

the camp to encourage the troops by his presence. Frederic was at the table when he received this message, and sent word back that he could not come until after dinner. As soon as the combat commenced, another still more urgent message was sent, to which he returned the same reply. *After dinner* he mounted his horse and rode to the gate which led to the White Mountain. The thunders of the terrible battle filled the air; the whole city was in the wildest state of terror and confusion; the gates barred and barricaded. Even the king could not get out. He climbed one of the towers of the wall and looked out upon the gory field, strewn with corpses, where his army *had been*, but was no more. He returned hastily to his palace, and met there the Prince of Anhalt, who, with a few fugitives, had succeeded in entering the city by one of the gates.

The city now could not defend itself for an hour. The batteries of Ferdinand were beginning to play upon the walls, when Frederic sent out a flag of truce soliciting a cessation of hostilities for twenty-four hours, that they might negotiate respecting peace. The peremptory reply returned was, that there should not be truce for a single moment, unless Frederic would renounce all pretension to the crown of Bohemia. With such a renunciation truce would be granted for eight hours. Frederic acceded to the demand, and the noise of war was hushed.

## CHAPTER XVII.

FERDINAND II.

FROM 1621 TO 1629.

PUSILLANIMITY OF FREDERIC.—INTREATIES OF THE CITIZENS OF PRAGUE.—SHAMEFUL FLIGHT OF FREDERIC.—VENGEANCE INFLICTED UPON BOHEMIA.—PROTESTANTISM AND CIVIL FREEDOM.—VAST POWER OF THE EMPEROR.—ALARM OF EUROPE.—JAMES I.—TREATY OF MARRIAGE FOR THE PRINCE OF WALES.—CARDINAL RICHELIEU.—NEW LEAGUE OF THE PROTESTANTS.—DESOLATING WAR.—DEFEAT OF THE KING OF DENMARK.—ENERGY OF WALLENSTEIN.—TRIUMPH OF FERDINAND.—NEW ACTS OF INTOLERANCE.—SEVERITIES IN BOHEMIA.—DESOLATION OF THE KINGDOM.—DISSATISFACTION OF THE DUKE OF BAVARIA.—MEETING OF THE CATHOLIC PRINCES.—THE EMPEROR HUMBLLED.

THE citizens of Prague were indignant at the pusillanimity of Frederic. In a body they repaired to the palace and tried to rouse his feeble spirits. They urged him to adopt a manly resistance, and offered to mount the ramparts and beat off the foe until succor could arrive. But Frederic told them that he had resolved to leave Prague, that he should escape during the darkness of the night, and advised them to capitulate on the most favorable terms they could obtain. The inhabitants of the city were in despair. They knew that they had nothing to hope from the clemency of the conqueror, and that there was no salvation for them from irretrievable ruin but in the most desperate warfare. Even now, though the enemy was at their gates, their situation was by no means hopeless with a leader of any energy.

"We have still," they urged, "sufficient strength to withstand a siege. The city is not invested on every side, and reinforcements can enter by some of the gates. We have ample means in the city to support all the troops which can



be assembled within its walls. The soldiers who have escaped from the disastrous battle need but to see the Bohemian banners again unfurled and to hear the blast of the bugle, to return to their ranks. Eight thousand troops are within a few hours' march of us. There is another strong band in the rear of the enemy, prepared to cut off their communications. Several strong fortresses, filled with arms and ammunition, are still in our possession, and the Bohemians, animated by the remembrance of the heroic deeds of their ancestors, are eager to retrieve their fortunes."

Had Frederic possessed a title of the perseverance and energy of Ferdinand, with these resources he might soon have arrested the steps of the conqueror. Never was the characteristic remark of Napoleon to Ney better verified, that "an army of deer led by a lion is better than an army of lions led by a deer." Frederic was panic-stricken for fear he might fall into the hands of Ferdinand, from whom he well knew that he was to expect no mercy. With ignominious haste, abandoning every thing, even the coronation regalia, at midnight, surrounded by a few friends, he stole out at one of the gates of the city, and putting spurs to his horse, allowed himself no rest until he was safe within the walls of Berlin, two hundred miles from Prague.

The despairing citizens, thus deserted by their sovereign, and with a victorious foe at their very walls, had no alternative but to throw open their gates and submit to the mercy of the conqueror. The next day the whole imperial army, under the Duke of Bavaria, with floating banners and exultant music, entered the streets of the capital, and took possession of the palaces. The tyrant Ferdinand was as vengeful and venomous as he was vigorous and unyielding. The city was immediately disarmed, and the government intrusted to a vigorous Roman Catholic prince, Charles of Lichtenstein. A strong garrison was left in the city to crush, with a bloody hand, any indications of insurrection, and then the Duke of Bavaria returned

with most of his army to Munich, his capital, tottering beneath the burden of plunder.

