

all the cares of government in the hands of his wife, Elizabeth Farnese.

Germany was still agitated by the great religious contest between the Catholics and the Protestants, which divided the empire into two nearly equal parties, bitterly hostile to each other. Various fruitless attempts had been made to bring the parties together, into *unity of faith*, by compromise. Neither party were reconciled to cordial *toleration*, free and full, in which alone harmony can be obtained. In all the States of the empire the Catholics and the Protestants were coming continually into collision. Charles, though a very decided Catholic, was not disposed to persecute the Protestants, as most of his predecessors had done, for he feared to rouse them to despair.

England, France, Austria and Spain, were now involved in an inextricable maze of diplomacy. Congresses were assembled and dissolved; treaties made and violated; alliances formed and broken. Weary of the conflict of arms, they were engaged in the more harmless squabbles of intrigue, each seeking its own aggrandizement. Philip V., who had fought so many bloody battles to acquire the crown of Spain, now, disgusted with the cares which that crown involved, overwhelmed with melancholy, and trembling in view of the final judgment of God, suddenly abdicated the throne in favor of his son Louis, and took a solemn oath that he would never resume it again. This event, which surprised Europe, took place on the 10th of February, 1724. Philip retired to St. Ildefonso.

The celebrated palace of St. Ildefonso, which became the retreat of the monarch, was about forty miles north of Madrid, in an elevated ravine among the mountains of Gaudaruma. It was an enormous pile, nearly four thousand feet above the level of the sea, and reared by the Spanish monarchs at an expense exceeding thirty millions of dollars. The palace, two stories high, and occupying three sides of a square, presents a front five hundred and thirty feet in length. In

this front alone there are, upon each story, twelve gorgeous apartments in a suite. The interior is decorated in the richest style of art, with frescoed ceilings, and splendid mirrors, and tessellated floors of variegated marble. The furniture was embellished with gorgeous carvings, and enriched with marble, jasper and verd-antique. The galleries were filled with the most costly productions of the chisel and the pencil. The spacious garden, spread out before the palace, was cultivated with the utmost care, and ornamented with fountains surpassing even those of Versailles.

To this magnificent retreat Philip V. retired with his imperious, ambitious wife. She was the step-mother of his son who had succeeded to the throne. For a long time, by the vigor of her mind, she had dominated over her husband, and had in reality been the sovereign of Spain. In the magnificent palace of St. Ildefonso, she was by no means inclined to relinquish her power. Gathering a brilliant court around her, she still issued her decrees, and exerted a powerful influence over the kingdom. The young Louis, who was but a boy, was not disposed to engage in a quarrel with his mother, and for a time submitted to this interference; but gradually he was roused by his adherents, to emancipate himself from these shackles, and to assume the authority of a sovereign. This led to very serious trouble. The abdicated king, in his moping melancholy, was entirely in subjection to his wife. There were now two rival courts. Parties were organizing. Some were for deposing the son; others for imprisoning the father. The kingdom was on the eve of a civil war, when death kindly came to settle the difficulty.

The young King Louis, but eighteen years of age, after a nominal reign of but eight months, was seized with that awful scourge the small-pox, and, after a few days of suffering and delirium, was consigned to the tomb. Philip, notwithstanding his vow, was constrained by his wife to resume the crown, she probably promising to relieve him of all care. Such are



the vicissitudes of a hereditary government. Elizabeth, with woman's spirit, now commanded the emperor to renounce the title of King of Spain, which he still claimed. Charles, with the spirit of an emperor, declared that he would do no such thing.

There was another serious source of difficulty between the two monarchs, which has descended, generation after generation, to our own time, and to this day is only settled by each party quietly persisting in his own claim.

In the year 1430 Philip III., Duke of Burgundy, instituted a new order of knighthood for the protection of the Catholic church, to be called the order of the Golden Fleece. But twenty-four members were to be admitted, and Philip himself was the grand master. Annual meetings were held to fill vacancies. Charles V., as grand master, increased the number of knights to fifty-one. After his death, as the Burgundian provinces and the Netherlands passed under the dominion of Spain, the Spanish monarchs exercised the office of grand master, and conferred the dignity, which was now regarded the highest order of knighthood in Europe, according to their pleasure. But Charles VI., now in admitted possession of the Netherlands, by virtue of that possession claimed the office of grand master of the Golden Fleece. Philip also claimed it as the inheritance of the kings of Spain. The dispute has never been settled. Both parties still claim it, and the order is still conferred both at Vienna and Madrid.

