

97. Campaign in Italy. — Francis was ambitious to use this national power to get back the possessions which Louis XII had gained and then lost in Italy. He was successful in his campaign, and Milan with Lombardy acknowledged him as conqueror. One important result of this conquest was the establishment of a "perpetual peace" with the Swiss, who had hitherto sold their military services to the Italians.

A second result not less important was a concordat¹ or treaty with the pope, which made the clergy of France dependent on the king, who now claimed and obtained the right of disposing of the great offices in the Church. On the other hand, the pope's spiritual power over the clergy was increased, and it was agreed that in future his authority in all matters of doctrine should be held superior to that of the church councils.

Francis, like his predecessor, Louis, brought back from Italy new conceptions of art and of architecture. He purchased paintings by Raphael, and statuary by Michael Angelo, to adorn the magnificent palaces of the Louvre² and of Fontainebleau,³ which he now began to build or to enlarge. These splendid edifices, with many others, were of that classical or Italian architectural order called the Renaissance,⁴ already mentioned, and which now took the place of the Gothic. It was another evidence that the Middle Ages were passed, and that a new spirit of life was everywhere seeking expression in the growth of literature and art as well as of nationality.

98. Formation of a Royal Court. — Another great change introduced by Francis I. was the formation of the court. When the feudal system was at its height, each baron lived

¹ Concordat (kôn-kôr'dăt).

² Louvre (loovr).

³ Fontainebleau (fôn-tân-blô).

⁴ Renaissance: the new birth or new period. The classical or Italian style of architecture, which now superseded the Gothic, was a revival in modified form of the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. St. Peter's at Rome, St. Paul's, London, and the Panthéon of Paris are fine examples of Renaissance style. So, too, in some degree, is the Hôtel de Cluny, mentioned in Paragraph 95.

apart from every other, and from the king, shut up in the gloomy isolation of his castle, which was rather a fortress than a home. There he ruled supreme. He made war, coined money, declared and executed the law.

Now all this was changed. The nobles had lost their power, and the king had gained it. He was therefore the center of influence. So Francis gathered round himself, in his palaces at Fontainebleau, Chambord, or Paris, a retinue of barons and bishops, whose chief object henceforth was to secure the royal favor. The barons' wives and daughters accompanied them; for the king declared that "a court without ladies is like a spring without flowers."

Refinement, luxury, and dissipation now became the fashion. The time was passed in balls, tournaments, hunting parties, and gaming. Men of letters, minstrels, and artists contributed their part, and life put on a different color from the monotonous and somber hue it had worn in sterner and more perilous days.

Most important of all, the nobles gradually lost much of their former independence of character. They bowed more and more to the king's will, and thus the effect of the formation of the court was to steadily increase that royal power which was all the while tending to become absolute.

The old danger had been want of unity; the new was the excessive concentration of authority in the hands of a single person. If monarchy had not grown to be supreme, France would have remained a weak bundle of mutually discordant and belligerent states. If, on the other hand, it was not restrained, monarchy must eventually end in despotism. In England, Parliament, and especially the House of Commons, applied that check, but in France that salutary power had little practical influence. The king, instead of convening the States-General,¹ now summoned a select body of men called

¹ See Paragraphs 71 and 94.

the Notables, who were chosen by himself; and henceforth we shall see the government of the two countries diverge more and more,—one toward larger political liberty, the other toward its gradual extinction.

99. **Francis I. and Charles V.**—France was now the first power in Europe; but the country was soon to be obliged to enter the field against a rival who would be content with no second place. Shortly after the accession of Francis I., Charles V¹ ascended the throne of Spain. He was ruler not only over that realm, but over the Netherlands, Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia. Among his possessions he included also those immense regions of unexplored wealth in the New World which Columbus had gained for his ancestors, Ferdinand and Isabella.

Later, the death of his grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian, added Austria to his dominions. Then, when Maximilian's death left the throne of the German empire vacant, the princes of Germany met to choose a new imperial sovereign. Three candidates presented themselves,—Henry VIII of England, Charles V of Spain, and the young king of France. The choice fell on Charles, who thus became ruler of nearly all civilized Europe outside of France and the British Isles.

