

CHAPTER XXI.

LEOPOLD I. AND THE SPANISH SUCCESSION.

FROM 1697 TO 1710.

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION.—THE IMPOTENCE OF CHARLES II.—APPEAL TO THE POPE.—HIS DECISION.—DEATH OF CHARLES II.—ACCESSION OF PHILIP V.—INDIGNATION OF AUSTRIA.—THE OUTBREAK OF WAR.—CHARLES III. CROWNED.—INSURRECTION IN HUNGARY.—DEFECTION OF BAVARIA.—THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.—DEATH OF LEOPOLD I.—ELEONORA.—ACCESSION OF JOSEPH I.—CHARLES XII. OF SWEDEN.—CHARLES III. IN SPAIN.—BATTLE OF MALPLAQUET.—CHARLES AT BARCELONA.—CHARLES AT MADRID.

CHARLES II., King of Spain, was one of the most impotent of men, in both body and mind. The law of hereditary descent had placed this semi-idiot upon the throne of Spain to control the destinies of twenty millions of people. The same law, in the event of his death without heirs, would carry the crown across the Pyrenees to a little boy in the palace of Versailles, or two thousand miles, to the banks of the Danube, to another little boy in the gardens of Vienna. Louis XIV. claimed the Spanish scepter in behalf of his wife, the Spanish princess Maria Theresa, and her son. Leopold claimed it in behalf of his deceased wife, Margaret, and her child. For many years before the death of Philip II. the envoys of France and Austria crowded the court of Spain, employing all the arts of intrigue and bribery to forward the interests of their several sovereigns. The different courts of Europe espoused the claims of the one party or the other, accordingly as their interests would be promoted by the aggrandizement of the house of Bourbon or the house of Hapsburg.

Louis XIV. prepared to strike a sudden blow by gathering

an army of one hundred thousand men in his fortresses near the Spanish frontier, in establishing immense magazines of military stores, and in filling the adjacent harbors with ships of war. The sagacious French monarch had secured the coöperation of the pope, and of some of the most influential Jesuits who surrounded the sick and dying monarch. Charles II. had long been harassed by the importunities of both parties that he should give the influence of his voice in the decision. Tortured by the incessant vacillations of his own mind, he was at last influenced, by the suggestions of his spiritual advisers, to refer the question to the pope. He accordingly sent an embassy to the pontiff with a letter soliciting counsel.

"Having no children," he observed, "and being obliged to appoint an heir to the Spanish crown from a foreign family, we find such great obscurity in the law of succession, that we are unable to form a settled determination. Strict justice is our aim; and, to be able to decide with that justice, we have offered up constant prayers to God. We are anxious to act rightly, and we have recourse to your holiness, as to an infallible guide, intreating you to consult with the cardinals and divines, and, after having attentively examined the testaments of our ancestors, to decide according to the rules of right and equity."

Pope Innocent XII. was already prepared for this appeal, and was engaged to act as the agent of the French court. The hoary-headed pontiff, with one foot in the grave, affected the character of great honesty and impartiality. He required forty days to examine the important case, and to seek divine assistance. He then returned the following answer, admirably adapted to influence a weak and superstitious prince:

"Being myself," he wrote, "in a situation similar to that of his Catholic majesty, the King of Spain, on the point of appearing at the judgment-seat of Christ, and rendering an account to the sovereign pastor of the flock which has been intrusted to my care, I am bound to give such advice as will

not reproach my conscience on the day of judgment. Your majesty ought not to put the interests of the house of Austria in competition with those of eternity. Neither should you be ignorant that the French claimants are the rightful heirs of the crown, and no member of the Austrian family has the smallest legitimate pretension. It is therefore your duty to omit no precaution, which your wisdom can suggest, to render justice where justice is due, and to secure, by every means in your power, the undivided succession of the Spanish monarchy to the French claimants."

Charles, as fickle as the wind, still remained undecided, and his anxieties preying upon his feeble frame, already exhausted by disease, caused him rapidly to decline. He was now confined to his chamber and his bed, and his death was hourly expected. He hated the French, and all his sympathies were with Austria. Some priests entered his chamber, professedly to perform the pompous and sepulchral service of the church of Rome for the dying. In this hour of languor, and in the prospect of immediate death, they assailed the imbecile monarch with all the terrors of superstition. They depicted the responsibility which he would incur should he entail on the kingdom the woes of a disputed succession; they assured him that he could not, without unpardonable guilt, reject the decision of the holy father of the Church; and growing more eager and excited, they denounced upon him the vengeance of Almighty God, if he did not bequeath the crown, now falling from his brow, to the Bourbons of France.

