

## CHAPTER XXIII.

CHARLES VI.

FROM 1716 TO 1727.

HEROIC DECISION OF EUGENE.—BATTLE OF BELGRADE.—UTTER ROUT OF THE TURKS.—POSSESSIONS OF CHARLES VI.—THE ELECTOR OF HANOVER SUCCEEDS TO THE ENGLISH THRONE.—PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.—STATE OF ITALY.—PHILIP V. OF SPAIN.—DIPLOMATIC AGITATIONS.—PALACE OF ST. ILDEFONSO.—ORDER OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE.—REJECTION OF MARIA ANNE.—CONTEST FOR THE ROCK OF GIBRALTAR.—DISMISSAL OF RIPPERDA.—TREATY OF VIENNA.—PEACE CONCLUDED.

THE enterprise upon which Eugene had resolved was bold in the extreme. It could only be accomplished by consummate bravery aided by equal military skill. The foe they were to attack were five to one, and were protected by well-constructed redoubts, armed with the most formidable batteries. They were also abundantly supplied with cavalry, and the Turkish cavalry were esteemed the finest horsemen in the world. There was but one circumstance in favor of Eugene. The Turks did not dream that he would have the audacity to march from the protection of his intrenchments and assail them behind their own strong ramparts. There was consequently but little difficulty in effecting a surprise.

All the arrangements were made with the utmost precision and secrecy for a midnight attack. The favorable hour came. The sun went down in clouds, and a night of Egyptian darkness enveloped the armies. The glimmer of innumerable camp-fires only pointed out the position of the foe, without throwing any illumination upon the field. Eugene visited all the posts of the army, ordered abundant refreshment to be distributed to the troops, addressed them in encouraging

words, to impress upon them the importance of the enterprise, and minutely assigned to each battalion, regiment, brigade and division its duty, that there might be no confusion. The whole plan was carefully arranged in all its details and in all its grand combination. As the bells of Belgrade tolled the hour of twelve at midnight, three bombs, simultaneously discharged, put the whole Austrian army in rapid and noiseless motion.

A dense fog had now descended, through which they could with difficulty discern the twinkling lights of the Turkish camp. Rapidly they traversed the intervening space, and in dense, solid columns, rushed over the ramparts of the foe. Bombs, cannon, musketry, bayonets, cavalry, all were employed, amidst the thunderings and the lightnings of that midnight storm of war, in the work of destruction. The Turks, roused from their slumber, amazed, bewildered, fought for a short time with maniacal fury, often pouring volleys of bullets into the bosoms of their friends, and with bloody cimicers smiting indiscriminately on the right hand and the left, till, in the midst of a scene of confusion and horror which no imagination can conceive, they broke and fled. Two hundred thousand men, lighted only by the flash of guns which mowed their ranks, with thousands of panic-stricken cavalry trampling over them, while the crash of musketry, the explosions of artillery, the shouts of the assailants and the fugitives, and the shrieks of the dying, blended in a roar more appalling than heaven's heaviest thunders, presented a scene which has few parallels even in the horrid annals of war.

The morning dawned upon a field of blood and death. The victory of the Austrians was most decisive. The flower of the Turkish army was cut to pieces, and the remnant was utterly dispersed. The Turkish camp, with all its abundant booty of tents, provisions, ammunition and artillery, fell into the hands of the conqueror. So signal was the victory, that the disheartened Turks made no attempt to retrieve their loss. Bel-

grade was surrendered to the Austrians, and the sultan implored peace. The articles were signed in Passarowitz, a small town of Servia, in July, 1718. By this treaty the emperor added Belgrade to his dominions, and also a large part of Wallachia and Servia.

