

CHAPTER IX.

CHARLES V. AND THE TURKISH WARS.

FROM 1552 TO 1555.

THE TREATY OF PASSAU.—THE EMPEROR YIELDS.—HIS CONTINUED REVERSES.—THE TOLERATION COMPROMISE.—MUTUAL DISSATISFACTION.—REMARKABLE DESPONDENCY OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES.—HIS ADDRESS TO THE CONVENTION AT BRUSSELS.—THE CONVENT OF ST. JUSTUS.—CHARLES RETURNS TO SPAIN.—HIS CONVENT LIFE.—THE MOCK BURIAL.—HIS DEATH.—HIS TRAITS OF CHARACTER.—THE KING'S COMPLIMENT TO TITIAN.—THE CONDITION OF AUSTRIA.—RAPID ADVANCE OF THE TURKS.—REASONS FOR THE INACTION OF THE CHRISTIANS.—THE SULTAN'S METHOD OF OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES.—THE LITTLE FORTRESS OF GUNTZ.—WHAT IT ACCOMPLISHED.

THE Turks, animated by this civil war which was raging in Germany, were pressing their march upon Hungary with great vigor, and the troops of Ferdinand were retiring discomfited before the invader. Henry of France and the Duke of Parma were also achieving victories in Italy endangering the whole power of the emperor over those States. Ferdinand, appalled by the prospect of the loss of Hungary, imploringly besought the emperor to listen to terms of reconciliation. The Catholic princes, terrified in view of the progress of the infidel, foreseeing the entire subjection of Europe to the arms of the Moslem unless Christendom could combine in self-defense, joined their voices with that of Ferdinand so earnestly and in such impassioned tones, that the emperor finally, though very reluctantly, gave his assent to the celebrated treaty of Passau, on the 2d of August, 1552. By this pacification the captives were released, freedom of conscience and of worship was established, and the Protestant troops, being disbanded, were at liberty to enter into the service of Ferdinand to repel the Turks. Within six months a diet was to be as

sembled to attempt an amicable adjustment of all civil and religious difficulties.

The intrepid Maurice immediately marched, accompanied by many of the Protestant princes, and at the head of a powerful army, to repel the Mohammedan armies. Charles, relieved from his German troubles, gathered his strength to wreak revenge upon the King of France. But fortune seemed to have deserted him. Defeat and disgrace accompanied his march. Having penetrated the French province of Lorraine, he laid siege to Metz. After losing thirty thousand men beneath its walls, he was compelled, in the depth of winter, to raise the siege and retreat. His armies were everywhere routed; the Turks menaced the shores of Italy; the pope became his inveterate enemy, and joined France against him. Maurice was struck by a bullet, and fell on the field of battle. The electorate of Saxony passed into the hands of Augustus, a brother of Maurice, while the former elector, Ferdinand, who shortly after died, received some slight indemnification.

Such was the state of affairs when the promised diet was summoned at Passau. It met on the 5th of February, 1555. The emperor was confined with the gout at Brussels, and his brother Ferdinand presided. It was a propitious hour for the Protestants. Charles was sick, dejected and in adversity. The better portion of the Catholics were disgusted with the intolerance of the emperor, intolerance which even the more conscientious popes could not countenance. Ferdinand was fully aware that he could not defend his own kingdom of Hungary from the Turks without the intervention of Protestant arms. He was, therefore, warmly in favor of conciliation.

The world was not yet sufficiently enlightened to comprehend the beauty of a true toleration, entire freedom of conscience and of worship. After long and very exciting debates—after being again and again at the point of grasping their arms anew—they finally agreed that the Protestants should enjoy the free exercise of their religion wherever Protestantism had

been established and recognized by the Confession of Augsburg. That in all other places Protestant princes might prohibit the Catholic religion in their States, and Catholic princes prohibit the Protestant religion. But in each case the ejected party was at liberty to sell their property and move without molestation to some State where their religion was dominant. In the free cities of the empire, where both religions were established, both were to be tolerated.

Thus far, and no further, had the spirit of toleration made progress in the middle of the sixteenth century.

Such was the basis of the pacification. Neither party was satisfied. Each felt that it had surrendered far too much to the other; and there was subsequently much disagreement respecting the interpretation of some of the most important articles. The pope, Paul IV., was indignant that such toleration had been granted to the Protestants, and threatened the emperor and his brother Ferdinand of Austria with excommunication if they did not declare these decrees null and void throughout their dominions. At the same time he entered into correspondence with Henry II. of France to form a new holy league for the defense of the papal church against the inroads of heresy.