Since the time of Charlemagne and the Cæsars no sovereign had been able to gain control of such an immense territory as that which the Emperor Charles V now possessed. Francis I. felt that so formidable a neighbor was a constant menace to himself and his people. Placed as his kingdom was between the armies of Germany and Spain, both of whom obeyed one directing and absolute will, France was like the wheat between the upper and the nether millstones, which a single energetic movement might suffice to crush. One look at the map will show the position and the danger.²

¹ Mary of Burgundy (see Paragraph 90) had married Maximilian, Archduke of Austria. Their son Philip married the heiress of the Spanish provinces of Castile and Aragon. Charles V was Philip's son. ² See Map No. IX, page 118.

100. **War for the "Balance of Power"; Death of the Chevalier Bayard; Defeat of Francis I.**—The policy of Francis was to offset this danger by attacking his rival's Italian possessions. A war, which began in 1521, was the commencement of the great struggle for the maintenance of the "balance of power"; or, in other words, for preventing any one sovereign from getting a controlling influence in Europe. It was a contest which was not to be finished; for in one form or another this strife, springing from political jealousy, has ever since engaged the utmost efforts of the chief European rulers.

Were it not for this mutual dread lest one nation should become greater than the rest, there would be no reason for keeping up the enormous standing armies of the present day. The burden of taxation and debt which these armies and their wars have imposed has kept on increasing. It is a common saying in Europe that every workingman carries a soldier on his back. Should the army expenses continue to increase, the time must come when the people will have to choose between one of two alternatives—"disarm or starve."¹

Francis I. gained neither glory nor dominions by his Italian wars. On the contrary, he lost the Chevalier Bayard, that knight "without fear and without reproach," who, as the king said, was in himself alone worth a regiment. He also lost the Duke of Bourbon by desertion. The latter found Bayard dying on the battlefield, with his face turned toward the enemy. The duke expressed his sorrow at seeing him in that condition. "Do not pity me," replied Bayard, "since I die as a man should; but rather pity yourself, you who are fighting against both your king and your country."

Later, Francis himself was taken prisoner, carried to Madrid, and had to give up not only his possessions in Italy, but even

¹ See Professor Atkinson's *Strength of Nations*. France has by far the largest national debt of any country of Europe. In 1902 it amounted, in round numbers, to over thirty billion francs.

the dukedom of Burgundy. When he gained his liberty, however, he resumed the wars. Leagues were formed, in which Henry VIII of England and the pope joined Francis. Again Francis was defeated. Then another and still stronger league was formed, in which Henry VIII changed about and took sides with Charles V, while not only the Protestant princes of Germany, but even the sultan of Turkey, gave their support to Francis. It was the first instance in which a Christian sovereign had allied himself in arms with a Mohammedan. Francis excused himself for this singular compact by saying, "When the wolves attack the flock, one has a right to call the dogs to help him."

But it was all to no purpose, and, as Comines says, "The French left no memorials of themselves in Italy but their graves." At last, in 1544, after many years of fighting, peace was made. By a previous treaty Francis had got back Burgundy; but Charles refused to give him so much as a foot of Italian soil, and so the German emperor kept that preponderance of power which vexed the soul of the French king during the brief remainder of his life.

101. Francis I and the New World. — Though thus ardently engaged in war, Francis I found time and means to take part in the great maritime expeditions which characterized the age. Columbus had crossed "The Sea of Darkness," and found its opposite side. Spain and Portugal claimed possession of the New World by right of discovery, but Francis was fully determined to have his share in the rich prize.

"Show me," said he to the kings of those countries, "the clause in the will of Father Adam which divides America between you, and excludes the French." As the claimants found it inconvenient to produce the document, Francis continued, in spite of all remonstrance, to send out explorers in the wake of those hardy French fishermen, who brought back cargoes of Newfoundland codfish, and who named Cape Breton from their own native province of Brittany.

