

Vienna. The emperor fled in dismay to Lintz, and was obliged to purchase an ignominious peace by an immense sum of money, all of which was of course to be extorted by taxes on the miserable and starving peasantry.

Poland, Bohemia and the Turks, now all pounced upon Hungary, and Frederic, deeming this a providential indication that Hungary could not enforce the fulfillment of the treaty, refused to pay the money. Matthias, greatly exasperated, made the best terms he could with Poland, and again led his armies in Austria. For four years the warfare raged fiercely, when all Lower Austria, including the capital, was in the hands of Matthias, and the emperor was driven from his hereditary domains; and, accompanied by a few followers, he wandered a fugitive from city to city, from convent to convent, seeking aid from all, but finding none.

CHAPTER V.

THE EMPERORS FREDERIC II. AND MAXIMILIAN I.

FROM 1477 TO 1500

WANDERINGS OF THE EMPEROR FREDERIC.—PROPOSED ALLIANCE WITH THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY.—MUTUAL DISTRUST.—MARRIAGE OF MARY.—THE AGE OF CHIVALRY.—THE MOTIVE INDUCING THE LORD OF PRAUNSTEIN TO DECLARE WAR.—DEATH OF FREDERIC II.—THE EMPEROR'S SECRET.—DESIGNS OF THE TURKS.—DEATH OF MAHOMET II.—FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDING ARMIES.—USE OF GUNPOWDER.—ENERGY OF MAXIMILIAN.—FRENCH AGGRESSIONS.—THE LEAGUE TO EXPEL THE FRENCH.—DISAPPOINTMENTS OF MAXIMILIAN.—BRIBING THE POPE.—INVASION OF ITALY.—CAPTURE AND RECAPTURE.—THE CHEVALIER DE BAYARD.

ADVERSITY only developed more fully the weak and ignoble character of Frederic. He wandered about, recognized Emperor of Germany, but a fugitive from his own Austrian estates, occasionally encountering pity, but never sympathy or respect. Matthias professed his readiness to surrender Austria back to Frederic so soon as he would fulfill the treaty by paying the stipulated money. Frederic was accompanied in his wanderings by his son Maximilian, a remarkably elegant lad, fourteen years of age. They came to the court of the powerful Duke of Burgundy. The dukedom extended over wide realms, populous and opulent, and the duke had the power of a sovereign but not the regal title. He was ambitious of elevating his dukedom into a kingdom and of being crowned king; and he agreed to give his only daughter and heiress, Mary, a beautiful and accomplished girl, to the emperor's son Maximilian, if Frederic would confer upon his estates the regal dignity and crown him king. The bargain was made, and Maximilian and Mary both were delighted, for they regarded each other with all the warmth of young lovers. Mary, heiress to the dukedom of Burgundy, was a prize which

Maximilian had encountered innumerable difficulties in Burgundy, and was not unwilling to escape from the vexations and cares of that distant dukedom, by surrendering its government to his son Philip, who was now sixteen years of age, and whom the Burgundians claimed to be their ruler as the heir of Mary. The Swiss estates were also sundered from Austrian dominion, and, uniting with the Swiss confederacy, were no longer subject to the house of Hapsburg. Thus Maximilian had the Austrian estates upon the Danube only, as the nucleus of the empire he was ambitious of establishing.

Conscious of his power, and rejoicing in the imperial title, he had no idea of playing an obscure part on the conspicuous stage of European affairs. With an eagle eye he watched the condition of the empire, and no less eagerly did he fix his eye upon the movements of those great southern powers, now becoming consolidated into kingdoms and empires, and marshaling armies which threatened again to bring all Europe under a dominion as wide and despotic as that of Rome.

Charles VIII., King of France, crossed the Alps with an army of twenty-two thousand men, in the highest state of discipline, and armed with all the modern enginery of war. With ease he subjugated Tuscany, and in a triumphant march through Pisa and Siena, entered Rome as a conqueror. It was the 31st of December, 1394, when Charles, by torchlight, at the head of his exultant troops, entered the eternal city. The pope threw himself into the castle of St. Angelo, but was soon compelled to capitulate and to resign all his fortresses to the conqueror. Charles then continued his march to Naples, which he reached on the 22d of February. He overran and subjugated the whole kingdom, and, having consolidated his conquest, entered Naples on a white steed, beneath imperial banners, and arrogantly assumed the title of King of Naples, Sicily and Jerusalem. Alphonso, King of Naples, in despair, abdicated in favor of his son, Ferdinand; and Ferdinand,

unable to oppose any effectual resistance, abandoned his kingdom to the conqueror, and fled to the island of Ischia.

