

**ТОМАС
БАБИНГТОН
МАКОЛЕЙ**

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL
ESSAYS. VOLUME 2

Томас Бабингтон Маколей
Critical and Historical
Essays. Volume 2

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=35006473
Critical and Historical Essays – Volume 2:

Содержание

MACHIAVELLI	4
VON RANKE	63
WAR OF THE SUCCESSION IN SPAIN	120
FREDERIC THE GREAT	194
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	267

Thomas Babington Macaulay

Critical and Historical Essays – Volume 2

MACHIAVELLI

(March 1827) *Oeuvres completes de MACHIAVEL, traduites par J. V. PERIER Paris: 1825.*

THOSE who have attended to the practice of our literary tribunal are well aware that, by means of certain legal fictions similar to those of Westminster Hall, we are frequently enabled to take cognisance of cases lying beyond the sphere of our original jurisdiction. We need hardly say, therefore, that in the present instance M. Perier is merely a Richard Roe, who will not be mentioned in any subsequent stage of the proceedings, and whose name is used for the sole purpose of bringing Machiavelli into court.

We doubt whether any name in literary history be so generally odious as that of the man whose character and writings we now propose to consider. The terms in which he is commonly described would seem to import that he was the Tempter, the Evil Principle, the discoverer of ambition and revenge, the original inventor of perjury, and that, before the publication

of his fatal Prince, there had never been a hypocrite, a tyrant, or a traitor, a simulated virtue, or a convenient crime. One writer gravely assures us that Maurice of Saxony learned all his fraudulent policy from that execrable volume. Another remarks that since it was translated into Turkish, the Sultans have been more addicted than formerly to the custom of strangling their brothers. Lord Lyttelton charges the poor Florentine with the manifold treasons of the house of Guise, and with the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Several authors have hinted that the Gunpowder Plot is to be primarily attributed to his doctrines, and seem to think that his effigy ought to be substituted for that of Guy Faux, in those processions by which the ingenious youth of England annually commemorate the preservation of the Three Estates. The Church of Rome has pronounced his works accursed things. Nor have our own countrymen been backward in testifying their opinion of his merits. Out of his surname they have coined an epithet for a knave, and out of his Christian name a synonym for the Devil.

Nick Machiavel had ne'er a trick,
Tho' he gave his name to our old Nick.
Hudibras, Part iii. Canto i.

[But, we believe, there is a schism on this subject among the antiquarians.]

It is indeed scarcely possible for any person, not well acquainted with the history and literature of Italy, to read without

horror and amazement the celebrated treatise which has brought so much obloquy on the name of Machiavelli. Such a display of wickedness, naked yet not ashamed, such cool, judicious, scientific atrocity, seemed rather to belong to a fiend than to the most depraved of men. Principles which the most hardened ruffian would scarcely hint to his most trusted accomplice, or avow, without the disguise of some palliating sophism, even to his own mind, are professed without the slightest circumlocution, and assumed as the fundamental axioms of all political science.

It is not strange that ordinary readers should regard the author of such a book as the most depraved and shameless of human beings. Wise men, however, have always been inclined to look with great suspicion on the angels and daemons of the multitude: and in the present instance, several circumstances have led even superficial observers to question the justice of the vulgar decision. It is notorious that Machiavelli was, through life, a zealous republican. In the same year in which he composed his manual of King-craft, he suffered imprisonment and torture in the cause of public liberty. It seems inconceivable that the martyr of freedom should have designedly acted as the apostle of tyranny. Several eminent writers have, therefore, endeavoured to detect in this unfortunate performance some concealed meaning, more consistent with the character and conduct of the author than that which appears at the first glance.

One hypothesis is that Machiavelli intended to practise on the young Lorenzo de Medici a fraud similar to that which

Sunderland is said to have employed against our James the Second, and that he urged his pupil to violent and perfidious measures, as the surest means of accelerating the moment of deliverance and revenge. Another supposition which Lord Bacon seems to countenance, is that the treatise was merely a piece of grave irony, intended to warn nations against the arts of ambitious men. It would be easy to show that neither of these solutions is consistent with many passages in *The Prince* itself. But the most decisive refutation is that which is furnished by the other works of Machiavelli. In all the writings which he gave to the public, and in all those which the research of editors has, in the course of three centuries, discovered, in his *Comedies*, designed for the entertainment of the multitude, in his *Comments on Livy*, intended for the perusal of the most enthusiastic patriots of Florence, in his *History*, inscribed to one of the most amiable and estimable of the Popes, in his public despatches, in his private memoranda, the same obliquity of moral principle for which *The Prince* is so severely censured is more or less discernible. We doubt whether it would be possible to find, in all the many volumes of his compositions, a single expression indicating that dissimulation and treachery had ever struck him as discreditable.

After this, it may seem ridiculous to say that we are acquainted with few writings which exhibit so much elevation of sentiment, so pure and warm a zeal for the public good, or so just a view of the duties and rights of citizens, as those of Machiavelli.

Yet so it is. And even from *The Prince* itself we could select many passages in support of this remark. To a reader of our age and country this inconsistency is, at first, perfectly bewildering. The whole man seems to be an enigma, a grotesque assemblage of incongruous qualities, selfishness and generosity, cruelty and benevolence, craft and simplicity, abject villainy and romantic heroism. One sentence is such as a veteran diplomatist would scarcely write in cipher for the direction of his most confidential spy; the next seems to be extracted from a theme composed by an ardent schoolboy on the death of Leonidas. An act of dexterous perfidy, and an act of patriotic self-devotion, call forth the same kind and the same degree of respectful admiration. The moral sensibility of the writer seems at once to be morbidly obtuse and morbidly acute. Two characters altogether dissimilar are united in him. They are not merely joined, but interwoven. They are the warp and the woof of his mind; and their combination, like that of the variegated threads in shot silk, gives to the whole texture a glancing and ever-changing appearance. The explanation might have been easy, if he had been a very weak or a very affected man. But he was evidently neither the one nor the other. His works prove, beyond all contradiction, that his understanding was strong, his taste pure, and his sense of the ridiculous exquisitely keen.

This is strange: and yet the strangest is behind. There is no reason whatever to think, that those amongst whom he lived saw anything shocking or incongruous in his writings. Abundant

proofs remain of the high estimation in which both his works and his person were held by the most respectable among his contemporaries. Clement the Seventh patronised the publication of those very books which the Council of Trent, in the following generation, pronounced unfit for the perusal of Christians. Some members of the democratical party censured the Secretary for dedicating *The Prince* to a patron who bore the unpopular name of Medici. But to those immoral doctrines which have since called forth such severe reprehensions no exception appears to have been taken. The cry against them was first raised beyond the Alps, and seems to have been heard with amazement in Italy. The earliest assailant, as far as we are aware, was a countryman of our own, Cardinal Pole. The author of the *Anti-Machiavelli* was a French Protestant.

It is, therefore, in the state of moral feeling among the Italians of those times that we must seek for the real explanation of what seems most mysterious in the life and writings of this remarkable man. As this is a subject which suggests many interesting considerations, both political and metaphysical, we shall make no apology for discussing it at some length.

During the gloomy and disastrous centuries which followed the downfall of the Roman Empire, Italy had preserved, in a far greater degree than any other part of Western Europe, the traces of ancient civilisation. The night which descended upon her was the night of an Arctic summer. The dawn began to reappear before the last reflection of the preceding

sunset had faded from the horizon. It was in the time of the French Merovingians and of the Saxon Heptarchy that ignorance and ferocity seemed to have done their worst. Yet even then the Neapolitan provinces, recognising the authority of the Eastern Empire, preserved something of Eastern knowledge and refinement. Rome, protected by the sacred character of her Pontiffs, enjoyed at least comparative security and repose. Even in those regions where the sanguinary Lombards had fixed their monarchy, there was incomparably more of wealth, of information, of physical comfort, and of social order, than could be found in Gaul, Britain, or Germany.

That which most distinguished Italy from the neighbouring countries was the importance which the population of the towns, at a very early period, began to acquire. Some cities had been founded in wild and remote situations, by fugitives who had escaped from the rage of the barbarians. Such were Venice and Genoa, which preserved their freedom by their obscurity, till they became able to preserve it by their power. Other cities seem to have retained, under all the changing dynasties of invaders, under Odoacer and Theodoric, Narses and Alboin, the municipal institutions which had been conferred on them by the liberal policy of the Great Republic. In provinces which the central government was too feeble either to protect or to oppress, these institutions gradually acquired stability and vigour. The citizens, defended by their walls, and governed by their own magistrates and their own by-laws, enjoyed a considerable share

of republican independence. Thus a strong democratic spirit was called into action. The Carlovingian sovereigns were too imbecile to subdue it. The generous policy of Otho encouraged it. It might perhaps have been suppressed by a close coalition between the Church and the Empire. It was fostered and invigorated by their disputes. In the twelfth century it attained its full vigour, and, after a long and doubtful conflict, triumphed over the abilities and courage of the Swabian princes.

The assistance of the Ecclesiastical power had greatly contributed to the success of the Guelfs. That success would, however, have been a doubtful good, if its only effect had been to substitute a moral for a political servitude, and to exalt the Popes at the expense of the Caesars. Happily the public mind of Italy had long contained the seeds of free opinions, which were now rapidly developed by the genial influence of free institutions. The people of that country had observed the whole machinery of the Church, its saints and its miracles, its lofty pretensions and its splendid ceremonial, its worthless blessings and its harmless curses, too long and too closely to be duped. They stood behind the scenes on which others were gazing with childish awe and interest. They witnessed the arrangement of the pulleys, and the manufacture of the thunders. They saw the natural faces and heard the natural voices of the actors. Distant nations looked on the Pope as the Vicegerent of the Almighty, the oracle of the All-wise, the umpire from whose decisions, in the disputes either of theologians or of kings, no Christian ought to appeal.

The Italians were acquainted with all the follies of his youth, and with all the dishonest arts by which he had attained power. They knew how often he had employed the keys of the Church to release himself from the most sacred engagements, and its wealth to pamper his mistresses and nephews. The doctrines and rites of the established religion they treated with decent reverence. But though they still called themselves Catholics, they had ceased to be Papists. Those spiritual arms which carried terror into the palaces and camps of the proudest sovereigns excited only contempt in the immediate neighbourhood of the Vatican. Alexander, when he commanded our Henry the Second to submit to the lash before the tomb of a rebellious subject, was himself an exile. The Romans apprehending that he entertained designs against their liberties, had driven him from their city; and though he solemnly promised to confine himself for the future to his spiritual functions, they still refused to readmit him.

In every other part of Europe, a large and powerful privileged class trampled on the people and defied the Government. But in the most flourishing parts of Italy, the feudal nobles were reduced to comparative insignificance. In some districts they took shelter under the protection of the powerful commonwealths which they were unable to oppose, and gradually sank into the mass of burghers. In other places they possessed great influence; but it was an influence widely different from that which was exercised by the aristocracy of any Transalpine kingdom. They were not petty princes, but

eminent citizens. Instead of strengthening their fastnesses among the mountains, they embellished their palaces in the market-place. The state of society in the Neapolitan dominions, and in some parts of the Ecclesiastical State, more nearly resembled that which existed in the great monarchies of Europe. But the Governments of Lombardy and Tuscany, through all their revolutions, preserved a different character. A people, when assembled in a town, is far more formidable to its rulers than when dispersed over a wide extent of country. The most arbitrary of the Caesars found it necessary to feed and divert the inhabitants of their unwieldy capital at the expense of the provinces. The citizens of Madrid have more than once besieged their sovereign in his own palace, and extorted from him the most humiliating concessions. The Sultans have often been compelled to propitiate the furious rabble of Constantinople with the head of an unpopular Vizier. From the same cause there was a certain tinge of democracy in the monarchies and aristocracies of Northern Italy.