The dying, half-delirious king, appalled by the terrors of eternal damnation, yielded helplessly to their demands. A will was already prepared awaiting his signature. With a hand trembling in death, the king attached to it his name; but as he did so, he burst into tears, exclaiming, "I am already nothing." It was supposed that he could then survive but a few hours. Contrary to all expectation he revived, and expressed the keenest indignation and anguish that he had

been thus beguiled to decide against Austria, and in favor of France. He even sent a courier to the emperor, announcing his determination to decide in favor of the Austrian claimant. The flickering flame of life, thus revived for a moment, glimmered again in the socket and expired. The wretched king died the 1st of November, 1699, in the fortieth year of his age, and the thirty-sixth of his reign.

On the day of his death a council of State was convened, and the will, the very existence of which was generally unknown, was read. It declared the Dauphin of France, son of the Spanish princess Maria Theresa, to be the successor to all the Spanish dominions; and required all subjects and vassals of Spain to acknowledge him. The Austrian party were astounded at this revelation. The French party were prepared to receive it without any surprise. The son of Maria Theresa was dead, and the crown consequently passed to her grandson Philip. Louis XIV. immediately acknowledged his title, when he was proclaimed king, and took quiet possession of the throne of Spain on the 24th of November, 1700, as Philip V.

It was by such fraud that the Bourbons of France attained the succession to the Spanish crown; a fraud as palpable as was ever committed; for Maria Theresa had renounced all her rights to the throne; this renunciation had been confirmed by the will of her father Philip IV., sanctioned by the Cortes of Spain, and solemnly ratified by her husband, Louis XIV. Such is "legitimacy—the divine right of kings." All the great powers of Europe, excepting the emperor, promptly acknowledged the title of Philip V.

Leopold, enraged beyond measure, dispatched envoys to rouse the empire, and made the most formidable preparations for war. A force of eighty thousand men was soon assembled. The war commenced in Italy. Leopold sent down his German troops through the defiles of the Tyrol, and, in the valley of the Adige, they encountered the combined armies of France, Spain and Italy. Prince Eugene, who had

already acquired great renown in the wars against the Turks though by birth a French noble, had long been in the Austrian service, and led the Austrian troops. William, of England, jealous of the encroachments of Louis XIV., and leading with him the States of Holland, formed an alliance with Austria. This was pretty equally dividing the military power of Europe, and a war of course ensued, almost unparalleled in its sanguinary ferocity. The English nation supported the monarch; the House of Lords, in an address to the king, declared that "his majesty, his subjects and his allies, could never be secure till the house of Austria should be restored to its rights, and the invader of the Spanish monarchy brought to reason." Forty thousand sailors and forty thousand land troops were promptly voted for the war.

William died on the 16th of March, in consequence of a fall from his horse, and was succeeded by Anne, daughter of James II. She was, however, but nominally the sovereign. The infamously renowned Duke of Marlborough became the real monarch, and with great skill and energy prosecuted the eleven years' war which ensued, which is known in history as the War of the Spanish Succession. For many months the conflict raged with the usual fluctuations, the Austrian forces being commanded on the Rhine by the Duke of Marlborough, and in Italy by Prince Eugene. Portugal soon joined the Austrian alliance, and Philip V. and the French becoming unpopular in Spain, a small party rose there, advocating the claims of the house of Austria. Thus supported, Leopold, at Vienna, declared his son Charles King of Spain, and crowned him as such in Vienna. By the aid of the English fleet he passed from Holland to England, and thence to Lisbon, where a powerful army was assembled to invade Spain, wrest the crown from Philip, and place it upon the brow of Charles III.

And now Leopold began to reap the bitter consequences of his atrocious conduct in Hungary. The Hungarian nobles

embraced this opportunity, when the imperial armies were fully engaged, to rise in a new and formidable invasion. Francis Ragotsky, a Transylvanian prince, led in the heroic enterprise. He was of one of the noblest and wealthiest families of the realm, and was goaded to action by the bitterest wrongs. His grandfather and uncle had been beheaded; his father robbed of his property and his rank; his cousin doomed to perpetual imprisonment; his father-in-law proscribed, and his mother driven into exile. The French court immediately opened a secret correspondence with Ragotsky, promising him large supplies of men and money, and encouraging him with hopes of the coöperation of the Turks. Ragotsky secretly assembled a band of determined followers, in the savage solitudes of the Carpathian mountains, and suddenly descended into the plains of Hungary, at the head of his wild followers, calling upon his countrymen to rise and shake off the yoke of the detested Austrian. Adherents rapidly gathered around his standard; several fortresses fell into his hands, and he soon found himself at the head of twenty thousand well armed troops. The flame of insurrection spread, with electric rapidity, through all Hungary and Transylvania.

