles V. could not believe his senses, and the Princes hesitated at first to respond to his overtures, fearing that some trap was being laid for them. However, finding that he persevered in this attitude, they took courage, and one by one came to Augsburg, so that the Diet, which, when opened in January, was like a desert, had become very crowded in March. It took

* See the letters from Ferdinand to his sister, Queen Mary of Hungary, to whom he relates the violent outbursts of his brother. He also complained to Charles V. himself. Their answers are also given. — "Correspondance des Kaisers," vol. iii., pages 11—21.

in hand religious affairs, and disposed of them very expeditiously, the Reformed Faith being everywhere placed upon a footing of equality with Catholicism, and the civil power being entrusted in each State with the regulation of matters of doctrine and public worship. This measure, which broke up the unity of the Empire, and the unity of religion, annihilated the political and the religious policy which Charles V. had made his own, and it was upon this that he determined to carry out the project which he had long meditated, and to quit the throne for the cloister.

Negotiations for peace had already been opened several times. Cardinal Pole, the Pope's legate in England, took them up, under the mediation of Queen Mary, in the spring of 1555. There was an exchange of views, but as mutual pretensions rendered the conclusion of peace impossible, it was agreed that there should be a truce of five years, during which all communications by land and sea should be re-established, each sovereign being left in possession of his

conquests.* This having been agreed to, Charles V. did not even await the formal conclusion to put his project into practice.

The idea of descending from the throne and going into retirement with the Hieronymites had first occurred to him on his return from the Tunis expedition, and had never been given up, as he told one of his relatives afterwards.†

The Hieronymites were great favourites of his. Devoted to prayer, to the cultivation of literature, and to singing, this order had recently been founded by some Spanish hermits, under the patronage of St. Jerome, and conformed to the rules of St. Augustin. Very popular in Spain, and enriched by the offerings of the faithful, its many establish-

* The prisoners of war were to be delivered upon payment of a ransom equivalent to three months' pay, except in the cases of François de Montmorency, the Duc de Bouillon, the Duc d'Arsechott, who were of such importance that they were treated with individually. See the verses of Joachim du Bellay.—“Discours au Roi sur la Trêve de Vaucelles,” Edition of 1573, page 172.

† Letter from Laurenço Pires de Tavora to King John III., dated January 16th, 1557, quoted by Miguet in his “Abdication de Charles-Quint,” page 6.

ments, which included vast tracts of land, forests of olives and cedars, and groves of orange and lemon trees, extended from Granada to Lisbon, and from Seville to Saragossa, covering a very picturesque and solitary tract of country. The monks cultivated the land, and pastured their flocks and herds upon the neighbouring mountains, entertaining the numerous pilgrims who came to visit them in the large refectories, where repasts were provided six or seven times a day. The beauty of their singing was celebrated throughout Spain, and the echo of it resounded sweetly in the surrounding country.*

After raising the siege of Metz, where he suffered so much, Charles V. selected for his retreat the monastery of Yuste, in the wooded valley of the Estramadura, called Vera Plasenzia, upon a hill with a southern aspect. Upon the 13th of December, he wrote a confidential letter to his son, in

* Siguenza, quoted by Mignet in his "Abdication de Charles-Quint," page 69.

which he directed him to have built, close to the monastery, a residence suitable for a nobleman and his suite. He then communicated his plans to his sisters, Mary of Hungary, and Eleanor* of Portugal and France, both of whom were very devoted to him.

His increasing infirmities confirmed him in his resolution, and at the death of his mother, Jeanne, who had for the last thirty years been insane, and confined to the castle of Tordesilas—her faithful Spaniards none the less still regarding her as their Queen—removed the last obstacle to his abdication of a throne which he had hitherto occupied on her behalf, he gave public notice of his intentions.

The ceremony of abdication was accordingly prepared, and on the 25th of October, 1555, in the grand saloon of the palace at Brussels, opposite the Assembly House of the States-General, Charles V., dressed in

* Queen Eleanor rejoined Charles V. at Brussels the year after the death of François I.

mourning, and accompanied by his son Philip, his sisters, his nephews and his nieces, came forward, walking with difficulty, leaning with one hand on a stick and with the other on the shoulder of William, Prince of Orange. A deep silence prevailed among those present,* as he took his seat under the Burgundy canopy, and ordered Philibert, of Brussels, to read aloud the Latin declaration, in which he announced his abdication of the Sovereignities of Burgundy and Flanders. When this had been done, he rose, and leaning for support on the Prince of Orange, made a brief speech, in which he reminded his hearers how, forty years before, at the same place and the same hour, his ancestor, the Emperor Maximilian, emancipated him at the age of fifteen, and made him "Lord of himself." He then went over the history of his life, asking pardon for his faults, and declaring that he had always sought to do for the best. Turning towards his son, he

* List of the deputies present at the abdication.—"Re-traite et Mort de Charles-Quint."—Gachard, Introduction, page 184.

pathetically commended to him the care of his States and the defence of the Catholic Faith. Unable to remain standing any longer, he fell back, with a broken voice, into his seat, and the whole assembly manifested its emotion in tears and sobs. Philip then threw himself at his father's feet, and swore that he would continue his work; and after the reply of the States and a speech by Cardinal de Granville, the Queen of Hungary resigned the post of Governor of Flanders, and declared that, being exhausted by disease, and tired of exercising authority after twenty-four years of difficult but sagacious government, she had determined to follow her brother to Spain, and devote the rest of her days to the service of God.

Upon the 16th of January, the Emperor abdicated the kingdoms of Castille, Aragon, and Sicily, with their dependencies, and his reason for retaining the Imperial Crown for a short time was, that Ferdinand might select the favourable moment for securing his own election. Since the treaty of Passau, and the rescript of Augsburg, Charles V

had, for conscience' sake, taken no part in the conduct of Imperial affairs, and before leaving the Low Countries, he sent his abdication to his brother through the Prince of Orange.

Upon the completion of these ceremonies, Charles V. retired to a small house which he possessed at the extremity of the Park, near the Porte de Louvain, being anxious to give some advice to his son as to the conduct of affairs. It was there, after the truce of Vaucelles, that he received a visit from Gaspard de Coligny, who had been sent with the document to Brussels in order that it might be ratified by the two Sovereigns.

Coligny had first gone to Peronne, to form an escort consisting of a thousand horse; but the Chevalier de Bossu, who had been sent to meet him at Cambrai, begged him to reduce it considerably, as, owing to the assembly of the States-General at Brussels, it would be impossible to accommodate so many people. This he accordingly did, and reached Brussels on the 25th of March, 1556.

Soon after, he went to the Palace for the royal reception. The saloon adjoining the chapel had been hung with tapestry representing the battle of Pavia, the capture of François I., and his embarking for Spain. The French were very indignant at this, but said nothing, though on the following day, after mass in the chapel, the jester Brusquet had his revenge, for, just as King Philip was proceeding to the altar, to swear fidelity to the truce, Brusquet cried with a loud voice, "Largess! Largess!" and threw pieces of money about. The company assembled thought that it would be only polite to rush and pick them up, while the King, taken by surprise, asked what it all meant. When Coligny explained that it was the jester who had done this, there was a general and hearty laugh.*

Upon Palm Sunday, Coligny took the

* Another trick which Brusquet played was at the dinner. Having obtained the King's permission to play a joke, he jumped on to the table, rolled himself up in the table cloth, and made off, with the plate and all, making a profound bow, and saying, "Many thanks!"

treaty to the Emperor, in his small house near the Porte de Louvain. After having passed through the ante room, twenty-four feet square, which was filled with nobles, he entered the Emperor's study, which was a little larger, and in which he found Charles V., with a bad attack of gout, seated in an invalid chair, attired in mourning, with a table covered with black cloth before him. Charles received him very courteously, and, though his half-paralysed hands could scarcely open the French King's letter, he declined the assistance of the Bishop of Arras, who was standing behind his chair, saying that he would not be prevented fulfilling his "duty towards the King his brother."

Having read the letter, he inquired very graciously after the King's health, and said that he was proud of being descended from his house through Mary of Burgundy. When told that Henri II. had already white hair, he said that he remembered how, when he was of the same age, he discovered his first white hairs while being curled and perfumed

at Naples, "to secure the admiration of the ladies," upon his return from Tunis. He tried to get rid of them, but finding a few days afterwards that there were three times as many, he gave it up.*

Charles V. would have liked to have seen his brother for the last time, his brotherly feelings of affection being revived at the moment of departure.† Ferdinand could not well leave Germany, but he sent his son, the eldest, Maximilian, King of Bohemia, being already at Brussels.

Charles V. bade them all good-bye on the 5th of August, Philip accompanying him as far as Ghent, where they parted on the 28th, never to meet again. Charles, accompanied by his two sisters, embarked at Flushing upon a vessel of the Low Countries squadron,

* "Voyage de l'amiral devant l'Empereur et le Roy Philippe pour la ratification de la Trêve de Vaucelles."—Bibliothèque du Roi; Colbert, in octavo, vol. xvi., folio 42. This narrative, wrongly mentioned as unpublished by the "Archives Curieuses de France," is to be found in "Ribier," vol. ii., page 635.

† Letter from Charles V. to Ferdinand.—"Lanz," vol. iii., page 693.

which was to escort them to Spain.* Detained by bad weather upon the Zeland sandbanks, the fleet did not leave the Channel till the 22nd of September, reaching the port of Loredo, in Biscay, on the 28th. The two Queens disembarked at Santander, and rejoined their brother the next day.

King Philip had already written to his sister, Dona Juana, who was acting as Regent in his absence, with regard to his father's reception; but, in accordance with the traditions of Spanish dilatoriness, nothing was ready, and Charles was much displeased.

He was some time in making his way to Valladolid, the country in the north of Old Castille being so denuded of all resources that the Emperor and his suite could not travel many leagues a day.

Charles had declined all official receptions upon the way, but he found the roads crowded with nobles and peasants who had

* Enumeration of the fifty-six vessels which escorted Charles V. to Spain.—“Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint.”—Gachard, Introduction, page 224.

come to see him for the last time. His grandson, Don Carlos, came to meet him at Cabezon, and, in the course of the conversation which they had, the aged Emperor was much struck by his vehemence, undiscipline, and haughty disposition. He could not bring himself to comply with any of the rules of etiquette, and it was repugnant to him even to stand bareheaded. His ferocity displayed itself, even in early youth, and he found pleasure in roasting hares and other animals alive. The Emperor was much troubled at finding how badly this lad had been brought up.*

At Valladolid he was met by his daughter and the general of the Hieronymites, accompanied by some of the monks, who had come to take his orders with regard to the religious service.

On the 4th of November, at 3.30 p.m., he left the town, and would not allow any of the *grandees* to accompany him beyond the El

* "Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint," vol. i., pages 9—18 ; "Retiro Estancio," quoted by Mignet, pages 142—152.

Campo Gate. His two sisters were to re-join him later, and, as his cortége entered upon the mountain paths, he said to his servitors :—

“Please God, I shall not be troubled with any more visits or receptions.”

The last part of his journey was very fatiguing. The road, if it could be called one, was intersected by impetuous torrents, which formed regular ravines, and the inhabitants had to come out with picks and spades to make it passable. Others helped to carry the Emperor’s litter, and at certain points they had to place him in a chair, or even carry him upon their shoulders. Reaching the summit of the pass, whence the Vera de Plasencia was visible, he turned round and looked northward, over the gorge which they had just come through, and said :—

“The only other pass I shall journey through will be that of death.”

The descent was less tiring than the ascent, and the Emperor reached the castle of the Count d’Oropesa, at Jarandilla, in good time, on the 12th of November, remaining

there for three months, until his residence at Yuste was ready for him. It was not until the 3rd of February, 1557, that he took a sorrowful leave of the nobles who had accompanied him from Brussels, and who were not to follow him any further. His litter, accompanied by his host, a few of his most intimate friends, and followed by his household,* arrived, in less than an hour, at the place where he was to end his days.

This residence was not, as was for a long time said, monastic in its austerity. The house was composed of two storeys, with four rooms on each, divided by a passage; and it was built upon very steep ground, adjoining the north side of the church, with a view to the south over the valley and mountain. Upon each side of the house, two open-air terraces, raised to the height of the first floor, formed covered galleries, supported by pillars, for the ground floor apartments.

* See the list of the servitors whom Charles V. kept with him upon entering Yuste.—“Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint,” page 111.

Charles V. lived in the upper storey, and his rooms communicated with the monastery church by means of a glass passage and a door upon the level of the high altar, so that when he was ill he could hear mass, and even see the officiating priest, without leaving his bed. He could also communicate with the monks through the choir, without coming out of his house. A large walled garden extended to the edge of the forest of oak and chestnut which covered the mountain. Two cows, the milk of which supplied his table, were allowed to browse in the garden, and there was a pond of running water, which contained the fish required for his kitchen.

The whole house, though hung with black drapery, in token of mourning, was luxuriously furnished with Turkey and Acaraz carpets, canopies of cloth and velvet, walnut-wood chairs, delicately carved and studded with gilt nails, luxurious beds and arm-chairs covered with black velvet, and two chairs, specially made to carry the Emperor about in, while the table and toilet services were in silver and gold, and the linen of the finest

description. There were fifty servants, and eight mules were kept solely for the conveyance of provisions.* The house contained many works of art as well, including the portraits of the whole of his family by Titian, of whom he was a warm admirer and patron, and that painter's celebrated picture—the Trinity—now in the Escorial, together with delicately carved crucifixes, reliquaries, and splendid tapestry. Then, in accordance with the custom of the day, there were talismans, supposed to be endowed with curative properties; encrusted stones, which would cure gout; bracelets and gold rings, which were sovereign remedies for cramp; a philosopher's stone, and several bezoar stones brought from the East.†

It was here that Charles passed the last years of his life, but he did not, as has been said, spend them in the company of the

* Charles V. was a large eater, and his table was always very well served. Once, at Yuste, he tried the monk's fare, but that was the last as well as the first time.

† Inventory of the things which Charles V. took with him from the Low Countries to Spain.

monks, joining in strange ceremonies, and placing himself while still alive in his coffin, to have the funeral service read over him.* He led a life entirely independent of and apart from the monks. He selected from among them his confessor, his reader, and his three preachers. He was very fond of hearing the monks sing, and he loaded the Order with gifts; but he made them feel the weight of his authority. Having been informed that when the poor inhabitants of the neighbour-

* With reference to this tradition, Fray Martin de Angelo, Father Siguenza, and a third monk, whose MS. is in the archives at Brussels, relate the fact, as being eye-witnesses; while neither the majordomo, Quijada, nor the secretary, Gaztelu, nor the doctor, Mathys, make the slightest mention of it in their correspondence or in their reports to King Philip and the Queen Regent, either before or after his death. These contradictory statements are, however, reconcilable, if we admit, with M. Gachard and Mr. Stirling (the "Cloister Life of the Emperor Charles V."), and, in opposition to M. Mignet, that the ceremony really took place, but without any of the dramatic surroundings described. The monks themselves say that Charles V., after being present at a service in memory of his parent's defunct wife, had one celebrated for himself, and his household may not have thought the fact worth special mention. — See Gachard's "Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint," vol. i., page 175; and Mignet's "Abdication," page 17.

hood came to obtain alms, the monks amused themselves by conversing with the young women, he ordered that the grain, food, and other gifts should be taken round into the villages, and he had public proclamation made forbidding any woman to come within two cross-bows' range of the monastery.* The monks invariably trembled in his presence; and the first time he came into the church they were so troubled that they could not sprinkle him with the holy water.

Charles V. had a keen appreciation of the beauties of nature, and he was able, once freed from the cares of politics, to satisfy his fondness for all that related to art and literature. The western terrace of his residence was his favourite resort, and he had it planted with an orange grove and plenty of creepers, while a small waterfall added to the picturesque character of this terrace, where the Emperor liked to sit and watch the sunset, walking down to the garden below when the gout allowed him to use his legs.

* "Sandoval," page 827.

His intention was to erect an oratory above the terrace, and he sketched the plans of a building close by for the accommodation of his son when he came to see him.