Thus liberty, partially indeed and transiently, revisited Italy; and with liberty came commerce and empire, science and taste, all the comforts and all the ornaments of life. The Crusades, from which the inhabitants of other countries gained nothing but relics and wounds, brought to the rising commonwealths of the Adriatic and Tyrrhene seas a large increase of wealth, dominion, and knowledge. The moral and geographical position of those commonwealths enabled them to profit alike by the

barbarism of the West and by the civilisation of the East. Italian ships covered every sea. Italian factories rose on every shore. The tables of Italian moneychangers were set in every city. Manufactures flourished. Banks were established. The operations of the commercial machine were facilitated by many useful and beautiful inventions. We doubt whether any country of Europe, our own excepted, have at the present time reached so high a point of wealth and civilisation as some parts of Italy had attained four hundred years ago. Historians rarely descend to those details from which alone the real state of a community can be collected. Hence posterity is too often deceived by the vague hyperboles of poets and rhetoricians, who mistake the splendour of a court for the happiness of a people. Fortunately, John Villani has given us an ample and precise account of the state of Florence in the early part of the fourteenth century. The revenue of the Republic amounted to three hundred thousand florins; a sum which, allowing for the depreciation of the precious metals, was at least equivalent to six hundred thousand pounds sterling; a larger sum than England and Ireland, two centuries ago, yielded annually to Elizabeth. The manufacture of wool alone employed two hundred factories and thirty thousand workmen. The cloth annually produced sold, at an average, for twelve hundred thousand florins; a sum fully equal in exchangeable value to two millions and a half of our money. Four hundred thousand florins were annually coined. Eighty banks conducted the commercial operations, not of Florence

only but of all Europe. The transactions of these establishments were sometimes of a magnitude which may surprise even the contemporaries of the Barings and the Rothschilds. Two houses advanced to Edward the Third of England upwards of three hundred thousand marks, at a time when the mark contained more silver than fifty shillings of the present day, and when the value of silver was more than quadruple of what it now is. The city and its environs contained a hundred and seventy thousand inhabitants. In the various schools about ten thousand children were taught to read; twelve hundred studied arithmetic; six hundred received a learned education.

The progress of elegant literature and of the fine arts was proportioned to that of the public prosperity. Under the despotic successors of Augustus, all the fields of intellect had been turned into arid wastes, still marked out by formal boundaries, still retaining the traces of old cultivation, but yielding neither flowers nor fruit. The deluge of barbarism came. It swept away all the landmarks. It obliterated all the signs of former tillage. But it fertilised while it devastated. When it receded, the wilderness was as the garden of God, rejoicing on every side, laughing, clapping its hands, pouring forth, in spontaneous abundance, everything brilliant, or fragrant, or nourishing. A new language, characterised by simple sweetness and simple energy, had attained perfection. No tongue ever furnished more gorgeous and vivid tints to poetry; nor was it long before a poet appeared who knew how to employ them. Early in the fourteenth

century came forth the Divine Comedy, beyond comparison the greatest work of imagination which had appeared since the poems of Homer. The following generation produced indeed no second Dante: but it was eminently distinguished by general intellectual activity. The study of the Latin writers had never been wholly neglected in Italy. But Petrarch introduced a more profound, liberal, and elegant scholarship, and communicated to his countrymen that enthusiasm for the literature, the history, and the antiquities of Rome, which divided his own heart with a frigid mistress and a more frigid Muse. Boccaccio turned their attention to the more sublime and graceful models of Greece.

From this time, the admiration of learning and genius became almost an idolatry among the people of Italy. Kings and republics, cardinals and doges, vied with each other in honouring and flattering Petrarch. Embassies from rival States solicited the honour of his instructions. His coronation agitated the Court of Naples and the people of Rome as much as the most important political transaction could have done. To collect books and antiques, to found professorships, to patronise men of learning, became almost universal fashions among the great. The spirit of literary research allied itself to that of commercial enterprise. Every place to which the merchant princes of Florence extended their gigantic traffic, from the bazars of the Tigris to the monasteries of the Clyde, was ransacked for medals and manuscripts. Architecture, painting, and sculpture, were munificently encouraged. Indeed it would be difficult to name an

Italian of eminence, during the period of which we speak, who, whatever may have been his general character, did not at least affect a love of letters and of the arts.

Knowledge and public prosperity continued to advance together. Both attained their meridian in the age of Lorenzo the Magnificent. We cannot refrain from quoting the splendid passage, in which the Tuscan Thucydides describes the state of Italy at that period. “Ridotta tutta in somma pace e tranquillita, coltivata non meno ne’ luoghi piu montuosi e piu sterili che nelle pianure e regioni piu fertili, ne sottoposta ad altro imperio che de’ suoi medesimi, non solo era abbondantissima d’abitatori e di ricchezze; ma illustrata sommamente dalla magnificenza di molti principi, dallo splendore di molte nobilissime e bellissime citta, dalla sedia e maestà della religione, fioriva d’uomini prestantissimi nell’amministrazione delle cose pubbliche, e d’ingegni molto nobili in tutte le scienze, ed in qualunque arte preclara ed industriosa.” When we peruse this just and splendid description, we can scarcely persuade ourselves that we are reading of times in which the annals of England and France present us only with a frightful spectacle of poverty, barbarity, and ignorance. From the oppressions of illiterate masters, and the sufferings of a degraded peasantry, it is delightful to turn to the opulent and enlightened States of Italy, to the vast and magnificent cities, the ports, the arsenals, the villas, the museums, the libraries, the marts filled with every article of comfort or luxury, the factories swarming with artisans, the

Apennines covered with rich cultivation up to their very summits, the Po wafting the harvests of Lombardy to the granaries of Venice, and carrying back the silks of Bengal and the furs of Siberia to the palaces of Milan. With peculiar pleasure, every cultivated mind must repose on the fair, the happy, the glorious Florence, the halls which rang with the mirth of Pulci, the cell where twinkled the midnight lamp of Politian, the statues on which the young eye of Michael Angelo glared with the frenzy of a kindred inspiration, the gardens in which Lorenzo meditated some sparkling song for the May-day dance of the Etrurian virgins. Alas for the beautiful city! Alas for the wit and the learning, the genius and the love!

“Le donne, e i cavalier, gli affanni, e gli agi,
Che ne ‘nvogliava amore e cortesia
La dove i cuor son fatti si malvagi.”

A time was at hand, when all the seven vials of the Apocalypse were to be poured forth and shaken out over those pleasant countries, a time of slaughter, famine, beggary, infamy, slavery, despair.

In the Italian States, as in many natural bodies, untimely decrepitude was the penalty of precocious maturity. Their early greatness, and their early decline, are principally to be attributed to the same cause, the preponderance which the towns acquired in the political system.

In a community of hunters or of shepherds, every man easily

and necessarily becomes a soldier. His ordinary avocations are perfectly compatible with all the duties of military service. However remote may be the expedition on which he is bound, he finds it easy to transport with him the stock from which he derives his subsistence. The whole people is an army; the whole year a march. Such was the state of society which facilitated the gigantic conquests of Attila and Tamerlane.

But a people which subsists by the cultivation of the earth is in a very different situation. The husbandman is bound to the soil on which he labours. A long campaign would be ruinous to him. Still his pursuits are such as give to his frame both the active and the passive strength necessary to a soldier. Nor do they, at least in the infancy of agricultural science, demand his uninterrupted attention. At particular times of the year he is almost wholly unemployed, and can, without injury to himself, afford the time necessary for a short expedition. Thus the legions of Rome were supplied during its earlier wars. The season during which the fields did not require the presence of the cultivators sufficed for a short inroad and a battle. These operations, too frequently interrupted to produce decisive results, yet served to keep up among the people a degree of discipline and courage which rendered them, not only secure, but formidable. The archers and billmen of the middle ages, who, with provisions for forty days at their backs, left the fields for the camp, were troops of the same description.

But when commerce and manufactures begin to flourish a

great change takes place. The sedentary habits of the desk and the loom render the exertions and hardships of war insupportable. The business of traders and artisans requires their constant presence and attention. In such a community there is little superfluous time; but there is generally much superfluous money. Some members of the society are, therefore, hired to relieve the rest from a task inconsistent with their habits and engagements.

The history of Greece is, in this, as in many other respects, the best commentary on the history of Italy. Five hundred years before the Christian era, the citizens of the republics round the Aegean Sea formed perhaps the finest militia that ever existed. As wealth and refinement advanced, the system underwent a gradual alteration. The Ionian States were the first in which commerce and the arts were cultivated, and the first in which the ancient discipline decayed. Within eighty years after the battle of Plataea, mercenary troops were everywhere plying for battles and sieges. In the time of Demosthenes, it was scarcely possible to persuade or compel the Athenians to enlist for foreign service. The laws of Lycurgus prohibited trade and manufactures. The Spartans, therefore, continued to form a national force long after their neighbours had begun to hire soldiers. But their military spirit declined with their singular institutions. In the second century before Christ, Greece contained only one nation of warriors, the savage highlanders of Aetolia, who were some generations behind their countrymen in civilisation and intelligence.

All the causes which produced these effects among the Greeks acted still more strongly on the modern Italians. Instead of a power like Sparta, in its nature warlike, they had amongst them an ecclesiastical state, in its nature pacific. Where there are numerous slaves, every freeman is induced by the strongest motives to familiarise himself with the use of arms. The commonwealths of Italy did not, like those of Greece, swarm with thousands of these household enemies. Lastly, the mode in which military operations were conducted during the prosperous times of Italy was peculiarly unfavourable to the formation of an efficient militia. Men covered with iron from head to foot, armed with ponderous lances, and mounted on horses of the largest breed, were considered as composing the strength of an army. The infantry was regarded as comparatively worthless, and was neglected till it became really so. These tactics maintained their ground for centuries in most parts of Europe. That foot-soldiers could withstand the charge of heavy cavalry was thought utterly impossible, till, towards the close of the fifteenth century, the rude mountaineers of Switzerland dissolved the spell, and astounded the most experienced generals by receiving the dreaded shock on an impenetrable forest of pikes.

The use of the Grecian spear, the Roman sword, or the modern bayonet, might be acquired with comparative ease. But nothing short of the daily exercise of years could train the man-at-arms to support his ponderous panoply, and manage his unwieldy weapon. Throughout Europe this most important

branch of war became a separate profession. Beyond the Alps, indeed, though a profession, it was not generally a trade. It was the duty and the amusement of a large class of country gentlemen. It was the service by which they held their lands, and the diversion by which, in the absence of mental resources, they beguiled their leisure. But in the Northern States of Italy, as we have already remarked, the growing power of the cities, where it had not exterminated this order of men, had completely changed their habits. Here, therefore, the practice of employing mercenaries became universal, at a time when it was almost unknown in other countries.

When war becomes the trade of a separate class, the least dangerous course left to a government is to force that class into a standing army. It is scarcely possible, that men can pass their lives in the service of one State, without feeling some interest in its greatness. Its victories are their victories. Its defeats are their defeats. The contract loses something of its mercantile character. The services of the soldier are considered as the effects of patriotic zeal, his pay as the tribute of national gratitude. To betray the power which employs him, to be even remiss in its service, are in his eyes the most atrocious and degrading of crimes.

When the princes and commonwealths of Italy began to use hired troops, their wisest course would have been to form separate military establishments. Unhappily this was not done. The mercenary warriors of the Peninsula, instead of being

attached to the service of different powers, were regarded as the common property of all. The connection between the State and its defenders was reduced to the most simple and naked traffic. The adventurer brought his horse, his weapons, his strength, and his experience, into the market. Whether the King of Naples or the Duke of Milan, the Pope or the Signory of Florence, struck the bargain, was to him a matter of perfect indifference. He was for the highest wages and the longest term. When the campaign for which he had contracted was finished, there was neither law nor punctilio to prevent him from instantly turning his arms against his late masters. The soldier was altogether disjoined from the citizen and from the subject.

The natural consequences followed. Left to the conduct of men who neither loved those whom they defended, nor hated those whom they opposed, who were often bound by stronger ties to the army against which they fought than to the State which they served, who lost by the termination of the conflict, and gained by its prolongation, war completely changed its character. Every man came into the field of battle impressed with the knowledge that, in a few days, he might be taking the pay of the power against which he was then employed, and, fighting by the side of his enemies against his associates. The strongest interests and the strongest feelings concurred to mitigate the hostility of those who had lately been brethren in arms, and who might soon be brethren in arms once more. Their common profession was a bond of union not to be forgotten even when

they were engaged in the service of contending parties. Hence it was that operations, languid and indecisive beyond any recorded in history, marches and counter-marches, pillaging expeditions and blockades, bloodless capitulations and equally bloodless combats, make up the military history of Italy during the course of nearly two centuries. Mighty armies fight from sunrise to sunset. A great victory is won. Thousands of prisoners are taken; and hardly a life is lost. A pitched battle seems to have been really less dangerous than an ordinary civil tumult.

