1685. Louis commences a merciless persecution of his Protestant subjects.

1688. The glorious Revolution in England. Expulsion of James II. William of Orange is made King of England. James takes refuge at the French court, and Louis undertakes to restore him. General war in the west of Europe.

1697. Treaty of Ryswick. Charles XII. becomes King of Sweden.

1700. Charles II., of Spain, dies, having bequeathed his dominions to Philip of Anjou, Louis XIV.'s grandson. Defeat of the Russians at Narva by Charles XII.

1701. Willam III. forms a "Grand Alliance" of Austria, the Empire, the United Provinces, England, and other powers, against France.

1702. King William dies; but his successor, Queen Anne, adheres to the Grand Alliance, and war is proclaimed against France.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM, A.D. 1704.

The decisive blow struck at Blenheim resounded through every part of Europe: it at once destroyed the vast fabric of power which it had taken Louis XIV., aided by the talents of Turenne and the genius of Vauban, so long to construct.—ALISON.

THOUGH more slowly moulded and less imposingly vast than the empire of Napoleon, the power which Louis XIV. had acquired and was acquiring at the commencement of the eighteenth century was almost equally menacing to the general liberties of Europe. If tested by the amount of *permanent* aggrandizement which each procured for France, the ambition of the royal Bourbon was more successful than were the enterprises of the imperial Corsican. All the provinces that Bonaparte conquered were rent again from France within twenty years from the date when the very earliest of them was acquired. France is not stronger by a single city or a single acre for all the devastating wars of the Consulate and the Empire. But she still possesses Franche-Comte, Alsace, and part of Flanders. She has still the extended boundaries which Louis XIV. gave her; and the royal Spanish marriage a few years ago proved clearly how enduring has been the political influence which the arts and arms of France's "Grand Monarque" obtained for her southward of the Pyrenees.

When Louis XIV. took the reins of government into his own hands, after the death of Cardinal Mazarin, there was a union of ability with opportunity such as France had not seen since the



days of Charlemagne. Moreover, Louis's career was no brief one. For upward of forty years, for a period nearly equal to the duration of Charlemagne's reign, Louis steadily followed an aggressive and a generally successful policy. He passed a long youth and manhood of triumph before the military genius of Marlborough made him acquainted with humiliation and defeat. The great Bourbon lived too long. He should not have outstayed our two English kings, one his dependent, James II., the other his antagonist, William III. Had he died when they died, his reign would be cited as unequalled in the French annals for its prosperity. But he lived on to see his armies beaten, his cities captured, and his kingdom wasted year after year by disastrous war. It is as if Charlemagne had survived to be defeated by the Northmen, and to witness the misery and shame that actually fell to the lot of his descendants.

Still, Louis XIV. had forty years of success; and from the permanence of their fruits, we may judge what the results would have been if the last fifteen years of his reign had been equally fortunate. Had it not been for Blenheim, all Europe might at this day suffer under the effect of French conquests resembling those of Alexander in extent, and those of the Romans in durability.

When Louis XIV. began to govern, he found all the materials for a strong government ready to his hand. Richelieu had completely tamed the turbulent spirit of the French nobility, and had subverted the "imperium in imperio" of the Huguenots. The faction of the Frondeurs in Mazarin's time had had the effect of making the Parisian Parliament utterly hateful and contemptible in the eyes of the nation. The Assemblies of the States-General were obsolete. The royal authority alone remained. The king was the state. Louis knew his position. He fearlessly avowed it, and he fearlessly acted up to it.*

Not only was his government a strong one, but the country which he governed was strong—strong in its geographical situation, in the compactness of its territory, in the number and martial spirit of its inhabitants, and in their complete and undivided nationality. Louis had neither a Hungary nor an Ireland in his dominions. The civil war in the Cevennes was caused solely by his own persecuting intolerance; and that did not occur till late in his reign, when old age made his bigotry more gloomy, and had given fanaticism the mastery over prudence.

Like Napoleon in after times, Louis XIV. saw clearly that the great wants of France were "ships, colonies, and commerce." But Louis did more than see these wants; by the aid of his great minister, Colbert, he supplied them. One of the surest proofs of the

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* "Quand Louis XIV. dit, 'L'Etat, c'est moi.' Il n'y eut dans cette parole ni enflure, ni vantere, mais la simple enonciation d'ur fait."—MICHELET *Histoire Moderne*, vol. ii., p. 106.

genius of Louis was his skill in finding out genius in others, and his promptness in calling it into action. Under him, Louvois organized, Turenne, Conde, Villars, and Berwick led the armies of France, and Vauban fortified her frontiers. Throughout his reign, French diplomacy was marked by skilfulness and activity, and also by comprehensive far-sightedness, such as the representatives of no other nation possessed. Guizot's testimony to the vigor that was displayed through every branch of Louis XIV.'s government, and to the extent to which France at present is indebted to him, is remarkable. He says that, "taking the public services of every kind, the finances, the departments of roads and public works, the military administration, and all the establishments which belong to every branch of administration, there is not one that will not be found to have had its origin, its development, or its greatest perfection under the reign of Louis XIV."* And he points out to us that "the government of Louis XIV. was the first that presented itself to the eyes of Europe as a power acting upon sure grounds, which had not to dispute its existence with inward enemies, but was at ease as to its territory and its people, and solely occupied with the task of administering government properly so called. All the European governments had been previously thrown into incessant wars, which deprived them of all security as well as of all leisure, or so pestered by internal parties or antagonists that their time was passed in fighting for existence. The government of Louis XIV. was the first to appear as a busy, thriving administration of affairs, as a power at once definitive and progressive, which was not afraid to innovate, because it could reckon securely on the future. There have been, in fact, very few governments equally innovating. Compare it with a government of the same nature, the unmixed monarchy of Philip II. in Spain; it was more absolute than that of Louis XIV., and yet it was less regular and tranquil. How did Philip II. succeed in establishing absolute power in Spain? By stifling all activity in the country, opposing himself to every species of amelioration, and rendering the state of Spain completely stagnant. The government of Louis XIV., on the contrary, exhibited alacrity for all sorts of innovations, and showed itself favorable to the progress of letters, arts, wealth—in short, of civilization. This was the veritable cause of its preponderance in Europe, which arose to such a pitch, that it became the type of a government not only to sovereigns, but also to nations, during the seventeenth century."

