

with his own eyes. Blansac could no longer doubt. He returned, and submitted to his chief officers that, however frightful would be the impression upon the French nation that twenty-six battalions and twelve squadrons should have surrendered as prisoners of war, it was better to preserve so many brave men for the future service of their king. "This horrible capitulation," as St. Simon terms it, was forthwith signed. Marlborough was embarrassed by the number of his prisoners. In a few days he had more than twelve thousand on his hands; and he writes to sir Charles Hedges, "they are not only very troublesome, but oblige us to continue here, while we should be pursuing our blow and following the enemy."*

The post road from Ulm to Ratisbon traverses a part of the field of Blenheim. It "rests partly on a foundation of bones of men and horses, part of which were disinterred in constructing it a few years back."† This is more wholesale evidence of the mighty battle than when little Peterkin found "something large and round" beside the rivulet, and old Kaspar shook his head with a natural sigh:

" 'Tis some poor fellow's skull, said he,
Who fell in the great victory."‡

It is computed that the two armies of Marlborough and Eugene had eleven thousand men killed and wounded; and the armies of France and the elector, fourteen thousand. It was supposed that the total loss of the French and Bavarians in the battle, and during their retreat, amounted to forty thousand men including prisoners and deserters.§ The blow to the power of France was tremendous. All the prestige of her glories under Turenne and Luxembourg was gone. "There never," says Cunningham, "was a battle fought within the memory of man, wherein either the courage of the soldiers, or the prudence of the generals, were more conspicuous than on this day, which first ruined the French fortunes, and put a stop to their long course of victories." Louis received the fatal news on the 21st, but without any details. For six days he remained in uncertainty as to the real losses. "We were not used to misfortunes," says St. Simon. "The grief of the king at this disgrace and this loss, at the moment when he believed that the fate of Europe was in his hands, may be imagined. When he might have counted upon striking a decisive blow, he saw himself reduced to act simply upon the defensive."

* Dispatches, vol. i. p. 414.

† Murray's "Hand-Book of Southern Germany," p. 137.

‡ Southey, "Battle of Blenheim."

§ Dispatch of Cardonnell to Harley. Dispatches, vol. i. 409.

The day after a great victory rarely leaves the conqueror at his ease. Marlborough had no dread of a desperate enemy returning to a new contest. The French were flying through the Black Forest, and did not hold themselves safe until they had crossed the Rhine by the bridge of Strasburg. On the night of the battle the victors found a hundred slaughtered oxen in the French camp, with other food. On the 15th of August Marlborough was imploring the duke of Würtemberg to send him two hundred waggons to carry bread to the army, without which, he says, "we can neither stir nor remain where we are." The English soldiers, neither the oxen were devoured, could not subsist upon the herbs and vegetables that they found in the French tents. In a previous letter Marlborough had said to Godolphin, "Our greatest difficulty is, that of making our bread follow us; for the troops that I have the honour to command cannot subsist without it; and the Germans, that are used to starve, cannot advance without us." He had not only to feed his own camp, but had twelve thousand prisoners, who would be as clamorous under starvation as the English and Dutch. The 17th of August "was devoutly observed through the whole army, in returning thanks to Almighty God for his blessing upon the arms of the Allies."* The difficulties were speedily surmounted; and on the 20th the army was before Ulm. "We must not leave this city behind us," writes the provident general. "When we are masters of it, I believe the French will hardly attempt coming again into this country."† On the 12th of September Marlborough received the news that the garrison had capitulated. The Allies were then advancing to the siege of Landau, which the prince of Baden was to conduct, and Marlborough was to cover with his army, for Villeroy was hovering around, but would not come to battle. The defence of this strongly fortified place was very obstinate. On the 8th of November Marlborough writes to Harley, "our people are entire masters of the counterscarp, from whence we are now firing with near sixty pieces of cannon at the breach."‡ He was impatient to go to Berlin, to conclude an agreement with the king of Prussia for a large addition to the allied forces. Meanwhile he had concluded a treaty with the electress of Bavaria, who was left regent, by which she agreed that all her troops should be disbanded. Honours were coming thick upon the conqueror. He was admitted a prince of the Roman Empire by the emperor of Germany, and is addressed by him as "Most Illustrious Cousin and dear Prince." A principality was created for him. Leaving what he calls "this tedious siege" of

* Dispatches, vol. i. p. 417.