The room which he used of a day had a magnificent view over the valley, and faced full south. It was in this room that he studied and received his numerous visitors; and he delighted in his library, which was filled with works of science, warfare, Christian philosophy, religion, and romances of chivalry, a great number of which had been written or translated by his orders. He took a deep interest in mechanics and astronomy, and the learned engineer, Giovanni Torriano, constructed in his presence clocks of all sizes—the smallest would now be called watches—Charles himself working under his directions. He had, too, in his study, mathematical instruments for taking levels and measuring distances; telescopes for examining the stars, a sea-chart, given him by Prince Doria, and maps of Italy, Spain, Flanders, Germany, Constantinople, and India, to enable him to follow the move-

ments of the different armies. But his most interesting occupation, no doubt, was the compilation of Memoirs, which have not, unfortunately, come down to us. He says: "I have related all my enterprises, with their causes and motives"; and in asking Father Francis de Borza, his confessor, whether he could be accused of vanity in writing them, he said that his sole object was to re-establish historical truth.*

The monastery of Yuste, formerly so silent and lifeless, had become a centre of movement and activity. Carriers were constantly coming and going, and, except during the first few days, when he seemed charmed at being delivered from the burden of business, he occupied himself with the utmost interest in all that was going on.† His

* M. Gachard, in two learned dissertations upon the "Mémoires de Charles-Quint," drew the reasonable conclusion that they were contained in a large black velvet portfolio, which, at his death, was sent to his daughter, the Regent of Spain, and then to Philip II. According to this, it was Philip who had them burnt.—"Bulletin de l'Académie de Bruxelles," vol. xii., pages 29 and 38; "Académie Royale de Belgique," vol. xxi.; "Des Bulletins," No. 6.

† "His Majesty," writes the majordomo Quijada, on

correspondence with Philip II. was uninterrupted, and he followed both home and foreign affairs with constant anxiety, sustaining his son with his advice; while, strangely enough, it was invariably the father, old and ill as he was, who was in favour of the bolder course. But, much as he was pressed to do so, he declined resolutely to leave his retreat, and the only occasion upon which his resolution seemed somewhat shaken was when the Protestant heresy made a brief appearance in Spain. Writing to the Regent to stimulate her zeal, he hints that if necessary he would contribute in person to the repression and punishment.*

His two sisters almost worshipped him. Eleanor, of a very gentle and submissive disposition, obeyed him blindly, and when on

October 6, 1556, "had such a dislike to business, that he will not hear a word said about it." A few months later, things were very different, as the numerous letters of the Secretaries, Vasquez and Gaztelu, testify.—"Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint," vol. i., pages 42, 45, 47, etc., and vol. ii., pages 458, 484, 490.

° "Sandoval," page 829.—"Retiro Estancio," folio 182, quoted by Mignet, page 363.

the throne of Portugal, as well as that of France, she was his docile instrument. Mary, more energetic by nature and endowed with more political capacity, as well as with more perseverance and mental resource, had served his cause very effectually during her twenty-four years' government of the Low Countries. She often said of him that he was "everything to her after God."

When he was settled at Yuste, Charles instructed Quijada to prepare for them the Castle of Jarandilla, where they were to reside, and two rooms were reserved for them at Yuste. "We will give them iced drinks," said Quijada, "there is nothing they enjoy so much."*

The two Queens thus spent the autumn of 1557 with their brother, discussing with him not only public affairs, but family business, all of which he kept completely under his own control.

As John III., the King of Portugal, kept Dona Maria, his half-sister, the daughter of

* "Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint," vol. i., page 175.

Eleanor, with him at Lisbon, Charles compelled him to send her back to her mother, who wished to see her. The meeting took place at Badajoz, and lasted several days. But the young Princess, who was very proud and unfeeling, showed nothing but aversion for her mother, and, despite her earnest entreaties, left her to go back to Portugal. This was a death blow to her mother, who, taken ill at Truxillo, died a few days afterwards of an attack of asthma, complicated by a violent fever (January 18, 1558).

This terribly affected the Queen of Hungary, who, hitherto so strong-minded and self-contained, could not pronounce her sister's name without bursting into tears. Charles V., himself suffering from an attack of gout in the knee and hip, was so affected that he dreaded an interview with his sister.

“He felt this loss mortally,” wrote Vasquez, and he said to Quijada, “I shall not believe it until I see the Queen of Hungary coming in to me without her sister.”*

* “Retiro Estancio.” folio 170, quoted by Mignet, page 341; “Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint,” vol. i., page 280.

She came on the 3rd of March, at night-fall, and in spite of their efforts to contain themselves, they both burst into tears on meeting.

The presence of the youthful Don Juan, who was placed under the charge of Doña Magdalena, the wife of Quijada, was one of the last pleasurable incidents in the Emperor's life. Residing at Quacos, close to Yuste, Doña Magdalena often brought him this lad, who was born to him by a young woman of Ratisbon, and whose presence always moved him very much. "At times," writes the anonymous monk already quoted, "this boy would walk along before his father, and the Emperor gazed steadfastly on him, but with so much majesty and circumspection, that no one would ever have guessed his secret. Once or twice the lad entered his apartments, and the Emperor spoke to him as he might have done to any of the other lads who came and went."*

* "Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint," vol. ii., Preface, page iv. It is known that he recognized his birth in his will and provided for his future, warmly recommending him to the care of Philip II.

The Emperor's health was declining daily, and he soon had a succession of delirious attacks, followed by fits of fainting, which foreshadowed the end. His resignation and force of character never abandoned him, and when he came to again he recovered all his self-command, nor did he ever cease to take an interest in Spain and in the affairs of his own family.

He spoke of his approaching end with the utmost calm, but, dreading a painful scene, he would not again see his sister Mary, nor his daughter Juana, despite their urgent entreaties. His regular attendants were the only persons near him, except the monks, who exhorted him to prepare for death, and sustained him with their prayers and the ceremonies of the church, which he had always piously and faithfully observed. After his death, his attendants found close to his bed two scourges quite worn out, close to a carved crucifix, which had been held by the Empress when at the point of death.*

* Siguenza relates that during the two seasons of Lent which he passed at Yuste, the Emperor, on every Friday,

It was upon this crucifix that he, too, wished to draw his last breath. It never left his hands, and after several days of terrible pain and anguish, he pressed it to his lips for the last time, this being at about two in the morning of September 21st.

Queen Mary followed him at a few days' interval, and thus was unable to carry out the promise he had extracted from her that she would return to the Low Countries and resume the governorship, in order to relieve King Philip.

Charles V. was one of the most original and powerful personages of his time. The son of a woman who was deranged in her mind, subject as a boy to attacks of epilepsy and violent fever, and, from the time he reached man's estate, to frequent attacks of

went up into the choir, and extinguishing the taper he had in his hand, and praying "like a valiant soldier of Christ, macerated the flesh, and scourged himself with the rest of the monks." He even scourged himself with such force that he wore out the ends of the thong. His whips of discipline were handed down to his son.—"Re-traite et Mort de Charles-Quint," vol. ii., Preface, pages 6 and 8.

gout,* he was endowed with a sombre genius in keeping with his uneasy temperament—a strange compound of politician, theocrat, and mystic.

The politician was the first to develop, and before he was twenty he had won the battle of the Empire, and had displayed the ability of a practised strategist, in the most difficult circumstances. The struggles of the Reformation developed the theocratic side of his character, and, when brought face to face with the uprising of the individual conscience, his whole soul was set upon a theory of absolute unity—a theory which aggrandized his conceptions, but sterilized them.† Deriving his principle of action from the absolute and the abstract, he was lacking in that knowledge of character and influence

° “Correspondance de l'Empéreur Maximilien avec Marguerite d'Autriche” (1509—1519), vol. i., pages 145—245.—“Journal des Voyages de Vandenesse,” speaking of the epilepsy and fevers; “Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint,” Introduction, p. 12.

† Charles V., it is true, was inclined to usurp the place of the Head of the Church; but it is true that he filled it far better than any of the Popes of his day.

over men which holds so important a place in the art of leading them. His authority was his only mainstay, and that became as rigid and implacable as the dogmatism which enshrouded it. The supremacy of the end implied indifference to the means, and there was no crime which Charles V. could not, in his own eyes, justifiably commit; for he was only executing a sovereign decree, and reverses did not dispirit him, for was he not above them? The workman of an hour, engaged upon a work that was eternal, could neither appreciate the vicissitudes of it, nor grasp the aspect of it as a whole. While the exclusively personal despotism of François I. followed the promptings of nature, and was, so to speak, human in its character, that of Charles V., impassable and cold as his theory, calculated, intentional and dogmatic, placed him in a world apart, where he stood alone, an enigma to others if not to himself.

The danger of a superhuman tyranny of this kind is that it has no permanent hold upon men; and so this silent despot, who sought to impose his yoke as the incarnation

of what was unchangeable, inspired no other feeling than that of horror; and his victories were only the forerunners of defeats, his work not establishing itself anywhere, and crumbling to dust with him. It was doubtless this feeling, more than anything else, which drove him into the Monastery of Yuste; but he left the arena with dignity, and the gentle, luminous calm of his declining days is not the least curious feature in his character and life. There must, too, despite the rigour of his theocratic ideas, have been a depth of tenderness and mysticism in him, for monastic solitude had always had an attraction for him; and amid the vicissitudes of his stormy existence, upon his accession to the Imperial throne, his coronation in Italy, his expeditions to the African coast, as well as after the death of a dearly-loved wife, he sought advice and consolation, not among his own relations, but in the cloister. It is said that at Algiers, during that terrible night when the tempest, breaking the anchors of his vessels, and inundating his camp, threatened him and his army with

a miserable death, he walked about among the grandees, attired in a long white mantle, repeating, in his anguish, "*Fiat voluntas tua!*" And then, as if suddenly remembering the hymns offered up at midnight in all the monasteries, he added, with a smile on his face, "Be of good cheer! In an hour all the monks and nuns in Spain will be praying for us."*

Such was Charles V., whose glory it is to have represented in history an idea, true or false, malignant or beneficent—at all events, an idea and a general conception of life. This was why Philip II. could say with truth that, even in the tomb, the very shadow of his figure still added to the greatness of his country.†

* "Sandoval," vol. ii., p. 408, quoted by Mignet, page 59.

† "Retraite et Mort de Charles-Quint," vol. i., page 147.



CHAPTER VIII.

GUISE'S CAMPAIGN IN ITALY.—THE DEFEAT OF ST. QUENTIN.—THE VICTORY AT CALAIS.—GRAVELINES.—PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE.—THE SECRET CAUSES OF THE PEACE OF CATEAU-CAMBRESIS.—MARRIAGES AT COURT.—DEATH OF HENRI II.



WHILE Charles V. was passing away at Yuste, Philip II. re-opened the struggle against France which the truce of Vaucelles had for the time suspended, the war recommencing in Italy. The Guises, descended from the house of Anjou, had always claimed the throne of Naples, and so regarded the King of Spain as their personal enemy. Cardinal de Lorraine was constantly intriguing at Rome against the Duke of Alva, the Viceroy of Naples, and it was mainly

through his efforts that Caraffa, a hot-headed old monk, who was bent upon driving the Spaniards out of Italy and restoring to the Papacy the authority which it enjoyed in the Middle Ages, was elected Pope.

Charles V. was much alarmed when the news of this election reached him in his retreat, as he foresaw its dangers. It could not but give rise to protests, and, after a quarrel between the Caraffas, nephews of the Pope, and the Colonnas, who were backed up by the Duke of Alva, the Pope, moved thereto by the Cardinal de Lorraine, concluded a treaty, by the terms of which a French army was to go to Italy and support the Pope.*

Montmorency, who had concluded the truce of Vaucelles, protested against these

* Agreement between the King and the Duke of Ferrara, and declaration of the King with regard to this treaty, Nov. 16, 1555.—“Fontanieu,” pages 277, 278. See also in “Fontanieu,” pages 275—278, the many letters from Caraffa to the King; and in “Béthunes,” 8645, folio 3, a memorandum upon the league between the Pope and the King.

schemes; but it was all in vain, and while Montluc and Strozzi went to support the Pontiff at Rome, without denouncing the truce,* the Duc de Guise, at the head of twenty-five thousand men, marched through Italy, and joining the Duke of Ferrara, his brother-in-law, entered Rome in triumph.

But his triumph was of brief duration, for the Duke of Alva gained over the nephews of the Pope, who proved false to all their promises, and Guise had to withdraw from Rome. The Duke of Alva retook the various towns which had gone over to the enemy, and compelled Guise to sign a treaty of peace. His army was dispersed and nearly annihilated, and he returned in humiliation to France, where great disasters had also occurred.†

° War was only declared on Jan. 31st.

† Powers given to the Duc de Guise to proceed to Italy as Lieutenant-General of the King.—“Béthunes,” 8653, folio 54. Statement of the forces sent to Italy, and negotiations with Switzerland for their passage through that country. Letter of Henry II. to the Pope, apologizing for not leading the army in person.—“Fontanieu,” pages 281, 282, taken from “Béthunes,” 8644, folio 85, etc.

Mary of England, to please her husband, and contrary to the wish of her people, had declared war against France on June 7, 1557.* A body of English troops, landing in the Low Countries, reinforced the Spanish army, and while the French had their attention distracted by an attack on Rocroi, the Duke of Savoy marched on St. Quentin. The town was dismantled and had but a very small garrison, so Coligny and his brother, d'Andelot, garrisoned it in all haste, while St. André and the Prince of Condé made a feint of attacking the enemy near Ham. Unfortunately, the Constable allowed himself to be tempted into making a real attack with inferior forces, and, having failed to secure his retreat, the French army was attacked from the rear by the Spanish cavalry, and the defeat degenerated into a rout. The Constable, St. André, and more than four thousand nobles were taken prisoners, as many being left dead upon the

* Declaration of war by Mary against Henri II.—“Fontanieu,” pages 283, 284.

field of battle. The road to Paris was open, and the Duke of Savoy was anxious to take advantage of this to march upon the French capital.* But, wrote Montluc, "God was pleased miraculously to deprive the King of Spain of his right judgment; he could not make up his mind, and it was thus, as we must all confess, that God preserved our kingdom." †

Philip II. having given orders that the army was not to go beyond St. Quentin until that town had been taken, siege was laid to it; but Coligny resisted with the courage of despair, and, though very short of men, of provisions, and of ammunition, he held it for seventeen days, the town having eleven breaches in its walls when it was taken by storm. ‡

This heroic defence was the salvation of

° Letter from the Duke of Savoy to his subjects, after the battle of St. Quentin, upon the condition of France.—"Fontanieu," pages 283, 284.

† "Montluc," vol. xxiv., page 56.

‡ Speech of Gaspard de Coligny, about this siege.—"Fontanieu," pages 283, 284.

France, for the whole of the nobility had flown to arms, and mercenaries arrived in great numbers from Switzerland and Germany. Rivalry and discord broke out, too, in the army of the enemy, composed as it was of Germans, English, and Spaniards, the Germans deserting, and the English being recalled by the outbreak of rebellion in Scotland.

It was at this juncture that the Duc de Guise returned from Italy, and defeated though he had been the King received him with open arms, for with Montmorency and St. André prisoners he had lost all heart. The Duc de Guise revived his courage by pointing out to him how great the resources of France still were, and, being appointed by the King as lieutenant-general,* he started for the army of the North, determined to wipe out by some deed of daring his defeat in Italy. When he arrived at the headquarters of the army he found that it would

* Powers done to the Duc de Guise as lieutenant-general of the kingdom.—“Béthunes,” 8364, folio 18.

be impossible, with the small forces at his disposal, to engage in battle against the Imperialists, so he boldly determined to attack Calais, which was the last vestige of English supremacy in France, and as Calais had the reputation of being impregnable, it had naturally excited the ambition of the greatest French strategists, whose various plans were carefully considered by Guise and his friend Strozzi, who was very well versed in this branch of the art of war. Those which he followed are attributed by some to Senarpont, Governor of Boulogne,* and by others to Coligny, a prisoner at Ghent.† The Admiral, convinced of the feasibility of taking Calais, compared that town to a beautiful woman reputed invincible because she has never been attacked, but who at the first effort surrenders.‡

While Guise, to deceive the enemy, made a feint in the Artois province, Strozzi got into the town under a disguise and carefully

* "Tavannes," vol. xxvi., page 189.

† Brantôme's "Duc de Guise."

‡ Malthieu's "Règne de Henri II.," book iii., page 189.

examined the state of the fortifications. He found them in a poor state of repair and nearly abandoned, while the garrison itself was short of numbers and badly appointed, half the men having returned to England. There was no fear, it was thought, of an attack being made in this severe weather. Guise accordingly made a rapid advance and invested the town with twenty thousand men, the siege works being pushed forward so vigorously that in less than a week (January 8th, 1558) Calais capitulated. The inhabitants were all driven out of the town, and had to wait three days on the shore for boats to take them back to their own country. This was the last inch of ground which the English possessed in France.