While France was thus strong and united in herself, and ruled by a martial, an ambitious, and (with all his faults) an enlightened and high-spirited sovereign, what European power was there fit to cope with her or keep her in check?

"As to Germany, the ambitious projects of the German branch

* "History of European Civilization," Lecture 18.



of Austria had been entirely defeated, the peace of the empire had been restored, and almost a new constitution formed, or an old revived, by the treaties of Westphalia; *nay, the imperial eagle was not only fallen, but her wings were clipped.*"*

As to Spain, the Spanish branch of the Austrian house had sunk equally low. Philip II. left his successors a ruined monarchy. He left them something worse; he left them his example and his principles of government, founded in ambition, in pride, in ignorance, in bigotry, and all the pedantry of state.†

It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, that France, in the first war of Louis XIV., despised the opposition of both branches of the once predominant house of Austria. Indeed, in Germany, the French king acquired allies among the princes of the empire against the emperor himself. He had a still stronger support in Austria's misgovernment of her own subjects. The words of Bolingbroke on this are remarkable, and some of them sound as if written within the last three years. Bolingbroke says, "It was not merely the want of cordial co-operation among the princes of the empire that disabled the emperor from acting with vigor in the cause of his family then, nor that has rendered the house of Austria a dead weight upon all her allies ever since. Bigotry, and its inseparable companion, cruelty, as well as the tyranny and avarice of the court of Vienna, created in those days, and has maintained in ours, almost a perpetual diversion of the imperial arms from all effectual opposition to France. *I mean to speak of the troubles in Hungary. Whatever they became in their progress, they were caused originally by the usurpations and persecutions of the emperor; and when the Hungarians were called rebels first, they were called so for no other reason than this, that they would not be slaves.* The dominion of the emperor being less supportable than that of the Turks, this unhappy people opened a door to the latter to infest the empire, instead of making their country what it had been before, a barrier against the Ottoman power. France became a sure though secret ally of the Turks as well as the Hungarians, and has found her account in it by keeping the emperor in perpetual alarms on that side, while she has ravaged the empire and the Low Countries on the other."‡

If, after having seen the imbecility of Germany and Spain

* Bolingbroke, vol. ii., p. 378. Lord Bolingbroke's "Letters on the Use of History," and his "Sketch of the History and State of Europe," abound with remarks on Louis XIV. and his contemporaries, of which the substance is as sound as the style is beautiful. Unfortunately, like all his other works, they contain also a large proportion of sophistry and misrepresentation. The best test to use before we adopt any opinion or assertion of Bolingbroke's, is to consider whether in writing it he was thinking either of Sir Robert Walpole or of Revealed Religion. When either of these objects of his hatred was before his mind, he scrupled at no artifice or exaggeration that might serve the purpose of his malignity. On most other occasions he may be followed with advantage, as he always may be read with pleasure.

† Bolingbroke, vol. ii., p. 378. ‡ Bolingbroke, vol. ii., p. 397.

against the France of Louis XIV., we turn to the two only remaining European powers of any importance at that time, to England and to Holland, we find the position of our own country as to European politics, from 1660 to 1688, most painful to contemplate; nor is our external history during the last twelve years of the eighteenth century by any means satisfactory to national pride, though it is infinitely less shameful than that of the preceding twenty-eight years. From 1660 to 1668, "England, by the return of the Stuarts, was reduced to a nullity." The words are Michelet's,* and, though severe, they are just. They are, in fact, not severe enough; for when England, under her restored dynasty of the Stuarts, did not take any part in European politics, her conduct, or rather her king's conduct, was almost invariably wicked and dishonorable.

Bolingbroke rightly says that, previous to the revolution of 1688, during the whole progress that Louis XIV. made toward acquiring such exhorbitant power as gave him well-grounded hopes of acquiring at last to his family the Spanish monarchy, England had been either an idle spectator of what passed on the Continent, or a faint and uncertain ally against France, or a warm and sure ally on her side, or a partial mediator between her and the powers confederated together in their common defense. But though the court of England submitted to abet the usurpations of France, and the King of England stooped to be her pensioner, the crime was not national. On the contrary, the nation cried out loudly against it even while it was committing.†

Holland alone, of all the European powers, opposed from the very beginning a steady and uniform resistance to the ambition and power of the French king. It was against Holland that the fiercest attacks of France were made, and, though often apparently on the eve of complete success, they were always ultimately baffled by the stubborn bravery of the Dutch, and the heroism of their great leader, William of Orange. When he became King of England, the power of this country was thrown decidedly into the scale against France; but though the contest was thus rendered less unequal, though William acted throughout "with invincible firmness, like a patriot and a hero,"‡ France had the general superiority in every war and in every treaty; and the commencement of the eighteenth century found the last league against her dissolved, all the forces of the confederates against her dispersed, and many disbanded; while France continued armed, with her veteran forces by sea and land increased, and held in readiness to act on all sides, whenever the opportunity should arise for seizing on the great prizes which, from the very beginning of his reign, had never been lost sight of by her king.

* "Histoire Moderne," vol. ii., p. 106. † Bolingbroke, vol. ii., 418
‡ Ibid., p. 404.