These alarming aggressions on the part of France, already very powerful, excited general consternation throughout Europe. Maximilian, as emperor, was highly incensed, and roused all his energies to check the progress of so dangerous a rival. The Austrian States alone could by no means cope with the kingdom of France. Maximilian sent agents to the pope, to the Dukes of Milan and Florence, and to the King of Arragon, and formed a secret league to expel the French from Italy, and restore Ferdinand to Naples. It was understood that the strength of France was such, that this enterprise could only be achieved through a long war, and that the allies must continue united to prevent France, when once expelled from Italy, from renewing her aggressions. The league was to continue twenty-two years. The pope was to furnish six thousand men, and the other Italian States twelve thousand. Maximilian promised to furnish nine thousand. Venice granted the troops of the emperor a free passage through her dominions.

These important first steps being thus taken secretly and securely, the emperor summoned a diet of Germany to enlist the States of the empire in the enterprise. This was the most difficult task, and yet nothing could be accomplished without the coöperation of Germany. But the Germanic States, loosely held together, jealous of each other, each grasping solely at its own aggrandizement, reluctantly delegating any power to the emperor, were slow to promise coöperation in any general enterprise, and having promised, were still slower to perform. The emperor had no power to enforce the fulfillment of agreements, and could only supplicate. During the long reign of Frederic the imperial dignity had lapsed more and more into an empty title; and Maximilian had an arduous task before him in securing even respectful attention to his demands. He was fully aware of the difficulties, and made arrangements accordingly

The memorable diet was summoned at Worms, on the 26th of May, 1496. The emperor had succeeded, by great exertion, in assembling a more numerous concourse of the princes and nobles of the empire than had ever met on a similar occasion. He presided in person, and in a long and earnest address endeavored to rouse the empire to a sense of its own dignity and its own high mission as the regulator of the affairs of Europe. He spoke earnestly of their duty to combine and chastise the insolence of the Turks; but waiving that for the present moment, he unfolded to them the danger to which Europe was immediately and imminently exposed by the encroachments of France. To add to the force of his words, he introduced ambassadors from the King of Naples, who informed the assembly of the conquests of the French, of their haughty bearing, and implored the aid of the diet to repel the invaders. The Duke of Milan was then presented, and, as a member of the empire, he implored as a favor and claimed as a right, the armies of the empire for the salvation of his duchy. And then the legate of the pope, in the robes of the Church, and speaking in the name of the Holy Father to his children, pathetically described the indignities to which the pope had been exposed, driven from his palace, bombarded in the fortress to which he had retreated, compelled to capitulate and leave his kingdom in the hands of the enemy; he expatiated upon the impiety of the French troops, the sacrilegious horrors of which they had been guilty, and in tones of eloquence hardly surpassed by Peter the Hermit, strove to rouse them to a crusade for the rescue of the pope and his sacred possessions.

Maximilian had now exhausted all his powers of persuasion. He had done apparently enough to rouse every heart to intensest action. But the diet listened coldly to all these appeals, and then in substance replied,

“We admit the necessity of checking the incursions of the Turks; we admit that it is important to check the progress of

the French. But our first duty is to secure peace in Germany. The States of the empire are embroiled in incessant wars with each other. All attempts to prevent these private wars between the States of the empire have hitherto failed. Before we can vote money and men for any foreign enterprise whatever, we must secure internal tranquillity. This can only be done by establishing a supreme tribunal, supported by a power which can enforce its decisions.”

These views were so manifestly judicious, that Maximilian assented to them, and, anxious to lose no time in raising troops to expel the French from Italy, he set immediately about the organization of an imperial tribunal to regulate the internal affairs of the empire. A court was created called the Imperial Chamber. It was composed of a president and sixteen judges, half of whom were taken from the army, and half from the class of scholars. To secure impartiality, the judges held their office for life. A majority of suffrages decided a question, and in case of a tie, the president gave a casting vote. The emperor reserved the right of deciding certain questions himself. This court gradually became one of the most important and salutary institutions of the German empire.