Austria and Spain were still in heart at war, as the emperor claimed the crown of Spain, and was only delaying active hostilities until he could dispose of his more immediate foes. Charles, soon after the death of his cousin, the Portuguese princess, with whom he had formed a matrimonial engagement, married Elizabeth Christina, a princess of Brunswick. The imperial family now consisted of three daughters, Maria Theresa, Maria Anne and Maria Amelia. It will be remembered that by the family compact established by Leopold, the succession was entailed upon Charles in preference to the daughters of Joseph, in case Joseph should die without male issue. But should Charles die without male issue, the crown was to revert to the daughters of Joseph in preference to those of Charles. The emperor, having three daughters and no sons, with natural parental partiality, but unjustly, and with great want of magnanimity, was anxious to deprive the daughters of Joseph of their rights, that he might secure the crown for his own daughters. He accordingly issued a decree reversing this contract, and settling the right of succession first upon his daughters, should he die without sons, then upon the daughters of Joseph, one of whom had married the Elector of Saxony and the other the Elector of Bavaria. After them he declared his sister, who had married the King of Portugal, and then his other sisters, the daughters of Leopold, to be in the line of succession. This new law of succession Charles issued under the name of the Pragmatic Sanction. He compelled his nieces, the daughters of Joseph, to give their assent to this Sanction, and then, for the remainder of his reign, made the greatest efforts to induce all the powers of Europe to acknowledge its validity.

Charles VI. was now, as to the extent of territory over which he reigned and the population subject to his sway, decidedly the most powerful monarch in Christendom. Three hundred princes of the German empire acknowledged him as their elected sovereign. By hereditary right he claimed dominion over Bohemia, Hungary, Transylvania, Wallachia, Servia, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, the Tyrol, and all the rich and populous States of the Netherlands. Naples, Sicily, Mantua and Milan in Italy, also recognized his sovereignty. To enlightened reason nothing can seem more absurd than that one man, of very moderate capacities, luxuriating in his palace at Vienna, should pretend to hold dominion over so many millions so widely dispersed. But the progress of the world towards intelligent liberty has been very slow. When we contrast the constitution of the United States with such a political condition, all our evils and difficulties dwindle to utter insignificance.

Still the power of the emperor was in many respects apparent rather than real. Each of these States had its own customs and laws. The nobles were tumultuary, and ever ready, if their privileges were infringed, to rise in insurrection. Military force alone could hold these turbulent realms in awe; and the old feudal servitude which crushed the millions, was but another name for anarchy. The peace establishment of the emperor amounted to one hundred thousand men, and every one of these was necessary simply to garrison his fortresses. The enormous expense of the support of such an army, with all the outlays for the materiel of war, the cavalry, and the structure of vast fortresses, exhausted the revenues of a kingdom in which the masses of the people were so miserably poor that they were scarcely elevated above the beasts of the field, and where the finances had long been in almost irreparable disorder. The years of peace, however, were very few. War, a maelstrom which ingulfs uncounted millions, seems to have been the normal state of Ger

many. But the treasury of Charles was so constantly drained that he could never, even in his greatest straits, raise more than one hundred and sixty thousand men; and he was often compelled to call upon the aid of a foreign purse to meet the expense which that number involved. Within a hundred years the nations have made vast strides in wealth, and in the consequent ability to throw away millions in war.

Charles VI. commenced his reign with intense devotion to business. He resolved to be an illustrious emperor, vigorously superintending all the interests of the empire, legislative, judicial and executive. For a few weeks he was busy night and day, buried in a hopeless mass of diplomatic papers. But he soon became weary of this, and leaving all the ordinary affairs of the State in the hands of agents, amused himself with his violin and in chasing rabbits. As more serious employment, he gave pompous receptions, and enveloped himself in imperial ceremony and the most approved courtly etiquette. He still, however, insisted upon giving his approval to all measures adopted by his ministers, before they were carried into execution. But as he was too busy with his entertainments, his music and the chase, to devote much time to the dry details of government, papers were accumulating in a mountainous heap in his cabinet, and the most important business was neglected.

Charles XII. was now King of Sweden; Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia; George I., King of England; and the shameful regency had succeeded, in France, the reign of Louis XIV. For eighteen years a bloody war had been sweeping the plains of Poland, Russia and Sweden. Thousands had been torn to pieces by the enginery of war, and trampled beneath iron hoofs. Millions of women and children had been impoverished, beggared, and turned out houseless into the fields to moan and starve and die. The claims of humanity must ever yield to the requisitions of war. This fierce battle of eighteen years was fought to decide which of

three men, Peter of Russia, Charles of Sweden, or Augustus of Poland, should have the right to exact tribute from Livonia. This province was a vast pasture on the Baltic, containing about seventeen thousand square miles, and inhabited by about five hundred thousand poor herdsmen and tillers of the soil.