This is not the place for any narrative of the first essay which Louis XIV. made of his power in the war of 1667; of his rapid conquest of Flanders and Franche-Comte; of the treaty of Aixla Chapelle, which "was nothing more than a composition between the bully and the bullied"* of his attack on Holland in 1672; of the districts and the barrier towns of the Spanish Netherlands, which were secured to him by the treaty of Nimeguen in 1678; of how, after this treaty, he "continued to vex both Spain and the empire, and to extend his conquests in the Low Countries and on the Rhine, both by the pen and the sword; how he took Luxembourg by force, stole Strasburg, and bought Casal;" of how the league of Augsburg was formed against him in 1686, and the election of William of Orange to the English throne in 1688 gave a new spirit to the opposition which France encountered; of the long and checkered war that followed, in which the French armies were generally victorious on the Continent, though his fleet were beaten at La Hogue, and his dependent, James II., was defeated at the Boyne; or of the treaty of Ryswick, which left France in possession of Roussillon, Artois, and Strasburg, which gave Europe no security against her claims on the Spanish succession, and which Louis regarded as a mere truce, to gain breathing-time before a more decisive struggle. It must be borne in mind that the ambition of Louis in these wars was two-fold. It had its immediate and its ulterior objects. Its immediate object was to conquer and annex to France the neighboring provinces and towns that were most convenient for the increase of her strength, but the ulterior object of Louis, from the time of his marriage to the Spanish Infanta in 1659, was to acquire for the house of Bourbon the whole empire of Spain. A formal renunciation of all right to the Spanish succession had been made at the time of the marriage; but such renunciations were never of any practical effect, and many casuists and jurists of the age even held them to be intrinsically void. As the time passed on, and the prospect of Charles II. of Spain dying without lineal heirs became more and more certain, so did the claims of the house of Bourbon to the Spanish crown after his death become matters of urgent interest to French ambition on the one hand, and to the other powers of Europe on the other. At length the unhappy King of Spain died. By his will he appointed Philip, duke of Anjou, one of Louis XIV.'s grandsons, to succeed him on the throne of Spain, and strictly forbade any partition of his dominions. Louis well knew that a general European war would follow if he accepted for his house the crown thus bequeathed. But he had been preparing for this crisis throughout his reign. He sent his grandson into Spain as King Philip V. of that country, addressing to him, on his departure, the memorable words, "There are no longer any Pyrenees."

* Ibid., p. 590.

The empire, which now received the grandson of Louis as its king, comprised besides Spain itself, the strongest part of the Netherlands, Sardinia, Sicily, Naples, the principality of Milan, and other possessions in Italy, the Philippines and Manilla Islands in Asia, and in the New World, besides California and Florida, the greatest part of Central and of Southern America. Philip was well received in Madrid, where he was crowned as King Philip V. in the beginning of 1701. The distant portions of his empire sent in their adhesion; and the house of Bourbon, either by its French or Spanish troops, now had occupation both of the kingdom of Francis I., and of the fairest and amplest portions of the empire of the great rival of Francis, Charles V.

Loud was the wrath of Austria, whose princes were the rival claimants of the Bourbons for the empire of Spain. The indignation of our William III., though not equally loud, was far more deep and energetic. By his exertions, a league against the house of Bourbon was formed between England, Holland, and the Austrian emperor, which was subsequently joined by the kings of Portugal and Prussia, by the Duke of Savoy, and by Denmark. Indeed, the alarm throughout Europe was now general and urgent. It was evident that Louis aimed at consolidating France and the Spanish dominions into one preponderating empire. At the moment when Philip was departing to take possession of Spain, Louis had issued letters-patent in his favor to the effect of preserving his rights to the throne of France. And Louis had himself obtained possession of the important frontier of the Spanish Netherlands with its numerous fortified cities, which were given up to his troops under pretense of securing them for the young King of Spain. Whether the formal union of the two crowns was likely to take place speedily or not, it was evident that the resources of the whole Spanish monarchy were now virtually at the French king's disposal.

The peril that seemed to menace the empire, England, Holland, and the other independent powers is well summed up by Alison. "Spain had threatened the liberties of Europe in the end of the sixteenth century. France had all but overthrown them in the close of the seventeenth. What hope was there of there being able to make head against them both, united under such a monarch as Louis XIV.?"*

Our knowledge of the decayed state into which the Spanish power had fallen ought not make us regard their alarms as chimerical. Spain possessed enormous resources, and her strength was capable of being regenerated by a vigorous ruler. We should remember what Alberoni effected even after the close of the war of Succession. By what that minister did in a few years, we may judge what Louis XIV. would have done in restoring the mari-

* "Military History of the Duke of Marlborough," p. 32.



time and military power of that great country, which nature had so largely gifted, and which man's misgovernment has so debased.

The death of King William, on the 8th of March, 1702, at first seemed likely to paralyze the league against France; "for, notwithstanding the ill success with which he made war generally, he was looked upon as the sole center of union that could keep together the great confederacy then forming; and how much the French feared from his life had appeared a few years before, in the extravagant and indecent joy they expressed on a false report of his death. A short time showed how vain the fears of some, and the hope of others were."* Queen Anne, within three days after her accession, went down to the House of Lords, and there declared her resolution to support the measures planned by her predecessor, who had been "the great support, not only of these kingdoms, but of all Europe." Anne was married to Prince George of Denmark, and by her accession to the English throne the confederacy against Louis obtained the aid of the troops of Denmark; but Anne's strong attachment to one of her female friends led to far more important advantages to the anti-Gallican confederacy than the acquisition of many armies, for it gave them MARLBOROUGH as their captain general.