By the 7th of August these important measures were arranged. Maximilian had made great concessions of his imperial dignity in transferring so much of his nominal power to the Imperial Chamber, and he was now sanguine that the States would vote him the supplies which were needed to expel the French from Italy, or, in more honest words, to win for the empire in Italy that ascendancy which France had attained. But bitter indeed was his disappointment. After long deliberation and vexatious delays, the diet voted a ridiculous sum, less than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to raise an army “sufficient to check the progress of the French.” One third of this sum Maximilian was to raise from his Austrian States; the remaining two thirds he was permitted to obtain by a loan. Four years were to be allowed for raising

the money, and the emperor, as a condition for the receipt of even this miserable boon, was required to pledge his word of honor that at the expiration of the four years he would raise no more. And even these hundred and fifty thousand dollars were to be intrusted to seven treasurers, to be administered according to their discretion. One only of these treasurers was to be chosen by the emperor, and the other six by the diet.

Deeply chagrined by this result, Maximilian was able to raise only three thousand men, instead of the nine thousand which he had promised the league. Charles VIII., informed of the formidable coalition combining against him, and not aware of the feeble resources of the emperor, apprehensive that the armies of Germany, marching down and uniting with the roused States of Italy, might cut off his retreat and overwhelm him, decided that the "better part of courage is discretion;" and he accordingly abandoned his conquests, recrossed the Apennines, fought his backward path through Italy, and returned to France. He, however, left behind him six thousand men strongly intrenched, to await his return with a new and more powerful armament.

Maximilian now resolved chivalrously to throw himself into Italy, and endeavor to rouse the Italians themselves to resist the threatened invasion, trusting that the diet of Germany, when they should see him struggling against the hosts of France, would send troops to his aid. With five hundred horse, and about a thousand foot soldiers, he crossed the Alps. Here he learned that for some unknown reason Charles had postponed his expedition. Recoiling from the ridicule attending a quixotic and useless adventure, he hunted around for some time to find some heroic achievement which would redeem his name from reproach, when, thwarted in every thing, he returned to Austria, chagrined and humiliated.

Thus frustrated in all his attempts to gain ascendancy in Italy, Maximilian turned his eyes to the Swiss estates of the

house of Hapsburg, now sundered from the Austrian territories. He made a vigorous effort, first by diplomacy, then by force of arms, to regain them. Here again he was frustrated, and was compelled to enter into a capitulation by which he acknowledged the independence of the Helvetic States, and their permanent severance from Austrian jurisdiction.

In April, 1498, Charles VIII. died, and Louis XII. succeeded him on the throne of France. Louis immediately made preparations for a new invasion of Italy. In those miserable days of violence and blood, almost any prince was ready to embark in war under anybody's banner, where there was the least prospect of personal aggrandizement. The question of right or wrong, seemed seldom to enter any one's mind. Louis fixed his eyes upon the duchy of Milan as the richest and most available prize within his grasp. Conscious that he would meet with much opposition, he looked around for allies.

"If you will aid me," he said to Pope Alexander VI., "I will assist you in your war against the Duke of Romagna. I will give your son, Cæsar Borgia,* a pension of two thousand dollars a year, will confer upon him an important command in my army, and will procure for him a marriage with a princess of the royal house of Navarre."

The holy father could not resist this bribe, and eagerly joined the robber king in his foray. To Venice Louis said—

"If you will unite with me, I will assist you in annexing to your dominions the city of Cremona, and the Ghiaradadda." Lured by such hopes of plunder, Venice was as eager as the pope to take a share in the piratic expedition. Louis then sent to the court of Turin, and offered them large sums of money and increased territory, if they would allow him a free

* Cæsar Borgia, who has filled the world with the renown of his infamy, was the illegitimate son of Alexander VI., and of a Roman lady named Vanozza.

any monarch might covet; and half the princes of Europe were striving for her hand.

But now came a new difficulty. Neither the emperor nor duke had the slightest confidence in each other. The King of France, who had hoped to obtain the hand of Mary for his son the dauphin, caused the suspicion to be whispered into the ear of Frederic that the Duke of Burgundy sought the kingly crown only as the first step to the imperial crown; and that so soon as the dukedom was elevated into a kingdom, Charles, the Duke of Burgundy, would avail himself of his increased power, to dethrone Frederic and grasp the crown of Germany. This was probably all true. Charles, fully understanding the perfidious nature of Frederic, did not dare to solemnize the marriage until he first should be crowned. Frederic, on the other hand, did not dare to crown the duke until the marriage was solemnized, for he had no confidence that the duke, after having attained the regal dignity, would fulfill his pledge.

