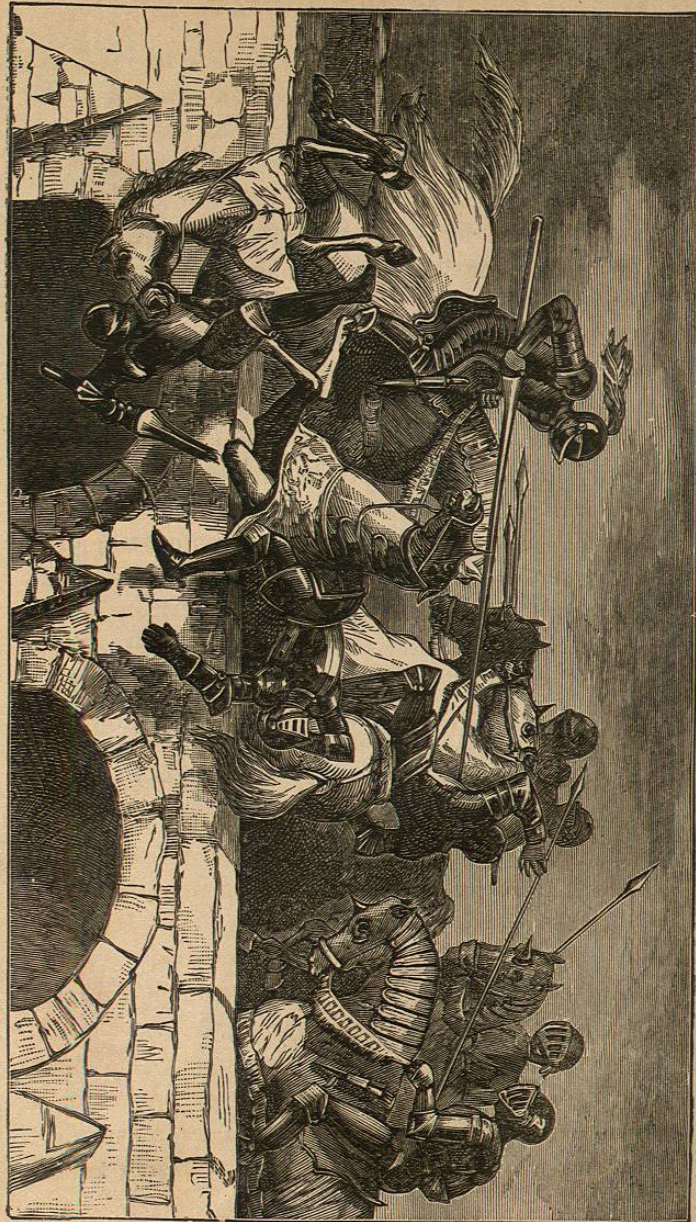


stantly tumbled headlong over the bridge, and two more thrown against the river-bank at the first thrust of his weapon. By adroit exercise of his lance and horse he hurled the enemy back by threes and fours till they were appalled at his wonderful feats. His powerful, well-trained horse seemed to share his own spirit. The Spaniards could make no headway against him, and they began to look upon him as a fiend rather than a mortal they had to encounter. Help came at last, and he no sooner heard the ring of the horses' hoofs behind him and the war-cry of his faithful gens-d'armes than he spurred his horse forward, ceasing to act merely on the defensive, and led his followers to a furious charge, which sent the enemy back in rapid retreat. Unfortunately for the French the army were unable to keep the bridge that one man had so bravely defended. The main body of the French were soon after withdrawn from Italy. Before Bayard was recalled, however, he received a visit from an Italian noble, who, with many flattering speeches, brought our hero proposals from the Pope, Julius II., that he should enter the service of the Church and take command of its armies, with the title of generalissimo and a large salary. The offer seemed not to tempt Bayard for a moment. His answer was respectful, and he expressed his gratitude to the Pope, but said that he would rather be a common soldier under the King of France, his natural sovereign, than the head of the army of a foreign prince.

The Genoese had for some time been restive under the French yoke, and they were stirred up into open revolt by the intrigues of Julius II. and Maximilian. The French king was preparing to march against



BAYARD DEFENDING THE BRIDGE.