There are few successful commanders on whom France has shone so unwillingly as upon John Churchill, duke of Marlborough, prince of the Holy Roman Empire, victor of Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, captor of Liege, Bonn, Limburg, Landau, Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, Oudenarde, Ostend, Menin, Dendermonde, Ath, Lille, Tournay, Mons, Dounay, Aire, Bethune, and Bouchain; who never fought a battle that he did not win, and never besieged a place that he did not take. Marlborough's own character is the cause of this. Military glory may, and too often does, dazzle both contemporaries and posterity, until the crimes as well as the vices of heroes are forgotten. But even a few stains of personal meanness will dim a soldier's reputation irreparably; and Marlborough's faults were of a peculiarly base and mean order. Our feelings toward historical personages are in this respect like our feelings toward private acquaintances. There are actions of that shabby nature, that however much they may be outweighed by a man's good deeds on a general estimate of his character, we never can feel any cordial liking for the person who has once been guilty of them. Thus, with respect to the Duke of Marlborough, it goes against our feelings to admire the man who owed his first advancement in life to the court favor which he and his family acquired through his sister becoming one of the mistresses of the Duke of York. It is repulsive to know that Marlborough laid the foundation of his wealth by being the paid lover of one of the fair

* Bolingbroke, vol. ii., 445.

and frail favorites of Charles II.* His treachery, and his ingratitude to his patron and benefactor, James II., stand out in dark relief, even in that age of thankless perfidy. He was almost equally disloyal to his new master, King William; and a more un-English act cannot be recorded than Godolphin's and Marlborough's betrayal to the French court in 1694 of the expedition then designed against Brest, a piece of treachery which caused some hundreds of English soldiers and sailors to be helplessly slaughtered on the beach in Cameret Bay.

It is, however, only in his military career that we have now to consider him; and there are very few generals, of either ancient or modern times, whose campaigns will bear a comparison with those of Marlborough, either for the masterly skill with which they were planned, or for the bold yet prudent energy with which each plan was carried into execution. Marlborough had served while young under Turenne, and had obtained the marked praise of this great tactician. It would be difficult, indeed, to name a single quality which a general ought to have, and with which Marlborough was not eminently gifted. What principally attracted the notice of contemporaries was the imperturbable evenness of his spirit. Voltaire† says of him.

"He had, to a degree above all other generals of his time, that calm courage in the midst of tumult, that serenity of soul in danger, which the English call a *cool head* [que les Anglais appellent *cold head, tete froide*], and it was, perhaps, this quality, the greatest gift of nature for command, which formerly gave the English so many advantages over the French in the plains of Cressy, Poictiers, and Agincourt."

King William's knowledge of Marlborough's high abilities, though he knew his faithlessness equally well, is said to have caused that sovereign in his last illness to recommend Marlborough to his successor as the fittest person to command her armies; but Marlborough's favor with the new queen, by means of his wife, was so high, that he was certain of obtaining the highest employment; and the war against Louis opened to him a glorious theater for the display of those military talents, which he had previously only had an opportunity of exercising in a subordinate character, and on far less conspicuous scenes.

He was not only made captain general of the English forces at home and abroad, but such was the authority of England in the council of the Grand Alliance, and Marlborough was so skilled in winning golden opinions from all whom he met with, that on his reaching the Hague, he was received with transports of joy by the

* Marlborough might plead the example of Sylla in this. Compare the anecdote in Plutarch about Sylla when young and Nicopolis, κοινῆς μέν, εὐπόρον δέ γυναικός, and the anecdote about Marlborough and the Duchess of Cleveland, told by Lord Chesterfield, and cited in Macaulay's "History," vol. i., p. 461.

† "Siecle de Louis Quatorze."



Dutch, and it was agreed by the heads of that republic, and the minister of the emperor, that Marlborough should have the chief command of all the allied armies.

It must, indeed, in justice to Marlborough, be borne in mind, that mere military skill was by no means all that was required of him in his arduous and invidious station. Had it not been for his unrivalled patience and sweetness of temper, and his marvelous ability in discerning the character of those whom he had to act with, his intuitive perception of those who were to be thoroughly trusted, and of those who were to be amused with the mere semblance of respect and confidence; had not Marlborough possessed and employed, while at the head of the allied armies, all the qualifications of a polished courtier and a great statesman, he never would have led the allied armies to the Danube. The confederacy would not have held together for a single year. His greatest political adversary, Bolingbroke, does him ample justice here. Bolingroke, after referring to the loss which King William's death seemed to inflict on the cause of the allies, observes that, "By his death, the Duke of Marlborough was raised to the head of the army, and, indeed, of the confederacy; where he, a new, a private man, a subject, acquired by merit and by management a more deciding influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain had given to King William. Not only all the parts of that vast machine, the Grand Alliance, were kept more compact and entire, but a more rapid and vigorous motion was given to the whole; and, instead of languishing and disastrous campaigns, we saw every scene of the war full of action. All those wherein he appeared, and many of those wherein he was not then an actor, but abettor, however, of their action, were crowned with the most triumphant success.

"I take with pleasure this opportunity of doing justice to that great man, whose faults I knew, whose virtues I admired; and whose memory, as the greatest general and the greatest minister that our country, or perhaps any other, has produced, I honor."*

War was formally declared by the allies against France on the 4th of May, 1702. The principal scenes of its operation were, at first, Flanders, the Upper Rhine, and North Italy. Marlborough headed the allied troops in Flanders during the first two years of the war, and took some towns from the enemy, but nothing decisive occurred. Nor did any actions of importance take place during this period between the rival armies in Italy. But in the center of that line from north to south, from the mouth of the Scheldt to the mouth of the Po, along which the war was carried on, the generals of Louis XIV. acquired advantages in 1703 which threatened one chief member of the Grand Alliance with utter destruction. France had obtained the important assistance

* Bolingbroke, vol. ii., p. 445.

of Bavaria as her confederate in the war. The elector of this powerful German state made himself master of the strong fortress of Ulm, and opened a communication with the French armies on the Upper Rhine. By this junction, the troops of Louis were enabled to assail the emperor in the very heart of Germany. In the autumn of the year 1703, the combined armies of the elector and French king completely defeated the Imperialists in Bavaria: and in the following winter they made themselves masters of the important cities of Augsburg and Passau. Meanwhile the French army of the Upper Rhine and Moselle had beaten the allied armies opposed to them, and taken Treves with Landau. At the same time, the discontents in Hungary with Austria again broke out into open insurrection, so as to distract the attention and complete the terror of the emperor and his council at Vienna.