Charles was for hurrying the coronation, Frederic for pushing the marriage. A magnificent throne was erected in the cathedral at Treves, and preparations were making on the grandest scale for the coronation solemnities, when Frederic, who did not like to tell the duke plumply to his face that he was fearful of being cheated, extricated himself from his embarrassment by feigning important business which called him suddenly to Cologne. A scene of petty and disgraceful intrigues ensued between the exasperated duke and emperor, and there were the marching and the countermarching of hostile bands and the usual miseries of war, until the death of Duke Charles at the battle of Nancy on the 5th of January, 1477.

The King of France now made a desperate endeavor to obtain the hand of Mary for his son. One of the novel acts of this imperial courtship, was to send an army into Burgundy, which wrested a large portion of Mary's dominions from her, which the king, Louis XI., refused to surrender unless Mary

would marry his son. Many of her nobles urged the claims of France. But love in the heart of Mary was stronger than political expediency, and more persuasive than the entreaties of her nobles. To relieve herself from importunity, she was hurriedly married, three months after the death of her father, by proxy to Maximilian.

In August the young prince, but eighteen years of age, with a splendid retinue, made his public entry into Ghent. His commanding person and the elegance of his manners, attracted universal admiration. His subjects rallied with enthusiasm around him, and, guided by his prowess, in a continued warfare of five years, drove the invading French from their territories. But death, the goal to which every one tends, was suddenly and unexpectedly reached by Mary. She died the 7th of August, 1479, leaving two infant children, Philip and Margaret.

The Emperor Frederic also succeeded, by diplomatic cunning, in convening the diet of electors and choosing Maximilian as his successor to the imperial throne. Frederic and Maximilian now united in the endeavor to recover Austria from the King of Hungary. The German princes, however, notwithstanding the summons of the emperor, refused to take any part in the private quarrels of Austria, and thus the battle would have to be fought between the troops of Maximilian and of Matthias. Maximilian prudently decided that it would be better to purchase the redemption of the territory with money than with blood. The affair was in negotiation when Matthias was taken sick and died the 15th of July, 1490. He left no heir, and the Hungarian nobles chose Ladislaus, King of Bohemia, to succeed him. Maximilian had been confident of obtaining the crown of Hungary. Exasperated by the disappointment, he relinquished all idea of purchasing his patrimonial estates, but making a sudden rush with his troops upon the Hungarians, he drove them out of Austria, and pursued them far over the frontiers of Hungary. Ladislaus, the new

King of Hungary, now listened to terms of peace. A singular treaty was made. The Bohemian king was to retain the crown of Hungary, officiating as reigning monarch, while Maximilian was to have the *title* of King of Hungary. Ladislaus relinquished all claim to the Austrian territories, and paid a large sum of money as indemnity for the war.

Thus Austria again comes into independent existence, to watch amidst the tumult and strife of Europe for opportunities to enlarge her territories and increase her power. Maximilian was a prince, energetic and brave, who would not allow any opportunity to escape him. In those dark days of violence and of blood, every petty quarrel was settled by the sword. All over Germany the clash of steel against steel was ever resounding. Not only kings and dukes engaged in wars, but the most insignificant baron would gather his few retainers around him and declare formal war against the occupant of the adjacent castle. The spirit of chivalry, so called, was so rampant that private individuals would send a challenge to the emperor. Contemporary writers record many curious specimens of these declarations of war. The Lord of Praunstein declared war against the city of Frankfort, because a young lady of that city refused to dance with his uncle at a ball.

Frederic was now suffering from the infirmities of age. Surrendering the administration of affairs, both in Austria and over the estates of the empire, to Maximilian, he retired, with his wife and three young daughters, to Lintz, where he devoted himself, at the close of his long and turbulent reign, to the peaceful pursuits of rural life. A cancerous affection of the leg rendered it necessary for him to submit to the amputation of the limb. He submitted to the painful operation with the greatest fortitude, and taking up his severed limb, with his accustomed phlegm remarked to those standing by,

“What difference is there between an emperor and a peasant? Or rather, is not a sound peasant better than a sick em-

peror? Yet I hope to enjoy the greatest good which can happen to man—a happy exit from this transitory life.”

The shock of a second amputation, which from the vitiated state of his blood seemed necessary, was too great for his enfeebled frame to bear. He died August 19th, 1493, seventy-eight years of age, and after a reign of fifty-three years. He was what would be called, in these days, an ultra temperance man, never drinking even wine, and expressing ever the strongest abhorrence of alcoholic drinks, calling them the parent of all vices. He seems to have anticipated the future greatness of Austria; for he had imprinted upon all his books, engraved upon his plate and carved into the walls of his palace a mysterious species of anagram composed of the five vowels, A, E, I, O, U.