There was a moment's lull before the tempest of imperial wrath burst upon doomed Bohemia. Ferdinand seemed to deliberate, and gather his strength, that he might strike a blow which would be felt forever. He did strike such a blow—one which has been remembered for two hundred years, and which will not be forgotten for ages to come—one which doomed parents and children to weary years of vagabondage, penury and woe which must have made life a burden.

On the night of the 21st of January, three months after the capitulation, and when the inhabitants of Prague had begun to hope that there might, after all, be some mercy in the bosom of Ferdinand, forty of the leading citizens of the place were simultaneously arrested. They were torn from their families and thrown into dungeons where they were kept in terrific suspense for four months. They were then brought before an imperial commission and condemned as guilty of high treason. All their property was confiscated, nothing whatever being left for their helpless families. Twenty-three were immediately executed upon the scaffold, and all the rest were either consigned to life-long imprisonment, or driven into banishment. Twenty seven other nobles, who had escaped from the kingdom, were declared traitors. Their castles were seized, their property confiscated and presented as rewards to Roman Catholic nobles who were the friends of Ferdinand. An order was then issued for all the nobles and landholders throughout the kingdom to send in a confession of whatever aid they had rendered, or encouragement they had given to the insurrection. And the most terrible vengeance was threatened against any one who should afterward be proved guilty of any act whatever of which he had not made confession. The consternation which this decree excited was so great, that not only was every one anxious to confess the slightest act which could be construed as unfriendly to the emperor, but many, in their



terror, were driven to accuse themselves of guilt, who had taken no share in the movement. Seven hundred nobles, and the whole body of Protestant landholders, placed their names on the list of those who confessed guilt and implored pardon.

The fiend-like emperor, then, in the mockery of mercy, declared that in view of his great clemency and their humble confession, he would spare their forfeited lives, and would only punish them by depriving them of their estates. He took their mansions, their estates, their property, and turned them adrift upon the world, with their wives and their children, fugitives and penniless. Thus between one and two thousand of the most ancient and noble families of the kingdom were rendered houseless and utterly beggared. Their friends, involved with them in the same woe, could render no assistance. They were denounced as traitors; no one dared befriend them, and their possessions were given to those who had rallied beneath the banners of the emperor. "To the victors belong the spoils." No pen can describe the ruin of these ancient families. No imagination can follow them in their steps of starvation and despair, until death came to their relief.

Ferdinand considered Protestantism and rebellion as synonymous terms. And well he might, for Protestantism has ever been arrayed as firmly against civil as against religious despotism. The doctrines of the reformers, from the days of Luther and Calvin, have always been associated with political liberty. Ferdinand was determined to crush Protestantism. The punishment of the Elector Palatine was to be a signal and an appalling warning to all who in future should think of disputing the imperial sway. The elector himself, having renounced the throne, had escaped beyond the emperor's reach. But Ferdinand took possession of his ancestral territories and divided them among his Roman Catholic allies. The electoral vote which he held in the diet of the empire, Ferdinand transferred to the Duke of Bavaria, thus reducing the Protestant vote to two, and securing an additional Catholic suffrage. The ban of

the empire was also published against the Prince of Anhalt, the Count of Hohenloe, and the Duke Jaegendorf, who had been supporters of Frederic. This ban of the empire deprived them of their territories, of their rank, and of their possessions.

The Protestants throughout the empire were terrified by these fierce acts of vengeance, and were fearful of sharing the same fate. They now regretted bitterly that they had disbanded their organization. They dared not make any move against the emperor, who was flushed with pride and power, lest he should pounce at once upon them. The emperor consequently marched unimpeded in his stern chastisements. Frederic was thus deserted entirely by the Protestant union; and his father-in-law, James of England, in accordance with his threat, refused to lend him any aid. Various most heroic efforts were made by a few intrepid nobles, but one after another they were crushed by the iron hand of the emperor.

Ferdinand, having thus triumphed over all his foes, and having divided their domains among his own followers, called a meeting of the electors who were devoted to his cause, at Ratisbon, on the 25th of February, 1623, to confirm what he had done. In every portion of the empire, where the arm of the emperor could reach them, the Protestants were receiving heavy blows. They were now thoroughly alarmed and aroused. The Catholics all over Europe were renewing their league; all the Catholic powers were banded together, and Protestantism seemed on the eve of being destroyed by the sword of persecution.

