Historical Tales, Vol 5 (of 15) eBook

Historical Tales, Vol 5 (of 15) by Charles W. Morris

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[Illustration: *Maximilian receiving Venetian delegation*.]

HERMANN, THE HERO OF GERMANY.

In the days of Augustus, the emperor of Rome in its golden age of prosperity, an earnest effort was made to subdue and civilize barbarian Germany. Drusus, the step-son of the emperor, led the first army of invasion into this forest-clad land of the north, penetrating deeply into the country and building numerous forts to guard his conquests. His last invasion took him as far as the Elbe. Here, as we are told, he found himself confronted by a supernatural figure, in the form of a woman, who waved him back with lofty and threatening air, saying, “How much farther wilt thou advance, insatiable Drusus? It is not thy lot to behold all these countries. Depart hence! the term of thy deeds and of thy life is at hand.” Drusus retreated, and died on his return.

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Tiberius, his brother, succeeded him, and went far to complete the conquest he had begun. Germany seemed destined to become a Roman province. The work of conquest was followed by efforts to civilize the free-spirited barbarians, which, had they been conducted wisely, might have led to success. One of the Roman governors, Sentius, prefect of the Rhine, treated the people so humanely that many of them adopted the arts and customs of Rome, and the work of overcoming their barbarism was well begun. He was succeeded in this office by Varus, a friend and confidant of the emperor, but a man of very different character, and one who not only lacked military experience and mental ability, but utterly misunderstood the character of the people he was dealing with. They might be led, they could not be driven into civilization, as the new prefect was to learn.

All went well as long as Varus remained peacefully in his head-quarters, erecting markets, making the natives familiar with the attractive wares of Rome, instructing them in civilized arts, and taking their sons into the imperial army. All went ill when he sought to hasten his work by acts of oppression, leading his forces across the Weser into the land of the Cherusci, enforcing there the rigid Roman laws, and chastising and executing free-born Germans for deeds which in their creed were not crimes. Varus, who had at first made himself loved by his kindness, now made himself hated by his severity. The Germans brooded over their wrongs, awed by the Roman army, which consisted of thirty thousand picked men, strongly intrenched, their camps being impregnable to their undisciplined foes. Yet the high-spirited barbarians felt that this army was but an entering wedge, and that, if not driven out, their whole country would gradually be subdued.

A patriot at length arose among the Cherusci, determined to free his country from the intolerable Roman yoke. He was a handsome and athletic youth, Arminius, or Hermann as the Germans prefer to name him, of noble descent, and skilled alike in the arts of war and of oratory, his eloquence being equal to his courage. He was one of the sons of the Germans who had served in the Roman armies, and had won there such distinction as to gain the honors of knighthood and citizenship. Now, perceiving clearly the subjection that threatened his countrymen, and filled with an ardent love of liberty, he appeared among them, and quickly filled their dispirited souls with much of his own courage and enthusiasm. At midnight meetings in the depths of the forests a conspiracy against Varus and his legions was planned, Hermann being the chosen leader of the perilous enterprise.

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It was not long before this conspiracy was revealed. The German control over the Cherusci had been aided by Segestus, a treacherous chief, whose beautiful and patriotic daughter, Thusnelda, had given her hand in marriage to Hermann, against her father's will. Filled with revengeful anger at this action, and hoping to increase his power, Segestus told the story of the secret meetings, which he had discovered, to Varus, and bade him beware, as a revolt against him might at any moment break out. He spoke to the wrong man. Pride in the Roman power and scorn of that of the Germans had deeply infected the mind of Varus, and he heard with incredulous contempt this story that the barbarians contemplated rising against the best trained legions of Rome.

Autumn came, the autumn of the year 9 A.D. The long rainy season of the German forests began. Hermann decided that the time had arrived for the execution of his plans. He began his work with a deceitful skill that quite blinded the too-trusting Varus, inducing him to send bodies of troops into different parts of the country, some to gather provisions for the winter supply of the camps, others to keep watch over some tribes not yet subdued. The Roman force thus weakened, the artful German succeeded in drawing Varus with the remainder of his men from their intrenchments, by inducing one of the subjected tribes to revolt.

The scheme of Hermann had, so far, been completely successful. Varus, trusting to his representations, had weakened his force, and now prepared to draw the main body of his army out of camp. Hermann remained with him to the last, dining with him the day before the starting of the expedition, and inspiring so much confidence in his faithfulness to Rome that Varus refused to listen to Segestus, who earnestly entreated him to take Hermann prisoner on the spot. He even took Hermann's advice, and decided to march on the revolted tribe by a shorter than the usual route, oblivious to the fact that it led through difficult mountain passes, shrouded in forests and bordered by steep and rocky acclivities.

The treacherous plans of the patriotic German had fully succeeded. While the Romans were toiling onward through the straitened passes, Hermann had sought his waiting and ambushed countrymen, to whom he gave the signal that the time for vengeance had come. Then, as if the dense forests had borne a sudden crop of armed men, the furious barbarians poured out in thousands upon the unsuspecting legionaries.

A frightful storm was raging. The mountain torrents, swollen by the downpour of rain, over—flowed their banks and invaded the passes, along which the Romans, encumbered with baggage, were wearily dragging onward in broken columns. Suddenly, to the roar of winds and waters, was added the wild war-cry of the Germans, and a storm of arrows, javelins, and stones hurtled through the disordered ranks, while the barbarians, breaking from the woods, and rushing downward from the heights, fell upon the legions with sword and battle-axe, dealing death with every blow.

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Only the discipline of the Romans saved them from speedy destruction. With the instinct of their training they hastened to gather into larger bodies, and their resistance, at first feeble, soon became more effective. The struggle continued until night-fall, by which time the surviving Romans had fought their way to a more open place, where they hastily intrenched. But it was impossible for them to remain there. Their provisions were lost or exhausted, thousands of foes surrounded them, and their only hope lay in immediate and rapid flight.

Sunrise came. The soldiers had recovered somewhat from the fatigue of the day before. Setting fire to what baggage remained in their hands, they began a retreat fighting as they went, for the implacable enemy disputed every step. The first part of their route lay through an open plain, where they marched in orderly ranks. But there were mountains still to pass, and they quickly found themselves in a wooded and pathless valley, in whose rugged depths defence was almost impossible. Here they fell in thousands before the weapons of their foes. It was but a small body of survivors that at length escaped from that deadly defile and threw up intrenchments for the night in a more open spot.

With the dawn of the next day they resumed their progress, and were at no great distance from their stronghold of Aliso when they found their progress arrested by fresh tribes, who assailed them with murderous fury. On they struggled, fighting, dying, marking every step of the route with their dead. Varus, now reduced to despair, and seeing only slaughter or captivity before him, threw himself on his sword, and died in the midst of those whom his blind confidence had led to destruction. Of the whole army only a feeble remnant reached Aliso, which fort they soon after abandoned and fought their way to the Rhine. While this was going on, the detachments which Varus had sent out in various directions were similarly assailed, and met the same fate as had overtaken the main body of the troops.

[Illustration: *Return of Hermann after his victory over the Romans*.]

No more frightful disaster had ever befallen the Roman arms. Many prisoners had been taken, among them certain judges and lawyers, who were the chief objects of Hermann’s hate, and whom he devoted to a painful death. He then offered sacrifices to the gods, to whom he consecrated the booty, the slain, and the leading prisoners, numbers of them being slain on the altars of his deities. These religious ceremonies completed, the prisoners who still remained were distributed among the tribes as slaves. The effort of Varus to force Roman customs and laws upon the Germans had led to a fearful retribution.

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When the news of this dreadful event reached Rome, that city was filled with grief and fear. The heart of Augustus, now an old man, was stricken with dismay at the slaughter of the best soldiers of the empire. With neglected dress and person he wandered about the rooms and halls of the palace, his piteous appeal, “Varus, give me back my legions!” showing how deeply the disaster had pierced his soul. Hasty efforts were at once made to prevent the possible serious consequences of the overthrow of the slain legions. The Romans on the Rhine intrenched themselves in all haste. The Germans in the imperial service were sent to distant provinces, and recruits were raised in all parts of the country, their purpose being to protect Gaul from an invasion by the triumphant tribes. Yet so great was the fear inspired by the former German onslaughts, and by this destructive outbreak, that only threats of death induced the Romans to serve. As it proved, this defensive activity was not needed. The Germans, satisfied, as it seemed, with expelling the Romans from their country, destroyed their forts and military roads, and settled back into peace, with no sign of a desire to cross the Rhine.

For six years peace continued. Augustus died, and Tiberius became emperor of Rome. Then, in the year 14 A.D., an effort was made to reconquer Germany, an army commanded by the son of Drusus, known to history under the name of Germanicus, attacking the Marsi, when intoxicated and unarmed after a religious feast. Great numbers of the defenceless tribesmen were slain, but the other tribes sprung to arms and drove the invader back across the Rhine.

In the next year Hermann was again brought into the fray. Segestus had robbed him of his wife, the beautiful patriot Thusnelda, who hitherto had been his right hand in council in his plans against the Roman foe. Hermann besieged Segestus to regain possession of his wife, and pressed the traitor so closely that he sent his son Sigismund to Germanicus, who was again on the German side of the Rhine, imploring aid. The Roman leader took instant advantage of this promising opportunity. He advanced and forced Hermann to raise the siege, and himself took possession of Thusnelda, who was destined soon afterwards to be made the leading feature in a Roman triumph. Segestus was rewarded for his treason, and was given lands in Gaul, his life being not safe among the people he had betrayed. As for the daughter whom he had yielded to Roman hands, her fate troubled little his base soul.

Thusnelda is still a popular character in German legend, there being various stories extant concerning her. One of these relates that, when she lay concealed in the old fort of Schellenpyrmont, she was warned by the cries of a faithful bird of the coming of the Romans, who were seeking stealthily to approach her hiding-place.

The loss of his beloved wife roused Hermann’s heroic spirit, and spread indignation among the Germans, who highly esteemed the noble-hearted consort of their chief. They rose hastily in arms, and Hermann was soon at the head of a large army, prepared to defend his country against the invading hosts of the Romans. But as the latter

proved too strong to face in the open field, the Germans retreated with their families and property, the country left by them being laid waste by the advancing legions.

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Germanicus soon reached the scene of the late slaughter, and caused the bones of the soldiers of Varus to be buried. But in doing this he was obliged to enter the mountain defiles in which the former army had met its fate. Hermann and his men watched the Romans intently from forest and hilltop. When they had fairly entered the narrow valleys, the adroit chief appeared before them at the head of a small troop, which retreated as if in fear, drawing them onward until the whole army had entered the pass.

Then the fatal signal was given, and the revengeful Germans fell upon the legionaries of Germanicus as they had done upon those of Varus, cutting them down in multitudes. But Germanicus was a much better soldier than Varus. He succeeded in extricating the remnant of his men, after they had lost heavily, and in making an orderly retreat to his ships, which awaited him upon the northern coast whence he had entered the country. There were two other armies, one of which had invaded Germany from the coast of Friesland, and was carried away by a flood, narrowly escaping complete destruction. The third had entered from the Rhine. This was overtaken by Hermann while retreating over the long bridges which the Romans had built across the marshes of Muensterland, and which were now in a state of advanced decay. Here it found itself surrounded by seemingly insuperable dangers, being, in part of its route, shut up in a narrow dell, into which the enemy had turned the waters of a rapid stream. While defending their camp, the waters poured upon the soldiers, rising to their knees, and a furious tempest at the same time burst over their heads. Yet discipline, again prevailed. They lost heavily, but succeeded in cutting their way through their enemies and reaching the Rhine.

In the next year, 17 A.D., Germanicus again invaded Germany, sailing with a thousand ships through the northern seas and up the Ems. Flavus, the brother of Hermann, who had remained in the service of Rome, was with him, and addressed his patriotic brother from the river-side, seeking to induce him to desert the German cause, by painting in glowing colors the advantage of being a Roman citizen. Hermann, furious at his desertion of his country, replied to him with curses, as the only language worthy to use to a traitor, and would have ridden across the stream to kill him, but that he was held back by his men.

A battle soon succeeded, the Germans falling into an ambuscade artfully laid by the Roman leader, and being defeated with heavy loss. Germanicus raised a stately monument on the spot, as a memorial of his victory. The sight of this Roman monument in their country infuriated the Germans, and they attacked the Romans again, this time with such fury, and such slaughter on both sides, that neither party was able to resume the fight when the next day dawned. Germanicus, who had been very severely handled, retreated to his ships and set sail. On his voyage the heavens appeared to conspire against him. A tempest arose in which most of the vessels were wrecked and many of the legionaries lost. When he returned to Rome, shortly afterwards, a fort on the Taunus was the only one which Rome possessed in Germany. Hermann had cleared his country of the foe. Yet Germanicus was given a triumph, in which Thusnelda walked, laden with chains, to the capitol.

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The remaining events in the life of this champion of German liberty were few. While the events described had been taking place in the north of Germany, there were troubles in the south. Here a chieftain named Marbodius, who, like Hermann, had passed his youth in the Roman armies, was the leader of several powerful tribes. He lacked the patriotism of Hermann, and sought to ally himself with the Romans, with the hope of attaining to supreme power in Germany.

Hermann sought to rouse patriotic sentiments in his mind, but in vain, and the movements of Marbodius having revealed his purposes, a coalition was formed against him, with Hermann at its head. He was completely defeated, and southern Germany saved from Roman domination, as the northern districts had already been.

Peace followed, and for several years Hermann remained general-in-chief of the German people, and the acknowledged bulwark of their liberties. But envy arose; he was maligned, and accused of aiming at sovereignty, as Marbodius had done; and at length his own relations, growing to hate and fear him, conspired against and murdered him.

Thus ignobly fell the noblest of the ancient Germans, the man whose patriotism saved the realm of the Teutonic tribes from becoming a province of the empire of Rome. Had not Hermann lived, the history of Europe might have pursued a different course, and the final downfall of the colossus of the south been long averted, Germany acting as its bulwark of defence instead of becoming the nursery of its foes.

ALBOIN AND ROSAMOND.

Of the Teutonic invaders of Italy none are invested with more interest than the Lombards,—the Long Beards, to give them their original title. Legend yields us the story of their origin, a story of interest enough to repeat. A famine had been caused in Denmark by a great flood, and the people, to avoid danger of starvation, had resolved to put all the old men and women to death, in order to save the food for the young and strong. This radical proposition was set aside through the advice of a wise woman, named Gambara, who suggested that lots should be drawn for the migration of a third of the population. Her counsel was taken and the migration began, under the leadership of her two sons. These migrants wore beards of prodigious length, whence their subsequent name.

They first entered the land of the Vandals, who refused them permission to settle. This was a question to be decided at sword’s point, and war was declared. Both sides appealed to the gods for aid, Gambara praying to Freya, while the Vandals invoked Odin, who answered that he would grant the victory to the party he should first behold at the dawn of the coming day.

The day came. The sun rose. In front of the Danish host were stationed their women, who had loosened their long hair, and let it hang down over their faces. “Who are these with long beards?” demanded Odin, on seeing these Danish amazons. This settled the question of victory, and also gave the invaders a new name, that of Longobardi,—due, in this legend, to the long hair of the women instead of the long beards of the men. There are other legends, but none worth repeating.

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The story of their king Alboin, with whom we have particularly to deal, begins, however, with a story which may be in part legendary. They were now in hostile relations with the Gepidae, the first nation to throw off the yoke of the Huns. Alboin, son of Audoin, king of the Longobardi, killed Thurismund, son of Turisend, king of the Gepidae, in battle, but forgot to carry away his arms, and thus returned home without a trophy of his victory. In consequence, his stern father refused him a seat at his table, as one unworthy of the honor. Such was the ancient Lombard custom, and it must be obeyed.

The young prince acknowledged the justice of this reproof, and determined to try and obtain the arms which were his by right of victory. Selecting forty companions, he boldly visited the court of Turisend, and openly demanded from him the arms of his son. It was a daring movement, but proved successful. The old king received him hospitably, as the custom of the time demanded, though filled with grief at the loss of his son. He even protected him from the anger of his subjects, whom some of the Lombards had provoked by their insolence of speech. The daring youth returned to his father's court with the arms of his slain foe, and won the seat of honor of which he had been deprived.

Turisend died, and Cunimund, his son, became king. Audoin died, and Alboin became king. And now new adventures of interest occurred. In his visit to the court of Turisend, Alboin had seen and fallen in love with Rosamond, the beautiful daughter of Cunimund. He now demanded her hand in marriage, and as it was scornfully refused him, he revenged himself by winning her honor through force and stratagem. War broke out in consequence, and the Gepidae were conquered, Rosamond falling to Alboin as part of the trophies of victory.

We are told that in this war Alboin sought the aid of Bacan, chagan of the Avars, promising him half the spoil and all the land of the Gepidae in case of victory. He added to this a promise of the realm of the Longobardi, in case he should succeed in winning for them a new home in Italy, which country he proposed to invade.

About fifteen years before, some of his subjects had made a warlike expedition to Italy. Their report of its beauty and fertility had kindled a spirit of emulation in the new generation, and inspired the young and warlike king with ambitious hopes. His eloquence added to their desire. He not only described to them in glowing words the land of promise which he hoped to win, but spoke to their senses as well, by producing at the royal banquets the fairest fruits that grew in that garden land of Europe. His efforts were successful. No sooner was his standard erected, and word sent abroad that Italy was his goal, than the Longobardi found their strength augmented by hosts of adventurous youths from the surrounding peoples. Germans, Bulgarians, Scythians, and others joined in ranks, and twenty thousand Saxon warriors, with their wives and children, added to the great host which had flocked to the banners of the already renowned warrior.

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It was in the year 568 that Alboin, followed by the great multitude of adventurers he had gathered, and by the whole nation of the Longobardi, ascended the Julian Alps, and looked down from their summits on the smiling plains of northern Italy to which his success was thenceforward to give the name of Lombardy, the land of the Longobardi.

Four years were spent in war with the Romans, city after city, district after district, falling into the hands of the invaders. The resistance was but feeble, and at length the whole country watered by the Po, with the strong city of Pavia, fell into the hands of Alboin, who divided the conquered lands among his followers, and reduced their former holders to servitude. Alboin made Pavia his capital, and erected strong fortifications to keep out the Burgundians, Franks, and other nations which were troubling his new-gained dominions. This done, he settled down to the enjoyment of the conquest which he had so ably made and so skilfully defended.

History tells us that the Longobardi cultivated their new lands so skilfully that all traces of devastation soon vanished, and the realm grew rich in its productions. Their freemen distinguished themselves from the other German conquerors by laboring to turn the waste and desert tracts into arable soil, while their king, though unceasingly watchful against his enemies, lived among his people with patriarchal simplicity, procuring his supplies from the produce of his farms, and making regular rounds of inspection from one to another. It is a picture fitted for a more peaceful and primitive age than that turbulent period in which it is set.

But now we have to do with Alboin in another aspect,—his domestic relations, his dealings with his wife Rosamond, and the tragic end of all the actors in the drama of real life which we have set out to tell. The Longobardi were barbarians, and Alboin was no better than his people; a strong evidence of which is the fact that he had the skull of Cunimund, his defeated enemy and the father of his wife, set in gold, and used it as a drinking cup at his banquets.

Doubtless this brutality stirred revengeful sentiments in the mind of Rosamond. An added instance of barbarian insult converted her outraged feelings into a passion for revenge. Alboin had erected a palace near Verona, one of the cities of his new dominion, and here he celebrated his victories with a grand feast to his companions in arms. Wine flowed freely at the banquet, the king emulating, or exceeding, his guests in the art of imbibing. Heated with his potations, in which he had drained many cups of Rhaetian or Falernian wine, he called for the choicest ornament of his sideboard, the gold-mounted skull of Cunimund, and drank its full measure of wine amid the loud plaudits of his drunken guests.

“Fill it again with wine,” he cried; “fill it to the brim; carry this goblet to the queen, and tell her that it is my desire and command that she shall rejoice with her father.”

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Rosamond's heart throbbed with grief and rage on hearing this inhuman request. She took the skull in trembling hands, and murmuring in low accents, "Let the will of my lord be obeyed," she touched it to her lips. But in doing so she breathed a silent prayer, and resolved that the unpardonable insult should be washed out in Alboin's blood.

If she had ever loved her lord, she felt now for him only the bitterness of hate. She had a friend in the court on whom she could depend, Helmichis, the armor-bearer of the king. She called on him for aid in her revenge, and found him willing but fearful, for he knew too well the great strength and daring spirit of the chief whom he had so often attended in battle. He proposed, therefore, that they should gain the aid of a Lombard of unequalled strength, Peredeus by name. This champion, however, was not easily to be won. The project was broached to him, but the most that could be gained from him was a promise of silence.

Failing in this, more shameful methods were employed. Such was Rosamond's passion for revenge that the most extreme measures seemed to her justifiable. Peredeus loved one of the attendants of the queen. Rosamond replaced this frail woman, sacrificed her honor to her vengeance, and then threatened to denounce Peredeus to the king unless he would kill the man who had so bitterly wronged her.

Peredeus now consented. He must kill the king or the king would kill him, for he felt that Rosamond was quite capable of carrying out her threat. Having thus obtained the promise of the instruments of her vengeance, the queen waited for a favorable moment to carry out her dark design. The opportunity soon came. The king, heavy with wine, had retired from the table to his afternoon slumbers. Rosamond, affecting solicitude for his health and repose, dismissed his attendants, closed the palace gates, and then, seeking her spouse, lulled him to rest by her tender caresses.

Finding that he slumbered, she unbolted the chamber door, and urged her confederates to the instant performance of the deed of blood. They entered the room with stealthy tread, but the quick senses of the warrior took the alarm, he opened his eyes, saw two armed men advancing upon him, and sprang from his couch. His sword hung beside him, and he attempted to draw it, but the cunning hand of Rosamond had fastened it securely in the scabbard. The only weapon remaining was a small foot-stool. This he used with vigor, but it could not long protect him from the spears of his assailants, and he quickly fell dead beneath their blows. His body was buried beneath the stairway of the palace, and thus tragically ended the career of the founder of the kingdom of Lombardy.

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But the story of Rosamond's life is not yet at an end. The death of Alboin was followed by another tragic event, which brought her guilty career to a violent termination. The wily queen had not failed to prepare for the disturbances which might follow the death of the king. The murder of Alboin was immediately followed by her marriage with Helmichis, whose ambition looked to no less a prize than the throne of Lombardy. The queen was surrounded by a band of faithful Gepidae, with whose aid she seized the palace and made herself mistress of Verona, the Lombard chiefs flying in alarm. But the assassination of the king who had so often led them to victory filled the Longobardi with indignation, the chiefs mustered their bands and led them against the stronghold of the guilty couple, and they in their turn, were forced to fly for their lives. Helmichis and Rosamond, with her daughter, her faithful Gepidae, and the spoils of the palace, took ship down the Adige and the Po, and were transported in a Greek vessel to the port of Ravenna, where they hoped to find shelter and safety.

Longinus, the Greek governor of Ravenna, gave willing refuge to the fugitives, the more so as the great beauty of Rosamond filled him with admiration. She had not been long there, indeed, before he offered her his hand in marriage. Rosamond, moved by ambition or a return of his love, accepted his offer. There was, it is true, an obstacle in the way. She was already provided with a husband. But the barbarian queen had learned the art of getting rid of inconvenient husbands. Having, perhaps, grown to detest the tool of her revenge, now that the purpose of her marriage with him had failed, she set herself to the task of disposing of Helmichis, this time using the cup instead of the sword.

As Helmichis left the bath he received a wine-cup from the hands of his treacherous wife, and lifted it to his lips. But no sooner had he tasted the liquor, and felt the shock that it gave his system, than he knew that he was poisoned. Death, a speedy death, was in his veins, but he had life enough left for revenge. Seizing his dagger, he pressed it to the breast of Rosamond, and by threats of instant death compelled her to drain the remainder of the cup. In a few minutes both the guilty partners in the death of Alboin had breathed their last.

When Longinus was, at a later moment, summoned into the room, it was to find his late guests both dead upon the floor. The poison had faithfully done its work. Thus ended a historic tragedy than which the stage possesses few of more striking dramatic interest and opportunities for histrionic effect.

THE CAREER OF GRIMOALD.

The Avars, led by Cacan, their king, crossed, in the year 611, the mountains of Illyria and Lombardy, killed Gisulph, the grand duke, with all his adherents, in battle, and laid siege to the city of Friuli, behind whose strong walls Romilda, the widow of Gisulph, had taken refuge. These events formed the basis of the romantic, and perhaps largely legendary, story we have to tell.

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One day, so we are told, Romilda, gazing from the ramparts of the city, beheld Cacan, the young khan of the Avars, engaged in directing the siege. So handsome to her eyes appeared the youthful soldier that she fell deeply in love with him at sight, her passion growing until, in disregard of honor and patriotism, she sent him a secret message, offering to deliver up to him the city on condition of becoming his wife. The khan, though doubtless despising her treachery to her people, was quick to close with the offer, and in a short time Friuli was in his hands.

This accomplished, he returned to Hungary, taking with him Romilda and her children, of whom there were four sons and four daughters. Cacan kept his compact with the traitress, marrying her with the primitive rites of the Hungarians. But her married life was of the shortest. He had kept his word, and such honor as he possessed was satisfied. The morning after his marriage, moved perhaps by detestation of her treachery, he caused the hapless Romilda to be impaled alive. It was a dark end to a dark deed, and the perfidy of the woman had been matched by an equal perfidy on the part of the man.

The children of Romilda were left in the hands of the Avars. Of her daughters, one subsequently married a duke of Bavaria and another a duke of Allemania. The four sons, one of whom was Grimoald, the hero of our story, managed to escape from their savage captors, though they were hotly pursued. In their flight, Grimoald, the youngest, was taken up behind Tafo, the oldest; but in the rapid course he lost his hold and fell from his brother’s horse.

Tafo, knowing what would be the fate of the boy should he be captured, turned and galloped upon him lance in hand, determined that he should not fall alive into the hands of his cruel foes. But Grimoald’s entreaties and Tafo’s brotherly affection induced him to change his resolution, and, snatching up the boy, he continued his flight, the pursuing Avars being now close at hand.

Not far had they ridden before the same accident occurred. Grimoald again fell, and Tafo was now obliged to leave him to his fate, the fierce pursuers being too near to permit him either to kill or save the unlucky boy. On swept Tafo, up swept the Avars, and one of them, halting, seized the young captive, threw him behind him on his horse, and rode on after his fellows.

Grimoald’s peril was imminent, but he was a child with the soul of a warrior. As his captor pushed on in the track of his companions, the brave little fellow suddenly snatched a knife from his belt, and in an instant had stabbed him to the heart with his own weapon Tossing the dead body from the saddle, Grimoald seized the bridle and rode swiftly on, avoiding the Avars, and in the end rejoining his flying brothers. It was a deed worthy the childhood of one who was in time to become a famous warrior.

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The fugitives reached Lombardy, where Tafo was hospitably received by the king, and succeeded his father as Grand Duke of Friuli. Grimoald was adopted by Arigil, Duke of Benevento, in whose court he grew to manhood, and in whose service his courage and military ability were quickly shown. There were wars between Benevento and the Greeks of southern Italy, and in these the young soldier so greatly distinguished himself that on the death of Arigil he succeeded him as Duke of Benevento.

Meanwhile, troubles arose in Lombardy. Tafo had been falsely accused, by an enemy of the queen, of criminal relations with her, and was put to death by the king. Her innocence was afterwards proved, and on the death of Ariowald the Lombards treated her with the greatest respect, and raised Rotharis, her second husband, to the throne. He, too, died, and Aribert, uncle of the queen, was next made king. On his death, his two sons, Bertarit and Godebert, disputed the succession. A struggle ensued between the rival brothers, in the course of which Grimoald was brought into the dispute.

The events here briefly described had taken place while Grimoald was engaged in the Greek wars of his patron, Duke Arigil. When he succeeded the latter in the ducal chair, the struggle between Bertarit and Godebert was going on, and the new Duke of Benevento declared in favor of the latter, who was his personal friend.

A scheme of treachery, of a singular character, put an end to their friendship and to the life of Godebert. A man who was skilled in the arts of dissimulation, and who was secretly in the pay of Bertarit, persuaded Godebert that his seeming friend, Duke Grimoald, was really his enemy, and was plotting his destruction. He told the same story to Grimoald, making him believe that Godebert was his secret foe. In proof of his words he told each of them that the other wore armor beneath his clothes, through fear of assassination by his assumed friend.

The suspicion thus artfully aroused produced the very state of things which the agent of mischief had declared to exist. Each of the friends put on armor, as a protection against treachery from the other, and when they sought to test the truth of the spy's story it seemed fully confirmed. Each discovered that the other wore secret armor, without learning that it had just been assumed.

The two close friends were thus converted by a plotting Iago into distrustful enemies, each fearing and on guard against assassination by the other. The affair ended tragically. Grimoald was no sooner fully convinced of the truth of what had been told him than he slew his supposed enemy, deeming it necessary to save his own life. The dark scheme had succeeded. Treason and falsehood had sown death between two friends.

Bertarit, his rival removed, deemed the throne now securely his. But the truth underlying the tragedy we have described became known, and the Lombards, convinced of the innocence of Grimoald, and scorning the treachery by which he had

been led on to murder, dismissed Bertarit's pretensions and placed Grimoald on the throne. His career had been a strange but highly successful one. From his childhood captivity to the Avars he had risen to the high station of King of Lombardy, a position fairly earned by his courage and ability.

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We are not yet done with the story of this distinguished warrior. Bertarit had taken the field against him, and civil war desolated Lombardy, an unhappy state of affairs which was soon taken advantage of by the foes of the distracted kingdom. The enemy who now appeared in the field was Constans, the Greek emperor, who laid siege to Benevento, hoping to capture it while Grimoald was engaged in hostilities with Bertarit in the north.

Grimoald had left his son, Romuald, in charge of the city. On learning of the siege he despatched a trusty friend and officer, Sesuald by name, with some troops, to the relief of the beleaguered stronghold, proposing to follow quickly himself with the main body of his army.

And now occurred an event nobly worthy of being recorded in the annals of human probity and faithfulness, one little known, but deserving to be classed with those that have become famous in history. When men erect monuments to courage and virtue, the noble Sesuald should not be forgotten.

This brave man fell into the hands of the emperor, who sought to use him in a stratagem to obtain possession of Benevento. He promised him an abundance of wealth and honors if he would tell Romuald that his father had died in battle, and persuade him to surrender the city. Sesuald seems to have agreed, for he was led to the walls of the city that he might hold the desired conference with Romuald. Instead, however, of carrying out the emperor's design, he cried out to the young chief, "Be firm, Grimoald approaches"; then, hastily telling him that he had forfeited his life by those words, he begged him in return to protect his wife and children, as the last service he could render him.

Sesuald was right. Constans, furious at his words, had his head instantly struck off; and then, with a barbarism worthy of the times, had it flung from a catapult into the heart of the city. The ghastly trophy was brought to Romuald, who pressed it to his lips, and deeply deplored the death of his father's faithful friend.

This was the last effort of the emperor. Fearing to await the arrival of Grimoald, he raised the siege and retreated towards Naples, hotly pursued by the Lombards. The army of Grimoald came up with the retreating Greeks, and a battle was imminent, when a Lombard warrior of giant size, Amalong by name, spurring upon a Greek, lifted him from the saddle with his lance, and rode on holding him poised in the air. The sight of this feat filled the remaining Greeks with such terror that they broke and fled, and their hasty retreat did not cease till they had found shelter in Sicily.

After this event Bertarit, finding it useless to contend longer against his powerful and able opponent, submitted to Grimoald. Yet this did not end their hostile relations. The Lombard king, distrusting his late foe, of whose treacherous disposition he already had abundant evidence, laid a plan to get rid of him by murdering him in his bed. This plot

was discovered by a servant of the imperilled prince, who aided his master to escape, and, the better to secure his retreat, placed himself in his bed, being willing to risk death in his lord’s service.

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Grimoald discovered the stratagem of the faithful fellow, but, instead of punishing him for it, he sought to reward him, attempting to attach him to his own service as one whose fidelity would make him valuable to any master. The honest servant refused, however, to desert his old lord for a new service, and entreated so earnestly for permission to join his master, who had taken refuge in France, that Grimoald set him free, doubtless feeling that such faithfulness was worthy of encouragement.

In France Bertarit found an ally in Chlotar II., who took up arms against the Lombards in his aid. Grimoald, however, defeated him by a shrewd stratagem. He feigned to retreat in haste, leaving his camp, which was well stored with provisions, to fall into the hands of the enemy. Deeming themselves victorious, the Franks hastened to enjoy the feast of good things which the Lombards had left behind. But in the midst of their repast Grimoald suddenly returned, and, falling upon them impetuously, put most of them to the sword.

In the following year (666 A.D.) he defeated another army by another stratagem. The Avars had invaded Lombardy, with an army which far out-numbered the troops which Grimoald could muster against them. In this state of affairs he artfully deceived his foes as to the strength of his army by marching and countermarching his men within their view, each time dressed in uniform of different colors, and with varied standards and insignia of war. The invaders, deeming that an army confronted them far stronger than their own, withdrew in haste, leaving Grimoald master of the field.

We are further told of the king of the Lombards whose striking history we have concisely given, that he gave many new laws to his country, and that in his old age he was remarkable for his bald head and long white beard. He died in 671, sixty years after the time when his mother acted the traitress, and suffered miserably for her crime. After his death, the exiled Bertarit was recalled to the throne of Lombardy, and Romuald succeeded his father as Duke of Benevento, the city which he had held so bravely against the Greeks.

WITTEKIND, THE SAXON PATRIOT.

As Germany, in its wars with the Romans, found its hero in the great Arminius, or Hermann; and as England, in its contest with the Normans, found a heroic defender in the valiant Hereward; so Saxony, in its struggle with Charlemagne, gave origin to a great soul, the indomitable patriot Wittekind, who kept the war afoot years after the Saxons would have yielded to their mighty foe, and, like Hereward, only gave up the struggle when hope itself was at an end.

The career of the defender of Saxony bears some analogy to that of the last patriot of Saxon England. As in the case of Hereward, his origin is uncertain, and the story of his life overlaid with legend. He is said to have been the son of Wernekind, a powerful Westphalian chief, brother-in-law of Siegfried, a king of the Danes; yet this is by no

means certain, and his ancestry must remain in doubt. He came suddenly into the war with the great Frank conqueror, and played in it a strikingly prominent part, to sink again out of sight at its end.

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The attempt of Charlemagne to conquer Saxony began in 772. Religion was its pretext, ambition its real cause. Missionaries had been sent to the Saxons during their great national festival at Marclo. They came back with no converts to report. As the Saxons had refused to be converted by words, fire and sword were next tried as assumed instruments for spreading the doctrines of Christ, but really as effective means for extending the dominion of the monarch of the Franks.

In his first campaign in Saxony, Charlemagne marched victoriously as far as the Weser, where he destroyed the celebrated Irminsul, a famous object of Saxon devotion, perhaps an image of a god, perhaps a statue of Hermann that had become invested with divinity. The next year, Charles being absent in Italy, the Saxons broke into insurrection, under the leadership of Wittekind, who now first appears in history. With him was associated another patriot, Alboin, Duke of Eastphalia.

Charles returned in the succeeding year, and again swept in conquering force through the country. But a new insurrection called him once more to Italy, and no sooner had he gone than the eloquent Wittekind was among his countrymen, entreating them to rise in defence of their liberties. A general levy took place, every able man crowded to the ranks, and whole forests were felled to form abatis of defence against a marching enemy.

Again Charles came at the head of his army of veterans, and again the poorly-trained Saxon levies were driven in defeat from his front. He now established a camp in the heart of the country, and had a royal residence built at Paderborn, where he held a diet of the great vassals of the crown and received envoys from foreign lands. Hither came delegates from the humbled Saxons, promising peace and submission, and pledging themselves by oaths and hostages to be true subjects of Charles the Great. But Wittekind came not. He had taken refuge at the court of Siegfried, the pagan king of the Danes, where he waited an opportunity to strike a new blow for liberty.

Not content with their pledges and promises, the conqueror sought to win over his new subjects by converting them to Christianity in the wholesale way in which this work was then usually performed. The Saxons were baptized in large numbers, the proselyting method pursued being, as we are told, that all prisoners of war *must* be baptized, while of the others all who were reasonable *would* be baptized, and the inveterately unreasonable might be *bribed* to be baptized. Doubtless, as a historian remarks, the Saxons found baptism a cool, cleanly, and agreeable ceremony, while their immersion in the water had little effect in washing out their old ideas and washing in new ones.

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The exigencies of war in his vast empire now called Charlemagne to Spain, where the Arabs had become troublesome and needed chastisement. Not far had he marched away when Wittekind was again in Saxony, passing from tribe to tribe through the forests of the land, and with fiery eloquence calling upon his countrymen to rise against the invaders and regain the freedom of which they had been deprived. Heedless of their conversion, disregarding their oaths of allegiance, filled with the free spirit which had so long inspired them, the chiefs and people listened with approval to his burning words, seized their arms, and flew again to war. The priests were expelled from the country, the churches they had built demolished, the castles erected by the Frank monarch taken and destroyed, and the country was laid waste up to the walls of Cologne, its Christian inhabitants being exterminated.

But unyielding as Wittekind was, his great antagonist was equally resolute and persistent. When he had finished his work with the Arabs, he returned to Saxony with his whole army, fought a battle in 779 in the dry bed of the Eder, and in 780 defeated Wittekind and his followers in two great battles, completely disorganizing and discouraging the Saxon bands, and again bringing the whole country under his control. This accomplished, he stationed himself in their country, built numerous fortresses upon the Elbe, and spent the summer of 780 in missionary work, gaining a multitude of converts among the seemingly subdued barbarians. The better to make them content with his rule he treated them with great kindness and affability, and sent among them missionaries of their own race, being the hostages whom he had taken in previous years, and who had been educated in monasteries. All went well, the Saxons were to all appearance in a state of peaceful satisfaction, and Charles felicitated himself that he had finally added Saxony to his empire.

He deceived himself sadly. He did not know the spirit of the free-born Saxons, or the unyielding perseverance of their patriotic leader. In the silent depths of their forests, and in the name of their ancient gods, they vowed destruction to the invading Franks, and branded as traitors all those who professed Christianity except as a stratagem to deceive their powerful enemy. Entertaining no suspicion of the true state of affairs, Charlemagne at length left the country, which he fancied to be fully pacified and its people content. With complete confidence in his new subjects, he commissioned his generals, Geil and Adalgis, to march upon the Slavonians beyond the Elbe, who were threatening France with a new barbarian invasion.

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They soon learned that there was other work to do. In a brief time the irrepressible Wittekind was in the field again, with a new levy of Saxons at his back, and the tranquillity of the land, established at such pains, was once more in peril. Theoderic, one of Charlemagne's principal generals, hastily marched towards them with what men he could raise, and on his way met the army sent to repel the Slavonians. They approached the Saxon host where it lay encamped on the Weser, behind the Sundel mountain, and laid plans to attack it on both sides at once. But jealousy ruined these plans, as it has many other well-laid schemes. The leaders of the Slavonian contingent, eager to rob Theoderic of glory, marched in haste on the Saxons, attacked them in their camp, and were so completely defeated and overthrown that but a moity of their army escaped from the field. The appearance of these fugitives in the camp of Theoderic was the first he knew of the treachery of his fellow generals and their signal punishment.

The story of this dreadful event was in all haste borne to Charlemagne. His army had been destroyed almost as completely as that of Varus on a former occasion, and in nearly the same country. The distressing tidings filled his soul with rage and a bitter thirst for revenge. He had done his utmost to win over the Saxons by lenity and kindness, but this course now seemed to him useless, if not worse than useless. He determined to adopt opposite measures and try the effect of cruelty and severe retribution. Calling together his forces until he had a great army under his command, he marched into Saxony torch and sword in hand, and swept the country with fire and steel. All who would not embrace Christianity were pitilessly exterminated. Thousands were driven into the rivers to be baptized or drowned. Carnage, desolation, and destruction marked the path of the conqueror. Never had a country been more frightfully devastated by the hand of war.

All who were concerned in the rebellion were seized, so far as Charles could lay hands on them. When questioned, they lay all the blame on Wittekind. He was the culprit, they but his instruments. But Wittekind had vanished, the protesting chiefs and people were in the conqueror's hands, and, bent on making an awful example, he had no less than four thousand five hundred of them beheaded in one day. It was a frightful act of vengeance, which has ever since remained an ineradicable blot on the memory of the great king.

[Illustration: *The baptism of Wittekind*.]

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Its effect was what might have been anticipated. Instead of filling the Saxons with terror, it inspired them with revengeful fury. They rose as one man, Wittekind and Alboin at their head, and attacked the French with a fury such as they had never before displayed. The remorseless cruelty with which they had been treated was repaid in the blood of the invaders, and in the many petty combats that took place the hardy and infuriated barbarians proved invincible against their opponents. Even in a pitched battle, fought at Detmold, in which Wittekind led the Saxons against the superior forces of Charlemagne, they held their own against all his strength and generalship, and the victory remained undecided. But they were again brought to battle upon the Hase, and now the superior skill and more numerous army of the great conqueror prevailed. The Saxons were defeated with great slaughter, and the French advanced as far as the Elbe. The war continued during the succeeding year, by the end of which the Saxons had become so reduced in strength that further efforts at resistance would have been madness.

The cruelty which Charlemagne had displayed, and which had proved so signally useless, was now replaced by a mildness much more in conformity with his general character; and the Saxons, exhausted with their struggles, and attracted by the gentleness with which he treated them, showed a general disposition to submit. But Wittekind and his fellow-chieftain Alboin were still at large, and the astute conqueror well knew that there was no security in his new conquest unless they could be brought over. He accordingly opened negotiations with them, requesting a personal conference, and pledging his royal word that they should be dealt with in all faith and honesty. The Saxon chiefs, however, were not inclined to put themselves in the power of a king against whom they had so long and desperately fought without stronger pledge than his bare word. They demanded hostages. Charlemagne, who fully appreciated the value of their friendship and submission, freely acceded to their terms, sent hostages, and was gratified by having the indomitable chiefs enter his palace at Paderborn.

Wittekind was well aware that his mission as a Saxon leader was at an end. The country was subdued, its warriors slain, terrorized, or won over, and his single hand could not keep up the war with France. He, therefore, swore fealty to Charlemagne, freely consented to become a Christian, and was, with his companion, baptized at Attigny in France. The emperor stood his sponsor in baptism, received him out of the font, loaded him with royal gifts, and sent him back with the title of Duke of Saxony, which he held as a vassal of France. Henceforward he seems to have observed good faith to Charlemagne, for his name now vanishes from history, silence in this case being a pledge of honor and peacefulness.

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But if history here lays him down, legend takes him up, and yields us a number of stories concerning him not one of which has any evidence to sustain it, but which are curious enough to be worth repeating. It gives us, for instance, a far more romantic account of his conversion than that above told. This relates that, in the Easter season of 785,—the year of his conversion,—Wittekind stole into the French camp in the garb of a minstrel or a mendicant, and, while cautiously traversing it, bent on spying out its weaknesses, was attracted to a large tent within which Charlemagne was attending the service of the mass. Led by an irresistible impulse, the pagan entered the tent, and stood gazing in spellbound wonder at the ceremony, marvelling what the strange and impressive performance meant. As the priest elevated the host, the chief, with astounded eyes, beheld in it the image of a child, of dazzling and unearthly beauty. He could not conceal his surprise from those around him, some of whom recognized in the seeming beggar the great Saxon leader, and took him to the emperor. Wittekind told Charlemagne of his vision, begged to be made a Christian, and brought over many of his countrymen to the fold of the true church by the shining example of his conversion.

Legend goes on to tell us that he became a Christian of such hot zeal as to exact a bloody atonement from the Frisians for their murder of Boniface and his fellow-priests a generation before. It further tells us that he founded a church at Enger, in Westphalia, was murdered by Gerold, Duke of Swabia, and was buried in the church he had founded, and in which his tomb was long shown. In truth, the people came to honor him as a saint, and though there is no record of his canonization, a saint's day, January 7, is given him, and we are told of miracles performed at his tomb.

So much for the dealings of Christian legend with this somewhat unsaintly personage. Secular legend, for it is probably little more, has contented itself with tracing his posterity, several families of Germany deriving their descent from him, while he is held to have been the ancestor of the imperial house of the Othos. Some French genealogists go so far as to trace the descent of Hugh Capet to this hero of the Saxon woods. In truth, he has been made to some extent the Roland or the Arthur of Saxony, though fancy has not gone so far in his case as in that of the French paladin and the Welsh hero of knight-errantry, for, though he and his predecessor Hermann became favorite characters in German ballad and legend, the romance heroes of that land continued to be the mythical Siegfried and his partly fabulous, partly historical companions of the epical song of the Nibelung.

THE RAIDS OF THE SEA-ROVERS.

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While Central and Southern Europe was actively engaged in wars by land, Scandinavia, that nest of pirates, was as actively engaged in wars by sea, sending its armed galleys far to the south, to plunder and burn wherever they could find footing on shore. Not content with plundering the coasts, they made their way up the streams, and often suddenly appeared far inland before an alarm could be given. Wherever they went, heaps of the dead and the smoking ruins of habitations marked their ruthless course. They did not hesitate to attack fortified cities, several of which fell into their hands and were destroyed. They always fought on foot, but such was their strength, boldness, and activity that the heavy-armed cavalry of France and Germany seemed unable to endure their assault, and was frequently put to flight. If defeated, or in danger of defeat, they hastened back to their ships, from which they rarely ventured far and rowed away with such speed that pursuit was in vain. For a long period they kept the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts of Europe in such terror that prayers were publicly read in the churches for deliverance from them, and the sight of their dragon beaked ships filled the land with terror.

In 845 a party of them assailed and took Paris, from which they were bought off by the cowardly and ineffective method of ransom, seven thousand pounds of silver being paid them. In 853 another expedition, led by a leader named Hasting, one of the most dreaded of the Norsemen, again took Paris, marched into Burgundy, laying waste the country as he advanced, and finally took Tours, to which city much treasure had been carried for safe-keeping. Charles the Bald, who had bought off the former expedition with silver, bought off this one with gold, offering the bold adventurer a bribe of six hundred and eighty-five pounds of the precious metal, to which he added a ton and a half of silver, to leave the country.

From France, Hasting set sail for Italy, where his ferocity was aided by a cunning which gives us a deeper insight into his character. Rome, a famous but mystical city to the northern pagans, whose imaginations invested it with untold wealth and splendor, was the proposed goal of the enterprising Norseman, who hoped to make himself fabulously wealthy from its plunder. With a hundred ships, filled with hardy Norse pirates, he swept through the Strait of Gibraltar and along the coasts of Spain and France, plundering as he went till he reached the harbor of Lucca, Italy.

As to where and what Rome was, the unlettered heathen had but the dimmest conception. Here before him lay what seemed a great and rich city, strongly fortified and thickly peopled. This must be Rome, he told himself; behind those lofty walls lay the wealth which he so earnestly craved; but how could it be obtained? Assault on those strong fortifications would waste time, and perhaps end in defeat. If the city could be won by stratagem, so much the better for himself and his men.

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The shrewd Norseman quickly devised a promising plan within the depths of his astute brain. It was the Christmas season, and the inhabitants were engaged in the celebration of the Christmas festival, though, doubtless, sorely troubled in mind by that swarm of strange-shaped vessels in their harbor, with their stalwart crews of blue-eyed plunderers.