Louis XIV. ordered the next campaign to be commenced by his troops on a scale of grandeur and with a boldness of enterprise such as even Napoleon's military schemes have seldom equalled. On the extreme left of the line of war, in the Netherlands, the French armies were to act only on the defensive. The fortresses in the hands of the French there were so many and so strong, that no serious impression seemed likely to be made by the allies on the French frontier in that quarter during one campaign, and that one campaign was to give France such triumphs elsewhere as would (it was hoped) determine the war. Large detachments were therefore to be made from the French force in Flanders, and they were to be led by Marshal Villeroy to the Moselle and Upper Rhine. The French army already in the neighborhood of those rivers was to march under Marshal Tallard through the Black Forest and join the Elector of Bavaria, and the French troops that were already with the elector under Marshal Marsin. Meanwhile the French army of Italy was to advance through the Tyrol into Austria, and the whole forces were to combine between the Danube and the Inn. A strong body of troops was to be dispatched into Hungary, to assist and organize the insurgents in that kingdom; and the French grand army of the Danube was then in collected and irresistible might to march upon Vienna, and dictate terms of peace to the emperor. High military genius was shown in the formation of this plan, but it was met and baffled by a genius higher still.

Marlborough had watched, with the deepest anxiety, the progress of the French arms on the Rhine and in Bavaria, and he saw the futility of carrying on a war of posts and sieges in Flanders, while death-blows to the empire were being dealt on the Danube. He resolved, therefore, to let the war in Flanders languish for a year, while he moved with all the disposable forces that he could collect to the central scenes of decisive operations. Such a march was in itself difficult; but Marlborough had, in the first instance, to overcome the still greater difficulty of obtaining the consent and cheerful co-operation of the allies, especially of the Dutch, whose



frontier it was proposed thus to deprive of the larger part of the force which had hitherto been its protection: Fortunately, among the many slothful, the many foolish, the many timid, and the not few treacherous rulers, statesmen, and generals of different nations with whom he had to deal, there were two men, eminent both in ability and integrity, who entered fully into Marlborough's projects, and who, from the stations which they occupied, were enabled materially to forward them. One of these was the Dutch statesman Heinsius, who had been the cordial supporter of King William, and who now, with equal zeal and good faith, supported Marlborough in the councils of the allies; the other was the celebrated general, Prince Eugene, whom the Austrian cabinet had recalled from the Italian frontier to take the command of one of the emperor's armies in Germany. To these two great men, and a few more, Marlborough communicated his plan freely and unreservedly; but to the general councils of his allies he only disclosed part of his daring scheme. He proposed to the Dutch that he should march from Flanders to the Upper Rhine and Moselle with the British troops and part of the foreign auxiliaries, and commence vigorous operations against the French armies in that quarter, while General Auverquerque, with the Dutch and the remainder of the auxiliaries, maintained a defensive war in the Netherlands. Having with difficulty obtained the consent of the Dutch to this portion of his project, he exercised the same diplomatic zeal, with the same success, in urging the King of Prussia and other princes of the empire, to increase the number of the troops which they supplied, and to post them in places convenient for his own intended movements.

Marlborough commenced his celebrated march on the 19th of May. The army which he was to lead had been assembled by his brother, General Churchill, at Bedburg, not far from Maestricht, on the Meuse: it included sixteen thousand English troops, and consisted of fifty-one battalions of foot, and ninety-two squadrons of horse. Marlborough was to collect and join with him on his march the troops of Prussia, Luneburg, and Hesse, quartered on the Rhine, and eleven Dutch battalions that were stationed at Rothweil.* He had only marched a single day, when the series of interruptions, complaints, and requisitions from the other leaders of the allies began, to which he seemed subjected throughout his enterprise, and which would have caused its failure in the hands of any one not gifted with the firmness and the exquisite temper of Marlborough. One specimen of these annoyances and of Marlborough's mode of dealing with them may suffice. On his encamping at Kupen on the 20th, he recieved an express from Auverquerque pressing him to halt, because Villeroy, who commanded the French army in Flanders, had quitted the lines which he had been occupying, and crossed the Meuse at Namur with thirty-six battal-

* Coxe's "Life of Marlborough."

ions and forty-five squadrons, and was threatening the town of Huys. At the same time Marlborough received letters from the Margrave of Baden and Count Wratislaw, who commanded the Imperialist forces at Stollhoffen, near the left bank of the Rhine, stating that Tallard had made a movement as if intending to cross the Rhine, and urging him to hasten his march towards the lines of Stollhoffen. Marlborough was not diverted by these applications from the prosecution of his grand design. Conscious that the army of Villeroy would be too much reduced to undertake offensive operations, by the detachments which had already been made toward the Rhine, and those which must follow his own march, he halted only a day to quiet the alarms of Auverquerque. To satisfy also the margrave, he ordered the troops of Hompesch and Bulow to draw toward Philipsburg, though with private injunctions not to proceed beyond a certain distance. He even exacted a promise to the same effect from Count Wratislaw, who at the juncture arrived at the camp to attend him during the whole campaign.*