† *Ibid.*, p. 420.

‡ *Ibid.*, 531.

Landau, he posts to Berlin, and concludes his treaty with the king. On the 3rd of December he receives, at Hanover, the news of the capitulation of Landau. Trierbach, another strong place, also fell. On the 16th of December he is at the Hague, preparing to sail for England, with marshal Tallard and others, his distinguished prisoners. On the 22nd he embarked at Rotterdam; and on the 26th he dates from St. James's.

The duke of Marlborough took his seat on his arrival in the House of Peers. When he stood up to answer the congratulatory address of the Lord Keeper, who ascribed everything to the general, and nothing to his troops, he wisely and modestly replied: "My Lords, I am extremely sensible of the great honour your lordships are pleased to do me. I must beg, on this occasion, to do right to all the officers and soldiers I had the honour of having under my command. Next to the blessing of God, the good success of this campaign is owing to their extraordinary courage. I am sure it will be a great satisfaction, as well as an encouragement to the whole army, to find their services so favourably accepted." He replied in very similar terms to the complimentary address of the House of Commons. A reward more solid than congratulations was immediately bestowed upon him. Soon after the Commons had unanimously voted their Address, the queen sent a Message to the effect that her Majesty having taken into her consideration their Address, "relating to the great services performed by the duke of Marlborough, does incline to grant the interest of the Crown in the honour and manor of Woodstock, and hundred of Wootton, to him and his heirs."—desiring the assistance of the House to clear off the incumbrance of the property, the rents and profits having been granted for two lives. Upon this noble estate of Woodstock—the ancient palace of the Plantagenets—the favorite haunt of Chaucer—the retreat of Elizabeth in her early days of fear and sorrow—was built the palace of Blenheim.

Whilst Marlborough had been conducting his wonderful campaign of 1704, it had been felt by the violent Tory party in England that he had ceased to belong to them. The triumphant resistance to the power of France was not in harmony with their ancient hopes, which led them to look to some day when the great Louis should give them back a king with a more legitimate title, in their eyes, than any title that could be conferred by an Act of Settlement. The wife of Burnet had written to the duchess of Marlborough, after the news of the great day of Blenheim, that certain people said, "it was true a great many men were killed and taken, but that to the French king was no more than to take a bucket of water out

of a river." The duchess transmitted this to her lord, and he replied, "if they will allow me to draw one or two such buckets more, I should think we might then let the river run quietly, and not much apprehend its overflowing and destroying its neighbours."* With this manifestation of contempt, we nevertheless find the equability of the duke disturbed by the acrimony of the party at home, who were still powerful in the House of Commons. He writes to the duchess, in October, "I will endeavour to leave a good name behind me in countries that have hardly any blessing but that of not knowing the detested names of Whig and Tory. . . I shall certainly not care what any party thinks of me; being resolved to recommend myself to the people of England, by being, to the best of my understanding, in the true interest of my country." † When Marlborough came home he found the people of England ready enough to give him the heartiest welcome, without reference to the passionate quarrels of factions. The standards that had been taken in the campaign were carried in a grand military procession from the Tower to Westminster Hall, and there hung up, with the whole population of London shouting for Anne and Marlborough as a hundred and twenty pikemen each carried one of these tattered emblems of victory. When the hero was entertained by the City, the roofs and windows of the houses sent forth as hearty shouts of gratulation as when Raleigh and Drake went to St. Paul's to return thanks for the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The factions of the Commons cared nothing for a national triumph—they sought only the triumph of a party. They had for a third time brought forward the factious Bill against Occasional Conformity, before Marlborough returned home; and they had made the most strenuous efforts to tack it to a money bill which was to enable the war to be continued. The scheme was defeated. The tackers, as they were called, became ridiculous to the nation. The Commons then passed the Bill, without tacking it to a money bill. Marlborough arrived in time to vote against it in this amended form. It was thrown out by the Lords. On the 14th of March, the queen, in proroguing the Parliament, spoke of "unreasonable humour and animosity," and exhorted to prudence and moderation. "When this session," says Burnet, "and with it this Parliament, came to an end, it was no small blessing to the queen and to the nation, that they got well out of such hands. They had discovered, on many occasions, and very manifestly, what lay at bottom with most of them; but they had not skill enough to know how to manage their advantages, and to