According to some accounts Francis sent out Verrazano,¹ a Florentine, in 1524. He, it is said, explored the coast from what is now the harbor of New York to the Carolinas, and called the country New France.

Ten years later Cartier² ascended that noble river to which he gave the name of St. Lawrence, and reaching a little Indian village on its banks, he called the lofty hill which rose above it Montreal³ and the country Canada.⁴

Such was the beginning of those French discoveries in America which in the course of the next century led to temporary settlements in the Carolinas and Florida by Ribaut⁵ and to permanent colonies in Nova Scotia and Canada by De Monts⁶ and Champlain.

102. Results of the Discovery and Exploration of America.

— The results of these expeditions cannot be overestimated. No one then realized their true significance, but, as the historian Voltaire said at a later period, "The discovery of America is the greatest event that has ever taken place in this world of ours, one half of which knew nothing of the other half."

Before this time, commerce had been confined almost wholly to the Mediterranean. There, little vessels not larger than pleasure yachts crept cautiously from port to port with their small cargoes.

Now all was changed. Large and strong ships, fit to battle with Atlantic gales, were built, and ocean navigation began. New ports were opened, new cities rose, and the trade of Europe took its first real step toward encircling the globe.

The enormous increase in the precious metals brought by Spain from Mexico and Peru had far-reaching political effects.

¹ Verrazano (vē-rā-tsā'no): historians are not agreed in regard to the genuineness of Verrazano's reports.

² Cartier (kar-tyā').

³ Montreal: Royal Mountain.

⁴ Canada: the meaning of the word is uncertain.

⁵ Ribaut (re-bō').

⁶ De Monts (dēh mōn).

During a great part of the Middle Ages there had been a chronic dearth of gold and silver coin. The kings of France and of other countries had been driven to extremities to get means to pay their armies. They had robbed the Jews, issued bad money, and hired alchemists to try to transmute lead into gold. Henceforth there would be no excuse for these devices, since there was now coin enough to meet all legitimate needs.

Such were some of the material effects of the discoveries that had been made. But these were not all. The extension of geographical knowledge enlarged the boundaries of thought. The voyage to America was like a journey to another planet. New races, new animals, new plants, new products, and new fields of enterprise came into view. The accounts brought back set all Europe in a ferment; soon thousands were eagerly inquiring and debating about the realities and possibilities of that strange world which lay beyond the seas. The Church, too, took part in the discussion, and theologians asked each other whether the Indians were descendants of Adam, and whether Christ died for their salvation.

103. The Reformation: Luther; Calvin; Religious Intolerance.—These inquiries naturally connected themselves with that great movement known as the Reformation, which had already made marked progress. The translation, printing, and circulation of the Bible led to the renewed study of religious questions. Among those who were thus moved to make a reëxamination of the grounds of their religious faith was Martin Luther, a German monk. He became involved in a violent controversy respecting questions of ecclesiastical discipline and doctrine, which finally led to his denial of the supreme power of the pope.

Later, he published a work entitled the "Babylonian Captivity of the Church of God," in which he boldly maintained that the Church had fallen into bondage to the pope, as the Jews once had to the king of Babylon, and that his mission was

to deliver her from this slavery. Up to this time, and even somewhat later, Luther's object was not separation from the Church, but reform within it. Finding this, as he believed, impracticable, he eventually took an independent stand, and attacked the Catholic authority and belief with all his might, and with a coarseness characteristic of the age.

The Elector of Saxony, the most powerful of the German princes, had long been irritated by the heavy drain of money from his province to meet the demands of Rome. He, with other influential men, took Luther's side either openly or secretly, and as a result the German emperor was obliged to grant the Lutheran party freedom of worship in certain provinces until a general church council should be called to settle matters. A few years later the emperor, Charles V, forbade the further exercise of the privilege. In 1529 the Lutheran party protested against the prohibition, denouncing it as an attempt to tyrannize over conscience. This protest gained for them the name of Protestants, henceforth destined to fill so large a place in the world's history.