Word was sent to the authorities of the city that the fleet had come thither from no hostile intent, and that all the mariners wished was to obtain the favor of an honorable burial-place for their chieftain, who had just died. If the citizens would grant them this, they would engage to depart after the funeral without injury to their courteous and benevolent friends. The message—probably not expressed in quite the above phrase—was received in good faith by the unsuspecting Lombards, who were glad enough to get rid of their dangerous visitors on such cheap terms, and gratified to learn that these fierce pagans wished Christian burial for their chief. Word was accordingly sent to the ships that the authorities granted their request, and were pleased with the opportunity to oblige the mourning crews.

Not long afterwards a solemn procession left the fleet, a coffin, draped in solemn black, at its head, borne by strong carriers. As mourners there followed a large deputation of stalwart Norsemen, seemingly unarmed, and to all appearance lost in grief. With slow steps they entered the gates and moved through the streets of the city, chanting the death-song of the great Hasting, until the church was reached, and they had advanced along its crowded aisle to the altar, where stood the priests ready to officiate at the obsequies of the expired freebooter.

The coffin was set upon the floor, and the priests were about to break into the solemn chant for the dead, when suddenly, to the surprise and horror of the worshippers, the supposed corpse sprang to life, leaped up sword in hand, and with a fierce and deadly blow struck the officiating bishop to the heart. Instantly the seeming mourners, who had been chosen from the best warriors of the fleet, flung aside their cloaks and grasped their arms, and a carnival of death began in that crowded church.

It was not slaughter, however, that Hasting wanted, but plunder. Rushing from the church, the Norsemen assailed the city, looting with free hand, and cutting down all who came in their way. No long time was needed by the skilful freebooters for this task, and before the citizens could recover from the mortal terror into which they had been thrown, the pagan plunderers were off again for their ships, laden with spoil, and taking with them as captives a throng of women and maidens, the most beautiful they could find.

This daring affair had a barbarous sequel. A storm arising which threatened the loss of his ships, the brutal Hasting gave orders that the vessels should be lightened by throwing overboard plunder and captives alike. Saved by this radical method, the sea-rovers quickly repaid themselves for their losses by sailing up the Rhone, and laying the country waste through many miles of Southern France.

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The end of this phase of Hasting's career was a singular one. In the year 860 he consented to be baptized as a Christian, and to swear allegiance to Charles the Bald of France, on condition of receiving the title of Count of Chartres, with a suitable domain. It was a wiser method of disarming a redoubtable enemy than that of ransoming the land, which Charles had practised with Hasting on a previous occasion. He had converted a foe into a subject, upon whom he might count for defence against those fierce heathen whom he had so often led to battle.

While France, England, and the Mediterranean regions formed the favorite visiting ground of the Norsemen, they did not fail to pay their respects in some measure to Germany, and during the ninth century, their period of most destructive activity, the latter country suffered considerably from their piratical ravages. Two German warriors who undertook to guard the coasts against their incursions are worthy of mention. One of these, Baldwin of the Iron Arm, Count of Flanders, distinguished himself by seducing Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald of France, who, young as she was, was already the widow of two English kings, Ethelwolf and his son Ethelbold. Charles was at first greatly enraged, but afterwards accepted Baldwin as his son-in-law, and made him lord of the district. The second was Robert the Strong, Count of Maine, a valiant defender of the country against the sea-kings. He was slain in a bloody battle with them, near Anvers, in 866. This distinguished warrior was the ancestor of Hugh Capet, afterwards king of France.

For some time after his death the Norsemen avoided Germany, paying their attentions to England, where Alfred the Great was on the throne. About 880 their incursions began again, and though they were several times defeated with severe slaughter, new swarms followed the old ones, and year by year fresh fleets invaded the land, leaving ruin in their paths.

Up the rivers they sailed, as in France, taking cities, devastating the country, doing more damage each year than could be repaired in a decade. Aix-la-Chapelle, the imperial city of the mighty Charlemagne, fell into their hands, and the palace of the great Charles, in little more than half a century after his death, was converted by these marauders into a stable. Well might the far-seeing emperor have predicted sorrow and trouble for the land from these sea-rovers, as he is said to have done, on seeing their many-oared ships from a distance. Yet even his foresight could scarcely have imagined that, before he was seventy years in the grave, the vikings of the north would be stabling their horses in the most splendid of his palaces.

The rovers attacked Metz, and Bishop Wala fell while bravely fighting them before its gates. City after city on the Rhine was taken and burned to the ground. The whole country between Liege, Cologne, and Mayence was so ravaged as to be almost converted into a desert. The besom of destruction, in the hands of the sea-kings, threatened to sweep Germany from end to end, as it had swept the greater part of France.

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The impunity with which they raided the country was due in great part to the indolent character of the monarch. Charles the Fat, as he was entitled, who had the ambitious project of restoring the empire of Charlemagne, and succeeded in combining France and Germany under his sceptre, proved unable to protect his realm from the pirate rovers. Like his predecessor, Charles the Bald of France, he tried the magic power of gold and silver, as a more effective argument than sharpened steel, to rid him of these marauders. Siegfried, their principal leader, was bought off with two thousand pounds of gold and twelve thousand pounds of silver, to raise which sum Charles seized all the treasures of the churches. In consideration of this great bribe the sea-rover consented to a truce for twelve years. His brother Gottfried was bought off in a different method, being made Duke of Friesland and vassal of the emperor.

These concessions, however, did not put an end to the depredations of the Norsemen. There were other leaders than the two formidable brothers, and other pirates than those under their control, and the country was soon again invaded, a strong party advancing as far as the Moselle, where they took and destroyed the city of Treves. This marauding band, however, dearly paid for its depredations. While advancing through the forest of Ardennes, it was ambushed and assailed by a furious multitude of peasants and charcoal-burners, before whose weapons ten thousand of the Norsemen fell in death.

This revengeful act of the peasantry was followed by a treacherous deed of the emperor, which brought renewed trouble upon the land. Eager to rid himself of his powerful and troublesome vassal in Friesland, Charles invited Gottfried to a meeting, at which he had the Norsemen treacherously murdered, while his brother-in-law Hugo was deprived of his sight. It was an act sure to bring a bloody reprisal. No sooner had news of it reached the Scandinavian north than a fire of revengeful rage swept through the land, and from every port a throng of oared galleys put to sea, bent upon bloody retribution. Soon in immense hordes they fell upon the imperial realm, forcing their way in mighty hosts up the Rhine, the Maese, and the Seine, and washing out the memory of Gottfried’s murder in torrents of blood, while the brand spread ruin far and wide.

The chief attack was made on Paris, which the Norsemen invested and besieged for a year and a half. The march upon Paris was made by sea and land, the marauders making Rouen their place of rendezvous. From this centre of operations Rollo—the future conqueror and Duke of Normandy, now a formidable sea-king—led an overland force towards the French capital, and on his way was met by an envoy from the emperor, no less a personage than the Count of Chartres, the once redoubtable Hasting, now a noble of the empire.

“Valiant sirs,” he said to Rollo and his chiefs, “who are you that come hither, and why have you come?”

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“We are Danes,” answered Rollo, proudly; “all of us equals, no man the lord of any other, but lords of all besides. We are come to punish these people and take their lands. And you, by what name are you called?”

“Have you not heard of a certain Hasting,” was the reply, “a sea-king who left your land with a multitude of ships, and turned into a desert a great part of this fair land of France?”

“We have heard of him,” said Rollo, curtly. “He began well and ended badly.”

“Will you submit to King Charles?” asked the envoy, deeming it wise, perhaps, to change the subject.

“We will submit to no one, king or chieftain. All that we gain by the sword we are masters and lords of. This you may tell to the king who has sent you. The lords of the sea know no masters on land.”

Hasting left with his message, and Rollo continued his advance to the Seine. Not finding here the ships of the maritime division of the expedition, which he had expected to meet, he seized on the boats of the French fishermen and pursued his course. Soon afterwards a French force was met and put to flight, its leader, Duke Ragnold, being killed. This event, as we are told, gave rise to a new change in the career of the famous Hasting. A certain Tetbold or Thibaud, of Northman birth, came to him and told him that he was suspected of treason, the defeat of the French having been ascribed to secret information furnished by him. Whether this were true, or a mere stratagem on the part of his informant, it had the desired effect of alarming Hasting, who quickly determined to save himself from peril by joining his old countrymen and becoming again a viking chief. He thereupon sold his countship to Tetbold, and hastened to join the army of Norsemen then besieging Paris. As for the cunning trickster, he settled down into his cheaply bought countship, and became the founder of the subsequent house of the Counts of Chartres.

The siege of Paris ended in the usual manner of the Norseman invasions of France,—-that of ransom. Charles marched to its relief with a strong army, but, instead of venturing to meet his foes in battle, he bought them off as so often before, paying them a large sum of money, granting them free navigation of the Seine and entrance to Paris, and confirming them in the possession of Friesland. This occurred in 887. A year afterwards he lost his crown, through the indignation of the nobles at his cowardice, and France and Germany again fell asunder.

The plundering incursions continued, and soon afterwards the new emperor, Arnulf, nephew of Charles the Fat, a man of far superior energy to his deposed uncle, attacked a powerful force of the piratical invaders near Louvain, where they had encamped after a victory over the Archbishop of Mayence. In the heat of the battle that followed, the

vigilant Arnulf perceived that the German cavalry fought at a disadvantage with their stalwart foes, whose dexterity as foot-soldiers

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was remarkable. Springing from his horse, he called upon his followers to do the same. They obeyed, the nobles and their men-at-arms leaping to the ground and rushing furiously on foot upon their opponents. The assault was so fierce and sudden that the Norsemen gave way, and were cut down in thousands, Siegfried and Gottfried —a new Gottfried apparently—falling on the field, while the channel of the Dyle, across which the defeated invaders sought to fly, was choked with their corpses.

This bloody defeat put an end to the incursions of the Norsemen by way of the Rhine. Thenceforward they paid their attention to the coast of France, which they continued to invade until one of their great leaders, Rollo, settled in Normandy as a vassal of the French monarch, and served as an efficient barrier against the inroads of his countrymen.

As to Hasting, he appears to have returned to his old trade of sea-rover, and we hear of him again as one of the Norse invaders of England, during the latter part of the reign of Alfred the Great.

THE CAREER OF BISHOP HATTO.

We have now to deal with a personage whose story is largely legendary, particularly that of his death, a highly original termination to his career having arisen among the people, who had grown to detest him. But Bishop Hatto played his part in the history as well as in the legend of Germany, and the curious stories concerning him may have been based on the deeds of his actual life. It was in the beginning of the tenth century that this notable churchman flourished as Archbishop of Mayence, and the emperor-maker of his times. In connection with Otho, Duke of Saxony, he placed Louis, surnamed the Child, —for he was but seven years of age,—on the imperial throne, and governed Germany in his name. Louis died in 911, while still a boy, and with him ended the race of Charlemagne in Germany. Conrad, Duke of Franconia, was chosen king to succeed him, but the astute churchman still remained the power behind the throne.

In truth, the influence and authority of the church at that time was enormous, and many of its potentates troubled themselves more about the affairs of the earth than those of heaven. Hatto, while a zealous churchman, was a bold, energetic, and unscrupulous statesman, and raised himself to an almost unlimited power in France and Southern Germany by his arts and influence, Otho of Saxony aiding him in his progress to power. Two of his opponents, Henry and Adelhart, of Babenberg, took up arms against him, and came to their deaths in consequence. Adalbert, the opponent of the Norsemen, was his next antagonist, and Hatto, through his influence in the diet, had him put under the ban of the empire.

Adalbert, however, vigorously resisted this decree, taking up arms in his own defence, and defeating his opponent in the field. But soon, being closely pressed, he retired to his fortress of Bamberg, which was quickly invested and besieged. Here he defended himself with such energy that Hatto, finding that the outlawed noble was not to be easily subdued by force, adopted against him those spiritual weapons, as he probably considered them, in which he was so trained an adept.

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Historians tell us that the priest, with a pretence of friendly purpose, offered to mediate between Adalbert and his enemies, promising him, if he would leave his stronghold to appear before the assembled nobles of the diet, that he should have a free and safe return. Adalbert accepted the terms, deeming that he could safely trust the pledged word of a high dignitary of the church. Leaving the gates of his castle, he was met at a short distance beyond by the bishop, who accosted him in his friendliest tone, and proposed that, as their journey would be somewhat long, they should breakfast together within the castle before starting.

Adalbert assented and returned to the fortress with his smooth-tongued companion, took breakfast with him, and then set out with him for the diet. Here he was sternly called to answer for his acts of opposition to the decree of the ruling body of Germany, and finding that the tide of feeling was running strongly against him, proposed to return to his fortress in conformity with the plighted faith of Bishop Hatto. Hatto, with an aspect of supreme honesty, declared that he had already fulfilled his promise. He had agreed that Adalbert should have a free and safe return to his castle. This had been granted him. He had returned there to breakfast without opposition of any sort. The word of the bishop had been fully kept, and now, as a member of the diet, he felt free to act as he deemed proper, all his obligations to the accused having been fulfilled. Just how far this story accords with the actual facts we are unable to say, but Adalbert, despite his indignant protest, was sentenced to death and beheaded.

Hatto had reached his dignity in the church by secular instead of ecclesiastic influence, and is credited with employing his power in this and other instances with such lack of honor and probity that he became an object of the deepest popular contempt and execration. His name was derided in the popular ballads, and he came to be looked upon as the scapegoat of the avarice and licentiousness of the church in that irreligious mediaeval age. Among the legends concerning him is one relating to Henry, the son of his ally, Otho of Saxony, who died in 912. Henry had long quarrelled with the bishop, and the fabulous story goes that, to get rid of his high-spirited enemy, the cunning churchman sent him a gold chain, so skilfully contrived that it would strangle its wearer.

[Illustration: THE MOUSE-TOWER ON THE RHINE.]

The most famous legend about Hatto, however, is that which tells the manner of his death. The story has been enshrined in poetry by Longfellow, but we must be content to give it in plain prose. It tells us that a famine occurred in the land, and that a number of peasants came to the avaricious bishop to beg for bread. By his order they were shut up in a great barn, which then was set on fire, and its miserable occupants burned to death.

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And now the cup of Hatto's infamy was filled, and heaven sent him retribution. From the ruins of the barn issued a myriad of mice, which pursued the remorseless bishop, ceaselessly following him in his every effort to escape their avenging teeth. At length the wretched sinner, driven to despair, fled for safety to a strong tower standing in the middle of the Rhine, near Bingen, with the belief that the water would protect him from his swarming foes. But the mice swam the stream, invaded the tower, and devoured the miserable fugitive. As evidence of the truth of this story we are shown the tower, still standing, and still known as the Maeusethurm, or Mouse Tower. It must be said, however, that this tradition probably refers to another Bishop Hatto, of somewhat later date. Its utterly fabulous character, of course, will be recognisable by all.

So much for Bishop Hatto and his fate. It may be said, in conclusion, that his period was one of terror and excitement in Germany, sufficient perhaps to excuse the overturning of ideas, and the replacement of conceptions of truth and honor by their opposites. The wild Magyars had invaded and taken Hungary, and were making savage inroads into Germany from every quarter. The resistance was obstinate, the Magyars were defeated in several severe battles, yet still their multitudes swarmed over the borders, and carried terror and ruin wherever they came. These invaders were as ferocious in disposition, as fierce in their onsets, as invincible through contempt of death, and as formidable through their skilful horsemanship, as the Huns had been before them. So rapid were their movements, and so startling the suddenness with which they would appear in and vanish from the heart of the country, that the terrified people came to look upon them as possessed of supernatural powers. Their inhuman love of slaughter and their destructive habits added to the terror with which they were viewed. They are said to have been so bloodthirsty, that in their savage feasts after victory they used as tables the corpses of their enemies slain in battle. It is further said that it was their custom to bind the captured women and maidens with their own long hair as fetters, and drive them, thus bound, in flocks to Hungary.

We may conclude with a touching story told of these unquiet and misery-haunted times. Ulrich, Count of Linzgau, was, so the story goes, taken prisoner by the Magyars, and long held captive in their hands. Wendelgarde, his beautiful wife, after waiting long in sorrow for his return, believed him to be dead, and resolved to devote the remainder of her life to charity and devotion. Crowds of beggars came to her castle gates, to whom she daily distributed alms. One day, while she was thus engaged, one of the beggars suddenly threw his arms around her neck and kissed her. Her attendants angrily interposed, but the stranger waved them aside with a smile, and said,—

"Forbear, I have endured blows and misery enough during my imprisonment without needing more from you; I am Ulrich, your lord."

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Truly, in this instance, charity brought its reward.

THE MISFORTUNES OF DUKE ERNST.

In the reign of Conrad II., Emperor of Germany, took place the event which we have now to tell, one of those interesting examples of romance which give vitality to history. On the death of Henry II., the last of the great house of the Othos, a vast assembly from all the states of the empire was called together to decide who their next emperor should be. From every side they came, dukes, margraves, counts and barons, attended by hosts of their vassals; archbishops, bishops, abbots, and other churchmen, with their proud retainers; Saxons, Swabians, Bavarians, Bohemians, and numerous other nationalities, great and small; all marching towards the great plain between Worms and Mayence, where they gathered on both sides of the Rhine, until its borders seemed covered by a countless multitude of armed men. The scene was a magnificent one, with its far-spreading display of rich tents, floating banners, showy armor, and everything that could give honor and splendor to the occasion.

We are not specially concerned with what took place. There were two competitors for the throne, both of them Conrad by name. By birth they were cousins, and descendants of the emperor Conrad I. The younger of these, but the son of the elder brother, and the most distinguished for ability, was elected, and took the throne as Conrad II. He was to prove one of the noblest sovereigns that ever held the sceptre of the German empire. The election decided, the great assembly dispersed, and back to their homes marched the host of warriors who had collected for once with peaceful purpose.

[Illustration: PEASANT WEDDING PROCESSION.]

Two years afterwards, in 1026, Conrad crossed the Alps with an army, and marched through Italy, that land which had so perilous an attraction for German emperors, and so sadly disturbed the peace and progress of the Teutonic realm. Conrad was not permitted to remain there long. Troubles in Germany recalled him to his native soil. Swabia had broken out in hot troubles. Duke Ernst, step-son of Conrad, claimed Burgundy as his inheritance, in opposition to the emperor himself, who had the better claim. He not only claimed it, but attempted to seize it. With him were united two Swabian counts of ancient descent, Rudolf Welf, or Guelph, and Werner of Kyburg.

Swabia was in a blaze when Conrad returned. He convoked a great diet at Ulm, as the legal means of settling the dispute. Thither Ernst came, at the head of his Swabian men-at-arms, and still full of rebellious spirit, although his mother, Gisela, the empress, begged him to submit and to return to his allegiance.

The angry rebel, however, soon learned that his followers were not willing to take up arms against the emperor. They declared that their oath of allegiance to their duke did not release them from their higher obligations to the emperor and the state, that if their

lord was at feud with the empire it was their duty to aid the latter, and that if their chiefs wished to quarrel with the state, they must fight for themselves.

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This defection left the rebels powerless. Duke Ernst was arrested and imprisoned on a charge of high treason. Eudolf was exiled. Werner, who took refuge in his castle, was besieged there by the imperial troops, against whom he valiantly defended himself for several months. At length, however, finding that his stronghold was no longer tenable, he contrived to make his escape, leaving the nest to the imperialists empty of its bird.

Three years Ernst remained in prison. Then Conrad restored him to liberty, perhaps moved by the appeals of his mother Gisela, and promised to restore him to his dukedom of Swabia if he would betray the secret of the retreat of Werner, who was still at large despite all efforts to take him.

This request touched deeply the honor of the deposed duke. It was much to regain his ducal station; it was more to remain true to the fugitive who had trusted and aided him in his need.

“How can I betray my only true friend?” asked the unfortunate duke, with touching pathos.

His faithfulness was not appreciated by the emperor and his nobles. They placed Ernst under the ban of the empire, and thus deprived him of rank, wealth, and property, reducing him by a word from high estate to abject beggary. His life and liberty were left him, but nothing more, and, driven by despair, he sought the retreat of his fugitive friend Werner, who had taken refuge in the depths of the Black Forest.

Here the two outlaws, deprived of all honest means of livelihood, became robbers, and entered upon a life of plunder, exacting contributions from all subjects of the empire who fell into their hands. They soon found a friend in Adalbert of Falkenstein, who gave them the use of his castle as a stronghold and centre of operations, and joined them with his followers in their freebooting raids.

For a considerable time the robber chiefs maintained themselves in their new mode of life, sallying from the castle, laying the country far and wide under contribution, and returning to the fortress for safety from pursuit. Their exactions became in time so annoying, that the castle was besieged by a strong force of Swabians, headed by Count Mangold of Veringen, and the freebooters were closely confined within their walls. Impatient of this, a sally in force was made by the garrison, headed by the two robber chiefs, and an obstinate contest ensued. The struggle ended in the death of Mangold on the one side and of Ernst and Werner on the other, with the definite defeat and dispersal of the robber band.

Thus ended an interesting episode of mediaeval German history. But the valor and misfortunes of Duke Ernst did not die unsung. He became a popular hero, and the subject of many a ballad, in which numerous adventures were invented for him during his career as an opponent of the emperor and an outlaw in the Black Forest. For the

step-son of an emperor to be reduced to such a strait was indeed an event likely to arouse public interest and sympathy, and for centuries the doings of the robber duke were sung.

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In the century after his death the imagination of the people went to extremes in their conception of the adventures of Duke Ernst, mixing up ideas concerning him with fancies derived from the Crusades, the whole taking form in a legend which is still preserved in the popular ballad literature of Germany. This strange conception takes Ernst to the East, where he finds himself opposed by terrific creatures in human and brute form, they being allegorical representations of his misfortunes. Each monster signifies an enemy. He reaches a black mountain, which represents his prison. He is borne into the clouds by an old man; this is typical of his ambition. His ship is wrecked on the Magnet mountain; a personification of his contest with the emperor. The nails fly out of the ship and it falls to pieces; an emblem of the falling off of his vassals. There are other adventures, and the whole circle of legends is a curious one, as showing the vagaries of imagination, and the strong interest taken by the people in the fortunes and misfortunes of their chieftains.

THE REIGN OF OTHO II.

Otho II., Emperor of Germany,—Otho the Red, as he was called, from his florid complexion,—succeeded to the Western Empire in 973, when in his eighteenth year of age. His reign was to be a short and active one, and attended by adventures and fluctuations of fortune which render it worthy of description. Few monarchs have experienced so many of the ups and downs of life within the brief period of five years, through which his wars extended.

As heir to the imperial title of Charlemagne, he was lord of the ancient palace of the great emperor, at Aix-la-Chapelle, and here held court at the feast of St. John in the year 978. All was peace and festivity within the old imperial city, all war and threat without it. While Otho and his courtiers, knights and ladies, lords and minions, were enjoying life with ball and banquet, feast and frivolity, in true palatial fashion, an army was marching secretly upon them, with treacherous intent to seize the emperor and his city at one full swoop. Lothaire, King of France, had in haste and secrecy collected an army, and, without a declaration of hostilities, was hastening, by forced marches, upon Aix-la-Chapelle.

It was an act of treachery utterly undeserving of success. But it is not always the deserving to whom success comes, and Otho heard of the rapid approach of this army barely in time to take to flight, with his fear-winged flock of courtiers at his heels, leaving the city an easy prey to the enemy. Lothaire entered the city without a blow, plundered it as if he had taken it by storm, and ordered that the imperial eagle, which was erected in the grand square of Charles the Great, should have its beak turned westward, in token that Lorraine now belonged to France.

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Doubtless the great eagle turned creakingly on its support, thus moved by the hand of unkingly perfidy, and impatiently awaited for time and the tide of affairs to turn its beak again to the east. It had not long to wait. The fugitive emperor hastily called a diet of the princes and nobles at Dortmund, told them in impassioned eloquence of the faithless act of the French king, and called upon them for aid against the treacherous Lothaire. Little appeal was needed. The honor of Germany was concerned. Setting aside all the petty squabbles which rent the land, the indignant princes gathered their forces and placed them under Otho's command. By the 1st of October the late fugitive found himself at the head of a considerable army, and prepared to take revenge on his perfidious enemy.

Into France he marched, and made his way with little opposition, by Rheims and Soissons, until the French capital lay before his eyes. Here the army encamped on the right bank of the Seine, around Montmartre, while their cavalry avenged the plundering of Aix-la-Chapelle by laying waste the country for many miles around. The French were evidently as little prepared for Otho's activity as he had been for Lothaire's treachery, and did not venture beyond the walls of their city, leaving the country a defenceless prey to the revengeful anger of the emperor.

The Seine lay between the two armies, but not a Frenchman ventured to cross its waters; the garrison of the city, under Hugh Capet,—Count of Paris, and soon to become the founder of a new dynasty of French kings,—keeping closely within its walls. These walls proved too strong for the Germans, and as winter was approaching, and there was much sickness among his troops, the emperor retreated, after having devastated all that region of France. But first he kept a vow that he had made, that he would cause the Parisians to hear a *Te Deum* such as they had never heard before. In pursuance of this vow, he gathered upon the hill of Montmartre all the clergymen whom he could seize, and forced them to sing his anthem of victory with the full power of their lungs. Then, having burned the suburbs of Paris, and left his lance quivering in the city gate, he withdrew in triumph, having amply punished the treacherous French king. Aix-la-Chapelle fell again into his hands; the eyes of the imperial eagle were permitted once more to gaze upon Germany, and in the treaty of peace that followed Lorraine was declared to be forever a part of the German realm.

Two years afterwards Otho, infected by that desire to conquer Italy which for centuries afterwards troubled the dreams of German emperors, and brought them no end of trouble, crossed the Alps and descended upon the Italian plains, from which he was never to return. Northern Italy was already in German hands, but the Greeks held possessions in the south which Otho claimed, in view of the fact that he had married Theophania, the daughter of the Greek emperor at Constantinople. To enforce this claim he marched upon the Greek cities, which in their turn made peace with the Arabs, with whom they had been at war, and gathered garrisons of these bronzed pagans alike from Sicily and Africa.

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For two years the war continued, the advantage resting with Otho. In 980 he reached Rome, and there had a secret interview with Hugh Capet, whom he sustained in his intention to seize the throne of France, still held by his old enemy Lothaire. In 981 he captured Naples, Taranto, and other cities, and in a pitched battle near Cotrona defeated the Greeks and their Arab allies. Abn al Casem, the terror of southern Italy, and numbers of his Arab followers, were left dead upon the field.

On the 13th of July, 982, the emperor again met the Greeks and their Arab allies in battle, and now occurred that singular adventure and reverse of fortune which has made this engagement memorable. The battle took place at a point near the sea-shore, in the vicinity of Basantello, not far from Taranto, and at first went to the advantage of the imperial forces. They attacked the Greeks with great impetuosity, and, after a stubborn defence, broke through their ranks, and forced them into a retreat, which was orderly conducted.

It was now mid-day. The victors, elated with their success and their hopes of pillage, followed the retreating columns along the banks of the river Corace, feeling so secure that they laid aside their arms and marched leisurely and confidently forward. It was a fatal confidence. At one point in their march the road led between the river and a ridge of serried rocks, which lay silent beneath the mid-day sun. But silent as they seemed, they were instinct with life. An ambuscade of Arabs crouched behind them, impatiently waiting the coming of the unsuspecting Germans.

Suddenly the air pealed with sound, the “Allah il Allah!” of the fanatical Arabs; suddenly the startled eyes of the imperialists saw the rugged rocks bursting, as it seemed, into life; suddenly a horde of dusky warriors poured down upon them with scimitar and javelin, surrounding them quickly on all sides, cutting and slashing their way deeply into the disordered ranks. The scattered troops, stricken with dismay, fell in hundreds. In their surprise and confusion they became easy victims to their agile foes, and in a short time nearly the whole of that recently victorious army were slain or taken prisoners. Of the entire force only a small number broke through the lines of their environing foes.

The emperor escaped almost by miracle. His trusty steed bore him unharmed through the crowding Arabs. He was sharply pursued, but the swift animal distanced the pursuers, and before long he reached the sea-shore, over whose firm sands he guided his horse, though with little hope of escaping his active foes. Fortunately, he soon perceived a Greek vessel at no great distance from the shore, a vision which held out to him a forlorn hope of escape. The land was perilous; the sea might be more propitious; he forced his faithful animal into the water, and swam towards the vessel, in the double hope of being rescued and remaining unknown.

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He was successful in both particulars. The crew willingly took him on board, ignorant of his high rank, but deeming him to be a knight of distinction, from whom they could fairly hope for a handsome ransom. His situation was still a dangerous one, should he become known, and he could not long hope to remain incognito. In truth, there was a slave on board who knew him, but who, for purposes of his own, kept the perilous secret. He communicated by stealth with the emperor, told him of his recognition, and arranged with him a plan of escape. In pursuance of this he told the Greeks that their captive was a chamberlain of the emperor, a statement which Otho confirmed, and added that he had valuable treasures at Rossano, which, if they would sail thither, they might take on board as his ransom.

The Greek mariners, deceived by the specious tale, turned their vessel's prow towards Rossano, and on coming near that city, shifted their course towards the shore. Otho had been eagerly awaiting this opportunity. When they had approached sufficiently near to the land, he suddenly sprang from the deck into the sea, and swam ashore with a strength and swiftness that soon brought him to the strand. In a short time afterwards he entered Rossano, then held by his forces, and joined his queen, who had been left in that city.

This singular adventure is told with a number of variations by the several writers who have related it, most of them significant of the love of the marvellous of the old chroniclers. One writer tells us that the escaping emperor was pursued and attacked by the Greek boatmen, and that he killed forty of them with the aid of a soldier, named Probus, whom he met on the shore. By another we are told that the Greeks recognized him, that he enticed them to the shore by requesting them to take on board his wife and treasures, which had been left at Rossano, and that he sent young men on board disguised as female attendants of his wife, by whose aid he seized the vessel. All the stories agree, however, in saying that Theophania jeeringly asked the emperor whether her countrymen had not put him in mortal fear,—a jest for which the Germans never forgave her.

To return to the domain of fact, we have but further to tell that the emperor, full of grief and vexation at the loss of his army, and the slaughter of many of the German and Italian princes and nobles who had accompanied him, returned to upper Italy, with the purpose of collecting another army.

All his conquests in the south had fallen again into the hands of the enemy, and his work remained to be done over again. He held a grand assembly in Verona, in which he had his son Otho, three years old, elected as his successor. From there he proceeded to Rome, in which city he was attacked by a violent fever, brought on by the grief and excitement into which his reverses had thrown his susceptible and impatient mind. He died December 7, 983, and was buried in the church of St. Peter, at Rome.

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The fancy of the chroniclers has surrounded his death with legends, which are worth repeating as curious examples of what mediaeval writers offered and mediaeval readers accepted as history. One of them tells the story of a naval engagement between Otho and the Greeks, in which the fight was so bitter that the whole sea around the vessels was stained red with blood. The emperor won the victory, but received a mortal wound.

Another story, which does not trouble itself to sail very close to the commonplace, relates that Otho met his end by being whipped to death on Mount Garganus by the angels, among whom he had imprudently ventured while they were holding a conclave there. These stories will serve as examples of the degree of credibility of many of the ancient chronicles and the credulity of their readers.

THE FORTUNES OF HENRY THE FOURTH.

At the festival of Easter, in the year 1062, a great banquet was given in the royal palace at Kaiserswerth, on the Rhine. The Empress Agnes, widow of Henry III., and regent of the empire, was present, with her son, then a boy of eleven. A pious and learned woman was the empress, but she lacked the energy necessary to control the unquiet spirits of her times. Gentleness and persuasion were the means by which she hoped to influence the rude dukes and haughty archbishops of the empire, but qualities such as these were wasted on her fierce subjects, and served but to gain her the contempt of some and the dislike of others. A plot to depose the weakly-mild regent and govern the empire in the name of the youthful monarch was made by three men, Otto of Norheim, the greatest general of the state, Ekbert of Meissen, its most valiant knight, and Hanno, Archbishop of Cologne, its leading churchman. These three men were present at the banquet, which they had fixed upon as the occasion for carrying out their plot.

The feast over, the three men rose and walked with the boy monarch to a window of the palace that overlooked the Rhine. On the waters before them rode at anchor a handsome vessel, which the child looked upon with eyes of delight.

[Illustration: SCENE OF MONASTIC LIFE.]

“Would you like to see it closer?” asked Hanno. “I will take you on board, if you wish.”

“Oh, will you?” pleaded the boy. “I shall be so glad.”

The three conspirators walked with him to the stream, and rowed out to the vessel, the empress viewing them without suspicion of their design. But her doubts were aroused when she saw that the anchor had been raised and that the sails of the vessel were being set. Filled with sudden alarm she left the palace and hastened to the shore, just as the kidnapping craft began to move down the waters of the stream.

At the same moment young Henry, who had until now been absorbed in gazing delightedly about the vessel, saw what was being done, and heard his mother's cries. With courage and resolution unusual for his years he broke, with a cry of anger, from those surrounding him, and leaped into the stream, with the purpose of swimming ashore. But hardly had he touched the water when Count Ekbert sprang in after him, seized him despite his struggles, and brought him back to the vessel.

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The empress entreated in pitiful accents for the return of her son, but in vain; the captors of the boy were not of the kind to let pity interfere with their plans; on down the broad stream glided the vessel, the treacherous vassals listening in silence to the agonized appeals of the distracted mother, and to the mingled prayers and demands of the young emperor to be taken back. The country people, furious on learning that the emperor had been stolen, and was being carried away before their eyes, pursued the vessel for some distance on both sides of the river. But their cries and threats were of no more avail than had been the mother's tears and prayers. The vessel moved on with increasing speed, the three kidnappers erect on its deck, their only words being those used to cajole and quiet their unhappy prisoner, whom they did their utmost to solace by promises and presents.

The vessel continued its course until it reached Cologne, where the imperial captive was left under the charge of the archbishop, his two confederates fully trusting him to keep close watch and ward over their precious prize. The empress was of the same opinion. After vainly endeavoring to regain her lost son from his powerful captors, she resigned the regency and retired with a broken heart to an Italian convent, in which the remainder of her sad life was to be passed.

The unhappy boy soon learned that his new lot was not to be one of pleasure. He had a life of severe discipline before him. Bishop Hanno was a stern and rigid disciplinarian, destitute of any of the softness to which the lad had been accustomed, and disposed to rule all under his control with a rod of iron. He kept his youthful captive strictly immured in the cloister, where he had to endure the severest discipline, while being educated in Latin and the other learning of the age.

The regency given up by Agnes was instantly assumed by the ambitious churchman, and a decree to that effect was quickly passed by the lords of the diet, on the grounds that Hanno was the bishop of the diocese in which the emperor resided. The character of Hanno is variously represented by historians. While some accuse him of acts of injustice and cruelty, others speak of him as a man of energy, yet one whose holy life, his paternal care for his see, and his zealous reformation of monasteries and foundation of churches, gained him the character of a saint.

Young Henry remained but a year or two in the hands of this stern taskmaster. An imperative necessity called Hanno to Italy, and he was obliged to leave the young monarch under the charge of Adalbert, Archbishop of Bremen, a personage of very different character from himself. Adalbert, while a churchman of great ability, was a courtier full of ambitious views. He was one of the most polished and learned men of his time, at once handsome, witty, and licentious, his character being in the strongest contrast to the stern harshness of Hanno and the coarse manners of the nobles of that period.

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It would have been far better, however, for Henry could he have remained under the control of Hanno, with all his severity. It is true that the kindness and gentleness of Adalbert proved a delightful change to the growing boy, and the unlimited liberty he now enjoyed was in pleasant contrast to his recent restraint, while the gravity and severe study of Hanno's cloister were agreeably replaced by the gay freedom of Adalbert's court, in which the most serious matters were treated as lightly as a jest. But the final result of the change was that the boy's character became thoroughly corrupted. Adalbert surrounded his youthful charge with constant alluring amusements, using the influence thus gained to obtain new power in the state for himself, and places of honor and profit for his partisans. He inspired him also with a contempt for the rude-mannered dukes of the empire, and for what he called the stupid German people, while he particularly filled the boy's mind with a dislike for the Saxons, with whom the archbishop was at feud. All this was to have an important influence on the future life of the growing monarch.

It was more Henry's misfortune than his fault that he grew up to manhood as a compound of sensuality, levity, malice, treachery, and other mean qualities, for his nature had in it much that was good, and in his after-life he displayed noble qualities which had been long hidden under the corrupting faults of his education. The crime of the ambitious nobles who stole him from his pious and gentle mother went far to ruin his character, and was the leading cause of the misfortunes of his life.

As to the character of the youthful monarch, and its influence upon the people, a few words may suffice. His licentious habits soon became a scandal and shame to the whole empire, the more so that the mistresses with whom he surrounded himself were seen in public adorned with gold and precious stones which had been taken from the consecrated vessels of the church. His dislike of the Saxons was manifested in the scorn with which he treated this section of his people, and the taxes and enforced labors with which they were oppressed.

The result of all this was an outbreak of rebellion. Hanno, who had beheld with grave disapproval the course taken by Adalbert, now exerted his great influence in state affairs, convoked an assembly of the princes of the empire, and cited Henry to appear before it. On his refusal, his palace was surrounded and his person seized, while Adalbert narrowly escaped being made prisoner. He was obliged to remain in concealment during the three succeeding years, while the indignant Saxons, taking advantage of the opportunity for revenge, laid waste his lands.

The licentious young ruler found his career of open vice brought to a sudden end. The stern Hanno was again in power. Under his orders the dissolute courtiers were dispersed, and Henry was compelled to lead a more decorous life, a bride being found for him in the person of Bertha, daughter of the Italian Margrave of Susa, to whom he had at an earlier date been affianced. She was a woman of noble spirit, but, unfortunately, was wanting in personal beauty, in consequence of which she soon

became an object of extreme dislike to her husband, a dislike which her patience and fidelity seemed rather to increase than to diminish.

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The feeling of the young monarch towards his dutiful wife was overcome in a singular manner, which is well worth describing. Henry at first was eager to free himself from the tie that bound him to the unloved Bertha, a resolution in which he was supported by Siegfried, Archbishop of Mayence, who offered to assist him in getting a divorce. At a diet held at Worms, Henry demanded a separation from his wife, to whom he professed an unconquerable aversion. His efforts, however, were frustrated by the pope's legate, who arrived in Germany during these proceedings, and the licentious monarch, finding himself foiled in these legal steps, sought to gain his end by baser means. He caused beautiful women and maidens to be seized in their homes and carried to his palace as ministers to his pleasure, while he exposed the unhappy empress to the base solicitations of his profligate companions, offering them large sums if they could ensnare her, in her natural revulsion at his shameless unfaithfulness.

But the virtue of Bertha was proof against all such wiles, and the story goes that she turned the tables on her vile-intentioned husband in an amusing and decisive manner. On one occasion, as we are informed, the empress appeared to listen to the solicitations of one of the would-be seducers, and appointed a place and time for a secret meeting with this profligate. The triumphant courtier duly reported his success to Henry, who, overjoyed, decided to replace him in disguise. At the hour fixed he appeared and entered the chamber named by Bertha, when he suddenly found himself assailed by a score of stout servant-maids, armed with rods, which they laid upon his back with all the vigor of their arms. The surprised Lothario ran hither and thither to escape their blows, crying out that he was the king. In vain his cries; they did not or would not believe him; and not until he had been most soundly beaten, and their arms were weary with the exercise, did they open the door of the apartment and suffer the crest-fallen reprobate to escape.

This would seem an odd means of gaining the affection of a truant husband, but it is said to have had this effect upon Henry, his wronged wife from that moment gaining a place in his heart, into which she had fairly cudgelled herself. The man was really of susceptible disposition, and her invincible fidelity had at length touched him, despite himself. From that moment he ceased his efforts to get rid of her, treated her with more consideration, and finally settled down to the fact that a beautiful character was some atonement for a homely face, and that Bertha was a woman well worthy his affection.

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We have now to describe the most noteworthy event in the life of Henry IV., and the one which has made his name famous in history,—his contest with the great ecclesiastic Hildebrand, who had become pope under the title of Gregory VII. Though an aged man when raised to the papacy, Gregory's vigorous character displayed itself in a remarkable activity in the enhancement of the power of the church. His first important step was directed against the scandals of the priesthood in the matter of celibacy, the marriage of priests having become common. A second decree of equal importance followed. Gregory forbade the election of bishops by the laity, reserving this power to the clergy, under confirmation by the pope. He further declared that the church was independent of the state, and that the extensive lands held by the bishops were the property of the church, and free from control by the monarch.

These radical decrees naturally aroused a strong opposition, in the course of which Henry came into violent controversy with the pope. Gregory accused Henry openly of simony, haughtily bade him to come to Rome, and excommunicated the bishops who had been guilty of the same offence. The emperor, who did not know the man with whom he had to deal, retorted by calling an assembly of the German bishops at Worms, in which the pope was declared to be deposed from his office.

The result was very different from that looked for by the volatile young ruler. The vigorous and daring pontiff at once placed Henry himself under interdict, releasing his subjects from their oath of allegiance, and declaring him deprived of the imperial dignity. The scorn with which the emperor heard of this decree was soon changed to terror when he perceived its effect upon his people. The days were not yet come in which the voice of the pope could be disregarded. With the exception of the people of the cities and the free peasantry, who were opposed to the papal dominion, all the subjects of the empire deserted Henry, avoiding him as though he were infected with the plague. The Saxons flew to arms; the foreign garrisons were expelled; the imprisoned princes were released; all the enemies whom Henry had made rose against him; and in a diet, held at Oppenheim, the emperor was declared deposed while the interdict continued, and the pope was invited to visit Augsburg; in order to settle the affairs of Germany. The election of a successor to Henry was even proposed, and, to prevent him from communicating with the pope, his enemies passed a decree that he should remain in close residence at Spires.

The situation of the recently great monarch had suddenly become desperate. Never had a decree of excommunication against a crowned ruler been so completely effective. The frightened emperor saw but one hope left, to escape to Italy before the princes could prevent him, and obtain release from the interdict at any cost, and with whatever humiliation it might involve. With this end in view he at once took to flight, accompanied by Bertha, his infant son, and a single knight, and made his way with all haste towards the Alps.

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The winter was one of the coldest that Germany had ever known, the Rhine remaining frozen from St. Martin's day of 1076 to April, 1077. About Christmas of this severe winter the fugitives reached the snow-covered Alps, having so far escaped the agents of their enemies, and crossed the mountains by the St. Bernard pass, the difficulty of the journey being so great that the empress had to be slid down the precipitous paths by ropes in the hands of guides, she being wrapped in an ox-hide for protection.

Italy was at length reached, after the greatest dangers and hardships had been surmounted. Here Henry, much to his surprise, found prevailing a very different spirit from that which he had left behind him. The nobles, who cordially hated Gregory, and the bishops, many of whom were under interdict, hailed his coming with joy, with the belief "that the emperor was coming to humiliate the haughty pope by the power of the sword." He might soon have had an army at his back, but that he was too thoroughly downcast to think of anything but conciliation, and to the disgust of the Italians insisted on humiliating himself before the powerful pontiff.

Gregory was little less alarmed than the emperor on learning of Henry's sudden arrival in Italy. He was then on his way to Augsburg, and, in doubt as to the intentions of his enemy, took hasty refuge in the castle of Canossa, then held by the Countess Matilda, recently a widow, and the most powerful and influential princess in Italy.

But the alarmed pope was astonished and gratified when he learned that the emperor, instead of intending an armed assault upon him, had applied to the Countess Matilda, asking her to intercede in his behalf with the pontiff. Gregory's acute mind quickly perceived the position in which Henry stood, and, with great severity, he at first refused to speak of a reconciliation, but referred all to the diet; then, on renewed entreaties, he consented to receive Henry at Canossa, if he would come alone, and as a penitent. The castle was surrounded with three walls, within the second of which Henry was admitted, his attendants being left without. He had laid aside every badge of royalty, being clothed in penitential dress and barefoot, and fasting and praying from morning to evening. For a second and even a third day was he thus kept, and not until the fourth day, moved at length by the solicitations of Matilda and those about him, did Gregory grant permission for Henry to enter his presence. An interview now took place, in which the pope consented to release the penitent emperor from the interdict. One of the conditions of this release was he should leave to Gregory the settlement of affairs in Germany, and to give up all exercise of his imperial power until he should be granted permission to exercise it again.

This agreement was followed by a solemn mass, after which Gregory spoke to the following effect: As regarded the crimes of which Henry had accused him, he could easily bring evidence in disproof of the charges made, but he would invoke the judgment of God alone. "May the body of Jesus Christ, which I am about to receive," he said, "be the witness of my innocence. I beseech the Almighty thus to dispel all suspicions, if I am innocent; to strike me dead on the spot, if guilty."

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He then received one-half the Sacred Host, and turning to the king, offered him the remaining half, bidding him to follow his example, if he held himself to be guiltless. Henry refused the ordeal, doubtless because he did not dare to risk the penalty, and was glad enough to escape from the presence of the pope, a humble penitent.

This ended Henry's career of humiliation. It was followed by a period of triumph. On leaving the castle of Canossa he found the people of Lombardy so indignant at his cowardice, that their scorn induced him to break the oath he had just taken, gather an army, and assail the castle, in which he shut up the pope so closely that he could neither proceed to Augsburg nor return to Rome.

This siege, however, was not of long continuance. Henry soon found himself recalled to Germany, where his enemies had elected Rudolf, Duke of Swabia, emperor in his stead. A war broke out, which continued for several years, at the end of which Gregory, encouraged by a temporary success of Rudolf's party, pronounced in his favor, invested him with the empire as a fief of the papacy, and once more excommunicated Henry. It proved a false move. Henry had now learned his own power, and ceased to fear the pope. He had strong support in the cities and among the clergy, whom Gregory's severity had offended, and immediately convoked a council, by which the pope was again deposed, and the Archbishop of Ravenna elected in his stead, under the title of Clement III.

In this year, 1080, a battle took place in which Rudolf was mortally wounded, and the party opposed to Henry left without a leader, though the war continued. And now Henry, seeing that he could trust his cause in Germany to the hands of his lieutenants, determined to march upon his pontifical foe in Italy, and take revenge for his bitter humiliation at Canossa.

He crossed the Alps, defeated the army which Matilda had raised in the pope's cause, and laid siege to Rome, a siege which continued without success for the long period of three years. At length the city was taken, Wilprecht von Groitsch, a Saxon knight, mounting the walls, and making his way with his followers into the city, aided by treachery from within. Gregory hastily shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo, in which he was besieged by the Romans themselves, and from which he bade defiance to Henry with the same inflexible will as ever. Henry offered to be reconciled with him if he would crown him, but the vigorous old pontiff replied that, "He could only communicate with him when he had given satisfaction to God and the church." The emperor, thereupon, called the rival pope, Clement, to Rome, was crowned by him, and returned to Germany, leaving Clement in the papal chair and Gregory still shut up in St. Angelo.

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But a change quickly took place in the fortunes of the indomitable old pope. Robert Guiscard, Duke of Normandy, who had won for himself a principality in lower Italy, now marched to the relief of his friend Gregory, stormed and took the city at the head of his Norman freebooters, and at once began the work of pillage, in disregard of Gregory's remonstrances. The result was an unusual one. The citizens of Rome, made desperate by their losses, gathered in multitudes and drove the plunderers from their city, and Gregory with them. The Normans, thus expelled, took the pope to Salerno, where he died the following year, 1085, his last words being, "I have loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore do I die in exile."