The significance of this great secret no one could obtain from him. It of course excited great curiosity, as it everywhere met the eye of the public. After his death the riddle was solved by finding among his papers the following interpretation—

Austri Est Imperare Orbi Universo.

Austria Is To govern The world Universal.

Maximilian, in the prime of manhood, energetic, ambitious, and invested with the imperial dignity, now assumed the government of the Austrian States. The prospect of greatness was brilliant before Maximilian. The crowns of Bohemia and Hungary were united in the person of Ladislaus, who was without children. As Maximilian already enjoyed the title of King of Hungary, no one enjoyed so good a chance as he of securing both of those crowns so soon as they should fall from the brow of Ladislaus.

Europe was still trembling before the threatening cimeter of the Turk. Mahomet II., having annihilated the Greek empire, and consolidated his vast power, and checked in his career by the warlike barons of Hungary, now cast a lustful eye across the Adriatic to the shores of Italy. He crossed the

sea, landed a powerful army and established twenty thousand men, strongly garrisoned, at Otranto, and supplied with provisions for a year. All Italy was in consternation, for a passage was now open directly from Turkey to Naples and Rome. Mahomet boasted that he would soon feed his horse on the altar of St. Peter's. The pope, Sextus IV., in dismay, was about abandoning Rome, and as there was no hope of uniting the discordant States of Italy in any effectual resistance, it seemed inevitable that Italy, like Greece, would soon become a Turkish province. And where then could it be hoped that the ravages of the Turks would be arrested?

In this crisis, so alarming, Providence interposed, and the sudden death of Mahomet, in the vigor of his pride and ambition, averted the danger. Bajazet II. succeeded to the Moslem throne, an indolent and imbecile sultan. Insurrection in his own dominions exhausted all his feeble energies. The Neapolitans, encouraged, raised an army, recovered Otranto, and drove the Turks out of Italy. Troubles in the Turkish dominions now gave Christendom a short respite, as all the strength of the sultan was required to subjugate insurgent Circassia and Egypt.

Though the Emperor of Germany was esteemed the first sovereign in Europe, and, on state occasions, was served by kings and electors, he had in reality but little power. The kings who formed his retinue on occasions of ceremonial pomp, were often vastly his superiors in wealth and power. Frequently he possessed no territory of his own, not even a castle, but depended upon the uncertain aids reluctantly granted by the diet.

Gunpowder was now coming into use as one of the most efficient engines of destruction, and was working great changes in the science of war. It became necessary to have troops drilled to the use of cannon and muskets. The baron could no longer summon his vassals, at the moment, to abandon the plow, and seize pike and saber for battle, where the strong

arm only was needed. Disciplined troops were needed, who could sweep the field with well-aimed bullets, and crumble walls with shot and shells. This led to the establishment of standing armies, and gave the great powers an immense advantage over their weaker neighbors. The invention of printing, also, which began to be operative about the middle of the fifteenth century, rapidly changed, by the diffusion of intelligence, the state of society, hitherto so barbarous. The learned men of Greece, driven from their country by the Turkish invasion, were scattered over Europe, and contributed not a little to the extension of the love of letters. The discovery of the mariner's compass and improvements in nautical astronomy, also opened new sources of knowledge and of wealth, and the human mind all over Europe commenced a new start in the career of civilization. Men of letters began to share in those honors which heretofore had belonged exclusively to men of war; and the arts of peace began to claim consideration with those who had been accustomed to respect only the science of destruction.

Maximilian was at Innspruck when he received intelligence of the death of his father. He commenced his reign with an act of rigor which was characteristic of his whole career. A horde of Turks had penetrated Styria and Carniola, laying every thing waste before them as far as Carniola. Maximilian, sounding the alarm, inspired his countrymen with the same energy which animated his own breast. Fifteen thousand men rallied at the blast of his bugles. Instead of intrusting the command of them to his generals, he placed himself at their head, and made so fierce an onset upon the invaders, that they precipitately fled. Maximilian returned at the head of his troops triumphant to Vienna, where he was received with acclamations such as had seldom resounded in the metropolis. He was hailed as the deliverer of his country, and at once rose to the highest position in the esteem and affection of the Austrians.