The emperor, alarmed at the attitude of the Lutherans or Protestants, was determined to root out a belief that seemed to him a dangerous heresy, which, if not speedily checked, threatened to split not only the Church, but the empire, into hostile factions. Germany was at best but a loose bundle of states, and Charles saw that if these were to be separated by different political and religious parties, his rule would be practically over. His efforts at stamping out the new faith and new thought were, however, unsuccessful. In spite of all he could do, Protestantism continued to grow and spread throughout the greater part of northwest Europe.¹

In Italy, Spain, and throughout the south Catholicism fully maintained its authority, and heretics expiated their boldness with their lives.

¹ See Stubbs's Lectures on Mediæval and Modern History, page 233.

In central Europe, especially in France, the population was divided, and ultimately both sides were engaged in a long and desperate struggle, not only to support their respective churches, but for the possession of political power besides. The fact that France, unlike Germany, was now under the government of one supreme authority, made this battle of Catholics and Protestants all the more terrible. Each side was determined to get possession of the crown, and there could be no prospect of a compromise, as there might have been at an earlier period when the country was virtually in the hands of the great barons.

In France the chief leader of the party of the Reformation was John Calvin. He was a profound thinker and acute logician. He soon became the very Protestant of the Protestants, going far beyond Luther in his departure from the usages and teachings of the Catholics. Politically, his tendencies were decidedly toward republicanism.

He speedily found that neither his life nor his liberty was safe in France, and he accordingly fled to Bâle, a city in one of the Protestant cantons of Switzerland. Here, shutting himself up with the Bible as his sole companion, he proceeded to draw up the first clear and consistent statement of the chief doctrines of the Reformation. These he embodied in a famous work, entitled the "Institutes of the Christian Religion," which he dedicated, in an eloquent introduction, to Francis I.

Meanwhile Francis pursued a double policy. He encouraged the German Protestants in order to divide that empire and so harass and weaken his enemy, Charles V. At home he showed no such friendliness to the reformers, but, on the contrary, vied with Charles in his efforts to crush them. Roughly speaking, the power of the French Calvinists was mainly south of the Loire, while Paris and the north were strongly Catholic.

The course taken by Francis was not inconsistent with the ideas of the age, for religious toleration was then practically

unknown, and the king's motives were mainly, if not wholly, political. Even after the progress of the Reformation had familiarized Europe with the spectacle of two churches and two creeds, it was still the belief of the most enlightened statesmen that no subject had any right to profess a different religion from that of his sovereign.

In every country, whether Protestant or Catholic, Church and State were considered to be indissolubly united, so that to call a man a heretic was only another way of calling him a rebel or a traitor. If in the south Catholics persecuted Lutherans, in the north, though in a different degree, Lutherans persecuted Catholics, and ended by persecuting their fellow-Protestants if they followed a different leader.

France, as we have already seen, was at this period just emerging from feudal anarchy into monarchical and national unity, and the king hated the Protestants as men who dared to think for themselves. What he wanted was absolute uniformity of faith and obedience to authority.

In England, upwards of a hundred years later, the Stuart kings had precisely the same feeling. They persecuted Puritanism because they feared that, if allowed to go on unchecked, it would lead to the overthrow of the established church and the established government.

For these reasons Francis I. refused the French Protestants liberty of worship. Meanwhile Calvin had established himself in the free Swiss city of Geneva; thence he disseminated his writings and doctrines in all directions. Calvin had no more idea of tolerating the religious liberty that we enjoy to-day than Francis I. had. The king tortured and burned those who rejected Catholicism. In the same spirit, believing they were doing God's will, the stern Protestant authorities who ruled Geneva sent Michael Servetus to the stake for denying the doctrine of the Trinity, an example which was followed in England many years later.

104. Massacre of the Vaudois.—The persecution under Francis I. varied in intensity, and was occasionally suspended for political reasons; but in the last part of his reign the king renewed his punishment of the Calvinists and other Protestants with terrible severity.