As for his imperial enemy, the remainder of his life was one of incessant war. Years of battle were needed to put down his enemies in the state, and his triumph was quickly followed by the revolt of his own son, Henry, who reduced his father so greatly that the old emperor was thrown into prison and forced to sign an abdication of the throne. It is said that he became subsequently so reduced that he was forced to sell his boots to obtain means of subsistence, but this story may reasonably be doubted. Henry died in 1106, again under excommunication, so that he was not formally buried in consecrated ground until 1111, the interdict being continued for five years after his death.

ANECDOTES OF MEDIAEVAL GERMANY.

THE WIVES OF WEINSBERG.

In the year of grace 1140 a German army, under Conrad III., emperor, laid siege to the small town of Weinsberg, the garrison of which resisted with a most truculent and disloyal obstinacy. Germany, which for centuries before and after was broken into warring factions, to such extent that its emperors could truly say, "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," was then divided between the two strong parties of the Welfs and the Waiblingers,—or the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, as pronounced by the Italians and better known to us. The Welfs were a noble family whose ancestry could be traced back to the days of Charlemagne. The Waiblingers derived their name from the town of Waiblingen, which belonged to the Hohenstaufen family, of which the Emperor Conrad was a representative.

And now, as often before and after, the Guelphs, and Ghibellines were at war, Duke Welf holding Weinsberg vigorously against his foes of the imperial party, while his relative, Count Welf of Altorf, marched to his relief. A battle ensued between emperor and count, which ended in the triumph of the emperor and the flight of the count. And this battle is worthy of mention, as distinguished from the hundreds of battles which are unworthy of mention, from the fact that in it was first heard a war-cry which continued famous for centuries afterwards. The German war-cry preceding this period had been "Kyrie Eleison" ("Lord, have mercy upon us!" a pious invocation

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hardly in place with men who had little mercy upon their enemies). But now the cry of the warring factions became “Hie Weif,” “Hie Waiblinger,” softened in Italy into “The Guelph,” “The Ghibelline,” battle-shouts which were long afterwards heard on the field of German war, and on that of Italy as well, for the factions of Germany became also the factions of this southern realm.

So much for the origin of Guelph and Ghibelline, of which we may further say that a royal representative of the former party still exists, in King Edward VII. of England, who traces his descent from the German Welfs. And now to return to the siege of Weinsberg, to which Conrad returned after having disposed of the army of relief. The garrison still were far from being in a submissive mood, their defence being so obstinate, and the siege so protracted, that the emperor, incensed by their stubborn resistance, vowed that he would make their city a frightful example to all his foes, by subjecting its buildings to the brand and its inhabitants to the sword. Fire and steel, he said, should sweep it from the face of the earth.

[Illustration: THUSNELDA IN THE GERMANICUS TRIUMPH.]

Weinsberg at length was compelled to yield, and Conrad, hot with anger, determined that his cruel resolution should be carried out to the letter, the men being put to the sword, the city given to the flames. This harsh decision filled the citizens with terror and despair. A deputation was sent to the angry emperor, humbly praying for pardon, but he continued inflexible, the utmost concession he would make being that the women might withdraw, as he did not war with them. As for the men, they had offended him beyond forgiveness, and the sword should be their lot. On further solicitation, he added to the concession a proviso that the women might take away with them all that they could carry of their most precious possessions, since he did not wish to throw them destitute upon the world.

The obdurate emperor was to experience an unexampled surprise. When the time fixed for the departure of the women arrived, and the city gates were thrown open for their exit, to the astonishment of Conrad, and the admiration of the whole army, the first to appear was the duchess, who, trembling under the weight, bore upon her shoulders Duke Welf, her husband. After her came a long line of other women, each bending beneath the heavy burden of her husband, or some dear relative among the condemned citizens.

Never had such a spectacle been seen. So affecting an instance of heroism was it, and so earnest and pathetic were the faces appealingly upturned to him, that the emperor’s astonishment quickly changed to admiration, and he declared that women like these had fairly earned their reward, and that each should keep the treasure she had borne. There were those around him with less respect for heroic deeds, who sought to induce

him to keep his original resolution, but Conrad, who had it in him to be noble when not moved by passion, curtly silenced them with the remark, “An emperor keeps his word.” He was so moved by the scene, indeed, that he not only spared the men, but the whole city, and the doom of sword and brand, vowed against their homes, was withdrawn through admiration of the noble act of the worthy wives of Weinsberg.

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A KING IN A QUANDARY.

From an old chronicle we extract the following story, which is at once curious and interesting, as a picture of mediaeval manners and customs, though to all seeming largely legendary.

Henry, the bishop of Utrecht, was at sword's point with two lords, those of Aemstel and Woerden, who hated him from the fact that a kinsman of theirs, Goswin by name, had been deposed from the same see, through the action of a general chapter. In reprisal these lords, in alliance with the Count of Gebria, raided and laid waste the lands of the bishopric. Time and again they visited it with plundering bands, Henry manfully opposing them with his followers, but suffering much from their incursions. At length the affair ended in a peculiar compact, in which both sides agreed to submit their differences to the wager of war, in a pitched battle, which was to be held on a certain day in the green meadows adjoining Utrecht.

When the appointed day came both sides assembled with their vassals, the lords full of hope, the bishop exhorting his followers to humble the arrogance of these plundering nobles. The Archbishop of Cologne was in the city of Utrecht at the time, having recently visited it. He, as warlike in disposition as the bishop himself, gave Henry a precious ring, saying to him,—

"My son, be courageous and confident, for this day, through the intercession of the holy confessor St. Martin, and through the virtue of this ring, thou shalt surely subdue the pride of thy adversaries, and obtain a renowned victory over them. In the meantime, while thou art seeking justice, I will faithfully defend this city, with its priests and canons, in thy behalf, and will offer up prayers to the Lord of Hosts for thy success."

Bishop Henry, his confidence increased by these words, led from the gates a band of fine and well armed warriors to the sound of warlike trumpets, and marched to the field, where he drew them up before the bands of the hostile lords.

Meanwhile, tidings of this fray had been borne to William, king of the Romans, who felt it his duty to put an end to it, as such private warfare was forbidden by law. Hastily collecting all the knights and men-at-arms he could get together without delay, he marched with all speed to Utrecht, bent upon enforcing peace between the rival bands. As it happened, the army of the king reached the northern gate of the city just as the bishop's battalion had left the southern gate, the one party marching in as the other marched out.

The archbishop, who had undertaken the defence of the city, and as yet knew nothing of this royal visit, after making an inspection of the city under his charge, gave orders to the porters to lock and bar all the gates, and keep close guard thereon.

King William was not long in learning that he was somewhat late, the bishop having left the city. He marched hastily to the southern gate to pursue him, but only to find that he was himself in custody, the gates being firmly locked and the keys missing. He waited awhile impatiently. No keys were brought. Growing angry at this delay, he gave orders that the bolts and bars should be wrenched from the gates, and efforts to do this were begun.

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While this was going on, the archbishop was in deep affliction. He had just learned that the king was in Utrecht with an army, and imagined that he had come with hostile purpose, and had taken the city through the carelessness of the porters. Followed by his clergy, he hastened to where the king was trying to force a passage through the gates, and addressed him appealingly, reminding him that justice and equity were due from kings to subjects.

“Your armed bands, I fear, have taken this city,” he said, “and you have ordered the locks to be broken that you may expel the inhabitants, and replace them with persons favorable to your own interests. If you propose to act thus against justice and mercy, you injure me, your chancellor, and lessen your own honor. I exhort you, therefore, to restore me the city which you have unjustly taken, and relieve the inhabitants from violence.”

The king listened in silence and surprise to this harangue, which was much longer than we have given it. At its end, he said,—

“Venerable pastor and bishop, you have much mistaken my errand in Utrecht. I come here in the cause of justice, not of violence. You know that it is the duty of kings to repress wars and punish the disturbers of peace. It is this that brings us here, to put an end to the private war which we learn is being waged. As it stands, we have not conquered the city, but it has conquered us. To convince you that no harm is meant to Bishop Henry and his good city of Utrecht, we will command our men to repair to their hostels, lay down their arms, and pass their time in festivity. But first the purpose for which we have come must be accomplished, and this private feud be brought to an end.”

That the worthy archbishop was delighted to hear these words, need not be said. His fears had not been without sound warrant, for those were days in which kings were not to be trusted, and in which the cities maintained a degree of political independence that often proved inconvenient to the throne. As may be imagined, the keys were quickly forthcoming and the gates thrown open, the king being relieved from his involuntary detention, and given an opportunity to bring the bishop’s battle to an end.

He was too late; it had already reached its end. While King William was striving to get out of the city, which he had got into with such ease, the fight in the green meadows between the bishops and the lords had been concluded, the warlike churchman coming off victor. Many of the lords’ vassals had been killed, more put to flight, and themselves taken prisoners. At the vesper-bell Henry entered the city with his captives, bound with ropes, and was met at the gates by the king and the archbishop. At the request of King William he pardoned and released his prisoners, on their promise to cease molesting his lands, and all ended in peace and good will.

COURTING BY PROXY.

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Frederick von Stauffen, known as the One-eyed, being desirous of providing his son Frederick (afterwards the famous emperor Frederick Barbarossa) with a wife, sent as envoy for that purpose a handsome young man named Johann von Wuertemberg, whose attractions of face and manner had made him a general favorite. It was the beautiful daughter of Rudolf von Zaehringen who had been selected as a suitable bride for the future emperor, but when the handsome ambassador stated the purpose of his visit to the father, he was met by Rudolf with the joking remark, “Why don’t you court the damsel for yourself?”

The suggestion was much to the taste of the envoy. He took it seriously, made love for himself to the attractive Princess Anna, and won her love and the consent of her father, who had been greatly pleased with his handsome and lively visitor, and was quite ready to confirm in earnest what he had begun in jest.

Frederick, the One-eyed, still remained to deal with, but that worthy personage seems to have taken the affair as a good joke, and looked up another bride for his son, leaving to Johann the maiden he had won. This story has been treated as fabulous, but it is said to be well founded. It has been repeated in connection with other persons, notably in the case of Captain Miles Standish and John Alden, in which case the fair maiden herself is given the credit of admonishing the envoy to court for himself. It is very sure, however, that this latter story is a fable. It was probably founded on the one we have given.

THE BISHOP’S WINE-CASKS.

Adalbert of Treves was a bandit chief of note who, in the true fashion of the robber barons of mediaeval Germany, dwelt in a strong-walled castle, which was garrisoned by a numerous band of men-at-arms, as fond of pillage as their leader, and equally ready to follow him on his plundering expeditions and to defend his castle against his enemies. Our noble brigand paid particular heed to the domain of Peppo, Bishop of Treves, whose lands he honored with frequent unwelcome visits, despoiling lord and vassal alike, and hastening back from his raids to the shelter of his castle walls.

This was not the most agreeable state of affairs for the worthy bishop, though how it was to be avoided did not clearly appear. It probably did not occur to him to apply to the emperor, Henry II., the mediaeval German emperors having too much else on hand to leave them time to attend to matters of minor importance. Peppo therefore naturally turned to his own kinsmen, friends, and vassals, as those most likely to afford him aid.

Bishop Peppo could wield sword and battle-axe with the best bishop, which is almost equivalent to saying with the best warrior, of his day, and did not fail to use, when occasion called, these carnal weapons. But something more than the battle-axes of himself and vassals was needed to break through the formidable walls of Adalbert’s

stronghold, which frowned defiance to the utmost force the bishop could muster. Force alone would not answer, that was evident. Stratagem was needed to give effect to brute strength. If some way could only be devised to get through the strong gates of the robber's stronghold, and reach him behind his bolts and bars, all might be well; otherwise, all was ill.

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In this dilemma, a knightly vassal of the bishop, Tycho by name, undertook to find a passage into the castle of Adalbert, and to punish him for his pillaging. One day Tycho presented himself at the gate of the castle, knocked loudly thereon, and on the appearance of the guard, asked him for a sup of something to drink, being, as he said, overcome with thirst.

He did not ask in vain. It is a pleasant illustration of the hospitality of that period to learn that the traveller's demand was unhesitatingly complied with at the gate of the bandit stronghold, a brimming cup of wine being brought for the refreshment of the thirsty wayfarer.

"Thank your master for me," said Tycho, on returning the cup, "and tell him that I shall certainly repay him with some service for his good will."

With this Tycho journeyed on, sought the bishopric, and told Peppo what he had done and what he proposed to do. After a full deliberation a definite plan was agreed upon, which the cunning fellow proceeded to put into action. The plan was one which strongly reminds us of that adopted by the bandit chief in the Arabian story of the "Forty Thieves," the chief difference being that here it was true men, not thieves, who were to be benefited.

Thirty wine casks of capacious size were prepared, and in each was placed instead of its quota of wine a stalwart warrior, fully armed with sword, shield, helmet, and cuirass. Each cask was then covered with a linen cloth, and ropes were fastened to its sides for the convenience of the carriers. This done, sixty other men were chosen as carriers, and dressed as peasants, though really they were trained soldiers, and each had a sword concealed in the cask he helped to carry.

The preparations completed, Tycho, accompanied by a few knights and by the sixty carriers and their casks, went his way to Adalbert's castle, and, as before, knocked loudly at its gates. The guard again appeared, and, on seeing the strange procession, asked who they were and for what they came.

"I have come to repay your chief for the cup of wine he gave me," said Tycho. "I promised that he should be well rewarded for his good will, and am here for that purpose."

The warder looked longingly at the array of stout casks, and hastened with the message to Adalbert, who, doubtless deeming that the gods were raining wine, for his one cup to be so amply returned, gave orders that the strangers should be admitted. Accordingly the gates were opened, and the wine-bearers and knights filed in.

Reaching the castle hall, the casks were placed on the floor before Adalbert and his chief followers, Tycho begging him to accept them as a present in return for his former

kindness. As to receive something for nothing was Adalbert's usual mode of life, he did not hesitate to accept the lordly present, and Tycho ordered the carriers to remove the coverings. In a very few seconds this was done, when out sprang the armed men, the porters seized their swords from the casks, and in a minute's time the surprised bandits found themselves sharply attacked. The stratagem proved a complete success. Adalbert and his men fell victims to their credulity, and the fortress was razed to the ground.

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The truth of this story we cannot vouch for. It bears too suspicious a resemblance to the Arabian tale to be lightly accepted as fact. But its antiquity is unquestionable, and it may be offered as a faithful picture of the conditions of those centuries of anarchy when every man's hand was for himself and might was right.

FREDERICK BARBAROSSA AND MILAN.

A proud old city was Milan, heavy with its weight of years, rich and powerful, arrogant and independent, the capital of Lombardy and the lord of many of the Lombard cities. For some twenty centuries it had existed, and now had so grown in population, wealth, and importance, that it could almost lay claim to be the Rome of northern Italy. But its day of pride preceded not long that of its downfall, for a new emperor had come to the German throne, Frederick the Red-bearded, one of the ablest, noblest, and greatest of all that have filled the imperial chair.

Not long had he been on the throne before, in the long-established fashion of German emperors, he began to interfere with affairs in Italy, and demanded from the Lombard cities recognition of his supremacy as Emperor of the West. He found some of them submissive, others not so. Milan received his commands with contempt, and its proud magistrates went so far as to tear the seal from the imperial edict and trample it underfoot.

In 1154 Frederick crossed the Alps and encamped on the Lombardian plain. Soon deputations from some of the cities came to him with complaints about the oppression of Milan, which had taken Lodi, Como, and other towns, and lorded it over them exasperatingly. Frederick bade the proud Milanese to answer these complaints, but in their arrogance they refused even to meet his envoys, and he resolved to punish them severely for their insolence.

But the time was not yet. He had other matters to attend to. Four years passed before he was able to devote some of his leisure to the Milanese. They had in the meantime managed to offend him still more seriously, having taken the town of Lodi and burnt it to the ground, for no other crime than that it had yielded him allegiance. After him marched a powerful army, nearly one hundred and twenty thousand strong, at the very sight of whose myriad of banners most of the Lombard cities submitted without a blow. Milan was besieged. Its resistance was by no means obstinate. The emperor's principal wish was to win it over to his side, and probably the authorities of the city were aware of his lenient disposition, for they held out no long time before his besieging multitude.

All that the conqueror now demanded was that the proud municipality should humble itself before him, swear allegiance, and promise not to interfere with the freedom of the smaller cities. On the 6th of September a procession of nobles and churchmen defiled before him, barefooted and clad in tattered garments, the consuls and patricians with

swords hanging from their necks, the others with ropes round their throats, and thus, with evidence of the deepest humility, they bore to the emperor the keys of the proud city.

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“You must now acknowledge that it is easier to conquer by obedience than with arms,” he said. Then, exacting their oaths of allegiance, placing the imperial eagle upon the spire of the cathedral, and taking with him three hundred hostages, he marched away, with the confident belief that the defiant resistance of Milan was at length overcome.

He did not know the Milanese. When, in the following year, he attempted to lay a tax upon them, they rose in insurrection and attacked his representatives with such fury that they could scarcely save their lives. On an explanation being demanded, they refused to give any, and were so arrogantly defiant that the emperor pronounced their city outlawed, and wrathfully vowed that he would never place the crown upon his head again until he had utterly destroyed this arrant nest of rebels.

It was not to prove so easy a task. Frederick began by besieging Cremona, which was in alliance with Milan, and which resisted him so obstinately that it took him seven months to reduce it to submission. In his anger he razed the city to the ground and scattered its inhabitants far and wide.

Then came the siege of Milan, which was so vigorously defended that three years passed before starvation threw it into the emperor’s hands. So virulent were the citizens that they several times tried to rid themselves of their imperial enemy by assassination. On one occasion, when Frederick was performing his morning devotions in a solitary spot upon the river Ada, a gigantic fellow attacked him and tried to throw him into the stream. The emperor’s cries for help brought his attendants to the spot, and the assailant, in his turn, was thrown into the river. On another occasion an old, misshapen man glided into the camp, bearing poisoned wares which he sought to dispose of to the emperor. Frederick, fortunately, had been forewarned, and he had the would-be assassin seized and executed.

It was in the spring of 1162 that the city yielded, hunger at length forcing it to capitulate. Now came the work of revenge. Frederick proceeded to put into execution the harsh vow he had made, after subjecting its inhabitants to the greatest humiliations which he could devise.

For three days the consuls and chief men of the city, followed by the people, were obliged to parade before the imperial camp, barefooted and dressed in sackcloth, with tapers in their hands and crosses, swords, and ropes about their necks. On the third day more than a hundred of the banners of the city were brought out and laid at the emperor’s feet. Then, in sign of the most utter humiliation, the great banner of their pride, the Carocium—a stately iron tree with iron leaves, drawn on a cart by eight oxen—was brought out and bowed before the emperor. Frederick seized and tore down its fringe, while the whole people cast themselves on the ground, wailing and imploring mercy.

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The emperor was incensed beyond mercy, other than to grant them their lives. He ordered that a part of the wall should be thrown down, and rode through the breach into the city. Then, after deliberation, he granted the inhabitants their lives, but ordered their removal to four villages, several miles away, where they were placed under the care of imperial functionaries. As for Milan, he decided that it should be levelled with the ground, and gave the right to do this, at their request, to the people of Lodi, Cremona, Pavia, and other cities which had formerly been oppressed by proud Milan.

[Illustration: THE AMPHITHEATRE AT MILAN.]

The city was first pillaged, and then given over to the hands of the Lombards, who—-such was the diligence of hatred—are said to have done more in six days than hired workmen would have done in as many months. The walls and forts were torn down, the ditches filled up, and the once splendid city reduced to a frightful scene of ruin and desolation. Then, at a splendid banquet at Pavia, in the Easter festival, the triumphant emperor replaced the crown upon his head.

His triumph was not to continue, nor the humiliation of Milan to remain permanent. Time brings its revenges, as the proud Frederick was to learn. For five years Milan lay in ruins, a home for owls and bats, a scene of desolation to make all observers weep; and then arrived its season of retribution. Frederick's downfall came from the hand of God, not of man. A frightful plague broke out in the ranks of the German army, then in Rome, carrying off nobles and men alike in such numbers that it looked as if the whole host might be laid in the grave. Thousands died, and the emperor was obliged to retire to Pavia with but a feeble remnant of his numerous army, nearly the whole of it having been swept away. In the following spring he was forced to leave Italy like a fugitive, secretly and in disguise, and came so nearly falling into the hands of his foes, that he only escaped by one of his companions placing himself in his bed, to be seized in his stead, while he fled under cover of the night.

Immediately the humbled cities raised their heads. An alliance was formed between them, and they even ventured to conduct the Milanese back to their ruined homes. At once the work of rebuilding was begun. The ditches, walls, and towers were speedily restored, and then each man went to work on his own habitation. So great was the city that the work of destruction had been but partial. Most of the houses, all the churches, and portions of the walls remained, and by aid of the other cities Milan soon regained its old condition.

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In 1174 Frederick reappeared in Italy, with a new army, and with hostile intentions against the revolted cities. The Lombards had built a new city, in a locality surrounded by rivers and marshes, and had enclosed it with walls which they sought to make impregnable. This they named Alexandria, in honor of the pope and in defiance of the emperor, and against this Frederick's first assault was made. For seven months he besieged it, and then broke into the very heart of the place, through a subterranean passage which the Germans had excavated. To all appearance the city was lost, yet chance and courage saved it. The brave defenders attacked the Germans, who had appeared in the market-place; the tunnel, through great good fortune, fell in; and in the end the emperor was forced to raise the siege in such haste that he set fire to his own encampment in his precipitate retreat.

On May 29, 1176, a decisive battle was fought at Lignano, in which Milan revenged itself on its too-rigorous enemy. The Carocium was placed in the middle of the Lombard army, surrounded by three hundred youths, who had sworn to defend it unto death, and by a body of nine hundred picked cavalry, who had taken a similar oath.

Early in the battle one wing of the Lombard army wavered under the sharp attack of the Germans, and threw into confusion the Milanese ranks. Taking advantage of this, the emperor pressed towards their centre, seeking to gain the Carocium, with the expectation that its capture would convert the disorder of the Lombards into a rout. On pushed the Germans until the sacred standard was reached, and its decorations torn down before the eyes of its sworn defenders.

This indignity to the treasured emblem of their liberties gave renewed courage to the disordered band. Their ranks re-established, they charged upon the Germans with such furious valor as to drive them back in disorder, cut through their lines to the emperor's station, kill his standard-bearer by his side, and capture the imperial standard. Frederick, clad in a splendid suit of armor, rushed against them at the head of a band of chosen knights. But suddenly he was seen to fall from his horse and vanish under the hot press of struggling warriors that surged back and forth around the standard.

This dire event spread instant terror through the German ranks. They broke and fled in disorder, followed by the death-phalanx of the Carocium, who cut them down in multitudes, and drove them back in complete disorder and defeat. For two days the emperor was mourned as slain, his unhappy wife even assuming the robes of widowhood, when suddenly he reappeared, and all was joy again. He had not been seriously hurt in his fall, and had with a few friends escaped in the tumult of the defeat, and, under the protection of night, made his way with difficulty back to Pavia.

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This defeat ended the efforts of Frederick against Milan, which had, through its triumph over the great emperor, regained all its old proud position and supremacy among the Lombard cities. The war ended with the battle of Lignano, a truce of six years being concluded between the hostile parties. For the ensuing eight years Frederick was fully occupied in Germany, in wars with Henry the Lion, of the Guelph faction. At the end of that time he returned to Italy, where Milan, which he had sought so strenuously to humiliate and ruin, now became the seat of the greatest honor he could bestow. The occasion was that of the marriage of his son Henry to Constanza, the last heiress of Naples and Sicily of the royal Norman race. This ceremony took place in Milan, in which city the emperor caused the iron crown of the Lombards to be placed upon the head of his son and heir, and gave him away in marriage with the utmost pomp and festivity. Milan had won in its great contest for life and death.

We may fitly conclude with the story of the death of the great Frederick, who, in accordance with the character of his life, died in harness. In his old age, having put an end to the wars in Germany and Italy, he headed a crusade to the Holy Land, from which he was never to return. It was the most interesting in many of its features of all the crusades, the leaders of the host being, in addition to Frederick Barbarossa, Richard Coeur de Lion of England, the hero of romance, the wise Philip Augustus of France, and various others of the leading potentates of Europe.

It is with Frederick alone that we are concerned. In 1188 he set out, at the head of one hundred and fifty thousand trained soldiers, on what was destined to prove a disastrous expedition. Entering Hungary, he met with a friendly reception from Bela, its king. Reaching Belgrade, he held there a magnificent tournament, hanged all the robber Servians he could capture for their depredations upon his ranks, and advanced into Greek territory, where he punished the bad faith of the emperor, Isaac, by plundering his country. Several cities were destroyed in revenge for the assassination of pilgrims and of sick and wounded German soldiers by their inhabitants. This done, Frederick advanced on Constantinople, whose emperor, to save his city from capture, hastened to place his whole fleet at the disposal of the Germans, glad to get rid of these truculent visitors at any price.

Reaching Asia Minor, the troubles of the crusaders began. They were assailed by the Turks, and had to cut their way forward at every step. Barbarossa had never shown himself a greater general. On one occasion, when hard pressed by the enemy, he concealed a chosen band of warriors in a large tent, the gift of the Queen of Hungary, while the rest of the army pretended to fly. The Turks entered the camp and began pillaging, when the ambushed knights broke upon them from the tent, the flying soldiers turned, and the confident enemy was disastrously defeated.

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But as the army advanced its difficulties increased. A Turkish prisoner who was made to act as a guide, being driven in chains before the army, led the Christians into the gorges of almost impassable mountains, sacrificing his life for his cause. Here, foot-sore and weary, and tormented by thirst and hunger, they were suddenly attacked by ambushed foes, stones being rolled upon them in the narrow gorges, and arrows and javelins poured upon their disordered ranks. Peace was here offered them by the Turks, if they would pay a large sum of money for their release. In reply the indomitable emperor sent them a small silver coin, with the message that they might divide this among themselves. Then, pressing forward, he beat off the enemy, and extricated his army from its dangerous situation.

As they pushed on, the sufferings of the army increased. Water was not to be had, and many were forced to quench their thirst by drinking the blood of their horses. The army was now divided. Frederick, the son of the emperor, led half of it forward at a rapid march, defeated the Turks who sought to stop him, and fought his way into the city of Iconium. Here all the inhabitants were put to the sword, and the crusaders gained an immense booty.

Meanwhile the emperor, his soldiers almost worn out with hunger and fatigue, was surrounded with the army of the sultan. He believed that his son was lost, and tears of anguish flowed from his eyes, while all around him wept in sympathy. Suddenly rising, he exclaimed, “Christ still lives, Christ conquers!” and putting himself at the head of his knights, he led them in a furious assault upon the Turks. The result was a complete victory, ten thousand of the enemy falling dead upon the field. Then the Christian army marched to Iconium, where they found relief from their hunger and weariness.

After recruiting they marched forward, and on June 10, 1190, reached the little river Cydnus, in Cilicia. Here the road and the bridge over the stream were so blocked up with beasts of burden that the progress of the army was greatly reduced. The bold old warrior, impatient to rejoin his son Frederick, who led the van, would not wait for the bridge to be cleared, but spurred his war-horse forward and plunged into the stream. Unfortunately, he had miscalculated the strength of the current. Despite the efforts of the noble animal, it was borne away by the swift stream, and when at length assistance reached the aged emperor he was found to be already dead.

Never was a man more mourned than was the valiant Barbarossa by his army, and by the Germans on hearing of his death. His body was borne by the sorrowing soldiers to Antioch, where it was buried in the church of St. Peter. His fate was, perhaps, a fortunate one, for it prevented him from beholding the loss of the army, which was almost entirely destroyed by sickness at the city in which his body was entombed. His son Frederick died at the siege of Acre, or Ptolemais.

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As regards the Germans at home, they were not willing to believe that their great emperor could be dead. Their superstitious faith gave rise to legendary tales, to the effect that the valiant Barbarossa was still alive, and would, some day, return to yield Germany again a dynasty of mighty sovereigns. The story went that the noble emperor lay asleep in a deep cleft of Kylfhaueser Berg, on the golden meadow of Thuringia. Here, his head resting on his arm, he sits by a granite block, through which, in the lapse of time, his red beard has grown. Here he will sleep until the ravens no longer fly around the mountain, when he will awake to restore the golden age to the world.

Another legend tells us that the great Barbarossa sits, wrapped in deep slumber, in the Untersberg, near Salzberg. His sleep will end when the dead pear-tree on the Walserfeld, which has been cut down three times but ever grows anew, blossoms. Then will he come forth, hang his shield on the tree, and begin a tremendous battle, in which the whole world will join, and in whose end the good will overcome the wicked, and the reign of virtue return to the earth.

THE CRUSADE OF FREDERICK II.

A remarkable career was that of Frederick II. of Germany, grandson of the great Barbarossa, crowned in 1215 under the immediate auspices of the papacy, yet during all the remainder of his life in constant and bitter conflict with the popes. He was, we are told, of striking personal beauty, his form being of the greatest symmetry, his face unusually handsome, and marked by intelligence, benevolence, and nobility. Born in a rude age, his learning would have done honor to our own. Son of an era in which poetry was scarcely known, he cultivated the gay science, and was one of the earliest producers of the afterwards favorite form known as the sonnet. An emperor of Germany, nearly his whole life was spent in Sicily. Though ruler of a Christian realm, he lived surrounded by Saracens, studying diligently the Arabian learning, dwelling in what was almost a harem of Arabian beauties, and hesitating not to give expression to the most infidel sentiments. The leader of a crusade, he converted what was ordinarily a tragedy into a comedy, obtained possession of Jerusalem without striking a blow or shedding a drop of blood, and found himself excommunicated in the holy city which he had thus easily restored to Christendom. Altogether we may repeat that the career of Frederick II. was an extraordinary one, and amply worthy our attention.

The young monarch had grown up in Sicily, of which charming island he became guardian after the death of his mother, Constanza. He was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, having defeated his rival, Otho IV.; but spent the greater part of his life in the south, holding his pleasure-loving court at Naples and Palermo, where he surrounded himself with all the refinements of life then possessed by the Saracens, but of which the Christians of Europe were lamentably deficient.

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It was in 1220 that Frederick returned from Germany to Italy, leaving his northern kingdom in the hands of the Archbishop of Cologne, as regent. At Rome he received the imperial crown from the hands of the pope, and, his first wife dying, married Yolinda de Lusignan, daughter of John, ex-king of Jerusalem, in right of whom he claimed the kingdom of the East.

Shortly afterwards a new pope came to the papal chair, the gloomy Gregory IX., whose first act was to order a crusade, which he desired the emperor to lead. Despite the fact that he had married the heiress of Jerusalem, Frederick was very reluctant to seek an enforcement of his claim upon the holy city. He had pledged himself when crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, and afterwards on his coronation at Rome, to undertake a crusade, but Honorius III., the pope at that time, readily granted him delay. Such was not the case with Gregory, who sternly insisted on an immediate compliance with his pledge, and whose rigid sense of decorum was scandalized by the frivolities of the emperor, no less than was his religious austerity by Frederick's open intercourse with the Sicilian Saracens.

The old contest between emperor and pope threatened to be opened again with all its former virulence. It was deferred for a time by Frederick, who, after exhausting all excuses for delay, at length yielded to the exhortations of the pope and set sail for the Holy Land. The crusade thus entered upon proved, however, to be simply a farce. In three days the fleet returned, Frederick pleading illness as his excuse, and the whole expedition came to an end.

Gregory was no longer to be trifled with. He declared that the illness was but a pretext, that Frederick had openly broken his word to the church, and at once proceeded to launch upon the emperor the thunders of the papacy, in a bull of excommunication.

Frederick treated this fulmination with contempt, and appealed from the pope to Christendom, accusing Rome of avarice, and declaring that her envoys were marching in all directions, not to preach the word of God, but to extort money from the people.

"The primitive church," he said, "founded on poverty and simplicity, brought forth numberless saints. The Romans are now rolling in wealth. What wonder that the walls of the church are undermined to the base, and threaten utter ruin."

For this saying the pope launched against him a more tremendous excommunication. In return the partisans of Frederick in Rome, raising an insurrection, expelled the pope from that city. And now the free-thinking emperor, to convince the world that he was not trifling with his word, set sail of his own accord for the East, with as numerous an army as he was able to raise.

A remarkable state of affairs followed, justifying us in speaking of this crusade as a comedy, in contrast with the tragic character of those which had preceded it. Frederick

had shrewdly prepared for success, by negotiations, through his Saracen friends, with the Sultan of Egypt. On reaching the Holy Land he was received with joy by the German knights and pilgrims there assembled, but the clergy and the Knight Templars and Hospitallers carefully kept aloof from him, for Gregory had despatched a swift-sailing ship to Palestine, giving orders that no intercourse should be held with the imperial enemy of the church.

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It was certainly a strange spectacle, for a man under the ban of the church to be the leader in an expedition to recover the holy city. Its progress was as strange as its inception. Had Frederick been the leader of a Mohammedan army to recover Jerusalem from the Christians, his camp could have been little more crowded with infidel delegates. He wore a Saracen dress. He discussed questions of philosophy with Saracen visitors. He received presents of elephants and of dancing-girls from his friend the sultan, to whom he appealed: "Out of your goodness, and your friendship for me, surrender to me Jerusalem as it is, that I may be able to lift up my head among the kings of Christendom."

Camel, the sultan, consented, agreeing to deliver up Jerusalem and its adjacent territory to the emperor, on the sole condition that Mohammedan pilgrims might have the privilege of visiting a mosque within the city. These terms Frederick gladly accepted, and soon after marched into the holy city at the head of his armed followers (not unarmed, as in the case of Coeur de Lion), took possession of it with formal ceremony, allowed the Mohammedan population to withdraw in peace, and repeopled the city with Christians, A.D. 1229.

He found himself in the presence of an extraordinary condition of affairs. The excommunication against him was not only maintained, but the pope actually went so far as to place Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre under interdict. So far did the virulence of priestly antipathy go that the Templars even plotted against Frederick's life. Emissaries sent by them gave secret information to the sultan of where he might easily capture the emperor. The sultan, with a noble friendliness, sent the letter to Frederick, cautioning him to beware of his foes.

The break between emperor and pope had now reached its highest pitch of hostility. Frederick proclaimed his signal success to Europe. Gregory retorted with bitter accusations. The emperor, he said, had presented to the sultan of Babylon the sword given him for the defence of the faith; he had permitted the Koran to be preached in the Holy Temple itself; he had even bound himself to join the Saracens, in case a Christian army should attempt to cleanse the city and temple from Mohammedan defilements.

In addition to these charges, accusations of murder and other crimes were circulated against him, and a false report of his death was industriously circulated. Frederick found it necessary to return home without delay. He crowned himself at Jerusalem, as no ecclesiastic could be found who would perform the ceremony, and then set sail for Italy, leaving Richard, his master of the horse, in charge of affairs in Palestine.

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Reaching Italy, he soon brought his affairs into order. He had under his command an army of thirty thousand Saracen soldiers, with whom it was impossible for his enemies to tamper. A bitter recrimination took place with the pope, in which the emperor managed to bring the general sentiment of Europe to his side, offering to convict Gregory of himself entering into negotiations with the infidels. Gregory, finding that he was getting the worst of the controversy with his powerful and alert enemy, now prudently gave way, having a horror of the shedding of blood. Peace was made in 1230, the excommunication removed from the emperor, and for nine years the conflict between him and the papacy was at an end.

We have told the story of Frederick's crusade, but the remainder of his life is of sufficient interest to be given in epitome. In his government of Sicily he showed himself strikingly in advance of the political opinions of his period. He enacted a system of wise laws, instituted representative parliaments, asserted the principle of equal rights and equal duties, and the supremacy of the law over high and low alike. All religions were tolerated, Jews and Mohammedans having equal freedom of worship with Christians. All the serfs of his domain were emancipated, private war was forbidden, commerce was regulated, cheap justice for the poor was instituted, markets and fairs were established, large libraries collected, and other progressive institutions organized. He established menageries for the study of natural history, founded in Naples a great university, patronized medical study, provided cheap schools, aided the development of the arts, and in every respect displayed a remarkable public spirit and political foresight.

Yet splendid as was his career of development in secular affairs, his private life, as well as his public conduct, was stained with flagrant faults, and there was much in his doings that was frowned upon by the pope. New quarrels arose; new wars broke out; the emperor was again excommunicated; the unfortunate closing years of Frederick's career began. Again there were appeals to Christendom; again Frederick's Saracens marched through Italy; such was their success that the pope only escaped by death from falling into the hands of his foe. But with a new pope the old quarrel was resumed, Innocent IV. flying to France to get out of reach of the emperor's hands, and desperately combating him from this haven of refuge.

The incessant conflict at length bowed down the spirit of the emperor, now growing old. His good fortune began to desert him. In 1249 his son Enzio, whom he had made king of Sicily, and who was the most chivalrous and handsome of his children, was taken prisoner by the Bolognese, who refused to accept ransom for him, although his father offered in return for his freedom a silver ring equal in circumference to their city. In the following year his long-tried friend and councillor, Peter de Vincis, who had been the most trusted man in the empire, was accused of having joined the papal party and of attempting to poison the emperor. He offered Frederick a beverage, which he, growing suspicious, did not drink, but had it administered to a criminal, who instantly expired.

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Whether Peter was guilty or not, his seeming defection was a sore blow to his imperial patron. “Alas!” moaned Frederick, “I am abandoned by my most faithful friends; Peter, the friend of my heart, on whom I leaned for support, has deserted me and sought my destruction. Whom can I trust? My days are henceforth doomed to pass in sorrow and suspicion.”

His days were near their end. Not long after the events narrated, while again in the field at the head of a fresh army of Saracens, he was suddenly seized with a mortal illness at Firenzuola, and died there on the 13th of December, 1250, becoming reconciled with the church on his deathbed. He was buried at Palermo.

Thus died one of the most intellectual, progressive, free-thinking, and pleasure-loving emperors of Germany, after a long reign over a realm in which he seldom appeared, and an almost incessant period of warfare against the head of a church of which he was supposed to be the imperial protector. Seven crowns were his,—those of the kingdom of Germany and of the Roman empire, the iron diadem of Lombardy, and those of Burgundy, Sicily, Sardinia, and Jerusalem. But of all the realms under his rule the smiling lands of Sicily and southern Italy were most to his liking, and the scene of his most constant abode. Charming palaces were built by him at Naples, Palermo, Messina, and several other places, and in these he surrounded himself with the noblest bards and most beautiful women of the empire, and by all that was attractive in the art, science, and poetry of his times. Moorish dancing-girls and the arts and learning of the East abounded in his court. The Sultan Camel presented him with a rare tent, in which, by means of artfully contrived mechanism, the movements of the heavenly bodies were represented. Michael Scott, his astrologer, translated Aristotle’s “History of Animals.” Frederick studied ornithology, on which he wrote a treatise, and possessed a menagerie of rare animals, including a giraffe, and other strange creatures. The popular dialect of Italy owed much to him, being elevated into a written language by his use of it in his love-sonnets. Of the poems written by himself, his son Enzio, and his friends, several have been preserved, while his chancellor, Peter de Vincis, is said to have originated the sonnet.

We have already spoken of his reforms in his southern kingdom. It was his purpose to introduce similar reforms into the government of Germany, abolishing the feudal system, and creating a centralized and organized state, with a well-regulated system of finance. But ideas such as these were much too far in advance of the age. State and church alike opposed them, and Frederick’s intelligent views did not long survive him. History must have its evolution, political systems their growth, and the development of institutions has never been much hastened or checked by any man’s whip or curb.

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In 1781, when the tomb of Frederick was opened, centuries after his death, the institutions he had advocated were but in process of being adopted in Europe. The body of the great emperor was found within the mausoleum, wrapped in embroidered robes, the feet booted and spurred, the imperial crown on its head, in its hand the ball and sceptre, on its finger a costly emerald. For five centuries and more Frederick had slept in state, awaiting the verdict of time on the ideas in defence of which his life had been passed in battle. The verdict had been given, the ideas had grown into institutions, time had vouchsafed the far-seeing emperor his revenge.

THE FALL OF THE GHIBELLINES.

The death of Frederick II., in 1250, was followed by a series of misfortunes to his descendants, so tragical as to form a story full of pathetic interest. His son Enzio, a man of remarkable beauty and valor, celebrated as a Minnesinger, and of unusual intellectual qualities, had been taken prisoner, as we have already told, by the Bolognese, and condemned by them to perpetual imprisonment, despite the prayers of his father and the rich ransom offered. For twenty-two years he continued a tenant of a dungeon, and in this gloomy scene of death in life survived all the sons and grandsons of his father, every one of whom perished by poison, the sword, or the axe of the executioner. It is this dread story of the fate of the Hohenstauffen imperial house which we have now to tell.

No sooner had Frederick expired than the enemies of his house arose on every side. Conrad IV., his eldest son and successor, found Germany so filled with his foes that he was forced to take refuge in Italy, where his half-brother, Manfred, Prince of Taranto, ceded to him the sovereignty of the Italian realm, and lent him his aid to secure it. The royal brothers captured Capua and Naples, where Conrad signalized his success by placing a bridle in the mouth of an antique colossal horse's head, the emblem of the city. This insult made the inhabitants his implacable foes. His success was but temporary. He died suddenly, as also did his younger brother Henry, poisoned by his half-brother Manfred, who succeeded to the kingship of the South. But with the Guelphs in power in Germany, and the pope his bitter foe in Italy, he was utterly unable to establish his claim, and was forced to cede all lower Italy, except Taranto, to the pontiff. But a new and less implacable pope being elected, the fortunes of Manfred suddenly changed, and he was unanimously proclaimed king at Palermo in 1258.

But the misfortunes of his house were to pursue him to the end. In northern Italy, the Guelphs were everywhere triumphant. Ezzelino, one of Frederick's ablest generals, was defeated, wounded, and taken prisoner. He soon after died. His brother Alberich was cruelly murdered, being dragged to death at a horse's tail. The other Ghibelline chiefs were similarly butchered, the horrible scenes of bloodshed so working on the feelings of the susceptible Italians that many of them did penance at the grave of Alberich, arrayed in sackcloth. From this circumstance arose the sect of the Flagellants,

who ran through the streets, lamenting, praying, and wounding themselves with thongs, as an atonement for the sins of the world.

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In southern Italy, Manfred for a while was successful. In 1259 he married Helena, the daughter of Michael of Cyprus and AEtolia, a maiden of seventeen years, and famed far and wide for her loveliness. So beautiful were the bridal pair, and such were the attractions of their court, which, as in Frederick's time, was the favorite resort of distinguished poets and lovely women, that a bard of the times declared, "Paradise has once more appeared upon earth."

Manfred, like his father and his brother Enzio, was a poet, being classed among the Minnesingers. His marriage gave him the alliance of Greece, and the marriage of Constance, his daughter by a former wife, to Peter of Aragon, gained him the friendship of Spain. Strengthened by these alliances, he was able to send aid to the Ghibellines in Lombardy, who again became victorious.

The Guelphs, alarmed at Manfred's growing power, now raised a Frenchman to the papal throne, who induced Charles of Anjou, the brother of the French monarch, to strike for the crown of southern Italy. Charles, a gloomy, cold-blooded and cruel prince, gladly accepted the pope's suggestions, and followed by a powerful body of French knights and soldiers of fortune, set sail for Naples in 1266. Manfred had unluckily lost the whole of his fleet in a storm, and was not able to oppose this threatening invasion, which landed in Italy in his despite.

Nor was he more fortunate with his land army. The clergy, in the interest of the Guelph faction, tampered with his soldiers and sowed treason in his camp. No sooner had Charles landed, than a mountain pass intrusted to the defence of Riccardo di Caseta was treacherously abandoned, and the French army allowed to advance unmolested as far as Benevento, where the two armies met.

In the battle that followed, Manfred defended himself gallantly, but, despite all his efforts, was worsted, and threw himself desperately into the thick of the fight, where he fell, covered with wounds. The bigoted victor refused him honorable burial, on the score of heresy, but the French soldiers, nobler-hearted than their leader, and touched by the beauty and valor of their unfortunate opponent, cast each of them a stone upon his body, which was thus buried under a mound which the natives still know as the "rock of roses."

The wife and children of Manfred met with a pitiable fate. On learning of the sad death of her husband Helena sought safety in flight, with her daughter Beatrice and her three infant sons, Henry, Frederick, and Anselino; but she was betrayed to Charles, who threw her into a dungeon, in which she soon languished and died. Of her children, her daughter Beatrice was afterwards rescued by Peter of Aragon, who exchanged for her a son of Charles of Anjou, whom he held prisoner; but the three boys were given over to the cruellest fate. Immured in a narrow dungeon, and loaded with chains, they remained thus half-naked, ill-fed, and untaught for the period of thirty-one years. Not until 1297 were they released from their chains and allowed to be visited by a priest and

a physician. Charles of Anjou, meanwhile, filled with the spirit of cruelty and ambition, sought to destroy every vestige of the Hohenstauffen rule in southern Italy, the scene of Frederick's long and lustrous reign.

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The death of Manfred had not extinguished all the princes of Frederick's house. There remained another, Conradin, son of Conrad IV., Duke of Swabia, a youthful prince to whom had descended some of the intellectual powers of his noted grand-sire. He had an inseparable friend, Frederick, son of the Margrave of Baden, of his own age, and like him enthusiastic and imaginative, their ardent fancies finding vent in song. One of Conradin's ballads is still extant.

As the young prince grew older, the seclusion to which he was subjected by his guardian, Meinhard, Count von Goertz, became so irksome to him that he gladly accepted a proposal from the Italian Ghibellines to put himself at their head. In 1267 he set out, in company with Frederick, and with a following of some ten thousand men, and crossed the Alps to Lombardy, where he met with a warm welcome at Verona by the Ghibelline chiefs.

Treachery accompanied him, however, in the presence of his guardian Meinhard and Louis of Bavaria, who persuaded him to part with his German possessions for a low price, and then deserted him, followed by the greater part of the Germans. Conradin was left with but three thousand men.

The Italians proved more faithful. Verona raised him an army; Pisa supplied him a large fleet; the Moors of Luceria took up arms in his cause; even Rome rose in his favor, and drove out the pope, who retreated to Viterbo. For the time being the Ghibelline cause was in the ascendant. Conradin marched unopposed to Rome, at whose gates he was met by a procession of beautiful girls, bearing flowers and instruments of music, who conducted him to the capitol. His success on land was matched by a success at sea, his fleet gaining a signal victory over that of the French, and burning a great number of their ships.

So far all had gone well with the youthful heir of the Hohenstauffens. Henceforth all was to go ill. Conradin marched from Rome to lower Italy, where he encountered the French army, under Charles, at Scurcola, drove them back, and broke into their camp. Assured of victory, the Germans grew careless, dispersing through the camp in search of booty, while some of them even refreshed themselves by bathing.

While thus engaged, the French reserve, who had watched their movements, suddenly fell upon them and completely put them to rout. Conradin and Frederick, after fighting bravely, owed their escape to the fleetness of their steeds. They reached the sea at Astura, boarded a vessel, and were about setting sail for Pisa, when they were betrayed into the hands of their pursuers, taken prisoners, and carried back to Charles of Anjou.

They had fallen into fatal hands; Charles was not the man to consider justice or honor in dealing with a Hohenstauffen. He treated Conradin as a rebel against himself, under the claim that he was the only legitimate king, and sentenced both the princes, then but sixteen years of age, to be publicly beheaded in the market-place at Naples.