Peter the Great was in the end victorious in this long conflict; and having attached large portions of Sweden to his territory, with a navy upon the Baltic, and a disciplined army, began to be regarded as a European power, and was quite disposed to make his voice heard in the diplomacy of Europe. Queen Anne having died, leaving no children, the law of hereditary descent carried the crown of England to Germany, and placed it upon the brow of the Elector of Hanover, who, as grandson of James I., was the nearest heir, but who could not speak a word of English, who knew nothing of constitutional law, and who was about as well qualified to govern England as a Patagonian or Esquimaux would have been. But obedience to this law of hereditary descent was a political necessity. There were thousands of able men in England who could have administered the government with honor to themselves and to the country. But it is said in reply that the people of England, as a body, were not then, and probably are not even now, sufficiently enlightened to be intrusted with the choice of their own rulers. Respect for the ballot-box is one of the last and highest attainments of civilization. Recent developments in our own land have led many to fear that barbarism is gaining upon the people. If the *ballot-box* be overturned, the *cartridge-box* must take its place. The great battle we have to fight is the battle against popular ignorance. The great army we are to support is the army of teachers in the schools and in the pulpit, elevating the mind to the highest possible intelligence, and guiding the heart by the pure spirit of the gospel.

The emperor was so crowded with affairs of immediate

urgency, and it was so evident that he could not drive Philip from the throne, now that he was recognized by all Europe, that he postponed the attempt for a season, while he still adopted the title of King of Spain. His troops had hardly returned from the brilliant campaign of Belgrade, ere the emperor saw a cloud gathering in the north, which excited his most serious apprehension. Russia and Sweden, irritated by some of the acts of the emperor, formed an alliance for the invasion of the German empire. The fierce warriors of the north, led by such captains as Charles XII. and Peter the Great, were foes not to be despised. This threatened invasion not only alarmed the emperor, but alarmed George I. of England, as his electorate of Hanover was imperiled; and also excited the fears of Augustus, the Elector of Saxony, who had regained the throne of Poland. England and Poland consequently united with the emperor, and formidable preparations were in progress for a terrible war, when one single chance bullet, upon the field of Pultowa, struck Charles XII., as he was looking over the parapet, and dispersed this cloud which threatened the desolation of all Europe.

Austria was now the preponderating power in degenerate Italy. Even those States which were not in subjection to the emperor, were overawed by his imperious spirit. Genoa was nominally independent. The Genoese arrested one of the imperial officers for some violation of the laws of the republic. The emperor sent an army to the gates of the city, threatening it with bombardment and utter destruction. They were thus compelled immediately to liberate the officer, to pay a fine of three hundred thousand dollars, and to send a senator to Vienna with humble expressions of contrition, and to implore pardon.

The kingdom of Sardinia was at this time the most powerful State in Italy, if we except those united Italian States which now composed an integral part of the Austrian empire. Victor Asmedeus, the energetic king, had a small but vigor-

ous army, and held himself ready, with this army, for a suitable remuneration, to engage in the service of any sovereign without asking any troublesome questions as to the righteousness of the expedition in which he was to serve. The Sardinian king was growing rich, and consequently ambitious. He wished to rise from the rank of a secondary to that of a primary power in Europe. There was but one direction in which he could hope to extend his territories, and that was by pressing into Lombardy. He had made the remark, which was repeated to the emperor, "I must acquire Lombardy piece by piece, as I eat an artichoke." Charles, consequently, watched Victor with a suspicious eye.

The four great powers of middle and southern Europe were Austria, England, France, and Spain. All the other minor States, innumerable in name as well as number, were compelled to take refuge, openly or secretly, beneath one or another of these great monarchies.

In France, the Duke of Orleans, the regent during the minority of Louis XV., whose court, in the enormous expenditures of vice, exhausted the yearly earnings of a population of twenty millions, was anxious to unite the Bourbon branches of France and Spain in more intimate alliance. He accordingly affianced the young sovereign of France to Mary Anne, daughter of Philip V. of Spain. At the same time he married his own daughter to the king's oldest son, the Prince of Asturias, who was heir to the throne. Mary Anne, to whom the young king was affianced, was only four years of age.

The personal history of the monarchs of Europe is, almost without exception, a melancholy history. By their ambition and their wars they whelmed the cottages in misery, and by a righteous retribution misery also inundated the palace. Philip V. became the victim of the most insupportable melancholy. Earth had no joy which could lift the cloud of gloom from his soul. For months he was never known to smile. Imprisoning himself in his palace he refused to see any company, and left