This persecution reached its height in the massacre of the Vaudois,¹ an inoffensive people of the southeast of France. They were Protestants, but not strict followers of Calvin. In the eyes of the Catholic Church they were heretics. The fact that they were neither political agitators nor noisy reformers, but loyal subjects, living pure and simple lives, did not avail to save them.

The king, who was prematurely old and morose, feared lest he had offended Heaven by being too lenient toward unbelievers. He now determined to offer up the Vaudois as a sacrifice for his lack of zeal.

He forthwith sent a body of troops into the heretical district. They fell upon the unsuspecting inhabitants of thirty or more peaceful little villages, and in a short time reduced the country to a wilderness of ruin. For fifteen leagues round not a cottage was left standing. Over three thousand men, women, and children were ruthlessly murdered, and many hundreds sent to the galleys² for life. Those who succeeded in escaping death by sword or flame, fled to the mountains, only to perish there by starvation and exposure.

Thus ended the heresy of the Vaudois. The massacre eased the king's conscience for a time, though when he died not long after, he seems to have had doubts of the wisdom of his course. Still he could console himself with the thought that if he had

¹ Vaudois (vō-dwā').

² Gallies: vessels propelled by sails and oars, and manned by convicts or galley slaves, each of whom was chained to his seat. This seat was never left. There the galley slaves ate, worked, and slept. These unfortunate men were treated with revolting cruelty, and the punishment was more dreaded than that of death.

not converted the obnoxious province, he had at least turned it into a graveyard.

105. Influence of Literature; Rabelais and Montaigne.—But another and subtler influence was at work, which Francis does not seem to have suspected, but which was nevertheless secretly undermining the authority of the Church, and thus indirectly aiding the reformers. While Calvin was denouncing Catholicism from his pulpit at Geneva, the French press sent forth a book which held up the priesthood and the monks to the grossest ridicule.

Francis Rabelais¹ was a man of remarkable though erratic genius, who began life as a Franciscan friar, then turned doctor, and ended by becoming a parish priest. He was the author of that strange medley of wit, nonsense, and vulgarity entitled the "Life of Gargantua and Pantagruel,"² of which he boasted that "more copies were sold in two months than of the Bible in ten years."

In those days it was the custom of sovereigns and nobles to keep professional buffoons or "fools," who amused their masters by their sharp sayings, and who, under cover of a jest or a story, sometimes uttered wholesome truths that no one else dared speak. Rabelais may be called the literary "fool" of the period. He attacked corruption and inefficiency in high places, but in such a manner that he escaped the usual penalty of the gallows or the stake. Men read and laughed at the wild, coarse, extravagant burlesque which to-day seems as disgusting as it is tedious; but none the less the satire had its influence in helping to break up the old system of things and prepare the way for the new.

¹ Rabelais (rā-blā').

² Gargantua and Pantagruel were the names of two famous giants of mediæval story. The first had a gluttonous appetite; the second was his son, and was worthy of such a father. Some writers suppose Gargantua to be a satire on Francis I; but if so, fortunately for Rabelais, the king never discovered his own likeness in that character.

The second great work of the age, though later in time, was the "Essays" of Montaigne.¹ Montaigne, who wrote under the successors of Francis (1580), took for his motto the question, "What do I know?"² His essays, dealing with almost every subject and side of human life, may be called so many short sermons on that significant but skeptical text. Montaigne aims to convince his reader that man knows but little, and that even that little has a tinge of uncertainty.

The effect of his book was to weaken faith in tradition. Montaigne really cast doubt on everything; but he did it in such a gentle and genial way that he was a universal favorite. No one wanted to burn the book, still less the author.

It is a striking illustration of his popularity and his courage, that during the civil and religious wars which we are soon to describe, he alone of all the country gentlemen in his province refused to fortify his house.³ "I have no other guard or sentinel than the stars," said he. Throwing open his doors he welcomed both parties; and, except during the fiercest period of the strife, he was respected and treated as a friend by both.