Other parts of Europe also began to look with alarm upon the vast power acquired by Austria. There was but little of conciliation in the character of Ferdinand, and his unbounded success, while it rendered him more haughty, excited also the jealousy of the neighboring powers. In Lower Saxony, nearly all the nobles and men of influence were Protestants. The principal portion of the ecclesiastical property was in their



hands. It was very evident that unless the despotism of Ferdinand was checked, he would soon wrest from them their titles and possessions, and none the less readily because he had succeeded in bribing the Elector of Saxony to remain neutral while he tore the crown of Bohemia from the Elector of the Palatine, and despoiled him of his wide-spread ancestral territories.

James I. of England had been negotiating a marriage of his son, the Prince of Wales, subsequently Charles I., with the daughter of the King of Spain. This would have been, in that day, a brilliant match for his son; and as the Spanish monarch was a member of the house of Austria, and a coöperator with his cousin, the Emperor Ferdinand, in all his measures in Germany, it was an additional reason why James should not interfere in defense of his son-in-law, Frederic of the Palatine. But now this match was broken off by the influence of the haughty English minister Buckingham, who had the complete control of the feeble mind of the British monarch. A treaty of marriage was soon concluded between the Prince of Wales and Henrietta, a princess of France. There was hereditary hostility between France and Spain, and both England and France were now quite willing to humble the house of Austria. The nobles of Lower Saxony availed themselves of this new turn in the posture of affairs, and obtained promises of aid from them both, and, through their intercession, aid also from Denmark and Sweden.

Richelieu, the imperious French minister, was embarrassed by two antagonistic passions. He was eager to humble the house of Austria; and this he could only do by lending aid to the Protestants. On the other hand, it was the great object of his ambition to restore the royal authority to unlimited power, and this he could only accomplish by aiding the house of Austria to crush the Protestants, whose love of freedom all despots have abhorred. Impelled by these conflicting passions, he did all in his power to extirpate Protest-

antism from France, while he omitted neither lures nor intrigues to urge the Protestants in Germany to rise against the despotism of Austria. Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden, was personally inimical to Ferdinand, in consequence of injuries he had received at his hands. Christian IV. of Denmark was cousin to Elizabeth, the mother of Frederic, and, in addition to this interest in the conflict which relationship gave him, he was also trembling lest some of his own possessions should soon be wrested from him by the all-grasping emperor. A year was employed, the year 1624, in innumerable secret intrigues, and plans of combination, for a general rising of the Protestant powers. It was necessary that the utmost secrecy should be observed in forming the coalition, and that all should be ready, at the same moment, to coöperate against a foe so able, so determined and so powerful.

Matters being thus essentially arranged, the States of Lower Saxony, who were to take the lead, held a meeting at Segeberg on the 25th of March, 1625. They formed a league for the preservation of their religion and liberties, settled the amount of money and men which each of the contracting parties was to furnish, and chose Christian IV., King of Denmark, their leader. The emperor had for some time suspected that a confederacy was in the process of formation, and had kept a watchful eye upon every movement. The vail was now laid aside, and Christian IV. issued a proclamation, stating the reasons why they had taken up arms against the emperor. This was the signal for a blaze of war, which wrapped all northern Europe in a wide conflagration. Victory ebbed and flowed. Bohemia, Hungary, Denmark, Austria—all the States of the empire, were swept and devastated by pursuing and retreating armies. But gradually the emperor gained. First he overwhelmed all opposition in Lower Saxony, and riveting anew the shackles of despotism, rewarded his followers with the spoils of the vanquished. Then he silenced every murmur in Austria, so that no foe dared lift up the voice or



peep. Then he poured his legions into Hungary, swept back the tide of victory which had been following the Hungarian banners, and struck blow after blow, until Gabriel Bethlehem was compelled to cry for peace and mercy. Bohemia, previously disarmed and impoverished, was speedily struck down.

And now the emperor turned his energies against the panic-stricken King of Denmark. He pursued him from fortress to fortress; attacked him in the open field, and beat him; attacked him behind his intrenchments, and drove him from them through the valleys, and over the hills, across rivers, and into forests; bombarded his cities, plundered his provinces, shot down his subjects, till the king, reduced almost to the last extremity, implored peace. The emperor repelled his advances with scorn, demanding conditions of debasement more to be dreaded than death. The King of Denmark fled to the isles of the Baltic. Ferdinand took possession of the shores of this northern sea, and immediately commenced with vigor creating a fleet, that he might have sea as well as land forces, that he might pursue the Danish monarch over the water, and that he might more effectually punish Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. He had determined to dethrone this monarch, and to transfer the crown of Sweden to Sigismund, his brother-in-law, King of Poland, who was almost as zealous a Roman Catholic as was the emperor himself.