The tyrant Leopold, as he heard these unexpected tidings, was struck with consternation. He sent all the troops he could collect to oppose the patriots, but they could make no impression upon an indignant nation in arms. He then, in his panic, attempted negotiation. But the Hungarians demanded terms both reasonable and honorable, and to neither of these could the emperor possibly submit. They required that the monarchy should no longer be hereditary, but elective, according to immemorial usage; that the Hungarians should have the right to resist *illegal* power without the charge of treason; that foreign officers and garrisons should be removed from the kingdom; that the Protestants should be reëstablished in the free exercise of their religion, and that their confiscated estates should be restored. The despot could not listen for one

moment to requirements so just; and appalled by the advance of the patriots toward Vienna, he recalled the troops from Italy.

About the same time the Duke of Bavaria, disgusted with the arrogance and the despotism of Leopold, renounced allegiance to the emperor, entered into an alliance with the French, and at the head of forty thousand troops, French and Bavarians, commenced the invasion of Austria from the west. Both Eugene and Marlborough hastened to the rescue of the emperor. Combining their forces, with awful slaughter they mowed down the French and Bavarians at Blenheim, and then overran all Bavaria. The elector fled with the mutilated remnants of his army to France. The conquerors seized all the fortresses, all the guns and ammunition; disbanded the Bavarian troops, took possession of the revenues of the kingdom, and assigned to the heart-broken wife of the duke a humble residence in the dismantled capital of the duchy.

The signal victory of Blenheim enabled Leopold to concentrate his energies upon Hungary. It was now winter, and the belligerents, during these stormy months, were active in making preparations for the campaign of the spring. But Leopold's hour was now tolled. That summons came which prince and peasant must alike obey, and the emperor, after a few months of languor and pain, on the 5th of May, 1705, passed away to that tribunal where each must answer for every deed done in the body. He was sixty-five years of age, and had occupied the throne forty-six years. This is the longest reign recorded in the Austrian annals, excepting that of Frederic III.

The reign of Leopold was eventful and woeful. It was almost one continued scene of carnage. In his character there was a singular blending of the good and the bad. In what is usually called moral character he was irreproachable. He was a faithful husband, a kind father, and had no taste for any sensual pleasures. In his natural disposition he was melancholy, and so exceedingly reserved, that he lived in his palace almost

the life of a recluse. Though he was called the most learned prince of his age, a Jesuitical education had so poisoned and debauched his mind, that while perpetrating the most grievous crimes of perfidy and cruelty, he seemed sincerely to feel that he was doing God service. His persecution of the Protestants was persistent, relentless and horrible; while at the same time he was scrupulous in his devotions, never allowing the cares of business to interfere with the prescribed duties of the Church. *The Church*, the human church of popes, cardinals, bishops and priests, was his guide, not the *divine Bible*. Hence his darkness of mind and his crimes. Pope Innocent XI. deemed him worthy of canonization. But an indignant world must in justice inscribe upon his tomb, "Tyrant and Persecutor."

He was three times married; first, to Margaret, daughter of Philip IV. of Spain; again, to Claudia, daughter of Ferdinand of Tyrol; and a third time, to Eleonora, daughter of Philip, Elector Palatine. The character and history of his third wife are peculiarly illustrative of the kind of religion inculcated in that day, and of the beautiful spirit of piety often exemplified in the midst of melancholy errors.

In the castle of her father, Eleonora was taught, by priests and nuns, that God was only acceptably worshiped by self-sacrifice and mortification. The devout child longed for the love of God more than for any thing else. Guided by the teachings of those who, however sincere, certainly misunderstood the spirit of the gospel, she deprived herself of every innocent gratification, and practiced upon her fragile frame all the severities of an anchorite. She had been taught that celibacy was a virtue peculiarly acceptable to God, and resolutely declined all solicitations for her hand.

The emperor, after the death of his first wife, sought Eleonora as his bride. It was the most brilliant match Europe could offer. Eleonora, from religious scruples, rejected the offer, notwithstanding all the importunities of her parents, who

could not feel reconciled to the loss of so splendid an alliance. The devout maiden, in the conflict, exposed herself, bonnetless, to sun and wind, that she might render herself unattractive, tanned, sun-burnt, and freckled, so that the emperor might not desire her. She succeeded in repelling the suit, and the emperor married Claudia of the Tyrol. The court of the Elector Palatine was brilliant in opulence and gayety. Eleonora was compelled to mingle with the festive throng in the scenes of pomp and splendor; but her thoughts, her affections, were elsewhere, and all the vanities of princely life had no influence in leading her heart from God. She passed several hours, every day, in devotional reading and prayer. She kept a very careful register of her thoughts and actions, scrutinizing and condemning with unsparing severity every questionable emotion. Every sick bed of the poor peasants around, she visited with sympathy and as a tender nurse. She groped her way into the glooms of prison dungeons to convey solace to the prisoner. She wrought ornaments for the Church, and toiled, even to weariness and exhaustion, in making garments for the poor.