* Coxe, vol. ii. pp. 42-44.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 45-47.

make use of their numbers. The constant successes with which God had blessed the queen's reign, put it out of their power to compass that which was aimed at by them; the forcing a peace, and of consequence the delivering all up to France."* Marlborough, though he still affected to be of no faction, saw the time had passed by when he could have the support of the party which the queen had first marked by her favour. Those who had attempted to stop the supplies by tacking to their vote the Occasional Conformity Bill were the High Tories, with whom he long conspired to make the life of King William a burden to him, by disturbing all his designs for the independence of nations. Marlborough, after the Session was ended, wrote to Godolphin, "As to what you say of the tackers I think the answer and method that should be taken is what is practised in all armies,—that is, if the enemy give no quarter, they should have none given to them." Godolphin's mode of giving no quarter was to deprive every man of public employment "who had given his vote for the tack." Whigs gradually were called by Godolphin into the public service; and political aspirants began to see that there was not only a virtue in moderation, but that it was a virtue which brought its own reward.

* "Own Time," vol. v. p. 494.

CHAPTER VIII.

The War in Spain.—Expedition to Catalonia.—Gibraltar taken by Sir George Rooke and the Prince of Darmstadt.—Sea-fight off Malaga.—Siege of Gibraltar by the Spaniards.—Expedition to Spain under Peterborough.—Siege of Barcelona.—Peterborough surprises Montjuich.—Barcelona taken.—Peterborough's rapid successes in Valencia.—Philip V. besieges Barcelona.—It is relieved.—The Allies enter Madrid.—Supineness of the Austrian king.—Disgust of Peterborough—He leaves Spain.—Prince Eugene drives the French out of Italy.

WHILST Marlborough was leading the army of the Allies to the Rhine—an army upon whose success depended the great issue between the king of France, and the emperor of Germany—the archduke Charles, who had assumed the title of king of Spain, had landed at Lisbon, and was prepared to head the troops on the western frontier of the kingdom to which he laid claim. But instead of carrying the war into Spain, the army of English, Dutch, and Portuguese were completely held in check by the duke of Berwick; and the Allies were unable to prevent several of the Portuguese towns being taken by the Spaniards. At the opposite extremity of the Peninsula an attempt was made to rouse the Catalans to declare for king Charles. The prince of Darmstadt was sanguine of success; and a little army of five or six thousand men was put under his command. They embarked at Lisbon in May, in a fleet of which sir George Rooke was the admiral. The expedition landed at Barcelona; but receiving very little support from the people, it re-embarked, and Rooke sailed down the Mediterranean, and passed through the Straits, where he effected a junction with the fleet under sir Cloudesley Shovel. It was not in the nature of English sailors willingly to return to port without effecting anything; and so the admirals planned an attack upon Gibraltar, in which the prince of Darmstadt agreed to join. The famous rock on which the Saracens had built their castle in the eighth century, and which they held till the middle of the fifteenth century, was strongly fortified by the Spaniards; but its vast importance as the key of the Mediterranean was not estimated as in more recent times. In 1704 there were not more than a hundred men within the works; but they were commanded by a brave veteran who rejected with disdain the summons to surrender.