And now occurred one of the most extraordinary events which history has recorded. Charles V., who had been the most enterprising and ambitious prince in Europe, and the most insatiable in his thirst for power, became the victim of the most extreme despondency. Harassed by the perplexities which pressed in upon him from his widely-extended realms, annoyed by the undutiful and haughty conduct of his son, who was endeavoring to wrest authority from his father by taking advantage of all his misfortunes, and perhaps inheriting a melancholy temperament from his mother, who died in the glooms of insanity, and, more than all, mortified and wounded by so sudden and so vast a reverse of fortune, in which all his plans seemed to have failed—thus oppressed, humbled, despondent,

he retired in disgust to his room, indulged in the most fretful temper, admitted none but his sister and a few confidential servants to his presence, and so entirely neglected all business as to pass nine months without signing a single paper.

While the emperor was in this melancholy state, his insane mother, who had lingered for years in delirious gloom, died on the 4th of April, 1555. It will be remembered that Charles had inherited valuable estates in the Low Countries from his marriage with the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy. Having resolved to abdicate all his power and titles in favor of his son, he convened the States of the Low Countries at Brussels on the 25th of October, 1555. Charles was then but fifty-five years of age, and should have been in the strength of vigorous manhood. But he was prematurely old, worn down with care, toil and disappointment. He attended the assembly accompanied by his son Philip. Tottering beneath infirmities, he leaned upon the shoulders of a friend for support, and addressed the assembly in a long and somewhat boastful speech, enumerating all the acts of his administration, his endeavors, his long and weary journeys, his sleepless care, his wars, and, above all, his victories. In conclusion he said:

“While my health enabled me to perform my duty, I cheerfully bore the burden; but as my constitution is now broken by an incurable distemper, and my infirmities admonish me to retire, the happiness of my people affects me more than the ambition of reigning. Instead of a decrepid old man, tottering on the brink of the grave, I transfer your allegiance to a sovereign in the prime of life, vigilant, sagacious, active and enterprising. With respect to myself, if I have committed any error in the course of a long administration, forgive and impute it to my weakness, not to my intention. I shall ever retain a grateful sense of your fidelity and attachment, and your welfare shall be the great object of my prayers to Almighty God, to whom I now consecrate the remainder of my days.”

Then turning to his son Philip, he said :

“ And you, my son, let the grateful recollection of this day redouble your care and affection for your people. Other sovereigns may rejoice in having given birth to their sons and in leaving their States to them after their death. But I am anxious to enjoy, during my life, the double satisfaction of feeling that you are indebted to me both for your birth and power. Few monarchs will follow my example, and in the lapse of ages I have scarcely found one whom I myself would imitate. The resolution, therefore, which I have taken, and which I now carry into execution, will be justified only by your proving yourself worthy of it. And you will alone render yourself worthy of the extraordinary confidence which I now repose in you by a zealous protection of your religion, and by maintaining the purity of the Catholic faith, and by governing with justice and moderation. And may you, if ever you are desirous of retiring like myself to the tranquillity of private life, enjoy the inexpressible happiness of having such a son, that you may resign your crown to him with the same satisfaction as I now deliver mine to you.”

The emperor was here entirely overcome by emotion, and embracing Philip, sank exhausted into his chair. The affecting scene moved all the audience to tears. Soon after this, with the same formalities the emperor resigned the crown of Spain to his son, reserving to himself, of all his dignities and vast revenues, only a pension of about twenty thousand dollars a year. For some months he remained in the Low Countries, and then returned to Spain to seek an asylum in a convent there.

When in the pride of his power he once, while journeying in Spain, came upon the convent of St. Justus in Estramadura, situated in a lovely vale, secluded from all the bustle of life. The massive pile was embosomed among the hills; forests spread widely around, and a beautiful rivulet murmured by its walls. As the emperor gazed upon the enchanting scene

of solitude and silence he exclaimed, “ Behold a lovely retreat for another Diocletian !”

The picture of the convent of St. Justus had ever remained in his mind, and perhaps had influenced him, when overwhelmed with care, to seek its peaceful retirement. Embarking in a ship for Spain, he landed at Loredo on the 28th of September, 1556. As soon as his feet touched the soil of his native land he prostrated himself to the earth, kissed the ground, and said,

“ Naked came I into the world, and naked I return to thee, thou common mother of mankind. To thee I dedicate my body, as the only return I can make for all the benefits conferred on me.”

Then kneeling, and holding the crucifix before him, with tears streaming from his eyes, and all unmindful of the attendants who were around, he breathed a fervent prayer of gratitude for the past, and commended himself to God for the future. By slow and easy stages, as he was very infirm, he journeyed to the vale of Estramadura, near Placentia, and entered upon his silent, monastic life.