Marlborough reached the Rhine at Coblentz, where he crossed that river, and then marched along its left bank to Broubach and Mentz. His march, though rapid, was admirably conducted, so as to save the troops from all unnecessary fatigue; ample supplies of provisions were ready, and the most perfect discipline was maintained. By degrees Marlborough obtained more re-enforcements from the Dutch and the other confederates, and he also was left more at liberty by them to follow his own course. Indeed before even a blow was struck, his enterprise had paralyzed the enemy, and had materially released Austria from the pressure of the war. Villeroy, with his detachments from the French Flemish army, was completely bewildered by Marlborough's movements; and, unable to divine where it was that the English general meant to strike his blow, wasted away the early part of the summer between Flanders and the Moselle without effecting any thing.†

Marshal Tallard who commanded forty-five thousand French at Strasburg, and who had been destined by Louis to march early in the year into Bavaria, thought that Marlborough's march along the Rhine was preliminary to an attack upon Alsace; and the Marshal therefore kept his forty-five thousand men back in order to protect France in that quarter. Marlborough skilfully encouraged his apprehensions, by causing a bridge to constructed across the Rhine at Philipsburg, and by making the Landgrave of Hesse advance his artillery at Manheim, as if for a siege at Landau. Meanwhile the Elector of Bavaria and Marshal Marsin, suspecting that Marlborough's design might be what it really proved to be, forebode

* Coxe.

† "Marshal Villeroy," says Voltaire, "who had wished to follow Marlborough on his first marches, suddenly lost sight of him altogether, and only learned where he really was on hearing of his victory at Donawert." *Siecle de Louis XIV.*



to press upon the Austrians opposed to them, or to send troops into Hungary; and they kept back so as to secure their communications with France. Thus, when Marlborough, at the beginning of June, left the Rhine and marched for the Danube, the numerous hostile armies were uncombined, and unable to check him.

"With such skill and science had this enterprise been concerted, that at the very moment when it assumed a specific direction, the enemy was no longer enabled to render it abortive. As the march was now to be bent toward the Danube, notice was given for the Prussians, Palatines, and Hessians, who were stationed on the Rhine, to order their march so as to join the main body in its progress. At the same time, directions were sent to accelerate the advance of the Danish auxiliaries, who were marching from the Netherlands."*

Crossing the River Neckar, Marlborough marched in a southeastern direction to Mundelshene, where he had his first personal interview with Prince Eugene, who was destined to be his colleague on so many glorious fields. Thence, through a difficult and dangerous country, Marlborough continued his march against the Bavarians, whom he encountered on the 2d of July on the heights of the Schullenberg, near Donauwert. Marlborough stormed their intrenched camp, crossed the Danube, took several strong places in Bavaria, and made himself completely master of the elector's dominions, except the fortified cities of Munich and Augsburg. But the elector's army, though defeated at Donauwert, was still numerous and strong: and at last Marshal Tallard, when thoroughly apprised of the real nature of Marlborough's movements, crossed the Rhine; and being suffered, through the supineness of the German General at Stollhoffen, to march without loss through the Black Forest, he united his powerful army at Biberbach, near Augsburg, with that of the elector and the French troops under Marshal Marsin, who had previously been co-operating with the Bavarians.

On the other hand, Marlborough recrossed the Danube, and on the 11th of August united his army with the Imperialist forces under Prince Eugene. The combined armies occupied a position near Hochstadt, a little higher up the left bank of the Danube than Donauwert, the scene of Marlborough's recent victory, and almost exactly on the ground where Marshal Villars and the elector had defeated an Austrian army in the preceding year. The French marshals and the elector were now in position a little farther to the east, between Blenheim and Lutzingen, and with the little stream of the Nebel between them and the troops of Marlborough and Eugene. The Gallo-Bavarian army consisted of about sixty thousand men, and they had sixty-one pieces of artillery. The army of the allies was about fifty-six thousand strong with fifty-two guns.

* Coxe.

Although the French army of Italy had been unable to penetrate into Austria, and although the masterly strategy of Marlborough had hitherto warded off the destruction with which the cause of the allies seemed menaced at the beginning of the campaign, the peril was still most serious. It was absolutely necessary for Marlborough to attack the enemy before Villeroy should be roused into action. There was nothing to stop that general and his army from marching into Franconia, whence the allies drew their principal supplies; and besides thus distressing them, he might, by marching on and joining his army to those of Tallard and the elector, form a mass which would overwhelm the force under Marlborough and Eugene. On the other hand, the chances of a battle seemed perilous, and the fatal consequences of a defeat were certain. The disadvantage of the allies in point of number was not very great, but still it was not to be disregarded; and the advantage which the enemy seemed to have in the composition of their troops was striking. Tallard and Marsin had forty-five thousand Frenchmen under them, all veterans and all trained to act together; the elector's own troops also were good soldiers. Marlborough, like Wellington at Waterloo, headed an army, of which the larger proportion consisted not of English, but of men of many different nations and many different languages. He was also obliged to be the assailant in the action, and thus to expose his troops to comparatively heavy loss at the commencement of the battle, while the enemy would fight under the protection of the villages and lines which they were actively engaged in strengthening. The consequences of a defeat of the confederated army must have broken up the Grand Alliance, and realized the proudest hopes of the French king. Mr. Alison, in his admirable military history of the Duke of Marlborough, has truly stated the effects which would have taken place if France had been successful in the war; and when the position of the confederates at the time when Blenheim was fought is remembered—when we recollect the exhaustion of Austria, the menacing insurrection of Hungary, the feuds and jealousies of the German princes, the strength and activity of the Jacobite party in England, and the imbecility of nearly all the Dutch statesmen of the time, and the weakness of Holland if deprived of her allies, we may adopt his words in speculating on what would have ensued if France had been victorious in the battle, and "if a power, animated by the ambition, guided by the fanaticism, and directed by the ability of that of Louis XIV., had gained the ascendency in Europe. Beyond all question, a universal despotic dominion would have been established over the bodies, a cruel spiritual thraldom over the minds of men. France and Spain united under Bourbon princes and in a close family alliance—the empire Charlemagne with that of Charles V.—the power which revoked the Edict of Nantes and perpetrated the massacre of St. Bartholomew, with that which banished the Moriscoes and established the Inquisition, would have proved irresistible, and beyond example destructive to the best interests of mankind.