Courage was now no longer necessary even to the military character. Men grew old in camps, and acquired the highest renown by their warlike achievements, without being once required to face serious danger. The political consequences are too well known. The richest and most enlightened part of the world was left undefended to the assaults of every barbarous invader, to the brutality of Switzerland, the insolence of France, and the fierce rapacity of Arragon. The moral effects which followed from this state of things were still more remarkable.

Among the rude nations which lay beyond the Alps, valour was absolutely indispensable. Without it none could be eminent; few could be secure. Cowardice was, therefore, naturally considered as the foulest reproach. Among the polished Italians, enriched by commerce, governed by law, and passionately attached to literature, everything was done by superiority and intelligence. Their very wars, more pacific than the peace of their neighbours, required rather civil than military qualifications.

Hence, while courage was the point of honour in other countries, ingenuity became the point of honour in Italy.

From these principles were deduced, by processes strictly analogous, two opposite systems of fashionable morality. Through the greater part of Europe, the vices which peculiarly belong to timid dispositions, and which are the natural defence of weakness, fraud, and hypocrisy, have always been most disreputable. On the other hand, the excesses of haughty and daring spirits have been treated with indulgence, and even with respect. The Italians regarded with corresponding lenity those crimes which require self-command, address, quick observation, fertile invention, and profound knowledge of human nature.

Such a prince as our Henry the Fifth would have been the idol of the North. The follies of his youth, the selfish ambition of his manhood, the Lollards roasted at slow fires the prisoners massacred on the field of battle, the expiring lease of priestcraft renewed for another century, the dreadful legacy of a causeless and hopeless war bequeathed to a people who had no interest in its event, everything is forgotten but the victory of Agincourt. Francis Sforza, on the other hand, was the model of Italian heroes. He made his employers and his rivals alike his tools. He first overpowered his open enemies by the help of faithless allies; he then armed himself against his allies with the spoils taken from his enemies. By his incomparable dexterity, he raised himself from the precarious and dependent situation of a military adventurer to the first throne of Italy. To such a man much was

forgiven, hollow friendship, ungenerous enmity, violated faith. Such are the opposite errors which men commit, when their morality is not a science but a taste, when they abandon eternal principles for accidental associations.

We have illustrated our meaning by an instance taken from history. We will select another from fiction. Othello murders his wife; he gives orders for the murder of his lieutenant; he ends by murdering himself. Yet he never loses the esteem and affection of Northern readers. His intrepid and ardent spirit redeems everything. The unsuspecting confidence with which he listens to his adviser, the agony with which he shrinks from the thought of shame, the tempest of passion with which he commits his crimes, and the haughty fearlessness with which he avows them, give an extraordinary interest to his character. Iago, on the contrary, is the object of universal loathing. Many are inclined to suspect that Shakspeare has been seduced into an exaggeration unusual with him, and has drawn a monster who has no archetype in human nature. Now we suspect that an Italian audience in the fifteenth century would have felt very differently. Othello would have inspired nothing but detestation and contempt. The folly with which he trusts the friendly professions of a man whose promotion he had obstructed, the credulity with which he takes unsupported assertions, and trivial circumstances, for unanswerable proofs, the violence with which he silences the exculpation till the exculpation can only aggravate his misery, would have excited the abhorrence and disgust of the spectators.

The conduct of Iago they would assuredly have condemned; but they would have condemned it as we condemn that of his victim. Something of interest and respect would have mingled with their disapprobation. The readiness of the traitor's wit, the clearness of his judgment, the skill with which he penetrates the dispositions of others and conceals his own, would have ensured to him a certain portion of their esteem.

So wide was the difference between the Italians and their neighbours. A similar difference existed between the Greeks of the second century before Christ, and their masters the Romans. The conquerors, brave and resolute, faithful to their engagements, and strongly influenced by religious feelings, were, at the same time, ignorant, arbitrary, and cruel. With the vanquished people were deposited all the art, the science, and the literature of the Western world. In poetry, in philosophy, in painting, in architecture, in sculpture, they had no rivals. Their manners were polished, their perceptions acute, their invention ready; they were tolerant, affable, humane; but of courage and sincerity they were almost utterly destitute. Every rude centurion consoled himself for his intellectual inferiority, by remarking that knowledge and taste seemed only to make men atheists, cowards, and slaves. The distinction long continued to be strongly marked, and furnished an admirable subject for the fierce sarcasms of Juvenal.

The citizen of an Italian commonwealth was the Greek of the time of Juvenal and the Greek of the time of Pericles, joined

in one. Like the former, he was timid and pliable, artful and mean. But, like the latter, he had a country. Its independence and prosperity were dear to him. If his character were degraded by some base crimes, it was, on the other hand, ennobled by public spirit and by an honourable ambition.

A vice sanctioned by the general opinion is merely a vice. The evil terminates in itself. A vice condemned by the general opinion produces a pernicious effect on the whole character. The former is a local malady, the latter a constitutional taint. When the reputation of the offender is lost, he too often flings the remains of his virtue after it in despair. The Highland gentleman who, a century ago, lived by taking blackmail from his neighbours, committed the same crime for which Wild was accompanied to Tyburn by the huzzas of two hundred thousand people. But there can be no doubt that he was a much less depraved man than Wild. The deed for which Mrs. Brownrigg was hanged sinks into nothing, when compared with the conduct of the Roman who treated the public to a hundred pair of gladiators. Yet we should greatly wrong such a Roman if we supposed that his disposition was as cruel as that of Mrs. Brownrigg. In our own country, a woman forfeits her place in society by what, in a man, is too commonly considered as an honourable distinction, and, at worst, as a venial error. The consequence is notorious. The moral principle of a woman is frequently more impaired by a single lapse from virtue than that of a man by twenty years of intrigues. Classical antiquity would

furnish us with instances stronger, if possible, than those to which we have referred.

We must apply this principle to the case before us. Habits of dissimulation and falsehood, no doubt, mark a man of our age and country as utterly worthless and abandoned. But it by no means follows that a similar judgment would be just in the case of an Italian of the middle ages. On the contrary, we frequently find those faults which we are accustomed to consider as certain indications of a mind altogether depraved, in company with great and good qualities, with generosity, with benevolence, with disinterestedness. From such a state of society, Palamedes, in the admirable dialogue of Hume, might have drawn illustrations of his theory as striking as any of those with which Fourli furnished him. These are not, we well know, the lessons which historians are generally most careful to teach, or readers most willing to learn. But they are not therefore useless. How Philip disposed his troops at Chaeronea, where Hannibal crossed the Alps, whether Mary blew up Darnley, or Siquier shot Charles the Twelfth, and ten thousand other questions of the same description, are in themselves unimportant. The inquiry may amuse us, but the decision leaves us no wiser. He alone reads history aright who, observing how powerfully circumstances influence the feelings and opinions of men, how often vices pass into virtues and paradoxes into axioms, learns to distinguish what is accidental and transitory in human nature from what is essential and immutable.

In this respect no history suggests more important reflections than that of the Tuscan and Lombard commonwealths. The character of the Italian statesman seems, at first sight, a collection of contradictions, a phantom as monstrous as the portress of hell in Milton, half divinity, half snake, majestic and beautiful above, grovelling and poisonous below, We see a man whose thoughts and words have no connection with each other, who never hesitates at an oath when he wishes to seduce, who never wants a pretext when he is inclined to betray. His cruelties spring, not from the heat of blood, or the insanity of uncontrolled power, but from deep and cool meditation. His passions, like well-trained troops, are impetuous by rule, and in their most headstrong fury never forget the discipline to which they have been accustomed. His whole soul is occupied with vast and complicated schemes of ambition: yet his aspect and language exhibit nothing but philosophical moderation. Hatred and revenge eat into his heart: yet every look is a cordial smile, every gesture a familiar caress. He never excites the suspicion of his adversaries by petty provocations. His purpose is disclosed only when it is accomplished. His face is unruffled, his speech is courteous, till vigilance is laid asleep, till a vital point is exposed, till a sure aim is taken; and then he strikes for the first and last time. Military courage, the boast of the sottish German, of the frivolous and prating Frenchman, of the romantic and arrogant Spaniard, he neither possesses nor values. He shuns danger, not because he is insensible to shame, but because, in the society in which he

lives, timidity has ceased to be shameful. To do an injury openly is, in his estimation, as wicked as to do it secretly, and far less profitable. With him the most honourable means are those which are the surest, the speediest, and the darkest. He cannot comprehend how a man should scruple to deceive those whom he does not scruple to destroy. He would think it madness to declare open hostilities against rivals whom he might stab in a friendly embrace, or poison in a consecrated wafer.

Yet this man, black with the vices which we consider as most loathsome, traitor, hypocrite, coward, assassin, was by no means destitute even of those virtues which we generally consider as indicating superior elevation of character. In civil courage, in perseverance, in presence of mind, those barbarous warriors, who were foremost in the battle or the breach, were far his inferiors. Even the dangers which he avoided with a caution almost pusillanimous never confused his perceptions, never paralysed his inventive faculties, never wrung out one secret from his smooth tongue, and his inscrutable brow. Though a dangerous enemy, and a still more dangerous accomplice, he could be a just and beneficent ruler. With so much unfairness in his policy, there was an extraordinary degree of fairness in his intellect. Indifferent to truth in the transactions of life, he was honestly devoted to truth in the researches of speculation. Wanton cruelty was not in his nature. On the contrary, where no political object was at stake, his disposition was soft and humane. The susceptibility of his nerves and the activity of his

imagination inclined him, to sympathise with the feelings of others, and to delight in the charities and courtesies of social life. Perpetually descending to actions which might seem to mark a mind diseased through all its faculties, he had nevertheless an exquisite sensibility, both for the natural and the moral sublime, for every graceful and every lofty conception. Habits of petty intrigue and dissimulation might have rendered him incapable of great general views, but that the expanding effect of his philosophical studies counteracted the narrowing tendency. He had the keenest enjoyment of wit, eloquence, and poetry. The fine arts profited alike by the severity of his judgment, and by the liberality of his patronage. The portraits of some of the remarkable Italians of those times are perfectly in harmony with this description. Ample and majestic foreheads, brows strong and dark, but not frowning, eyes of which the calm full gaze, while it expresses nothing, seems to discern everything, cheeks pale with thought and sedentary habits, lips formed with feminine delicacy, but compressed with more than masculine decision, mark out men at once enterprising and timid, men equally skilled in detecting the purposes of others, and in concealing their own, men who must have been formidable enemies and unsafe allies, but men, at the same time, whose tempers were mild and equable, and who possessed an amplitude and subtlety of intellect which would have rendered them eminent either in active or in contemplative life, and fitted them either to govern or to instruct mankind.

Every age and every nation has certain characteristic vices, which prevail almost universally, which scarcely any person scruples to avow, and which even rigid moralists but faintly censure. Succeeding generations change the fashion of their morals, with the fashion of their hats and their coaches, take some other kind of wickedness under their patronage, and wonder at the depravity of their ancestors. Nor is this all. Posterity, that high court of appeal which is never tired of eulogising its own justice and discernment, acts on such occasions like a Roman dictator after a general mutiny. Finding the delinquents too numerous to be all punished, it selects some of them at hazard, to bear the whole penalty of an offence in which they are not more deeply implicated than those who escape, Whether decimation be a convenient mode of military execution, we know not; but we solemnly protest against the introduction of such a principle into the philosophy of history.

In the present instance, the lot has fallen on Machiavelli, a man whose public conduct was upright and honourable, whose views of morality, where they differed from those of the persons around him, seemed to have differed for the better, and whose only fault was, that, having adopted some of the maxims then generally received, he arranged them more luminously, and expressed them more forcibly, than any other writer.

Having now, we hope, in some degree cleared the personal character of Machiavelli, we come to the consideration of his works. As a poet he is not entitled to a high place; but his

comedies deserve attention.

The *Mandragola*, in particular, is superior to the best of Goldoni, and inferior only to the best of Moliere. It is the work of a man who, if he had devoted himself to the drama, would probably have attained the highest eminence, and produced a permanent and salutary effect on the national taste. This we infer, not so much from the degree, as from the kind of its excellence. There are compositions which indicate still greater talent, and which are perused with still greater delight, from which we should have drawn very different conclusions. Books quite worthless are quite harmless. The sure sign of the general decline of an art is the frequent occurrence, not of deformity, but of misplaced beauty. In general, Tragedy is corrupted by eloquence, and Comedy by wit.