His apartments consisted of six small cells. The stone walls were whitewashed, and the rooms furnished with the utmost frugality. Within the walls of the convent, and communicating with the chapel, there was a small garden, which the emperor had tastefully arranged with shrubbery and flowers. Here Charles passed the brief remainder of his days. He amused himself with laboring in the garden with his own hands. He regularly attended worship in the chapel twice every day, and took part in the service, manifestly with the greatest sincerity and devotion.

The emperor had not a cultivated mind, and was not fond of either literary or scientific pursuits. To beguile the hours he amused himself with tools, carving toys for children, and ingenious puppets and automata to astonish the peasants. For a time he was very happy in his new employment. After sc

stormy a life, the perfect repose and freedom from care which he enjoyed in the convent, seemed to him the perfection of bliss. But soon the novelty wore away, and his constitutional despondency returned with accumulated power.

His dejection now assumed the form of religious melancholy. He began to devote every moment of his time to devotional reading and prayer, esteeming all amusements and all employments sinful which interfered with his spiritual exercises. He expressed to the Bishop of Toledo his determination to devote, for the rest of his days, every moment to the service of God. With the utmost scrupulousness he carried out this plan. He practiced rigid fasts, and conformed to all the austerity of convent discipline. He renounced his pension, and sitting at the abstemious table with the monks, declined seeing any other company than that of the world-renouncing priests and friars around him. He scourged himself with the most cruel severity, till his back was lacerated with the whip. His whole soul seemed to crave suffering, in expiation for his sins. His ingenuity was tasked to devise new methods of mortification and humiliation. Ambition had ever been the ruling passion of his soul, and now he was ambitious to suffer more, and to abuse himself more than any other mortal had ever done.

Goaded by this impulse, he at last devised the scheme of solemnizing his own funeral. All the melancholy arrangements for his burial were made; the coffin provided; the emperor reclined upon his bed as dead; he was wrapped in his shroud, and placed in his coffin. The monks, and all the inmates of the convent attended in mourning; the bells tolled; requiems were chanted by the choir; the funeral service was read, and then the emperor, as if dead, was placed in the tomb of the chapel, and the congregation retired. The monarch, after remaining some time in his coffin to impress himself with the sense of what it is to die, and be buried, rose from his tomb, kneeled before the altar for some time in wor-

ship, and then returned to his cell to pass the night in deep meditation and prayer.

The shock and the chill of this solemn scene were too much for the old monarch's feeble frame and weakened mind. He was seized with a fever, and in a few days breathed his last, in the 59th year of his age. He had spent a little over three years in the convent. The life of Charles V. was a sad one. Through all his days he was consumed by unsatisfied ambition, and he seldom enjoyed an hour of contentment. To his son he said—

“I leave you a heavy burden; for, since my shoulders have borne it, I have not passed one day exempt from disquietude.”

Indeed it would seem that there could have been but little happiness for anybody in those dark days of feudal oppression and of incessant wars. Ambition, intrigue, duplicity, reigned over the lives of princes and nobles, while the masses of the people were ever trampled down by oppressive lords and con-
ending armies. Europe was a field of fire and blood. The simeter of the Turk spared neither mother, maiden nor babe. Cities and villages were mercilessly burned, cottages set in flames, fields of grain destroyed, and whole populations carried into slavery, where they miserably died. And the ravages of Christian warfare, duke against duke, baron against baron, king against king, were hardly less cruel and desolating. Balls from opposing batteries regard not the helpless ones in their range. Charging squadrons must trample down with iron hoof all who are in their way. The wail of misery rose from every portion of Europe. The world has surely made some progress since that day.

There was but very little that was loveable in the character of Charles, and he seems to have had but very few friends. So intense and earnest was he in the prosecution of the plans of grandeur which engrossed his soul, that he was seldom known to smile. He had many of the attributes of greatness

indomitable energy and perseverance, untiring industry, comprehensive grasp of thought and capability of superintending the minutest details. He had, also, a certain fanatic conscientiousness about him, like that which actuated Saul of Tarsus, when, holding the garments of those who stoned the martyr, he "verily thought that he was doing God service."

Many anecdotes are told illustrative of certain estimable traits in his character. When a boy, like other boys, he was not fond of study, and being very self-willed, he would not yield to the entreaties of his tutors. He consequently had but an imperfect education, which may in part account for his excessive illiberality, and for many of his stupendous follies. The mind, enlarged by liberal culture, is ever tolerant. He afterwards regretted exceedingly this neglect of his early studies. At Genoa, on some public occasion, he was addressed in a Latin oration, not one word of which he understood.