This feat of arms, achieved at so small a cost, had an immense moral effect, for it revived the drooping courage of the French, while in England it excited a general clamour against the unpopular Government of Queen Mary. It was a terrible blow to the national pride, for upon one of the gates of the city was an inscription to the effect

that "the French will take Calais when iron and lead shall float like cork."*

While this campaign was going on Vieilleville had prepared plans for the siege of Thionville which had been accepted by the King, and he was preparing accordingly to invest the town when a letter from M. de Guise ordered him to suspend operations until his arrival, being anxious to secure the credit of the victory to himself. Vieilleville was compelled to submit to him as lieutenant-general of the King, but he was very sore at having, as he termed it, "the bread taken out of his mouth."

Guise assumed the command, and the place was duly invested, attacked, and taken on June 22nd, 1558,† the contemporary chroniclers being much divided in opinion as

* "Rabutin," vol. xxxix., page 316. "Discours de la prise de Calais par le Duc de Guise." Archives "Curieuses de l'Histoire de France," vol. iii., year 1835, page 239. "Hymne au Roi sur la prise de Calais."—Joachim du Bellay, edition of 1573, page 177.

† Letter from Etienne Callemant to the Cardinal de Guise concerning Thionville, June 17, 1558.—"Clair.," 352, folio 4249.

to who deserves the chief credit for the victory. The "Mémoires de Carloix," attribute it to Vieilleville, but Rabutin puts Bourdillon in the first place, while Tavannes mentions Montluc, who also claims the credit himself in his memoirs. Henri II. in a letter to the Cardinal de Tournon, speaks of the victory as one gained by the Duc de Guise, while Brantôme speaks of the preliminary work having been done by Vieilleville.

The French forces then marched upon Arlon, which opened its gates without striking a blow, and they were preparing to attack Luxemburg when news arrived of the disaster to the army of the North, Marshal de Termes, after capturing Dunkirk, Berch, and Newport, having been defeated at Gravelines, he himself wounded and made prisoner, and his army completely routed.*

M. de Guise then collected all his available forces and marched northward, while Vieilleville dismissed the Germans who had

* "Relation de la Bataille de Gravelines."—"Béthunes," 1660, folio 36. For details of this campaign, see Rabutin, Montluc, Villars, and Tavannes.

been employed for the siege and endeavoured to re-people the town. Instead of disposing of the houses for his own profit, as by the rules of warfare he was entitled to do, he made them over to the inhabitants who were left houseless; and the money which he derived from such sales as were necessary he devoted to the relief of the most necessitous, sending the remainder to the treasury, being reluctant, as he said, to profit by the misfortunes of France.

The King, after the misfortune at Gravelines, came to take the command of the troops on the Somme,* who were separated by only six leagues from the Spaniards, and still less from the English. Neither side cared to advance, being reluctant to risk an engagement, and being tired of this ruinous and interminable war. There was another motive which made Philip and Henri equally desirous of peace, and this was the religious question.

* "Exhortation Publique de Ronsard aux Soldats Français campés sous Amiens."—"Œuvres Complètes," edition of 1623, in folio, vol. ii., page 1265.

Philip had not inherited the political instinct and the grandiose side of his father's character. Narrow-minded, obstinate, and gloomy, seeing only the terrible and dark side of Catholicism, he regarded persecution as his prime duty. It was easier for him to indulge in it than it had been for his father, the election of Ferdinand as Emperor releasing him, as King of Spain, from the compromises with the German Princes of the Reformed Faith. Philip, therefore, was at liberty to caress his sinister aspirations, not for his own country, where heresy had no foothold, but in the Low Countries, where it was spreading every day. His project was to introduce into these free and industrious provinces the Spanish Inquisition, which put the people, and even the clergy, at the mercy of a few informers; but in order to accomplish this he must have peace.

Henri II., not cruelly inclined, but passively submissive to the Church, under the influence of Paul IV. and Cardinal Caraffa, was also bent upon a similar course. He encountered, however, more obstacles, as

the ancient independence of the Gallician Church and magistracy had not been destroyed, and the first attempt to introduce a Roman Inquisition* into France (1555) provoked remonstrances from the Parliament to the King. Henri evaded the difficulty by getting a Bull from the Pope, by which the inquisitorial powers were made over to the three French cardinals, Lorraine, Bourbon, and Châtillon, "to be used by them in the legal form, under the authority of the Holy See, with the evocation of the secular arm and temporal jurisdiction." An edict of the King approved the Bull, but Parliament refused to ratify it, and Paul IV., very much incensed, thundered in vain against the Protestant heresy and those who favoured it. Not only did the King fail to introduce the Spanish Inquisition into France, but he could not even regularly apply the Edict of Châteaubriand, on account of his alliances with Protestants outside the kingdom. Their

* Letters patent from Henri II. to the Pope as to the faculties and powers granted to Dr. Orry, Inquisitor of the Faith.—Ancient French, 383, folio 204.

complaints were constantly arresting him in his efforts at persecution, and he was very anxious to have his hands free.*

The two Sovereigns had, therefore, both the same motive for desiring peace, and upon the religious ground they were brought together by a community of views. But after so long a war, and with both armies in the presence of one another, neither liked to make the first advance. Tavannes and Rabutin say that the intermediary was the Duchess of Lorraine, who was connected with Philip by blood and with Henri by her son's marriage.†

The proposition being favourably received on both sides, a suspension of arms was agreed to, and this was followed by a five months' truce, to enable an understanding to be arrived at.‡ The deputies appointed met

* I do not enter into detail upon this topic, as I hope in my next volume to depict the religious state of France at the time of these troubles.

† The version given by Vincent Carloix, as to the secret intervention of a monk, is not worth notice.—“Vieilleville,” vol. xxxi., page 200.

‡ “Publication de la Suspension des Armes,” Octr. 18, 1558.—“Clair.,” 352, folio 4573.

to discuss conditions at the Abbey of Cercamp, these being Montmorency and St. André,* who had been released upon parole, the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Bishop of Orleans, and the Secretary of State, Aubespine, upon behalf of France; and the Duke of Alva, the Prince of Orange, Ruy Gomez de Silva and Granville, upon behalf of Spain. The Queen of England and the Duke of Savoy were also represented, but their deputies played only a subordinate part in the negotiations.

Charles V. died on the 21st of Sept., and as Queen Mary of England followed him to the grave a month later, this event necessitated a suspense of negotiations, which were not resumed until the February following, at Câteau-Cambresis. It might have been imagined, that with both sides anxious for peace, it would, without difficulty, have been arrived at—each side retaining the advantages it had gained. This had been the principle agreed upon in the truce; but while Spain entered upon the discussions with the force of an united and resolute policy, France came

into them weakened by divided parties, and the deplorable irresolution of her Sovereign.

The Duc de Guise, at the head of the kingdom, was anxious to go on with the war, while Montmorency, backed up by St. André, who was still languishing in prison, dreading the influence of the Duke, and the popularity of his recent triumphs, clamoured for peace at any price. Diane de Poitiers, accustomed to play one off against the other, and always on her guard against the one which had the upper hand—though she had had a violent quarrel with the Constable—was induced to side with him against Guise; and Henri, bent upon effecting a reconciliation between them, forgot that he was King of France.

It may be said, in fact, that during the twelve years that he was upon the throne, he did not reign a single day. Diane and Montmorency, in turn, shared his power, just as each of them dominated his mind, without the one being able to get rid of the other. Henri gave himself up entirely to each of them—and to each of them he remained faith-

ful.* His letters to Diane are most characteristic, for never has the voice of passion been heard in more unrestrained accents—a passion which time itself could not affect.

Among the many letters from Henri to Diane, which are to be found in “Fontanieu,” pages 267 and 268, 281 and 282; in “Clairambaut,” page 340; and in “Béthunes,” 8862, folio 3, as quoted by M. Guiffrey, are the following:—

“MADAME MAMYE,—I thank you very humbly for the trouble you have taken in giving me news of yourself, which is what I most care for in this world; and I beg of you to keep your promise, as I cannot live without you; while if you knew how little pleasure in life I have, you would take pity on me. I will not write more, save to assure

* “Just as we see in the heavens two planets, the sun and the moon, having the supremacy over the others, so Montmorency and Diane had absolute and entire power in this kingdom: the first over the crown, and the second over the person.”—“Mémoires sur le Cour de Henri II.”—Dupuy Collection, vol. lxxxvi.

you that he will not be able to come as soon as he could wish, who here signs himself your very humble servant. “**DE**”

“MADAME,—I received yesterday the letters which you wrote me. I beg of you ever to hold in remembrance him who never loved, and never will love, anyone but you.

“**DE**”

“I beg of you, Mamye, to deign wear this ring for love of me. “**DE**”

Thus Diane was the true Queen ; or, as Ronsard, in one of his many poems addressed to her, puts it, she was the King.* We have not her answers to these letters, which is a great pity, as they would, doubtless, have been typical of this very gifted and self-contained woman.

The quarrel of Diane and Montmorency had been of long standing ; but it was aggravated, as Lorenzo Contarini, the Venetian

* See Ronsard's "Œuvres Complètes," edition of 1623, vol. ii., page 1601.—See also "Joachim du Bellay's Pieces," edition of 1563, pages 308—320.

diplomatist, tells us, by the Constable having favoured an intrigue between Henri and the *gouvernante* of the Queen of Scotland, by whom he had a child. This was done to bring about a quarrel between the King and Diane; but the latter was so jealous of the Duc de Guise, and Montmorency was so anxious for the conclusion of peace, and the recovery of his liberty, that they both sank their differences. The Duchy of Bouillon, claimed by Philip, and of which her son-in-law is the titular holder, was to be the price of her forgiveness, as is shown by M. Guiffrey, who quotes her two autograph letters to the Constable.* Upon this condition, she will not dissuade the King from making peace, though it may well be doubted whether she would have succeeded; for Henri, indifferent, in many cases even hostile, to his own father, had for the Constable that filial feeling—a mixture of tenderness and fear—which is generally the mark of parental

* As Diane had always pretended to be the friend, and not the mistress, of Henri, M. Guiffrey imagines that these letters were burnt as being compromising.

authority. Modest and scrupulous to a degree, Henri was convinced of his powerlessness to govern without Montmorency.* When separated from him, he felt all at sea, and though François de Guise had re-established the supremacy of France in the north, displaying the utmost versatility and valour, while all the nobles urged him to resist the exorbitant demands of the Spaniards, who, after all, were not in any better position than the French, being in real jeopardy upon the Flemish side, Henri would not listen to any of the advice given him. He could think of nothing but the fact of Montmorency being in prison, and his one object, to be attained at any cost, was how to obtain his release.

* "In order to maintain his authority," wrote Lorenzo Contarini, "the Constable endeavours to prevent the King exercising much authority. It has become the custom for ambassadors who wish to see the King, first to pay a visit to his Minister and acquaint him with the object of their audience. The Constable then has an interview with the King, and tells him what answer he is to make. He wants to keep the King, as it were, in tutorship, and advises him to take plenty of bodily exercise, assuring him that this will prevent him from getting stout, which the King much dreads." —"Baschet, *Diplomatie Vénitienne*," page 437.

To secure this, he was ready to sacrifice Savoy and the Bresse, with its capital, Bourg, which was French, both in regards to its usages and language, nearly the whole of Piedmont and one hundred and eighty-nine towns and fortresses, which had cost the country so much blood and treasure. All that he was to get in exchange was permission still to occupy Calais and the Three Bishoprics.

The main difficulty arose with regard to the Duchy of Bouillon, for the Spaniards refused to give it up, but the King intervened personally, and appealed to Diane's daughter to renounce her claims to it.* The Spaniards, aware of the King's weakness, were not slow to take advantage of it, and to what an extent they did so may be gathered from the fifth volume of Granville's "Papiers d'Etat." Yet they were themselves at their wit's end to carry on the war, and King Philip, writing to the Bishop of Arras on the 12th of February, said: "I have already spent

* See, for this letter, French MS., 3941, folio 7.

two million two hundred thousand ducats. . . . I require another million. Yet I learn from Spain that no more money is to be had there, and the situation is so serious that I must come to an arrangement of some kind, or I am lost. I am anxiously awaiting the account of what has been done, but on no account are the negociations to be broken off.”*

This will show to what straits the enemy was reduced, and yet he obtained nearly what he asked for.

While the King was at Villers Cotterets, pending the negociations, he sent for Vieilleville, and accorded him a very hearty welcome. In the absence of St. André, Vieilleville, enjoying the privilege of the first gentleman of the chamber, slept in the King's room, so that they might discuss at their leisure the events of the day, and indulge in surmises as to the future.

The King questioned Vieilleville as to the capture of Thionville and the death of

* “Papiers d'Etat de Granville,” vol. v., page 454.

Strozzi, the Italian, who was killed there. He asked him if it was true that Strozzi's last words had been horribly blasphemous, and Vieilleville told him that the fact could not be denied; but that, in his opinion, one should be slow to offer an opinion upon these "mysterious questions, which almost escape our limited intelligence."

Henri renewed him his promise of giving him the first field-marshal's bâton of which he could dispose; and the intimacy between them increasing, he said that he intended to attach him to his person in future. A few days after this he appointed him, as a special mark of confidence, to escort his daughter, the Princess Claude, recently married to the Duke of Lorraine, to her mother-in-law, the Dowager Duchess, who was assisting at the peace conferences.*

Upon the 3rd of April, the preliminaries

° For Ronsard's sonnet on this marriage, see his "Œuvres Complètes," edition of 1623, vol. i., page 806. The Princess Claude took her names from the Swiss ambassadors whom the King had selected as her godfathers. November, 1547.—"Portefeuille de l'Aubespine," page 893.

of the treaty were concluded.* The King veiled these disgraceful concessions by the marriages of Madame Elizabeth, his eldest daughter, with Philip II., and of his sister, Madame Marguerite, with Prince Philibert, to whom she was supposed to bring Saxony as her dowry.

Thus the liberty of the Constable had been purchased at a higher price than that of the late King. All the nobility were most indignant, Montluc, Brissac, Tavannes, and, above all, the Duc de Guise, being unable to contain themselves.†

Etienne Pasquier wrote: "The King, caring more for the loss of the Constable than anything else, has signed away all our conquests of the last thirty years. It is a mixture of tragedy and comedy."

Vieilleville was also inconsolable, and he

* Letters from the Duke of Savoy, the Constable, and the Admiral upon the Câteau-Cambresis negotiations. — "Fontanieu," pages 287—288. "Treaty of Peace," Clairambaut, 353, folio 397.

† "Montluc," vol. xxiv., page 440; "Tavannes," vol. xxvii., pages 7—10; "Brissac," see "Ribier," vol. ii., page 797.

reproached the King with annihilating, by one stroke of the pen, all the institutions of the late King, the Court of Accounts, and the Parliaments of Turin and Chambéry, where so many French families had taken root, and this just to release the Constable and marry Madame Marguerite, who, being over forty, "might as well end her days in a good abbey like so many other Princesses of the blood."

The King urged that the fidelity of the Duke of Savoy made it certain that he would be a trustworthy ally for France, and that he had promised to accept the function of Constable at Montmorency's death; and another argument which he used was that the conquest of Savoy had been an usurpation, and that to give it back would be to release from purgatory the soul of his father. This last argument was too much for Vieilleville, who was fairly dumbfounded at this "assumption of piety."

Peace having been signed, the King, accompanied by Vieilleville, returned to Paris, passing through Fontainebleau, and upon reaching the capital, preparations were

made for receiving the Constable, accompanied by the Duke of Alva, who was to espouse the Princess Elizabeth in the name of King Philip, and some twenty other Spanish nobles. The Château du Louvre was prepared for them and their suite, while the lists were to be in the Rue St. Antoine. Vieilleville went to meet the cortège at St. Denis, and conduct it to the Louvre, where the King was waiting to receive them.

The whole of the month was spent in feasting and rejoicings,* and as the discussion with respect to the towns which were to be surrendered and kept in Savoy lasted a long time, the marriage of Madame Elizabeth was celebrated first, taking place at Notre Dame.† The fêtes lasted a week, all the Princes and cardinals being anxious to give an entertainment; and then came the jousts, which were opened on the 1st of June by the King. The

* "Clair.," 353, folios 5210, 5216, and 5217. The marriage contract was signed at the Louvre.