He drove the two Dukes of Mecklenburg from their territory, and gave the rich and beautiful duchy, extending along the south-eastern shore of the Baltic, to his renowned general, Wallenstein. This fierce, ambitious warrior was made generalissimo of all the imperial troops by land, and admiral of the Baltic sea. Ferdinand took possession of all the ports, from the mouth of the Keil, to Kolberg, at the mouth of the Persante. Wismar, on the magnificent bay bearing the same name, was made the great naval depot; and, by building, buying, hiring and robbing, the emperor soon collected quite a formidable fleet. The immense duchy of Pomerania was

just north-east of Mecklenburg, extending along the eastern shore of the Baltic sea some hundred and eighty miles, and about sixty miles in breadth. Though the duke had in no way displeased Ferdinand, the emperor grasped the magnificent duchy, and held it by the power of his resistless armies. Crossing a narrow arm of the sea, he took the rich and populous islands of Rugen and Usedom, and laid siege to the city of Stralsund, which almost commanded the Baltic sea.

The kings of Sweden and Denmark, appalled by the rapid strides of the imperial general, united all their strength to resist him. They threw a strong garrison into Stralsund, and sent the fleets of both kingdoms to aid in repelling the attack, and succeeded in baffling all the attempts of Wallenstein, and finally in driving him off, though he had boasted that "he would reduce Stralsund, even if it were bound to heaven with chains of adamant." Though frustrated in this attempt, the armies of Ferdinand had swept along so resistlessly, that the King of Denmark was ready to make almost any sacrifice for peace. A congress was accordingly held at Lubec in May, 1629, when peace was made; Ferdinand retaining a large portion of his conquests, and the King of Denmark engaging no longer to interfere in the affairs of the empire.

Ferdinand was now triumphant over all his foes. The Protestants throughout the empire were crushed, and all their allies vanquished. He now deemed himself omnipotent, and with wild ambition contemplated the utter extirpation of Protestantism, and the subjugation of nearly all of Europe to his sway. He formed the most intimate alliance with the branch of his house ruling over Spain, hoping that thus the house of Austria might be the arbiter of the fate of Europe. The condition of Europe at that time was peculiarly favorable for the designs of the emperor. Charles I. of England was struggling against that Parliament which soon deprived him both of his crown and his head. France was agitated, from the Rhine to the Pyrenees, by civil war, the Catholics striving to



exterminate the Protestants. Insurrections in Turkey absorbed all the energies of the Ottoman court, leaving them no time to think of interfering with the affairs of Europe. The King of Denmark was humiliated and prostrate. Sweden was too far distant and too feeble to excite alarm. Sigismond of Poland was in intimate alliance with the emperor. Gabriel Bethlehem of Hungary was, languishing on a bed of disease and pain, and only asked permission to die in peace.

The first step which the emperor now took was to revoke all the concessions which had been granted to the Protestants. In Upper Austria, where he felt especially strong, he abolished the Protestant worship utterly. In Lower Austria he was slightly embarrassed by engagements which he had so solemnly made, and dared not trample upon them without some little show of moderation. First he prohibited the circulation of all Protestant books; he then annulled all baptisms and marriages performed by Protestants; then all Protestants were excluded from holding any civil or military office; then he issued a decree that all the children, without exception, should be educated by Catholic priests, and that every individual should attend Catholic worship. Thus coil by coil he wound around his subjects the chain of unrelenting intolerance.

In Bohemia he was especially severe, apparently delighting to punish those who had made a struggle for civil and religious liberty. Every school teacher, university professor and Christian minister, was ejected from office, and their places in schools, universities and churches were supplied by Catholic monks. No person was allowed to exercise any mechanical trade whatever, unless he professed the Roman Catholic faith. A very severe fine was inflicted upon any one who should be detected worshipping at any time, even in family prayer, according to the doctrines and customs of the Protestant church. Protestant marriages were pronounced illegal, their children illegitimate, their wills invalid. The Protestant poor were driven from the hospitals and the alms-houses. No Protestant

was allowed to reside in the capital city of Prague, but, whatever his wealth or rank, he was driven ignominiously from the metropolis.