Claudia in three years died, and the emperor again was left a widower. Again he applied for the hand of Eleonora. Her spiritual advisers now urged that it was clearly the will of God that she should fill the first throne of the universe, as the patroness and protectress of the Catholic church. For such an object she would have been willing to sweep the streets or to die in a dungeon. Yielding to these persuasions she married the emperor, and was conveyed, as in a triumphal march, to the gorgeous palaces of Vienna. But her character and her mode of life were not changed. Though she sat at the imperial table, which was loaded with every conceivable luxury, she condemned herself to fare as humble and abstemious as could be found in the hut of the most impoverished peasant. It was needful for her at times to appear in the rich garb of an empress, but to prevent any possible indulgence of pride

she had her bracelets and jewelry so arranged with sharp brads as to keep her in continued suffering by the laceration of the flesh.

She was, notwithstanding these austerities, which she practiced with the utmost secrecy, indefatigable in the discharge of her duties as a wife and an empress. She often attended the opera with the emperor, but always took with her the Psalms of David, bound to resemble the books of the performance, and while the tragic or the comic scenes of the stage were transpiring before her, she was studying the devout lyrics of the Psalmist of Israel. She translated all the Psalms into German verse; and also translated from the French, and had printed for the benefit of her subjects, a devotional work entitled, "Pious Reflections for every Day of the Month." During the last sickness of her husband she watched with unwearied assiduity at his bed-side, shrinking from no amount of exhaustion or toil. She survived her husband fifteen years, devoting all this time to austerities, self-mortification and deeds of charity. She died in 1720; and at her express request was buried without any parade, and with no other inscription upon her tomb than—

ELEONORA,
A POOR SINNER,
Died, January 17, 1720.

Joseph, the eldest son of Leopold, was twenty-five years of age when, by the death of his father, he was called to the throne as both king and emperor. He immediately and cordially coöperated with the alliance his father had formed, and pressed the war against France, Spain and Italy. Louis XIV was not a man, however, to be disheartened by disaster. Though thousands of his choicest troops had found a grave at Blenheim, he immediately collected another army of one hundred and sixty thousand men, and pushed them forward to the seat of war on the Rhine and the Danube. Marlborough

and Eugene led Austrian forces to the field still more powerful. The whole summer was spent in marches, countermarches and bloody battles on both sides of the Rhine. Winter came, and its storms and snows drove the exhausted, bleeding combatants from the bleak plains to shelter and the fireside. All Europe, through the winter months, resounded with preparations for another campaign. There was hardly a petty prince on the continent who was not drawn into the strife—to decide whether Philip of Bourbon or Charles of Hapsburg, was entitled by hereditary descent to the throne of Spain.

And now suddenly Charles XII. of Sweden burst in upon the scene, like a meteor amidst the stars of midnight. A more bloody apparition never emerged from the sulphureous canopy of war. Having perfect contempt for all enervating pleasures, with an iron frame and the abstemious habits of a Spartan, he rushed through a career which has excited the wonder of the world. He joined the Austrian party; struck down Denmark at a blow; penetrated Russia in mid-winter, driving the Russian troops before him as dogs scatter wolves; pressed on triumphantly to Poland, through an interminable series of battles; drove the king from the country, and placed a new sovereign of his own selection upon the throne; and then, proudly assuming to hold the balance between the rival powers of France and Austria, made demands of Joseph I., as if the emperor were but the vassal of the King of Sweden. France and Austria were alike anxious to gain the coöperation of this energetic arm.

Early in May, 1706, the armies of Austria and France, each about seventy thousand strong, met in the Netherlands. Marlborough led the allied Austrian troops; the Duke of Bavaria was in command of the French. The French were again routed, almost as disastrously as at Blenheim, losing thirteen thousand men and fifty pieces of artillery. On the Rhine and in Italy the French arms were also in disgrace. Throughout the summer battle succeeded battle, and siege followed siege.

When the snows of another winter whitened the plains of Europe, the armies again retired to winter quarters, the Austrian party having made very decided progress as the result of the campaign. Marlborough was in possession of most of the Netherlands, and was threatening France with invasion. Eugene had driven the French out of Italy, and had brought many of the Italian provinces under the dominion of Austria.