† "Clair.," 353, folio 5219. List of furniture, etc., in the Princess Elizabeth's wedding trousseau, 353, folio 5225. Account of marriage expenses, 353, folio 5229.

French displayed a marked superiority over the Spaniards, both in the use of the lance and the management of their horses. The contract of Madame Marguerite having at length been signed, proclamation was issued for a final tournament on the 29th of June.

After dinner, the King announced his intention of taking part in the joust, and asked for his arms. Vieilleville brought them to him, but much against his inclination, telling the King that he had no right to expose his life. Henri had no time to reply, for the Duc de Savoie coming in all ready armed, the King laughingly advised him to stick his knees well in, as he intended to "shake him without regard for their alliance or fraternity."

Thereupon they left the palace, mounted their horses, and entered the lists. The King at first tilted very successfully, and broke his lance well. The Duke of Savoy also broke his lance, but the stump end having slipped out of his hand, he was shaken in the saddle, and had to seize hold of the pommel to save himself from falling.

M. de Guise came next, and "did remarkably well;" and then the Comte de Montgommery got into position for the third bout, which was to be the last the King ever took part in. The Comte de Montgommery was a tall and very upright young man, lieutenant to his father, M. de Lorges, a Captain of the Guard. He rode forward against the King, and the two adversaries broke their lances. Vieilleville then came forward to take his turn, but the King begged him to let him break another lance with young Lorges, for he was anxious to have his revenge, saying that he had at the first pass "shaken him in the saddle and caused him to quit his stirrups." Vieilleville replied that his Majesty had already honourably distinguished himself, and that if his adversary had been weakened, he, Vieilleville, should be all the better pleased to have a comparatively easy encounter. The Queen also urged the King to withdraw, the Duke of Savoy appealing to him on her behalf; but he was obdurate, and ordered M. de Montmorency to go and tell the Queen that he will only engage in

one more joust, and that out of love for her. Montgommery, seeing that the Queen did not wish the King to renew the encounter, objected that he had no right to occupy the ring again; but the King cut the whole matter short by ordering him to enter the lists.

The two opponents then advanced and broke their lances against each other with great dexterity; but Montgommery, instead of throwing down the fragment of the lance left in his hand, as was the usage, stupidly kept it, and when the King bore down on him afresh, he drove this fragment clean against Henri's vizor, putting out one of his eyes. The King threw his hands round the neck of his horse, which, feeling the reins drop, galloped round the ring, till stopped by the Grand Equerry and other officers of the suite. They took him off his horse and removed his head-gear, the King saying the while, in a very weak tone, that he was a dead man; that they had tried to prevent him taking part in the tournament, but that no man could avoid his fate. Mont-

gommery threw himself on his knees before the King and implored his forgiveness. He at once granted it, forbidding "anything to be said against him now, or at any future time, exculpating him from all blame, or from his death, if it ensued, seeing that he had been importuned to take part in the encounter."* M. le Grand and Vieilleville then carried the King to his room, which, according to the orders of the doctors, was kept closed even against the Queen and the Princes, lest the fever, which had already declared itself, should increase. Five or six surgeons were sent for; among others, Ambroise Paré; but their science and skill were all to no purpose. They dissected the heads of four criminals who had been decapitated, and into whose skulls they had driven the same fragment of the lance which had struck the King, in the hope that the information thus obtained would enable them

* "Claude Haton," vol. i., page 104. This same incident as to Montgommery's being pardoned on the spot is also related in a letter from the Bishop of Troyes, dated Paris, July 14, 1559.—"Epîtres aux Princes." Belleforest, edition of 1572, page 186.

to sound the wound and extract the splinters. But the fever became more intense, and the King was in a state of high delirium. But at the end of a few days he came to himself and sent for the Queen, bidding her hurry on the wedding of his sister as much as possible; and then turning to Vieilleville, who had never left him even to change his clothes, asked him what he had done with the brevet of Marshal which he had promised him. Vieilleville produced it from his pocket, and the King made the Queen sign it there and then. He then "commended to her the administration of the kingdom upon behalf of their eldest son, and bade her take care of the younger children; also that they should all pray God for his soul, feeling that it was all over with his body." The Queen then retired; but she would have fallen if Vieilleville had not held her up, and she had to be carried to her room.* When she came

* This scene is only related by Vieilleville, most historians, including Mézeray, declaring that the King never recovered the use of his speech after he was wounded. Still, it should be added, that a letter from Anne de Cossé

to herself she gave orders for her sister-in-law's wedding to be celebrated in all haste; and it took place five days later, under very gloomy circumstances. It was celebrated at midnight, in the church of St. Paul, by torchlight, and, in place of violins and hautbois, there were tears and sobs. The King was at the last extremity; he had lost the use of his speech, and did not know anyone. Upon the day following, July the 10th, he breathed his last.*

to Marshal Brissac, dated July 1st, speaks of an improvement in the King's condition.—“Recueil de Lettres Originales,” vol. v., folio 69.

* “Vieilleville,” vol. xxxi., pages 134—263.—“Mort du Henri II.,” taken from the registry of the Hôtel de Ville.—“Colbert,” 252, page 191.



CHAPTER IX.

VIEILLEVILLE'S EXPEDITION TO REDUCE THE HUGUENOTS TO SUBMISSION.—HIS EMBASSY TO GERMANY.—HIS RECEPTION BY THE EMPEROR.—HIS RETURN TO FRANCE.*



MID the divisions and cruel discord which followed the reign of Henri II., Vieilleville declined to recognize any other party than that of the King, as representing the French or national party. While remaining attached to the faith of his fathers, he strongly reprov'd violence in religion, and had a horror of persecution. When he received instructions to repress the Huguenot revolt, he did so in the name of social order, in the interest of the country,

* The remainder of this volume will be devoted to Vieilleville, deferring until the following volume all that relates to general history and more especially the religious question.

and out of obedience to the King. As a soldier, he looked only to his flag. Catherine showed great partiality for him, and attached him to her person as a chevalier d'honneur,* having recourse to him for advice. He was with her at the time of the Amboise conspiracy.

The assembling of the Huguenots at the Château de Noisé had just been reported, and the Guises, desirous of compromising Vieilleville, got the King to order him to go there and ask for explanations, and to promise that they should be pardoned if they submitted. Vieilleville, knowing that a trap was being laid for him, dexterously excused himself, saying that the word of a Prince alone would have weight enough to inspire the rebels with confidence. The King, convinced by his argument, appointed M. de Nemours; with what result we all know.

After the massacre, the Guises returned to the charge. Having been informed that three large vessels, loaded with arms and

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxxi., page 264.

ammunition, had been sent from Roanne by the Huguenots, they ordered Vieilleville to go to Orleans and stop them. Vieilleville objected that M. de Montpensier, the governor of the city, might think that his prerogatives were being entrenched upon, but upon the King insisting that he should accept the mission, he agreed to do so on condition that he was given a Lieutenant-General's powers, limited to two months, and for a specific purpose. He then left for Orleans, promptly seized the boats, and defeated the troops which were following them; but instead of handing the Huguenots over to justice, that is to say to death, he declared, after examining them, that they had acted in ignorance, and, having read them a good lesson, dismissed them. He then distributed among his men the arms which he had seized, handed over the ammunition to the stores at the Town Hall, and had the boats sold, and the money for them given to the Orleans almshouse. The expedition had lasted just a fortnight.

Upon his return, the Guises, fearing his

influence over the Queen, sent him to Rouen, which had been provoked to rebellion by the massacres of Amboise. Upon reaching the Abbey of Le Bec, he learnt that M. de Villebon, the governor of the city, had shut himself up in the château, leaving Parliament to fight it out with the rebels. M. de Villebon advised Vieilleville to join him, but the latter replied that he had come to imprison others, not to be imprisoned himself. The next day he had his troops distributed in the streets and public squares, and proclaimed that all the inhabitants, without exception of rank and creed, were to lay down their arms, under pain of hanging and confiscation. The order was universally obeyed, and then commenced the trial of the rebels. The only conduct which entailed a condemnation was disorder, as Vieilleville forbade religious motives to be alleged against any one. From Rouen, he proceeded to Dieppe, where matters were more serious. The inhabitants had erected in the centre of the town a Protestant church to hear the Gospel preached, contrary to the Royal edicts, and they sent a

deputation to Vieilleville, asking him not to let the army enter their town. This he agreed to do if they would demolish their church, and upon their demurring, he marched on Dieppe, the inhabitants of which sounded the tocsin, and commenced to erect barricades.

Vieilleville, followed by the whole of his troop, then entered the open town at a sharp trot, went through the streets, overturning all whom he met, "sparing neither age nor sex, and administering plenty of corporal punishment." On coming to the church, the soldiers halted, and compelled all present, "peasants, sailors, and other of the common people," to help demolish it. This was the work of a very short time, and the Huguenots, quite disconcerted, made off into the open country, or got on board the vessels in the harbour. Many of them hid themselves in the houses of their Catholic neighbours or relatives, though no attempt was made to find them.

The demolition had lasted three days, and Vieilleville records his regret at having

to pull down this "brave building," which much resembled "that called the Colosseum at Rome." This done, and some conciliatory measures adopted, he returned to Rouen and thence to Orleans, to resume his post in the Queen's household.

The Court was in a great state of commotion at that time, for Condé had only just been cast into prison. François de Guise accordingly went to meet Vieilleville, greeted him very cordially and gave him his version of the affair, hoping to win him over. But Vieilleville was very much on his guard, as it seemed strange to him that Condé, being guilty, should have delivered himself up. Soon after, he had an interview with the King, who asked him to go upon a visit to the prisoner. Vieilleville replied that he was not a great friend of the Prince, and that as he had a detestation for all disturbers of the public peace, Condé should be condemned without mercy if guilty, but, if not, it would be an everlasting reproach to the King if he put to death a Prince of his own family. Whereupon, François admitted

that all he wanted was to extract Vieilleville's opinion.*

The accession of Charles IX. having given the Queen increased powers, she decided in the spring following (1561),† after consultation with her council, to send Vieilleville as Ambassador Extraordinary to Vienna to offer her greetings to the Emperor and perhaps sound him as to a marriage between the King and the Archduchess Elizabeth, both of them as yet children. Vieilleville, who had gone to spend the winter at Metz, accepted the appointment, and upon the 5th of April he left that city with a suite of sixty horsemen, including M. d'Epinaÿ, M. de Thevalle, and other nobles of his friends. He was followed by baggage waggons carrying the money which he was to distribute on his way among the German Princes pensioned by France, special paymasters accompanying them.

Entering Germany by Bavaria, the Duke

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxxi., pages 266 - 316.

† 1561, and not 1562 as the "Mémoires" erroneously put it.

Palatine, first Elector of the Holy Empire, sent his Marshal with forty horses to meet Vieilleville, and his own son escorted him to his residence at Heidelberg, where he was received for two days in the most courteous fashion. Vieilleville and his suite were much amused by a tame lion in the ducal palace, which was a present from the King of Muscovy, as the Counts Palatine of the Rhine had a lion *or* rampant in their arms.

On their departure the Duke escorted them a league on their road with three hundred horsemen, flags flying and trumpets sounding. When they were taking leave they were presented with "sixty bottles of Alsace wine," which was very excellent, and of which they all had to drink a stoop, eating with it Mayence ham, Milan cheese, saveloys, and other "incentives to wine."

Vieilleville after this passed through Swabia and Wurtemberg, being received with great respect by the Duke, who had been brought up in France during the reign of François I. After much feasting they proceeded to Augsburg, where they were met by

“the secret pensioners” of France, colonels, captains, and bishops, who received no less than forty thousand crowns for their subsidies, which had fallen into arrear.

Vieilleville then entering Saxony, where Duke John-Frederick and his brother John-William, whom Charles V. had despoiled in favour of Maurice, led a penurious life upon the French King’s pension of four thousand crowns each. They received him as well as their means admitted of their doing, and the meeting was a very cordial one. At Ulm the embassy was welcomed warmly by the population, and Vieilleville, being anxious to visit the Landgrave of Hesse, asked the burgomaster which was the best way to Cassel; but the latter dissuaded him from attempting the journey as the roads were so bad. Vieilleville, therefore, despatched a gentleman of his suite with a letter and the arrears of his pension to the Landgrave, and, also at the burgomaster’s advice, sent his horses and carriages back to Metz, and went down the Danube in boats. At Ingolstadt, where he arrived in the course

of a week, Duke Augustus of Saxony, the brother and heir of Maurice, was the reigning Prince, and, regarding the King, who pensioned his despoiled cousins, as his enemy, he left the town upon the arrival of Vieilleville, to whom the burgomaster handed the following memorandum from him :—

“I have left in all haste my town of Ingolstadt, so as not to be obliged to hold counsel with the agents and ambassadors of the King of France, who has favoured my enemies, and given them a pension, so that they may make war upon me. Still, I should have much liked to have met M. de Vieilleville, in order to judge, after conversing with him, whether his person and discourse are deserving of the great reputation which he enjoys in Germany for valour and discernment. This will be for some other time, perhaps for this very year. I beg, however, that no one may be sent to me with the letters and packets which I know that he is bringing me on the part of his Sovereign, for

I should disdain to accept or read anything coming from those who favour and support my mortal enemies.

“Signed, AUGUSTUS, *hereditary* and *legitimate* Duke of Saxony, and the *real* Elector of the Holy Empire.”

Vieilleville, after having heard this curious document read, begged the burgomaster to sign it, as evidence that he could not fulfil his mission, and had the three letters to the Duke publicly burnt. He then continued his descent of the Danube to Vienna, and upon reaching Closternayburg, about a league from the city, he was met by Bochetel, Bishop of Rennes, the regular ambassador of France at Vienna.* The two ambassadors held a conference, in the course of which Bochetel put

* He had been sent there in 1560, in order to bring about a *rapprochement* between France and the Empire, and to exempt the Council of Trent from the influence of the King of Spain. See “Additions aux Mémoires de Castelnau,” vol. i., page 466. In the “Correspondance de Catherine de Médicis,” vol. i., p. 175, is a letter from her, accrediting Vieilleville, March 13, 1561. Another letter dated June 6, refers to the journey.

Vieilleville in possession of the etiquette of the Imperial Court ; after which they entered Vienna, two Counts meeting Vieilleville at the landing-stage and conducting him to his lodging. They were attached to his person for the whole period of his stay, and they escorted him the next day to the Imperial presence. The Emperor had courteously ordered that the ceremonial of the French Court was to be observed, and he showed so much desire to give Vieilleville a cordial reception, that he went towards the door to greet him, and when Vieilleville, on approaching him, bent the knee, Ferdinand at once bade him rise, and said in French, " Though I do not imagine you have come to hand me over your government of Metz, or of the other Imperial towns beyond the Rhine usurped by the French Crown,* I must none the less tell you that you are welcome, as well out of respect for the King your master, whose good uncle and perfect friend it is my

* Brantôme says that one of the objects of Vieilleville's visit was to stipulate in favour of these towns being retained by France.

desire ever to remain, as upon your own account, for having long known you by reputation, I was very anxious to see you in person. For the rest of what I have to say, let us retire to my chamber.”

The Emperor then had an interview, which lasted two hours, and when the Counts in attendance on Vieilleville came to fetch him for dinner, they did not dare knock at the door. At last, the Emperor opened it himself, and he called for MM. d’Epinay and Thevalle, whom he honoured with a friendly touch upon the shoulder. After handing various presents to Vieilleville and the suite, he returned, and Vieilleville was then introduced into a large room, where Cardinal Granvelle, Bishop of Arras, received him very honourably.* Four tables were loaded with viands, and at the first Vieilleville was seated, next the Cardinal, together with MM. d’Epinay and Thevalle, Bochetel, and a

* The Memoirs speak of the *Cardinal* of Arras, and this must refer to Granvelle, who was made Cardinal by Pius IV. on the 25th of January, 1561, and who doubtless made a journey to Vienna about this period.

Spanish nobleman who had only just returned from Constantinople, where the Emperor had sent him to negotiate with "the Turk," and where he had spent four months. The other tables were filled with Vieilleville's suite and the Imperial nobles, conversation going on in four languages: French, German, Spanish, and Italian.