Other powers interfered, in the endeavor to promote reconciliation between the hostile courts, but, as usual, only increased the acrimony of the two parties. The young Spanish princess Mary Anne, who was affianced to the Dauphin of France, was sent to Paris for her education, and that she might become familiar with the etiquette of a court over which she was to preside as queen. For a time she was treated with great attention, and child as she was, received all the homage which the courtiers were accustomed to pay to the Queen of

France. But amidst the intrigues of the times a change arose, and it was deemed a matter of state policy to marry the boy-king to another princess. The French court consequently rejected Maria Anne and sent her back to Spain, and married Louis, then but fifteen years of age, to Maria Lebrinsky, daughter of the King of Poland. The rejected child was too young fully to appreciate the mortification. Her parents, however, felt the insult most keenly. The whole Spanish court was roused to resent it as a national outrage. The queen was so indignant that she tore from her arm a bracelet which she wore, containing a portrait of Louis XV., and dashing it upon the floor, trampled it beneath her feet. Even the king was roused from his gloom by the humiliation of his child, and declared that no amount of blood could atone for such an indignity.

Under the influence of this exasperation, the queen resolved to seek reconciliation with Austria, that all friendly relations might be abandoned with France, and that Spain and Austria might be brought into intimate alliance to operate against their common foe. A renowned Spanish diplomatist, the Baron of Ripperda, had been for some time a secret agent of the queen at the court of Vienna, watching the progress of events there. He resided in the suburbs under a fictitious name, and eluding the vigilance of the ministry, had held by night several secret interviews with the emperor, proposing to him, in the name of the queen, plans of reconciliation. Letters were immediately dispatched to Ripperda urging him to come to an accommodation with the emperor upon almost any terms.

A treaty was soon concluded, early in the spring of 1725. The emperor renounced all claim to the Spanish crown, entered into an alliance, both offensive and defensive, with Philip, and promised to aid, both with men and money, to help recover Gibraltar from the English, which fortress they had held since they seized upon it in the war of the Spanish succession.



In consideration of these great concessions Philip agreed to recognize the right of the emperor to the Netherlands and to his acquisitions in Italy. He opened all the ports of Spain to the subjects of the emperor, and pledged himself to support the Pragmatic Sanction, which wrested the crown of Austria from the daughters of Joseph, and transmitted it to the daughters of Charles. It was this last clause which influenced the emperor, for his whole heart was set upon the accomplishment of this important result, and he was willing to make almost any sacrifice to attain it. There were also some secret articles attached which have never been divulged.

The immediate demand of Spain for the surrender of the rock of Gibraltar was the signal for all Europe to marshal itself for war—a war which threatened the destruction of hundreds of thousands of lives, millions of property, and which was sure to spread far and wide over populous cities and extended provinces, carnage, conflagration, and unspeakable woe. The question was, whether England or Spain should have possession of a rock seven miles long and one mile broad, which was supposed, but very erroneously, to command the Mediterranean. To the rest of Europe it was hardly a matter of the slightest moment whether the flag of England or Spain waved over those granite cliffs. It seems incredible that beings endowed with reason could be guilty of such madness.

England, with great vigor, immediately rallied on her side France, Hanover, Holland, Denmark and Sweden. On the other side were Spain, Austria, Russia, Prussia and a large number of the minor States of Germany. Many months were occupied in consolidating these coalitions, and in raising the armies and gathering the materials for the war.

In the meantime Ripperda, having so successfully, as he supposed, concluded his negotiations at Vienna, in a high state of exultation commenced his journey back to Spain. Passing down through the Tyrol and traversing Italy he embarked at

Genoa and landed at Barcelona. Here he boasted loudly of what he had accomplished.

“Spain and the emperor now united,” he said, “will give the law to Europe. The emperor has one hundred and fifty thousand troops under arms, and in six months can bring as many more into the field. France shall be pillaged. George I. shall be driven both from his German and his British territories.”