In Spain, also, the warfare was fiercely raging. Charles III., who had been crowned in Vienna King of Spain, and who, as we have mentioned, had been conveyed to Lisbon by a British fleet, joined by the King of Portugal, and at the head of an allied army, marched towards the frontiers of Spain. The Spaniards, though they disliked the French, hated virulently the English and the Dutch, both of whom they considered heretics. Their national pride was roused in seeing England, Holland and Portugal marching upon them to place over Spain an Austrian king. The populace rose, and after a few sanguinary conflicts drove the invaders from their borders. December's storms separated the two armies, compelling them to seek winter quarters, with only the frontier line between them. It was in one of the campaigns of this war, in 1704, that the English took the rock of Gibraltar, which they have held from that day till this.

The British people began to remonstrate bitterly against this boundless expenditure of blood and treasure merely to remove a Bourbon prince, and place a Hapsburg prince upon the throne of Spain. Both were alike despotic in character, and Europe had as much to fear from the aggressions of the house of Austria as from the ambition of the King of France. The Emperor Joseph was very apprehensive that the English court might be induced to withdraw from the alliance, and fearing that they might sacrifice, as the price of accommodation, his conquests in Italy, he privately concluded with France a treaty of neutrality for Italy. This secured to him what he

had already acquired there, and saved France and Spain from the danger of losing any more Italian States.

Though the allies were indignant, and remonstrated against this transaction, they did not see fit to abandon the war. Immense preparations were made to invade France from the Netherlands and from Piedmont, in the opening of the spring of 1707. Both efforts were only successful in spreading far and wide conflagration and blood. The invaders were driven from the kingdom with heavy loss. The campaign in Spain, this year, was also exceedingly disastrous to the Austrian arms. The heterogeneous army of Charles III., composed of Germans, English, Dutch, Portuguese, and a few Spanish refugees, were routed, and with the loss of thirteen thousand men were driven from the kingdom. Joseph, however, who stood in great dread of so terrible an enemy as Charles XII., succeeded in purchasing his neutrality, and this fiery warrior marched off with his battalions, forty-three thousand strong, to drive Peter I. from the throne of Russia.

Joseph I., with exhausted resources, and embarrassed by the claims of so wide-spread a war, was able to do but little for the subjugation of Hungary. As the campaign of 1708 opened, two immense armies, each about eighty thousand strong, were maneuvering near Brussels. After a long series of marches and combinations a general engagement ensued, in which the Austrian party, under Marlborough and Eugene, were decisively triumphant. The French were routed with the loss of fifteen thousand in killed, wounded and prisoners. During the whole summer the war raged throughout the Low Countries with unabated violence. In Spain, Austria was not able to make any progress against Philip and his forces.

Another winter came, and again the wearied combatants, all of whom had received about as many blows as they had given, sought repose. The winter was passed in fruitless negotiations, and as soon as the buds of another spring began to swell, the thunders of war were again pealing over

nearly all the hills and valleys of Europe. The Austrian party had resolved, by a gigantic effort, to send an army of one hundred thousand men to the gates of Paris, there to dictate terms to the French monarch. On the 11th of September, 1709, the Austrian force, eighty thousand strong, with eighty pieces of cannon, encountered the French, seventy thousand in number, with eighty pieces of cannon, on the field of Malplaquet. The bloodiest battle of the Spanish succession was then fought. The Austrian party, guided by Marlborough and Eugene, justly claimed the victory, as they held the field. But they lost twenty thousand in killed and wounded, and took neither prisoners nor guns. The loss of the French was but ten thousand. All this slaughter seemed to be accomplishing nothing. Philip still stood firm upon the Spanish throne, and Charles could scarcely gain the slightest foothold in the kingdom which he claimed. On the side of the Rhine and of Italy, though blood flowed like water, nothing was accomplished; the plan of invading France had totally failed, and again the combatants were compelled to retire to winter quarters.

For nine years this bloody war had now desolated Europe. It is not easy to defend the cause of Austria and her allies in this cruel conflict. The Spaniards undeniably preferred Philip as their king. Louis XIV. had repeatedly expressed his readiness to withdraw entirely from the conflict. But the Austrian allies demanded that he should either by force or persuasion remove Philip from Spain, and place the kingdom in the hands of the Austrian prince. But Philip was now an independent sovereign who for ten years had occupied the throne. He was resolved not to abdicate, and his subjects were resolved to support him. Louis XIV. said that he could not wage warfare against his own grandson. The wretched old monarch, now feeble, childless, and woe crushed, whose soul was already crimsoned with the blood of countless thousands, was so dispirited by defeat, and so weary of the war, that though he