Chevalier Bayard. This was in 1506, just fourteen years after one of Genoa's illustrious citizens had, by his intrepidity and perseverance against all opposing obstacles, succeeded in finding for a Spanish monarch a New World.

In 1509 we find Louis XII. leagued with Maximilian, the Pope, and the King of Spain against the little republic of Venice. In various encounters with the Venetians Bayard bore himself bravely, and in the great battle of Agudello he again distinguished himself by his intrepid valor in the face of obstacles that would have deterred a less determined man. When the fate of the battle was doubtful, and the king's troops staggered for a moment, Bayard seeing the situation of the king, who was leading his troops in person, made one of those bold, sudden movements which so often characterized him. He plunged into a morass, and, calling to his troops to follow, waded breast-deep through mud and water to the rescue of his sovereign. This movement brought him unexpectedly upon the Venetians, and routed them utterly.

At the siege of Padua, when the French troops under Bayard were making an assault upon the city, our hero, fighting on foot in a terrible hand-to-hand conflict, is described by a quaint old chronicler as bearing himself "like a she-lion robbed of her whelps." The city was defended by four barricades, and all well manned and bristling with cannon. Bayard with his gallant followers, all gentlemen of France, and "each one," says the old chronicler, "fit to be a captain of a hundred men," carried them by assault in the face of a deadly fire. "On, comrades, they are ours!" he cried, as he bounded over the last barricade, followed by thirty or

forty knights crying, "France and empire!" The trumpet sounded, and a general advance soon put the Venetians to rout. "The deeds of every warrior could be seen, but the palm was borne away from all by Bayard. He led the assault, and was first everywhere in the front of danger."

In 1512 we find the brave knight fighting for France against the Pope. Once he actually planned the capture of His Holiness, and was only defeated in his enterprise by a sudden fall of snow, which caused the Pope to return from an expedition on the road from San Felice. His Holiness heard something of the plot, and lost no time in escaping from our wary knight. "Had he only lingered while one should murmur a paternoster," says Bayard's quaint chronicler, the loyal *Serviteur*, "he had surely been snapped up."

At Brescia our brave knight was severely wounded leading a charge, as usual, for he was ever in the front of the battle. As he fell he cried to the Lord of Molait, "The town is gained, companion; on with your people. As for me, I am slain, and can go no further." Fortunately, the wound was not mortal; but it was painful and serious, and kept him confined nearly five weeks in the house of a lady of Brescia, who carefully attended him. On his recovery the good lady offered Bayard a large sum of money as ransom for herself and her daughters, the city having been taken by the French; she and her daughters were in fact prisoners. "On my honor, madam," said he, "had you brought me a hundred thousand ducats I should not be so much beholden to you as I am for the kindly treatment and careful attendance I have had at your hands. Be sure, madam, that wherever I

may be, and while God permits me to live, you shall always have a gentleman at your service. As for your ducats, take them back. All my life I have loved men better than money." Seeing that the lady was offended at his refusal to take her gift, he accepted it, and sending for her daughters, immediately bestowed it upon them as a marriage portion.

Easter day, 1512, found Bayard, scarcely healed of his wounds, in camp with the army at Ravenna. At early dawn the French were in motion, for a terrible battle was imminent. Arrayed against France were the allied powers of Spain, Venice, the Pope, and even Maximilian, who had been bought up by His Holiness. It was a fierce struggle. The gallant commander of the French army, Gaston de Foix, was slain, and Bayard's horse, a noble animal that he had taken at Brescia, was so badly wounded that Bayard was obliged to fight on foot. The victory was with the French, but it was dearly bought with the loss of many of the bravest knights of France. In the retreat from Paria, which the French were soon obliged to make, Bayard was again wounded so seriously that he had to retire from the army to Grenoble, where he was kindly received and cared for by his venerable uncle, the bishop, whom he had not seen for many years.