The real object of the drama is the exhibition of human character. This, we conceive, is no arbitrary canon, originating in local and temporary associations, like those canons which regulate the number of acts in a play, or of syllables in a line. To this fundamental law every other regulation is subordinate. The situations which most signally develop character form the best plot. The mother tongue of the passions is the best style.

This principle rightly understood, does not debar the poet from any grace of composition. There is no style in which some man may not under some circumstances express himself. There is therefore no style which the drama rejects, none which it does not occasionally require. It is in the discernment of place, of

time, and of person, that the inferior artists fail. The fantastic rhapsody of Mercutio, the elaborate declamation of Antony, are, where Shakspeare has placed them, natural and pleasing. But Dryden would have made Mercutio challenge Tybalt in hyperboles as fanciful as those in which he describes the chariot of Mab. Corneille would have represented Antony as scolding and coaxing Cleopatra with all the measured rhetoric of a funeral oration.

No writers have injured the Comedy of England so deeply as Congreve and Sheridan. Both were men of splendid wit and polished taste. Unhappily, they made all their characters in their own likeness. Their works bear the same relation to the legitimate drama which a transparency bears to a painting. There are no delicate touches, no hues imperceptibly fading into each other: the whole is lighted up with an universal glare. Outlines and tints are forgotten in the common blaze which illuminates all. The flowers and fruits of the intellect abound; but it is the abundance of a jungle, not of a garden, unwholesome, bewildering, unprofitable from its very plenty rank from its very fragrance. Every fop, every boor, every valet, is a man of wit. The very butts and dupes, Tattle, Witwould, Puff, Acres, outshine the whole Hotel of Rambouillet. To prove the whole system of this school erroneous, it is only necessary to apply the test which dissolved the enchanted Florimel, to place the true by the false Thalia, to contrast the most celebrated characters which have been drawn by the writers of whom we speak with the

Bastard in King John or the Nurse in Romeo and Juliet. It was not surely from want of wit that Shakspeare adopted so different a manner. Benedick and Beatrice throw Mirabel and Millamant into the shade. All the good sayings of the facetious houses of Absolute and Surface might have been clipped from the single character of Falstaff, without being missed. It would have been easy for that fertile mind to have given Bardolph and Shallow as much wit as Prince Hal, and to have made Dogberry and Verges retort on each other in sparkling epigrams. But he knew that such indiscriminate prodigality was, to use his own admirable language, "from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was, and is, to hold, as it were, the mirror up to Nature."

This digression will enable our readers to understand what we mean when we say that in the Mandragola, Machiavelli has proved that he completely understood the nature of the dramatic art, and possessed talents which would have enabled him to excel in it. By the correct and vigorous delineation of human nature, it produces interest without a pleasing or skilful plot, and laughter without the least ambition of wit. The lover, not a very delicate or generous lover, and his adviser the parasite, are drawn with spirit. The hypocritical confessor is an admirable portrait. He is, if we mistake not, the original of Father Dominic, the best comic character of Dryden. But old Nicias is the glory of the piece. We cannot call to mind anything that resembles him. The follies which Moliere ridicules are those

of affection, not those of fatuity. Coxcombs and pedants, not absolute simpletons, are his game. Shakspeare has indeed a vast assortment of fools; but the precise species of which we speak is not, if we remember right, to be found there. Shallow is a fool. But his animal spirits supply, to a certain degree, the place of cleverness. His talk is to that of Sir John what soda water is to champagne. It has the effervescence though not the body or the flavour. Slender and Sir Andrew Aguecheek are fools, troubled with an uneasy consciousness of their folly, which in the latter produces meekness and docility, and in the former, awkwardness, obstinacy, and confusion. Cloten is an arrogant fool, Osric a foppish fool, Ajax a savage fool; but Nicias is, as Thersites says of Patroclus, a fool positive. His mind is occupied by no strong feeling; it takes every character, and retains none; its aspect is diversified, not by passions, but by faint and transitory semblances of passion, a mock joy, a mock fear, a mock love, a mock pride, which chase each other like shadows over its surface, and vanish as soon as they appear. He is just idiot enough to be an object, not of pity or horror, but of ridicule. He bears some resemblance to poor Calandrino, whose mishaps, as recounted by Boccaccio, have made all Europe merry for more than four centuries. He perhaps resembles still more closely Simon da Villa, to whom Bruno and Buffalmacco promised the love of the Countess Civillari. Nicias is, like Simon, of a learned profession; and the dignity with which he wears the doctoral fur, renders his absurdities infinitely more grotesque. The old Tuscan is the very

language for such a being. Its peculiar simplicity gives even to the most forcible reasoning and the most brilliant wit an infantine air, generally delightful, but to a foreign reader sometimes a little ludicrous. Heroes and statesmen seem to lisp when they use it. It becomes Nicias incomparably, and renders all his silliness infinitely more silly. We may add, that the verses with which the *Mandragola* is interspersed, appear to us to be the most spirited and correct of all that Machiavelli has written in metre. He seems to have entertained the same opinion; for he has introduced some of them in other places. The contemporaries of the author were not blind to the merits of this striking piece. It was acted at Florence with the greatest success. Leo the Tenth was among its admirers, and by his order it was represented at Rome.

[Nothing can be more evident than that Paulus Jovius designates the *Mandragola* under the name of the *Nicias*. We should not have noticed what is so perfectly obvious, were it not that this natural and palpable misnomer has led the sagacious and industrious Bayle into a gross error.]

The *Clizia* is an imitation of the *Casina* of Plautus, which is itself an imitation of the lost *kleroumenoi* of Diphilus. Plautus was, unquestionably, one of the best Latin writers; but the *Casina* is by no means one of his best plays; nor is it one which offers great facilities to an imitator. The story is as alien from modern habits of life, as the manner in which it is developed from the modern fashion of composition. The lover remains in the country and the heroine in her chamber during the whole action, leaving

their fate to be decided by a foolish father, a cunning mother, and two knavish servants. Machiavelli has executed his task with judgment and taste. He has accommodated the plot to a different state of society, and has very dexterously connected it with the history of his own times. The relation of the trick put on the dotting old lover is exquisitely humorous. It is far superior to the corresponding passage in the Latin comedy, and scarcely yields to the account which Falstaff gives of his ducking.

Two other comedies without titles, the one in prose, the other in verse, appear among the works of Machiavelli. The former is very short, lively enough, but of no great value. The latter we can scarcely believe to be genuine. Neither its merits nor its defects remind us of the reputed author. It was first printed in 1796, from a manuscript discovered in the celebrated library of the Strozzi. Its genuineness, if we have been rightly informed, is established solely by the comparison of hands. Our suspicions are strengthened by the circumstance, that the same manuscript contained a description of the plague of 1527, which has also, in consequence, been added to the works of Machiavelli. Of this last composition the strongest external evidence would scarcely induce us to believe him guilty. Nothing was ever written more detestable in matter and manner. The narrations, the reflections, the jokes, the lamentations, are all the very worst of their respective kinds, at once trite and affected, threadbare tinsel from the Rag Fairs and Monmouth Streets of literature. A foolish schoolboy might write such a piece, and, after he had written it,

think it much finer than the incomparable introduction of the Decameron. But that a shrewd statesman, whose earliest works are characterised by manliness of thought and language, should, at near sixty years of age, descend to such puerility, is utterly inconceivable.

The little novel of Belphegor is pleasantly conceived and pleasantly told. But the extravagance of the satire in some measure injures its effect. Machiavelli was unhappily married; and his wish to avenge his own cause and that of his brethren in misfortune, carried him beyond even the licence of fiction. Jonson seems to have combined some hints taken from this tale, with others from Boccaccio, in the plot of *The Devil is an Ass*, a play which, though not the most highly finished of his compositions, is perhaps that which exhibits the strongest proofs of genius.

The Political Correspondence of Machiavelli, first published in 1767, is unquestionably genuine, and highly valuable. The unhappy circumstances in which his country was placed during the greater part of his public life gave extraordinary encouragement to diplomatic talents. From the moment that Charles the Eighth descended from the Alps, the whole character of Italian politics was changed. The governments of the Peninsula ceased to form an independent system. Drawn from their old orbit by the attraction of the larger bodies which now approached them, they became mere satellites of France and Spain. All their disputes, internal and external, were decided by

foreign influence. The contests of opposite factions were carried on, not as formerly in the senate-house or in the marketplace, but in the antechambers of Louis and Ferdinand. Under these circumstances, the prosperity of the Italian States depended far more on the ability of their foreign agents, than on the conduct of those who were intrusted with the domestic administration. The ambassador had to discharge functions far more delicate than transmitting orders of knighthood, introducing tourists, or presenting his brethren with the homage of his high consideration. He was an advocate to whose management the dearest interests of his clients were intrusted, a spy clothed with an inviolable character. Instead of consulting, by a reserved manner and ambiguous style, the dignity of those whom he represented, he was to plunge into all the intrigues of the Court at which he resided, to discover and flatter every weakness of the prince, and of the favourite who governed the prince, and of the lacquey who governed the favourite. He was to compliment the mistress and bribe the confessor, to panegyrisse or supplicate, to laugh or weep, to accommodate himself to every caprice, to lull every suspicion, to treasure every hint, to be everything, to observe everything, to endure everything. High as the art of political intrigue had been carried in Italy, these were times which required it all.

On these arduous errands Machiavelli was frequently employed. He was sent to treat with the King of the Romans and with the Duke of Valentinois. He was twice ambassador of the

Court of Rome, and thrice at that of France. In these missions, and in several others of inferior importance, he acquitted himself with great dexterity. His despatches form one of the most amusing and instructive collections extant. The narratives are clear and agreeably written; the remarks on men and things clever and judicious. The conversations are reported in a spirited and characteristic manner. We find ourselves introduced into the presence of the men who, during twenty eventful years, swayed the destinies of Europe. Their wit and their folly, their fretfulness and their merriment, are exposed to us. We are admitted to overhear their chat, and to watch their familiar gestures. It is interesting and curious to recognise, in circumstances which elude the notice of historians, the feeble violence and shallow cunning of Louis the Twelfth; the bustling insignificance of Maximilian, cursed with an impotent pruriency for renown, rash yet timid, obstinate yet fickle, always in a hurry, yet always too late; the fierce and haughty energy which gave dignity to the eccentricities of Julius; the soft and graceful manners which masked the insatiable ambition and the implacable hatred of Caesar Borgia.

We have mentioned Caesar Borgia. It is impossible not to pause for a moment on the name of a man in whom the political morality of Italy was so strongly personified, partially blended with the sterner lineaments of the Spanish character. On two important occasions Machiavelli was admitted to his society; once, at the moment when Caesar's splendid villainy achieved its

most signal triumph, when he caught in one snare and crushed at one blow all his most formidable rivals; and again when, exhausted by disease and overwhelmed by misfortunes, which no human prudence could have averted, he was the prisoner of the deadliest enemy of his house. These interviews between the greatest speculative and the greatest practical statesman of the age are fully described in the Correspondence, and form perhaps the most interesting part of it.

From some passages in *The Prince*, and perhaps also from some indistinct traditions, several writers have supposed a connection between those remarkable men much closer than ever existed. The Envoy has even been accused of prompting the crimes of the artful and merciless tyrant. But from the official documents it is clear that their intercourse, though ostensibly amicable, was in reality hostile. It cannot be doubted, however, that the imagination of Machiavelli was strongly impressed, and his speculations on government coloured, by the observations which he made on the singular character and equally singular fortunes of a man who under such disadvantages had achieved such exploits; who, when sensuality, varied through innumerable forms, could no longer stimulate his sated mind, found a more powerful and durable excitement in the intense thirst of empire and revenge; who emerged from the sloth and luxury of the Roman purple the first prince and general of the age; who, trained in an unwarlike profession, formed a gallant army out of the dregs of an unwarlike people; who, after acquiring

sovereignty by destroying his enemies, acquired popularity by destroying his tools; who had begun to employ for the most salutary ends the power which he had attained by the most atrocious means; who tolerated within the sphere of his iron despotism no plunderer or oppressor but himself; and who fell at last amidst the mingled curses and regrets of a people of whom his genius had been the wonder, and might have been the salvation. Some of those crimes of Borgia which to us appear the most odious would not, from causes which we have already considered, have struck an Italian of the fifteenth century with equal horror. Patriotic feeling also might induce Machiavelli to look with some indulgence and regret on the memory of the only leader who could have defended the independence of Italy against the confederate spoilers of Cambray.