In the smaller towns and remote provinces of the kingdom, a military force, accompanied by Jesuits and Capuchin friars, sought out the Protestants, and they were exposed to every conceivable insult and indignity. Their houses were pillaged, their wives and children surrendered to all the outrages of a cruel soldiery; many were massacred; many, hunted like wild beasts, were driven into the forest; many were put to the torture, and as their bones were crushed and quivering nerves were torn, they were required to give in their adhesion to the Catholic faith. The persecution to which the Bohemians were subjected has perhaps never been exceeded in severity.

While Bohemia was writhing beneath these woes, the emperor, to secure the succession, repaired in regal pomp to Prague, and crowned his son King of Bohemia. He then issued a decree abolishing the right which the Bohemians had claimed, to elect their king, forbade the use of the Bohemian language in the court and in all public transactions, and annulled all past edicts of toleration. He proclaimed that no religion but the Roman Catholic should henceforth be tolerated in Bohemia, and that all who did not immediately return to the bosom of the Church should be banished from the kingdom. This cruel edict drove into banishment thirty thousand families. These Protestant families composed the best portion of the community, including the most illustrious in rank, the most intelligent, the most industrious and the most virtuous. No State could meet with such a loss without feeling it deeply, and Bohemia has never yet recovered from the blow. One of the Bohemian historians, himself a Roman Catholic, thus describes the change which persecution wrought in Bohemia:

“The records of history scarcely furnish a similar example of such a change as Bohemia underwent during the reign of Ferdinand II. In 1620, the monks and a few of the nobility



only excepted, the whole country was entirely Protestant. At the death of Ferdinand it was, in appearance at least, Catholic. Till the battle of the White Mountain the States enjoyed more exclusive privileges than the Parliament of England. They enacted laws, imposed taxes, contracted alliances, declared war and peace, and chose or confirmed their kings. But all these they now lost.

“Till this fatal period the Bohemians were daring, undaunted, enterprising, emulous of fame; now they have lost all their courage, their national pride, their enterprising spirit. Their courage lay buried in the White Mountain. Individuals still possessed personal valor, military ardor and a thirst of glory, but, blended with other nations, they resembled the waters of the Moldau which join those of the Elbe. These united streams bear ships, overflow lands and overturn rocks; yet the Elbe is only mentioned, and the Moldau forgotten.

“The Bohemian language, which had been used in all the courts of justice, and which was in high estimation among the nobles, fell into contempt. The German was introduced, became the general language among the nobles and citizens, and was used by the monks in their sermons. The inhabitants of the towns began to be ashamed of their native tongue, which was confined to the villages and called the language of peasants. The arts and sciences, so highly cultivated and esteemed under Rhodolph, sunk beyond recovery. During the period which immediately followed the banishment of the Protestants, Bohemia scarcely produced one man who became eminent in any branch of learning. The greater part of the schools were conducted by Jesuits and other monkish orders, and nothing taught therein but bad Latin.

“It can not be denied that several of the Jesuits were men of great learning and science; but their system was to keep the people in ignorance. Agreeably to this principle they gave their scholars only the rind, and kept to themselves the pulp of literature. With this view they traveled from town to

town as missionaries, and went from house to house, examining all books, which the landlord was compelled under pain of eternal damnation to produce. The greater part they confiscated and burnt. They thus endeavored to extinguish the ancient literature of the country, labored to persuade the students that before the introduction of their order into Bohemia nothing but ignorance prevailed, and carefully concealed the learned labors and even the names of our ancestors.”

Ferdinand, having thus bound Bohemia hand and foot, and having accomplished all his purpose in that kingdom, now endeavored, by cautious but very decisive steps, to expel Protestant doctrines from all parts of the German empire. Decree succeeded decree, depriving Protestants of their rights and conferring upon the Roman Catholics wealth and station. He had a powerful and triumphant standing army at his control, under the energetic and bigoted Wallenstein, ready and able to enforce his ordinances. No Protestant prince dared to make any show of resistance. All the church property was torn from the Protestants, and this vast sum, together with the confiscated territories of those Protestant princes or nobles who had ventured to resist the emperor, placed at his disposal a large fund from which to reward his followers. The emperor kept, however, a large portion of the spoils in his own hands for the enriching of his own family.

This state of things soon alarmed even the Catholics. The emperor was growing too powerful, and his power was bearing profusely its natural fruit of pride and arrogance. The army was insolent, trampling alike upon friend and foe. As there was no longer any war, the army had become merely the sword of the emperor to maintain his despotism. Wallenstein had become so essential to the emperor, and possessed such power at the head of the army, that he assumed all the air and state of a sovereign, and insulted the highest nobles and the most powerful bishops by his assumptions of superiority. The electors of the empire perceiving that the emperor