106. Henry II; Taking of Metz and Calais.—In 1547 Henry II came to the throne. He married Catherine de' Medici,⁴ an Italian, and a relative of the pope.⁵ Her craft and cruelty were destined to do irreparable harm to France. Voltaire declared that her robes of silk and gold were spotted—he might truly have said drenched—with blood.

While Henry lived, however, Catherine's real character did not fully show itself, for he was not under her influence, but under that of Diana of Poitiers, who was as weak and worthless as Catherine was resolute.

¹ Montaigne (mōn-tān').

² "Que sais-je?"

³ Montaigne lived in a chateau not very far from Bordeaux.

⁴ Medici (mā'de-chee).

⁵ That is, of the late Pope Clement VII.

Henry continued his father's policy and formed an alliance with the German Protestants in the war against the emperor. With their aid he took the free German city of Metz, and also the neighboring cities of Verdun and Toul. He thus extended the boundaries of the French kingdom on the northeast.

Charles made a desperate effort to take Metz from Henry, but after a twelve weeks' siege, he withdrew, having lost half his army in the attempt. In his rage at the miscarriage of his plans, the gouty old emperor exclaimed, "I see now that Fortune is like the rest of her sex: she favors young men, and disdains those who are getting into years."

From this period (1552) Metz remained one of the most important frontier strongholds of France, until the Franco-Prussian War compelled its cession to Germany in 1870. The struggle for its possession is a good illustration of the strife of France and Germany for that strip of country which once constituted a middle kingdom neither French nor German,¹ but having just enough of each element to give both a pretext for war then and now.

A few years later Charles V, disgusted with the world, abdicated in favor of his son Philip II, and retired to spend his remaining life in a Spanish monastery, where he meditated on the fickleness of Fortune to his heart's content.

Philip married Mary, Queen of England; but he was disappointed in his purpose of crushing out Protestantism in that country, although Mary spared neither rack nor fagots to aid her husband in his policy of conversion or extermination.²

Henry continued the war against Spain, but gained no more foreign territory. He, however, made a conquest at home which filled France with exultation. The Duke of Guise,³ one of his ablest generals, succeeded in wresting Calais from the English. They, it will be remembered, had held it since

¹ See Paragraph 31.

² See The Leading Facts of English History in this series. ³ Guise (gēz).

Edward III took it in 1347.¹ When the duke's forces entered its gates in triumph, England lost its last foot of French soil. Queen Mary, who had been determined to hold the city at all odds, never recovered from the humiliation of this surrender. In her last moments she said, "After my death you will find *Calais* written on my heart."

In order to be at liberty to devote all his strength to the destruction of Protestantism in Europe, Philip II made peace with France. Henry had married his eldest son Francis to Mary Queen of Scots. Philip of Spain was now a widower, and Henry, in order to cement the treaty of peace with him, agreed to give him his daughter Elizabeth in marriage, and his sister Marguerite to the Duke of Savoy, one of the Spanish king's ablest allies. At a grand tournament held in honor of the double nuptials, Henry was accidentally killed.

His policy toward the French Calvinists during the latter part of his reign was ominous of future trouble. Henry cared less for their religious views than for their politics. He saw that the tendency of Calvin's work was democratic. Hence he persecuted that great leader's adherents; for, said he, "if we let them increase, we run the risk of falling into a kind of republic like the Swiss."

107. Summary. — During this period, covering almost a century, we have traced the chief points in the struggle between Louis XI and Charles the Bold of Burgundy. We have seen the king gradually succeed in establishing power throughout the realm, thus consolidating France. His reign is also marked by the revival of learning and the introduction of printing. Under Louis' successor, Charles VIII, we have the beginning of the Italian war and the rise of the *Tiers État*.

With Francis I comes the further development of national unity, the formation of the royal court, the wars with Charles V

¹ See Paragraph 78.

for the balance of power, the French exploration and colonization of America, the beginning of the Reformation, and the rise of French literature.

Finally, we have the extension of royal power and territory by the taking of the free German city of Metz, with Verdun and Toul, followed by the capture of Calais from the English, thus marking the final expulsion of the last remnant of that power from French soil.