On this subject Machiavelli felt most strongly. Indeed the expulsion of the foreign tyrants, and the restoration of that golden age which had preceded the irruption of Charles the Eighth, were projects which, at that time, fascinated all the master-spirits of Italy. The magnificent vision delighted the great but ill-regulated mind of Julius. It divided with manuscripts and saucers, painters, and falcons, the attention of the frivolous Leo. It prompted the generous treason of Morone. It imparted a transient energy to the feeble mind and body of the last Sforza. It excited for one moment an honest ambition in the false heart of Pescara. Ferocity and insolence were not among the vices of the national character. To the discriminating cruelties of politicians,

committed for great ends on select victims, the moral code of the Italians was too indulgent. But though they might have recourse to barbarity as an expedient, they did not require it as a stimulant. They turned with loathing from the atrocity of the strangers who seemed to love blood for its own sake, who, not content with subjugating, were impatient to destroy, who found a fiendish pleasure in razing magnificent cities, cutting the throats of enemies who cried for quarter, or suffocating an unarmed population by thousands in the caverns to which it had fled for safety. Such were the cruelties which daily excited the terror and disgust of a people among whom, till lately, the worst that a soldier had to fear in a pitched battle was the loss of his horse and the expense of his ransom. The swinish intemperance of Switzerland, the wolfish avarice of Spain, the gross licentiousness of the French, indulged in violation of hospitality, of decency, of love itself, the wanton inhumanity which was common to all the invaders, had made them objects of deadly hatred to the inhabitants of the Peninsula. The wealth which had been accumulated during centuries of prosperity and repose was rapidly melting away. The intellectual superiority of the oppressed people only rendered them more keenly sensible of their political degradation. Literature and taste, indeed, still disguised with a flush of hectic loveliness and brilliancy the ravages of an incurable decay. The iron had not yet entered into the soul. The time was not yet come when eloquence was to be gagged, and reason to be hoodwinked, when the harp of the poet

was to be hung on the willows of Arno, and the right hand of the painter to forget its cunning. Yet a discerning eye might even then have seen that genius and learning would not long survive the state of things from which they had sprung, and that the great men whose talents gave lustre to that melancholy period had been formed under the influence of happier days, and would leave no successors behind them. The times which shine with the greatest splendour in literary history are not always those to which the human mind is most indebted. Of this we may be convinced, by comparing the generation which follows them with that which had preceded them. The first fruits which are reaped under a bad system often spring from seed sown under a good one. Thus it was, in some measure, with the Augustan age. Thus it was with the age of Raphael and Ariosto, of Aldus and Vida.

Machiavelli deeply regretted the misfortunes of his country, and clearly discerned the cause and the remedy. It was the military system of the Italian people which had extinguished their value and discipline, and left their wealth an easy prey to every foreign plunderer. The Secretary projected a scheme alike honourable to his heart and to his intellect, for abolishing the use of mercenary troops, and for organising a national militia.

The exertions which he made to effect this great object ought alone to rescue his name from obloquy. Though his situation and his habits were pacific, he studied with intense assiduity the theory of war. He made himself master of all its details. The Florentine Government entered into his views. A council of war

was appointed. Levies were decreed. The indefatigable minister flew from place to place in order to superintend the execution of his design. The times were, in some respects, favourable to the experiment. The system of military tactics had undergone a great revolution. The cavalry was no longer considered as forming the strength of an army. The hours which a citizen could spare from his ordinary employments, though by no means sufficient to familiarise him with the exercise of a man-at-arms, might render him an useful foot-soldier. The dread of a foreign yoke, of plunder, massacre, and conflagration, might have conquered that repugnance to military pursuits which both the industry and the idleness of great towns commonly generate. For a time the scheme promised well. The new troops acquitted themselves respectably in the field. Machiavelli looked with parental rapture on the success of his plan, and began to hope that the arms of Italy might once more be formidable to the barbarians of the Tagus and the Rhine. But the tide of misfortune came on before the barriers which should have withstood it were prepared. For a time, indeed, Florence might be considered as peculiarly fortunate. Famine and sword and pestilence had devastated the fertile plains and stately cities of the Po. All the curses denounced of old against Tyre seemed to have fallen on Venice. Her merchants already stood afar off, lamenting for their great city. The time seemed near when the sea-weed should overgrow her silent Rialto, and the fisherman wash his nets in her deserted arsenal. Naples had been four times conquered and reconquered

by tyrants equally indifferent to its welfare and equally greedy for its spoils. Florence, as yet, had only to endure degradation and extortion, to submit to the mandates of foreign powers, to buy over and over again, at an enormous price, what was already justly her own, to return thanks for being wronged, and to ask pardon for being in the right. She was at length deprived of the blessings even of this infamous and servile repose. Her military and political institutions were swept away together. The Medici returned, in the train of foreign invaders, from their long exile. The policy of Machiavelli was abandoned; and his public services were requited with poverty, imprisonment, and torture.

The fallen statesman still clung to his project with unabated ardour. With the view of vindicating it from some popular objections and of refuting some prevailing errors on the subject of military science, he wrote his seven books on *The Art of War*. This excellent work is in the form of a dialogue. The opinions of the writer are put into the mouth of Fabrizio Colonna, a powerful nobleman of the Ecclesiastical State, and an officer of distinguished merit in the service of the King of Spain. Colonna visits Florence on his way from Lombardy to his own domains. He is invited to meet some friends at the house of Cosimo Rucellai, an amiable and accomplished young man, whose early death Machiavelli feelingly deploras. After partaking of an elegant entertainment, they retire from the heat into the most shady recesses of the garden. Fabrizio is struck by the sight of some uncommon plants. Cosimo says that,

though rare, in modern days, they are frequently mentioned by the classical authors, and that his grandfather, like many other Italians, amused himself with practising the ancient methods of gardening. Fabrizio expresses his regret that those who, in later times, affected the manners of the old Romans should select for imitation the most trifling pursuits. This leads to a conversation on the decline of military discipline and on the best means of restoring it. The institution of the Florentine militia is ably defended; and several improvements are suggested in the details.

The Swiss and the Spaniards were, at that time, regarded as the best soldiers in Europe. The Swiss battalion consisted of pikemen, and bore a close resemblance to the Greek phalanx. The Spaniards, like the soldiers of Rome, were armed with the sword and the shield. The victories of Flamininus and Aemilius over the Macedonian kings seem to prove the superiority of the weapons used by the legions. The same experiment had been recently tried with the same result at the battle of Ravenna, one of those tremendous days into which human folly and wickedness compress the whole devastation of a famine or a plague. In that memorable conflict, the infantry of Arragon, the old companions of Gonsalvo, deserted by all their allies, hewed a passage through the thickest of the imperial pikes, and effected an unbroken retreat, in the face of the gendarmerie of De Foix, and the renowned artillery of Este. Fabrizio, or rather Machiavelli, proposes to combine the two systems, to arm the foremost lines with the pike for the purpose of repulsing

cavalry, and those in the rear with the sword, as being a weapon better adapted for every other purpose. Throughout the work, the author expresses the highest admiration of the military science of the ancient Romans, and the greatest contempt for the maxims which had been in vogue amongst the Italian commanders of the preceding generation. He prefers infantry to cavalry, and fortified camps to fortified towns. He is inclined to substitute rapid movements and decisive engagements for the languid and dilatory operations of his countrymen. He attaches very little importance to the invention of gunpowder. Indeed he seems to think that it ought scarcely to produce any change in the mode of arming or of disposing troops. The general testimony of historians, it must be allowed, seems to prove that the ill-constructed and ill-served artillery of those times, though useful in a siege, was of little value on the field of battle.

Of the tactics of Machiavelli we will not venture to give an opinion: but we are certain that his book is most able and interesting. As a commentary on the history of his times, it is invaluable. The ingenuity, the grace, and the perspicuity of the style, and the eloquence and animation of particular passages, must give pleasure even to readers who take no interest in the subject.

The Prince and the Discourses on Livy were written after the fall of the Republican Government. The former was dedicated to the young Lorenzo di Medici. This circumstance seems to have disgusted the contemporaries of the writer far more

than the doctrines which have rendered the name of the work odious in later times. It was considered as an indication of political apostasy. The fact however seems to have been that Machiavelli, despairing of the liberty of Florence, was inclined to support any government which might preserve her independence. The interval which separated a democracy and a despotism, Soderini and Lorenzo, seemed to vanish when compared with the difference between the former and the present state of Italy, between the security, the opulence, and the repose which she had enjoyed under her native rulers, and the misery in which she had been plunged since the fatal year in which the first foreign tyrant had descended from the Alps. The noble and pathetic exhortation with which *The Prince* concludes shows how strongly the writer felt upon this subject.

The Prince traces the progress of an ambitious man, the *Discourses* the progress of an ambitious people. The same principles on which, in the former work, the elevation of an individual is explained, are applied in the latter, to the longer duration and more complex interest of a society. To a modern statesman the form of the *Discourses* may appear to be puerile. In truth Livy is not an historian on whom implicit reliance can be placed, even in cases where he must have possessed considerable means of information. And the first *Decade*, to which Machiavelli has confined himself, is scarcely entitled to more credit than our *Chronicle of British Kings* who reigned before the Roman invasion. But the commentator is indebted to

Livy for little more than a few texts which he might as easily have extracted from the Vulgate or the Decameron. The whole train of thought is original.

On the peculiar immorality which has rendered *The Prince* unpopular, and which is almost equally discernible in the *Discourses*, we have already given our opinion at length. We have attempted to show that it belonged rather to the age than to the man, that it was a partial taint, and by no means implied general depravity. We cannot, however, deny that it is a great blemish, and that it considerably diminishes the pleasure which, in other respects, those works must afford to every intelligent mind.

It is, indeed, impossible to conceive a more healthful and vigorous constitution of the understanding than that which these works indicate. The qualities of the active and the contemplative statesman appear to have been blended in the mind of the writer into a rare and exquisite harmony. His skill in the details of business had not been acquired at the expense of his general powers. It had not rendered his mind less comprehensive; but it had served to correct his speculations and to impart to them that vivid and practical character which so widely distinguishes them from the vague theories of most political philosophers.

Every man who has seen the world knows that nothing is so useless as a general maxim. If it be very moral and very true, it may serve for a copy to a charity-boy. If, like those of Rochefoucault, it be sparkling and whimsical, it may make an excellent motto for an essay. But few indeed of the many wise

apophthegms which have been uttered, from the time of the Seven Sages of Greece to that of Poor Richard, have prevented a single foolish action. We give the highest and the most peculiar praise to the precepts of Machiavelli when we say that they may frequently be of real use in regulating conduct, not so much because they are more just or more profound than those which might be culled from other authors, as because they can be more readily applied to the problems of real life.

There are errors in these works. But they are errors which a writer, situated like Machiavelli, could scarcely avoid. They arise, for the most part, from a single defect which appears to us to pervade his whole system. In his political scheme, the means had been more deeply considered than the ends. The great principle, that societies and laws exist only for the purpose of increasing the sum of private happiness, is not recognised with sufficient clearness. The good of the body, distinct from the good of the members, and sometimes hardly compatible with the good of the members, seems to be the object which he proposes to himself. Of all political fallacies, this has perhaps had the widest and the most mischievous operation. The state of society in the little commonwealths of Greece, the close connection and mutual dependence of the citizens, and the severity of the laws of war, tended to encourage an opinion which, under such circumstances, could hardly be called erroneous. The interests of every individual were inseparably bound up with those of the State. An invasion destroyed his corn-fields and vineyards,

drove him from his home, and compelled him to encounter all the hardships of a military life. A treaty of peace restored him to security and comfort. A victory doubled the number of his slaves. A defeat perhaps made him a slave himself. When Pericles, in the Peloponnesian war, told the Athenians, that, if their country triumphed, their private losses would speedily be repaired, but, that, if their arms failed of success, every individual amongst them would probably be ruined, he spoke no more than the truth, He spoke to men whom the tribute of vanquished cities supplied with food and clothing, with the luxury of the bath and the amusements of the theatre, on whom the greatness of their Country conferred rank, and before whom the members of less prosperous communities trembled; to men who, in case of a change in the public fortunes, would, at least, be deprived of every comfort and every distinction which they enjoyed. To be butchered on the smoking ruins of their city, to be dragged in chains to a slave-market. To see one child torn from them to dig in the quarries of Sicily, and another to guard the harams of Persepolis, these were the frequent and probable consequences of national calamities. Hence, among the Greeks, patriotism became a governing principle, or rather an ungovernable passion. Their legislators and their philosophers took it for granted that, in providing for the strength and greatness of the state, they sufficiently provided for the happiness of the people. The writers of the Roman empire lived under despots, into whose dominion a hundred nations were melted down, and whose gardens would

have covered the little commonwealths of Phlius and Plataea. Yet they continued to employ the same language, and to cant about the duty of sacrificing everything to a country to which they owed nothing.