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Conradin was playing at chess in prison when the news of this unjust sentence was brought to him. He calmly listened to it, with the courage native to his race. On October 22, 1268, he, with Frederick and his other companions, was conducted to the scaffold erected in the market-place, passing through a throng of which even the French contingent looked on the spectacle with indignation. So greatly were they wrought up, indeed, by the outrage, that Robert, Earl of Flanders, Charles's son-in-law, drew his sword, and cut down the officer commissioned to read in public the sentence of death.

"Wretch!" he cried, as he dealt the blow, "how darest thou condemn such a great and excellent knight?"

Conradin met his fate with unyielding courage, saying, in his address to the people,—

"I cite my judge before the highest tribunal. My blood, shed on this spot, shall cry to heaven for vengeance. Nor do I esteem my Swabians and Bavarians, my Germans, so low as not to trust that this stain on the honor of the German nation will be washed out by them in French blood."

Then, throwing his glove to the ground, he charged him who should raise it to bear it to Peter, King of Aragon, to whom, as his nearest relative, he bequeathed all his claims. The glove was raised by Henry, Truchsess von Waldberg, who found in it the seal ring of the unfortunate wearer. Thence-forth he bore in his arms the three black lions of the Stauffen.

In a minute more the fatal axe of the executioner descended, and the head of the last heir of the Hohenstauffens rolled upon the scaffold. His friend, Frederick, followed him to death, nor was the bloodthirsty Charles satisfied until almost every Ghibelline in his hands had fallen by the hand of the executioner.

Enzio, the unfortunate son of Frederick who was held prisoner by the Bolognese, was involved in the fate of his unhappy nephew. On learning of the arrival of Conradin in Italy he made an effort to escape from prison, which would have been successful but for an unlucky accident. He had arranged to conceal himself in a cask, which was to be borne out of the prison by his friends, but by an unfortunate chance one of his long, golden locks fell out of the air-hole which had been made in the side of the cask, and revealed the stratagem to his keepers.

During his earlier imprisonment Enzio had been allowed some alleviation, his friends being permitted to visit him and solace him in his seclusion; but after this effort to escape he was closely confined, some say, in an iron cage, until his death in 1272.

Thus ended the royal race of the Hohenstauffen, a race marked by unusual personal beauty, rich poetical genius, and brilliant warlike achievements, and during whose

period of power the mediaeval age and its institutions attained their highest development.

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As for the ruthless Charles of Anjou, he retained Apulia, but lost his possessions in Sicily through an event which has become famous as the “Sicilian Vespers.” The insolence and outrages of the French had so exasperated the Sicilians that, on the night of March 30, 1282, a general insurrection broke out in this island, the French being everywhere assassinated. Constance, the grand-daughter of their old ruler, and Peter of Aragon, her husband, were proclaimed their sovereigns by the Sicilians, and Charles, the son of Charles of Anjou, fell into their hands.

Constance was generous to the captive prince, and on hearing him remark that he was happy to die on a Friday, the day on which Christ suffered, she replied,—

“For love of him who suffered on this day I will grant thee thy life.”

He was afterwards exchanged for Beatrice, the daughter of the unhappy Helena, whose sons, the last princes of the Hohenstauffen race, died in the prison in which they had lived since infancy.

THE TRIBUNAL OF THE HOLY VEHM.

The ideas of law and order in mediaeval Germany were by no means what we now understand by those terms. The injustice of the strong and the suffering of the weak were the rule; and men of noble lineage did not hesitate to turn their castles into dens of thieves. The title “robber baron,” which many of them bore, sufficiently indicates their mode of life, and turbulence and outrage prevailed throughout the land.

But wrong did not flourish with complete impunity; right had not entirely vanished; justice still held its sword, and at times struck swift and deadly blows that filled with terror the wrong-doer, and gave some assurance of protection to those too weak for self-defence. It was no unusual circumstance to behold, perhaps in the vicinity of some baronial castle, perhaps near some town or manorial residence, a group of peasants gazing upwards with awed but triumphant eyes; the spectacle that attracted their attention being the body of a man hanging from the limb of a tree above their heads.

Such might have been supposed to be some act of private vengeance or bold outrage, but the exulting lookers-on knew better. For they recognized the body, perhaps as that of the robber baron of the neighboring castle, perhaps that of some other bold defier of law and justice, while in the ground below the corpse appeared an object that told a tale of deep meaning to their experienced eyes. This was a knife, thrust to the hilt in the earth. As they gazed upon it they muttered the mysterious words, “*Vehm gericht*,” and quickly dispersed, none daring to touch the corpse or disturb the significant signal of the vengeance of the executioners.

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But as they walked away they would converse in low tones of a dread secret tribunal, which held its mysterious meetings in remote places, caverns of the earth or the depths of forests, at the dread hour of midnight, its members being sworn by frightful oaths to utter secrecy. Before these dark tribunals were judged, present or absent, the wrong-doers of the land, and the sentence of the secret Vehm once given, there was no longer safety for the condemned. The agents of vengeance would be put upon his track, while the secret of his death sentence was carefully kept from his ears. The end was sure to be a sudden seizure, a rope to the nearest tree, a writhing body, the signal knife of the executioners of the Vehm, silence and mystery.

Such was the visible outcome of the workings of this dreaded court, of whose sessions and secrets the common people of the land had exaggerated conceptions, but whose sudden and silent deeds in the interest of justice went far to repress crime in that lawless age. We have seen the completion of the sentence, let us attend a session of this mysterious court.

Seeking the Vehmic tribunal, we do not find ourselves in a midnight forest, nor in a dimly-lighted cavern or mysterious vault, as peasant traditions would tell us, but in the hall of some ancient castle, or on a hill-top, under the shade of lime-trees, and with an open view of the country for miles around. Here, on the seat of justice, presides the graf or count of the district, before him the sword, the symbol of supreme justice, its handle in the form of the cross, while beside it lies the *Wyd*, or cord, the sign of his power of life or death. Around him are seated the *Schoeffen*, or ministers of justice, bareheaded and without weapons, in complete silence, none being permitted to speak except when called upon in the due course of proceedings.

The court being solemnly opened, the person cited to appear before it steps forward, unarmed and accompanied by two sureties, if he has any. The complaint against him is stated by the judge, and he is called upon to clear himself by oath taken on the cross of the sword. If he takes it, he is free. “He shall then,” says an ancient work, “take a farthing piece, throw it at the feet of the court, turn round and go his way. Whoever attacks or touches him, has then, which all freemen know, broken the king’s peace.”

This was the ancient custom, but in later times witnesses were examined, and the proceedings were more in conformity with those of modern courts. If sentence of death was passed, the criminal was hanged at once on the nearest tree. The minor punishments were exile and fine. If the defendant refused to appear, after being three times cited, the sentence of the Vehm was pronounced against him, a dreadful sentence, ending in,—

“And I hereby curse his flesh and his blood; and may his body never receive burial, but may it be borne away by the wind, and may the ravens and crows, and wild birds of prey, consume and destroy him. And I adjudge his neck to the rope, and his body to be

devoured by the birds and beasts of the air, sea, and land; but his soul I commend to our dear Lord, if He will receive it."

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These words spoken, the judge cast forth the rope beyond the limits of the court, and wrote the name of the condemned in the book of blood, calling on the princes and nobles of the land, and all the inhabitants of the empire, to aid in fulfilling this sentence upon the criminal, without regard to relationship or any ties of kindred or affection whatever.

The condemned man was now left to the work of the ministers of justice, the Schoeffen of the court. Whoever should shelter or even warn him was himself to be brought before the tribunal. The members of the court were bound by a terrible oath, to be enforced by death, not to reveal the sentence of the Holy Vehm, except to one of the initiated, and not to warn the culprit, even if he was a father or a brother. Wherever the condemned was found, whether in a house, a street, the high-road, or the forest, he was seized and hanged to the nearest tree or post, if the servants of the court could lay hands on him. As a sign that he was executed by the Holy Vehm, and not slain by robbers, nothing was taken from his body, and the knife was thrust into the ground beneath him. We may further say that any criminal taken in the act by the Vehmic officers of justice did not need to be brought before the court, but might be hanged on the spot, with the ordinary indications that he was a victim to the secret tribunal.

A citation to appear before the Vehm was executed by two Schoeffen, who bore the letter of the presiding count to the accused. If they could not reach him because he was living in a city or a fortress which they could not safely enter, they were authorized to execute their mission otherwise. They might approach the castle in the night, stick the letter, enclosing a farthing piece, in the panel of the castle gate, cut off three chips from the gate as evidence to the count that they had fulfilled their mission, and call out to the sentinel on leaving that they had deposited there a letter for his lord. If the accused had no regular dwelling-place, and could not be met, he was summoned at four different cross-roads, where was left at the east, west, north, and south points a summons, each containing the significant farthing coin.

It must not be supposed that the administration of justice in Germany was confined to this Vehmic court. There were open courts of justice throughout the land. But what were known as *Freistuhls,* or free courts, were confined to the duchy of Westphalia. Some of the sessions of these courts were open, some closed, the Vehm constituting their secret tribunal.

Though complaints might be brought and persons cited to appear from every part of Germany, a free court could only be held on Westphalian ground, on the red earth, as it was entitled. Even the emperor could not establish a free court outside of Westphalia. When the Emperor Wenceslas tried to establish one in Bohemia, the counts of the empire decreed that any one who should take part in it would incur the

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penalty of death. The members of these courts consisted of Schoeffen, nominated by the graf, or presiding judge, and composed of ordinary members and the Wissenden or Witan, the higher membership. The initiation of these members was a singular and impressive ceremony. It could only take place upon the red earth, or within the boundaries of Westphalia. Bareheaded and ungirt, the candidate was conducted before the tribunal, and strictly questioned as to his qualifications to membership. He must be free-born, of Teutonic ancestry, and clear of any accusation of crime.

This settled, a deep and solemn oath of fidelity was administered, the candidate swearing by the Holy Law to guard the secrets of the Holy Vehm from wife and child, father and mother, sister and brother, fire and water, every creature on whom rain falls or sun shines, everything between earth and heaven; to tell to the tribunal all offences known to him, and not to be deterred therefrom by love or hate, gold, silver, or precious stones. He was now intrusted with the very ancient password and secret grip or other sign of the order, by which the members could readily recognize each other wherever meeting, and was warned of the frightful penalty incurred by those who should reveal the secrets of the Vehm. This penalty was that the criminal should have his eyes bound and be cast upon the earth, his tongue torn out through the back of his neck, and his body hanged seven times higher than ordinary criminals. In the history of the court there is no instance known of the oath of initiation being broken. For further security of the secrets of the Vehm, no mercy was given to strangers found within the limits of the court. All such intruders were immediately hung.

The number of the Schoeffen, or members of the free courts, was very great. In the fourteenth century it exceeded one hundred thousand. Persons of all ranks joined them, princes desiring their ministers, cities their magistrates, to apply for membership. The emperor was the supreme presiding officer, and under him his deputy, the stadtholder of the duchy of Westphalia, while the local courts, of which there were one or more in each district of the duchy, were under the jurisdiction of the grafs or counts of their districts.

The Vehm could consider criminal actions of the greatest diversity, cases of mere slander or defamation of character being sometimes brought before it. Any violation of the ten commandments was within its jurisdiction. It particularly devoted itself to secret crimes, such as magic, witchcraft, or poisoning. Its agents of justice were bound to make constant circuits, night and day, with the privilege, as we have said, if they caught a thief or murderer in the act, or obtained his confession, to hang him at once on the nearest tree, with the knife as signal of their commission.

Of the origin of this strange court we have no certain knowledge. Tradition ascribes it to Charlemagne, but that needs confirmation. It seems rather to have been an outgrowth

of an old Saxon system, which also left its marks in the systems of justice of Saxon England, where existed customs not unlike those of the Holy Vehm.

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Mighty was the power of these secret courts, and striking the traditions to which they have given rise, based upon their alleged nocturnal assemblies, their secret signs and solemn oaths, their mysterious customs, and the implacable persistency with which their sentences sought the criminal, pursuing him for years, and in whatever corner of the empire he might take refuge, while there were none to call its ministers of justice to account for their acts if the terrible knife had been left as evidence of their authority.

Such an association, composed of thousands of men of all classes, from the highest to the lowest,—for common freemen, mechanics, and citizens shared the honor of membership with knights and even princes,—bound together by a band of inviolable secrecy, and its edicts carried out so mysteriously and ruthlessly, could not but attain to a terrible power, and produce a remarkable effect upon the imagination of the people. “The prince or knight who easily escaped the judgment of the imperial court, and from behind his fortified walls defied even the emperor himself, trembled when in the silence of the night he heard the voices of the *Freischoeffen* at the gate of his castle, and when the free count summoned him to appear at the ancient *malplatz*, or plain, under the lime-tree, or on the bank of a rivulet upon that dreaded soil, the Westphalian or red ground. And that the power of those free courts was not exaggerated by the mere imagination, excited by terror, nor in reality by any means insignificant, is proved by a hundred undeniable examples, supported by records and testimonies, that numerous princes, counts, knights, and wealthy citizens were seized by these Schoeffen of the secret tribunal, and, in execution of its sentence, perished by their hands.”

An institution so mysterious and wide-spread as this could not exist without some degree of abuse of power. Unworthy persons would attain membership, who would use their authority for the purpose of private vengeance. This occasional injustice of the Vehmic tribunal became more frequent as time went on, and by the end of the fifteenth century many complaints arose against the free courts, particularly among the clergy. Civilization was increasing, and political institutions becoming more developed, in Germany; the lords of the land grew restive under the subjection of their people to the acts of a secret and strange tribunal, no longer supported by imperial power. Alliances of princes, nobles, and citizens were made against the Westphalian courts, and their power finally ceased, without any formal decree of abrogation.

In the sixteenth century the Vehm still possessed much strength; in the seventeenth it had grown much weaker; in the eighteenth only a few traces of it remained; at Gehmen, in Muenster, the secret tribunal was only finally extinguished by a decree of the French legislature in 1811. Even to the present day there are peasants who have taken the oath of the Schoeffen, whose secrecy they persistently maintain, and who meet annually at the site of some of the old free courts. The principal signs of the order are indicated by the letters S.S.G.G., signifying *stock, stein, gras, grein* (stick, stone, grass, tears), though no one has been able to trace the mysterious meaning these words convey as symbols of the mystic power of the ancient *Vehm gericht*.

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WILLIAM TELL AND THE SWISS PATRIOTS.

“In the year of our Lord 1307,” writes an ancient chronicler, “there dwelt a pious countryman in Unterwald beyond the Kernwald, whose name was Henry of Melchthal, a wise, prudent, honest man, well to do and in good esteem among his country-folk, moreover, a firm supporter of the liberties of his country and of its adhesion to the Holy Roman Empire, on which account Beringer von Landenberg, the governor over the whole of Unterwald, was his enemy. This Melchthaler had some very fine oxen, and on account of some trifling misdemeanor committed by his son, Arnold of Melchthal, the governor sent his servant to seize the finest pair of oxen by way of punishment, and in case old Henry of Melchthal said anything against it, he was to say that it was the governor’s opinion that the peasants should draw the plough themselves. The servant fulfilled his lord’s commands. But as he unharnessed the oxen, Arnold, the son of the countryman, fell into a rage, and striking him with a stick on the hand, broke one of his fingers. Upon this Arnold fled, for fear of his life, up the country towards Uri, where he kept himself long secret in the country where Conrad of Baumgarten from Altzelen lay hid for having killed the governor of Wolfenschiess, who had insulted his wife, with a blow of his axe. The servant, meanwhile, complained to his lord, by whose order old Melchthal’s eyes were torn out. This tyrannical action rendered the governor highly unpopular, and Arnold, on learning how his good father had been treated, laid his wrongs secretly before trusty people in Uri, and awaited a fit opportunity for avenging his father’s misfortune.”

Such was the prologue to the tragic events which we have now to tell, events whose outcome was the freedom of Switzerland and the formation of that vigorous Swiss confederacy which has maintained itself until the present day in the midst of the powerful and warlike nations which have surrounded it. The prologue given, we must proceed with the main scenes of the drama, which quickly followed.

As the story goes, Arnold allied himself with two other patriots, Werner Stauffacher and Walter Fuerst, bold and earnest men, the three meeting regularly at night to talk over the wrongs of their country and consider how best to right them. Of the first named of these men we are told that he was stirred to rebellion by the tyranny of Gessler, governor of Uri, a man who forms one of the leading characters of our drama. The rule of Gessler extended over the country of Schwyz, where in the town of Steinen, in a handsome house, lived Werner Stauffacher. As the governor passed one day through this town he was pleasantly greeted by Werner, who was standing before his door.

“To whom does this house belong?” asked Gessler.

Werner, fearing that some evil purpose lay behind this question, cautiously replied,—

“My lord, the house belongs to my sovereign lord the king, and is your and my fief.”

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“I will not allow peasants to build houses without my consent,” returned Gessler, angered at this shrewd reply, “or to live in freedom as if they were their own masters. I will teach you better than to resist my authority.”

So saying, he rode on, leaving Werner greatly disturbed by his threatening words. He returned into his house with heavy brow and such evidence of discomposure that his wife eagerly questioned him. Learning what the governor had said, the good lady shared his disturbance, and said,—

“My dear Werner, you know that many of the country-folk complain of the governor’s tyranny. In my opinion, it would be well for some of you, who can trust one another, to meet in secret, and take counsel how to throw off his wanton power.”

This advice seemed so judicious to Werner that he sought his friend Walter Fuerst, and arranged with him and Arnold that they should meet and consider what steps to take, their place of meeting being at Ruetli, a small meadow in a lonely situation, closed in on the land side by high rocks, and opening on the Lake of Lucerne. Others joined them in their patriotic purpose, and on the night of the Wednesday before Martinmas, in the year 1307, each of the three led to the place of meeting ten others, all as resolute and liberty-loving as themselves. These thirty-three good and true men, thus assembled at the midnight hour in the meadow of Ruetli, united in a solemn oath that they would devote their lives and strength to the freeing of their country from its oppressors. They fixed the first day of the coming year for the beginning of their work, and then returned to their homes, where they kept the strictest secrecy, occupying themselves in housing their cattle for the winter and in other rural labors, with no indication that they cherished deeper designs.

During this interval of secrecy another event, of a nature highly exasperating to the Swiss, is said to have happened. It is true that modern critics declare the story of this event to be solely a legend and that nothing of the kind ever took place. However that be, it has ever since remained one of the most attractive of popular tales, and the verdict of the critics shall not deter us from telling again this oft-repeated and always welcome story.

We have named two of the many tyrannical governors of Switzerland, the deputies there of Albert of Austria, then Emperor of Germany, whose purpose was to abolish the privileges of the Swiss and subject the free communes to his arbitrary rule. The second named of these, Gessler, governor of Uri and Schwyz, whose threats had driven Werner to conspiracy, occupied a fortress in Uri, which he had built as a place of safety in case of revolt, and a centre of tyranny. “Uri’s prison” he called this fortress, an insult to the people of Uri which roused their indignation. Perceiving their sullenness, Gessler resolved to give them a salutary lesson of his power and their helplessness.

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On St. Jacob's day he had a pole erected in the market-place at Altdorf, under the lime-trees there growing, and directed that his hat should be placed on its top. This done, the command was issued that all who passed through the market-place should bow and kneel to this hat as to the king himself, blows and confiscation of property to be the lot of all who refused. A guard was placed around the pole, whose duty was to take note of every man who should fail to do homage to the governor's hat.

On the Sunday following, a peasant of Uri, William Tell by name, who, as we are told, was one of the thirty-three sworn confederates, passed several times through the market-place at Altdorf without bowing or bending the knee to Gessler's hat. This was reported to the governor, who summoned Tell to his presence, and haughtily asked him why he had dared to disobey his command.

"My dear lord," answered Tell, submissively, "I beg you to pardon me, for it was done through ignorance and not out of contempt. If I were clever, I should not be called Tell. I pray your mercy; it shall not happen again."

[Illustration: STATUE OF WILLIAM TELL.]

The name Tell signifies dull or stupid, a meaning in consonance with his speech, though not with his character. Yet stupid or bright, he had the reputation of being the best archer in the country, and Gessler, knowing this, determined on a singular punishment for his fault. Tell had beautiful children, whom he dearly loved. The governor sent for these, and asked him,—

"Which of your children do you love the best?"

"My lord, they are all alike dear to me," answered Tell.

"If that be so," said Gessler, "then, as I hear that you are a famous marksman, you shall prove your skill in my presence by shooting an apple off the head of one of your children. But take good care to hit the apple, for if your first shot miss you shall lose your life."

"For God's sake, do not ask me to do this!" cried Tell in horror. "It would be unnatural to shoot at my own dear child. I would rather die than do it."

"Unless you do it, you or your child shall die," answered the governor harshly.

Tell, seeing that Gessler was resolute in his cruel project, and that the trial must be made or worse might come, reluctantly agreed to it. He took his cross-bow and two arrows, one of which he placed in the bow, the other he stuck behind in his collar. The governor, meanwhile, had selected the child for the trial, a boy of not more than six years of age, whom he ordered to be placed at the proper distance, and himself selected an apple and placed it on the child's head.

Tell viewed these preparations with startled eyes, while praying inwardly to God to shield his dear child from harm. Then, bidding the boy to stand firm and not be frightened, as his father would do his best not to harm him, he raised the perilous bow.

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The legend deals too briefly with this story. It fails to picture the scene in the market-place. But there, we may be sure, in addition to Gessler and his guards, were most of the people of Uri, their hearts burning with sympathy for their countryman and hatred of the tyrant, their feelings almost wrought up to the point of attacking Gessler and his guards, and daring death in defence of their liberties. There also we may behold in fancy the brave child, scarcely old enough to appreciate the magnitude of his peril, but looking with simple faith into the kind eyes of his father, who stands firm of frame but trembling in heart before him, the death-dealing bow in his hand.

In a minute more the bow is bent, Tell's unerring eye glances along the shaft, the string twangs sharply, the arrow speeds through the air, and the apple, pierced through its centre, is borne from the head of the boy, who leaps forward with a glad cry of triumph, while the unnerved father, with tears of joy in his eyes, flings the bow to the ground and clasps his child to his heart.

"By my faith, Tell, that is a wonderful shot!" cried the astonished governor. "Men have not belied you. But why have you stuck another arrow in your collar?"

"That is the custom among marksmen," Tell hesitatingly answered.

"Come, man, speak the truth openly and without fear," said Gessler, who noted Tell's hesitancy. "Your life is safe; but I am not satisfied with your answer."

"Then," said Tell, regaining his courage, "if you would have the truth, it is this. If I had struck my child with the first arrow, the other was intended for you; and with that I should not have missed my mark."

The governor started at these bold words, and his brow clouded with anger.

"I promised you your life," he exclaimed, "and will keep my word; but, as you cherish evil intentions against me, I shall make sure that you cannot carry them out. You are not safe to leave at large, and shall be taken to a place where you can never again behold the sun or the moon."

Turning to his guards, he bade them seize the bold marksman, bind his hands, and take him in a boat across the lake to his castle at Kuessnach, where he should do penance for his evil intentions by spending the remainder of his life in a dark dungeon. The people dared not interfere with this harsh sentence; the guards were too many and too well armed. Tell was seized, bound, and hurried to the lake-side, Gessler accompanying.

The water reached, he was placed in a boat, his cross-bow being also brought and laid beside the steersman. As if with purpose to make sure of the disposal of his threatening enemy, Gessler also entered the boat, which was pushed off and rowed across the lake

towards Brunnen, from which place the prisoner was to be taken overland to the governor’s fortress.

Before they were half-way across the lake, however, a sudden and violent storm arose, tossing the boat so frightfully that Gessler and all with him were filled with mortal fear.

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“My lord,” cried one of the trembling rowers to the governor, “we will all go to the bottom unless something is done, for there is not a man among us fit to manage a boat in this storm. But Tell here is a skilful boatman, and it would be wise to use him in our sore need.”

“Can you bring us out of this peril?” asked Gessler, who was no less alarmed than his crew. “If you can, I will release you from your bonds.”

“I trust, with God’s help, that I can safely bring you ashore,” answered Tell.

By Gessler’s order his bonds were then removed, and he stepped aft and took the helm, guiding the boat through the storm with the skill of a trained mariner. He had, however, another object in view, and had no intention to let the tyrannical governor bind his free limbs again. He bade the men to row carefully until they reached a certain rock, which appeared on the lake-side at no great distance, telling them that he hoped to land them behind its shelter. As they drew near the spot indicated, he turned the helm so that the boat struck violently against the rock, and then, seizing the cross-bow which lay beside him, he sprang nimbly ashore, and thrust the boat with his foot back into the tossing waves. The rock on which he landed is, says the chronicler, still known as Tell’s Rock, and a small chapel has been built upon it.

The story goes on to tell us that the governor and his rowers, after great danger, finally succeeded in reaching the shore at Brunnen, at which point they took horse and rode through the district of Schwyz, their route leading through a narrow passage between the rocks, the only way by which they could reach Kuessnach from that quarter. On they went, the angry governor swearing vengeance against Tell, and laying plans with his followers how the runaway should be seized. The deepest dungeon at Kuessnach, he vowed, should be his lot.

He little dreamed what ears heard his fulminations and what deadly peril threatened him. On leaving the boat, Tell had run quickly forward to the passage, or hollow way, through which he knew that Gessler must pass on his way to the castle. Here, hidden behind the high bank that bordered the road, he waited, cross-bow in hand, and the arrow which he had designed for the governor’s life in the string, for the coming of his mortal foe.

Gessler came, still talking of his plans to seize Tell, and without a dream of danger, for the pass was silent and seemed deserted. But suddenly to his ears came the twang of the bow he had heard before that day; through the air once more winged its way a steel-barbed shaft, the heart of a tyrant, not an apple on a child’s head, now its mark. In an instant more Gessler fell from his horse, pierced by Tell’s fatal shaft, and breathed his last before the eyes of his terrified servants. On that spot, the chronicler concludes, was built a holy chapel, which is standing to this day.

Such is the far-famed story of William Tell. How much truth and how much mere tradition there is in it, it is not easy to say. The feat of shooting an apple from a person's head is told of others before Tell's time, and that it ever happened is far from sure. But at the same time it is possible that the story of Tell, in its main features, may be founded on fact. Tradition is rarely all fable.

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We are now done with William Tell, and must return to the doings of the three confederates to whom fame ascribes the origin of the liberty of Switzerland. In the early morning of January 1, 1308, the date they had fixed for their work to begin, as Landenberg was leaving his castle to attend mass at Sarnen, he was met by twenty of the mountaineers of Unterwald, who, as was their custom, brought him a new-year's gift of calves, goats, sheep, fowls, and hares. Much pleased with the present, he asked the men to take the animals into the castle court, and went on his way towards Sarnen.

But no sooner had the twenty men passed through the gates than a horn was loudly blown, and instantly each of them drew from beneath his doublet a steel blade, which he fixed upon the end of his staff. At the sound of the horn thirty other men rushed from a neighboring wood, and made for the open gates. In a very few minutes they joined their comrades in the castle, which was quickly theirs, the garrison being overpowered.

Landenberg fled in haste on hearing the tumult, but was pursued and taken. But as the confederates had agreed with each other to shed no blood, they suffered this arch villain to depart, after making him swear to leave Switzerland and never return to it. The news of the revolt spread rapidly through the mountains, and so well had the confederates laid their plans, that several other castles were taken by stratagem before the alarm could be given. Their governors were sent beyond the borders. Day by day news was brought to the head-quarters of the patriots, on Lake Lucerne, of success in various parts of the country, and on Sunday, the 7th of January, a week from the first outbreak, the leading men of that part of Switzerland met and pledged themselves to their ancient oath of confederacy. In a week's time they had driven out the Austrians and set their country free.

It must be admitted that there is no contemporary proof of this story, though the Swiss accept it as authentic history, and it has not been disproved. The chief peril to the new confederacy lay with Albert of Austria, the dispossessed lord of the land, but the patriotic Swiss found themselves unexpectedly relieved from the execution of his threats of vengeance. His harshness and despotic severity had made him enemies alike among people and nobles, and when, in the spring of 1308, he sought the borders of Switzerland, with the purpose of reducing and punishing the insurgents, his career was brought to a sudden and violent end.

A conspiracy had been formed against him by his nephew, the Duke of Swabia, and others who accompanied him in this journey. On the 1st of May they reached the Reuss River at Windisch, and, as the emperor entered the boat to be ferried across, the conspirators pushed into it after him, leaving no room for his attendants. Reaching the opposite shore, they remounted their steeds and rode on while the boat returned for the others. Their route lay through the vast cornfields at the base of the hills whose highest summit was crowned by the great castle of Hapsburg.

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They had gone some distance, when John of Swabia suddenly rushed upon the emperor, and buried his lance in his neck, exclaiming, “Such is the reward of injustice!” Immediately two others rode upon him, Rudolph of Balm stabbing him with his dagger, while Walter of Eschenbach clove his head in twain with his sword. This bloody work done, the conspirators spurred rapidly away, leaving the dying emperor to breathe his last with his head supported in the lap of a poor woman, who had witnessed the murder and hurried to the spot.

This deed of blood saved Switzerland from the vengeance which the emperor had designed. The mountaineers were given time to cement the government they had so hastily formed, and which was to last for centuries thereafter, despite the efforts of ambitious potentates to reduce the Swiss once more to subjection and rob them of the liberty they so dearly loved.

THE BLACK DEATH AND THE FLAGELLANTS.

The middle of the fourteenth century was a period of extraordinary terror and disaster to Europe. Numerous portents, which sadly frightened the people, were followed by a pestilence which threatened to turn the continent into an unpeopled wilderness. For year after year there were signs in the sky, on the earth, in the air, all indicative, as men thought, of some terrible coming event. In 1337 a great comet appeared in the heavens, its far-extending tail sowing deep dread in the minds of the ignorant masses. During the three succeeding years the land was visited by enormous flying armies of locusts, which descended in myriads upon the fields, and left the shadow of famine in their track. In 1348 came an earthquake of such frightful violence that many men deemed the end of the world to be presaged. Its devastations were widely spread. Cyprus, Greece, and Italy were terribly visited, and it extended through the Alpine valleys as far as Basle. Mountains sank into the earth. In Carinthia thirty villages and the tower of Villach were ruined. The air grew thick and stifling. There were dense and frightful fogs. Wine fermented in the casks. Fiery meteors appeared in the skies. A gigantic pillar of flame was seen by hundreds descending upon the roof of the pope’s palace at Avignon. In 1356 came another earthquake, which destroyed almost the whole of Basle. What with famine, flood, fog, locust swarms, earthquakes, and the like, it is not surprising that many men deemed the cup of the world’s sins to be full, and the end of the kingdom of man to be at hand.

An event followed that seemed to confirm this belief. A pestilence broke out of such frightful virulence that it appeared indeed as if man was to be swept from the earth. Men died in hundreds, in thousands, in myriads, until in places there were scarcely enough living to bury the dead, and these so maddened with fright that dwellings, villages, towns, were deserted by all who were able to fly, the dying and dead being left their sole inhabitants. It was the pestilence called the “Black Death,” the most terrible visitation that Europe has ever known.

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This deadly disease came from Asia. It is said to have originated in China, spreading over the great continent westwardly, and descending in all its destructive virulence upon Europe, which continent it swept as with the besom of destruction. The disease appears to have been a very malignant type of what is known as the plague, a form of pestilence which has several times returned, though never with such virulence as on that occasion. It began with great lassitude of the body, and rapid swellings of the glands of the groin and armpits, which soon became large boils. Then followed, as a fatal symptom, large black or deep-blue spots over the body, from which came the name of “Black Death.” Some of the victims became sleepy and stupid; others were incessantly restless. The tongue and throat grew black; the lungs exhaled a noisome odor; an insatiable thirst was produced. Death came in two or three days, sometimes on the very day of seizure. Medical aid was of no avail. Doctors and relatives fled in terror from what they deemed a fatally contagious disease, and the stricken were left to die alone. Villages and towns were in many places utterly deserted, no living things being left, for the disease was as fatal to dogs, cats, and swine as to men. There is reason to believe that this, and other less destructive visitations of plague, were due to the action of some of those bacterial organisms which are now known to have so much to do with infectious diseases. This particular pestilence-breeder seems to have flourished in filth, and the streets of the cities of Europe of that day formed a richly fertile soil for its growth. Men prayed to God for relief, instead of cleaning their highways and by-ways, and relief came not.

Such was its character, what were its ravages? Never before or since has a pestilence brought such desolation. Men died by millions. At Basle it found fourteen thousand victims; at Strasburg and Erfurt, sixteen thousand; in the other cities of Germany it flourished in like proportion. In Osnabrueck only seven married couples remained unseparated by death. Of the Franciscan Minorites of Germany, one hundred and twenty-five thousand died.

Outside of Germany the fury of the pestilence was still worse; from east to west, from north to south, Europe was desolated. The mortality in Asia was fearful. In China there are said to have been thirteen million victims to the scourge; in the rest of Asia twenty-four millions. The extreme west was no less frightfully visited. London lost one hundred thousand of its population; in all England a number estimated at from one-third to one-half the entire population (then probably numbering from three to five millions) were swept into the grave. If we take Europe as a whole, it is believed that fully a fourth of its inhabitants were carried away by this terrible scourge. For two years the pestilence raged, 1348 and 1349. It broke out again in 1361-62, and once more in 1369.

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The mortality caused by the plague was only one of its disturbing consequences. The bonds of society were loosened; natural affection seemed to vanish; friend deserted friend, mothers even fled from their children; demoralization showed itself in many instances in reckless debauchery. An interesting example remains to us in Boccaccio's "Decameron," whose stories were told by a group of pleasure-lovers who had fled from plague-stricken Florence.

In many localities the hatred of the Jews by the people led to frightful excesses of persecution against them, they being accused by their enemies of poisoning the wells. From Berne, where the city councils gave orders for the massacre, it spread over the whole of Switzerland and Germany, many thousands being murdered. At Mayence it is said that twelve thousand Jews were massacred. At Strasburg two thousand were burned in one pile. Even the orders of the emperor failed to put an end to the slaughter. All the Jews who could took refuge in Poland, where they found a protector in Casimir, who, like a second Ahasuerus, extended his aid to them from love for Esther, a beautiful Jewess. From that day to this Poland has swarmed with Jews.

This persecution was discountenanced by Pope Clement VI. in two bulls, in the first of which he ordered that the Jews should not be made the victims of groundless charges or injured in person or property without the sentence of a lawful judge. The second affirmed the innocence of the Jews in the persecution then going on and ordered the bishops to excommunicate all those who should continue it.

Of the beneficial results of the religious excitement may be named the earnest labors of the order of Beguines, an association of women for the purpose of attending the sick and dying, which had long been in existence, but was particularly active and useful during this period. We may name also the Beghards and Lollards, whose extravagances were to some extent outgrowths of earnest piety, and their lives strongly contrasted with the levity and luxury of the higher ecclesiastics. These societies of poor and mendicant penitents were greatly increased by the religious excitement of the time, which also gave special vitality to another sect, the Flagellants, which, as mentioned in a former article, first arose in 1260, during the excesses of bloodshed of the Guelphs of northern Italy, and thence spread over Europe. After a period of decadence they broke out afresh in 1349, as a consequence of the deadly pestilence.

The members of this sect, seeing no hope of relief from human action, turned to God as their only refuge, and deemed it necessary to propitiate the Deity by extraordinary sacrifices and self-tortures. The flame of fanaticism, once started, spread rapidly and widely. Hundreds of men, and even boys, marched in companies through the roads and streets, carrying heavy torches, scourging their naked shoulders with knotted whips, which were often loaded with lead or iron, singing penitential hymns, parading in bands which bore banners and were distinguished by white hats with red crosses.

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Women as well as men took part in these fanatical exercises, marching about half-naked, whipping each other frightfully, flinging themselves on the earth in the most public places of the towns and scourging their bare backs and shoulders till the blood flowed. Entering the churches, they would prostrate themselves on the pavement, with their arms extended in the form of a cross, chanting their rude hymns. Of these hymns we may quote the following example:

"Now is the holy pilgrimage.
Christ rode into Jerusalem,
And in his hand he bore a cross;
May Christ to us be gracious.
Our pilgrimage is good and right."

The Flagellants did not content themselves with these public manifestations of self-sacrifice. They formed a regular religious order, with officers and laws, and property in common. At night, before sleeping, each indicated to his brothers by gestures the sins which weighed most heavily on his conscience, not a word being spoken until absolution was granted by one of them in the following form:

"For their dear sakes who torture bore,
Rise, brother, go and sin no more."

Had this been all they might have been left to their own devices, but they went farther. The day of judgment, they declared, was at hand. A letter had been addressed from Jerusalem by the Creator to his sinning creatures, and it was their mission to spread this through Europe. They preached, confessed, and forgave sins, declared that the blood shed in their flagellations had a share with the blood of Christ in atoning for sin, that their penances were a substitute for the sacraments of the church, and that the absolution granted by the clergy was of no avail. They taught that all men were brothers and equal in the sight of God, and upbraided the priests for their pride and luxury.

These doctrines and the extravagances of the Flagellants alarmed the pope, Clement VI., who launched against the enthusiasts a bull of excommunication, and ordered their persecution as heretics. This course, at first, roused their enthusiasm to frenzy. Some of them even pretended to be the Messiah, one of these being burnt as a heretic at Erfurt. Gradually, however, as the plague died away, and the occasion for this fanatical outburst vanished, the enthusiasm of the Flagellants went with it, and they sunk from sight. In 1414 a troop of them reappeared in Thuringia and Lower Saxony, and even surpassed their predecessors in wildness of extravagance. With the dying out of this manifestation this strange mania of the middle ages vanished, probably checked by the growing intelligence of mankind.

THE SWISS AT MORGARTEN

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On a sunny autumn morning, in the far-off year 1315, a gallant band of horsemen wound slowly up the Swiss mountains, their forest of spears and lances glittering in the ruddy beams of the new-risen sun, and extending down the hill-side as far as the eye could reach. In the vanguard rode the flower of the army, a noble cavalcade of knights, clad in complete armor, and including nearly the whole of the ancient nobility of Austria. At the head of this group rode Duke Leopold, the brother of Frederick of Austria, and one of the bravest knights and ablest generals of the realm. Following the van came a second division, composed of the inferior leaders and the rank and file of the army.

Switzerland was to be severely punished, and to be reduced again to the condition from which seven years before it had broken away; such was the dictum of the Austrian magnates. With the army came Landenberg, the oppressive governor who had been set free on his oath never to return to Switzerland. He was returning in defiance of his vow. With it are also said to have been several of the family of Gessler, the tyrant who fell beneath Tell's avenging arrow. The birds of prey were flying back, eager to fatten on the body of slain liberty in Switzerland.

Up the mountains wound the serried band, proud in their panoply, confident of easy victory, their voices ringing out in laughter and disdain as they spoke of the swift vengeance that was about to fall on the heads of the horde of rebel mountaineers. The duke was as gay and confidant as any of his followers, as he proudly bestrode his noble war-horse, and led the way up the mountain slopes towards the district of Schwyz, the head-quarters of the base-born insurgents. He would trample the insolent boors under his feet, he said, and had provided himself with an abundant supply of ropes with which to hang the leaders of the rebels, whom he counted on soon having in his power.

All was silent about them as they rode forward; the sun shone brilliantly; it seemed like a pleasure excursion on which they were bound.

"The locusts have crawled to their holes," said the duke, laughingly; "we will have to stir them out with the points of our lances."

"The poor fools fancied that liberty was to be won by driving out one governor and shooting another," answered a noble knight. "They will find that the eagle of Hapsburg does not loose its hold so easily."

Their conversation ceased as they found themselves at the entrance to a pass, through which the road up the mountains wound, a narrow avenue, wedged in between hills and lakeside. The silence continued unbroken around the rugged scene as the cavalry pushed in close ranks through the pass, filling it, as they advanced, from side to side. They pushed forward; beyond this pass of Morgarten they would find open land again and the villages of the rebellious peasantry; here all was solitude and a stillness that was almost depressing.

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Suddenly the stillness was broken. From the rugged cliffs which bordered the pass came a loud shout of defiance. But more alarming still was the sound of descending rocks, which came plunging down the mountain side, and in an instant fell with a sickening thud on the mail-clad and crowded ranks below. Under their weight the iron helmets of the knights cracked like so many nut-shells; heads were crushed into shapeless masses, and dozens of men, a moment before full of life, hope, and ambition, were hurled in death to the ground.

Down still plunged the rocks, loosened by busy hands above, sent on their errand of death down the steep declivities, hurling destruction upon the dense masses below. Escape was impossible. The pass was filled with horsemen. It would take time to open an avenue of flight, and still those death-dealing rocks came down, smashing the strongest armor like pasteboard, strewing the pass with dead and bleeding bodies.

And now the horses, terrified, wounded, mad with pain and alarm, began to plunge and rear, trebling the confusion and terror, crushing fallen riders under their hoofs, adding their quota to the sum of death and dismay. Many of them rushed wildly into the lake which bordered one side of the pass, carrying their riders to a watery death. In a few minutes' time that trim and soldierly array, filled with hope of easy victory and disdain of its foes, was converted into a mob of maddened horses and frightened men, while the rocky pass beneath their feet was strewn thickly with the dying and the dead.

Yet all this had been done by fifty men, fifty banished patriots, who had hastened back on learning that their country was in danger, and stationing themselves among the cliffs above the pass, had loosened and sent rolling downwards the stones and huge fragments of rock which lay plentifully there.

While the fifty returned exiles were thus at work on the height of Morgarten, the army of the Swiss, thirteen hundred in number, was posted on the summit of the Sattel Mountain opposite, waiting its opportunity. The time for action had come. The Austrian cavalry of the vanguard was in a state of frightful confusion and dismay. And now the mountaineers descended the steep hill slopes like an avalanche, and precipitated themselves on the flank of the invading force, dealing death with their halberds and iron-pointed clubs until the pass ran blood.

On every side the Austrian chivalry fell. Escape was next to impossible, resistance next to useless. Confined in that narrow passage, confused, terrified, their ranks broken by the rearing and plunging horses, knights and men-at-arms falling with every blow from their vigorous assailants, it seemed as if the whole army would be annihilated, and not a man escape to tell the tale.

Numbers of gallant knights, the flower of the Austrian, nobility, fell under those vengeful clubs. Numbers were drowned in the lake. A halberd-thrust revenged Switzerland on Landenberg, who had come back to his doom. Two of the Gesslers were slain. Death

held high carnival in that proud array which had vowed to reduce the free-spirited mountaineers to servitude.

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Such as could fled in all haste. The van of the army, which had passed beyond those death-dealing rocks, the rear, which had not yet come up, broke and fled in a panic of fear. Duke Leopold narrowly escaped from the vengeance of the mountaineers, whom he had held in such contempt. Instead of using the ropes he had brought with him to hang their chiefs, he fled at full speed from the victors, who were now pursuing the scattered fragments of the army, and slaying the fugitives in scores. With difficulty the proud duke escaped, owing his safety to a peasant, who guided him through narrow ravines and passes as far as Winterthur, which he at length reached in a state of the utmost dejection and fatigue. The gallantly-arrayed army which he had that morning led, with blare of trumpets and glitter of spears, with high hope and proud assurance of victory, up the mountain slopes, was now in great part a gory heap in the rocky passes, the remainder a scattered host of wearied and wounded fugitives. Switzerland had won its freedom.

The day before the Swiss confederates, apprised of the approach of the Austrians, had come together, four hundred men from Uri, three hundred from Unterwald, the remainder from Schwyz. They owed their success to Rudolphus Redin, a venerable patriot, so old and infirm that he could scarcely walk, yet with such reputation for skill and prudence in war that the warriors halted at his door in their march, and eagerly asked his advice.

[Illustration: THE CASTLE OF PRAGUE.]

“Our grand aim, my sons,” said he, “as we are so inferior in numbers, must be to prevent Duke Leopold from gaining any advantage by his superior force.”

He then advised them to occupy the Morgarten and Sattel heights, and fall on the Austrians when entangled in the pass, cutting their force in two, and assailing it right and left. They obeyed him implicitly, with what success we have seen. The fifty men who had so efficiently begun the fray had been banished from Schwyz through some dispute, but on learning their country’s danger had hastily returned to sacrifice their lives, if need be, for their native land.

Thus a strong and well-appointed army, fully disciplined and led by warriors famed for courage and warlike deeds, was annihilated by a small band of peasants, few of whom had ever struck a blow in war, but who were animated by the highest spirit of patriotism and love of liberty, and welcomed death rather than a return to their old state of slavery and oppression. The short space of an hour and a half did the work. Austria was defeated and Switzerland was free.

A MAD EMPEROR.

If genius to madness is allied, the same may be said of eccentricity, and certainly Wenceslas, Emperor of Germany and King of Bohemia, had an eccentricity that

approached the vagaries of the insane. The oldest son of Charles IV., he was brought up in pomp and luxury, and was so addicted to sensual gratification that he left the empire largely to take care of itself, while he gave his time to the pleasures of the bottle and the chase. Born to the throne, he was crowned King of Bohemia when but three years of age, was elected King of the Romans at fifteen, and two years afterwards, in 1378, became Emperor of Germany, when still but a boy, with regard for nothing but riot and rude frolic.

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So far as affairs of state were concerned, the volatile youth either totally neglected them or treated them with a ridicule that was worse than neglect. Drunk two-thirds of his time, he now dismissed the most serious matters with a rude jest, now met his councillors with brutal fits of rage. The Germans deemed him a fool, and were not far amiss in their opinion; but as he did not meddle with them, except in holding an occasional useless diet at Nuremberg, they did not meddle with him. The Bohemians, among whom he lived, his residence being at Prague, found his rule much more of a burden. They were exposed to his savage caprices, and regarded him as a brutal and senseless tyrant.

That there was method in his madness the following anecdote will sufficiently show. Former kings had invested the Bohemian nobles with possessions which he, moved by cupidity, determined to have back. This is the method he took to obtain them. All the nobles of the land were invited to meet him at Willamow, where he received them in a black tent, which opened on one side into a white, and on the other into a red one. Into this tent of ominous hue the waiting nobles were admitted, one at a time, and were here received by the emperor, who peremptorily bade them declare what lands they held as gifts from the crown.

Those who gave the information asked, and agreed to cede these lands back to the crown, were led into the white tent, where an ample feast awaited them. Those who refused were dismissed with frowns into the red tent, where they found awaiting them the headsman's fatal block and axe. The hapless guests were instantly seized and beheaded.

This ghastly jest, if such it may be considered, proceeded for some time before the nobles still waiting learned what was going on. When at length a whisper of the frightful mystery of the red tent was borne to their ears, there were no longer any candidates for its favors. The emperor found them eagerly willing to give up the ceded lands, and all that remained found their way to the white tent and the feast.

The emperor's next act of arbitrary tyranny was directed against the Jews. One of that people had ridiculed the sacrament, in consequence of which three thousand Jews of Prague were massacred by the populace of that city. Wenceslas, instead of punishing the murderers, as justice would seem to have demanded, solaced his easy conscience by punishing the victims, declaring all debts owed by Christians to Jews to be null and void.

His next act of injustice and cruelty was perpetrated in 1393, and arose from a dispute between the crown and the church. One of the royal chamberlains had caused two priests to be executed on the accusation of committing a flagrant crime. This action was resented by the Archbishop of Prague, who declared that it was an encroachment upon the prerogative of the church, which alone had the right to punish an ecclesiastic. He, therefore, excommunicated the chamberlain.