From Barcelona Ripperda traveled rapidly to Madrid, where he was received with almost regal honors by the queen, who was now in reality the sovereign. She immediately appointed him Secretary of State, and transferred to him the reins of government which she had taken from the unresisting hands of her moping husband. Thus Ripperda became, in all but title, the King of Spain. He was a weak man, of just those traits of character which would make him a haughty woman's favorite. He was so elated with this success, became so insufferably vain, and assumed such imperious airs as to disgust all parties. He made the most extravagant promises of the subsidies the emperor was to furnish, and of the powers which were to combine to trample England and France beneath their feet. It was soon seen that these promises were merely the vain-glorious boasts of his own heated brain. Even the imperial ambassador at Madrid was so repelled by his arrogance, that he avoided as far as possible all social and even diplomatic intercourse with him. There was a general combination of the courtiers to crush the favorite. The queen, who, with all her ambition, had a good share of sagacity, soon saw the mistake she had made, and in four months after Ripperda's return to Madrid, he was dismissed in disgrace.

A general storm of contempt and indignation pursued the discarded minister. His rage was now inflamed as much as his vanity had been. Fearful of arrest and imprisonment, and burning with that spirit of revenge which is ever strongest in weakest minds, he took refuge in the house of the British am-



bassador, Mr. Stanhope. Hostilities had not yet commenced. Indeed there had been no declaration of war, and diplomatic relations still continued undisturbed. Each party was acting secretly, and watching the movements of the other with a jealous eye.

Ripperda sought protection beneath the flag of England, and with the characteristic ignominy of deserters and traitors, endeavored to ingratiate himself with his new friends by disclosing all the secrets of his negotiations at Vienna. Under these circumstances full confidence can not be placed in his declarations, for he had already proved himself to be quite unscrupulous in regard to truth. The indignant queen sent an armed force, arrested the duke in the house of the British ambassador, and sent him, in close imprisonment, to the castle of Segovia. He, however, soon escaped from there and fled to England, where he reiterated his declarations respecting the secret articles of the treaty of Vienna. The most important of these declarations was, that Spain and the emperor had agreed to drive George I. from England and to place the Pretender, who had still many adherents, upon the British throne. It was also asserted that marriage contracts were entered into which, by uniting the daughters of the emperor with the sons of the Spanish monarch, would eventually place the crowns of Austria and Spain upon the same brow. The thought of such a vast accumulation of power in the hands of any one monarch, alarmed all the rest of Europe. Both Spain and the emperor denied many of the statements made by Ripperda. But as *truth* has not been esteemed a diplomatic virtue, and as both Ripperda and the sovereigns he had served were equally tempted to falsehood, and were equally destitute of any character for truth, it is not easy to decide which party to believe.

England and France took occasion, through these disclosures, to rouse the alarm of Europe. So much apprehension was excited in Prussia, Bavaria, and with other princes of the

empire, who were appalled at the thought of having another Spanish prince upon the imperial throne, that the emperor sent ambassadors to these courts to appease their anxiety, and issued a public declaration denying that any such marriages were in contemplation; while at the same time he was promising the Queen of Spain these marriages, to secure her support. England and France accuse the emperor of deliberate, persistent, unblushing falsehood.

The emperor seems now to have become involved in an inextricable maze of prevarication and duplicity, striving in one court to accomplish purposes which in other courts he was denying that he wished to accomplish. His embarrassment at length became so great, the greater part of Europe being roused and jealous, that he was compelled to abandon Spain, and reluctantly to sign a treaty of amity with France and England. A general armistice was agreed upon for seven years. The King of Spain, thus abandoned by the emperor, was also compelled to smother his indignation and to roll back his artillery into the arsenals. Thus this black cloud of war, which threatened all Europe with desolation, was apparently dispelled. This treaty, which seemed to restore peace to Europe, was signed in June, 1727. It was, however, a hollow peace. The spirit of ambition and aggression animated every court; and each one was ready, in defiance of treaties and in defiance of the misery of the world, again to unsheath the sword as soon as any opportunity should offer for the increase of territory or power.