Causes similar to those which had influenced the disposition of the Greeks operated powerfully on the less vigorous and daring character of the Italians. The Italians, like the Greeks, were members of small communities. Every man was deeply interested in the welfare of the society to which he belonged, a partaker in its wealth and its poverty, in its glory and its shame. In the age of Machiavelli this was peculiarly the case. Public events had produced an immense sum of misery to private citizens. The Northern invaders had brought want to their boards, infamy to their beds, fire to their roofs, and the knife to their throats. It was natural that a man who lived in times like these should overrate the importance of those measures by which a nation is rendered formidable to its neighbours, and undervalue those which make it prosperous within itself.

Nothing is more remarkable in the political treatises of Machiavelli than the fairness of mind which they indicate. It appears where the author is in the wrong, almost as strongly as where he is in the right. He never advances a false opinion because it is new or splendid, because he can clothe it in a happy phrase, or defend it by an ingenious sophism. His errors are at once explained by a reference to the circumstances in which he was placed. They evidently were not sought out; they lay

in his way, and could scarcely be avoided. Such mistakes must necessarily be committed by early speculators in every science.

In this respect it is amusing to compare *The Prince* and the *Discourses with the Spirit of Laws*. Montesquieu enjoys, perhaps, a wider celebrity than any political writer of modern Europe. Something he doubtless owes to his merit, but much more to his fortune. He had the good luck of a Valentine.

He caught the eye of the French nation, at the moment when it was waking from the long sleep of political and religious bigotry; and, in consequence, he became a favourite. The English, at that time, considered a Frenchman who talked about constitutional checks and fundamental laws as a prodigy not less astonishing than the learned pig or the musical infant. Specious but shallow, studious of effect, indifferent to truth, eager to build a system, but careless of collecting those materials out of which alone a sound and durable system can be built, the lively President constructed theories as rapidly and as slightly as card-houses, no sooner projected than completed, no sooner completed than blown away, no sooner blown away than forgotten. Machiavelli errs only because his experience, acquired in a very peculiar state of society, could not always enable him to calculate the effect of institutions differing from those of which he had observed the operation. Montesquieu errs, because he has a fine thing to say, and is resolved to say it. If the phaenomena which lie before him will not suit his purpose, all history must be ransacked. If nothing established by authentic testimony can be racked or chipped to

suit his Procrustean hypothesis, he puts up with some monstrous fable about Siam, or Bantam, or Japan, told by writers compared with whom Lucian and Gulliver were veracious, liars by a double right, as travellers and as Jesuits.

Propriety of thought, and propriety of diction, are commonly found together. Obscurity and affectation are the two greatest faults of style. Obscurity of expression generally springs from confusion of ideas; and the same wish to dazzle at any cost which produces affectation in the manner of a writer, is likely to produce sophistry in his reasonings. The judicious and candid mind of Machiavelli shows itself in his luminous, manly, and polished language. The style of Montesquieu, on the other hand, indicates in every page a lively and ingenious, but an unsound mind. Every trick of expression, from the mysterious conciseness of an oracle to the flippancy of a Parisian coxcomb, is employed to disguise the fallacy of some positions, and the triteness of others. Absurdities are brightened into epigrams; truisms are darkened into enigmas. It is with difficulty that the strongest eye can sustain the glare with which some parts are illuminated, or penetrate the shade in which others are concealed.

The political works of Machiavelli derive a peculiar interest from the mournful earnestness which he manifests whenever he touches on topics connected with the calamities of his native land. It is difficult to conceive any situation more painful than that of a great man, condemned to watch the lingering agony of an exhausted country, to tend it during the alternate fits of

stupefaction and raving which precede its dissolution, and to see the symptoms of vitality disappear one by one, till nothing is left but coldness, darkness, and corruption. To this joyless and thankless duty was Machiavelli called. In the energetic language of the prophet, he was "mad for the sight of his eye which he saw," disunion in the council, effeminacy in the camp, liberty extinguished, commerce decaying, national honour sullied, an enlightened and flourishing people given over to the ferocity of ignorant savages. Though his opinions had no escaped the contagion of that political immorality which was common among his countrymen, his natural disposition seem to have been rather stern and impetuous than pliant and artful. When the misery and degradation of Florence and the foul outrage which he had himself sustained recur to his mind, the smooth craft of his profession and his nation is exchanged for the honest bitterness of scorn and anger. He speaks like one sick of the calamitous times and abject people among whom his lot is cast. He pines for the strength and glory of ancient Rome, for the fasces of Brutus, and the sword of Scipio, the gravity of the curule chair, and the bloody pomp of the triumphal sacrifice. He seems to be transported back to the days when eight hundred thousand Italian warriors sprung to arms at the rumour of a Gallic invasion. He breathes all the spirit of those intrepid and haughty senators who forgot the dearest ties of nature in the claims of public duty, who looked with disdain on the elephants and on the gold of Pyrrhus, and listened with unaltered composure to the tremendous tidings

of Cannae. Like an ancient temple deformed by the barbarous architecture of a later age, his character acquires an interest from the very circumstances which debase it. The original proportions are rendered more striking by the contrast which they present to the mean and incongruous additions.

The influence of the sentiments which we have described was not apparent in his writings alone. His enthusiasm, barred from the career which it would have selected for itself, seems to have found a vent in desperate levity. He enjoyed a vindictive pleasure in outraging the opinions of a society which he despised. He became careless of the decencies which were expected from a man so highly distinguished in the literary and political world. The sarcastic bitterness of his conversation disgusted those who were more inclined to accuse his licentiousness than their own degeneracy, and who were unable to conceive the strength of those emotions which are concealed by the jests of the wretched, and by the follies of the wise.

The historical works of Machiavelli still remain to be considered. The Life of Castruccio Castracani will occupy us for a very short time, and would scarcely have demanded our notice, had it not attracted a much greater share of public attention than it deserves. Few books, indeed, could be more interesting than a careful and judicious account, from such a pen, of the illustrious Prince of Lucca, the most eminent of those Italian chiefs who, like Pisistratus and Gelon, acquired a power felt rather than seen, and resting, not on law or

on prescription, but on the public favour and on their great personal qualities. Such a work would exhibit to us the real nature of that species of sovereignty, so singular and so often misunderstood, which the Greeks denominated tyranny, and which, modified in some degree by the feudal system, reappeared in the commonwealths of Lombardy and Tuscany. But this little composition of Machiavelli is in no sense a history. It has no pretensions to fidelity. It is a trifle, and not a very successful trifle. It is scarcely more authentic than the novel of Belphegor, and is very much duller.

The last great work of this illustrious man was the history of his native city. It was written by command of the Pope, who, as chief of the house of Medici, was at that time sovereign of Florence. The characters of Cosmo, of Piero, and of Lorenzo, are, however, treated with a freedom and impartiality equally honourable to the writer and to the patron. The miseries and humiliations of dependence, the bread which is more bitter than every other food, the stairs which are more painful than every other ascent, had not broken the spirit of Machiavelli. The most corrupting post in a corrupting profession had not depraved the generous heart of Clement.

The History does not appear to be the fruit of much industry or research. It is unquestionably inaccurate. But it is elegant, lively, and picturesque, beyond any other in the Italian language. The reader, we believe, carries away from it a more vivid and a more faithful impression of the national character and manners than

from more correct accounts. The truth is, that the book belongs rather to ancient than to modern literature. It is in the style, not of Davila and Clarendon, but of Herodotus and Tacitus. The classical histories may almost be called romances founded in fact. The relation is, no doubt, in all its principal points, strictly true. But the numerous little incidents which heighten the interest, the words, the gestures, the looks, are evidently furnished by the imagination of the author. The fashion of later times is different. A more exact narrative is given by the writer. It may be doubted whether more exact notions are conveyed to the reader. The best portraits are perhaps those in which there is a slight mixture of caricature, and we are not certain that the best histories are not those in which a little of the exaggeration of fictitious narrative is judiciously employed. Something is lost in accuracy; but much is gained in effect. The fainter lines are neglected but the great characteristic features are imprinted on the mind for ever.

The History terminates with the death of Lorenzo de' Medici. Machiavelli had, it seems, intended to continue his narrative to a later period. But his death prevented the execution of his design; and the melancholy task of recording the desolation and shame of Italy devolved on Guicciardini.

Machiavelli lived long enough to see the commencement of the last struggle for Florentine liberty. Soon after his death monarchy was finally established, not such a monarchy as that of which Cosmo had laid the foundations deep in the institution and feelings of his countryman, and which Lorenzo

had embellished with the trophies of every science and every art; but a loathsome tyranny, proud and mean, cruel and feeble, bigoted and lascivious. The character of Machiavelli was hateful to the new masters of Italy; and those parts of his theory which were in strict accordance with their own daily practice afforded a pretext for blackening his memory. His works were misrepresented by the learned, misconstrued by the ignorant, censured by the Church, abused with all the rancour of simulated virtue by the tools of a base government, and the priests of a baser superstition. The name of the man whose genius had illuminated all the dark places of policy, and to whose patriotic wisdom an oppressed people had owed their last chance of emancipation and revenge, passed into a proverb of infamy. For more than two hundred years his bones lay undistinguished. At length, an English nobleman paid the as honours to the greatest statesman of Florence. In the church of Santa Croce a monument was erected to his memory, which is contemplated with reverence by all who can distinguish the virtues of a great mind through the corruptions of a degenerate age, and which will be approached with still deeper homage when the object to which his public life was devoted shall be attained, when the foreign yoke shall be broken, when a second Procida shall avenge the wrongs of Naples, when a happier Rienzi shall restore the good estate of Rome, when the streets of Florence and Bologna shall again resound with their ancient war-cry, Popolo; popolo; muoiano i tiranni!

VON RANKE

(October 1840) *The Ecclesiastical and political History of the Popes of Rome, during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* By LEOPOLD RANKE, Professor in the University of Berlin: Translated from the German, by SARAH AUSTIN. 3 vols. 8vo. London: 1840.

IT IS hardly necessary for us to say that this is an excellent book excellently translated. The original work of Professor Ranke is known and esteemed wherever German literature is studied, and has been found interesting even in a most inaccurate and dishonest French version. It is, indeed, the work of a mind fitted both for minute researches and for large speculations. It is written also in an admirable spirit, equally remote from levity and bigotry, serious and earnest, yet tolerant and impartial. It is, therefore, with the greatest pleasure that we now see this book take its place among the English classics. Of the translation we need only say that it is such as might be expected from the skill, the taste, and the scrupulous integrity of the accomplished lady who, as an interpreter between the mind of Germany and the mind of Britain, has already deserved so well of both countries.

The subject of this book has always appeared to us singularly interesting. How it was that Protestantism did so much, yet did no more, how it was that the Church of Rome, having lost a large part of Europe, not only ceased to lose, but actually regained

nearly half of what she had lost, is certainly a most curious and important question; and on this question Professor Ranke has thrown far more light than any other person who has written on it.

There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. The history of that Church joins together the two great ages of human civilisation. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday, when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The republic of Venice came next in antiquity. But the republic of Venice was modern when compared with the Papacy; and the republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigour. The Catholic Church is still sending forth to the farthest ends of the world missionaries as zealous as those who landed in Kent with Augustin, and still confronting hostile kings with the same spirit with which she confronted Attila. The number of her children is greater than in any former age. Her acquisitions in the New World have more than compensated for what she has

lost in the Old. Her spiritual ascendancy extends over the vast countries which lie between the plains of the Missouri and Cape Horn, countries which a century hence, may not improbably contain a population as large as that which now inhabits Europe. The members of her communion are certainly not fewer than a hundred and fifty millions; and it will be difficult to show that all other Christian sects united amount to a hundred and twenty millions. Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished at Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's.