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This action of the daring churchman threw the emperor into such a paroxysm of rage that the archbishop, knowing well the man he had to deal with, took to flight, saving his neck at the expense of his dignity. The furious Wenceslas, finding that the chief offender had escaped, vented his wrath on the subordinates, several of whom were seized. One of them, the dean, moved by indignation, dealt the emperor so heavy a blow on the head with his sword-knot as to bring the blood. It does not appear that he was made to suffer for his boldness, but two of the lower ecclesiastics, John of Nepomuk and Puchnik, were put to the rack to make them confess facts learned by them in the confessional. They persistently refused to answer. Wenceslas, infuriated by their obstinacy, himself seized a torch and applied it to their limbs to make them speak. They were still silent. The affair ended in his ordering John of Nepomuk to be flung headlong, during the night, from the great bridge over the Moldau into the stream. A statue now marks the spot where this act of tyranny was performed.

The final result of the emperor's cruelty was one which he could not have foreseen. He had made a saint of Nepomuk. The church, appreciating the courageous devotion of the murdered ecclesiastic to his duty in keeping inviolate the secrets of the confessional, canonized him as a martyr, and made him the patron saint of Bohemia.

Puchnik escaped with his life, and eventually with more than his life. The tyrant's wrath was followed by remorse,—a feeling, apparently, which rarely troubled his soul,—and he sought to atone for his cruelty to one churchman by loading the other with benefits. But his mad fury changed to as mad a benevolence, and he managed to make a jest of his gratuity. Puchnik was led into the royal treasury, and the emperor himself, thrusting his royal hands into his hoards of gold, filled the pockets, and even the boots, of the late sufferer with the precious coin. This done, Puchnik attempted to depart, but in vain. He found himself nailed to the floor, so weighed down with gold that he was unable to stir. Before he could move he had to disgorge much of his new-gained wealth, a proceeding to which churchmen in that age do not seem to have been greatly given. Doubtless the remorseful Wenceslas beheld this process with a grim smile of royal humor on his lips.

The emperor had a brother, Sigismund by name, a man not of any high degree of wisdom, but devoid of his wild and immoderate temper. Brandenburg was his inheritance, though he had married the daughter of the King of Hungary and Poland, and hoped to succeed to those countries. There was a third brother, John, surnamed "Von Goerlitz." Sigismund was by no means blind to his brother's folly, or to the ruin in which it threatened to involve his family and his own future prospects. This last exploit stirred him to action. Concerting with some other princes of the empire, he suddenly seized Wenceslas, carried him to Austria, and imprisoned him in the castle of Wiltberg, in that country.

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A fair disposal, this, of a man who was scarcely fit to run at large, most reasonable persons would say; but all did not think so. John von Goerlitz, the younger brother of the emperor, fearing public scandal from such a transaction, induced the princes who held him to set him free. It proved a fatal display of kindness and family affection for himself. The imperial captive was no sooner free than, concealing the wrath which he felt at his incarceration, he invited to a banquet certain Bohemian nobles who had aided in it. They came, trusting to the fact that the tiger's claws seemed sheathed. They had no sooner arrived than the claws were displayed. They were all seized, by the emperor's order, and beheaded. Then the dissimulating madman turned on his benevolent brother John, who had taken control of affairs in Bohemia during his imprisonment, and poisoned him. It was a new proof of the old adage, it is never safe to warm a frozen adder.

The restoration of Wenceslas was followed by other acts of folly. In the following year, 1395, he sold to John Galcazzo Visconti, of Milan, the dignity of a duke in Lombardy, a transaction which exposed him to general contempt. At a later date he visited Paris, and here, in a drunken frolic, he played into the hands of the King of France by ceding Genoa to that country, and by recognizing the antipope at Avignon, instead of Boniface IX. at Rome. These acts filled the cup of his folly. The princes of the empire resolved to depose him. A council was called, before which he was cited to appear. He refused to come, and was formally deposed, Rupert, of the Palatinate, being elected in his stead. Ten years afterwards, in 1410, Rupert died, and Sigismund became Emperor of Germany.

Meanwhile, Wenceslas remained King of Bohemia, in spite of his brother Sigismund, who sought to oust him from this throne also. He took him prisoner, indeed, but trusted him to the Austrians, who at once set him free, and the Bohemians replaced him on the throne. Some years afterwards, war continuing, Wenceslas sought to get rid of his brother Sigismund in the same manner as he had disposed of his brother John, by poison. He was successful in having it administered to Sigismund and his ally, Albert of Austria, in their camp before Zuaym. Albert died, but Sigismund was saved by a rude treatment which seems to have been in vogue in that day. He was suspended by the feet for twenty-four hours, so that the poison ran out of his mouth.

The later events in the life of Wenceslas have to do with the most famous era in the history of Bohemia, the reformation in that country, and the stories of John Huss and Ziska. The fate of Huss is well known. Summoned before the council at Constance, and promised a safe-conduct by the Emperor Sigismund, he went, only to find the emperor faithless to his word and himself condemned and burnt as a heretic. This base act of treachery was destined to bring a bloody retribution. It infuriated the reformers in Bohemia, who, after brooding for several years over their wrongs, broke out into an insurrection of revenge.

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The leader of this outbreak was an officer of experience, named John Ziska, a man who had lost one eye in childhood, and who bitterly hated the priesthood for a wrong done to one of his sisters. The martyrdom of Huss threw him into such deep and silent dejection, that one day the king, in whose court he was, asked him why he was so sad.

“Huss is burnt, and we have not yet avenged him,” replied Ziska.

“I can do nothing in that direction,” said Wenceslas; adding, carelessly, “you might attempt it yourself.”

This was spoken as a jest, but Ziska took it in deadly earnest. He, aided by his friends, roused the people, greatly to the alarm of the king, who ordered the citizens to bring their arms to the royal castle of Wisherad, which commanded the city of Prague.

Ziska heard the command, and obeyed it in his own way. The arms were brought, but they came in the hands of the citizens, who marched in long files to the fortress, and drew themselves up before the king, Ziska at their head.

“My gracious and mighty sovereign, here we are,” said the bold leader; “we await your commands; against what enemy are we to fight?”

Wenceslas looked at those dense groups of armed and resolute men, and concluded that his purpose of disarming them would not work. Assuming a cheerful countenance, he bade them return home and keep the peace. They obeyed, so far as returning home was concerned. In other matters they had learned their power, and were bent on exerting it.

Nicolas of Hussinez, Huss’s former lord, and Ziska’s seconder in this outbreak, was banished from the city by the king. He went, but took forty thousand men with him, who assembled on a mountain which was afterwards known by the biblical name of Mount Tabor. Here several hundred tables were spread for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, July 22, 1419.

Wenceslas, in attempting to put a summary end to the disturbance in the city, quickly made bad worse. He deposed the Hussite city council in the Neustadt, the locality of greatest disturbance, and replaced it by a new one in his own interests. This action filled Prague with indignation, which was redoubled when the new council sent two clamorous Hussites to prison. On the 30th of July Ziska led a strong body of his partisans through the streets to the council-house, and sternly demanded that the prisoners should be set free.

The councillors hesitated,—a fatal hesitation. A stone was flung from one of the windows. Instantly the mob stormed the building, rushed into the council-room, and seized the councillors, thirteen of whom, Germans by birth, were flung out of the

windows. They were received on the pikes of the furious mob below, and the whole of them murdered.

This act of violence was quickly followed by others. The dwelling of a priest, supposed to have been that of the seducer of Ziska's sister, was destroyed and its owner hanged; the Carthusian monks were dragged through the streets, crowned with thorns, and other outrages perpetrated against the opponents of the party of reform.

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A few days afterwards the career of Wenceslas, once Emperor of Germany, now King of Bohemia, came to an abrupt end. On August 16 he suddenly died,—by apoplexy, say some historians, while others say that he was suffocated in his palace by his own attendants. The latter would seem a fitting end for a man whose life had been marked by so many acts of tyrannous violence, some of them little short of insanity.

Whatever its cause, his death removed the last restraint from the mob. On the following day every church and monastery in Prague was assailed and plundered, their pictures were destroyed, and the robes of the priests were converted into flags and dresses. Many of these buildings are said to have been splendidly decorated, and the royal palace, which was also destroyed, had been adorned by Wenceslas and his father with the richest treasures of art. We are told that on the walls of a garden belonging to the palace the whole of the Bible was written. While the work of destruction went on, a priest formed an altar in the street of three tubs, covered by a broad table-top, from which all day long he dispensed the sacrament in both forms.

The excesses of this outbreak soon frightened the wealthier citizens, who dreaded an assault upon their wealth, and, in company with Sophia, the widow of Wenceslas, they sent a deputation to the emperor, asking him to make peace. He replied by swearing to take a fearful revenge on the insurgents. The insurrection continued, despite this action of the nobles and the threats of the emperor. Ziska, finding the citizens too moderate, invited into the city the peasants, who were armed with flails, and committed many excesses.

Forced by the moderate party to leave the city, Ziska led his new adherents to Mount Tabor, which he fortified and prepared to defend. They called themselves the “people of God,” and styled their Catholic opponents “Moabites,” “Amalekites,” *etc*., declaring that it was their duty to extirpate them. Their leader entitled himself “John Ziska, of the cup, captain, in the hope of God, of the Taborites.”

But having brought the story of the Emperor Wenceslas to an end, we must stop at this point. The after-life of John Ziska was of such stir and interest, and so filled with striking events, that we shall deal with it by itself, in a sequel to the present story.

SEMPACH AND ARNOLD WINKELRIED.

Seventy years had passed since the battle of Morgarten, through which freedom came to the lands of the Swiss. Throughout that long period Austria had let the liberty-loving mountaineers alone, deterred by the frightful lesson taught them in the bloody pass. In the interval the confederacy had grown more extensive. The towns of Berne, Zurich, Soleure, and Zug had joined it; and now several other towns and villages, incensed by the oppression and avarice of their Austrian masters, threw off the foreign yoke and allied themselves to the Swiss confederacy. It was time for the Austrians to be moving, if they would retain any possessions in the Alpine realm of rocks.

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Duke Leopold of Austria, a successor to the Leopold who had learned so well at Morgarten how the Swiss could strike for liberty, and as bold and arrogant as he, grew incensed at the mountaineers for taking into their alliance several towns which were subject to him, and vowed not only to chastise these rebels, but to subdue the whole country, and put an end to their insolent confederacy. His feeling was shared by the Austrian nobles, one hundred and sixty-seven of whom joined in his warlike scheme, and agreed to aid him in putting down the defiant mountaineers.

War resolved upon, the Austrians laid a shrewd plan to fill the Swiss confederates with terror in advance of their approach. Letters declaring war were sent to the confederate assembly by twenty distinct expresses, with the hope that this rapid succession of threats would overwhelm them with fear. The separate nobles followed with their declarations. On St. John's day a messenger arrived from Wuertemberg bearing fifteen declarations of war. Hardly had these letters been read when nine more arrived, sent by John Ulric of Pfirt and eight other nobles. Others quickly followed; it fairly rained declarations of war; the members of the assembly had barely time to read one batch of threatening fulminations before another arrived. Letters from the lords of Thurn came after those named, followed by a batch from the nobles of Schaffhausen. This seemed surely enough, but on the following day the rain continued, eight successive messengers arriving, who bore no less than forty-three declarations of war.

It seemed as if the whole north was about to descend in a cyclone of banners and spears upon the mountain land. The assembly sat breathless under this torrent of threats. Had their hearts been open to the invasion of terror they must surely have been overwhelmed, and have waited in the supineness of fear for the coming of their foes.

But the hearts of the Swiss were not of that kind. They were too full of courage and patriotism to leave room for dismay. Instead of awaiting their enemies with dread, a burning impatience animated their souls. If liberty or death were the alternatives, the sooner the conflict began the more to their liking it would be. The cry of war resounded through the country, and everywhere, in valley and on mountain, by lake-side and by glacier's rim, the din of hostile preparation might have been heard, as the patriots arranged their affairs and forged and sharpened their weapons for the coming fray.

Far too impatient were they to wait for the coming of Leopold and his army. There were Austrian nobles and Austrian castles within their land. No sooner was the term of the armistice at an end than the armed peasantry swarmed about these strongholds, and many a fortress, long the seat of oppression, was taken and levelled with the ground. The war-cry of Leopold and the nobles had inspired a different feeling from that counted upon.

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It was not long before Duke Leopold appeared. At the head of a large and well-appointed force, and attended by many distinguished knights and nobles, he marched into the mountain region and advanced upon Sempach, one of the revolted towns, resolved, he said, to punish its citizens with a rod of iron for their daring rebellion.

On the 9th of July, 1386, the Austrian cavalry, several thousands in number, reached the vicinity of Sempach, having distanced the foot-soldiers in the impatient haste of their advance. Here they found the weak array of the Swiss gathered on the surrounding heights, and as eager as themselves for the fray. It was a small force, no stronger than that of Morgarten, comprising only about fourteen hundred poorly-armed men. Some carried halberds, some shorter weapons, while some among them, instead of a shield, had only a small board fastened to the left arm. It seemed like madness for such a band to dare contend with the thousands of well-equipped invaders. But courage and patriotism go far to replace numbers, as that day was to show.

Leopold looked upon his handful of foes, and decided that it would be folly to wait for the footmen to arrive. Surely his host of nobles and knights, with their followers, would soon sweep these peasants, like so many locusts, from their path. Yet he remembered the confusion into which the cavalry had been thrown at Morgarten, and deeming that horsemen were ill-suited to an engagement on those wooded hill-sides, he ordered the entire force to dismount and attack on foot.

The plan adopted was that the dismounted knights and soldiers should join their ranks as closely as possible, until their front presented an unbroken wall of iron, and thus arrayed should charge the enemy spear in hand. Leaving their attendants in charge of their horses, the serried column of footmen prepared to advance, confident of sweeping their foes to death before their closely-knit line of spears.

Yet this plan of battle was not without its critics. The Baron of Hasenburg, a veteran soldier, looked on it with disfavor, as contrasted with the position of vantage occupied by the Swiss, and cautioned the duke and his nobles against undue assurance.

“Pride never served any good purpose in peace or war,” he said. “We had much better wait until the infantry come up.”

This prudent advice was received with shouts of derision by the nobles, some of whom cried out insultingly,—

“Der Hasenburg hat ein Hasenherz” ("Hasenburg has a hare’s heart,” a play upon the baron’s name).

Certain nobles, however, who had not quite lost their prudence, tried to persuade the duke to keep in the rear, as the true position for a leader. He smiled proudly in reply, and exclaimed with impatience,—

“What! shall Leopold be a mere looker-on, and calmly behold his knights die around him in his own cause? Never! here on my native soil with you I will conquer or perish with my people.” So saying, he placed himself at the head of the troops.

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And now the decisive moment was at hand. The Swiss had kept to the heights while their enemy continued mounted, not venturing to face such a body of cavalry on level ground. But when they saw them forming as foot-soldiers, they left the hills and marched to the plain below. Soon the unequal forces confronted each other; the Swiss, as was their custom, falling upon their knees and praying for God's aid to their cause; the Austrians fastening their helmets and preparing for the fray. The duke even took the occasion to give the honor of knighthood to several young warriors.

The day was a hot and close one, the season being that of harvest, and the sun pouring down its unclouded and burning rays upon the combatants. This sultriness was a marked advantage to the lightly-dressed mountaineers as compared with the armor-clad knights, to whom the heat was very oppressive.

The battle was begun by the Swiss, who, on rising from their knees, flung themselves with impetuous valor on the dense line of spears that confronted them. Their courage and fury were in vain. Not a man in the Austrian line wavered. They stood like a rock against which the waves of the Swiss dashed only to be hurled back in death. The men of Lucerne, in particular, fought with an almost blind rage, seeking to force a path through that steel-pointed forest of spears, and falling rapidly before the triumphant foe.

Numbers of the mountaineers lay dead or wounded. The line of spears seemed impenetrable. The Swiss began to waver. The enemy, seeing this, advanced the flanks of his line so as to form a half-moon shape, with the purpose of enclosing the small body of Swiss within a circle of spears. It looked for the moment as if the struggle were at an end, the mountaineers foiled and defeated, the fetters again ready to be locked upon the limbs of free Switzerland.

But such was not to be. There was a man in that small band of patriots who had the courage to accept certain death for his country, one of those rare souls who appear from time to time in the centuries and win undying fame by an act of self-martyrdom. Arnold of Winkelried was his name, a name which history is not likely soon to forget, for by an impulse of the noblest devotion this brave patriot saved the liberties of his native land.

[Illustration: STATUE OF ARNOLD WINKELRIED.]

Seeing that there was but one hope for the Swiss, and that death must be the lot of him who gave them that hope, he exclaimed to his comrades, in a voice of thunder,—

"Faithful and beloved confederates, I will open a passage to freedom and victory! Protect my wife and children!"

With these words, he rushed from his ranks, flung himself upon the enemy's steel-pointed line, and seized with his extended arms as many of the hostile spears as he was able to grasp, burying them in his body, and sinking dead to the ground.

His comrades lost not a second in availing themselves of this act of heroic devotion. Darting forward, they rushed over the body of the martyr to liberty into the breach he had made, forced others of the spears aside, and for the first time since the fray began reached the Austrians with their weapons.

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A hasty and ineffective effort was made to close the breach. It only added to the confusion which the sudden assault had caused. The line of hurrying knights became crowded and disordered. The furious Swiss broke through in increasing numbers. Overcome with the heat, many of the knights fell from exhaustion, and died without a wound, suffocated in their armor. Others fell below the blows of the Swiss. The line of spears, so recently intact, was now broken and pierced at a dozen points, and the revengeful mountaineers were dealing death upon their terrified and feebly-resisting foes.

The chief banner of the host had twice sunk and been raised again, and was drooping a third time, when Ulric, a knight of Aarburg, seized and lifted it, defending it desperately till a mortal blow laid him low.

“Save Austria! rescue!” he faltered with his dying breath.

Duke Leopold, who was pushing through the confused throng, heard him and caught the banner from his dying hand. Again it waved aloft, but now crimsoned with the blood of its defender.

The Swiss, determined to capture it, pressed upon its princely bearer, surrounded him, cut down on every side the warriors who sought to defend him and the standard.

“Since so many nobles and knights have ended their days in my cause, let me honorably follow them,” cried the despairing duke, and in a moment he rushed into the midst of the hostile ranks, vanishing from the eyes of his attendants. Blows rained on his iron mail. In the pressure of the crowd he fell to the earth. While seeking to raise himself again in his heavy armor, he cried, in his helpless plight, to a Swiss soldier, who had approached him with raised weapon,—

“I am the Prince of Austria.”

The man either heard not his words, or took no heed of princes. The weapon descended with a mortal blow. Duke Leopold of Austria was dead.

The body of the slain duke was found by a knight, Martin Malterer, who bore the banner of Freiburg. On recognizing him, he stood like one petrified, let the banner fall from his hand, and then threw himself on the body of the prince, that it might not be trampled under foot by the contending forces. In this position he soon received his own death-wound.

By this time the state of the Austrians was pitiable. The signal for retreat was given, and in utter terror and dismay they fled for their horses. Alas, too late! The attendants, seeing the condition of their masters, and filled with equal terror, had mounted the horses, and were already in full flight.

Nothing remained for the knights, oppressed with their heavy armor, exhausted with thirst and fatigue, half suffocated with the scorching heat, assailed on every side by the light-armed and nimble Swiss, but to sell their lives as dearly as possible. In a short time more all was at an end. The last of the Austrians fell. On that fatal field there had met their death, at the hands of the small body of Swiss, no less than six hundred and fifty-six knights, barons, and counts, together with thousands of their men-at-arms.

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Thus ended the battle of Sempach, with its signal victory to the Swiss, one of the most striking which history records, if we consider the great disproportion in numbers and in warlike experience and military equipment of the combatants. It secured to Switzerland the liberty for which they had so valiantly struck at Morgarten seventy years before.

But all Switzerland was not yet free, and more blows were needed to win its full liberty. The battle of Naefels, in 1388, added to the width of the free zone. In this the peasants of Glarus rolled stones on the Austrian squadrons, and set fire to the bridges over which they fled, two thousand five hundred of the enemy, including a great number of nobles, being slain. In the same year the peasants of Valais defeated the Earl of Savoy at Visp, putting four thousand of his men to the sword. The citizens of St. Gall, infuriated by the tyranny of the governor of the province of Schwendi, broke into insurrection, attacked the castle of Schwendi, and burnt it to the ground. The governor escaped. All the castles in the vicinity were similarly dealt with, and the whole district set free.

Shortly after 1400 the citizens of St. Gall joined with the peasants against their abbot, who ruled them with a hand of iron. The Swabian cities were asked to decide the dispute, and decided that cities could only confederate with cities, not with peasants, thus leaving the Appenzellers to their fate. At this decision the herdsmen rose in arms, defeated abbot and citizens both, and set their country free, all the neighboring peasantry joining their band of liberty. A few years later the people of this region joined the confederation, which now included nearly the whole of the Alpine country, and was strong enough to maintain its liberty for centuries thereafter. It was not again subdued until the legions of Napoleon trod over its mountain paths.

ZISKA, THE BLIND WARRIOR.

Sigismund, Emperor of Germany, had sworn to put an end to the Hussite rebellion in Bohemia, and to punish the rebels in a way that would make all future rebels tremble. But Sigismund was pursuing the old policy of cooking the hare before it was caught. He forgot that the indomitable John Ziska and the iron-flailed peasantry stood between him and his vow. He had first to conquer the reformers before he could punish them, and this was to prove no easy task.

The dreadful work of religious war began with the burning of Hussite preachers who had ventured from Bohemia into Germany. This was an argument which Ziska thoroughly understood, and he retorted by destroying the Bohemian monasteries, and burning the priests alive in barrels of pitch. “They are singing my sister’s wedding song,” exclaimed the grim barbarian, on hearing their cries of torture. Queen Sophia, widow of Wenceslas, the late king, who had garrisoned all the royal castles, now sent a strong body of troops against the reformers. The army came up with the multitude, which was largely made up of women and children, on the open plain near Pilsen. The cavalry charged upon the seemingly helpless mob. But Ziska was equal to the occasion. He ordered the women to strew the ground with their gowns and veils, and the horses’ feet

becoming entangled in these, numbers of the riders were thrown, and the trim lines of the troops broken.

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Seeing the confusion into which they had been thrown, Ziska gave the order to charge, and in a short time the army that was to defeat him was flying in a panic across the plain, a broken and beaten mob. Another army marched against him, and was similarly defeated; and the citizens of Prague, finding that no satisfactory terms could be made with the emperor, recalled Ziska, and entered into alliance with him. The one-eyed patriot was now lord of the land, all Bohemia being at his beck and call.

Meanwhile Sigismund, the emperor, was slowly gathering his forces to invade the rebellious land. The reign of cruelty continued, each side treating its prisoners barbarously. The Imperialists branded theirs with a cup, the Hussites theirs with a cross, on their foreheads. The citizens of Breslau joined those of Prague, and emulated them by flinging their councillors out of the town-house windows. In return the German miners of Kuttenberg threw sixteen hundred Hussites down the mines. Such is religious war, the very climax of cruelty.

In June, 1420, the threatened invasion came. Sigismund led an army, one hundred thousand strong, into the revolted land, fulminating vengeance as he marched. He reached Prague and entered the castle of Wisherad, which commanded it. Ziska fortified the mountain of Witlow (now called Ziskaberg), which also commanded the city. Sigismund, finding that he had been outgeneralled, and that his opponent held the controlling position, waited and temporized, amusing himself meanwhile by assuming the crown of Bohemia, and sowing dissension in his army by paying the Slavonian and Hungarian troops with the jewels taken from the royal palaces and the churches, while leaving the Germans unpaid. The Germans, furious, marched away. The emperor was obliged to follow. The ostentatious invasion was at an end, and scarcely a blow had been struck.

But Sigismund had no sooner gone than trouble arose in Prague. The citizens, the nobility, and Ziska's followers were all at odds. The Taborites—those strict republicans and religious reformers who had made Mount Tabor their head-quarters—were in power, and ruled the city with a rod of iron, destroying all the remaining splendor of the churches and sternly prohibiting every display of ostentation by the people. Death was named as the punishment for such venial faults as dancing, gambling, or the wearing of rich attire. The wine-cellars were rigidly closed. Church property was declared public property, and it looked as if private wealth would soon be similarly viewed. The peasants declared that it was their mission to exterminate sin from the earth.

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This tyranny so incensed the nobles and citizens that they rose in self-defence, and Ziska, finding that Prague had grown too hot to hold him, deemed it prudent to lead his men away. Sigismund took immediate advantage of the opportunity by marching on Prague. But, quick as he was, there were others quicker. The more moderate section of the reformers, the so-called Horebites,—from Mount Horeb, another place of assemblage,—entered the city, led by Hussinez, Huss's former lord, and laid siege to the royal fortress, the Wisherad. Sigismund attempted to surprise him, but met with so severe a repulse that he fled into Hungary, and the Wisherad was forced to capitulate, this ancient palace and its church, both splendid works of art, being destroyed. Step by step the art and splendor of Bohemia were vanishing in this despotic struggle between heresy and the papacy.

As the war went on, Ziska, its controlling spirit, grew steadily more abhorrent of privilege and distinction, more bitterly fanatical. The ancient church, royalty, nobility, all excited his wrath. He was republican, socialist, almost anarchist in his views. His idea of perfection lay in a fraternity composed of the children of God, while he trusted to the strokes of the iron flail to bear down all opposition to his theory of society. The city of Prachaticz treated him with mockery, and was burnt to the ground, with all its inhabitants. The Bishop of Nicopolis fell into his hands, and was flung into the river. As time went on, his war of extermination against sinners—that is, all who refused to join his banner—grew more cruel and unrelenting. Each city that resisted was stormed and ruined, its inhabitants slaughtered, its priests burned. Hussite virtue had degenerated into tyranny of the worst type. Yet, while thus fanatical himself, Ziska would not permit his followers to indulge in insane excesses of religious zeal. A party arose which claimed that the millennium was at hand, and that it was their duty to anticipate the coming of the innocence of Paradise, by going naked, like Adam and Eve. These Adamites committed the maddest excesses, but found a stern enemy in Ziska, who put them down with an unsparing hand.

In 1421 Sigismund again roused himself to activity, incensed by the Hussite defiance of his authority. He incited the Silesians to invade Bohemia, and an army of twenty thousand poured into the land, killing all before them,—men, women, and children. Yet such was the terror that the very name of Ziska now excited, that the mere rumor of his approach sent these invaders flying across the borders.

But, in the midst of his career of triumph, an accident came to the Bohemian leader which would have incapacitated any less resolute man from military activity. During the siege of the castle of Raby a splinter struck his one useful eye and completely deprived him of sight. It did not deprive him of power and energy. Most men, under such circumstances, would have retired from army leadership, but John Ziska was not of that calibre. He knew Bohemia so thoroughly that the whole land lay accurately mapped out in his mind. He continued to lead his army, to marshal his men in battle array, to command them in the field and the siege, despite his blindness, always riding in a

carriage, close to the great standard, and keeping in immediate touch with all the movements of the war.

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Blind as he was, he increased rather than diminished the severity of his discipline, and insisted on rigid obedience to his commands. As an instance of this we are told that, on one occasion, having compelled his troops to march day and night, as was his custom, they murmured and said,—

“Day and night are the same to you, as you cannot see; but they are not the same to us.”

“How!” he cried. “You cannot see! Well, set fire to a couple of villages.”

The blind warrior was soon to have others to deal with than his Bohemian foes. Sigismund had sent forward another army, which, in September, 1421, invaded the country. It was driven out by the mere rumor of Ziska’s approach, the soldiers flying in haste on the vague report of his coming. But in November the emperor himself came, leading a horde of eighty thousand Hungarians, Servians, and others, savage fellows, whose approach filled the moderate party of the Bohemians with terror. Ziska’s men had such confidence in their blind chief as to be beyond terror. They were surrounded by the enemy, and enclosed in what seemed a trap. But under Ziska’s orders they made a night attack on the foe, broke through their lines, and, to the emperor’s discomfiture, were once more free.

On New Year’s day, 1422, the two armies came face to face near Zollin. Ziska drew up his men in battle array and confidently awaited the attack of the enemy. But the inflexible attitude of his men, the terror of his name, or one of those inexplicable influences which sometimes affect armies, filled the Hungarians with a sudden panic, and they vanished from the front of the Bohemians without a blow. Once more the emperor and the army which he had led into the country with such high confidence of success were in shameful flight, and the terrible example which he had vowed to make of Bohemia was still unaccomplished.

The blind chief vigorously and relentlessly pursued, overtaking the fugitives on January 8 near Deutschbrod. Terrified at his approach, they sought to escape by crossing the stream at that place on the ice. The ice gave way, and numbers of them were drowned. Deutschbrod was burned and its inhabitants slaughtered in Ziska’s cruel fashion.

This repulse put an end to invasions of Bohemia while Ziska lived. There were intestine disturbances which needed to be quelled, and then the army of the reformers was led beyond the boundaries of the country and assailed the imperial dominions, but the emperor held aloof. He had had enough of the blind terror of Bohemia, the indomitable Ziska and his iron-flailed peasants. New outbreaks disturbed Bohemia. Ambitious nobles aspired to the kingship, but their efforts were vain. The army of the iron flail quickly put an end to all such hopes.

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In 1423 Ziska invaded Moravia and Austria, to keep his troops employed, and lost severely in doing so. In 1424 his enemies at home again made head against him, led an army into the field, and pursued him to Kuttenberg. Here he ordered his men to feign a retreat, then, while the foe were triumphantly advancing, he suddenly turned, had his battle-chariot driven furiously down the mountain-side upon their lines, and during the confusion thus caused ordered an attack in force. The enemy were repulsed, their artillery was captured, and Kuttenberg set in flames, as Ziska's signal of triumph.

Shortly afterwards, his enemies at home being thoroughly beaten, the indomitable blind chief marched upon Prague, the head-quarters of his foes, and threatened to burn this city to the ground. He might have done so, too, but for his own men, who broke into sedition at the threat.

Procop, Ziska's bravest captain, advised peace, to put an end to the disasters of civil war. His advice was everywhere re-echoed, the demand for peace seemed unanimous, Ziska alone opposing it. Mounting a cask, and facing his discontented followers, he exclaimed,—

"Fear internal more than external foes. It is easier for a few, when united, to conquer, than for many, when disunited. Snares are laid for you; you will be entrapped, but it will not be my fault."

Despite his harangue, however, peace was concluded between the contending factions, and a large monument raised in commemoration thereof, both parties heaping up stones. Ziska entered the city in solemn procession, and was met with respect and admiration by the citizens. Prince Coribut, the leader of the opposite party and the aspirant to the crown, came to meet him, embraced him, and called him father. The triumph of the blind chief over his internal foes was complete.

It seemed equally complete over his external foes. Sigismund, unable to conquer him by force of arms, now sought to mollify him by offers of peace, and entered into negotiations with the stern old warrior. But Ziska was not to be placated. He could not trust the man who had broken his plighted word and burned John Huss, and he remained immovable in his hostility to Germany. Planning a fresh attack on Moravia, he began his march thither. But now he met a conquering enemy against whose arms there was no defence. Death encountered him on the route, and carried him off October 12, 1424.

Thus ends the story of an extraordinary man, and the history of a series of remarkable events. Of all the peasant outbreaks, of which there were so many during the mediaeval period, the Bohemian was the only one—if we except the Swiss struggle for liberty—that attained measurable success. This was due in part to the fact that it was a religious instead of an industrial revolt, and thus did not divide the country into sharp ranks of rich and poor; and in greater part to the fact that it had an able leader, one of

those men of genius who seem born for great occasions. John Ziska, the blind warrior, leading his army to victory after victory, stands alone in the gallery of history. There were none like him, before or after.

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He is pictured as a short, broad-shouldered man, with a large, round, and bald head. His forehead was deeply furrowed, and he wore a long moustache of a fiery red hue. This, with his blind eye and his final complete blindness, yields a well-defined image of the man, that fanatical, remorseless, indomitable, and unconquerable avenger of the martyred Huss, the first successful opponent of the doctrines of the church of Rome whom history records.

The conclusion of the story of the Hussites may be briefly given. For years they held their own, under two leaders, known as Procop Holy and Procop the Little, defying the emperor, and at times invading the empire. The pope preached a crusade against them, but the army of invasion was defeated, and Silesia and Austria were invaded in reprisal by Procop Holy.

Seven years after the death of Ziska an army of invasion again entered Bohemia, so strong in numbers that it seemed as if that war-drenched land must fall before it. In its ranks were one hundred and thirty thousand men, led by Frederick of Brandenburg. Their purposes were seen in their actions. Every village reached was burned, till two hundred had been given to the flames. Horrible excesses were committed. On August 14, 1431, the two armies, the Hussite and the Imperialist, came face to face near Tauss. The disproportion in numbers was enormous, and it looked as if the small force of Bohemians would be swallowed up in the multitude of their foes. But barely was the Hussite banner seen in the distance when the old story was told over again, the Germans broke into sudden panic, and fled *en masse* from the field. The Bavarians were the first to fly, and all the rest speedily followed. Frederick of Brandenburg and his troops took refuge in a wood. The Cardinal Julian, who had preached a crusade against Bohemia, succeeded for a time in rallying the fugitives, but at the first onset of the Hussites they again took to flight, suffering themselves to be slaughtered without resistance. The munitions of war were abandoned to the foe, including one hundred and fifty cannon.

It was an extraordinary affair, but in truth the flight was less due to terror than to disinclination of the German soldiers to fight the Hussites, whose cause they deemed to be just and glorious, and the influence of whose opinions had spread far beyond the Bohemian border. Rome was losing its hold over the mind of northern Europe outside the limits of the land of Huss and Ziska.

Negotiations for peace followed. The Bohemians were invited to Basle, being granted a safe-conduct, and promised free exercise of their religion coming and going, while no words of ridicule or reproach were to be permitted. On January 9, 1433, three hundred Bohemians, mounted on horseback, entered Basle, accompanied by an immense multitude. It was a very different entrance from that of Huss to Constance, nearly twenty years before, and was to have a very different termination. Procop Holy headed the procession, accompanied by others of the Bohemian leaders. A signal triumph had come to the party of religious reform, after twenty years of struggle.

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For fifty days the negotiations continued. Neither side would yield. In the end, the Bohemians, weary of the protracted and fruitless debate, took to their horses again, and set out homewards. This brought their enemies to terms. An embassy was hastily sent after them, and all their demands were conceded, though with certain reservations that might prove perilous in the future. They went home triumphant, having won freedom of religious worship according to their ideas of right and truth.

They had not long reached home when dissensions again broke out. The emperor took advantage of them, accepted the crown of Bohemia, entered Prague, and at once reinstated the Catholic religion. The fanatics flew to arms, but after a desperate struggle were annihilated. The Bohemian struggle was at an end. In the following year the emperor Sigismund died, having lived just long enough to win success in his long conflict. The martyrdom of Huss, the valor and zeal of Ziska, appeared to have been in vain. Yet they were not so, for the seeds they had sown bore fruit in the following century in a great sectarian revolt which affected all Christendom and permanently divided the Church.

THE SIEGE OF BELGRADE

The empire of Rome finally reached its end, not in the fifth century, as ordinarily considered, but in the fifteenth; not at Rome, but at Constantinople, where the Eastern empire survived the Western for a thousand years. At length, in 1453, the Turks captured Constantinople, set a broad foot upon the degenerate empire of the East, and crushed out the last feeble remnants of life left in the pygmy successor of the colossus of the past.

And now Europe, which had looked on with clasped hands while the Turks swept over the Bosphorus and captured Constantinople, suddenly awoke to the peril of its situation. A blow in time might have saved the Greek empire. The blow had not been struck, and now Europe had itself to save. Terror seized upon the nations which had let their petty intrigues stand in the way of that broad policy in which safety lay, for they could not forget past instances of Asiatic invasion. The frightful ravages wrought by the Huns and the Avars were far in the past, but no long time had elapsed since the coming of the Magyars and the Mongols, and now here was another of those hordes of murderous barbarians, hanging like a cloud of war on the eastern skirt of Europe, and threatening to rain death and ruin upon the land. The dread of the nations was not amiss. They had neglected to strengthen the eastern barrier to the Turkish avalanche. Now it threatened their very doors, and they must meet it at home.

The Turks were not long in making their purpose evident. Within two years after the fall of Constantinople they were on the march again, and had laid siege to Belgrade, the first obstacle in their pathway to universal conquest. The Turkish cannons were thundering at the doors of Europe. Belgrade fallen, Vienna would come next, and the march of the barbarians might only end at the sea.

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And yet, despite their danger, the people of Germany remained supine. Hungary had valiantly defended itself against the Turks ten years before, without aid from the German empire. It looked now as if Belgrade might be left to its fate. The brave John Hunyades and his faithful Hungarians were the only bulwarks of Europe against the foe, for the people seemed incapable of seeing a danger a thousand miles away. The pope and his legate John Capistrano, general of the Capuchins, were the only aids to the valiant Hunyades in his vigorous defence. They preached a crusade, but with little success. Capistrano traversed Germany, eloquently calling the people to arms against the barbarians. The result was similar to that on previous occasions, the real offenders were neglected, the innocent suffered. The people, instead of arming against the Turks, turned against the Jews, and murdered them by thousands. Whatever happened in Europe,—a plague, an invasion, a famine, a financial strait,—that unhappy people were in some way held responsible, and mediaeval Europe seemed to think it could, at any time, check the frightful career of a comet or ward off pestilence by slaughtering a few thousands of Jews. It cannot be said that it worked well on this occasion; the Jews died, but the Turks surrounded Belgrade still.

Capistrano found no military ardor in Germany, in princes or people. The princes contented themselves with ordering prayers and ringing the Turkish bells, as they were called. The people were as supine as their princes. He did, however, succeed, by the aid of his earnest eloquence, in gathering a force of a few thousands of peasants, priests, scholars, and the like; a motley host who were chiefly armed with iron flails and pitchforks, but who followed him with an enthusiasm equal to his own. With this shadow of an army he joined Hunyades, and the combined force made its way in boats down the Danube into the heart of Hungary, and approached the frontier fortress which Mahomet II. was besieging with a host of one hundred and sixty thousand men, and which its defender, the brother-in-law of John Hunyades, had nearly given up for lost.

On came the flotilla,—the peasants with their flails and forks and Hunyades with his trained soldiers,—and attacked the Turkish fleet with such furious energy that it was defeated and dispersed, and the allied forces made their way into the beleaguered city. Capistrano and his followers were full of enthusiasm. He was a second Peter the Hermit, his peasant horde were crusaders, fierce against the infidels, disdaining death in God’s cause; neither leader nor followers had a grain of military knowledge or experience, but they had, what is sometimes better, courage and enthusiasm.

John Hunyades *had* military experience, and looked with cold disfavor on the burning and blind zeal of his new recruits. He was willing that they should aid him in repelling the furious attacks of the Turks, but to his trained eyes an attack on the well-intrenched camp of the enemy would have been simple madness, and he sternly forbade any such suicidal course, even threatening death to whoever should attempt it.

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In truth, his caution seemed reasonable. An immense host surrounded the city on the land side, and had done so on the water side, also, until the Christian flotilla had sunk, captured, and dispersed its boats. Far as the eye could see, the gorgeously-embellished tents of the Turkish army, with their gilded crescents glittering in the sun, filled the field of view. Cannon-mounted earthworks threatened the walls from every quarter. Squadrons of steel-clad horsemen swept the field. The crowding thousands of besiegers pressed the city day and night. Even defence seemed useless. Assault on such a host appeared madness to experienced eyes. Hunyades seemed wise in his stern disapproval of such an idea.

Yet military knowledge has its limitations, when it fails to take into account the power of enthusiasm. Blind zeal is a force whose possibilities a general does not always estimate. It is capable of performing miracles, as Hunyades was to learn. His orders, his threats of death, had no restraining effect on the minds of the crusaders. They had come to save Europe from the Turks, and they were not to be stayed by orders or threats. What though the enemy greatly outnumbered them, and had cannons and scimitars against their pikes and flails, had they not God on their side, and should God's army pause to consider numbers and cannon-balls? They were not to be restrained; attack they would, and attack they did.

The siege had made great progress. The reinforcement had come barely in time. The walls were crumbling under the incessant bombardment. Convinced that he had made a practicable breach, Mahomet, the sultan, ordered an assault in force. The Turks advanced, full of barbarian courage, climbed the crumbled walls, and broke, as they supposed, into the town, only to find new walls frowning before them. The vigorous garrison had built new defences behind the old ones, and the disheartened assailants learned that they had done their work in vain.

This repulse greatly discouraged the sultan. He was still more discouraged when the crusaders, irrepressible in their hot enthusiasm, broke from the city and made a fierce attack upon his works. Capistrano, seeing that they were not to be restrained, put himself at their head, and with a stick in one hand and a crucifix in the other, led them to the assault. It proved an irresistible one. The Turks could not sustain themselves against these flail-swinging peasants. One intrenchment after another fell into their hands, until three had been stormed and taken. Their success inspired Hunyades. Filled with a new respect for his peasant allies, and seeing that now or never was the time to strike, he came to their aid with his cavalry, and fell so suddenly and violently upon the Turkish rear that the invaders were put to rout.

Onward pushed the crusaders and their allies; backward went the Turks. The remaining intrenchments were stubbornly defended, but that storm of iron flails, those pikes and pitchforks, wielded by the zeal of enthusiasts, were not to be resisted, and in the end all that remained of the Turkish army broke into panic flight, the sultan himself being wounded, and more than twenty thousand of his men left dead upon the field.

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It was a signal victory. Miraculous almost, when one considers the great disproportion of numbers. The works of the invaders, mounted with three hundred cannon, and their camp, which contained an immense booty, fell into the hands of the Christians, and the power of Mahomet II. was so crippled that years passed before he was in condition to attempt a second invasion of Europe.

The victors were not long to survive their signal triumph. The valiant Hunyades died shortly after the battle, from wounds received in the action or from fatal disease. Capistrano died in the same year (1456). Hunyades left two sons, and the King of Hungary repaid his services by oppressing both, and beheading one of these sons. But the king himself died during the next year, and Matthias Corvinus, the remaining son of Hunyades, was placed by the Hungarians on their throne. They had given their brave defender the only reward in their power.

If the victory of Hunyades and Capistrano—the nobleman and the monk—had been followed up by the princes of Europe, the Turks might have been driven from Constantinople, Europe saved from future peril at their hands, and the tide of subsequent history gained a cleaner and purer flow. But nothing was done; the princes were too deeply interested in their petty squabbles to entertain large views, and the Turks were suffered to hold the empire of the East, and quietly to recruit their forces for later assaults.

LUTHER AND THE INDULGENCES.

Late in the month of April, in the year 1521, an open wagon containing two persons was driven along one of the roads of Germany, the horse being kept at his best pace, while now and then one of the occupants looked back as if in apprehension. This was the man who held the reins. The other, a short but presentable person, with pale, drawn face, lit by keen eyes, seemed too deeply buried in thought to be heedful of surrounding affairs. When he did lift his eyes they were directed ahead, where the road was seen to enter the great Thuringian forest. Dressed in clerical garb, the peasants who passed probably regarded him as a monk on some errand of mercy. The truth was that he was a fugitive, fleeing for his life, for he was a man condemned, who might at any moment be waylaid and seized.

On entering the forest the wagon was driven on until a shaded and lonely dell was reached, seemingly a fitting place for deeds of violence. Suddenly from the forest glades rode forth four armed and masked men, who stopped the wagon, sternly bade the traveller to descend and mount a spare horse they had with them, and rode off with him, a seeming captive, through the thick woodland.

As if in fear of pursuit, the captors kept at a brisk pace, not drawing rein until the walls of a large and strong castle loomed up near the forest border. The gates flew open and the drawbridge fell at their demand, and the small cavalcade rode into the powerful

stronghold, the entrance to which was immediately closed behind them. It was the castle of Wartburg, near Eisenach, Saxony, within whose strong walls the man thus mysteriously carried off was to remain hidden from the world for the greater part of the year that followed.

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The monk-like captive was just then the most talked of man in Germany. His seemingly violent capture had been made by his friends, not by his foes, its purpose being to protect him from his enemies, who were many and threatening. Of this he was well aware, and welcomed the castle as a place of refuge. He was, in fact, the celebrated Martin Luther, who had just set in train a religious revolution of broad aspect in Germany, and though for the time under the protection of a safe-conduct from the emperor Charles V., had been deemed in imminent danger of falling into an ambush of his foes instead of one of his friends.

That he might not be recognised by those who should see him at Wartburg, his ecclesiastic robe was exchanged for the dress of a knight, he wore helmet and sword instead of cassock and cross and let his beard grow freely. Thus changed in appearance, he was known as Junker George (Chevalier George) to those in the castle, and amused himself at times by hunting with his knightly companions in the neighborhood. The greater part of his time, however, was occupied in a difficult literary task, that of translating the Bible into German. The work thus done by him was destined to prove as important in a linguistic as in a theological sense, since it fixed the status of the German language for the later period to the same extent as the English translation of the Bible in the time of James I. aided to fix that of English speech.

Leaving Luther, for the present, in his retreat at Wartburg Castle, we must go back in his history and tell the occasion of the events just narrated. No man, before or after his time, ever created so great a disturbance in German thought, and the career of this fugitive monk is one of great historical import.

A peasant by birth, the son of a slate-cutter named Hans Luther, he so distinguished himself as a scholar that his father proposed to make him a lawyer, but a dangerous illness, the death of a near friend, and the exhortations of an eloquent preacher, so wrought upon his mind that he resolved instead to become a monk, and after going through the necessary course of study and mental discipline was ordained priest in May, 1507. The next year he was appointed a professor in the university of Wittenberg. There he remained for the next ten years of his life, when an event occurred which was to turn the whole current of his career and give him a prominence in theological history which few other men have ever attained.

In 1517 Pope Leo X. authorized an unusually large issue of indulgences, a term which signifies a remission of the temporal punishment due to sin, either in this life or the life to come; the condition being that the recipient shall have made a full confession of his sins and by his penitence and purpose of amendment fitted himself to receive the pardon of God, through the agency of the priest. He was also required to perform some service in the aid of charity or religion, such as the giving of alms.

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At the time of the Crusades the popes had granted to all who took part in them remission from church penalties. At a later date the same indulgence was granted to penitents who aided the holy wars with money instead of in person. At a still later date remission from the penalties of sin might be obtained by pious work, such as building churches, *etc*. When the Turks threatened Europe, those who fought against them obtained indulgence. In the instance of the issue of indulgences by Leo X. the pious work required was the giving of alms in aid of the completion of the great cathedral of St. Peter's at Rome.

This purpose did not differ in character from others for which indulgences had previously been granted, and there is nothing to show that any disregard of the requisite conditions was authorized by the pope; but there is reason to believe that some of the agents for the disposal of these indulgences went much beyond the intention of the decree. This was especially the case in the instance of a Dominican monk named Tetzel, who is charged with openly asserting what few or no other Catholics appear to have ever claimed, that the indulgences not only released the purchasers from the necessity of penance, but absolved them from all the consequences of sin in this world or the next.

We shall not go into the details of the venalities charged against Tetzel, whose field of labor was in Saxony, but they seem to have been sufficient to cause a strong feeling of dissatisfaction, which at length found a voice in Martin Luther, who preached vigorously against Tetzel and his methods and wrote to the princes and bishops begging them to refuse this irreligious dealer in indulgences a passage through their dominions.

The near approach of Tetzel to Wittenberg roused Luther to more decided action. He now wrote out ninety-five propositions in which he set forth in the strongest language his reasons for opposing and his view of the pernicious effects of Tetzel's doctrine of indulgences. These he nailed to the door of the Castle church of Wittenberg. The effect produced by them was extraordinary. The news of the protest spread with the greatest rapidity and within a fortnight copies of it had been distributed throughout Germany. Within five or six weeks it was being read over a great part of Europe. On all sides it aroused a deep public interest and excitement and became the great sensation of the day.