"The Protestants might have been driven, like the pagan heathens of old by the son of Pepin, beyond the Elbe; the Stuart race, and with them Romish ascendency, might have been re-established in England; the fire lighted by Latimer and Ridley might have been extinguished in blood; and the energy breathed by religious freedom into the Anglo-Saxon race might have expired. The destinies of the world would have been changed. Europe, instead of a variety of independent states, whose mutual hostility kept alive courage, while their national rivalry simulated talent, would have sunk into the slumber attendant on universal dominion. The colonial empire of England would have withered away and perished, as that of Spain has done in the grasp of the Inquisition. The Anglo-Saxon race would have been arrested in its mission to overspread the earth and subdue it. The centralized despotism of the Roman empire would have been renewed on Continental Europe; the chains of Romish tyranny, and with them the general infidelity of France before the Revolution, would have extinguished or perverted thought in the British Islands."*

Marlborough's words at the council of war, when a battle was resolved on, are remarkable, and they deserve recording. We know them on the authority of his chaplain, Mr. (afterward Bishop) Hare, who accompanied him throughout the campaign, and in whose journal the biographers of Marlborough have found many of their best materials. Marlborough's words to the officers who remonstrated with him on the seeming temerity of attacking the enemy in their position were, "I know the danger, yet a battle is absolutely necessary, and I rely on the bravery and discipline of the troops, which will make amends for our disadvantages." In the evening orders were issued for a general engagement, and received by the army with an alacrity which justified his confidence.

The French and Bavarians were posted behind a little stream called the Nebel, which runs almost from north to south into the Danube immediately in front of the village of Blenheim. The Nebel flows along a little valley, and the French occupied the rising ground to the west of it. The village of Blenheim was the extreme right of their position, and the village of Lutzingen, about three miles north of Blenheim, formed their left. Beyond Lutzingen are the rugged high grounds of the Godd Berg and Eich Berg, on the skirts of which some detachments were posted, so as to secure the Gallo-Bavarian position from being turned on the left flank. The Danube secured their right flank; and it was only in

* Alison's "Life of Marlborough," p. 243.

front that they could be attacked. The villages of Blenheim and Lutzingen had been strongly palisaded and intrenched. Marshal Tallard, who held the chief command, took his station at Blenheim; the elector and Marshal Marsin commanded on the left. Tallard garrisoned Blenheim with twenty-six battalions of French infantry and twelve squadrons of French cavalry. Marsin and the elector had twenty-two battalions of infantry and thirty-six squadrons of cavalry in front of the village of Lutzingen. The center was occupied by fourteen battalions of infantry, including the celebrated Irish brigade. These were posted in the little hamlet of Oberglau, which lies somewhat nearer to Lutzingen than to Blenheim. Eighty squadrons of cavalry and seven battalions of foot were ranged between Oberglau and Blenheim. Thus the French position was very stong at each extremity, but was comparatively weak in the center. Tallard seems to have relied on the swampy state of the part of the valley that reaches from below Oberglau to Blenheim for preventing any serious attack on this part of his line.

The army of the allies was formed into two great divisions, the largest being commanded by the duke in person, and being destined to act against Tallard, while Prince Eugene led the other division, which consisted chiefly of cavalry, and was intended to oppose the enemy under Marsin and the elector. As they approached the enemy, Marlborough's troops formed the left and the center, while Eugene's formed the right of the entire army. Early in the morning of the 13th of August, the allies left their own camp and marched toward the enemy. A thick haze covered the ground, and it was not until the allied right and center had advanced nearly within cannon shot of the enemy that Tallard was aware of their approach. He made his preparations with what haste he could, and about eight o'clock a heavy fire of artillery was opened from the French right on the advancing left wing of the British. Marlborough ordered up some of his batteries to reply to it, and while the columns that were to form the allied left and center deployed, and took up their proper stations in the line, a warm cannonade was kept up by the guns on both sides.

The ground which Eugene's columns had to traverse was peculiarly difficult, especially for the passage of the artillery, and it was nearly mid-day before he could get his troops into line opposite to Lutzingen. During this interval, Marlborough ordered divine service to be performed by the chaplains at the head of each regiment, and then rode along the lines, and found both officers and men in the highest spirits, and waiting impatiently for the signal for the attack. At length an aide-de-camp galloped up from the right with the welcome news that Eugene was ready. Marlborough instantly sent Lord Cutts, with a strong brigade of infantry, to assault the village of Blenheim, while he himself led the main body down the eastward slope of the valley of



the Nebel, and prepared to effect the passage of the stream.

The assault on Blenheim, though bravely made, was repulsed with severe loss; and Marlborough, finding how strongly that village was garrisoned, desisted from any farther attempts to carry it, and bent all his energies to breaking the enemy's line between Blenheim and Oberglau. Some temporary bridges had been prepared, and planks and fascines had been collected; and by the aid of these, and a little stone bridge which crossed the Nebel, near a hamlet called Unterglau, that lay in the center of the valley, Marlborough succeeded in getting several squadrons across the Nebel, though it was divided into several branches, and the ground between them was soft, and, in places, little better than a mere marsh. But the French artillery was not idle. The cannon balls plunged incessantly among the advancing squadrons of the allies, and bodies of French cavalry rode frequently down from the western ridge, to charge them before they had time to form on the firm ground. It was only by supporting his men by fresh troops, and by bringing up infantry, who checked the advance of the enemy's horse by their steady fire, that Marlborough was able to save his army in this quarter from a repulse, which, succeeding the failure of the attack upon Blenheim, would probably have been fatal to the allies. By degrees, his cavalry struggled over the blood-stained streams; the infantry were also now brought across, so as to keep in check the French troops who held Blenheim, and who, when no longer assailed in front, had begun to attack the allies on their left with considerable effect.