We often hear it said that the world is constantly becoming more and more enlightened, and that this enlightening must be favourable to Protestantism, and unfavourable to Catholicism. We wish that we could think so. But we see great reason to doubt whether this be a well-founded expectation. We see that during the last two hundred and fifty years the human mind has been in the highest degree active, that it has made great advances

in every branch of natural philosophy, that it has produced innumerable inventions tending to promote the convenience of life, that medicine, surgery, chemistry, engineering, have been very greatly improved, that government, police, and law have been improved, though not to so great an extent as the physical sciences. Yet we see that, during these two hundred and fifty years, Protestantism has made no conquests worth speaking of. Nay, we believe that, as far as there has been a change, that change has, on the whole, been in favour of the Church of Rome. We cannot, therefore, feel confident that the progress of knowledge will necessarily be fatal to a system which has, to say the least, stood its ground in spite of the immense progress made by the human race in knowledge since the days of Queen Elizabeth.

Indeed the argument which we are considering, seems to us to be founded on an entire mistake. There are branches of knowledge with respect to which the law of the human mind is progress. In mathematics, when once a proposition has been demonstrated, it is never afterwards contested. Every fresh story is as solid a basis for a new superstructure as the original foundation was. Here, therefore, there is a constant addition to the stock of truth. In the inductive sciences again, the law is progress. Every day furnishes new facts, and thus brings theory nearer and nearer to perfection. There is no chance that, either in the purely demonstrative, or in the purely experimental sciences, the world will ever go back or even remain stationary. Nobody

ever heard of a reaction against Taylor's theorem, or of a reaction against Harvey's doctrine of the circulation of the blood.

But with theology the case is very different. As respects natural religion,—revelation being for the present altogether left out of the question,—it is not easy to see that a philosopher of the present day is more favourably situated than Thales or Simonides. He has before him just the same evidences of design in the structure of the universe which the early Greeks had. We say just the same; for the discoveries of modern astronomers and anatomists have really added nothing to the force of that argument which a reflecting mind finds in every beast, bird, insect, fish, leaf, flower and shell. The reasoning by which Socrates, in Xenophon's hearing, confuted the little atheist Aristodemus, is exactly the reasoning of Paley's Natural Theology. Socrates makes precisely the same use of the statues of Polycletus and the pictures of Zeuxis which Paley makes of the watch. As to the other great question, the question, what becomes of man after death, we do not see that a highly educated European, left to his unassisted reason, is more likely to be in the right than a Blackfoot Indian. Not a single one of the many sciences in which we surpass the Blackfoot Indians throws the smallest light on the state of the soul after the animal life is extinct. In truth all the philosophers, ancient and modern, who have attempted, without the help of revelation to prove the immortality of man, from Plato down to Franklin, appear to us to have failed deplorably.

Then, again, all the great enigmas which perplex the natural theologian are the same in all ages. The ingenuity of a people just emerging from barbarism is quite sufficient to propound those enigmas. The genius of Locke or Clarke is quite unable to solve them. It is a mistake to imagine that subtle speculations touching the Divine attributes, the origin of evil, the necessity of human actions, the foundation of moral obligation, imply any high degree of intellectual culture. Such speculations, on the contrary, are in a peculiar manner the delight of intelligent children and of half civilised men. The number of boys is not small who, at fourteen, have thought enough on these questions to be fully entitled to the praise which Voltaire gives to Zadig. "Il en savait ce qu'on en a su dans tous les ages; c'est-a-dire, fort peu de chose." The book of Job shows that, long before letters and arts were known to Ionia, these vexing questions were debated with no common skill and eloquence, under the tents of the Idumean Emirs; nor has human reason, in the course of three thousand years, discovered any satisfactory solution of the riddles which perplexed Eliphaz and Zophar.

Natural theology, then, is not a progressive science. That knowledge of our origin and of our destiny which we derive from revelation is indeed of very different clearness, and of very different importance. But neither is revealed religion of the nature of a progressive science. All Divine truth is, according to the doctrine of the Protestant Churches, recorded in certain books. It is equally open to all who, in any age, can read those

books; nor can all the discoveries of all the philosophers in the world add a single verse to any of those books. It is plain, therefore, that in divinity there cannot be a progress analogous to that which is constantly taking place in pharmacy, geology, and navigation. A Christian of the fifth Century with a Bible is neither better nor worse situated than a Christian of the nineteenth century with a Bible, candour and natural acuteness being, of course, supposed equal. It matters not at all that the compass, printing, gunpowder, steam, gas, vaccination, and a thousand other discoveries and inventions, which were unknown in the fifth century, are familiar to the nineteenth. None of these discoveries and inventions has the smallest bearing on the question whether man is justified by faith alone, or whether the invocation of saints is an orthodox practice. It seems to us, therefore, that we have no security for the future against the prevalence of any theological error that ever has prevailed in time past among Christian men. We are confident that the world will never go back to the solar system of Ptolemy; nor is our confidence in the least shaken by the circumstance, that even so great a man as Bacon rejected the theory of Galileo with scorn; for Bacon had not all the means of arriving at a sound conclusion which are within our reach, and which secure people who would not have been worthy to mend his pens from falling into his mistakes. But when we reflect that Sir Thomas More was ready to die for the doctrine of transubstantiation, we cannot but feel some doubt whether the doctrine of transubstantiation

may not triumph over all opposition. More was a man of eminent talents. He had all the information on the subject that we have, or that, while the world lasts, any human being will have. The text, "This is my body," was in his New Testament as it is in ours. The absurdity of the literal interpretation was as great and as obvious in the sixteenth century as it is now. No progress that science has made, or will make, can add to what seems to us the overwhelming force of the argument against the real presence. We are, therefore, unable to understand why what Sir Thomas More believed respecting transubstantiation may not be believed to the end of time by men equal in abilities and honesty to Sir Thomas More. But Sir Thomas More is one of the choice specimens of human wisdom and virtue; and the doctrine of transubstantiation is a kind of proof charge. A faith which stands that test will stand any test. The prophecies of Brothers and the miracles of Prince Hohenlohe sink to trifles in the comparison.

One reservation, indeed, must be made. The books and traditions of a sect may contain, mingled with propositions strictly theological, other propositions, purporting to rest on the same authority, which relate to physics. If new discoveries should throw discredit on the physical propositions, the theological propositions, unless they can be separated from the physical propositions, will share in that discredit. In this way, undoubtedly, the progress of science may indirectly serve the cause of religious truth. The Hindoo mythology, for example, is bound up with a most absurd geography. Every young Brahmin,

therefore, who learns geography in our colleges learns to smile at the Hindoo mythology. If Catholicism has not suffered to an equal degree from the Papal decision that the sun goes round the earth, this is because all intelligent Catholics now hold, with Pascal, that, in deciding the point at all, the Church exceeded her powers, and was, therefore, justly left destitute of that supernatural assistance which, in the exercise of her legitimate functions, the promise of her Founder authorised her to expect.

This reservation affects not at all the truth of our proposition, that divinity, properly so called, is not a progressive science. A very common knowledge of history, a very little observation of life, will suffice to prove that no learning, no sagacity, affords a security against the greatest errors on subjects relating to the invisible world. Bayle and Chillingworth, two of the most sceptical of mankind, turned Catholics from sincere conviction. Johnson, incredulous on all other points, was a ready believer in miracles and apparitions. He would not believe in Ossian; but he was willing to believe in the second sight. He would not believe in the earthquake of Lisbon; but he was willing to believe in the Cock Lane ghost.

For these reasons we have ceased to wonder at any vagaries of superstition. We have seen men, not of mean intellect or neglected education, but qualified by their talents and acquirements to attain eminence either in active or speculative pursuits, well-read scholars, expert logicians, keen observers of life and manners, prophesying, interpreting, talking unknown

tongues, working miraculous cures, coming down with messages from God to the House of Commons. We have seen an old woman, with no talents beyond the cunning of a fortune-teller, and with the education of a scullion, exalted into a prophetess, and surrounded by tens of thousands of devoted followers, many of whom were, in station and knowledge, immeasurably her superiors; and all this in the nineteenth century; and all this in London. Yet why not? For of the dealings of God with man no more has been revealed to the nineteenth century than to the first, or to London than to the wildest parish in the Hebrides. It is true that, in those things which concern this life and this world, man constantly becomes wiser and wiser. But it is no less true that, as respects a higher power and a future state, man, in the language of Goethe's scoffing friend,

“bleibt stets von gleichem Schlag,
Und ist so wunderlich als wie am ersten Tag.”

The history of Catholicism strikingly illustrates these observations. During the last seven centuries the public mind of Europe has made constant progress in every department of secular knowledge. But in religion we can trace no constant progress. The ecclesiastical history of that long period is a history of movement to and fro. Four times, since the authority of the Church of Rome was established in Western Christendom, has the human intellect risen up against her yoke. Twice that Church

remained completely victorious. Twice she came forth from the conflict bearing the marks of cruel wounds, but with the principle of life still strong within her. When we reflect on the tremendous assaults which she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish.

The first of these insurrections broke out in the region where the beautiful language of Oc was spoken. That country, singularly favoured by nature, was, in the twelfth century, the most flourishing and civilised portion of Western Europe. It was in no wise a part of France. It had a distinct political existence, a distinct national character, distinct usages, and a distinct speech. The soil was fruitful and well cultivated; and amidst the cornfields and vineyards arose many rich cities each of which was a little republic, and many stately castles: each of which contained a miniature of an imperial court. It was there that the spirit of chivalry first laid aside its terrors, first took a humane and graceful form, first appeared as the inseparable associate of art and literature, of courtesy and love. The other vernacular dialects which, since the fifth century, had sprung up in the ancient provinces of the Roman empire, were still rude and imperfect. The sweet Tuscan, the rich and energetic English, were abandoned to artisans and shepherds. No clerk had ever condescended to use such barbarous jargon for the teaching of science, for the recording of great events, or for the painting of life and manners. But the language of Provence was already the language of the learned and polite, and was employed by

numerous writers, studious of all the arts of composition and versification. A literature rich in ballads, in war-songs, in satire, and, above all, in amatory poetry amused the leisure of the knights and ladies whose fortified mansions adorned the banks of the Rhone and Garonne. With civilisation had come freedom of thought. Use had taken away the horror with which misbelievers were elsewhere regarded. No Norman or Breton ever saw a Mussulman, except to give and receive blows on some Syrian field of battle. But the people of the rich countries which lay under the Pyrenees lived in habits of courteous and profitable intercourse with the Moorish kingdoms of Spain, and gave a hospitable welcome to skilful leeches and mathematicians who, in the schools of Cordova and Granada, had become versed in all the learning of the Arabians. The Greek, still preserving, in the midst of political degradation, the ready wit and the inquiring spirit of his fathers, still able to read the most perfect of human compositions, still speaking the most powerful and flexible of human languages, brought to the marts of Narbonne and Toulouse, together with the drugs and silks of remote climates, bold and subtle theories long unknown to the ignorant and credulous West. The Paulician theology, a theology in which, as it should seem, many of the doctrines of the modern Calvinists were mingled with some doctrines derived from the ancient Manichees, spread rapidly through Provence and Languedoc. The clergy of the Catholic Church were regarded with loathing and contempt. "Viler than a priest," "I would as soon be a

priest," became proverbial expressions. The Papacy had lost all authority with all classes, from the great feudal princes down to the cultivators of the soil.