Vieilleville having expressed to the Spanish nobleman his wonder that, with the Turk so close at hand, and able to put such a large force on foot in so few days, the gates of the city were not guarded, the latter informed him that Soliman was so great at heart and so jealous of his reputation, that he would die rather than take a place by surprise; and that when he intended to attack, he gave two months' formal notice. So enthusiastically did the Spaniard speak of the Grand Turk, that Cardinal de Granvelle was much displeased, and said in a whisper to Vieilleville that he was quite capable of leaving the Emperor to serve this infidel dog. To which Vieilleville rejoined, "You might go further and say that he is ready to

abandon the Christian faith and become a Mahomedan, which would not be wonderful, seeing that numerous Spaniards were Marans* (Moors) before they were Christians.

The anecdote was repeated, after dinner, to the Emperor, who laughed very much at it, especially as he did not much like the Spanish nation in general, or this nobleman in particular.

The Emperor, thinking, too, that he might have received a bribe from the Grand Turk to lull the city into a false security, determined that Vieilleville's hint should be taken and the gates of Vienna guarded by veteran soldiers, who would receive the pass-word from the Emperor himself. Vieilleville, however, represented that a sudden change of this kind would alarm the Pasha, and that it would be better to place a sharp sentinel upon the steeple, and keep a strict watch upon all who entered. The Emperor thought the advice sound, and decided that the sentinel

° Term of contempt applied to the Moors.

placed upon the steeple should bear the name of Vieilleville.

Ferdinand then asked him about his journey, and, upon hearing of his reception at Ingolstadt, and of the conduct of Prince Augustus, he said that the King of France need not be surprised, for he had treated him, the Emperor, in the same way, refusing to come and greet him or take any orders from him since he had been proclaimed Emperor. Ferdinand added, at the same time, that as he was full of valour, and in ten days could place ten thousand horsemen and fifteen thousand infantry in the field, he could not afford to quarrel with him.

Upon the following day, the third of Vieilleville's arrival, the two Counts came to fetch him, with forty horses to take him and his suite round the city. This occupied the whole day, and the visit to the arsenal was particularly interesting, as at least sixty workmen of all trades—"gunpowder makers, gun-carriage makers, smiths," etc.—were employed there, and made such a din that you could hardly hear yourself speak. Sixty

pieces of artillery were to be seen there, on carriages of various kinds, among them being twenty-two double cannon, eight basilics, each upon four wheels, and the remainder culverins of different patterns.

From there, Vieilleville went to the maritime arsenal, which was upon a lake about a league in circumference, formed by the Danube, and shut in by high walls, well guarded by two boulevards upon each side of the narrow channel which led to the river. There he saw twelve galleys, fifteen large three-masted men-of-war, thirteen frigates, thirty barques, and twenty-five galliots fully equipped and manned for service. All these vessels, with their masts, mizens, lateenyards, and foremasts, flying flags displaying the Imperial eagles and the blended arms of Austria and Spain, were in full battle array, and presented a most magnificent spectacle.

The two Counts in attendance then proposed to show Vieilleville a sham fight, he himself giving the signal for it. He suggested, however, that each vessel should merely fire a salute; and at the end of this

interesting day Vieilleville invited all in attendance on him to come and sup at his lodging.

The next day the Emperor gave a very sumptuous repast, to which he invited all the Princesses and ladies of the Court, to meet Vieilleville, among them being the Infanta Elizabeth of Austria, the Emperor's grand-daughter, who at once attracted Vieilleville's notice.*

There were six tables, at the first of which sat the Emperor, the Princes, Vieilleville, M. d'Epinay, and M. Thevalle. During dinner, the music of the lute and violin accompanied singers, most of whom were from Picardy, and therefore French. The dinner was succeeded by a ball, and after the dancing was over Vieilleville took the Cardinal by the hand, and asked him to be an ear-witness of something he had to say to the Emperor.

* The expression *niece* which we find in the Memoirs was often used instead of grand-daughter.—“Vieilleville,” vol. xxxi., page 365. The Princess Elizabeth married Charles IX., in 1570. Her portrait, which may be seen at Versailles, in the north attic of the Palace, No. 3241, would lead one to believe that she was more healthy than beautiful.

They approached the Emperor, and Vieilleville, addressing him, said :—

“Your Sacred Majesty will remember that when you so graciously received me at the threshold of this room on Sunday, you said that you wished ever to remain the good uncle and perfect friend of the King, my master. I have now discovered so good an opportunity for holding you to your word that I will not let it pass. It seems as if your Majesty had pronounced a prophecy.”

The Emperor not knowing what he was aiming at, and asking for an explanation, Vieilleville, pointing to the Princess Elizabeth, said :—

“If it please your Sacred Majesty, there is the Queen of France. You could not find a more suitable alliance in Christendom, if only on account of the peace to be thereby sealed between your two houses.”

Cardinal de Granvelle expressed his extreme delight, and Vieilleville promised him an income of ten thousand French crowns if the marriage took place.

The Emperor then asked Vieilleville if he

was empowered to treat of this matter; and the latter said that he was not, but that he felt sure of not being disowned in anything which he had done in the interests of his master. Vieilleville then showed the instructions which he had received from the King and Queen, and in which there was no allusion to the marriage.

The Emperor, therefore, regarding it as a mark of affection for his person, cordially embraced him, and made him many kind promises. He then sent for his grand-daughter, and she, upon having something said to her in German, came up to kiss Vieilleville, who was so much overcome by this extreme mark of honour that, with a profound bow, he declined to accept it. But the Princess insisted, and when she had kissed him he said that it was the highest honour he had ever received, and that now he would kiss her hands, as a mark of servitude, and as being the hands of a Princess who would one day be his Queen.

The Emperor translated this to his grand-daughter, who did not understand French,

and Vieilleville, taking from his neck a gold locket which bore on one side the portrait of the King and upon the other that of his mother, he presented it to the Princess, entreating the Emperor to bid her keep it, which, with a good grace, he did. Elizabeth, in high delight, put the locket round her neck and gave Vieilleville another kiss. Vieilleville then, in the name of the Queen, asked for a portrait of the Princess, which the Emperor gladly promised to give him.

The fifth day was spent by the Emperor in replying to the letters and despatches which Vieilleville had brought him, so the entertainments were given at the residence of Cardinal de Granvelle. At the collation, all the Princesses, including the Princess Elizabeth, who was very richly attired, were present, and dancing went on till the hour of supper, which took place at the French Ambassador's. After supper, dancing was renewed, and lasted all night.

The next day, the Emperor sent for Vieilleville to discuss business with him. He assented to all the French proposals,

except the despatch of an Imperial Ambassador to the French Court—an ancient usage which had only been broken off since his accession. The real reason for this was, he said, the cost, which was twenty thousand crowns at least. He did not like to put this in writing, as it reflected upon the honour of the Empire; but he told it to Vieilleville in confidence, and assured him of his friendship for France. The Emperor added that he regarded the Princess Elizabeth as already married, and felt assured that the confederation between the two houses was safe, as long as Vieilleville was alive. The latter then returned to his lodging, and, upon being asked by the two counts-in-waiting what his plans were, he said that after taking leave of the Emperor, the Princess, and others, he should start the next day, having hired twelve coaches to take him as far as Frankfort. He detained them to dine with him, and after dinner he gave to each a gold chain worth fifty crowns, beautifully fashioned, from which were suspended lockets, with the portraits of the King and Queen.

The next day, he went to take leave of the Emperor, who, leading him to the window, showed him the present he was going to make him, viz., a coach lined with crimson velvet, drawn by four large Turkish mares, white as swans, with their manes and tails painted pink, with an Hungarian coachman and footman, dressed in the style of the country, and with Vieilleville's colours of yellow and black: the coachman in velvet and the footman in a woollen material, called *taffe*.* The Emperor then told Vieilleville how pleased he was to have seen him, and how completely he relied upon him to maintain peace, adding that he should never forget his "honest face" and his wise counsels. He then embraced him, and when Vieilleville attempted, bending low upon his knees, to kiss the Emperor's thigh, Ferdinand raised him up and gave him his hand to kiss.

Vieilleville then went to the chamber of the Princess Elizabeth, who, speaking in

* Brantôme speaks also of a silver-gilt buffet, given by the Emperor, which he himself saw at Duretal. But there is no allusion to it in the Memoirs.

German, bade him present her respects to the King of France and the Queen, adding that she was, from this hour, their very humble and affectionate servant. And upon Vieilleville undertaking to deliver this message, the Princess said, "In order that you may the better remember, take, I beg of you, this diamond, which I give to you with as much good-will as I have to see their Majesties." She then placed a handsome ring on his finger, and honoured him with a third kiss.

On leaving the palace, Vieilleville took possession of the Imperial coach, which was waiting for him in the courtyard, and requested the Cardinal, the two counts-in-waiting, and MM. d'Epinay and Thevalle to occupy seats in it with him. The other gentlemen of his suite followed on horseback, and the day ended with a grand supper at his lodging.

Early the next morning, the seventh since his arrival, Vieilleville left Vienna with thirteen coaches, and accompanied by more than a hundred Imperial nobles and others on

horseback, including the Cardinal de Granvelle, who reminded him again of his promise to give him an income of ten thousand crowns if the marriage came off.

Vieilleville was in a hurry to return to France, and he had still many other visits to pay on the road. At Prague, he spent six days with the Archduke Ferdinand, brother of the Princess Elizabeth, who was delighted at the idea of the marriage. He was, therefore, received with much magnificence; and when he came to start, he found that the Archduke had sent back the Vienna carriages and coachmen, and had provided others, which were paid for as far as Mayence. He also made Vieilleville a present of a coach and four dappled grey Cleves and Guelder horses, and was very profuse in his liberal treatment of the man who might one day contribute to make his sister Queen of France.

The next stoppage was Mayence, where Vieilleville spent three days with the Archbishop, Prince Elector of the Holy Empire. The Embassy was lodged at an hostelry, but took all their meals at the Archbishop's

palace. Fifteen tables were spread : ten for the Archbishop, Vieilleville, and the principal personages, and five for the remainder of the guests. Upon starting, Vieilleville found that the hotel bill had also been paid, and they parted amid many warm demonstrations of friendship.

The Embassy at length reached Coblenz, at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle, and highly delighted were the travellers to drink the water of their native river once more.

Three large boats were waiting for them at the port, which had been sent by the Archbishop of Treves to bring them up to his city. The nephew of the Archbishop was in command, and as he had been at the siege of Thionville, he was delighted to present himself to Vieilleville with his uncle's letters, and to show him the gold medal representing Henri II. and Catherine, which he had received on that occasion.

Vieilleville, much moved by this souvenir, gave him a medal of Charles IX. and his mother, and this increased the young Prince's

delight. Vieilleville then asked him to supper, and treated him German fashion, by leaving him dead-drunk at table. As he could not accommodate himself to this custom of the country, he had brought with him a number of persons who acted as proxies for him at these "vinous carousals."

The next day, Vieilleville sent the Abbé de Bourgmoyen, Baptiste Praillon, his interpreter, to the Bishop of Cologne, to convey to him the King's letters, and bring back his replies, apologising for not having been able to undertake this task in person, owing to bad health. The fact was that to reach Cologne it would have been necessary to traverse four of the towns belonging to Duke Augustus, peopled with some barbarians, to say nothing of the lengthy and rough route. Fatigued with travelling, and eager to return, yet at the same time anxious to please the Archbishop, whose neighbour he had been at Metz, he embarked the next day on his boats, the young Prince doing the honours with much grace, and in the evening they reached Treves.

Vielleville stayed at the Archbishop's palace, while his suite were distributed among the best houses in the town. They all met at supper, and the next day was spent in presentations, good cheer, and mutual gratulations. The German captains had all, according to the Archbishop, "the fleur-de-lis engraved upon their hearts."

Vielleville, though peace prevailed, had his suspicions of the Comte de Mègue,* so he begged the Archbishop to let his boats tow him up to Metz, so as to avoid passing through Luxemburg. In this way, starting at daybreak, he arrived, unexpectedly, the same evening, to avoid a formal reception. When within half a league of the city, two lackeys were landed and sent on to M. de Senneterre, who was quite taken aback, and Vielleville, having landed almost immediately near the Pont aux More, there was no time to disobey his wishes. But the news of his arrival soon spread, and when Vielleville mounted his horse to go to the Cathedral and

* With whom he had fought so many battles around Metz.

return thanks for the safe issue of his journey, the whole city had turned out to acclaim him.

The journey had been a complete success. For more than three months, from April 5 to July 10, there had not been a single accident, quarrel, or case of illness. Vieilleville had been well received wherever he went, and had enlisted the sympathies of his hosts in the French cause.

After supper, he retired to rest so exhausted that he declared that he would not put pen to paper for four days. But the next morning there arrived a courier from the Queen, begging him to come and give her a full account of his journey, and adding that, as the courier would tell him, affairs were in such a lamentable state that she had urgent need of his counsels.

Vieilleville, therefore, had to resume his travels the next day, a most cordial reception awaiting him at Court.*

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxxi., pages 327—382, and vol. xxxii., pages 1—18.



CHAPTER X.

RELIGIOUS DISTURBANCES.—THE BATTLE OF DREUX.—TRAGIC DEATH OF ST. ANDRÉ.—VIEILLEVILLE APPOINTED MARSHAL.—HIS VARIANCES WITH VILLEBON AT ROUEN.—HIS TOUR IN THE EASTERN PROVINCES.



S the religious disturbances continued, Vieilleville, out of attachment to the Queen, only left her to transact necessary business at Metz, or to spend a short time among his family at Duretal. She afterwards confided to him, in the course of her negotiations with the Protestants, missions which he discharged with zeal,* but which were very repugnant to him,

* A letter from Catherine to the King of Navarre, dated May 17, 1562, and another to the Parliament, show that she sent him to negotiate at Orleans.—“Correspondance,” pages 317—321.

as is shown by the following letter to his friend, the Bishop of Rennes, at Vienna :—

“I am still at this business ; but had I known how complicated an affair it was, I would not have left Metz. The Queen has done what she could to bring about an arrangement, but to no purpose. You are very lucky not to be here, and I advise you to keep out of all these troubles.” *

Soon after this, he accepted a mission to England, with the object of dissuading Elizabeth from assisting the French Protestants ; but, as the following letter from Chantonney, the Spanish Ambassador, shows, it was a failure † :—

“Vieilleville passed through here this morning on his way from England. His first words were that he had not been beaten,

° “Additions aux Mémoires de Castelnau,” vol. i., page 853, edition of 1659. In this same letter he urges the Ambassador to send two portraits of the Ambassador, which the Queen is anxious to see, in view of the proposed marriage.

† Two letters from Catherine, one to M. de St. Sulpice, on August 14th, and another to the English Ambassador, on Sept. 17th, mention this mission.—“Correspondance,” vol. i., pages 373—401.

as he had done nothing." Chantonney then blames Catherine for entrusting him with this mission, seeing that "it is a common report at Court that he has a hankering after the new religion." *

In the following December, when the battle of Dreux was about to take place, St. André, who was to lead the vanguard of the Royal army, was anxious to take Vieilleville with him; but the Queen objected, as she wished to keep him with her and her son at Vincennes.

The result of the battle is well known; the leaders of the two opposing armies, Louis de Condé and the Constable, being made prisoners, while the Catholics slept upon the battle-field. At nightfall, while the Protestants were slowly retreating, St. André, who had somewhat imprudently gone forward in pursuit of the fugitives, suddenly found

* "Mémoires de Condé," vol. ii., pages 63 and 64. I have not quoted the narrative of Vincent Carloix, in regard to this mission, as it bristles with improbabilities, and describes it as a success, when we know that it was a failure.

himself cut off from his own men and opposed by a small band of the enemy. Upon being summoned to give his name, he declared that he was Marshal de St. André, and was at once made prisoner.

It so happened that Bobigny, the leader of this body, had formerly been in St. André's service, and had fled to Germany after having killed his equerry in a quarrel. Condemned to death and hung in effigy, his goods had been confiscated by his master, and when St. André saw into whose hands he had fallen, he was much alarmed, and begged Bobigny to forget the past and treat him as a prisoner of war. Bobigny said that he would see about it, and in the meanwhile had his arms taken from him. The Marshal gave his word not to attempt to escape, and they rode on, side by side, for some distance, when they met Prince Porcian, of the Condé party, who asked Bobigny the name of his prisoner. When he heard that it was St. André, he expressed the utmost satisfaction, because he thought that it would facilitate the release of Condé. The Marshal, too, was very pleased

at having met the Prince, and would have followed him, but Bobigny refused to let him go, saying that the Marshal belonged to him by the right of war. The Prince, who would also have liked to take St. André with him, was obliged to acknowledge that this was so, and he rode off.