Henry VIII. of England invaded France with a large army, and Bayard was again in the field. At the battle of Guinegatte, where the English with 6,000 archers, 4,000 lancers, and eight pieces of artillery, laid in ambush for a small detachment of French, 400 in all, Bayard was made prisoner in a novel and original way. Seeing that in such an unequal contest nothing but certain death or surrender awaited them, he called

to his troopers to surrender each one to the best man he could find. Seated under a tree was a hostile cavalier, who, thinking the fight was over, had thrown himself down to rest, and had removed his helmet. Bayard rushed upon him with his sword and cried out, "Yield, cavalier, or you die!" Astonished and chagrined, the knight could do nothing but yield, whereupon Bayard said, "I am Captain Bayard, and now I surrender to you." The knight lodged him in his own tent, and treated him with great courtesy. In a few days Bayard desired to be allowed a safe-conduct to return to his command. "We have not yet treated of your ransom," said the knight. "My ransom!" exclaimed Bayard, "*your own*, you mean, for you surrendered to me." The *ruse de guerre* was a new one, and the knight carried our chevalier to the king for his decision in the matter. When it was known in the English army that the chevalier "*sans peur et sans reproche*" was a prisoner, "there was such rejoicing," says the loyal Serviteur, "that to hear them speak of it you would think they had gained a battle." This battle is sometimes called the "Battle of the Spurs," from the good use which the French made of their spurs in the retreat. Henry decided that the two knights were quits with each other, and he released Bayard upon his parole not to fight against him for six weeks.

On the accession of Francis I. to the throne he made our chevalier lieutenant-general of his native province of Dauphiny. In an expedition over the Alps three distinguished officers, all his superiors in rank, served under him. Francis himself was knighted by him on the field of battle at Marignano. He would receive the

accolade from no other hands than those of the best knight in Christendom.

Mezieres, a weak and badly fortified place, was committed to his keeping. Others had urged its abandonment, but Bayard opposed it, saying, "No place is weak which has good soldiers to defend it." He worked day and night upon the defences himself, and spent his money in strengthening the place. It was besieged by 35,000 of the enemy, and the herald that was sent to demand its surrender represented to him that it was impossible to hold the place against such a force. Bayard smiled. "Tell your captains," he said, "that they shall sooner weary of the assault than I shall of its maintenance. The French Bayard has no fear of the German War-Horse." He held the place till Francis was able to send him relief. The king visited him afterwards in his camp and conferred upon him the collar of St. Michael, and gave him the command of a hundred men-at-arms. This honor had hitherto only been bestowed upon princes of the blood.

Soon after his noble defence of Mezieres he was again called to a position of unusual danger, viz., the conduct of the retreat of the French army, which, through the weakness of the king and the imbecility of his generals, was fast being overthrown. In one of the brilliant charges which he made during this retreat he was struck by a stone bullet and mortally wounded. His friends would have borne him off the field to a place of safety, but he would not allow it. "Let me die in peace," he said. "I would not in my last moments turn my back upon the enemy for the first time in my life!"

He was calm and brave to the end. He requested

to have his sword stuck into the earth that he might look upon the cross which formed its handle—a rude, soldierly emblem of the faith—and, gazing upon it, with the name of Christ upon his lips, the spirit took its flight.

He was buried in a convent near Grenoble, and all France mourned his loss.

them. "Our knight" had been suffering from serious illness, and was at Lyons when he heard this news. Though feeble and still a victim to ague, he lost no time in joining the army before the old city of Genoa. His presence was very welcome to Louis. At a council of war the king appealed to Bayard for advice as to the practicability of taking a fortress of considerable strength which the Genoese had manned on the top of a mountain. He answered that he knew not what to say, as he was ignorant of the strength of the enemy, but offered to make a reconnoissance. "Give me but an hour's leave," he said, "and I will ascend the mountain and see what the strength of the place is. In that time, unless I am taken or slain, I will bring you the necessary information." He gathered a small body of picked men, some of whom were distinguished nobles who knew that he would lead them only through paths of glory, about a hundred and twenty in all, and began the ascent of the mountain. It was so steep that in places they had to go on hands and knees, clinging to the low shrubbery to assist them in their ascent. Reaching the top they met a small force of Genoese, which was quickly dispersed, and he proceeded to take a survey of the fort. It was full of men, three hundred in number. His men were eager for a contest, and he knew they could be relied on. Taking all precautions to lessen the disparity of numbers, he brought on the fight, which was sustained nobly by the Genoese, but they were finally overcome and fled precipitately down the mountain and into the city of Genoa. They made no further resistance, and the French army entered Genoa, whose fall was due entirely to the courage and prompt action of the