"I now feel," he said, "the justice of my preceptor Adrian's remonstrances, who frequently used to predict that I should be punished for the thoughtlessness of my youth."

He was fond of the society of learned men, and treated them with great respect. Some of the nobles complained that the emperor treated the celebrated historian, Guicciardini, with much more respect than he did them. He replied—

"I can, by a word, create a hundred nobles; but God alone can create a Guicciardini."

He greatly admired the genius of Titian, and considered him one of the most resplendent ornaments of his empire. He knew full well that Titian would be remembered long after thousands of the proudest grandees of his empire had sunk into oblivion. He loved to go into the studio of the illustrious painter, and watch the creations of beauty as they rose beneath his pencil. One day Titian accidentally dropped

his brush. The emperor picked it up, and, presenting it to the artist, said gracefully—

"Titian is worthy of being served by an emperor."

Charles V. never, apparently, inspired the glow of affection, or an emotion of enthusiasm in any bosom. He accomplished some reforms in the German empire, and the only interest his name now excites is the interest necessarily involved in the sublime drama of his long and eventful reign.

It is now necessary to retrace our steps for a few years, that we may note the vicissitudes of Austria, while the empire was passing through the scenes we have narrated.

Ferdinand I., the brother of Charles V., who was left alone in the government of Austria, was the second son of Philip the Handsome and Joanna of Spain. His birth was illustrious, the Emperor Maximilian being his paternal grandfather, and Ferdinand and Isabella being his grandparents on his mother's side. He was born in Spain, March 10, 1503, and received a respectable education. His manners were courteous and winning, and he was so much more popular than Charles as quite to excite the jealousy of his imperious and imperial spirit. Charles, upon attaining the throne, ceded to his brother the Austrian territories, which then consisted of four small provinces, Austria, Styria, Carinthia and Carniola, with the Tyrol.

Ferdinand married Ann, princess of Hungary and Bohemia. The death of his wife's brother Louis made her the heiress of those two crowns, and thus secured to Ferdinand the magnificent dowry of the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia. But possession of the scepter of those realms was by no means a sinecure. The Turkish power, which had been for many years increasing with the most alarming rapidity and had now acquired appalling strength, kept Hungary, and even the Austrian States, in constant and terrible alarm.

The Turks, sweeping over Persia, Arabia, Egypt, Syria, all Asia Minor, crossing the straits and inundating Greece, fierce and semi-savage, with just civilization enough to organ-

ize and guide with skill their wolflike ferocity, were now pressing Europe in Spain, in Italy, and were crowding, in wave after wave of invasion, up the valley of the Danube. They had created a navy which was able to cope with the most powerful fleets of Europe, and island after island of the Mediterranean was yielding to their sway.

In 1520, Solyman, called the Magnificent, overran Bosnia, and advancing to the Danube, besieged and captured Belgrade, which strong fortress was considered the only reliable barrier against his encroachments. At the same time his fleet took possession of the island of Rhodes. After some slight reverses, which the Turks considered merely embarrassments, they resumed their aggressions, and Solyman, in 1525, again crossing the Danube, entered Hungary with an army of two hundred thousand men. Louis, who was then King of Hungary, brother of the wife of Ferdinand, was able to raise an army of but thirty thousand to meet him. With more courage than discretion, leading this feeble band, he advanced to resist the foe. They met on the plains of Mohatz. The Turks made short work of it. In a few hours, with their cimeters they hewed down nearly the whole Christian army. The remnant escaped as lambs from wolves. The king, in his heavy armor, spurred his horse into a stream to cross in his flight. In attempting to ascend the bank, the noble charger, who had borne his master bravely through the flood, fell back upon his rider, and the dead body of the king was afterward picked up by the Turks, covered with the mud of the morass. All Hungary would now have fallen into the hands of the Turks had not Solyman been recalled by a rebellion in one of his own provinces.

It was this event which placed the crowns of Bohemia and Hungary on the brow of Ferdinand, and by annexing those two kingdoms to the Austrian States, elevated Austria to be one of the first powers in Europe. Ferdinand, thus strengthened sent ambassadors to Constantinople to demand the restitu-

tion of Belgrade and other important towns which the Turks still held in Hungary.

"Belgrade!" exclaimed the haughty sultan, when he heard the demand. "Go tell your master that I am collecting troops and preparing for my expedition. I will suspend at my neck the keys of my Hungarian fortresses, and will bring them to that plain of Mohatz where Louis, by the aid of Providence, found defeat and a grave. Let Ferdinand meet and conquer me, and take them, after severing my head from my body! But if I find him not there, I will seek him at Buda or follow him to Vienna."