Marlborough had thus at last succeeded in drawing up the whole left wing of his army beyond the Nebel, and was about to press forward with it, when he was called away to another part of the field by a disaster that had befallen his center. The Prince of Holstein Beck had, with eleven Hanoverian battalions, passed the Nebel opposite to Oberglau, when he was charged and utterly routed by the Irish brigade which held that village. The Irish drove the Hanoverians back with heavy slaughter, broke completely through the line of the allies, and nearly achieved a success as brilliant as that which the same brigade afterward gained at Fontenoy. But at Blenheim their ardor in pursuit led them too far. Marlborough came up in person, and dashed in upon the exposed flank of the brigade with some squadrons of British cavalry. The Irish reeled back, and as they strove to regain the height of Oberglau, their column was raked through and through by the fire of three battalions of the allies, which Marlborough had summoned up from the reserve. Marlborough having re-established the order and communications of the allies in this quarter, now, as he returned to his own left wing, sent to learn how his colleague fared against Marsin and the elector, and to inform Eugene of his own success.

Eugene had hitherto not been equally fortunate. He had made three attacks on the enemy opposed to him, and had been thrice

driven back. It was only by his own desperate personal exertions, and the remarkable steadiness of the regiments of Prussian infantry which were under him, that he was to save his wing from being totally defeated. But it was on the southern part of the battle-field, on the ground which Marlborough had won beyond the Nebel with such difficulty, that the crisis of the battle was to be decided.

Like Hannibal, Marlborough relied principally on his cavalry for achieving his decisive successes, and it was by his cavalry that Blenheim, the greatest of his victories, was won. The battle had lasted till five in the afternoon. Marlborough had now eight thousand horsemen drawn up in two lines, and in the most perfect order for a general attack on the enemy's line along the space between Blenheim and Oberglau. The infantry was drawn up in battalions in their rear, so as to support them if repulsed, and to keep in check the large masses of the French that still occupied the village of Blenheim. Tallard now interlaced his squadrons of cavalry with battalions of infantry ; and Marlborough, by a corresponding movement, brought several regiments of infantry, and some pieces of artillery, to his front line at intervals between the bodies of horse. A little after five, Marlborough commenced the decisive movement, and the allied cavalry, strengthened and supported by foot and guns, advanced slowly from the lower ground near the Nebel up the slope to where the French cavalry, ten thousand strong, awaited them. On riding over the summit of the acclivity, the allies were received with so hot a fire from the French artillery and small arms, that at first the cavalry recoiled, but without abandoning the high ground. The guns and the infantry which they had brought with them maintained the contest with spirit and effect. The French fire seemed to slacken. Marlborough instantly ordered a charge along the line. The allied cavalry galloped forward at the enemy's squadrons, and the hearts of the French horsemen failed them. Discharging their carbines at an idle distance, they wheeled round and spurred from the field, leaving the nine infantry battalions of their comrades to be ridden down by the torrent of the allied cavalry. The battle was now won. Tallard and Marsin, severed from each other, thought only of retreat. Tallard drew up the squadrons of horse that he had left, in a line extended toward Blenheim, and sent orders to the infantry in that village to leave it and join him without delay. But, long ere his orders could be obeyed, the conquering squadrons of Marlborough had wheeled to the left and thundered down on the feeble array of the French marshal. Part of the force which Tallard had drawn up for this last effort was driven into the Danube ; part fled with their general to the village of Sonderheim, where they were soon surrounded by the victorious allies, and compelled to surrender. Meanwhile, Eugene had renewed his attack upon the Gallo-Bavarian left, and Marsin, finding his colleague utterly routed, and his own right flank uncovered, prepared to retreat. He and the elector succeeded in withdrawing a considerable part of their troops in tolerable order to Dillingen ; but the large body of French who garrisoned Blenheim were left exposed to certain destruction. Marlborough speedily occupied all the outlets from the village with his victorious troops, and then, collecting his artillery round it, he commenced a cannonade that speedily would have destroyed Blenheim itself and all who were in it. After several gallant but unsuccessful attempts to cut their way through the allies, the French in Blenheim were at length compelled to surrender at discretion ; and twenty-four battalions and twelve squadrons, with all their officers, laid down their arms, and became the captives of Marlborough.



"Such," says Voltaire, "was the celebrated battle which the French call the battle of Hochstet, the Germans Plentheim, and the English Blenheim. The conquerors had about five thousand killed and eight thousand wounded, the greater part being on the side of Prince Eugene. The French army was almost entirely destroyed : of sixty thousand men, so long victorious, there never reassembled more than twenty thousand effective. About twelve thousand killed, fourteen thousand prisoners, all the cannon, a prodigious number of colors and standards, all the tents and equipages, the general of the army, and one thousand two hundred officers of mark in the power of the conqueror, signalized that day!"

Ulm, Landau, Treves, and Traerbach surrendered to the allies before the close of the year. Bavaria submitted to the emperor, and the Hungarians laid down their arms. Germany was completely delivered from France, and the military ascendency of the arms of the allies was completely established. Throughout the rest of the war Louis fought only in defense. Blenheim had dissipated forever his once proud visions of almost universal conquest.

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### Synopsis of Events between the Battle of Blenheim, A.D. 1704, and the Battle of Pultowa, A.D. 1709.

A.D. 1705. The Archduke Charles lands in Spain with a small English army under Lord Peterborough, who takes Barcelona.

1706. Marlborough's victory at Ramillies.

1707. The English army in Spain is defeated at the battle of Almanza.

1708. Marlborough's victory at Oudenarde.