He had not gone a hundred yards before Bobigny, turning upon St. André, said, "You have shown how evil-disposed you are, and that I can never feel any trust in you. If you regained your high position, you would complete my ruin. You have had me hung in effigy, and confiscated all my goods, which you gave to my servants, and you have entirely ruined my household. The hour has come for God's judgment to overtake you." With these words, he blew his brains out with a pistol, stripped his body, and left it naked in the plain, "at the mercy of the wolves and dogs." *

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxxii., page 48. Brantôme, Castelnau, and la Popelinière also speak of the murder of St. André, but without entering into the same details. D'Aubigné is more explicit, for he says: "St. André was taken

This same evening, Vieilleville, having come from Vincennes to Paris, where he occupied his usual lodging "at Claire-Fontaine's, close by the Croix du Tirouer," a curious incident occurred. When the Constable was captured, and the Catholics regarded the battle as lost, La Bretonnière, an old Metz soldier, had quitted the camp in haste, and brought the news to Paris in the middle of the night. The whole town was upon the move, and the principal inhabitants of the quarter came to Vieilleville to ask him what he thought of the matter. Vieilleville got up and sent for the soldier, and when he learned that M. de Guise had not attacked the enemy when La Bretonnière left, he reassured the people present, composed of men of all conditions, belonging to the Church, the law and commerce, being ready, he said,

and killed by Bobigny. The latter had sworn his death for having placed his son Mézières in the Marshal's service, and his son having deposited a large sum of money with the Marshal, he got up a quarrel between Mézières and St. Sornin. Mézières having killed St. Sornin, the Marshal had him prosecuted and confiscated the money.—"D'Aubigné," page 326.

to stake his head that the battle was not lost. He then ordered his horses and drove out to Vincennes to see the King.

Half way there, he met, about seven in the morning, several nobles, whom their Majesties, having heard a rumour of the defeat, were sending into Paris to reassure the inhabitants and assume the command. The same evening the Court returned to Paris, and about nine o'clock, the Sieur de Losses, with ten or twelve horsemen, reached the Porte St. Honoré, shouting, "Victory for M. de Guise! the Prince de Condé is a prisoner!"

The guard discharged their muskets, and the news so soon spread through the city, that it reached the Louvre, and the streets were illuminated before Losses could arrive at the palace.* He was introduced into the

* In the "Mémoires du Duc de Montpensier," page 17, it is said that the King did not come to Paris till Monday, that Losses brought the news in the morning. This is confirmed by a letter from Catherine de Médicis, vol. i., page 455. See also, with regard to this battle, two very curious letters written after the action by two Spaniards.—"Mémoires de Condé," vol. v., pages 183—187.

royal presence, and gave their Majesties a full account of the battle; of the defeat in the morning, and of the victory in the afternoon, confirmed by Guise's letters. But in order not to spoil the effect of his story, he kept back the tragic death of St. André.

Vieilleville was supping that evening with Marshal de Montmorency, whom he was trying to console for the capture of his father, when an envoy arrived from the King to say that Guise had won the battle, and that the Constable would soon be released, as Condé was also a prisoner. All the company present went down to question Losses, who had accompanied the King's messenger, and there were great demonstrations of joy in the streets.*

Vieilleville having gone to see the King and Queen, Losses, who was a creature of the Constable, informed his son, François, of St. André's death, so that he might be able to utilize the early information if he wanted to apply on behalf of any of his own friends

* "Castelnau," vol. xviii., page 212.—"Vieilleville," vol. xxxii., page 43.

for the succession. But François, faithful to Vieilleville, presented himself early the next morning in the Queen's chamber, while she was still in bed, and informed her of St. André's death, asking at the same time that Vieilleville should be appointed to succeed him. The Queen granted his request, and did so all the more gladly because it was in accordance with the promise given by the defunct King, sending him at the same time to offer her congratulations, and those of the King, her son, to Vieilleville. Montmorency was delighted to fulfil this mission, and he found Vieilleville still in bed. He announced in the same breath the death of his friend and his succession to the post, but Vieilleville, when he heard what had happened to St. André, uttered such a loud shriek that you would have thought his last hour had come. Cursing the nomination brought him, he declared that he would sooner die than succeed the friend he loved best in the world; that if he was not a Christian, he would commit suicide, and that he begged Montmorency to leave him to die in peace. He,

thereupon, took out of his box the written promises he had received, and tore them up, telling Montmorency to inform the Queen that he released her from her promise, and that she might appoint whom she pleased. Montmorency took this message back to the Queen, who thereupon sent the Chancellor and Aubespine to Vieilleville, telling them that it was the special desire of herself and of the King that he should accept it. But Vieilleville would not listen to them, and said that he intended to retire from the army and Court, and live in solitude. The Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon fared no better, and at last the King became very incensed, and declared with an oath that things should not go on this way. Accompanied by the Queen, and followed by Aubespine, the King passed through the Hôtel Bourbon and the St. Germain Cloister on foot, and entered Vieilleville's room. He was in bed, but when the Sovereigns entered, he got out and sought to prostrate himself at their feet.

The King, in quite an angry tone, said to him, "What, Marshal de Vieilleville, is this the

return to me for having kept for you, when fifty people were pestering my life out, the rank which I have now conferred upon you. I do well assure you that it is my intention to fulfil the wishes of the late King, my father, and discharge the Queen and myself of our obligations, as well as to mark my sense of the great services which you have rendered, and will continue to render daily to the French Crown.”

The King then ordered Aubespine to read aloud the letters patent, and hand them to Vieilleville. The latter took them humbly from the hands of his Sovereign, and, going upon his knees, assured him that if he had refused to accept the dignity before, it was because he could not bear the idea of succeeding one in whose company he had seen so much service by land and sea during the reigns of the King's father and grand-sire.

The King, who accepted his excuses and assured him of his goodwill, then made the new Marshal walk by his side to mass, and after mass he invited him, together with the

Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon to dine with him.*

Soon after this, an attack by the Protestants upon Rouen being dreaded, the Queen sent Vieilleville with full powers to put the city into a thorough state of defence. This nomination was most distasteful to the Governor, M. de Villebon, who was already very much irritated with Vieilleville.† He, accordingly, sent no one to greet Vieilleville upon his arrival, an omission of which the latter complained very much. Hearing this, Villebon went to see Vieilleville at the Abbey of St. Ouen, which Cardinal de Bourbon had placed at his disposal, and after mutual greetings Vieilleville invited him to join the principal inhabitants at supper. Villebon accepted the invitation, but he did not put in an appearance at the review held the following day. Vieilleville, to give him a lesson, sent one of his captains and fifty men to make a sham attack on Villebon in his fortress; and when the latter gravely

◦ "Vieilleville," vol. xxxii., pages 21—86.

† See the previous chapter.

came to inform him, the next day, that he had been attacked by Coligny, Vieilleville, pointing to his captain, said, "That is the admiral who summoned you to surrender, and you should be very grateful to him, for he has taught you to begin doing your duty." Vieilleville then went on to upbraid Villebon for not having come to confer with him, and this, of course, made matters all the worse. Another incident occurred which still further envenomed their mutual feelings towards one another, though on the Sunday following this scene Villebon consented to attend mass with the Marshal, and after it was over the latter invited him to come and dine at the Abbey. The dinner passed over quietly enough, but after dinner they again fell out, and Vieilleville pushed M. de Villebon so violently that but for the table he would have fallen. The two men then pulled out their swords, and Vieilleville wounded his adversary so badly in the arm that part of the flesh and bone was severed, and he fell senseless to the ground. The nephews and suite of Villebon were not numerous

enough to attempt to continue the combat, and they carried him back to the Castle.

The nephews of M. de Villebon denounced Vieilleville as being a friend of the Huguenots, and urged the people of Rouen to testify to their religious feelings by attacking the Abbey and burning the Marshal and his suite within its walls.

This appeal was not disregarded, and from about noon on Sunday to four the following morning, something like civil war prevailed, the majority of the inhabitants siding with M. de Villebon. There was a good deal of bloodshed; and Vieilleville, who was in inferior force, sent for reinforcements from the neighbouring garrisons, whose presence awed the inhabitants into submission. A great many of them left the city, while several of the others came to the Abbey, and, kneeling down in the open space before it, entreated his forgiveness. Vieilleville came forward in person, and assured them that no harm should befall them.

The Queen, however, having been informed of what was going on, sent Marshal

de Brissac, with a strong body of troops and full powers to restore order.* Vieilleville, learning this, sent to tell Brissac that if he wished to enter Rouen as a friend, with a following of twenty persons, he would be welcome; but that he might throw his credentials into the fire, as he would allow no one except a Prince of the blood to interfere in his affairs. Brissac, knowing that Vieilleville was a man of his word, and not wishing to quarrel with him, accepted his invitation, and entered Rouen the next day with a few attendants. Vieilleville received him very courteously, but, for fear that Brissac should exhibit his credentials to the Parliament, he convoked that body to the Abbey to pay him their respects.

The affair had an unfortunate ending for M. de Villebon, as Brissac, being recalled to Court, and being unwilling to leave Vieilleville and him together, went one morning quite unexpectedly to the Château and ordered Villebon to leave Rouen, with the

* Letter from Catherine de Médicis to M. de Gonnor, July 28th, 1563. Vol. i., page 490.

whole of his suite. The furniture and all the movable goods were loaded on waggons, which the inhabitants, moved to pity, helped to provide, and a litter was got ready for the wounded governor; Brissac not starting from Rouen until he was outside the city. Vieilleville, much surprised when he heard of what Brissac had done, was afraid that the blame for it would be cast upon him.*

As the disturbances continued, notwithstanding the Edict of Amboise, to be general, Catherine, while preparing for the siege of Havre—to which, according to Carloix, Vieilleville accompanied her, though other contemporary writers are silent upon the point—determined to visit next year, with her son, the different provinces of the kingdom, in order to pacify men's minds. The Marshals were to lead the way, and make a preliminary tour, the King calling them together and assigning each of them his pro-

* "Le Laboureur," book iv., page 177; "Vieilleville," vol. xxxii., pages 87—142, etc. M. de Villebon returned as Governor after Vieilleville's departure, and held the post till his death, on April 18th, 1564.

vince. Vieilleville was to visit the eastern provinces, including the Lyonnais, Provence, Dauphiny, Auvergne, the Vivarais, and Languedoc;* and he left Paris in the spring, with a suite of one hundred and twenty horsemen, and armed with the most extensive powers.

At Lyons, where there had been great disorder, he had twenty-two persons executed for crimes at common law, the only ones which he chose to recognize, and the Huguenots, who were most compromised, left the city. The celebration of Mass was re-established, but at the same time the Edict assured full liberty of conscience, and a certain amount of liberty as regarded the form of worship.†

From Lyons Vieilleville went to Grenoble,

* A letter from Catherine to M. de Crussol, dated May 18, 1563, vol. ii., page 41, of the "Correspondance," mentions Vieilleville's mission, and fixes the date of it. Another letter to M. de Crussol, of June 2nd, page 50, announces that Vieilleville has gone to Lyons.

† A letter from Catherine to Soubise, June 13, "Correspondance," vol. ii., page 59, mentions the difficulty Vieilleville experienced in pacifying the city. See also the account

where the Parliament had been compelled, in consequence of the rebellion, to take refuge in the castle. The mere announcement that Vieilleville was coming had the effect of restoring order, and the Edict was placarded without resistance. Vieilleville then ordered the leaders of the two parties to meet in the public square and to embrace one another, and swear oblivion of all hostile feelings. His order was obeyed, and one hundred and twenty gentlemen of the two parties cordially embraced one another. A company of marauders, who belonged to the best families, had taken refuge in the valley of Angrogne, under the pretext of religious enthusiasm, and had rejected the proffered reconciliation. Vieilleville started off with a body of men, fell upon their camp, and killed some thirty of them, carrying off the remainder prisoners to Grenoble. The sixty of them who were most guilty were executed, many of them,

given by Philippi, President of the Cour des Aides at Montpellier, and the evidence of Pérussin, in his "Histoire des Guerres du Comté Venaissin," quoted in the "Recueil du Marquis d'Aubais," vol. i., pages 14 and 50.

despite their noble birth, being hung, while the others were incorporated in the army. All being tranquil at Valence, Vieilleville proceeded to Provence, and on his way he met Fabrizio, the nephew of the Pope, who was Governor of Avignon, and who came to tell him that the country round about was in a very disturbed state, and to ask him whether he could not come and lend a hand in the restoration of order. On reaching Avignon, he found that three or four hundred gentlemen had seized Sisteron,* and were exercising great violence and cruelty there, under the cloak of enthusiasm for the Protestant religion.

Having quieted the disturbances in and about Avignon, and having refused to accept any presents from the Papal authorities there, he started for Cavaillon, where he made but a short stay, and then went on to Aix, which had escaped the disturbances so preva-

* Note of the Translator. As Sisteron is not within a hundred miles of Avignon, and had no connection with the Comtat, as that province was called, I have omitted the account of what was alleged to have occurred there.

lent elsewhere. The Governor of the town, the Count de Tendi, a natural son of a member of the House of Savoy, was then at Marseilles, and Vieilleville, holding a bed of justice on the following day in the Parliament, declared, after the customary salutations had been exchanged, that as the Governor bore the name and arms of the House of Savoy, he would have handed the control over to him had he been present, instead of exercising it himself. The President thanked him for his courteous statement, and the sitting then terminated.

Vieilleville went on to Marseilles, and the Count de Sommerive, son of the Count de Tendi, came out to meet him three leagues from Marseilles; and the Count de Tendi himself was waiting to receive him at the gates of the city. He escorted him, with a large following of nobles, to his residence facing the sea, where he was saluted by the guns of fifteen galleys and twenty other vessels. After dinner, Vieilleville and his host took a drive along the quay, where they witnessed a sham fight of the galleys, and

were greeted with fresh salvoes of artillery and arquebuses. Then followed supper and dancing; while on the following day the Count de Tendi, delighted at the language used by Vieilleville at Aix, placed all the military and naval officers at his disposal. A week was thus spent in rejoicings—one of the entertainments consisting in placing six galleys in juxtaposition, and serving a banquet upon them, a number of convicts, dressed as Brazilians, acting as footmen, and amusing the company by the gambols in which they indulged. At last the time came for saying good-bye, and Vieilleville set his face northward once more, travelling by slow stages, and stopping at each town on the road, until he received a despatch from the King, who was then at Lyons, bidding him return with all speed, as he had an important mission which he desired him to undertake. Vieilleville at once left his suite to follow, and hurried forward alone to rejoin the King.



CHAPTER XI.

MISSION OF VIEILLEVILLE TO SWITZERLAND.—
THE BATTLE OF ST. DENIS; DEATH OF THE
CONSTABLE.—SIEGE OF ST. JEAN D'ANGELY.
—DEATH OF VIEILLEVILLE.



It was customary, at the beginning of each reign, to renew the treaty with the Swiss Confederation, which enabled the French Government to hire fighting men in that country. This having been omitted when Charles IX. came to the throne, negotiations were now being carried on; but they met with unexpected obstacles, as Protestant cantons, such as Berne and Zurich, demanded the right of building churches for their inhabitants, which the King refused to allow. Then, again, the never-sleeping jealousy of the Emperor and the Pope had caused them to send as

Ambassadors to Switzerland the Count d'Anguissol, one of the murderers of Farnèse, and Molina, a Spanish senator, both of whom spared no effort to complicate matters. The two French Plenipotentiaries were quite baffled, and the Confederation had sent to Charles IX. to concert measures for overcoming the difficulty. The King accordingly sent Vieilleville to try and settle the matter; and the latter, after a long conference with the Swiss deputies, started for Fribourg, where, owing to the outbreak of the plague at Basle, the Diet was then sitting.

The Marshal took with him fifty horsemen, and his advisers were l'Aubespine, Bishop of Limoges, and the President, Belière, who had gone on in advance to feel the way.