We cannot go into the details of what followed. Luther's propositions were like a thunderbolt flung into the mind of Germany. Everywhere deep thought was aroused and a host of those who had been displeased with Tetzel's methods sustained him in his act. Other papers from his pen followed in which his revolt from the Church of Rome grew wider and deeper. His energetic assault aroused a number of opponents and an active controversy ensued; ending in Luther's being cited to appear before Cajetan, the pope's legate, at Augsburg. From this meeting no definite result came. After a heated argument Cajetan ended the controversy with the following words:

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“I can dispute no longer with this beast; it has two wicked eyes and marvellous thoughts in its head.”

Luther’s view of the matter was much less complimentary. He said of the legate,—

“He knows no more about the Word than a donkey knows of harp-playing.”

In the next year, 1519, a discussion took place at Leipzig, between Luther on the one hand, aided by his friends Melanchthon and Carlstadt, and a zealous and talented ecclesiastic, Dr. Eck, on the other. Eck was a vigorous debater,—in person, in voice, and in opinion,—but as Luther was not to be silenced by his argument, he ended by calling him “a gentile and publican,” and wending his way to Borne, where he expressed his opinion of the new movement, demanded that the heretic should be made to feel the heavy hand of church discipline.

Back he came soon to Germany, bearing a bull from the pope, in which were extracts from Luther’s writings stated to be heretical, and which must be publicly retracted within sixty days under threat of excommunication. This the ardent agent tried to distribute through Germany, but to his surprise he found that Germany was in no humor to receive it. Most of the magistrates forbade it to be made public. Where it was posted upon the walls of any town, the people immediately tore it down. In truth, Luther’s heresy had with extraordinary rapidity become the heresy of Germany, and he found himself with a nation at his back, a nation that admired his courage and supported his opinions.

His most decisive step was taken on the 10th of December, 1520. On that day the faculty and students of the University of Wittenberg, convoked by him, met at the Elster gate of the town. Here a funeral pile was built up by the students, one of the magistrates set fire to it, and Luther, amid approving shouts from the multitude, flung into the flames the pope’s bull, and with it the canonical law and the writings of Dr. Eck. In this act he decisively broke loose from and defied the Church of Rome, sustained in his radical step of revolt apparently by all Wittenberg, and by a large body of converts to his views throughout Germany.

The bold reformer found friends not only among the lowly, but among the powerful. The Elector of Saxony was on his side, and openly accused the pope of acting the unjust judge, by listening to one side and not the other, and of needlessly agitating the people by his bull. Ulrich von Hutten, a favorite popular leader, was one of the zealous proselytes of the new doctrines. Franz von Sickingen, a knight of celebrity, was another who offered Luther shelter, if necessary, in his castles.

And now came a turning-point in Luther’s career, the most dangerous crisis he was to reach, and the one that needed the utmost courage and most inflexible resolution to pass it in safety. It was that which has become famous as the “Diet of Worms.” Germany had gained a new emperor, Charles V., under whose sceptre the empire of

Charlemagne was in great part restored, for his dominions included Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands. This young monarch left Spain for Germany in 1521, and was no sooner there than he called a great diet, to meet at Worms, that the affairs of the empire might be regulated, and that in particular this religious controversy, which was troubling the public mind, should be settled.

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Thither came the princes and potentates of the realm, thither great dignitaries of the church, among them the pope's legate, Cardinal Alexander, who was commissioned to demand that the emperor and the princes should call Luther to a strict account, and employ against him the temporal power. But to the cardinal's astonishment he found that the people of Germany had largely seceded from the papal authority. Everywhere he met with writings, songs, and pictures in which the holy father was treated with contempt and mockery. Even himself, as the pope's representative, was greeted with derision, and his life at times was endangered, despite the fact that he came in the suite of the emperor.

[Illustration: STATUE OF LUTHER AT WORMS.]

The diet assembled, the cardinal, as instructed, demanded that severe measures should be taken against the arch-heretic: the Elector of Saxony, on the contrary, insisted that Luther should be heard in his own defence; the emperor and the princes agreed with him, silencing the cardinal's declaration that the diet had no right or power to question the decision of the pope, and inviting Luther to appear before the imperial assembly at Worms, the emperor granting him a safe-conduct.

Possibly Charles thought that the insignificant monk would fear to come before that august body, and the matter thus die out. Luther's friends strongly advised him not to go. They had the experience of John Huss to offer as argument. But Luther was not the man to be stopped by dread of dignitaries or fear of penalties. He immediately set out from Wittenberg for Worms, saying to his protesting friends, "Though there were as many devils in the city as there are tiles on the roofs, still I would go."

His journey was an ovation. The people flocked by thousands to greet and applaud him. On his arrival at Worms two thousand people gathered and accompanied him to his lodgings. When, on the next day, April 18, 1521, the grand-marshal of the empire conducted him to the diet, he was obliged to lead him across gardens and through by-ways to avoid the throng that filled the streets of the town.

When entering the hall, he was clapped on the shoulder by a famous knight and general of the empire, Georg von Frundsberg, who said, "Monk, monk, thou art in a strait the like of which myself and many leaders, in the most desperate battles, have never known. But if thy thoughts are just, and thou art sure of thy cause, go on, in God's name; and be of good cheer; He will not forsake thee."

Luther was not an imposing figure as he stood before the proud assembly in the imperial hall. He had just recovered from a severe fever, and was pale and emaciated. And standing there, unsupported by a single friend, before that great assembly, his feelings were strongly excited. The emperor remarked to his neighbor, "This man would never succeed in making a heretic of *me*."

But though Luther's body was weak, his mind was strong. His air quickly became calm and dignified. He was commanded to retract the charges he had made against the church. In reply he acknowledged that the writings produced were his own, and declared that he was not ready to retract them, but said that "If they can convince me from the Holy Scriptures that I am in error, I am ready with my own hands to cast the whole of my writings into the flames."

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The chancellor replied that what he demanded was retraction, not dispute. This Luther refused to give. The emperor insisted on a simple recantation, which Luther declared he could not make. For several days the hearing continued, ending at length in the threatening declaration of the emperor, that “he would no longer listen to Luther, but dismiss him at once from his presence, and treat him as he would a heretic.”

There was danger in this, the greatest danger. The emperor’s word had been given, it is true; but an emperor had broken his word with John Huss, and his successor might with Martin Luther. Charles was, indeed, importuned to do so, but replied that his imperial word was sacred, even if given to a heretic, and that Luther should have an extension of the safe-conduct for twenty-one days, during his return home.

Luther started home. It was a journey by no means free from danger. He had powerful and unscrupulous enemies. He might be seized and carried off by an ambush of his foes. How he was saved from peril of this sort we have described. It was his friend and protector, Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, who had placed the ambush of knights, his purpose being to put Luther in a place of safety where he could lie concealed until the feeling against him had subsided. Meanwhile, at Worms, when the period of the safe-conduct had expired, Luther was declared out of the ban of the empire, an outlaw whom no man was permitted to shelter, his works were condemned to be burned wherever found, and he was adjudged to be seized and held in durance subject to the will of the emperor.

What had become of the fugitive no one knew. The story spread that he had been murdered by his enemies. For ten months he remained in concealment and when he again appeared it was to combat a horde of fanatical enthusiasts who had carried his doctrines to excess and were stirring up all Germany by their wild opinions. The outbreak drew Luther back to Wittenberg, where for eight days he preached with great eloquence against the fanatics and finally succeeded in quelling the disturbance.

From that time forward Luther continued the guiding spirit of the Protestant revolt and was looked upon with high consideration by most of the princes of Germany, his doctrines spreading until, during his lifetime, they extended to Moravia, Bohemia, Denmark and Sweden. Then, in 1546, he died at Eisleben, near the castle in which he had dwelt during the most critical period of his life.

SOLYMAN THE MAGNIFICENT AT GUNTZ.

Solyman the Magnificent, Sultan of Turkey, had collected an army of dimensions as magnificent as his name, and was on his march to overwhelm Austria and perhaps subject all western Europe to his arms. A few years before he had swept Hungary with his hordes, taken and plundered its cities of Buda and Pesth, and made the whole region his own. Belgrade, which had been so valiantly defended against his predecessor,

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had fallen into his infidel hands. The gateways of western Europe were his; he had but to open them and march through; doubtless there had come to him glorious dreams of extending the empire of the crescent to the western seas. And yet the proud and powerful sultan was to be checked in his course by an obstacle seemingly as insignificant as if the sting of a hornet should stop the career of an elephant. The story is a remarkable one, and deserves to be better known.

Vast was the army which Solyman raised. He had been years in gathering men and equipments. Great work lay before him, and he needed great means for its accomplishment. It is said that three hundred thousand men marched under his banners. So large was the force, so great the quantity of its baggage and artillery, that its progress was necessarily a slow one, and sixty days elapsed during its march from Constantinople to Belgrade.

Here was time for Ferdinand of Austria to bring together forces for the defence of his dominions against the leviathan which was slowly moving upon them. He made efforts, but they were not of the energetic sort which the crisis demanded, and had the Turkish army been less unwieldly and more rapid, Vienna might have fallen almost undefended into Solyman's hands. Fortunately, large bodies move slowly, and the sultan met with an obstacle that gave the requisite time for preparation.

On to Belgrade swept the grand army, with its multitude of standards and all the pomp and glory of its vast array. The slowness with which it came was due solely to its size, not in any sense to lack of energy in the warlike sultan. An anecdote is extant which shows his manner of dealing with difficulties. He had sent forward an engineer with orders to build a bridge over the river Drave, to be constructed at a certain point, and be ready at a certain time. The engineer went, surveyed the rapid stream, and sent back answer to the sultan that it was impossible to construct a bridge at that point.

But Solyman's was one of those magnificent souls that do not recognize the impossible. He sent the messenger back to the engineer, in his hand a linen cord, on his lips this message:

"Your master, the sultan, commands you, without consideration of the difficulties, to complete the bridge over the Drave. If it be not ready for him on his arrival, he will have you strangled with this cord."

The bridge was built. Solyman had learned the art of overcoming the impossible. He was soon to have a lesson in the art of overcoming the difficult.

Belgrade was in due time reached. Here the sultan embarked his artillery and heavy baggage on the Danube, three thousand vessels being employed for that purpose.

They were sent down the stream, under sufficient escort, towards the Austrian capital, while the main army, lightened of much of its load, prepared to march more expeditiously than heretofore through Hungary towards its goal.

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Ferdinand of Austria, alarmed at the threatening approach of the Turks, had sent rich presents and proposals of peace to Solyman at Belgrade; but those had the sole effect of increasing his pride and making him more confidant of victory. He sent an insulting order to the ambassadors to follow his encampment and await his pleasure, and paid no further heed to their pacific mission.

The Save, an affluent of the Danube, was crossed, and the army lost sight of the great stream, and laid its course by a direct route through Sclavonia towards the borders of Styria, the outlying Austrian province in that direction. It was the shortest line of march available, the distance to be covered being about two hundred miles. On reaching the Styrian frontier, the Illyrian mountain chain needed to be crossed, and within it lay the obstacle with which Solyman had to contend.

The route of the army led through a mountain pass. In this pass was a petty and obscure town, Guntz by name, badly fortified, and garrisoned by a mere handful of men, eight hundred in all. Its principal means of defence lay in the presence of an indomitable commander, Nicholas Jurissitz, a man of iron nerve and fine military skill.

Ibrahim Pasha, who led the vanguard of the Turkish force, ordered the occupation of this mountain fortress, and learned with anger and mortification that Guntz had closed its gates and frowned defiance on his men. Word was sent back to Solyman, who probably laughed in his beard at the news. It was as if a fly had tried to stop an ox.

“Brush it away and push onward,” was probably the tenor of his orders.

But Guntz was not to be brushed away. It stood there like an awkward fact, its guns commanding the pass through which the army must march, a ridiculous obstacle which had to be dealt with however time might press.

The sultan sent orders to his advance-guard to take the town and march on. Ibrahim Pasha pushed forward, assailed it, and found that he had not men enough for the work. The little town with its little garrison had the temper of a shrew, and held its own against him valiantly. A few more battalions were sent, but still the town held out. The sultan, enraged at this opposition, now despatched what he considered an overwhelming force, with orders to take the town without delay, and to punish the garrison as they deserved for their foolish obstinacy. But what was his surprise and fury to receive word that the pigmy still held out stubbornly against the leviathan, that all their efforts to take it were in vain, and that its guns commanded and swept the pass so that it was impossible to advance under its storm of death-dealing balls.

Thundering vengeance, Solyman now ordered his whole army to advance, sweep that insolent and annoying obstacle from the face of the earth, and then march on towards the real goal of their enterprise, the still distant city of Vienna, the capital and stronghold of the Christian dogs.

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Upon Guntz burst the whole storm of the war, against Guntz it thundered, around Guntz it lightened; yet still Guntz stood, proud, insolent, defiant, like a rock in the midst of the sea, battered by the waves of war's tempest, yet rising still in unyielding strength, and dashing back the bloody spray which lashed its walls in vain.

Solyman's pride was roused. That town he must and would have. He might have marched past it and left it in the rear, though not without great loss and danger, for the pass was narrow and commanded by the guns of Guntz, and he would have had to run the gantlet of a hailstorm of iron balls. But he had no thought of passing it; his honor was involved. Guntz must be his and its insolent garrison punished, or how could Solyman the Magnificent ever hold up his head among monarchs and conquerors again?

On every side the town was assailed; cannon surrounded it and poured their balls upon its walls; they were planted on the hills in its rear; they were planted on lofty mounds of earth which overtopped its walls and roofs; from every direction they thundered threat; to every direction Guntz thundered back defiance.

An attempt was made to undermine the walls, but in vain; the commandant, Jurissitz, was far too vigilant to be reached by burrowing. Breach after breach was made in the walls, and as quickly repaired, or new walls built. Assault after assault was made and hurled back. Every effort was baffled by the skill, vigor, and alertness of the governor and the unyielding courage of his men, and still the days went by and still Guntz stood.

Solyman, indignant and alarmed, tried the effect of promises, bribes, and threats. Jurissitz and his garrison should be enriched if they yielded; they should die under torture if they persisted. These efforts proved as useless as cannon-balls. The indomitable Jurissitz resisted promises and threats as energetically as he had resisted shot and balls.

The days went on. For twenty-eight days that insignificant fortress and its handful of men defied the great Turkish army and held it back in that mountain-pass. In the end the sultan, with all his pride and all his force, was obliged to accept a feigned submission and leave Jurissitz and his men still in possession of the fortress they had held so long and so well.

They had held it long enough to save Austria, as it proved. While the sultan's cannon were vainly bombarding its walls, Europe was gathering around Vienna in defence. From every side troops hurried to the salvation of Austria from the Turks. Italy, the Netherlands, Bohemia. Poland, Germany, sent their quotas, till an army of one hundred and thirty thousand men were gathered around Vienna, thirty thousand of them being cavalry.

Solyman was appalled at the tidings brought him. It had become a question of arithmetic to his barbarian intellect. If Guntz, with less than a thousand men, could defy him for a month, what might not Vienna do with more than a hundred thousand? Winter was not far away. It was already September. He was separated from his flotilla of artillery. Was it safe to advance? He answered the question by suddenly striking camp and retreating with such haste that his marauding horsemen, who were out in large numbers, were left in ignorance of the movement, and were nearly all taken or cut to pieces.

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Thus ingloriously ended one of the most pretentious invasions of Europe. For three years Solyman had industriously prepared, gathering the resources of his wide dominion to the task and fulminating infinite disaster to the infidels. Yet eight hundred men in a petty mountain town had brought this great enterprise to naught and sent back the mighty army of the grand Turk in inglorious retreat.

[Illustration: THE MOSQUE OF SOLYMAN, CONSTANTINOPLE.]

The story of Guntz has few parallels in history; the courage and ability of its commander were of the highest type of military worthiness; yet its story is almost unknown and the name of Jurissitz is not classed among those of the world's heroes. Such is fame.

There is another interesting story of the doings of Solyman and the gallant defence of a Christian town, which is worthy of telling as an appendix to that just given. The assault at Guntz took place in the year 1532. In 1566, when Solyman was much older, though perhaps not much wiser, we find him at his old work, engaged in besieging the small Hungarian town of Szigeth, west of Mohacs and north of the river Drave, a stronghold surrounded by the small stream Almas almost as by the waters of a lake. It was defended by a Croatian named Zrinyr and a garrison of twenty-five hundred men.

Around this town the Turkish army raged and thundered in its usual fashion. Within it the garrison defended themselves with all the spirit and energy they could muster. Step by step the Turks advanced. The outskirts of the town were destroyed by fire and the assailants were within its walls. The town being no longer tenable, Zrinyr took refuge, with what remained of the garrison, in the fortress, and still bade defiance to his foes.

Solyman, impatient at the delay caused by the obstinacy of the defender, tried with him the same tactics he had employed with Jurissitz many years before,—those of threats and promises. Tempting offers of wealth proving of no avail, the sultan threatened the bold commander with the murder of his son George, a prisoner in his hands. This proved equally unavailing, and the siege went on.

It went on, indeed, until Solyman was himself vanquished, and by an enemy he had not taken into account in his thirst for glory—the grim warrior Death. Temper killed him. In a fit of passion he suddenly died. But the siege went on. The vizier concealed his death and kept the batteries at work, perhaps deeming it best for his own fortunes to be able to preface the announcement of the sultan's death with a victory.

The castle walls had been already crumbling under the storm of balls. Soon they were in ruins. The place was no longer tenable. Yet Zrinyr was as far as ever from thoughts of surrender. He dressed himself in his most magnificent garments, filled his pockets with gold, "that they might find something on his corpse," and dashed on the Turks at the head of what soldiers were left. He died, but not unrevenged. Only after his death

was the Turkish army told that their great sultan was no more and that they owed their victory to the shadow of the genius of Solyman the Magnificent.

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THE PEASANTS AND THE ANABAPTISTS.

Germany, in great part, under the leadership of Martin Luther, had broken loose from the Church of Rome, the ball which he had set rolling being kept in motion by other hands. The ideas of many of those who followed him were full of the spirit of fanaticism. The pendulum of religious thought, set in free swing, vibrated from the one extreme of authority to the opposite extreme of license, going as far beyond Luther as he had gone beyond Rome. There arose a sect to which was given the name of Anabaptists, from its rejection of infant baptism, a sect with a strange history, which it now falls to us to relate.

The new movement, indeed, was not confined to matters of religion. The idea of freedom from authority once set afloat, quickly went further than its advocates intended. If men were to have liberty of thought, why should they not have liberty of action? So argued the peasantry, and not without the best of reasons, for they were pitifully oppressed by the nobility, weighed down with feudal exactions to support the luxury of the higher classes, their crops destroyed by the horses and dogs of hunting-parties, their families ill-treated and insulted by the men-at-arms who were maintained at their expense, their flight from tyranny to the freedom of the cities prohibited by nobles and citizens alike, everywhere enslaved, everywhere despised, it is no wonder they joined with gladness in the revolutionary sentiment and made a vigorous demand for political liberty.

As a result of all this an insurrection broke out,—a double insurrection in fact,—here of the peasantry for their rights, there of the religious fanatics for their license. Suddenly all Germany was upturned by the greatest and most dangerous outbreak of the laboring classes it had ever known, a revolt which, had it been ably led, might have revolutionized society and founded a completely new order of things.

In 1522 the standard of revolt was first raised, its signal a golden shoe, with the motto, “Whoever will be free let him follow this ray of light.” In 1524 a fresh insurrection broke out, and in the spring of the following year the whole country was aflame, the peasants of southern Germany being everywhere in arms and marching on the strongholds of their oppressors.

Their demands were by no means extreme. They asked for a board of arbitration, to consist of the Archduke Ferdinand, the Elector of Saxony, Luther, Melanchthon, and several preachers, to consider their proposed articles of reform in industrial and political concerns. These articles covered the following points. They asked the right to choose their own pastors, who were to preach the word of God from the Bible; the abolition of dues, except tithes to the clergy; the abolition of vassalage; the rights of hunting and fishing, and of cutting wood in the forests; reforms in rent, in the administration of

justice, and in the methods of application of the laws; the restoration of communal property illegally seized; and several other matters of the same general character.

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They asked in vain. The princes ridiculed the idea of a court in which Luther should sit side by side with the archduke. Luther refused to interfere. He admitted the oppression of the peasantry, severely attacked the princes and nobility for their conduct, but deprecated the excesses which the insurgents had already committed, and saw no safety from worse evils except in putting down the peasantry with a strong hand.

The rejection of the demands of the rebellious peasants was followed by a frightful reign of license, political in the south, religious in the north. Everywhere the people were in arms, destroying castles, burning monasteries, and forcing numbers of the nobles to join them, under pain of having their castles plundered and burned. The counts of Hohenlohe were made to enter their ranks, and were told, “Brother Albert and brother George, you are no longer lords but peasants, and we are the lords of Hohenlohe.” Other nobles were similarly treated. Various Swabian nobles fled for safety, with their families and treasures, to the city and castle of Weinsberg. The castle was stormed and taken, and the nobles, seventy in number, were forced to run the gantlet between two lines of men armed with spears, who stabbed them as they passed. It was this deed that brought out a pamphlet from Luther, in which he called on all the citizens of the empire to put down “the furious peasantry, to strangle, to stab them, secretly and openly, as they can, as one would kill a mad dog.”

There was need for something to be done if Germany was to be saved from a revolution. The numbers of the insurgents steadily increased. Many of the cities were in league with them, several of the princes entered in negotiation concerning their demands; in Thuringia the Anabaptists, under the lead of a fanatical preacher named Thomas Muenzer, were in full revolt; in Saxony, Hesse, and lower Germany the peasantry were in arms; there was much reason to fear that the insurgents and fanatics would join their forces and pour like a rushing torrent through the whole empire, destroying all before them. Of the many peasant revolts which the history of mediaevalism records this was the most threatening and dangerous, and called for the most strenuous exertions to save the institutions of Germany from a complete overthrow.

At the head of the main body of insurgents was a knight of notorious character, the famed Goetz von Berlichingen,—Goetz with the Iron Hand, as he is named,—a robber baron whose history had been one of feud and contest, and of the plunder alike of armed foes and unarmed travellers. Goethe has honored him by making him the hero of a drama, and the peasantry sought to honor him by making him the leader of their march of destruction. This worthy had lost his hand during youth, and replaced it with a hand of iron. He was bold, daring, and unscrupulous, but scarcely fitted for generalship, his knowledge of war being confined to the tactics of highway robbery. Nor can it be said that his leadership of the peasants was voluntary. He was as much their prisoner as their general, his service being an enforced one.

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With the redoubtable Goetz at their head the insurgents poured onward, spreading terror before them, leaving ruin behind them. Castles and monasteries were destroyed, until throughout Thuringia, Franconia, Swabia, and along the Rhine as far as Lorraine the homes of lords and clergy were destroyed, and a universal scene of smoking ruins replaced the formerly stately architectural piles.

We cannot go further into the details of this notable outbreak. The revolt of the southern peasantry was at length brought to an end by an army collected by the Swabian league, and headed by George Truchsess of Waldburg. Had they marched against him in force he could not have withstood their onset. But they occupied themselves in sieges, disregarding the advice of their leaders, and permitted themselves to be attacked and beaten in detail. Seeing that all was at an end, Goetz von Berlichingen secretly fled from their ranks and took refuge in his castle. Many of the bodies of peasantry dispersed. Others made head against the troops and were beaten with great slaughter. All was at an end.

Truchsess held a terrible court of justice in the city of Wuerzburg, in which his jester Hans acted as executioner, and struck off the heads of numbers of the prisoners, the bloody work being attended with laughter and jests, which added doubly to its horror. All who acknowledged that they had read the Bible, or even that they knew how to read and write, were instantly beheaded. The priest of Schipf, a gouty old man who had vigorously opposed the peasants, had himself carried by four of his men to Truchsess to receive thanks for his services. Hans, fancying that he was one of the rebels, slipped up behind him, and in an instant his head was rolling on the floor.

“I seriously reproved my good Hans for his untoward jest,” was the easy comment of Truchsess upon this circumstance.

Throughout Germany similar slaughter of the peasantry and wholesale executions took place. In many places the reprisal took the dimensions of a massacre, and it is said that by the end of the frightful struggle more than a hundred thousand of the peasants had been slain. As for its political results, the survivors were reduced to a deeper state of servitude than before. Thus ended a great struggle which had only needed an able leader to make it a success and to free the people from feudal bonds. It ended like all the peasant outbreaks, in defeat and renewed oppression. As for the robber chief Goetz, while he is said by several historians to have received a sentence of life imprisonment, Menzel states that he was retained in prison for two years only.

In Thuringia, as we have said, the revolt was a religious one, it being controlled by Thomas Muenzer, a fanatical Anabaptist. He pretended that he had the gift of receiving divine revelations, and claimed to be better able to reveal Christian truth than Luther. God had created the earth, he said, for believers, all government should be regulated by the Bible and revelation, and there was no need of princes, priests, or nobles. The distinction between rich and poor was unchristian, since in God’s kingdom all should be

alike. Nicholas Storch, one of Muenzer's preachers, surrounded himself with twelve apostles and seventy-two disciples, and claimed that an angel brought him divine messages.

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Driven from Saxony by the influence of Luther, Muenzer went to Thuringia, and gained such control by his preaching and his doctrines over the people of the town of Muelhausen that all the wealthy people were driven away, their property confiscated, and the sole control of the place fell into his hands.

So great was the disturbance caused by his fanatical teachings and the exertions of his disciples that Luther again bestirred himself, and called on the princes for the suppression of Muenzer and his fanatical horde. A division of the army was sent into Thuringia, and came up with a large body of the Anabaptists near Frankenhausen, on May 15, 1525. Muenzer was in command of the peasants. The army officers, hoping to bring them to terms by lenient measures, offered to pardon them if they would give up their leaders and peacefully retire to their homes. This offer might have been effective but for Muenzer, who, foreseeing danger to himself, did his utmost to awaken the fanaticism of his followers.

It happened that a rainbow appeared in the heavens during the discussion. This, he declared, was a messenger sent to him from God. His ignorant audience believed him, and for the moment were stirred up to a mad enthusiasm which banished all thoughts of surrender. Rushing in their fury on the ambassadors of peace and pardon, they stabbed them to death, and then took shelter behind their intrenchments, where they prepared for a vigorous defence.

Their courage, however, did not long endure the vigorous assault made by the troops of the elector. In vain they looked for the host of angels which Muenzer had promised would come to their aid. Not the glimpse of an angel's wing appeared in the sky. Muenzer himself took to flight, and his infatuated followers, their blind courage vanished, fell an easy prey to the swords of the soldiers.

The greater part of the peasant horde were slain, while Muenzer, who had concealed himself from pursuit in the loft of a house in Frankenhausen, was quickly discovered, dragged forth, put to the rack, and beheaded, his death putting an end to that first phase of the Anabaptist outbreak.

[Illustration: OLD HOUSES AT MUeNSTER.]

After this event, several years passed during which the Anabaptists kept quiet, though their sect increased. Then came one of the most remarkable religious revolts which history records. Persecution in Germany had caused many of the new sectarians to emigrate to the Netherlands, where their preachings were effective, and many new members were gained. But the persecution instigated by Charles V. against heretics in the Netherlands fell heavily upon them and gave rise to a new emigration, great numbers of the Anabaptists now seeking the town of Muenster, the capital of Westphalia. The citizens of this town had expelled their bishop, and had in consequence been treated with great severity by Luther, in his effort to keep the cause

of religious reform separate from politics. The new-comers were received with enthusiasm, and the people of Muenster quickly fell under the influence of two of their fanatical preachers, John Matthiesen, a baker, of Harlem, and John Bockhold, or Bockelson, a tailor, of Leyden.

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Muenster soon became the seat of an extraordinary outburst of profligacy, fanaticism, and folly. The Anabaptists took possession of the town, drove out all its wealthy citizens, elected two of themselves—a clothier named Knipperdolling and one Krechting—as burgomasters, and started off in a remarkable career of self-government under Anabaptist auspices.

A community of property was the first measure inaugurated. Every person was required to deposit all his possessions, in gold, silver, and other articles of value, in a public treasury, which fell under the control of Bockelson, who soon made himself lord of the city. All the images, pictures, ornaments, and books of the churches, except their Bibles, were publicly burned. All persons were obliged to eat together at public tables, all made to work according to their strength and without regard to their former station, and a general condition of communism was established. Bockelson gave himself out as a prophet, and quickly gained such influence over the people that they were ready to support him in the utmost excesses of folly and profligacy.

One of the earliest steps taken was to authorize each man to possess several wives, the number of women who had sought Muenster being six times greater than the men. John Bockelson set the example by marrying three at once. His licentious example was quickly followed by others, and for a full year the town continued a scene of unbridled profligacy and mad license. One of John's partisans, claiming to have received a divine communication, saluted him as monarch of the whole globe, the "King of Righteousness," his title of royalty being "John of Leyden," and declared that heaven had chosen him to restore the throne of David. Twenty-eight apostles were selected and sent out, charged to preach the new gospel to the whole earth and to bring its inhabitants to acknowledge the divinely-commissioned king. Their success was not great, however. Wherever they came they were seized and immediately executed, the earth showing itself very unwilling to accept John of Leyden as its king.

In August, 1534, an army, led by Francis of Waldeck, the expelled bishop, who was supported by the landgrave of Hesse and several other princes, advanced and laid siege to the city, which the Anabaptists defended with furious zeal. In the first assault, which was made on August 30, the assailants were repulsed with severe loss. They then settled down to the slower but safer process of siege, considering it easier to starve out than to fight out their enthusiastic opponents.

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One of the two leaders of the citizens, John Matthiesen, made a sortie against the troops with only thirty followers, filled with the idea that he was a second Gideon, and that God would come to his aid to defeat the oppressors of His chosen people. The aid expected did not come, and Matthiesen and his followers were all cut down. His death left John of Leyden supreme. He claimed absolute authority in the new "Zion," received daily fresh visions from heaven, which his followers implicitly believed and obeyed, and indulged in wild excesses which only the insane enthusiasm of his followers kept them from viewing with disgust. Among his mad freaks was that of running around the streets naked, shouting, "The King of Zion is come." His lieutenant Knipperdolling, not to be outdone in fanaticism, followed his example, shouting, "Every high place shall be brought low." Immediately the mob assailed the churches and pulled down all the steeples. Those who ventured to resist the monarch's decrees were summarily dealt with, the block and axe, with Knipperdolling as headsman, quickly disposing of all doubters and rebels.

Such was the doom of Elizabeth, one of the prophet's wives, who declared that she could not believe that God had condemned so many people to die of hunger while their king was living in abundance. John beheaded her with his own hands in the market-place, and then, in insane frenzy, danced around her body in company with his other wives. Her loss was speedily repaired. The angels were kept busy in picking out new wives for the inspired tailor, till in the end he had seventeen in all, one of whom, Divara by name, gained great influence by her spirit and beauty.

While all this was going on within the city, the army of besiegers lay encamped about it, waiting patiently till famine should subdue the stubborn courage of the citizens. Numbers of nobles flocked thither by way of pastime, in the absence of any other wars to engage their attention. Nor were the citizens without aid from a distance. Parties of their brethren from Holland and Friesland sought to relieve them, but in vain. All their attempts were repelled, and the siege grew straiter than ever.

The defence from within was stubborn, women and boys being enlisted in the service. The boys stood between the men and fired arrows effectively at the besiegers. The women poured lime and melted pitch upon their heads. So obstinate was the resistance that the city might have held out for years but for the pinch of famine. The effect of this was temporarily obviated by driving all the old men and the women who could be spared beyond the walls; but despite this the grim figure of starvation came daily nearer and nearer, and the day of surrender or death steadily approached.

A year at length went by, the famine growing in virulence with the passing of the days. Hundreds perished of starvation, yet still the people held out with a fanatical courage that defied assault, still their king kept up their courage by divine revelations, and still he contrived to keep himself sufficiently supplied with food amid his starving dupes.

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At length the end came. Some of the despairing citizens betrayed the town by night to the enemy. On the night of June 25, 1535, two of them opened the gates to the bishop's army, and a sanguinary scene ensued. The betrayed citizens defended themselves desperately, and were not vanquished until great numbers of them had fallen and the work of famine had been largely completed by the sword. John of Leyden was made prisoner, together with his two chief men,—Knipperdolling, his executioner, and Krechting, his chancellor,—they being reserved for a slower and more painful fate.

For six months they were carried through Germany, enclosed in iron cages, and exhibited as monsters to the people. Then they were taken back to Muenster, where they were cruelly tortured, and at length put to death by piercing their hearts with red-hot daggers.

Their bodies were placed in iron cages, and suspended on the front of the church of St. Lambert, in the market-place of Muenster, while the Catholic worship was re-established in that city. The cages, and the instruments of torture, are still preserved, probably as salutary examples to fanatics, or as interesting mementos of Muenster's past history.

The Muenster madness was the end of trouble with the Anabaptists. They continued to exist, in a quieter fashion, some of them that fled from persecution in Germany and Holland finding themselves exposed to almost as severe a persecution in England. As a sect they have long since vanished, while the only trace of their influence is to be seen in those recent sects that hold the doctrine of adult baptism.

The history of mankind presents no parallel tale to that we have told. It was an instance of insanity placed in power, of lunacy ruling over ignorance and fanaticism; and the doings of John of Leyden in Muenster may be presented as an example alike of the mad extremes to which unquestioned power is apt to lead, and the vast capabilities of faith and trust which exist in uneducated man.

THE FORTUNES OF WALLENSTEIN.

[Illustration: WALLENSTEIN.]

Wallenstein was in power, Wallenstein the mysterious, the ambitious, the victorious; soldier of fortune and arbiter of empires; reader of the stars and ally of the powers of darkness; poor by birth and rich by marriage and imperial favor; an extraordinary man, surrounded by mystery and silence, victorious through ability and audacity, rising from obscurity to be master of the emperor, and falling at length by the hand of assassination. In person he was tall and thin, in countenance sallow and lowering, his eyes small and piercing, his forehead high and commanding, his hair short and bristling, his expression dark and sinister. Fortune was his deity, ambition ruled him with the sway of a tyrant; he was born with the conquering instinct, and in the end handed over

all Germany, bound and captive, to his imperial master, and retired to brood new conquests.

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Albert von Wallenstein was Bohemian by birth, Prague being his native city. His parents were Lutherans, but they died, and he was educated as a Catholic. He travelled with an astrologer, and was taught cabalistic lore and the secrets of the stars, which he ever after believed to control his destiny. His fortune began in his marriage to an aged but very wealthy widow, who almost put an end to his career by administering to him a love-potion. He had already served in the army, fought against the Turks in Hungary, and with his wife's money raised a regiment for the wars in Bohemia. A second marriage with a rich countess added to his wealth; he purchased, at a fifth of their value, about sixty estates of the exiled Bohemian nobility, and paid for them in debased coin; the emperor, in recognition of his services, made him Duke of Friedland, in which alone there were nine towns and fifty-seven castles and villages; his wealth, through these marriages, purchases, and gifts, steadily increased till he became enormously rich, and the wealthiest man in Germany, next to the emperor.

This extraordinary man was born in an extraordinary time, a period admirably calculated for the exercise of his talents, and sadly suited to the suffering of mankind in consequence. It was the period of the frightful conflict known as the Thirty Years' War. A century had passed since the Diet of Worms, in which Protestantism first boldly lifted its head against Catholicism. During that period the new religious doctrines had gained a firm footing in Germany. Charles V. had done his utmost to put them down, and, discouraged by his failure, had abdicated the throne. In his retreat he is said to have amused his leisure in seeking to make two watches go precisely alike. The effort proved as vain as that to make two people think alike, and he exclaimed, "Not even two watches, with similar works, can I make to agree, and yet, fool that I was, I thought I should be able to control like the works of a watch different nations, living under diverse skies, in different climes, and speaking varied languages." Those who followed him were to meet with a similar result.

The second effort to put down Protestantism by arms began in 1618, and led to that frightful outbreak of human virulence, the Thirty Years' War, which made Germany a desert, but left religion as it found it. The emperor, Ferdinand II., a rigid Catholic, bitterly opposed to the spread of Protestantism, had ordered the demolition of two new churches built by the Bohemian Protestants. His order led to instant hostilities. Count Thurn, a fierce Bohemian nobleman, had the emperor's representatives, Slawata and Martinitz by name, flung out of the window of the council-chamber in Prague, a height of seventy or more feet, and their secretary Fabricius flung after them. It was a terrible fall, but they escaped, for a pile of litter and old papers lay below. Fabricius fell on Martinitz, and, polite to the last, begged his pardon for coming down upon him so rudely. This act of violence, which occurred on May 23, 1618, is looked upon as the true beginning of the dreadful war.

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Matters moved rapidly. Bohemia was conquered by the imperial armies, its nobles exiled or executed, its religion suppressed. This victory gained, an effort was made to suppress Lutheranism in Upper Austria. It led to a revolt, and soon the whole country was in a flame of war. Tilly and Pappenheim, the imperial commanders, swept all before them, until they suddenly found themselves opposed by a man their equal in ability, Count Mansfeld, who had played an active part in the Bohemian wars.

A diminutive, deformed, sickly-looking man was Mansfeld, but he had the soul of a soldier in his small frame. No sooner was his standard raised than the Protestants flocked to it, and he quickly found himself at the head of twenty thousand men. But as the powerful princes failed to support him he was compelled to subsist his troops by pillage, an example which was followed by all the leaders during that dreadful contest.

And now began a frightful struggle, a game of war on the chess-board of a nation, in which the people were the helpless pawns and suffered alike from friends and foes. Neither side gained any decisive victory, but both sides plundered and ravaged, the savage soldiery, unrestrained and unrestrainable, committing cruel excesses wherever they came.

Such was the state of affairs which preceded the appearance of Wallenstein on the field of action. The soldiers led by Tilly were those of the Catholic League; Ferdinand, the emperor, had no troops of his own in the field; Wallenstein, discontented that the war should be going on without him, offered to raise an imperial army, paying the most of its expenses himself, but stipulating, in return, that he should have unlimited control. The emperor granted all his demands, and made him Duke of Friedland as a preliminary reward, Wallenstein agreeing to raise ten thousand men.

No sooner was his standard raised than crowds flocked to it, and an army of forty thousand soldiers of fortune were soon ready to follow him to plunder and victory. His fame as a soldier, and the free pillage which he promised, had proved irresistible inducements to war-loving adventurers of all nations and creeds. In a few months the army was raised and fully equipped, and in the autumn of 1625 took the field, growing as it marched.

Christian IV., the Lutheran king of Denmark, had joined in the war, and Tilly, jealous of Wallenstein, vigorously sought to overcome his new adversaries before his rival could reach the field of conflict. He succeeded, too, in great measure, reducing many of the Protestant towns and routing the army of the Danish king.

Meanwhile, Wallenstein came on, his army growing until sixty thousand men—a wild and undisciplined horde—followed his banners. Mansfeld, who had received reinforcements from England and Holland, opposed him, but was too weak to face him successfully in the field. He was defeated on the bridge of Dessau, and marched

rapidly into Silesia, whither Wallenstein, much to his chagrin, was compelled to follow him.

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From Silesia, Mansfeld marched into Hungary, still pursued by Wallenstein. Here he was badly received, because he had not brought the money expected by the king. His retreat cut off, and without the means of procuring supplies in that remote country, the valiant warrior found himself at the end of his resources. Return was impossible, for Wallenstein occupied the roads. In the end he was forced to sell his artillery and ammunition, disband his army, and proceed southward towards Venice, whence he hoped to reach England and procure a new supply of funds. But on arriving at the village of Urakowitz, in Bosnia, his strength, worn out by incessant struggles and fatigues, gave way, and the noble warrior, the last hope of Protestantism in Germany, as it seemed, breathed his last, a disheartened fugitive.

On feeling the approach of death, he had himself clothed in his military coat, and his sword buckled to his side. Thus equipped, and standing between two friends, who supported him upright, the brave Mansfeld breathed his last. His death left his cause almost without a supporter, for the same year his friend, Duke Christian of Brunswick, expired, and with them the Protestants lost their only able leaders; King Christian of Denmark, their principal successor, being greatly wanting in the requisites of military genius.

Ferdinand seemed triumphant and the cause of his opponents lost. All opposition, for the time, was at an end. Tilly, whose purposes were the complete restoration of Catholicism in Germany, held the provinces conquered by him with an iron hand. Wallenstein, who seemingly had in view the weakening of the power of the League and the raising of the emperor to absolutism, broke down all opposition before his irresistible march.

His army had gradually increased till it numbered one hundred thousand men,—a host which it cost him nothing to support, for it subsisted on the devastated country. He advanced through Silesia, driving all his enemies before him; marched into Holstein, in order to force the King of Denmark to leave Germany; invaded and devastated Jutland and Silesia; and added to his immense estate the duchy of Sagan and the whole of Mecklenburg, which latter was given him by the emperor in payment of his share of the expenses of the war. This raised him to the rank of prince. As for Denmark, he proposed to get rid of its king and have Ferdinand elected in his stead.

The career of this incomprehensible man had been strangely successful. Not a shadow of reverse had met him. What he really intended no one knew. As his enemies decreased he increased his forces. Was it the absolutism of the emperor or of himself that he sought? Several of the princes appealed to Ferdinand to relieve their dominions from the oppressive burden of war, but the emperor was weaker than his general, and dared not act against him. The whole of north Germany lay prostrate beneath the powerful warrior, and obeyed his slightest nod. He lived in a style of pomp and ostentation far beyond that of the emperor himself. His officers imitated him in extravagance. Even his soldiers lived in luxury. To support this lavish display many

thousands of human beings languished in misery, starvation threatened whole provinces, and destitution everywhere prevailed.

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From Mecklenburg, Wallenstein fixed his ambitious eyes on Pomerania, which territory he grew desirous of adding to his dominions. Here was an important commercial city, Stralsund, a member of the Hanseatic League, and one which enjoyed the privilege of self-government. It had contributed freely to the expenses of the imperial army, but Wallenstein, in furtherance of his designs upon Pomerania, now determined to place in it a garrison of his own troops.

This was an interference with their vested rights which roused the wrath of the citizens of Stralsund. They refused to receive the troops sent them: Wallenstein, incensed, determined to teach the insolent burghers a lesson, and bade General Arnim to march against and lay siege to the place, doubting not that it would be quickly at his mercy.

He was destined to a disappointment. Stralsund was to put the first check upon his uniformly successful career. The citizens defended their walls with obstinate courage. Troops, ammunition, and provisions were sent them from Denmark and Sweden, and they continued to oppose a successful resistance to every effort to reduce them.

This unlooked for perversity of the Stralsunders filled the soul of Wallenstein with rage. It seemed to him unexampled insolence that these merchants should dare defy his conquering troops. “Even if this Stralsund be linked by chains to the very heavens above,” he declared, “still I swear it shall fall!”

He advanced in person against the city and assailed it with his whole army, bringing all the resources at his command to bear against its walls. But with heroic courage the citizens held their own. Weeks passed, while he continued to thunder upon it with shot and shell. The Stralsunders thundered back. His most furious assaults were met by them with a desperate valor which in time left his ranks twelve thousand men short. In the end, to his unutterable chagrin, he was forced to raise the siege and march away, leaving the valiant burghers lords of their homes.

The war now seemingly came to its conclusion. The King of Denmark asked for peace, which the emperor granted, and terms were signed at Luebeck on May 12, 1629. The contest was, for the time being, at an end, for there was no longer any one to oppose the emperor. For twelve years it had continued, its ravages turning rich provinces into deserts, and making beggars and fugitives of wealthy citizens. The opposition of the Protestants was at an end, and there were but two disturbing elements of the seemingly pacific situation.

One of these was the purpose which the Catholic party soon showed to suppress Protestantism and bring what they considered the heretical provinces again under the dominion of the pope. The other was the army of Wallenstein, whose intolerable tyranny over friends and foes alike had now passed the bounds of endurance. From all sides complaints reached the emperor’s ears, charges of pillage, burnings, outrages, and shameful oppressions of every sort inflicted by the imperial troops upon the

inhabitants of the land. So many were the complaints that it was impossible to disregard them. The whole body of princes—every one of whom cordially hated Wallenstein—joined in the outcry, and in the end Ferdinand, with some hesitation, yielded to their wishes, and bade the general to disband his forces.

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Would he obey? That was next to be seen. The mighty chief was in a position to defy princes and emperor if he chose. The plundering bands who followed him were his own, not the emperor's soldiers; they knew but one master and were ready to obey his slightest word; had he given the order to advance upon Vienna and drive the emperor himself from his throne, there is no question but that they would have obeyed. As may be imagined, then, the response of Wallenstein was awaited in fear and anxiety. Should ambition counsel him to revolution, the very foundations of the empire might be shaken. What, then, was the delight of princes and people when word came that he had accepted the emperor's command without a word, and at once ordered the disbanding of his troops.

The stars were perhaps responsible for this. Astrology was his passion, and the planetary conjunctions seemed then to be in favor of submission. The man was superstitious, with all his clear-sighted ability, and permitted himself to be governed by influences which have long since lost their force upon men's minds.

"I do not complain against or reproach the emperor," he said to the imperial deputies; "the stars have already indicated to me that the spirit of the Elector of Bavaria holds sway in the imperial councils. But his majesty, in dismissing his troops, is rejecting the most precious jewel of his crown."

The event which we have described took place in September, 1630. Wallenstein, having paid off and dispersed his great army to the four winds, retired to his duchy of Friedland, and took up his residence at Gitschen, which had been much enlarged and beautified by his orders. Here he quietly waited and observed the progress of events.

He had much of interest to observe. The effort of Ferdinand and his advisers to drive Protestantism out of Germany had produced an effect which none of them anticipated. The war, which had seemed at an end, was quickly afoot again, with a new leader of the Protestant cause, new armies, and new fortunes. Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, had come to the rescue of his threatened fellow-believers, and before the army of Wallenstein had been dissolved the work of the peace-makers was set aside, and the horrors of war returned.

The dismissed general had now left Gitschen for Bohemia, where he dwelt upon his estates in a style of regal luxury, and in apparent disregard of the doings of emperors and kings. His palace in Prague was royal in its adornments, and while his enemies were congratulating themselves on having forced him into retirement, he had Italian artists at work painting on the walls of this palace his figure in the character of a conqueror, his triumphal car drawn by four milk-white steeds, while a star shone above his laurel-crowned head. Sixty pages, of noble birth, richly attired in blue and gold velvet, waited upon him, while some of his officers and chamberlains had served the emperor in the same rank. In his magnificent stables were three hundred horses of

choice breeds, while the daily gathering of distinguished men in his halls was not surpassed by the assemblies of the emperor himself.

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Yet in his demeanor there was nothing to show that he entertained a shadow of his former ambition. He affected the utmost ease and tranquillity of manner, and seemed as if fully content with his present state, and as if he cared no longer who fought the wars of the world.

But inwardly his ambition had in no sense declined. He beheld the progress of the Swedish conqueror with secret joy, and when he saw Tilly overthrown at Leipsic, and the fruits of twelve years of war wrested from the emperor at a single blow, his heart throbbed high with hope. His hour of revenge upon the emperor had come. Ferdinand must humiliate himself and come for aid to his dismissed general, for there was not another man in the kingdom capable of saving it from the triumphant foe.

He was right. The emperor's deputies came. He was requested, begged, to head again the imperial armies. He received the envoys coldly. Urgent persuasions were needed to induce him to raise an army of thirty thousand men. Even then he would not agree to take command of it. He would raise it and put it at the emperor's disposal.