Soon after this Solyman crossed the Danube with three hundred thousand men, and advancing to Mohatz, encamped for several days upon the plain, with all possible display of Oriental pomp and magnificence. Thus proudly he threw down the gauntlet of defiance. But there was no champion there to take it up. Striking his tents, and spreading his banners to the breeze, in unimpeded march he ascended the Danube two hundred miles from Belgrade to the city of Pest. And here his martial bands made hill and vale reverberate the bugle blasts of victory. Pest, the ancient capital of Hungary, rich in all the wealth of those days, with a population of some sixty thousand, was situated on the left bank of the river. Upon the opposite shore, connected by a fine bridge three quarters of a mile in width, was the beautiful and opulent city of Buda. In possession of these two maritime towns, then perhaps the most important in Hungary, the Turks rioted for a few days in luxury and all abominable outrage and indulgence, and then, leaving a strong garrison to hold the fortresses, they continued their march. Pressing resistlessly onward some hundred miles further, taking all the towns by the way, on both sides of the Danube, they came to the city of Raab.

It seems incredible that there could have been such an unobstructed march of the Turks, through the very heart of

Hungary. But the Emperor Charles V. was at that time in Italy, all engrossed in the fiercest warfare there. Throughout the German empire the Catholics and the Protestants were engaged in a conflict which absorbed all other thoughts. And the Protestants resolutely refused to assist in repelling the Turks while the sword of Catholic vengeance was suspended over them. From Raab the invading army advanced some hundred miles further to the very walls of Vienna. Ferdinand, conscious of his inability to meet the foe in the open field, was concentrating all his available strength to defend his capital.

At Cremnitz the Turks met with the first serious show of resistance. The fortress was strong, and the garrison, inspired by the indomitable energy and courage of their commandant, Nicholas, Count of Salm, for a month repelled every assault of the foe. Day after day and night after night the incessant bombardment continued; the walls were crumbled by the storm of shot; column after column of the Turks rushed to the assault, but all in vain. The sultan, disappointed and enraged, made one last desperate effort, but his strong columns, thinned, mangled and bleeding, were compelled to retire in utter discomfiture.

Winter was now approaching. Reinforcements were also hastening from Vienna, from Bohemia, and from other parts of the German empire. Solyman, having devastated the country around him, and being all unprepared for the storms of winter, was compelled to retire. He struck his tents, and slowly and sullenly descended the Danube, wreaking diabolical vengeance upon the helpless peasants, killing, burning and destroying. Leaving a strong garrison to hold what remained of Buda and Pest, he carried thousands with him into captivity, where, after years of woe, they passed into the grave.

"Tis terrible to rouse the lion,
Dreadful to cross the tiger's path,
But the most terrible of terrors,
Is man himself in his wild wrath."

Solyman spent two years in making preparation for another march to Vienna, resolved to wipe out the disgrace of his last defeat by capturing all the Austrian States, and of then spreading the terror of his arms far and wide through the empire of Germany. The energy with which he acted may be inferred from one well authenticated anecdote illustrative of his character. He had ordered a bridge to be constructed across the Drave. The engineer who had been sent to accomplish the task, after a careful survey, reported that a bridge could not be constructed at that point. Solyman sent him a linen cord with this message:

"The sultan, thy master, commands thee, without consideration of the difficulties, to complete the bridge over the Drave. If thou doest it not, on his arrival he will have thee strangled with this cord."

With a large army, thoroughly drilled, and equipped with all the enginery of war, the sultan commenced his campaign. His force was so stupendous and so incumbered with the necessary baggage and heavy artillery, that it required a march of sixty days to pass from Constantinople to Belgrade. Ferdinand, in inexpressible alarm, sent ambassadors to Solyman, hoping to avert the storm by conciliation and concessions. This indication of weakness but increased the arrogance of the Turk.

He embarked his artillery on the Danube in a flotilla of three thousand vessels. Then crossing the Save, which at Belgrade flows into the Danube, he left the great central river of Europe on his right, and marching almost due west through Selavonia, approached the frontiers of Styria, one of the most important provinces of the Austrian kingdom, by the shortest route. Still it was a long march of some two hundred miles. Among the defiles of the Illyrian mountains, through which he was compelled to pass in his advance to Vienna, he came upon the little fortress of Guntz, garrisoned only by eight hundred men. Solyman expected to sweep this slight annoyance