It was no small matter to bring thirteen cantons and nine confederate towns into harmony, for no sooner had he, by dint of promises, presents, and cajolery, won over one of them, when the Imperial Ambassadors undid his work. Vieilleville determined,

therefore, to take the bull by the horns, and, after obtaining the consent of the Confederation, he sent four of his suite, accompanied by four Swiss notaries, to Lucerne, where the Ambassadors were residing, to ask the rulers of that town why they harboured upon their territory men who had come with the set design of breaking off the negociations. They replied, that as their territory was free, and as foreigners were at liberty to reside there, they had no power to expel them.

Vieilleville then informed the people of Lucerne that he should come and seek an explanation from them in person, and, accompanied by about sixty nobles and five or six hundred Swiss soldiers, he started for that town. The Council of Lucerne, taking alarm, begged him to suspend his march, and promised to expel the Imperial Ambassadors at once. Vieilleville consented, but the Imperial Ambassadors had already gone. After coming into Lucerne and remaining there two days, he returned to Fribourg, where the treaty was signed on the 7th of November (1564), and, having received

deputations from various parts of the country, which came to congratulate him on the alliance thus formed, he returned to France, escorted to the frontier by a troop of Swiss soldiers.*

Vieilleville would not accept any reward for this mission—not even the repayment of his expenses—owing to the great dearth which then prevailed, and, after spending the winter at Duretal, he went back to Metz in the spring to continue the construction of the citadel.†

Since the death of Henri II., Vieilleville, whose time was so much taken up by state affairs, had not been able to spend much time at Metz.‡ But he exercised a constant supervision over what was going on there;

* “Mémoires de Vieilleville,” vol. xxxiii., pages 1—44. The treaty was ratified in the year following (July 22, 1568). See letter from Vieilleville and the Bishop of Limoges to the Bishop of Rennes, in vol. i., book ii., page 829, of the “Additions aux Mémoires de Castelnau.” M. de Thou also gives the credit for the renewal of the fact to Vieilleville and M. de l’Aubespine.

† “Vieilleville,” vol. xxxii., page 203.

‡ The fortifications were carried on under the management of M. de Vadincourt, who died at Metz, on the 21st of

though, owing to the low ebb of the public fortune, and the general poverty which prevailed, it was no easy matter to get any money advanced by the Treasury.

Catherine was also still employing him to negociate with the Huguenots; and in July, 1565, she sent him to Tours to re-establish order there.*

At Metz, which was one of the centres of the Reformation, Vieilleville had great difficulty in keeping the fervent propagators of the new faith within the limits prescribed by the Edicts; but as at Rouen, Dieppe, and Orleans, he succeeded without committing any act of violence upon their persons. To the Jews, who were literally outlaws, he showed himself still more humane; for, whereas they had been driven out of Metz in the twelfth century, and had since then only come back upon sufferance, being at the

April, 1569; while Jacques de Montheron was military governor, and the Sieur de Senneterre had been appointed President instead of Aubespine.—“*Histoire de Bénédictins*,” vol. iii., page 82.

◦ “*Correspondance de Catherine de Médicis*,” vol. ii., page 304.

mercy of a population which loathed them, Vieilleville gave them a regular right to reside and trade there, placing, at the same time, a limit upon their profits, and compelling them to contribute to the relief of the poor.* This act of justice, and his firm administration, gained him credit and respect, even from the most indifferent and the most corrupt; while at Court he had the ear of the sovereign, and ever put the interest and honour of France above the conflicting claims of parties.

After the undecided battle of St. Denis, in 1567, when a discussion was going on as to which side had been victorious, Vieilleville, appealed to by the King, said: "It was neither your Majesty nor the Prince, but the King of Spain; for enough valiant captains and soldiers were killed to have conquered the Flanders and the Low Countries, and have incorporated them in your kingdom. But for this accursed rupture of peace (and may he be damned who is the cause of it!),

* "Histoire des Bénédictins," pages 88 and 97.

I had intended to urge, and even force you to unite all your forces for an enterprise, out of which you would have come with honour, and which would have perpetuated your name.”*

The peace of Longjumeau having been signed (1568), Vieilleville was appointed Governor of Anjou.† The Prince de Condé resided, at that time, at the Château de Noyon, in Burgundy, and hearing that there was a scheme on foot to seize him treacherously, in violation of the treaty, he fled to take refuge at La Rochelle. As he had to pass through Anjou, Vieilleville was urged to arrest him, and so please the Queen-Mother; but he resolutely refused to break a solemn engagement.

In the year following (1559)‡, after the battles of Jarnac and Montcontour, Vieilleville had command of the forces besieging St.

* “Vieilleville,” vol. xxxii., page 215.

† Commission given to Marshal de Vieilleville, Aug. 21, 1568, registered Oct. 22, 1569.—“Pièces Originales,” 2661, article “Scépeaux,” folio 24.

‡ “La Popelinière,” book xiv., folio 62.

Jean d'Angely,* and he was encamped at La Vergne, under the walls of the town, while Charles IX. and his mother were quartered in the village of Luret,† about a league distant.

Vieilleville summoned the town to surrender; but Piles, a doughty Huguenot captain, who was the governor of it, replied that he held it by the command of the King of Navarre, Governor of Guyenne, for the service of His Majesty (of France), and that he would surrender it at his orders. Upon receiving this reply, the Marshal commenced the preliminary works, such as approaches and trenches; but the Huguenots defended the town with great ardour, and the combat, which lasted several days, was a very bloody one, though the besiegers continued to advance. As this fratricidal struggle was very repugnant to Vieilleville, he wrote to Captain

* I give the siege of St. Jean d'Angely its proper date, in preference to that given in the "Mémoires de Vieilleville," which describe it as being previous to the battle of Montcontour.

† Liberge and the "Itinéraire des Rois de France" say that they resided at Landes, and not at Luret.—"Vieilleville," vol. xxxii., page 233.

Piles to demonstrate the inutility of it; pointing out that the Protestant Princes were now driven into a corner, and that if he (Piles) should be taken prisoner with arms in his hands, he would die an ignominious death; whereas, if he would surrender, he would be treated honourably.

Piles, running short of ammunition and men, asked for a ten days' truce to communicate with the Princes,* and this being granted, an exchange of hostages took place, and the Huguenot officers came out to visit the Royal camp. Piles, receiving no reply to his letter, renewed the struggle, hoping to get himself killed in the breach; while Vieille-

* The archives of the British Museum contain an original letter from Henri, Duke of Anjou, to Count Mansfeld, colonel of reiters in the camp of the Princes of Navarre and Condé, dated from before St. Jean d'Angely, Nov. 1569, telling him that the King is prepared to send the Sieur de Marillac, his councillor, to treat; all that he requires before setting out being a safe conduct for himself and ten men. ("Original Letters relative to the Affairs of France," vol. i., pages 24—206.) These letters show in the first place that the Duc d'Anjou, to whom Vieilleville does not refer, was present at the siege. It also shows that Vieilleville and the Court had a share in these attempted negotiations.

ville, exasperated by the loss of ten days, bombarded the town with all his artillery, and soon reduced the besieged to despair. An assault was imminent, in which case a general massacre would have ensued; but Vieilleville, always generous and full of sympathy with courage, sent another message to Piles, who at length bowed to fate. The conditions of surrender were not made more stringent, and the garrison were allowed to leave the town, with their arms, horses, and baggage, upon the understanding that they were not to fight any thing in the cause of religion for three months.

The next day, after a siege lasting seven weeks, Charles IX. entered St. Jean d'Angely by the Porte d'Auluys, accompanied by his mother and Vieilleville, while the Huguenots marched out by the Porte de Mataz, under the command of M. d'Aumale.* The King,

* "Vieilleville," vol. xxxii., pages 233—246, and "Observations," pages 405—407. Liberge and Castelnau, who speak of this siege, are agreed with Carloix as to the operations, except that they make Biron the commander, and not Vieilleville. He was at the siege, but only in a subordinate command.

after having affectionately thanked Vieilleville for his devotion, announced that he had selected him for the Governorship of Brittany, left vacant by the death of M. de Martigues,* and in making over the letters patent, said: "I have given you this appointment so that you may still be able to render me service in your old age, without quitting your property, as I learn that the most remote part of the duchy is not more than ten or twelve leagues off."

This appointment, which enabled him to withdraw from the theatre of the civil war, which he detested, was most acceptable to him, and in thanking the King, he obtained his permission to elect his sons-in-law, M. d'Epinau, as his lieutenant in Brittany, and M. de Dailly as Governor of Metz. The King then went back to Luret to prepare for his departure, while Vieilleville was to remain a month longer at St. Jean d'Angely, in order to repair the fortifications, and settle in the new governor.

* Sebastien de Luxembourg, Vicomte de Martigues, had succeeded his uncle, the Duc d'Etampes.

But Charles IX. had no sooner returned to Paris than the Duc de Montpensier, Governor of Dauphiny, came to ask him for the governorship of Brittany. Upon the King telling him that he had already given it to Vieilleville, the Duke reminded him that it had been originally stipulated that the governorship of this province should always be the appanage of a Prince of the Blood, and that he had reckoned upon it for the Dauphin,* his son. Upon the King reiterating his refusal, the Duke flew into a great passion, and reproached the King with neglecting his own kinsfolk, and finally burst into tears, "after a fashion truly unbecoming, not only for a Prince, but for a man of humble station."

This scene was so painful that the Queen retired, and the King himself felt rather confused. Whereupon Cardinal de Bourbon, who was backed up by the Cardinal de Lorraine and other nobles, urged upon the King that it was right to "have regard for so

* The Prince de Montpensier's son was entitled to the style of Dauphin of Auvergne.

great a Prince, and that even the Marshal himself would not wish to hold his post against the wish of the Duc de Montpensier.”

They insisted so much, that the King, “much against his will, and even with an aching heart,” consented to ask back from Vieilleville his letters-patent. The mission was by no means an enviable one, and Charles selected for it the *Sieur du Peron*,* who was an intimate friend of Vieilleville, impressing upon him that he must relate the whole scene to Vieilleville, and bring him back word what the latter said. In order to mollify him, he was to hand him a sum of ten thousand crowns, and make him all sorts of promises.

The *Sieur du Peron* went direct to St. Jean d'Angely, where the Marshal received him most cordially and asked him to dinner. He was full of spirits, and chatted gaily, and seeing how gloomy and taciturn his guest was, he asked him if any disaster

* *Albert de Gondi*, son of *Antoine de Gondi*, *Sieur du Peron*.

had befallen the army. Du Peron replied that he would gladly give a thousand crowns to any one who would deliver the message he was entrusted with, but that the King had selected him, counting upon their friendship.

This preamble alarmed Vieilleville, whereupon Du Peron related the whole story to him, only omitting mention of the fact that he had a sum of ten thousand crowns on him for Vieilleville. The Marshal, instead of getting angry, burst out laughing, and said that the King was as free to take back as to confer a gift, and that any lackey might have brought the message. "All I regret," he added, "is that M. de Montpensier, who is a valiant prince, should be so bitten by ambition as to resort to the arms of the female sex to reach his aims, and make captive my fortune."

He then handed over the letters to M. du Peron, and said that he would have taken them himself if he had not been obliged to see after the defence of the town, having been advised of a Huguenot attack.

On taking leave, M. du Peron produced the ten thousand crowns, saying that he had kept the funny part for the last; but Vieilleville refused, and told Du Peron that he must take them back. The latter shook his head, and, knowing well what would be the answer, had obtained from the King the following letter:—

“If Marshal de Vieilleville refuses the ten thousand crowns which I send him through the Sieur du Peron, he may remain for ever in his own house, for I shall never like him again, and banish him for ever from my presence and conversation.

“CHARLES.”

The Marshal, feeling “the marvellous and cordial affection” of these words, consented to accept the sum, but, in the presence of M. du Peron, he divided part of it between MM. d’Epinay and Duilly, to compensate them for the States which the tears of the Duc de Montpensier had deprived them of, and gave the rest to various gentlemen of his suite, in the King’s name.

A few days after, their Majesties left Suret for Coulanges-les-Réaulx, where they spent Christmas, and the Marshal, having completed his task at St. Jean d'Angely, returned to Duretal.

Vieilleville was ageing fast. Over sixty, and always on the move, his body began to succumb under the fatigues of the battlefield, while his mind was absorbed by melancholy forebodings. Religious discord and the civil war, which became more bitter every day, were ruining the kingdom, and what with military and civil occupations, Vieilleville could spend but little time among his family in the Château de Duretal, which was beautifully situated upon the Loir at the junction of two hills, with a broad terrace which overlooked the river and the wooded plain beyond.*

In November, 1571, while the King and

* "At the place where there are stone blocks over which the Paris courier passes every week. The pavilions, towers, and galleries are built in a fine style of architecture, each of them having as many stones inside as out."—Frère du Paz. "Les Mémoires de Carloix" do not go beyond the capture of St. Jean d'Angely.

the Court were at Duretal, where they had been spending a month, and had been enjoying the pleasures of the chase in the well-stocked forest of Duretal, Vieilleville was carried off in a few hours by an attack of illness which seemed inexplicable. No wonder, therefore, that in an age when the use of poison was so general, and the accusation of its use still more so, suspicions were engendered. Whether he was in reality struck down by the treachery of someone who meditated fresh massacres and who feared his influence, or whether he was carried off by one of those attacks to which the most vigorous constitutions, when undermined by excessive fatigue, are liable, is a mystery which will never be cleared up.

Augustin du Paz* gives the following account of his end:—

* Augustin du Paz (of the Order of the Preaching Brothers at Nôtre Dame des Rennes), "Histoire Générale de Quelques Familles de Bretagne," page 321; edition of 1720. After the death of Vieilleville, the King conferred the government of Metz upon Albert de Gondi, Comte de Retz.—"Histoire des Bénédictins," vol. iii., page 134. The Scépeaux branch, represented by Vieilleville, became extinct

“During the stay of their Majesties at Duretal, while the Marshal was entertaining the Court, some evildoers jealous of the favour which the King, his master, rightly showed him, and of the familiarities which he honoured him with, had him poisoned on the last day of November, 1571, and he died twelve hours afterwards, the Court still being at Duretal. The King and their Majesties the Queens (Catherine and the wife of Charles IX.) were much grieved, as well they might be, at the loss of this faithful servant and true base of the Crown, very zealous in the service of and for the honour of his sovereigns, sparing neither his energy nor his life. A man of worth if ever there was one, he never permitted any evil, nor

at his death, owing to there being no male issue. We have seen that Marguerite, his eldest daughter, married the Marquis d'Epinau, in Brittany, and his younger, Jeanne, the Comte de Duilly, in Lorraine. From the elder are descended the Ducs de Larochehoucauld, the Seigneurs de Rieux, the Ducs de Montbazou and the Princes de Guéméné. Jeanne Charlotte de Plessis-Liancourt, grand-daughter in the sixth generation of Marguerite de Scépeaux, brought the Duretal property by marriage into the Larochehoucauld family.—“*Vieilleville*,” vol. xxxiii., pages 29—44.

was there anything he abhorred more than treachery. Thus did they by detestable and damnable means make him to give back his spirit to God, after having faithfully served four Kings. He lives now in the heavenly mansion. Amen.”



CONCLUSION.



ENRI II. possessed all the political insufficiency of his father without having any of his grander characteristics. That personal energy which is the prime virtue of all lofty situations was wanting in him, and his very virtues were obscured by the vices of others. An absolute tool in the hands of his favourites, he allowed them to plunder France as well as himself. During his reign, dilapidation and waste reached proportions hitherto unknown, and the kingdom was put to ransom as if it had been a conquered country, and brought to the verge of ruin. Not only were all the taxes increased, but the multiplication and sale of financial and judicial appointments,

the re-purchase on behalf of the Crown of permanent annuities and seigneurial rights, the restitution in return for money of the privilege of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the forced loans, and other such transactions, threw the whole social machine into disorder without satisfying the insatiable appetites of the harpies. In spite of these many exactions, the treasury was always empty, and the public services were constantly suffering in consequence.

Owing to these encroachments of the Crown, the institutions of ancient France, which had already received a serious shock in the reign of François I., were still further weakened, and the incessant progress of the Reformation doctrines, not in any way checked by an intermittent persecution, only added to the disorganization. So much incapacity, weakness, and puerility in the management of public affairs destroyed all respect for the person of the sovereign. Henri II. was in secret the laughing stock of the Court.