He planted his standard; the men came; many of them his old followers. Plenty and plunder were promised, and thousands flocked to his tents. By March of 1632 the thirty thousand men were collected. Who should command them? There was but one, and this the emperor and Wallenstein alike knew. They would follow only the man to whose banner they had flocked.

The emperor begged him to take command. He consented, but only on conditions to which an emperor has rarely agreed. Wallenstein was to have exclusive control of the army, without interference of any kind, was to be given irresponsible control over all the provinces he might conquer, was to hold as security a portion of the Austrian patrimonial estates, and after the war might choose any of the hereditary estates of the empire for his seat of retirement. The emperor acceded, and Wallenstein, clothed with almost imperial power, marched to war. His subsequent fortunes the next narrative must declare.

THE END OF TWO GREAT SOLDIERS.

Two armies faced each other in central Bavaria, two armies on which the fate of Germany depended, those of Gustavus Adolphus, the right hand of Protestantism, and of Wallenstein, the hope of Catholic imperialism. Gustavus was strongly intrenched in the vicinity of Nuremberg, with an army of but sixteen thousand men. Wallenstein faced him with an army of sixty thousand, yet dared not attack him in his strong position. He occupied himself in efforts to make his camp as impregnable as that of his foeman, and the two great opponents lay waiting face to face, while famine slowly decimated their ranks.

It was an extraordinary position. Both sides depended for food on foraging, and between them they had swept the country clean. The peasantry fled in every direction from Wallenstein's pillaging troops, who destroyed all that they could not carry away. It had become a question with the two armies which could starve the longest, and for three months they lay encamped, each waiting until famine should drive the other out. Surely such a situation had never before been known.

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What had preceded this event? A few words will tell. Ferdinand the emperor had, with the aid of Tilly and Wallenstein, laid all Germany prostrate at his feet. Ferdinand the zealot had, by this effort to impose Catholicism on the Protestant states, speedily undone the work of his generals, and set the war on foot again. Gustavus Adolphus, the hero of Sweden, had come to the aid of the oppressed Protestants of Germany, borne down all before him, and quickly won back northern Germany from the oppressor's hands.

And now the cruelty of that savage war reached its culminating point. When Germany submitted to the emperor, one city did not submit. Magdeburg still held out. All efforts to subdue it proved fruitless, and it continued free and defiant when all the remainder of Germany lay under the emperor's control.

It was to pay dearly for the courage of its citizens. When the war broke out again, Magdeburg was besieged by Tilly with his whole force. After a most valiant defence it was taken by storm, and a scene of massacre and ruin followed without a parallel in modern wars. When it ended, Magdeburg was no more. Of its buildings all were gone, except the cathedral and one hundred and thirty-seven houses. Of its inhabitants all had perished, except some four thousand who had taken refuge in the cathedral. Man, woman, and child, the sword had slain them all, Tilly being in considerable measure responsible for the massacre, for he was dilatory in ordering its cessation. When at length he did act there was little to save. All Europe thrilled with horror at the dreadful news, and from that day forward fortune fled from the banners of Count Tilly.

On September 7, 1631, the armies of Gustavus and Tilly met at Leipsic, and a terrible battle ensued, in which the imperialists were completely defeated and all the fruits of their former victories torn from their hands. In the following year Tilly had his thigh shattered by a cannon-ball at the battle of the Lech, and died in excruciating agonies.

Such were the preludes to the scene we have described. The Lutheran princes everywhere joined the victorious Gustavus; Austria itself was threatened by his irresistible arms; and the emperor, in despair, called Wallenstein again to the command, yielding to the most extreme demands of this imperious chief.

The next scene was that we have described, in which the armies of Gustavus and Wallenstein lay face to face at Nuremberg, each waiting until starvation should force the other to fight or to retreat.

Gustavus had sent for reinforcements, and his army steadily grew. That of Wallenstein dwindled away under the assaults of famine and pestilence. A large convoy of provisions intended for Wallenstein was seized by the Swedes. Soon afterwards Gustavus was so strongly reinforced that his army grew to seventy thousand men. At his back lay Nuremberg, his faithful ally, ready to aid him with thirty thousand fighting

men besides. As his force grew that of Wallenstein shrank, until by the end of the siege pestilence and want had reduced his army to twenty-four thousand men.

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The Swedes were the first to yield in this game of starvation. As their numbers grew their wants increased, and at length, furious with famine, they made a desperate assault upon the imperial camp. They were driven back, with heavy loss. Two weeks more Gustavus waited, and then, despairing of drawing his opponent from his works, he broke camp and marched with sounding trumpets past his adversary's camp, who quietly let him go. The Swedes had lost twenty thousand men, and Nuremberg ten thousand of her inhabitants, during this period of hunger and slaughter.

This was in September, 1632. In November of the same year the two armies met again, on the plain of Luetzen, in Saxony, not far from the scene of Tilly's defeat, a year before. Wallenstein, on the retreat of Gustavus, had set fire to his own encampment and marched away, burning the villages around Nuremberg and wasting the country as he advanced, with Saxony as his goal. Gustavus, who had at first marched southward into the Catholic states, hastened to the relief of his allies. On the 15th of November the two great opponents came once more face to face, prepared to stake the cause of religious freedom in Germany on the issue of battle.

Early in the morning of the 16th Gustavus marshalled his forces, determined that that day should settle the question of victory or defeat. Wallenstein had weakened his ranks by sending Count Pappenheim south on siege duty, and the Swedish king, without waiting for reinforcements, decided on an instant attack.

Unluckily for him the morning dawned in fog. The entire plain lay shrouded. It was not until after eleven o'clock that the mist rose and the sun shone on the plain. During this interval Count Pappenheim, for whom Wallenstein had sent in haste the day before, was speeding north by forced marches, and through the chance of the fog was enabled to reach the field while the battle was at its height.

The troops were drawn up in battle array, the Swedes singing to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets Luther's stirring hymn, and an ode composed by the king himself: "Fear not, thou little flock." They were strongly contrasted with the army of their foe, being distinguished by the absence of armor, light colored (chiefly blue) uniforms, quickness of motion, exactness of discipline, and the lightness of their artillery. The imperialists, on the contrary, wore old-fashioned, close-fitting uniforms, mostly yellow in color, cuirasses, thigh-pieces, and helmets, and were marked by slow movements, absence of discipline, and the heaviness and unmanageable character of their artillery. The battle was to be, to some extent, a test of excellence between the new and the old ideas in war.

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At length the fog rose and the sun broke out, and both sides made ready for the struggle. Wallenstein, though suffering from a severe attack of his persistent enemy, the gout, mounted his horse and prepared his troops for the assault. His infantry were drawn up in squares, with the cavalry on their flanks, in front a ditch defended by artillery. His purpose was defensive, that of Gustavus offensive. The Swedish king mounted in his turn, placed himself at the head of his right wing, and, brandishing his sword, exclaimed, “Now, onward! May our God direct us! Lord! Lord! help me this day to fight for the glory of Thy name!” Then, throwing aside his cuirass, which annoyed him on account of a slight wound he had recently received, he cried, “God is my shield!” and led his men in a furious charge upon the cannon-guarded ditch.

The guns belched forth their deadly thunders, many fell, but the remainder broke irresistibly over the defences and seized the battery, driving the imperialists back in disorder. The cavalry, which had charged the black cuirassiers of Wallenstein, was less successful. They were repulsed, and the cuirassiers fiercely charged the Swedish infantry in flank, driving it back beyond the trenches.

This repulse brought on the great disaster of the day. Gustavus, seeing his infantry driven back, hastened to their aid with a troop of horse, and through the disorder of the field became separated from his men, only a few of whom accompanied him, among them Francis, Duke of Saxe-Lauenburg. His short-sightedness, or the foggy condition of the atmosphere, unluckily brought him too near a party of the black cuirassiers, and in an instant a shot struck him, breaking his left arm.

“I am wounded; take me off the field,” he said to the Duke of Lauenburg, and turned his horse to retire from the perilous vicinity.

As he did so a second ball struck him in the back. “My God! My God!” he exclaimed, falling from the saddle, while his horse, which had been wounded in the neck, dashed away, dragging the king, whose foot was entangled in the stirrup, for some distance.

The duke fled, but Luchau, the master of the royal horse, shot the officer who had wounded the king. The cuirassiers advanced, while Leubelfing, the king’s page, a boy of eighteen, who had alone remained with him, was endeavoring to raise him up.

“Who is he?” they asked.

The boy refused to tell, and was shot and mortally wounded.

“I am the King of Sweden!” Gustavus is said to have exclaimed to his foes, who had surrounded and were stripping him.

On hearing this they sought to carry him off, but a charge of the Swedish cavalry at that moment drove them from their prey. As they retired they discharged their weapons at

the helpless king, one of the cuirassiers shooting him through the head as he rushed past his prostrate form.

The sight of the king's charger, covered with blood, and galloping with empty saddle past their ranks, told the Swedes the story of the disastrous event. The news spread rapidly from rank to rank, carrying alarm wherever it came. Some of the generals wished to retreat, but Duke Bernhard of Weimar put himself at the head of a regiment, ran its colonel through for refusing to obey him, and called on them to follow him to revenge their king.

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His ardent appeal stirred the troops to new enthusiasm. Regardless of a shot that carried away his hat, Bernhard charged at their head, broke over the trenches and into the battery, retook the guns, and drove the imperial troops back in confusion, regaining all the successes of the first assault.

The day seemed won. It would have been but for the fresh forces of Pappenheim, who had some time before reached the field, only to fall before the bullets of the foe. His men took an active part in the fray, and swept backward the tide of war. The Swedes were again driven from the battery and across the ditch, with heavy loss, and the imperialists regained the pivotal point of the obstinate struggle.

But now the reserve corps of the Swedes, led by Kniphausen, came into action, and once more the state of the battle was reversed. They charged across the ditch with such irresistible force that the position was for the third time taken, and the imperialists again driven back. This ended the desperate contest. Wallenstein ordered the retreat to be sounded. The dead Gustavus had won the victory.

A thick fog came on as night fell and prevented pursuit, even if the weariness of the Swedes would have allowed it. They held the field, while Wallenstein hastened away, his direction of retreat being towards Bohemia. The Swedes had won and lost, for the death of Gustavus was equivalent to a defeat, and the emperor, with unseemly rejoicing, ordered a Te Deum to be sung in all his cities.

On the following day the Swedes sought for the body of their king. They found it by a great stone, which is still known as the Swedish stone. It had been so trampled by the hoofs of charging horses, and was so covered with blood from its many wounds, that it was difficult to recognize. The collar, saturated with blood, which had fallen into the hands of the cuirassiers, was taken to Vienna and presented to the emperor, who is said to have shed tears on seeing it. The corpse was laid in state before the Swedish army, and was finally removed to Stockholm, where it was interred.

Thus perished one of the great souls of Europe, a man stirred deeply by ambition, full of hopes greater than he himself acknowledged, a military hero of the first rank, and one disposed to prosecute war with a humanity far in advance of his age. He severely repressed all excesses of his soldiery, was solicitous for the security of citizens and peasantry, and strictly forbade any revengeful reprisals on Catholic cities for the frightful work done by his opponents upon the Protestants. Seldom has a conqueror shown such magnanimity and nobility of sentiment, and his untimely death had much to do with exposing Germany to the later desolation of that most frightful of religious wars.

His defeated foe, Wallenstein, was not long to survive him. After his defeat he acted in a manner that gave rise to suspicions that he intended to play false to the emperor. He executed many of his officers and soldiers in revenge for their cowardice, as he termed

it, recruited his ranks up to their former standard, but remained inactive, while Bernhard of Weimar was leading the Swedes to new successes.

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His actions were so problematical, indeed, that suspicion of his motives grew more decided, and at length a secret conspiracy was raised against him with the connivance of the emperor. Wallenstein, as if fearful of an attempt to rob him of his power, had his superior officers assembled at a banquet given at Pilsen, in January, 1634. A fierce attack of gout prevented him from presiding, but his firm adherents, Field-Marshals Illo and Terzka, took his place, and all the officers signed a compact to adhere faithfully to the duke in life and death as long as he should remain in the emperor's service. Some signed it who afterwards proved false to him, among them Field-Marshal Piccolomini, who afterwards betrayed him.

Just what designs that dark and much revolving man contemplated it is not easy to tell. It may have been treachery to the emperor, but he was not the man to freely reveal his secrets. The one person he trusted was Piccolomini, whose star seemed in favorable conjunction with his own. To him he made known some of his projected movements, only to find in the end that his trusted confidant had revealed them all to the emperor.

The plot against Wallenstein was now put into effect, the emperor ordering his deposition from his command, and appointing General Gablas to replace him, while a general amnesty for all his officers was announced. Wallenstein was quickly taught how little he could trust his troops and officers. Many of his generals fell from him at once. A few regiments only remained faithful, and even in their ranks traitors lurked. With but a thousand men to follow him he proceeded to Eger, and from there asked aid of Bernhard of Weimar, as if he purposed to join with those against whom he had so long fought. Bernhard received the message with deep astonishment, and exclaimed, moved by his belief that Wallenstein was in league with the devil,—

"He who does not trust in God can never be trusted by man!"

The great soldier of fortune was near his end. The stars were powerless to save him. It was not enough to deprive him of his command, his enemies did not deem it safe to let him live. One army gone, his wealth and his fame might soon bring him another, made up of those mercenary soldiers of all nations, and of all or no creeds, who would follow Satan if he promised them plunder. His death had been resolved upon, and the agent chosen for its execution was Colonel Butler, one of the officers who had accompanied him to Eger.

It was late in February, 1634. On the night fixed for the murder, Wallenstein's faithful friends, Illo, Terzka, Kinsky, and Captain Neumann were at a banquet in the castle of Eger. The agents of death were Colonel Butler, an Irish officer named Lesley, and a Scotchman named Gordon, while the soldiers employed were a number of dragoons, chiefly Irish.

In the midst of the dinner the doors of the banqueting hall were burst open, and the assassins rushed upon their victims, killing them as they sat, with the exception of Terzka, who killed two of his assailants before he was despatched.

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From this scene of murder the assassins rushed to the quarters of Wallenstein. It was midnight and he had gone to bed. He sprang up as his door was burst open, and Captain Devereux, one of the party, rushed with drawn sword into the room.

“Are you the villain who would sell the army to the enemy and tear the crown from the emperor’s head?” he shouted.

Wallenstein’s only answer was to open his arms and receive the blow aimed at his breast. He died without a word. Thus, with a brief interval between, had fallen military genius and burning ambition in two forms,—that of the heroic Swede and that of the ruthless Bohemian.

THE SIEGE OF VIENNA.

Once more the Grand Turk was afoot. Straight on Vienna he had marched, with an army of more than two hundred thousand men. At length he had reached the goal for which he had so often aimed, the Austrian capital, while all western Europe was threatened by his arms. The grand vizier, Kara Mustapha, headed the army, which had marched straight through Hungary without wasting time in petty sieges, and hastened towards the imperial city with scarce a barrier in its path.

Consternation filled the Viennese as the vast army of the Turks rolled steadily nearer and nearer, pillaging the country as it came, and moving onward as irresistibly and almost as destructively as a lava flow. The emperor and his court fled in terror. Many of the wealthy inhabitants followed, bearing with them such treasures as they could convey. The land lay helpless under the shadow of terror which the coming host threw far before its columns.

But pillage takes time. The Turks, through the greatness of their numbers, moved slowly. Some time was left for action. The inhabitants of the city, taking courage, armed for defence. The Duke of Lorraine, whose small army had not ventured to face the foe, left twelve thousand men in the city, and drew back with the remainder to wait for reinforcements. Count Ruediger of Stahrenberg was left in command, and made all haste to put the imperilled city in a condition of defence.

[Illustration: THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE IN VIENNA.]

On came the Turks, the smoke of burning villages the signal of their approach. On the 14th of June, 1683, their mighty army appeared before the walls, and a city of tents was built that covered a space of six leagues in extent.

Their camp was arranged in the form of a crescent, enclosing within its boundaries a promiscuous mass of soldiers and camp-followers, camels, and baggage-wagons, which seemed to extend as far as the eye could reach. In the centre was the gorgeous

tent of the vizier, made of green silk, and splendid with its embroidery of gold, silver, and precious stones, while inside it was kept the holy standard of the prophet. Marvellous stories are told of the fountains, baths, gardens, and other appliances of Oriental luxury with which the vizier surrounded himself in this magnificent tent.

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Two days after the arrival of the Turkish host the trenches were opened, the cannon placed, and the siege of Vienna began. For more than two centuries the conquerors of Constantinople had kept their eyes fixed on this city as a glorious prize. Now they had reached it, and the thunder of their cannon around its walls was full of threat for the West. Vienna once theirs, it was not easy to say where their career of conquest would be stayed.

Fortunately, Count Ruediger was an able and vigilant soldier, and defended the city with a skill and obstinacy that baffled every effort of his foes. The Turks, determined on victory, thundered upon the walls till they were in many parts reduced to heaps of ruins. With incessant labor they undermined them, blew up the strongest bastions, and laid their plans to rush into the devoted city, from which they hoped to gain a glorious booty. But active as they were the besieged were no less so. The damage done by day was repaired by night, and still Vienna turned a heroic face to its thronging enemies.

Furious assaults were made, multitudes of the Turks rushing with savage cries to the breaches, only to be hurled back by the obstinate valor of the besieged. Every foot of ground was fiercely contested, the struggle at each point being desperate and determined. It was particularly so around the Loebel bastion, where scarcely an inch of ground was left unstained by the blood of the struggling foes.

Count Ruediger, although severely wounded, did not let his hurt reduce his vigilance. Daily he had himself carried round the circle of the works, directing and cheering his men. Bishop Kolonitsch attended the wounded, and with such active and useful zeal that the grand vizier sent him a threat that he would have his head for his meddling. Despite this fulmination of fury, the worthy bishop continued to use his threatened head in the service of mercy and sympathy.

But the numbers of the garrison grew rapidly less, and their incessant duty wore them out with fatigue. The commandant was forced to threaten death to any sentinel found asleep upon his post. A fire broke out which was only suppressed with the greatest exertion. Famine also began to invade the city, and the condition of the besieged grew daily more desperate. Their only hope lay in relief from without, and this did not come.

Two months passed slowly by. The Turks had made a desert of the surrounding country, and held many thousands of its inhabitants as prisoners in their camp. Step by step they gained upon the defenders. By the end of August they possessed the moat around the city walls. On the 4th of September a mine was sprung under the Burg bastion, with such force that it shook half the city like an earthquake. The bastion was rent and shattered for a width of more than thirty feet, portions of its walls being hurled far and wide.

Into the great breach made the assailants poured in an eager multitude. But the defenders were equally alert, and drove them back with loss. On the following day they

charged again, and were again repulsed by the brave Viennese, the ruined bastion becoming a very gulf of death.

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The Turks, finding their efforts useless, resumed the work of mining, directing their efforts against the same bastion. On the 10th of September the new mine was sprung, and this time with such effect that a breach was made through which a whole Turkish battalion was able to force its way.

This city now was in the last extremity of danger; unless immediate relief came all would soon be lost. The garrison had been much reduced by sickness and wounds, while those remaining were so completely exhausted as to be almost incapable of defence. Ruediger had sent courier after courier to the Duke of Lorraine in vain. In vain the lookouts swept the surrounding country with their eyes in search of some trace of coming aid. All seemed at an end. During the night a circle of rockets was fired from the tower of St. Stephen's as a signal of distress. This done the wretched Viennese waited for the coming day, almost hopeless of repelling the hosts which threatened to engulf them. At the utmost a few days must end the siege. A single day might do it.

That dreadful night of suspense passed away. With the dawn the wearied garrison was alert, prepared to strike a last blow for safety and defence, and to guard the yawning breach unto death. They waited with the courage of despair for an assault which did not come. Hurried and excited movements were visible in the enemy's camp. Could succor be at hand? Yes, from the summit of the Kahlen Hill came the distant report of three cannon, a signal that filled the souls of the garrison with joy. Quickly afterwards the lookouts discerned the glitter of weapons and the waving of Christian banners on the hill. The rescuers were at hand, and barely in time to save the city from its almost triumphant foes.

During the siege the Christian people outside had not been idle. Bavaria, Saxony, and the lesser provinces of the empire mustered their forces in all haste, and sent them to the reinforcement of Charles of Lorraine. To their aid came Sobieski, the chivalrous King of Poland, with eighteen thousand picked men at his back. He himself was looked upon as a more valuable reinforcement than his whole army. He had already distinguished himself against the Turks, who feared and hated him, while all Europe looked to him as its savior from the infidel foe.

There were in all about seventy-seven thousand men in the army whose vanguard ascended the Kahlen Hill on that critical 11th of September, and announced its coming to the beleaguered citizens by its three signal shots. The Turks, too confident in their strength, had thoughtlessly failed to occupy the heights, and by this carelessness gave their foes a position of vantage. In truth, the vizier, proud in his numbers, viewed the coming foe with disdain, and continued to pour a shower of bombs and balls upon the city while despatching what he deemed would be a sufficient force to repel the enemy.

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On the morning of September 12, Sobieski led his troops down the hill to encounter the dense masses of the Moslems in the plain below. This celebrated chief headed his men with his head partly shaved, in the Polish fashion, and plainly dressed, though he was attended by a brilliant retinue. In front went an attendant bearing the king's arms emblazoned. Beside him was another who carried a plume on the point of his lance. On his left rode his son James, on his right Charles of Lorraine. Before the battle he knighted his son and made a stirring address to his troops, in which he told them that they fought not for Vienna alone, but for all Christendom; not for an earthly sovereign, but for the King of kings.

Early in the day the left wing of the army had attacked and carried the village of Nussdorf, on the Danube, driving out its Turkish defenders after an obstinate resistance. It was about mid-day when the King of Poland led the right wing into the plain against the dense battalions of Turkish horsemen which there awaited his assault.

The ringing shouts of his men told the enemy that it was the dreaded Sobieski whom they had to meet, their triumphant foe on many a well-fought field. At the head of his cavalry he dashed upon their crowded ranks with such impetuosity as to penetrate to their very centre, carrying before him confusion and dismay. So daring was his assault that he soon found himself in imminent danger, having ridden considerably in advance of his men. Only a few companions were with him, while around him crowded the dense columns of the foe. In a few minutes more he would have been overpowered and destroyed, had not the German cavalry perceived his peril and come at full gallop to his rescue, scattering with the vigor of their charge the turbaned assailants, and snatching him from the very hands of death.

So sudden and fierce was the assault, so poorly led the Turkish horsemen, and so alarming to them the war-cry of Sobieski's men, that in a short time they were completely overthrown, and were soon in flight in all directions. This, however, was but a partial success. The main body of the Turkish army had taken no part. Their immense camp, with its thousands of tents, maintained its position, and the batteries continued to bombard the city as if in disdain of the paltry efforts of their foes.

Yet it seems to have been rather rage and alarm than disdain that animated the vizier. He is said to have, in a paroxysm of fury, turned the scimitars of his followers upon the prisoners in his camp, slaughtering thirty thousand of these unfortunates, while bidding his cannoneers to keep up their assault upon the city.

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These evidences of indecision and alarm in their leader filled the Turks with dread. They saw their cavalry battalions flying in confusion, heard the triumphant trumpets of their foes, learned that the dreaded Polish king was at the head of the irresistible charging columns, and yet beheld their commander pressing the siege as if no foe were in the field. It was evident that the vizier had lost his head through fright. A sudden terror filled their souls. They broke and fled. While Sobieski and the other leaders were in council to decide whether the battle should be continued that evening or left till the next morning, word was brought them that the enemy was in full flight, running away in every direction.

They hastened out. The tidings proved true. A panic had seized the Turks, and, abandoning tents, cannon, baggage, everything, they were flying in wild haste from the beleaguered walls. The alarm quickly spread through their ranks. Those who had been firing on the city left their guns and joined in the flight. From rank to rank, from division to division, it extended, until the whole army had decamped and was hastening in panic terror over the plain, hotly pursued by the death-dealing columns of the Christian cavalry, and thinking only of Constantinople and safety.

The booty found in the camp was immense. The tent of the grand vizier alone was valued at nearly half a million dollars, and the whole spoil was estimated as worth fifteen million dollars. The king wrote to his wife as follows:

“The whole of the enemy’s camp, together with their artillery and an incalculable amount of property, has fallen into our hands. The camels and mules, together with the captive Turks, are driven away in herds, while I myself am become the heir of the grand vizier. The banner which was usually borne before him, together with the standard of Mohammed, with which the sultan had honored him in this campaign, and the tents, wagons, and baggage, are all fallen to my share; even some of the quivers captured among the rest are alone worth several thousand dollars. It would take too long to describe all the other objects of luxury found in his tents, as, for instance, his baths, fountains, gardens, and a variety of rare animals. This morning I was in the city, and found that it could hardly have held out more than five days. Never before did the eye of man see a work of equal magnitude despatched with a vigor like that with which they blew up, and shattered to pieces, huge masses of stone and rocks.”

Sobieski, on entering Vienna, was greeted with the warmest gratitude and enthusiasm by crowds of people, who looked upon him as their deliverer. The governor, Count Ruediger, grasped his hand with affection, the populace followed him in his every movement, while cries of “Long live the king!” everywhere resounded. Never had been a more signal delivery, and the citizens were beside themselves with joy.

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In this siege the Turks had lost forty-eight thousand men. Twenty thousand more fell on the day of battle, and an equal number during the retreat. It is said that in the tent of the grand vizier were found letters from Louis XIV. containing the full plan of the siege, and to the many crimes of ambition of this monarch seems to be added that of bringing this frightful peril upon Europe for his own selfish ends. As for the unlucky vizier, he was put to death by strangling, by order of the angry sultan, on his reaching Belgrade. It is said that his head, found on the taking of Belgrade by Eugene, years afterwards, was sent to Bishop Kolonitsch, whose own head the vizier had threatened to take in revenge for his labors among the wounded of Vienna.

The war with the Turks continued, with some few intermissions, for fifteen years afterwards. It ended to the great advantage of the Christian armies. One after another the fortresses of Hungary were wrested from their hands, and in the year 1687 they were totally defeated at Mohacz by the Duke of Lorraine and Prince Eugene, and the whole of Hungary torn from their grasp.

In 1697 another great victory over them was won by Eugene, at Zenta, by which the power of the Turks was completely broken. Belgrade, which they had long held, fell into his hands, and a peace was signed which confirmed Austria in the possession of all Hungary. From that time forward the terror which the Turkish name had so long inspired vanished, and the siege of Vienna may be looked upon as the concluding act in the long array of invasions of Europe by the Mongolian hordes of Asia. It was to be followed by the gradual recovery, now almost consummated, of their European dominions from their hands.

THE YOUTH OF FREDERICK THE GREAT.

An extraordinarily rude, coarse, and fierce old despot was Frederick William, first King of Prussia, son of the great Elector and father of Frederick the Great. He hated France and the French language and culture, then so much in vogue in Europe; he despised learning and science; ostentation was to him a thing unknown; and he had but two passions, one being to possess the tallest soldiers in Europe, the other to have his own fierce will in all things on which he set his mind. About all that we can say in his favor is that he paid much attention to the promotion of education in his realm, many schools being opened and compulsory attendance enforced.

Of the fear with which he inspired many of his subjects, and the methods he took to overcome it, there is no better example than that told in relation to a Jew, whom the king saw as he was riding one day through Berlin. The poor Israelite was slinking away in dread, when the king rode up, seized him, and asked in harsh tones what ailed him.

“Sire, I was afraid of you,” said the trembling captive.

“Fear me! fear me, do you?” exclaimed the king in a rage, lashing his riding-whip across the man’s shoulders with every word. “You dog! I’ll teach you to love me!”

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[Illustration: STATUE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT, UNTER DEN LINDEN, BERLIN.]

It was in some such fashion that he sought to make his son love him, and with much the same result. In fact, he seemed to entertain a bitter dislike for the beautiful and delicate boy whom fortune had sent him as an heir, and treated him with such brutal severity that the unhappy child grew timid and fearful of his presence. This the harsh old despot ascribed to cowardice, and became more violent accordingly.

On one occasion when young Frederick entered his room, something having happened to excite his rage against him, he seized him by the hair, flung him violently to the floor, and caned him until he had exhausted the strength of his arm on the poor boy's body. His fury growing with the exercise of it, he now dragged the unresisting victim to the windows, seized the curtain cord, and twisted it tightly around his neck. Frederick had barely strength enough to grasp his father's hand and scream for help. The old brute would probably have strangled him had not a chamberlain rushed in and saved him from the madman's hands.

The boy, as he grew towards man's estate, developed tastes which added to his father's severity. The French language and literature which he hated were the youth's delight, and he took every opportunity to read the works of French authors, and particularly those of Voltaire, who was his favorite among writers. This predilection was not likely to overcome the fierce temper of the king, who discovered his pursuits and flogged him unmercifully, thinking to cane all love for such enervating literature, as he deemed it, out of the boy's mind. In this he failed. Germany in that day had little that deserved the name of literature, and the expanding intellect of the active-minded youth turned irresistibly towards the tabooed works of the French.

In truth, he needed some solace for his expanding tastes, for his father's house and habits were far from satisfactory to one with any refinement of nature. The palace of Frederick William was little more attractive than the houses of the humbler citizens of Berlin. The floors were carpetless, the rooms were furnished with common bare tables and wooden chairs, art was conspicuously absent, luxury wanting, comfort barely considered, even the table was very parsimoniously served.

The old king's favorite apartment in all his places of residence was his smoking-room, which was furnished with a deal table covered with green baize and surrounded by hard chairs. This was his audience-chamber, his hall of state, the room in which the affairs of the kingdom were decided in a cloud of smoke and amid the fumes of beer. Here sat generals in uniform, ministers of state wearing their orders, ambassadors and noble guests from foreign realms, all smoking short Dutch pipes and breathing the vapors of tobacco. Before each was placed a great mug of beer, and the beer-casks were kept freely on tap, for the old despot insisted that all should drink or smoke whether or not they liked beer and tobacco, and he was never more delighted than when he could

make a guest drunk or sicken him with smoke. For food, when they were in need of it, bread and cheese and similar viands might be had.

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A strange picture of palatial grandeur this. Fortune had missed Frederick William's true vocation in not making him an inn-keeper in a German village instead of a king. Around this smoke-shrouded table the most important affairs of state were discussed. Around it the rudest practical jokes were perpetrated. Gundling, a beer-bibbing author, whom the king made at once his historian and his butt, was the principal sufferer from these frolics, which displayed abundantly that absence of wit and presence of brutality which is the characteristic of the practical joke. As if in scorn of rank and official dignity, Frederick gave this sot and fool the title of baron and created him chancellor and chamberlain of the palace, forcing him always to wear an absurdly gorgeous gala dress, while to show his disdain of learned pursuits he made him president of his Academy of Sciences, an institution which, in its condition at that time, was suited to the presidency of a Gundling.

For these dignities he made the poor butt suffer. On one occasion the kingly joker had a brace of bear cubs laid in Gundling's bed, and the drunken historian tossed in between them, with little heed of the danger to which he exposed the poor victim of his sport. On another occasion, when Gundling grew sullen and refused to leave his room, the king and his boon companions besieged him with rockets and crackers, which they flung in at the open window. A third and more elaborate trick was the following. The king had the door of Gundling's room walled up, so that the drunken dupe wandered the palace halls the whole night long, vainly seeking his vanished door, getting into wrong rooms, disturbing sleepers to ask whither his room had flown, and making the palace almost as uncomfortable for its other inmates as for himself. He ended his journey in the bear's den, where he got a severe hug for his pains.

Such were the ideas of royal dignity, of art, science, and learning, and of wit and humor, entertained by the first King of Prussia, the coarse-mannered and brutal-minded progenitor of one of the greatest of modern monarchs. His ideas of military power were no wiser or more elevated. His whole soul was set on having a play army, a brigade of tall recruits, whose only merit lay in their inches above the ordinary height of humanity. Much of the revenues of the kingdom were spent upon these giants, whom he had brought from all parts of Europe, by strategy and force where cash and persuasion did not avail. His agents were everywhere on the lookout for men beyond the usual stature, and on more than one occasion blood was shed in the effort to kidnap recruits, while some of his crimps were arrested and executed. More than once Prussia was threatened with war for the practices of its king, yet so eager was he to add to the number of his giants that he let no such difficulties stand in his way.

His tall recruits were handsomely paid and loaded with favors. To one Irishman of extraordinary stature he paid one thousand pounds, while the expense of watching and guarding him while bringing him from Ireland was two hundred pounds more. It is said that in all twelve million dollars left the country in payment for these showy and costly giants.

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By his various processes of force, fraud, and stratagem he collected three battalions of tall show soldiers, comprising at one time several thousand men. Not content with the unaided work of nature in providing giants, he attempted to raise a gigantic race in his own dominions, marrying his grenadiers to the tallest women he could find. There is nothing to show that the result of his efforts was successful.

The king's giants found life by no means a burden. They enjoyed the highest consideration in Berlin, were loaded with favors, and presented with houses, lands, and other evidences of royal grace, while their only duties were show drills and ostentatious parades. They were too costly and precious to expose to the dangers of actual war. When Frederick William's son came to the throne the military career of the giants suddenly ended. They were disbanded, pensioned off, or sent to invalid institutions, with secret instructions to the officers that if any of them tried to run away no hinderance should be placed in their path to freedom.

It is, however, with Frederick William's treatment of his son that we are principally concerned. As the boy grew older his predilection for the culture and literature of France increased, and under the influence of his favorite associates, two young men named Katte and Keith, a degree of licentiousness was developed in his habits. To please his father he accepted a position in the army, but took every opportunity to throw aside the hated uniform, dress in luxurious garments, solace himself with the flute, bury himself among his books, and enjoy the society of the women he admired and the friends he loved. He was frequently forced to attend the king's smoking-parties, where he seems to have avoided smoking and drinking as much as possible, escaping from the scene before it degenerated into an orgy of excess, in which it was apt to terminate.

These tastes and tendencies were not calculated to increase the love of the brutal old monarch for his son, and the life of the boy became harder to bear as he grew older. His sister Wilhelmina was equally detested by the harsh old king, who treated them both with shameful brutality, knocking them down and using his cane upon them on the slightest provocation, confining them and sending them food unfit to eat, omitting to serve them at table, and using disgusting means to render their food unpalatable.

"The king almost starved my brother and me," says the princess. "He performed the office of carver, and helped everybody excepting us two, and when there happened to be something left in a dish, he would spit upon it to prevent us from eating it. On the other hand, I was treated with abundance of abuse and invectives, being called all day long by all sorts of names, no matter who was present. The king's anger was sometimes so violent that he drove my brother and me away, and forbade us to appear in his presence except at meal-times."

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This represented the state of affairs when they were almost grown up, and is a remarkable picture of court habits and manners in Germany in the early part of the eighteenth century. The scene we have already described, in which the king attempted to strangle his son with the curtain cord, occurred when Frederick was in his nineteenth year, and was one of the acts which gave rise to his resolution to run away, the source of so many sorrows.

Poor Frederick's lot had become too hard to bear. He was bent on flight. His mother was the daughter of George I. of England, and he hoped to find at the English court the happiness that failed him at home. He informed his sister of his purpose, saying that he intended to put it into effect during a journey which his father was about to make, and in which opportunities for flight would arise. Katte, he said, was in his interest; Keith would join him; he had made with them all the arrangements for his flight. His sister endeavored to dissuade him, but in vain. His father's continued brutality, and particularly his use of the cane, had made the poor boy desperate. He wrote to Lieutenant Katte,—

"I am off, my dear Katte. I have taken such precautions that I have nothing to fear. I shall pass through Leipsic, where I shall assume the name of Marquis d'Ambreville. I have already sent word to Keith, who will proceed direct to England. Lose no time, for I calculate on finding you at Leipsic. Adieu, be of good cheer."

The king's journey took place. Frederick accompanied him, his mind full of his projected flight. The king added to his resolution by ill-treatment during the journey, and taunted him as he had often done before, saying,—

"If my father had treated me so, I would soon have run away; but you have no heart; you are a coward."

This added to the prince's resolution. He wrote to Katte at Berlin, repeating to him his plans. But now the chapter of accidents, which have spoiled so many well-laid plots, began. In sending this letter he directed it "*via* Nuernberg," but in his haste or agitation forgot to insert Berlin. By ill luck there was a cousin of Katte's, of the same name, at Erlangen, some twelve miles off. The letter was delivered to and read by him. He saw the importance of its contents, and, moved by an impulse of loyalty, sent it by express to the king at Frankfort.

Another accident came from Frederick's friend Keith being appointed lieutenant, his place as page to the prince being taken by his brother, who was as stupid as the elder Keith was acute. The royal party had halted for the night at a village named Steinfurth. This the prince determined to make the scene of his escape, and bade his page to call him at four in the morning, and to have horses ready, as he proposed to make an early morning call upon some pretty girls at a neighboring hamlet. He deemed the boy too stupid to trust with the truth.

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Young Keith managed to spoil all. Instead of waking the prince, he called his valet, who was really a spy of the king's, and who, suspecting something to be amiss, pretended to fall asleep again, while heedfully watching. Frederick soon after awoke, put on a coat of French cut instead of his uniform, and went out. The valet immediately roused several officers of the king's suite, and told them his suspicions. Much disturbed, they hurried after the prince.

After searching through the village, they found him at the horse-market leaning against a cart. His dress added to their suspicions, and they asked him respectfully what he was doing there. He answered sharply, angry at being discovered.

"For God's sake, change your coat!" exclaimed Colonel Rochow. "The king is awake, and will start in half an hour. What would be the consequence if he were to see you in this dress?"

"I promise you that I will be ready before the king," said Frederick. "I only mean to take a little turn."

While they were arguing, the page arrived with the horses. The prince seized the bridle of one of them, and would have leaped upon it but for the interference of those around him, who forced him to return to the barn in which the royal party had found its only accommodation for that night. Here he was obliged to put on his uniform, and to restrain his anger.

During the day the valet and others informed the king of what had occurred. He said nothing, as there were no proofs of the prince's purpose. That night they reached Frankfort. Here the king received, the next morning, the letter sent him by Katte's cousin. He showed it to two of his officers, and bade them on peril of their heads to keep a close watch on the prince, and to take him immediately to the yacht on which the party proposed to travel the next day by water to Wesel.

The king embarked the next morning, and as soon as he saw the prince his smothered rage burst into fury. He grasped him violently by the collar, tore his hair out by the roots, and struck him in the face with the knob of his stick till the blood ran. Only by the interference of the two officers was the unhappy youth saved from more extreme violence.

His sword was taken from him, his effects were seized by the king, and his papers burned by his valet before his face,—in which he did all concerned "an important service."

At the request of his keepers the prince was taken to another yacht. On reaching the bridge of boats at the entrance to Wesel, he begged permission to land there, so that he might not be known. His keepers acceded, but he was no sooner on land than he ran

off at full speed. He was stopped by a guard, whom the king had sent to meet him, and was conducted to the town-house. Not a word was said to the king about this attempt at flight.

The next day Frederick was brought before his father, who was in a raging passion.

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“Why did you try to run away?” he furiously asked.

“Because,” said Frederick, firmly, “you have not treated me like your son, but like a base slave.”

“You are an infamous deserter, and have no honor.”

“I have as much as you,” retorted the prince. “I have done no more than I have heard you say a hundred times that you would do if you were in my place.”

This answer so incensed the old tyrant that he drew his sword in fury from its scabbard, and would have run the boy through had not General Mosel hastily stepped between, and seized the king’s arm.

“If you must have blood, stab me,” he said; “my old carcass is not good for much; but spare your son.”

These words checked the king’s brutal fury. He ordered them to take the boy away, and listened with more composure to the general, who entreated him not to condemn the prince without a hearing, and not to commit the unpardonable crime of becoming his son’s executioner.

Events followed rapidly upon this discovery. Frederick contrived to despatch a line in pencil to Keith. “Save yourself,” he wrote; “all is discovered.” Keith at once fled, reached the Hague, where he was concealed in the house of Lord Chesterfield, the English ambassador, and when searched for there, succeeded in escaping to England in a fishing-boat. He was hung in effigy in Prussia, but became a major of cavalry in the service of Portugal.

Katte was less fortunate. He was warned in time to escape, and the marshal who was sent to arrest him purposely delayed, but he lost precious time in preparation, and was seized while mounting his horse.

His arrest filled the queen with terror. Numerous letters were in his possession which had been written by herself and her daughter to the prince royal. In these they had often spoken with great freedom of the king. It might be ruinous should these letters fall into his hands.

Some friend sent the portfolio supposed to contain them to the queen. It was locked, corded, and sealed. The trouble about the seal was overcome by an old valet, who had found in the palace garden one just like it. The portfolio was opened, and the queen’s fears found to be correct. It contained the letters, not less than fifteen hundred in all. They were all hastily thrown into the fire,—too hastily, for many of them were innocent of offence.

But it would not do to return an empty portfolio. The queen and her daughter immediately began to write letters to replace the burned ones, taking paper of each year's manufacture to prevent discovery. For three days they diligently composed and wrote, and in that period fabricated no less than six or seven hundred letters. These far from filled the portfolio, but the queen packed other things into it, and then locked and sealed it, so that no change in its appearance could be perceived. This done, it was restored to its place.

We must hasten over what followed. On the king's return his first greeting to his wife was, "Your good-for-nothing son is dead." He immediately demanded the portfolio, tore it open, and carried away the letters which had been so recently concocted. In a few minutes he returned, and on seeing his daughter broke out into a fury of rage, his eyes glaring, his mouth foaming.

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“Infamous wretch!” he shouted; “dare you appear in my presence? Go keep your scoundrel of a brother company.”

He seized her as he spoke and struck her several times violently in the face, one blow on the temple hurling her to the floor. Mad with rage, he would have trampled on her had not the ladies present got her away. The scene was a frightful one. The queen, believing her son dead, and completely unnerved, ran wildly around the room, shrieking with agony. The king’s face was so distorted with rage as to be frightful to look at. His younger children were around his knees, begging him with tears to spare their sister. Wilhelmina, her face bruised and swollen, was supported by one of the ladies of the court. Rarely had insane rage created a more distressing spectacle.

In the end the king acknowledged that Frederick was still alive, but vowed that he would have his head off as a deserter, and that Wilhelmina, his confederate, should be imprisoned for life. He left the room at length to question Katte, who was being brought before him, harshly exclaiming as he did so, “Now I shall have evidence to convict the scoundrel Fritz and that blackguard Wilhelmina. I shall find plenty of reasons to have their heads off.”

But we must hasten to the conclusion. Both the captives were tried by court-martial, on the dangerous charge of desertion from the army. The court which tried Frederick proved to be subservient to the king’s will. They pronounced sentence of death on the prince royal. Katte was sentenced to imprisonment for life, on the plea that his crime had been only meditated, not committed. The latter sentence did not please the despot. He changed it himself from life imprisonment to death, and with a refinement of cruelty ordered the execution to take place under the prince’s window, and within his sight.

On the 5th of November, 1730, Frederick, wearing a coarse prison dress, was conducted from his cell in the fortress of Cuestrin to a room on the lower floor, where the window-curtains, let down as he entered, were suddenly drawn up. He saw before him a scaffold hung with black, which he believed to be intended for himself, and gazed upon it with shuddering apprehension. When informed that it was intended for his friend, his grief and pain became even more acute. He passed the night in that room, and the next morning was conducted again to the window, beneath which he saw his condemned friend, accompanied by soldiers, an officer, and a minister of religion.

“Oh,” cried the prince, “how miserable it makes me to think that I am the cause of your death! Would to God I were in your place!”

“No,” replied Katte; “if I had a thousand lives, gladly would I lay them down for you.”

Frederick swooned as his friend moved on. In a few minutes afterwards Katte was dead. It was long before the sorrowing prince recovered from the shock of that cruel spectacle.

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Whether the king actually intended the execution of his son is questioned. As it was, earnest remonstrances were addressed to him from the Kings of Sweden and Poland, the Emperor of Germany, and other monarchs. He gradually recovered from the insanity of his rage, and, on humble appeals from his son, remitted his sentence, requiring him to take a solemn oath that he was converted from his infidel beliefs, that he begged a thousand pardons from his father for his crimes, and that he repented not having been always obedient to his father's will.

This done, Frederick was released from prison, but was kept under surveillance at Cuestrin till February, 1732, when he was permitted to return to Berlin. He had been there before on the occasion of his sister's marriage, in November, 1731, the poor girl gladly accepting marriage to a prince she had never seen as a means of escape from a king of whom she had seen too much. With this our story ends. Father and son were reconciled, and lived to all appearance as good friends until 1740, when the old despot died, and Frederick succeeded him as king.

VOLTAIRE AND FREDERICK THE GREAT.

Voltaire, who was an adept in the art of making France too hot to hold him, had gone to Prussia, as a place of rest for his perturbed spirit, and, in response to the repeated invitations of his ardent admirer, Frederick the Great. It was a blunder on both sides. If they had wished to continue friends, they should have kept apart. Frederick was autocratic in his ways and thoughts; Voltaire embodied the spirit of independence in thought and speech. The two men could no more meet without striking fire than flint and steel. Moreover, Voltaire was normally satirical, restless, inclined to vanity and jealousy, and that terrible pen of his could never be brought to respect persons and places. With a martinet like Frederick, the visit was sure to end in a quarrel, despite the admiration of the prince for the poet.

Frederick, though a German king, was French in his love for the Gallic literature, philosophy, and language. He cared little for German literature—there was little of it in his day worth caring for—and always wrote and spoke in French, while French wits and thinkers who could not live in safety in straitlaced Paris, gained the amplest scope for their views in his court. Voltaire found three such emigrants there, Maupertuis, La Mettrie, and D'Arnaud. He was received by them with enthusiasm, as the sovereign of their little court of free thought. Frederick had given him a pension and the post of chamberlain,—an office with very light duties,—and the expatriated poet set himself out to enjoy his new life with zest and animation.

"A hundred and fifty thousand victorious soldiers," he wrote to Paris, "no attorneys, opera, plays, philosophy, poetry, a hero who is a philosopher and a poet, grandeur and graces, grenadiers and muses, trumpets and violins, Plato's symposium, society and freedom! Who would believe it? It is all true, however."

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“It is Caesar, it is Marcus Aurelius, it is Julian, it is sometimes Abbe Chaulieu, with whom I sup,” he further wrote; “there is the charm of retirement, there is the freedom of the country, with all those little delights which the lord of a castle who is a king can procure for his very obedient humble servants and guests. My own duties are to do nothing. I enjoy my leisure. I give an hour a day to the King of Prussia to touch up a bit his works in prose and verse; I am his grammarian, not his chamberlain ... Never in any place in the world was there more freedom of speech touching the superstitions of men, and never were they treated with more banter and contempt. God is respected, but all they who have cajoled men in His name are treated unsparingly.”