The captains, the governors of provinces,

the foreign ambassadors, and even the magistrates and financiers, hearing that his word was of no account, sought for protection among the favourites who reigned in his stead, and the latter took advantage of it to gather around them a whole cluster of creatures who treated them as sovereigns themselves. Thus, under the appearance of unity, factions sprung up and increased in power at the expense of the monarchy. By a singular anomaly, side by side with this social disorganization, the intellectual movement and the development of knowledge made considerable progress. The Royal College continued to be the first in Europe for the study of ancient tongues ; and in spite of the efforts made by the ancient university, which was jealous of its success, the King confirmed it in its privileges.* It is true that the celebrated printer, Henri Estienne, not

* Under pretext of certain disturbances in the streets, the University presented a request to the King that he would subject the Royal College to its regulations. The King refused this request.—“*Mémoire sur le College Royal*,” by Abbé Goujet, page 132 ; edition of 1758.

feeling that he was supported as he should be, went and settled at Geneva.* But his brother, Robert, took his place, and maintained the family reputation in Paris.

In 1556, a decree ordered all publishers to send a copy of any printed work to the King's library, and this edict, in a different form, still exists.

Works of law and jurisprudence also showed considerable progress, and at Paris and Bourges, legists of the highest order met and expounded the Roman laws, classified the French laws, commented the uses and customs, and prepared the public mind for the conception of political in the place of feudal law.

Ramus opened up all branches of know-

* Henri II., not nearly so severe as his father in regard to ecclesiastical encroachments, annulled the letters by which his father exempted the Bibles printed by Henri Estienne from the Sorbonne condemnation. It was upon this that Estienne removed his presses to Geneva.—“Decree of November 25, 1547.”—“National Archives,” No. 628, University of Paris. From Geneva his publications on the literature of antiquity were distributed all over Europe.

ledge to criticism,* while, with Rabelais, criticism was extended to prejudices and manners.† Science, renewed from antiquity in mathematics, made a further development through the discovery of algebra and natural history. Surgery commenced its marvellous operations, and military and civil engineering, passing from Italy into France, made itself manifest in the art of siege work, the cutting of canals, and the making of roads. The French language continued its progress, representing in Amyot the type of simple narrative, and in Calvin a concise simplicity, a clearness, and a force which make his works a school in themselves. Michel Montaigne was writing his *Essays*, not published till 1580, and La Boëtie his famous discourse.

* Ramus was much persecuted by the Faculty of Theology. Letter from Cardinal de Lorraine denouncing his doctrines.—“National Archives,” No. 632; “Archives of the Empire,” MS. 73.

† The printer was forbidden, in 1552, to offer for sale the fourth book of “*Pantagruel*.” This work had already been prohibited by the Parliament on March 15, 1552.—“National Archives,” No. 630.

Poetry did not lose any of its privileges at Court, where Ronsard took the place of Marot. Young and handsome, and of noble birth, his amorous adventures, his remote travels, his shipwrecks, and his campaigns, made a hero of him from his youth. Premature deafness causing him to turn his attention to study, he shut himself up for seven years in the College of Coqueret, and, endowed with a prodigious facility, he quitted it with the complete mastery of the languages and the works of antiquity. His first efforts elicited an acknowledgment of his genius. All the young poets of the day, such as Joachim du Bellay, who wrote the treatise called "Illustration de la Langue Française," Remi Belleau, Antoine de Baïf, Thiard, Muret, Jodelle, and others, followed him to the Court. Grouped together, under the name of the Pleiad, they formed a new school, which had not so much as its objective the development of the natural French language, as the introduction into it of the beauties of antiquity. The Pleiad affected to disdain Villon and Marot, and the King's sister, Marguerite, afterwards

Duchess of Savoy, followed the example of her aunt and became their Egeria, gradually persuading the King, who with St. Gelais had for a long time remained true to the old tradition, to embrace the new faith. Great was the exultation of its disciples, and the "Floral Games" proclaim Ronsard to be the Prince of Poets, and treat him as if he were a Homer or a Virgil. Every versifier had a compliment for him, and even the better-balanced minds did him homage; L'Hôpital saying that there was nothing to pick and choose in his works, as "the whole of them are admirable;" while De Thou, comparing his birth to the disaster of Pavia, saw in it a compensation for France.

The creation of a literary theatre, which was destined to assume such a brilliant development a century later, dates from this period. Very curious was the origin of the theatre in France, as it was the spontaneous outcome of the natural attraction which scenic representations have for humanity, and this in the Middle Ages, when religion was all-powerful. First of all, we have the Fêtes

des Fous, the Fêtes des Anes, and so forth; and then follow the processions of the Crusaders returning from the East, the bourdon in their hand, and scallops in their hats, chanting in chorus the Passion and other sacred narratives, as they marched slowly through the streets, filled with eager and awe-struck crowds. At the end of the fourteenth century, the first regular troupe of actors was formed in the village of St. Maur-des-Fossés, near Vincennes, to represent mystery plays by the transformation of singing into mimic action. A decree of Charles VI. (September 4, 1402), constituted them into what was called the Brotherhood of the Passion (Confrérie de la Passion), with an exclusive monopoly for Paris and the neighbourhood. A similar course was adopted in the provinces, and these different troupes were indifferently recruited from among the burgesses, merchants, ushers of the Châtelet, locksmiths, masons, and even among the ecclesiastics, who condescended to comedy in their leisure hours.*

* On July 3, 1473, the Curé of St. Victor de Metz, nearly died, while nailed to the cross to represent our Lord ;

The representations took place on Sunday, before or after church, the hours of which were so altered as to allow the congregation to witness this edifying spectacle.

The Brotherhood of the Passion, which at first played at the Trinity Hospital, afterwards occupied the Hôtel de Flandre, where it continued to give its representations up to the middle of the sixteenth century, though they had fallen off very much.

From the very first, popular farces and sacred mysteries were mixed up together. At the end of the reign of St. Louis, the professional jugglers, male and female, had introduced into their performances feats of strength and dancing animals.* In the fifteenth century, two lay companies were formed, specially with a view to playing farces, one being the *Basoche*, composed of

and in the same piece, Jean de Nicey, chaplain at Métrange, took the part of Judas.—“Histoire de Lorraine de Don Calmet,” quoted by the “Revue Retrospective,” vol. iv.

* They were dispensed from payment of toll on the bridges upon the condition that they made their animals dance before the toll-keeper, whence the popular saying, “Monnaie de Singe.”

lawyers' clerks, and the other the *Enfants sans Souci*, consisting of wealthy young men who wanted to amuse themselves. Their pieces were called *moralités*, or *sotties*, according as to whether they had the pretension to give lessons of morality, or whether they merely sought to ridicule folly.*

As religious faith declined, the public gradually deserted the mystery - plays in favour of the farces, and the *Confréries de la Passion*, in order to regain popular favour, then introduced into religious history all sorts of grotesque and libertine incidents. This caused serious scandal to the pious, and gave the Reformers an opportunity for the most bitter criticism.† The clergy complained very much, and in the winter of

* One of the most famous is that of Patelin, which dates from 1474. These companies needed a special licence for each of their plays, which were generally given upon an open-air platform.

† Among other successful pieces was the "Actes des Apôtres," by the Brothers Gréban, a popular play, the representation of which extended over forty days, which contained fifty thousand lines, and required five hundred actors and supernumeraries, the latter of whom were recruited by the public crier from the streets.

1541, the representations, which had never been so brilliant, were marked by such scenes of disorder that Parliament intervened. The players of the "Confrèrie" then left the Hôtel de Flandre and migrated to the Hôtel de Bourgoyne, in the Rue Mauconseil, and an edict forbade them to play any more mysteries taken from Holy Writ, but only secular and decent subjects.* Just at the time that the religious theatre, so to call it, was dying out, the literary theatre made its first appearance, with Jodelle and other members of the Pleiad, the first pieces being translations and adaptations from the ancients, such as "Cléopatre," "Medée," and "Antigone." There was nothing original about them, but they opened the way, and "Cléopatre," Jodelle's first tragedy, represented in 1552 at the Hôtel de Reims before Henry II., his Court, and all the learned

* It was under this new form that they existed, until an edict of Louis XIV. withdrew their privilege in 1676, and fused them in 1680 with Molière's troupe, the members of which then took the title of "Comedians in Ordinary to the King." They then settled at the Etoile Tennis-Court, Rue des Fossés-St. Germain.

men of the Collège de France, excited great enthusiasm. The principal rôles were taken by the poets themselves and the men of letters, and in the evening, authors and actors went off together to sup at Arcueil, the goat of classic antiquity, adorned with flowers and ivy, being brought into the banqueting-room and presented to the triumphant poet. Bœiff, speaking in Greek, no doubt, with a strong dash of French about it, chanted a pean of triumph, and so Athens was brought to life again.*

The plastic arts, on the contrary, reverted during the same period to the more truly French ideal which they had lost. The conventional character of decorative painting, introduced by the Italians, had already commenced, towards the close of the previous reign, to fatigue the public, and as this feeling became more accentuated, the Italian artists, falling into discredit, one by one

* "Revue Retrospective," vol. iv.—"Histoire du Théâtre Français," by the Brothers Parfait.—"Poésie et Théâtre au Seizième Siècle," by Sainte-Beuve.

returned to their native country.* The French artists were compelled either to imitate or to enter the service of some noble,† many of them finding occupation at Fontainebleau. Thus a return was made to the old Clouet school, that of portrait painting; and in 1551, François Clouet, who had worthily inherited his father's post and his method of painting, was working at his famous full-length portrait of Henri II., while as the artists of that day were not above doing the smallest details, he at the same time painted his crescents and mottoes. The change which had occurred in public opinion may be measured by the fact, that all the poets of the day, Ronsard among them,‡ sang the

* Primaticcio and Dell' Abbate, however, remained at Fontainebleau till 1570, as their names are to be seen in the registry of baptisms as godfathers at that date.—“Revue des Arts,” Comte de la Borde, vol. i., page 706.

† A letter from the Queen of Navarre to the Chancellor d'Alençon instructs him to engage in her service the brother of “Jeannet, the King's painter.” She and her husband will each give him one hundred livres as wages.—“Lettres Inédites,” vol. I., page 252.

‡ “Œuvres Complètes,” vol. i., page 556. Edition of 1623.

praises of Clouet, whereas none of them had alluded to any of his predecessors.

The polychromic art, which had appeared in Italy about the middle of the fifteenth century with Della Robbia, had been introduced into France by one of his grand-nephews, Jerome, son of Andrea, brought into the country by François I.* It was under the inspiration of this artist and that of the Prince himself, that the Château de Madrid was built, in what was then an entirely new style of architecture. An elegant edifice, with arcades, and everywhere open to the light, it formed a curious contrast to the heavy and massive monuments of the Middle Ages, the thick walls and narrow windows of which were designed with a special view to defensive purposes. The Château de Madrid, on the contrary, presented quite a fairy-like appearance, with its sculptured stonework

° Della Robbia, who seems to have derived his method from Arab potters, had founded with his two nephews, Andrea and Simone, a studio where the work executed in common bore only a family mark. The first document which mentions enamelled stones is dated 1646.

ornamented with coloured enamels from the base to the summit.

The work having been interrupted by the King's death, Della Robbia returned to Italy, having been got rid of by Philibert Delorme; but, curiously enough, it was just at this epoch that Bernard Palissy created anew the polychromic art, without borrowing anything from his predecessors, and, through his influence this mode of ornamentation was again adopted in the public buildings.

Philibert Delorme and Pierre Lescot continued to direct the public works commenced in the last reign, such as the Louvre, the Hôtel de Ville, the Châteaux of Vincennes, St. Leger, the Tournelles, Anet, Ecouen, and others.

Sculpture completed the work of architecture, with such chisels as those of Jean-Goujon, Germain Pilon, and Cousin; and in their capable hands busts, statues, and allegorical groups, representing historical and religious scenes, together with many other forms of ornamentation, were to be seen

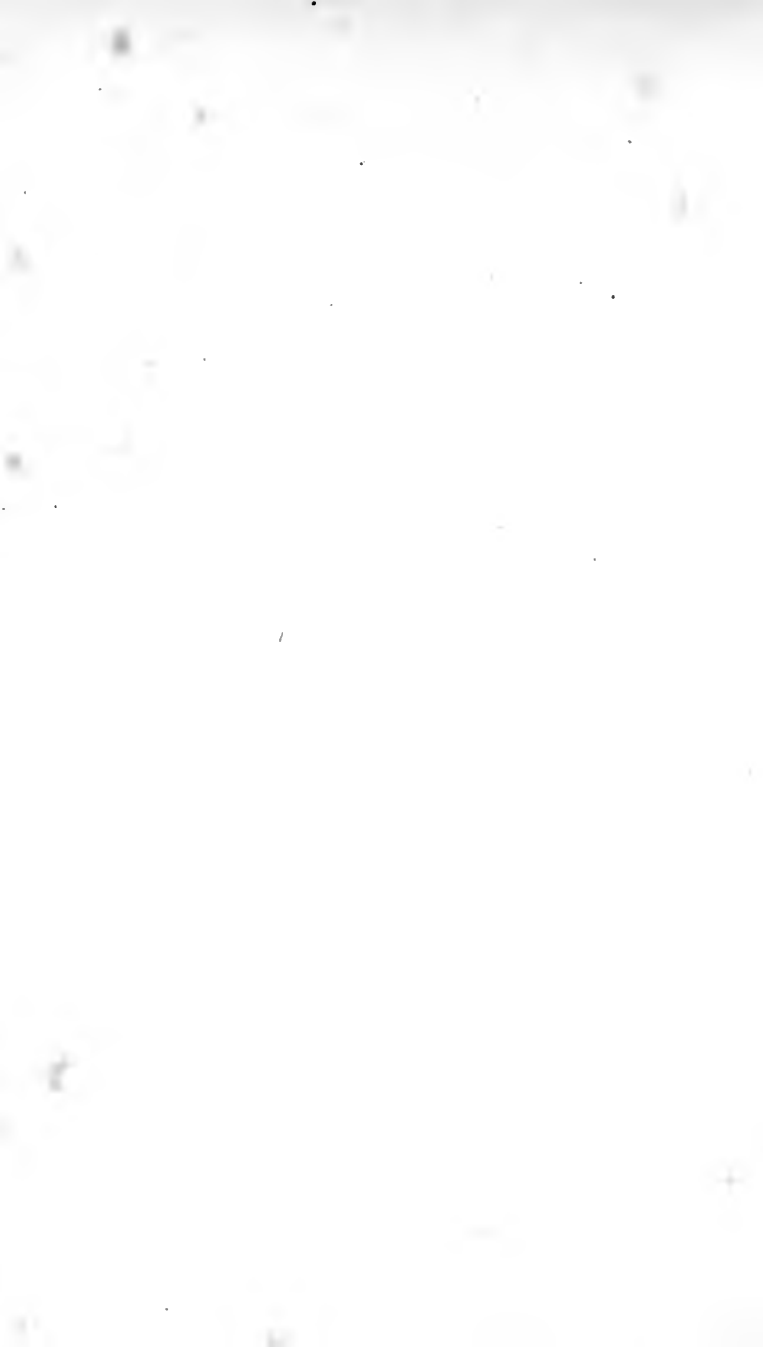
everywhere.* There was a general enthusiasm to follow the King's example, Diane and Montmorency being among the first to copy him; and every Prince and noble had his architect, sculptor, stone-cutter, painter, gilder, and image-maker attached to his household. Art held the first place in every department of life — in dress, dwelling-houses, ceremonies, and public festivals—and to François I. belongs the glory of having given the impetus to this grand movement, while Henri II. has the credit of having followed it.

At the same time, if art can charm, embellish, and elevate the life of a nation, it does not constitute that life itself. Moral and political order are the true sources of national life, and when its forces are not

* The façade of the Louvre clock-tower, the Salle des Cent-Suisses, the horse-shoe courtyard at Fontainebleau, the Fontaine des Innocents, the tomb of the Valois at St. Denis, "The Three Graces"—so celebrated, and so often imitated—the "Quatre Vertus Cardinales," "Diane Chasseresse," the tomb of Philippe de Chabot, belong to this epoch. Then there was a whole array of gods and goddesses, naiads and nymphs, side by side with saints, evangelists, and funereal figures.

renewed, they become exhausted. It is in vain that the ruin is then disguised under a brilliant surface; it continues its slow but inevitable progress until the day arrives when the edifice totters to the ground. So it was to be with ancient France.

THE END.



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