It was, in short, an Eden for a free-thinker; but an Eden with its serpent, and this serpent was the envy, jealousy, and unrestrainable satiric spirit of Voltaire. There was soon trouble between him and his fellow-exiles. He managed to get Arnaud exiled from the country, and gradually a coolness arose between him and Maupertuis, whom Frederick had made president of the Berlin Academy. There were other quarrels and complications, and Voltaire grew disgusted with the occupation of what he slyly called “buck-washing” the king’s French verses,—poor affairs they were. Step by step he was making Berlin as hot as he had made Paris. The new Adam was growing restless in his new Paradise. He wrote to his niece,—

“So it is known by this time in Paris, my dear child, that we have played the ‘Mort de Caesar’ at Potsdam, that Prince Henry is a good actor, has no accent, and is very amiable, and that this is the place for pleasure? All this is true, but—The king’s supper parties are delightful; at them people talk reason, wit, science; freedom prevails thereat; he is the soul of it all; no ill-temper, no clouds, at any rate no storms; my life is free and well occupied,—but—Opera, plays, carousals, suppers at Sans Souci, military manoeuvres, concerts, studies, readings,—but—The city of Berlin, grand, better laid out than Paris; palaces, play-houses, affable queens, charming princesses, maids of honor beautiful and well-made, the mansion of Madame de Tyrconnel always full and sometimes too much so,—but—but—My dear child, the weather is beginning to settle down into a fine frost.”

Voltaire brought the frost. He got into a disreputable quarrel with a Jew, and meddled in other affairs, until something very like a quarrel arose between him and Frederick. The king wrote him a severe letter of reprimand. The poet apologized. But immediately afterwards his irrepressible spirit of mischief broke out in a new place. It was his ill-humor with Maupertuis which now led him astray. He wrote a pamphlet, full of wit and as full of bitterness, called “La diatribe du docteur Akakia,” so evidently satirizing Maupertuis that the king grew furious. It was printed anonymously, and circulated surreptitiously in Berlin, but a copy soon fell into Frederick’s hand, who knew at once that but one man in the kingdom was capable of such a production. He wrote so severely to Voltaire that the malicious satirist was frightened and gave up the whole edition of the pamphlet, which was burnt before his eyes in the king’s own closet, though Frederick could not help laughing at its wit.

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But Voltaire's daring was equal to a greater defiance than Frederick imagined. Despite the work of the flames, a copy of the diatribe found its way to Paris, was printed there, and copies of it made their way back to Prussia by mail. Everybody was reading it, everybody laughing, people fought for copies of the satire, which spread over Europe. The king, enraged by this treacherous disobedience, as he deemed it, retorted on Voltaire by having the pamphlet burned in the Place d'Armes.

This brought matters to a crisis. The next day Voltaire sent his commissions and orders back to Frederick; the next, Frederick returned them to him. He was bent on leaving Prussia at once, but wished to do it without a quarrel with the king.

"I sent the Solomon of the North," he wrote to Madame Denis, "for his present, the cap and bells he gave me, with which you reproached me so much. I wrote him a very respectful letter, for I asked him for leave to go. What do you think he did? He sent me his great factotum, Federshoff, who brought me back my toys; he wrote me a letter saying that he would rather have me to live with than Maupertuis. What is quite certain is that I would rather not live with either the one or the other."

In truth, Frederick could not bear to lose Voltaire. Vexed as he was with him, he was averse to giving up that charming conversation from which he had derived so much enjoyment. Voltaire wanted to get away; Frederick pressed him to stay. There was protestation, warmth, coolness, a gradual breaking of links, letters from France urging the poet to return, communications from Frederick wishing him to remain, and a growing attraction from Paris drawing its flown son back to that centre of the universe for a true Frenchman.

At length Frederick yielded; Voltaire might go. The poet approached him while reviewing his troops.

"Ah! Monsieur Voltaire," said the king, "so you really intend to go away?"

"Sir, urgent private affairs, and especially my health, leave me no alternative."

"Monsieur, I wish you a pleasant journey."

This was enough for Voltaire; in an hour he was in his carriage and on the road to Leipsic. He thought he was done for the rest of his life with the "exactions" and "tyrannies" of the King of Prussia. He was to experience some more of them before he left the land. Frederick bided his time.

It was on March 26, 1753, that Voltaire left Potsdam. It was two months afterwards before he reached Frankfort. He had tarried at Leipsic and at Gotha, engaged in the latter place on a dry chronicle asked for by the duchess, entitled "The Annals of the Empire." During this time also, in direct disregard of a promise he had made Frederick,

there appeared a supplement to “Doctor Akakia,” more offensive than the main text. It was followed by a virulent correspondence with Maupertuis. Voltaire was filling up the vials of wrath of the king.

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On May 31 he reached Frankfort. Here the blow fell. There occurred an incident which has become famous in literary history, and which, while it had some warrant on Frederick's side, tells very poorly for that patron of literature. No unlettered autocrat could have acted with less regard to the rights and proprieties of citizenship.

"Here is how this fine adventure came about," writes Voltaire. "There was at Frankfort one Freytag, who had been banished from Dresden and had become an agent for the King of Prussia....He notified me, on behalf of his Majesty, that I was not to leave Frankfort till I had restored the valuable effects I was carrying away from his Majesty.

"'Alack, sir, I am carrying away nothing from that country, if you please, not even the smallest regret. What, pray, are those jewels of the Brandenburg crown that you require?'

"'It be, sir,' replied Freytag, 'the work of *poeshy* of the king, my gracious master.'

"'Oh, I will give him back his prose and verse with all my heart,' replied I, 'though, after all, I have more than one right to the work. He made me a present of a beautiful copy printed at his expense. Unfortunately, the copy is at Leipsic with my other luggage.'

"Then Freytag proposed to me to remain at Frankfort until the treasure which was at Leipsic should have arrived; and he signed an order for it."

The volume which Frederick wanted he had doubtless good reason to demand, when it is considered that it was in the hands of a man who could be as malicious as Voltaire. It contained a burlesque and licentious poem, called the "Palladium," in which the king scoffed at everybody and everything in a manner he preferred not to make public. Voltaire in Berlin might be trusted to remain discreet. In Paris his discretion could not be counted on. Frederick wanted the poem in his own hands.

There was delay in the matter; references to Frederick and returns; the affair dragged on slowly. The package arrived. Voltaire, agitated at his detention, ill and anxious, wanted to get away, in company with Madame Denis, who had just joined him. Freytag refused to let him go. Very unwisely, the poet determined to slip away, imagining that in a "free city" like Frankfort he could not be disturbed. He was mistaken. The freedom of Frankfort was subject to the will of Frederick. The poet tells for himself what followed.

"The moment I was off, I was arrested, I, my secretary and my people; my niece is arrested; four soldiers drag her through the mud to a cheesemonger's named Smith, who had some title or other of privy councillor to the King of Prussia; my niece had a passport from the King of France, and, what is more, she had never corrected the King of Prussia's verses. They huddled us all into a sort of hostelry, at the door of which were posted a dozen soldiers; we were for twelve days prisoners of war, and we had to pay a hundred and forty crowns a day."

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Voltaire was furious; Madame Denis was ill, or feigned to be; she wrote letter after letter to Voltaire's friends in Prussia, and to the king himself. The affair was growing daily more serious. Finally the city authorities themselves, who doubtless felt that they were not playing a very creditable part, put an end to it by ordering Freytag to release his prisoner. Voltaire, set free, travelled leisurely towards France, which, however, he found himself refused permission to enter. He thereupon repaired to Geneva, and thereafter, freed from the patronage of princes and the injustice of the powerful, spent his life in a land where full freedom of thought and action was possible.

As for the worthy Freytag, he felicitated himself highly on the way he had handled that dabbler in *poeshy*. "We would have risked our lives rather than let him get away," he wrote; "and if I, holding a council of war with myself, had not found him at the barrier but in the open country, and he had refused to jog back, I don't know that I shouldn't have lodged a bullet in his head. To such a degree had I at heart the letters and writing of the king."

The too trusty agent did not feel so self-satisfied on receiving the opinion of the king.

"I gave you no such orders as that," wrote Frederick. "You should never make more noise than a thing deserves. I wanted Voltaire to give you up the key, the cross, and the volume of poems I had intrusted to him; as soon as all that was given up to you I can't see what earthly reason could have induced you to make this uproar."

It is very probable, however, that Frederick wished to humiliate Voltaire, and the latter did not fail to revenge himself with that weapon which he knew so well how to wield. In his poem of "La Loi naturelle" he drew a bitter but truthful portrait of Frederick which must have made that arbitrary gentleman wince. He was, says the poet,—

"Of incongruities a monstrous pile,
Calling men brothers, crushing them the while;
With air humane, a misanthropic brute;
Ofttimes impulsive, sometimes over-'cute;
Weak 'midst his choler, modest in his pride;
Yearning for virtue, lust personified;
Statesman and author, of the slippery crew;
My patron, pupil, persecutor too."

SCENES FROM THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

[Illustration: SANS SOUCI, PALACE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT.]

The story of Frederick the Great is a story of incessant wars, wars against frightful odds, for all Europe was combined against him, and for seven years the Austrians, the French, the Russians, and the Swedes surrounded his realm, with the bitter

determination to crush him, if not to annihilate the Prussian kingdom. England alone was on his side. Russia had joined the coalition through anger of the Empress Elizabeth at Frederick's satire upon her licentious life; France had joined it through hostility to England; Austria had organized it from indignation at Frederick's lawless seizure of Silesia; the army raised to operate against Prussia numbered several hundred thousand men.

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For years Frederick fought them all single-handed, with a persistence, an energy, and a resolute rising under the weight of defeat that compelled the admiration even of his enemies, and in the end gave him victory over them all. To the rigid discipline of his troops, his own military genius, and his indomitable perseverance, he owed his final success and his well-earned epithet of “The Great.”

The story of battle, stirring as it is, is apt to grow monotonous, and we have perhaps inflicted too many battle scenes already upon our readers, though we have selected only such as had some particular feature of interest to enliven them. Out of Frederick’s numerous battles we may be able to present some examples sufficiently diverse from the ordinary to render them worthy of classification, under the title of the romance of history.

Let us go back to the 5th of November, 1757. On that date the army of Frederick lay in the vicinity of Rossbach, on the Saale, then occupied by a powerful French army. The Prussian commander, after vainly endeavoring to bring the Austrians to battle, had turned and marched against the French, with the hope of driving them out of Saxony.

His hope was not a very promising one. The French army was sixty thousand strong. He had but little over twenty thousand men. While he felt hope the French felt assurance. They had their active foe now in their clutches, they deemed. With his handful of men he could not possibly stand before their onset. He had escaped them more than once before; this time they had him, as they believed.

His camp was on a height, near the Saale. Towards it the French advanced, with flying colors and sounding trumpets, as if with purpose to strike terror into the ranks of their foes. That Frederick would venture to stand before them they scarcely credited. If he should, his danger would be imminent, for they had laid their plans to surround his small force and, by taking the king and his army prisoners, end at a blow the vexatious war. They calculated shrewdly but not well, for they left Frederick out of the account in their plans.

As they came up, line after line, column after column, they must have been surprised by the seeming indifference of the Prussians. There were in their ranks no signs of retreat and none of hostility. They remained perfectly quiet in their camp, not a gun being fired, not a movement visible, as inert and heedless to all seeming of the coming of the French as though there were no enemy within a hundred miles.

There was a marked difference between the make-up of the two armies, which greatly reduced their numerical odds. Frederick’s army was composed of thoroughly disciplined and trained soldiers, every man of whom knew his place and his duty, and could be trusted in an emergency. The French, on the contrary, had brought all they could of Paris with them; their army was encumbered with women, wig-makers, barbers, and the like impedimenta, and confusion and gayety in their ranks replaced the stern

discipline of Frederick's camp. After the battle, the booty is said to have consisted largely of objects of gallantry better suited for a boudoir than a camp.

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The light columns of smoke that arose from the Prussian camp as the French advanced indicated their occupation,—and that by no means suggested alarm. They were cooking their dinners, with as much unconcern as though they had not yet seen the coming enemy nor heard the clangor of trumpets that announced their approach. Had the French commanders been within the Prussian lines they would have been more astonished still, for they would have seen Frederick with his staff and general officers dining at leisure and with the utmost coolness and indifference. There was no appearance of haste in their movements, and no more in those of their men, whose whole concern just then seemed to be the getting of a good meal.

The hour passed on, the French came nearer, their trumpet clangor was close at hand, every moment seemed to render the peril of the Prussians more imminent, yet their inertness continued; it looked almost as though they had given up the idea of defence. The confidence of the French must have grown rapidly as their plan of surrounding the Prussians with their superior numbers seemed more and more assured.

But Frederick had his eye upon them. He was biding his time. Suddenly there came a change. It was about half-past two in the afternoon. The French had reached the position for which he had been waiting. Quickly the staff officers dashed right and left with their orders. The trumpets sounded. As if by magic the tents were struck, the men sprang to their ranks and were drawn up in battle array, the artillery opened its fire, the seeming inertness which had prevailed was with extraordinary rapidity exchanged for warlike activity; the complete discipline of the Prussian army had never been more notably displayed.

The French, who had been marching forward with careless ease, beheld this change of the situation with astounded eyes. They looked for heaviness and slowness of movement among the Germans, and could scarcely believe in the possibility of such rapidity of evolution. But they had little time to think. The Prussian batteries were pouring a rain of balls through their columns. And quickly the Prussian cavalry, headed by the dashing Seidlitz, was in their midst, cutting and slashing with annihilating vigor.

The surprise was complete. The French found it impossible to form into line. Everywhere their columns were being swept by musketry and artillery, and decimated by the sabres of the charging cavalry. In almost less time than it takes to tell it they were thrown into confusion, overwhelmed, routed; in the course of less than half an hour the fate of the battle was decided, and the French army completely defeated.

Their confidence of a short time before was succeeded by panic, and the lately trim ranks fled in utter disorganization, so utterly broken that many of the fugitives never stopped till they reached the other side of the Rhine.

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Ten thousand prisoners fell into Frederick's hands, including nine generals and numerous other officers, together with all the French artillery, and twenty-two standards; while the victory was achieved with the loss of only one hundred and sixty-five killed and three hundred and fifty wounded on the Prussian side. The triumph was one of discipline against over-confidence. No army under less complete control than that of Frederick could have sprung so suddenly into warlike array. To this, and to the sudden and overwhelming dash of Seidlitz and his cavalry, the remarkable victory was due.

Just one month from that date, on the 5th of December, another great battle took place, and another important victory for Frederick the Great. With thirty-four thousand Prussians he defeated eighty thousand Austrians, while the prisoners taken nearly equalled in number his entire force.

The Austrians had taken the opportunity of Frederick's campaign against the French to overrun Silesia. Breslau, its capital, with several other strongholds, fell into their hands, and the probability was that if left there during the winter they would so strongly fortify it as to defy any attempt of the Prussian king to recapture it.

Despite the weakness of his army Frederick decided to make an effort to regain the lost province, and marched at once against the Austrians. They lay in a strong position behind the river Lohe, and here their leader, Field-Marshal Daun, wished to have them remain, having had abundant experience of his opponent in the open field. This cautious advice was not taken by Prince Charles, who controlled the movements of the army, and whom several of the generals persuaded that it would be degrading for a victorious army to intrench itself against one so much inferior in numbers, and advised him to march out and meet the Prussians. "The parade guard of Berlin," as they contemptuously designated Frederick's army, "would never be able to make a stand against them."

The prince, who was impetuous in disposition, agreed with them, marched out from his intrenchments, and met Frederick's army in the vast plain near Leuthen. On December 5 the two armies came face to face, the lines of the imperial force extending over a space of five miles, while those of Frederick occupied a much narrower space.

In his lack of numbers the Prussian king was obliged to substitute celerity of movement, hoping to double the effectiveness of his troops by their quickness of action. The story of the battle may be given in a few words. A false attack was made on the Austrian right, and then the bulk of the Prussian army was hurled upon their left wing, with such impetuosity as to break and shatter it. The disorder caused by this attack spread until it included the whole army. In three hours' time Frederick had completely defeated his foes, one-third of whom were killed, wounded, or captured, and the remainder put to flight. The field was covered with the slain,

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and whole battalions surrendered, the Prussians capturing in all twenty-one thousand prisoners. They took besides one hundred and thirty cannon and three thousand baggage and ammunition wagons. The victory was a remarkable example of the supremacy of genius over mere numbers. Napoleon says of it, “That battle was a master-piece. Of itself it is sufficient to entitle Frederick to a place in the first rank of generals.” It restored Silesia to the Prussian dominions.

There is one more of Frederick’s victories of sufficiently striking character to fit in with those already given. It took place in 1760, several years after those described, years in which Frederick had struggled persistently against overwhelming odds, and, though often worsted, yet coming up fresh after every defeat, and unconquerably keeping the field.

He was again in Silesia, which was once more seriously threatened by the Austrian forces. His position was anything but a safe one. The Austrians almost surrounded him. On one side was the army of Field-Marshal Daun, on the other that of General Lasci; in front was General Laudon. Fighting day and night he advanced, and finally took up his position at Liegnitz, where he found his forward route blocked, Daun having formed a junction with Laudon. His magazines were at Breslau and Schweidnitz in front, which it was impossible to reach; while his brother, Prince Henry, who might have marched to his relief, was detained by the Russians on the Oder.

The position of Frederick was a critical one. He had only a few days’ supply of provisions; it was impossible to advance, and dangerous to retreat; the Austrians, in superior numbers, were dangerously near him; only fortune and valor could save him from serious disaster. In this crisis of his career happy chance came to his aid, and relieved him from the awkward and perilous situation into which he had fallen.

The Austrians were keenly on the alert, biding their time and watchful for an opportunity to take the Prussians at advantage. The time had now arrived, as they thought, and they laid their plans accordingly. On the night before the 15th of August Laudon set out on a secret march, his purpose being to gain the heights of Puffendorf, from which the Prussians might be assailed in the rear. At the same time the other corps were to close in on every side, completely surrounding Frederick, and annihilating him if possible.

It was a well-laid and promising plan, but accident befriended the Prussian king. Accident and alertness, we may say; since, to prevent a surprise from the Austrians, he was in the habit of changing the location of his camp almost every night. Such a change took place on the night in question. On the 14th the Austrians had made a close reconnoisance of his position. Fearing some hostile purpose in this, Frederick, as soon as the night had fallen, ordered his tents to be struck and the camp to be moved with the utmost silence, so as to avoid giving the foe a hint of his purpose. As it

chanced, the new camp was made on those very heights of Puffendorf towards which Laudon was advancing with equal care and secrecy.

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That there might be no suspicion of the Prussian movement, the watch-fires were kept up in the old camp, peasants attending to them, while patrols of hussars cried out the challenge every quarter of an hour. The gleaming lights, the watch-cries of the sentinels, all indicated that the Prussian army was sleeping on its old ground, without suspicion of the overwhelming blow intended for it on the morrow.

Meanwhile the king and his army had reached their new quarters, where the utmost caution and noiselessness was observed. The king, wrapped in his military cloak, had fallen asleep beside his watch-fire; Ziethen, his valiant cavalry leader, and a few others of his principal officers, being with him. Throughout the camp the greatest stillness prevailed, all noise having been forbidden. The soldiers slept with their arms close at hand, and ready to be seized at a moment's notice. Frederick fully appreciated the peril of his situation, and was not to be taken by surprise by his active foes. And thus the night moved on until midnight passed, and the new day began its course in the small hours.

About two o'clock a sudden change came in the situation. A horseman galloped at full speed through the camp, and drew up hastily at the king's tent, calling Frederick from his light slumbers. He was the officer in command of the patrol of hussars, and brought startling news. The enemy was at hand, he said; his advance columns were within a few hundred yards of the camp. It was Laudon's army, seeking to steal into possession of those heights which Frederick had so opportunely occupied.

The stirring tidings passed rapidly through the camp. The soldiers were awakened, the officers seized their arms and sprang to horse, the troops grasped their weapons and hastened into line, the cannoneers flew to their guns, soon the roar of artillery warned the coming Austrians that they had a foe in their front.

Laudon pushed on, thinking this to be some advance column which he could easily sweep from his front. Not until day dawned did he discover the true situation, and perceive, with astounded eyes, that the whole Prussian army stood in line of battle on those very heights which he had hoped so easily to occupy.

The advantage on which the Austrian had so fully counted lay with the Prussian king. Yet, undaunted, Laudon pushed on and made a vigorous attack, feeling sure that the thunder of the artillery would be borne to Daun's ears, and bring that commander in all haste, with his army, to take part in the fray.

But the good fortune which had so far favored Frederick did not now desert him. The wind blew freshly in the opposite direction, and carried the sound of the cannon away from Daun's hearing. Not the roar of a piece of artillery came to him, and his army lay moveless during the battle, he deeming that Laudon must now be in full possession of the heights, and felicitating himself on the neat trap into which the King of Prussia had fallen. While he thus rested on his arms, glorying in his soul on the annihilation to which

the pestilent Prussians were doomed, his ally was making a desperate struggle for life, on those very heights which he counted on taking without a shot. Truly, the Austrians had reckoned without their foe in laying their cunning plot.

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Three hours of daylight finished the affray. Taken by surprise as they were, the Austrians proved unable to sustain the vigorous Prussian assault, and were utterly routed, leaving ten thousand dead and wounded on the field, and eighty-two pieces of artillery in the enemy's hands. Shortly afterwards Daun, advancing to carry out his share of the scheme of annihilation, fell upon the right wing of the Prussians, commanded by General Ziethen, and was met with so fierce an artillery fire that he halted in dismay. And now news of Laudon's disaster was brought to him. Seeing that the game was lost and himself in danger, he emulated his associate in his hasty retreat.

Fortune and alertness had saved the Prussian king from a serious danger, and turned peril into victory. He lost no time in profiting by his advantage, and was in full march towards Breslau within three hours after the battle, the prisoners in the centre, the wounded—friend and foe alike,—in wagons in the rear, and the captured cannon added to his own artillery train. Silesia was once more delivered into his hands.

Never in history had there been so persistent and indomitable a resistance against overwhelming numbers as that which Frederick sustained for so many years against his numerous foes. At length, when hope seemed almost at an end, and it appeared as if nothing could save the Prussian kingdom from overthrow, death came to the aid of the courageous monarch. The Empress Elizabeth of Russia died, and Frederick's bitterest foe was removed. The new monarch, Peter III., was an ardent admirer of Frederick, and at once discharged all the Prussian prisoners in his hands, and signed a treaty of alliance with Prussia. Sweden quickly did the same, leaving Frederick with no opponents but the Austrians. Four months more sufficed to bring his remaining foes to terms, and by the end of the year 1762 the distracting Seven Years' War was at an end, the indomitable Frederick remaining in full possession of Silesia, the great bone of contention in the war. His resolution and perseverance had raised Prussia to a high position among the kingdoms of Europe, and laid the foundations of the present empire of Germany.

THE PATRIOTS OF THE TYROL.

On the 9th of April, 1809, down the river Inn, in the Tyrol, came floating a series of planks, from whose surface waved little red flags. What they meant the Bavarian soldiers, who held that mountain land with a hand of iron, could not conjecture. But what they meant the peasantry well knew. On the day before peace had ruled throughout the Alps, and no Bavarian dreamed of war. Those flags were the signal for insurrection, and on their appearance the brave mountaineers sprang at once to arms and flew to the defence of the bridges of their country, which the Bavarians were marching to destroy, as an act of defence against the Austrians.

On the 10th the storm of war burst. Some Bavarian sappers had been sent to blow up the bridge of St. Lorenzo. But hardly had they begun their work, when a shower of

bullets from unseen marksmen swept the bridge. Several were killed; the rest took to flight; the Tyrol was in revolt.

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News of this outbreak was borne to Colonel Wrede, in command of the Bavarians, who hastened with a force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery to the spot. He found the peasants out in numbers. The Tyrolean riflemen, who were accustomed to bring down chamois from the mountain peaks, defended the bridge, and made terrible havoc in the Bavarian ranks. They seized Wrede's artillery and flung guns and gunners together into the stream, and finally put the Bavarians to rout, with severe loss.

The Bavarians held the Tyrol as allies of the French, and the movement against the bridges had been directed by Napoleon, to prevent the Austrians from reoccupying the country, which had been wrested from their hands. Wrede in his retreat was joined by a body of three thousand French, but decided, instead of venturing again to face the daring foe, to withdraw to Innsbruck. But withdrawal was not easy. The signal of revolt had everywhere called the Tyrolese to arms. The passes were occupied. The fine old Roman bridge over the Brenner, at Laditsch, was blown up. In the pass of the Brixen, leading to this bridge, the French and Bavarians found themselves assailed in the old Swiss manner, by rocks and logs rolled down upon their heads, while the unerring rifles of the hidden peasants swept the pass. Numbers were slain, but the remainder succeeded in escaping by means of a temporary bridge, which they threw over the stream on the site of the bridge of Laditsch.

Of the Tyrolese patriots to whom this outbreak was due two are worthy of special mention, Joseph Speckbacher, a wealthy peasant of Rinn, and the more famous Andrew Hofer, the host of the Sand Inn at Passeyr, a man everywhere known through the mountains, as he traded in wine, corn, and horses as far as the Italian frontier.

Hofer was a man of herculean frame and of a full, open, handsome countenance, which gained dignity from its long, dark-brown beard, which fell in rich curls upon his chest. His picturesque dress—that of the Tyrol—comprised a red waistcoat, crossed by green braces, which were fastened to black knee breeches of chamois leather, below which he wore red stockings. A broad black leather girdle clasped his muscular form, while over all was worn a short green coat. On his head he wore a low-crowned, broad-brimmed Tyrolean hat, black in color, and ornamented with green ribbons and with the feathers of the capercailzie.

This striking-looking patriot, at the head of a strong party of peasantry, made an assault, early on the 11th, upon a Bavarian infantry battalion under the command of Colonel Baeraklau, who retreated to a table-land named Sterzinger Moos, where, drawn up in a square, he resisted every effort of the Tyrolese to dislodge him. Finally Hofer broke his lines by a stratagem. A wagon loaded with hay, and driven by a girl, was pushed towards the square, the brave girl shouting, as the balls flew around her, "On with ye! Who cares for Bavarian dumplings!" Under its shelter the Tyrolese advanced, broke the square, and killed or made prisoners the whole of the battalion.

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Speckbacher, the other patriot named, was no less active. No sooner had the signal of revolt appeared in the Inn than he set the alarm-bells ringing in every church-tower through the lower valley of that stream, and quickly was at the head of a band of stalwart Tyrolese. On the night of the 11th he advanced on the city of Hall, and lighted about a hundred watch-fires on one side of the city, as if about to attack it from that quarter. While the attention of the garrison was directed towards these fires, he crept through the darkness to the gate on the opposite side, and demanded entrance as a common traveller. The gate was opened; his hidden companions rushed forward and seized it; in a brief time the city, with its Bavarian garrison, was his.

On the 12th he appeared before Innsbruck, and made a fierce assault upon the city in which he was aided by a murderous fire poured upon the Bavarians by the citizens from windows and towers. The people of the upper valley of the Inn flocked to the aid of their fellows, and the place, with its garrison, was soon taken, despite their obstinate defence. Dittfurt, the Bavarian leader, who scornfully refused to yield to the peasant dogs, as he considered them, fought with tiger-like ferocity, and fell at length, pierced by four bullets.

One further act completed the freeing of the Tyrol from Bavarian domination. The troops under Colonel Wrede had, as we have related, crossed the Brenner on a temporary bridge, and escaped the perils of the pass. Greater perils awaited them. Their road lay past Sterzing, the scene of Hofer's victory. Every trace of the conflict had been obliterated, and Wrede vainly sought to discover what had become of Baeraklau and his battalion. He entered the narrow pass through which the road ran at that place, and speedily found his ranks decimated by the rifles of Hofer's concealed men.

After considerable loss the column broke through, and continued its march to Innsbruck, where it was immediately surrounded by a triumphant host of Tyrolese. The struggle was short, sharp, and decisive. In a few minutes several hundred men had fallen. In order to escape complete destruction the rest laid down their arms. The captors entered Innsbruck in triumph, preceded by the military band of the enemy, which they compelled to play, and guarding their prisoners, who included two generals, more than a hundred other officers, and about two thousand men.

In two days the Tyrol had been freed from its Bavarian oppressors and their French allies and restored to its Austrian lords. The arms of Bavaria were everywhere cast to the ground, and the officials removed. But the prisoners were treated with great humanity, except in the single instance of a tax-gatherer, who had boasted that he would grind down the Tyrolese until they should gladly eat hay. In revenge, they forced him to swallow a bushel of hay for his dinner.

The freedom thus gained by the Tyrolese was not likely to be permanent with Napoleon for their foe. The Austrians hastened to the defence of the country which had been so bravely won for their emperor. On the other side came the French and Bavarians as

enemies and oppressors. Lefebvre, the leader of the invaders, was a rough and brutal soldier, who encouraged his men to commit every outrage upon the mountaineers.

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For some two or three months the conflict went on, with varying fortunes, depending upon the conditions of the war between France and Austria. At first the French were triumphant, and the Austrians withdrew from the Tyrol. Then came Napoleon's defeat at Aspern, and the Tyrolese rose and again drove the invaders from their country. In July occurred Napoleon's great victory at Wagram, and the hopes of the Tyrol once more sank. All the Austrians were withdrawn, and Lefebvre again advanced at the head of thirty or forty thousand French, Bavarians, and Saxons.

The courage of the peasantry vanished before this threatening invasion. Hofer alone remained resolute, saying to the Austrian governor, on his departure, "Well, then, I will undertake the government, and, as long as God wills, name myself Andrew Hofer, host of the Sand at Passeyr, and Count of the Tyrol."

He needed resolution, for his fellow-chiefs deserted the cause of their country on all sides. On his way to his home he met Speckbacher, hurrying from the country in a carriage with some Austrian officers.

"Wilt thou also desert thy country!" said Hofer to him in tones of sad reproach.

Another leader, Joachim Haspinger, a Capuchin monk, nicknamed Redbeard, a man of much military talent, withdrew to his monastery at Seeben. Hofer was left alone of the Tyrolese leaders. While the French advanced without opposition, he took refuge in a cavern amid the steep rocks that overhung his native vale, where he implored Heaven for aid.

The aid came. Lefebvre, in his brutal fashion, plundered and burnt as he advanced, and published a proscription list instead of the amnesty promised. The natural result followed. Hofer persuaded the bold Capuchin to leave his monastery, and he, with two others, called the western Tyrol to arms. Hofer raised the eastern Tyrol. They soon gained a powerful associate in Speckbacher, who, conscience-stricken by Hofer's reproach, had left the Austrians and hastened back to his country. The invader's cruelty had produced its natural result. The Tyrol was once more in full revolt.

With a bunch of rosemary, the gift of their chosen maidens, in their green hats, the young men grasped their trusty rifles and hurried to the places of rendezvous. The older men wore peacock plumes, the Hapsburg symbol. With haste they prepared for the war. Cannon which did good service were made from bored logs of larch wood, bound with iron rings. Here the patriots built abatis; there they gathered heaps of stone on the edges of precipices which rose above the narrow vales and passes. The timber slides in the mountains were changed in their course so that trees from the heights might be shot down upon the important passes and bridges. All that could be done to give the invaders a warm welcome was prepared, and the bold peasants waited eagerly for the coming conflict.

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From four quarters the invasion came, Lefebvre's army being divided so as to attack the Tyrolese from every side, and meet in the heart of the country. They were destined to a disastrous repulse. The Saxons, led by Rouyer, marched through the narrow valley of Eisach, the heights above which were occupied by Haspinger the Capuchin and his men. Down upon them came rocks and trees from the heights. Rouyer was hurt, and many of his men were slain around him. He withdrew in haste, leaving one regiment to retain its position in the Oberau. This the Tyrolese did not propose to permit. They attacked the regiment on the next day, in the narrow valley, with overpowering numbers. Though faint with hunger and the intense heat, and exhausted by the fierceness of the assault, a part of the troops cut their way through with great loss and escaped. The rest were made prisoners.

The story is told that during their retreat, and when ready to drop with fatigue, the soldiers found a cask of wine. Its head was knocked in by a drummer, who, as he stooped to drink, was pierced by a bullet, and his blood mingled with the wine. Despite this, the famishing soldiery greedily swallowed the contents of the cask.

A second *corps d'armee* advanced up the valley of the Inn as far as the bridges of Pruz. Here it was repulsed by the Tyrolese, and retreated under cover of the darkness during the night of August 8. The infantry crept noiselessly over the bridge of Pontlaz. The cavalry followed with equal caution but with less success. The sound of a horse's hoof aroused the watchful Tyrolese. Instantly rocks and trees were hurled upon the bridge, men and horses being crushed beneath them and the passage blocked. All the troops which had not crossed were taken prisoners. The remainder were sharply pursued, and only a handful of them escaped.

The other divisions of the invading army met with a similar fate. Lefebvre himself, who reproached the Saxons for their defeat, was not able to advance as far as they, and was quickly driven from the mountains with greatly thinned ranks. He was forced to disguise himself as a common soldier and hide among the cavalry to escape the balls of the sharp-shooters, who owed him no love. The rear-guard was attacked with clubs by the Capuchin and his men, and driven out with heavy loss. During the night that followed all the mountains around the beautiful valley of Innsbruck were lit up with watch-fires. In the valley below those of the invaders were kept brightly burning while the troops silently withdrew. On the next day the Tyrol held no foes; the invasion had failed.

Hofer placed himself at the head of the government at Innsbruck, where he lived in his old simple mode of life, proclaimed some excellent laws, and convoked a national assembly. The Emperor of Austria sent him a golden chain and three thousand ducats. He received them with no show of pride, and returned the following naive answer: "Sirs, I thank you. I have no news for you to-day. I have, it is true, three couriers on the road, the Watscher-Hiesele, the Sixten-Seppele, and the Memmele-Franz, and the Schwanz ought long to have been here. I expect the rascal every hour."

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Meanwhile, Speckbacher and the Capuchin kept up hostilities successfully on the eastern frontier. Haspinger wished to invade the country of their foes, but was restrained by his more prudent associate. Speckbacher is described as an open-hearted, fine-spirited fellow, with the strength of a giant, and the best marksman in the country. So keen was his vision that he could distinguish the bells on the necks of the cattle at the distance of half a mile.

His son Anderle, but ten years of age, was of a spirit equal to his own. In one of the earlier battles of the war he had occupied himself during the fight in collecting the enemy's balls in his hat, and so obstinately refused to quit the field that his father had him carried by force to a distant alp. During the present conflict, Anderle unexpectedly appeared and fought by his father's side. He had escaped from his mountain retreat. It proved an unlucky escape. Shortly afterwards, the father was surprised by treachery and found himself surrounded with foes, who tore from him his arms, flung him to the ground, and seriously injured him with blows from a club. But in an instant more he sprang furiously to his feet, hurled his assailants to the earth, and escaped across a wall of rock impassable except to an expert mountaineer. A hundred of his men followed him, but his young son was taken captive by his foes. The king, Maximilian Joseph, attracted by the story of his courage and beauty, sent for him and had him well educated.

The freedom of the Tyrol was not to last long. The treaty of Vienna, between the Emperors of Austria and France, was signed. It did not even mention the Tyrol. It was a tacit understanding that the mountain country was to be restored to Bavaria, and to reduce it to obedience three fresh armies crossed its frontiers. They were repulsed in the south, but in the north Hofer, under unwise advice, abandoned the anterior passes, and the invaders made their way as far as Innsbruck, whence they summoned him to capitulate.

During the night of October 30 an envoy from Austria appeared in the Tyrolese camp, bearing a letter from the Archduke John, in which he announced the conclusion of peace and commanded the mountaineers to disperse, and not to offer their lives as a useless sacrifice. The Tyrolese regarded him as their lord, and obeyed, though with bitter regret. A dispersion took place, except of the band of Speckbacher, which held its ground against the enemy until the 3d of November, when he received a letter from Hofer saying, "I announce to you that Austria has made peace with France, and has forgotten the Tyrol." On receiving this news he disbanded his followers, and all opposition ceased.

The war was soon afoot again, however, in the native vale of Hofer, the people of which, made desperate by the depredations of the Italian bands which had penetrated their country, sprang to arms and resolved to defend themselves to the bitter end. They compelled Hofer to place himself at their head.

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For a time they were successful. But a traitor guided the enemy to their rear, and defeat followed. Hofer escaped and took refuge among the mountain peaks. Others of the leaders were taken and executed. The most gallant among the peasantry were shot or hanged. There was some further opposition, but the invaders pressed into every valley and disarmed the people, the bulk of whom obeyed the orders given them and offered no resistance. The revolt was quelled.

Hofer took refuge at first, with his wife and child, in a narrow hollow in the Kellerlager. This he soon left for a hut on the highest alps. He was implored to leave the country, but he vowed that he would live or die on his native soil. Discovery soon came. A peasant named Raffel learned the location of his hiding-place by seeing the smoke ascend from his distant hut. He foolishly boasted of his knowledge; his story came to the ears of the French; he was arrested, and compelled to guide them to the spot. Two thousand French were spread around the mountain; a thousand six hundred ascended it; Hofer was taken.

[Illustration: THE LAST DAY OF ANDREAS HOFER.]

His captors treated him with brutal violence. They tore out his beard, and dragged him pinioned, barefoot, and in his night-dress, over ice and snow to the valley. Here he was placed in a carriage and carried to the fortress of Mantua, in Italy. Napoleon, on news of the capture being brought to him at Paris, sent orders to shoot him within twenty-four hours.

He died as bravely as he had lived. When placed before the firing-party of twelve riflemen, he refused either to kneel or to allow himself to be blindfolded. “I stand before my Creator,” he exclaimed, in firm tones, “and standing will I restore to him the spirit he gave.”

He gave the signal to fire, but the men, moved by the scene, missed their aim. The first fire brought him to his knees, the second stretched him on the ground, where a corporal terminated the cruel scene by shooting him through the head. He died February 20, 1810. At a later date his remains were borne back to his native alps, a handsome monument of white marble was erected to his memory in the church at Innsbruck, and his family was ennobled.

Of the two other principal leaders of the Tyrolese, Haspinger, the Capuchin, escaped to Vienna, which Speckbacher also succeeded in reaching, after a series of perils and escapes which are well worth relating.

After the dispersal of his troops he, like Hofer, sought concealment in the mountains where the Bavarians sought for him in troops, vowing to “cut his skin into boot-straps if they caught him.” He attempted to follow the mountain paths to Austria, but at Dux found the roads so blocked with snow that further progress was impossible. Here the

Bavarians came upon his track and attacked the house in which he had taken refuge. He escaped by leaping from its roof, but was wounded in doing so.

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For the twenty-seven days that followed he roamed through the snowy mountain forests, in danger of death both from cold and starvation. Once for four days together he did not taste food. At the end of this time he found shelter in a hut at Bolderberg, where by chance he found his wife and children, who had sought the same asylum.

His bitterly persistent foes left him not long in safety here. They learned his place of retreat, and pursued him, his presence of mind alone saving him from capture. Seeing them approach, he took a sledge upon his shoulders, and walked towards and past them as though he were a servant of the house.

His next place of refuge was in a cave on the Gemshaken, in which he remained until the opening of spring, when he had the ill-fortune to be carried by a snow-slide a mile and a half into the valley. It was impossible to return. He crept from the snow, but found that one of his legs was dislocated. The utmost he could do, and that with agonizing pain, was to drag himself to a neighboring hut. Here were two men, who carried him to his own house at Rinn.

Bavarians were quartered in the house, and the only place of refuge open to him was the cow-shed, where his faithful servant Zoppel dug for him a hole beneath the bed of one of the cows, and daily supplied him with food. His wife had returned to the house, but the danger of discovery was so great that even she was not told of his propinquity.

For seven weeks he remained thus half buried in the cow-shed, gradually recovering his strength. At the end of that time he rose, bade adieu to his wife, who now first learned of his presence, and again betook himself to the high paths of the mountains, from which the sun of May had freed the snow. He reached Vienna without further trouble.

Here the brave patriot received no thanks for his services. Even a small estate he had purchased with the remains of his property he was forced to relinquish, not being able to complete the purchase. He would have been reduced to beggary but for Hofer's son, who had received a fine estate from the emperor, and who engaged him as his steward. Thus ended the active career of the ablest leader in the Tyrolean war.

THE OLD EMPIRE AND THE NEW.

During the Christmas festival of the year 800 the crown of the imperial dignity was placed at Rome on the head of Charles the Great, and the Roman Empire of the West again came into being, so far as a dead thing could be restored to life. For one thousand and six years afterwards this title of emperor was retained in Germany, though the power represented by it became at times a very shadowy affair. The authority and influence of the emperors reached their culmination during the reign of the Hohenstauffens (1138 to 1254). For a few centuries afterwards the title represented an empire which was but a quarter fact, three-quarters tradition, the emperor being duly elected by the diet of German princes, but by

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no means submissively obeyed. The fraction of fact which remained of the old empire perished in the Thirty Years' War. After that date the title continued in existence, being held by the Hapsburgs of Austria as an hereditary dignity, but the empire had vanished except as a tradition or superstition. Finally, on the 6th of August, 1806, Francis II., at the absolute dictum of Napoleon, laid down the title of "Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation," and the long defunct empire was finally buried.

The shadow which remained of the empire of Charlemagne had vanished before the rise of a greater and more vital thing, the empire of France, brought into existence by the genius of Napoleon Bonaparte, the successor of Charles the Great as a mighty conqueror. For a few years it seemed as if the original empire might be restored. The power of Napoleon, indeed, extended farther than that of his great predecessor, all Europe west of Russia becoming virtually his. Some of the kings were replaced by monarchs of his creation. Others were left upon their thrones, but with their power shorn, their dignity being largely one of vassalage to France. Not content with an empire that stretched beyond the limits of that of Charlemagne or of the Roman Empire of the West, Napoleon ambitiously sought to subdue all Europe to his imperial will, and marched into Russia with nearly all the remaining nations of Europe as his forced allies.

His career as a conqueror ended in the snows of Muscovy and amid the flames of Moscow. The shattered fragment of the grand army of conquest that came back from that terrible expedition found crushed and dismayed Germany rising into hostile vitality in its rear. Russia pursued its vanquished invader, Prussia rose against him, Austria joined his foes, and at length, in October, 1813, united Germany was marshalled in arms against its mighty enemy before the city of Leipsic, the scene of the great battles of the Thirty Years' War, nearly two centuries before.

Here was fought one of the fiercest and most decisive struggles of that quarter century of conflict. It was a fight for life, a battle to decide the question of who should be lord of Europe. Napoleon had been brought to bay. Despising to the last his foes, he had weakened his army by leaving strong garrisons in the German cities, which he hoped to reoccupy after he had beaten the German armies. On the 16th of October the great contest began. It was fought fiercely throughout the day, with successive waves of victory and defeat, the advantage at the end resting with the allies through sheer force of numbers. The 17th was a day of rest and negotiation, Napoleon vainly seeking to induce the Emperor of Austria to withdraw from the alliance. While this was going on large bodies of Swedes, Russians, and Austrians were marching to join the German ranks, and the battle of the 18th was fought between a hundred and fifty thousand French and a hostile army of double that strength, which represented all northern and eastern Europe.

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The battle was one of frightful slaughter. Its turning-point came when the Saxon infantry, which had hitherto fought on the French side, deserted Napoleon's cause in the thick of the fight, and went over in a body to the enemy. It was an act of treachery whose fatal effect no effort could overcome. The day ended with victory in the hands of the allies. The French were driven back close upon the walls of Leipsic, with the serried columns of Germany and Russia closing them in, and bent on giving no relaxation to their desperate foe.

The struggle was at an end. Longer resistance would have been madness. Napoleon ordered a retreat. But the Elster had to be crossed, and only a single bridge remained for the passage of the army and its stores. All night long the French poured across the bridge with what they could take of their wagons and guns. Morning dawned with the rush and hurry of the retreat still in active progress. A strong rear-guard held the town, and Napoleon himself made his way across the bridge with difficulty through the crowding masses.

Hardly had he crossed when a frightful misfortune occurred. The bridge had been mined, to blow it up on the approach of the foe. This duty had been carelessly trusted to a subaltern, who, frightened by seeing some of the enemy on the river-side, set fire hastily to the train. The bridge blew up with a tremendous explosion, leaving a rear-guard of twenty-five thousand men in Leipsic cut off from all hope of escape. Some officers plunged on horseback into the stream and swam across. Prince Poniatowsky, the gallant Pole, essayed the same, but perished in the attempt. The soldiers of the rear-guard were forced to surrender as prisoners of war. In this great conflict, which had continued for four days, and in which the most of the nations of Europe took part, eighty thousand men are said to have been slain. The French lost very heavily in prisoners and guns. Only a hasty retreat to the Rhine saved the remainder of their army from being cut off and captured. On the 20th Napoleon succeeded in crossing that frontier river of his kingdom with seventy thousand men, the remnant of the grand army with which he had sought to hold Prussia after the disastrous end of the invasion of Russia.

[Illustration: A GERMAN MILK WAGON.]

Germany was at length freed from its mighty foe. The garrisons which had been left in its cities were forced to surrender as prisoners of war. France in its turn was invaded, Paris taken, and Napoleon forced to resign the imperial crown, and to retire from his empire to the little island of Elba, near the Italian coast. In 1815 he returned, again set Europe in flame with war, and fell once more at Waterloo, to end his career in the far-off island of St. Helena.

Thus ended the empire founded by the great conqueror. The next to claim the imperial title was Louis Napoleon, who in 1851 had himself crowned as Napoleon III. But his so-called empire was confined to France, and fell in 1870 on the field of Sedan, himself

and his army being taken prisoners. A republic was declared in France, and the second French empire was at an end.

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And now the empire of Germany was restored, after having ceased to exist for sixty-five years. The remarkable success of William of Prussia gave rise to a wide-spread feeling in the German states that he should assume the imperial crown, and the old empire be brought again into existence under new conditions; no longer hampered by the tradition of a Roman empire, but as the title of united Germany.

On December 18, 1870, an address from the North German Parliament was read to King William at Versailles, asking him to accept the imperial crown. He assented, and on January 18, 1871, an imposing ceremony was held in the splendid Mirror Hall (*Galerie des Glaces*) of Louis XIV., at the royal palace of Versailles. The day was a wet one, and the king rode from his quarters in the prefecture to the great gates of the chateau, where he alighted and passed through a lane of soldiers, the roar of cannon heralding his approach, and rich strains of music signalling his entrance to the hall.

William wore a general's uniform, with the ribbon of the Black Eagle on his breast. Helmet in hand he advanced slowly to the dais, bowed to the assembled clergymen, and turned to survey the scene. There had been erected an altar covered with scarlet cloth, which bore the device of the Iron Cross. Right and left of it were soldiers bearing the standards of their regiments. Attending on the king were the crown-prince, and a brilliant array of the princes, dukes, and other rulers of the German states arranged in semicircular form. Just above his head was a great allegorical painting of the Grand Monarch, with the proud subscription, "*Le Roi gouverne par lui meme*," the motto of the autocrat.

The ceremony began with the singing of psalms, a short sermon, and a grand German chorale, in which all present joined. Then William, in a loud but broken voice, read a paper, in which he declared the German empire re-established, and the imperial dignity revived, to be invested in him and his descendants for all future time, in accordance with the will of the German people.

Count Bismarck followed with a proclamation addressed by the emperor to the German nation. As he ended, the Grand-Duke of Baden, William's son-in-law, stepped out from the line, raised his helmet in the air, and shouted in stentorian tones, "Long live the German Emperor William! Hurrah!"

Loud cheers and waving of swords and helmets responded to his stirring appeal, the crown-prince fell on his knee to kiss the emperor's hand, and a military band outside the hall struck up the German National Anthem, while, as a warlike background to the scene, came the roar of French cannon from Mount Valerien, still besieged by the Germans, their warlike peal the last note of defiance from vanquished France. Ten days afterwards Paris surrendered, and the war was at an end. On the 16th of June the army made a triumphant entrance into Berlin, William riding at its head, to be triumphantly hailed as emperor by his own people on his own soil. All Germany, with the exception

of Austria, was for the first time fully united into an empire, the minor princes having ceased to exist as ruling potentates.