The danger to the hierarchy was indeed formidable. Only one transalpine nation had emerged from barbarism; and that nation had thrown off all respect for Rome. Only one of the vernacular languages of Europe had yet been extensively employed for literary purposes; and that language was a machine in the hands of heretics. The geographical position of the sectaries made the danger peculiarly formidable. They occupied a central region communicating directly with France, with Italy, and with Spain. The provinces which were still untainted were separated from each other by this infected district. Under these circumstances, it seemed probable that a single generation would suffice to spread the reformed doctrine to Lisbon, to London, and to Naples. But this was not to be. Rome cried for help to the warriors of northern France. She appealed at once to their superstition and to their cupidity. To the devout believer she promised pardons as ample as those with which she had rewarded the deliverers of the Holy Sepulchre. To the rapacious and profligate she offered the plunder of fertile plains and wealthy cities. Unhappily, the ingenious and polished inhabitants of the Languedocian provinces were far better qualified to enrich and embellish their country than to defend it. Eminent in the arts of peace, unrivalled in the "gay science," elevated above many vulgar superstitions, they wanted that iron courage, and that

skill in martial exercises, which distinguished the chivalry of the region beyond the Loire, and were ill fitted to face enemies who, in every country from Ireland to Palestine, had been victorious against tenfold odds. A war, distinguished even among wars of religion by merciless atrocity, destroyed the Albigensian heresy, and with that heresy the prosperity the civilisation, the literature, the national existence, of what was once the most opulent and enlightened part of the great European family. Rome, in the meantime, warned by that fearful danger from which the exterminating swords of her crusaders had narrowly saved her, proceeded to revise and to strengthen her whole system of polity. At this period were instituted the Order of Francis, the Order of Dominic, the Tribunal of the Inquisition. The new spiritual police was everywhere. No alley in a great city, no hamlet on a remote mountain, was unvisited by the begging friar. The simple Catholic, who was content to be no wiser than his fathers, found, wherever he turned, a friendly voice to encourage him. The path of the heretic was beset by innumerable spies; and the Church, lately in danger of utter subversion, now appeared to be impregably fortified by the love, the reverence, and the terror of mankind.

A century and a half passed away; and then came the second great rising up of the human intellect against the spiritual domination of Rome. During the two generations which followed the Albigensian crusade, the power of the Papacy had been at the height. Frederic the Second, the ablest and most accomplished

of the long line of German Caesars, had in vain exhausted all the resources of military and political skill in the attempt to defend the rights of the civil power against the encroachments of the Church. The vengeance of the priesthood had pursued his house to the third generation. Manfred had perished on the field of battle, Conradin on the scaffold. Then a turn took place. The secular authority, long unduly depressed, regained the ascendant with startling rapidity. The change is doubtless to be ascribed chiefly to the general disgust excited by the way in which the Church had abused its power and its success. But something must be attributed to the character and situation of individuals. The man who bore the chief part in effecting this revolution was Philip the Fourth of France, surnamed the Beautiful, a despot by position, a despot by temperament, stern, implacable, and unscrupulous, equally prepared for violence and for chicanery, and surrounded by a devoted band of men of the sword and of men of law. The fiercest and most high minded of the Roman Pontiffs, while bestowing kingdoms and citing great princes to his judgment-seat, was seized in his palace by armed men, and so foully outraged that he died mad with rage and terror. "Thus," sang the great Florentine poet, "was Christ, in the person of his vicar, a second time seized by ruffians, a second time mocked, a second time drenched with the vinegar and the gall." The seat of the Papal court was carried beyond the Alps, and the Bishops of Rome became dependants of France. Then came the great schism of the West. Two Popes, each

with a doubtful title, made all Europe ring with their mutual invectives and anathemas. Rome cried out against the corruptions of Avignon; and Avignon, with equal justice, recriminated on Rome. The plain Christian people, brought up in the belief that it was a sacred duty to be in communion with the head of the Church, were unable to discover, amidst conflicting testimonies and conflicting arguments, to which of the two worthless priests who were cursing and reviling each other, the headship of the Church rightfully belonged. It was nearly at this juncture that the voice of John Wickliffe began to make itself heard. The public mind of England was soon stirred to its inmost depths: and the influence of the new doctrines was soon felt, even in the distant kingdom of Bohemia. In Bohemia, indeed, there had long been a predisposition to heresy. Merchants from the Lower Danube were often seen in the fairs of Prague; and the Lower Danube was peculiarly the seat of the Paulician theology. The Church, torn by schism, and fiercely assailed at once in England and in the German Empire, was in a situation scarcely less perilous than at the crisis which preceded the Albigensian crusade.

But this danger also passed by. The civil power gave its strenuous support to the Church; and the Church made some show of reforming itself. The Council of Constance put an end to the schism. The whole Catholic world was again united under a single chief; and rules were laid down which seemed to make it improbable that the power of that chief would be grossly abused. The most distinguished teachers of the new doctrine were

slaughtered. The English Government put down the Lollards with merciless rigour; and in the next generation, scarcely one trace of the second great revolt against the Papacy could be found, except among the rude population of the mountains of Bohemia.

Another century went by; and then began the third and the most memorable struggle for spiritual freedom. The times were changed. The great remains of Athenian and Roman genius were studied by thousands. The Church had no longer a monopoly of learning. The powers of the modern languages had at length been developed. The invention of printing had given new facilities to the intercourse of mind with mind. With such auspices commenced the great Reformation.

We will attempt to lay before our readers, in a short compass, what appears to us to be the real history of the contest which began with the preaching of Luther against the Indulgences, and which may, in one sense, be said, to have been terminated, a hundred and thirty years later, by the treaty of Westphalia.

In the northern parts of Europe the victory of Protestantism was rapid and decisive. The dominion of the Papacy was felt by the nations of Teutonic blood as the dominion of Italians, of foreigners, of men who were aliens in language, manners, and intellectual constitution. The large jurisdiction exercised by the spiritual tribunals of Rome seemed to be a degrading badge of servitude. The sums which, under a thousand pretexts, were exacted by a distant court, were regarded both as a humiliating and as a ruinous tribute. The character of that court excited

the scorn and disgust of a grave, earnest, sincere, and devout people. The new theology spread with a rapidity never known before. All ranks, all varieties of character, joined the ranks of the innovators. Sovereigns impatient to appropriate to themselves the prerogatives of the Pope, nobles desirous to share the plunder of abbeys, suitors exasperated by the extortions of the Roman Camera, patriots impatient of a foreign rule, good men scandalised by the corruptions of the Church, bad men desirous of the licence inseparable from great moral revolutions, wise men eager in the pursuit of truth, weak men allured by the glitter of novelty, all were found on one side. Alone among the northern nations the Irish adhered to the ancient faith: and the cause of this seems to have been that the national feeling which, in happier countries, was directed against Rome, was in Ireland directed against England. Within fifty years from the day on which Luther publicly renounced communion with the Papacy, and burned the bull of Leo before the gates of Wittenberg, Protestantism attained its highest ascendancy, an ascendancy which it soon lost, and which it has never regained. Hundreds, who could well remember Brother Martin a devout Catholic, lived to see the revolution of which he was the chief author, victorious in half the states of Europe. In England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Livonia, Prussia, Saxony, Hesse, Wurtemberg, the Palatinate, in several cantons of Switzerland, in the Northern Netherlands, the Reformation had completely triumphed; and in all the other countries on this side of the Alps and the Pyrenees, it seemed on

the point of triumphing.

But while this mighty work was proceeding in the north of Europe, a revolution of a very different kind had taken place in the south. The temper of Italy and Spain was widely different from that of Germany and England. As the national feeling of the Teutonic nations impelled them to throw off the Italian supremacy, so the national feeling of the Italians impelled them to resist any change which might deprive their country of the honours and advantages which she enjoyed as the seat of the government of the Universal Church. It was in Italy that the tributes were spent of which foreign nations so bitterly complained. It was to adorn Italy that the traffic in Indulgences had been carried to that scandalous excess which had roused the indignation of Luther. There was among the Italians both much piety and much impiety; but, with very few exceptions, neither the piety nor the impiety took the turn of Protestantism. The religious Italians desired a reform of morals and discipline, but not a reform of doctrine, and least of all a schism. The irreligious Italians simply disbelieved Christianity, without hating it. They looked at it as artists or as statesmen; and, so looking at it, they liked it better in the established form than in any other. It was to them what the old Pagan worship was to Trajan and Pliny. Neither the spirit of Savonarola nor the spirit of Machiavelli had anything in common with the spirit of the religious or political Protestants of the North.

Spain again was, with respect to the Catholic Church, in

a situation very different from that of the Teutonic nations. Italy was, in truth, a part of the empire of Charles the Fifth; and the Court of Rome was, on many important occasions, his tool. He had not, therefore, like the distant princes of the North, a strong selfish motive for attacking the Papacy. In fact, the very measures which provoked the Sovereign of England to renounce all connection with Rome were dictated by the Sovereign of Spain. The feeling of the Spanish people concurred with the interest of the Spanish Government. The attachment of the Castilian to the faith of his ancestors was peculiarly strong and ardent. With that faith were inseparably bound up the institutions, the independence, and the glory of his country. Between the day when the last Gothic king was vanquished on the banks of the Xeres, and the day when Ferdinand and Isabella entered Granada in triumph, near eight hundred years had elapsed; and during those years the Spanish nation had been engaged in a desperate struggle against misbelievers. The Crusades had been merely an episode in the history of other nations. The existence of Spain had been one long Crusade. After fighting Mussulmans in the Old World, she began to fight heathens in the New. It was under the authority of a Papal bull that her children steered into unknown seas. It was under the standard of the cross that they marched fearlessly into the heart of great kingdoms. It was with the cry of "St. James for Spain," that they charged armies which outnumbered them a hundredfold. And men said that the Saint had heard the call,

and had himself, in arms, on a grey war-horse, led the onset before which the worshippers of false gods had given way. After the battle, every excess of rapacity or cruelty was sufficiently vindicated by the plea that the sufferers were unbaptized. Avarice stimulated zeal. Zeal consecrated avarice. Proselytes and gold mines were sought with equal ardour. In the very year in which the Saxons, maddened by the exactions of Rome, broke loose from her yoke, the Spaniards, under the authority of Rome, made themselves masters of the empire and of the treasures of Montezuma. Thus Catholicism which, in the public mind of Northern Europe, was associated with spoliation and oppression, was in the public mind of Spain associated with liberty, victory, dominion, wealth, and glory.

It is not, therefore, strange that the effect of the great outbreak of Protestantism in one part of Christendom should have been to produce an equally violent outbreak of Catholic zeal in another. Two reformations were pushed on at once with equal energy and effect, a reformation of doctrine in the North, a reformation of manners and discipline in the South. In the course of a single generation, the whole spirit of the Church of Rome underwent a change. From the halls of the Vatican to the most secluded hermitage of the Apennines, the great revival was everywhere felt and seen. All the institutions anciently devised for the propagation and defence of the faith were refurbished up and made efficient. Fresh engines of still more formidable power were constructed. Everywhere old religious communities were

remodelled and new religious communities called into existence. Within a year after the death of Leo, the order of Camaldoli was purified. The Capuchins restored the old Franciscan discipline, the midnight prayer and the life of silence. The Barnabites and the society of Somasca devoted themselves to the relief and education of the poor. To the Theatine order a still higher interest belongs. Its great object was the same with that of our early Methodists, namely to supply the deficiencies of the parochial clergy. The Church of Rome, wiser than the Church of England, gave every countenance to the good work. The members of the new brotherhood preached to great multitudes in the streets and in the fields, prayed by the beds of the sick, and administered the last sacraments to the dying. Foremost among them in zeal and devotion was Gian Pietro Caraffa, afterwards Pope Paul the Fourth. In the convent of the Theatines at Venice, under the eye of Caraffa, a Spanish gentleman took up his abode, tended the poor in the hospitals, went about in rags, starved himself almost to death, and often sallied into the streets, mounted on stones, and, waving his hat to invite the passers-by, began to preach in a strange jargon of mingled Castilian and Tuscan. The Theatines were among the most zealous and rigid of men; but to this enthusiastic neophyte their discipline seemed lax, and their movements sluggish; for his own mind, naturally passionate and imaginative, had passed through a training which had given to all its peculiarities a morbid intensity and energy. In his early life he had been the very prototype of the hero of Cervantes. The

single study of the young Hidalgo had been chivalrous romance; and his existence had been one gorgeous day-dream of princesses rescued and infidels subdued. He had chosen a Dulcinea, “no countess, no duchess,”—these are his own words,—“but one of far higher station”; and he flattered himself with the hope of laying at her feet the keys of Moorish castles and the jewelled turbans of Asiatic kings. In the midst of these visions of martial glory and prosperous love, a severe wound stretched him on a bed of sickness. His constitution was shattered and he was doomed to be a cripple for life. The palm of strength, grace, and skill in knightly exercises, was no longer for him. He could no longer hope to strike down gigantic soldans, or to find favour in the sight of beautiful women. A new vision then arose in his mind, and mingled itself with his old delusions in a manner which to most Englishmen must seem singular, but which those who know how close was the union between religion and chivalry in Spain will be at no loss to understand. He would still be a soldier; he would still be a knight errant; but the soldier and knight errant of the spouse of Christ. He would smite the Great Red Dragon. He would be the champion of the Woman clothed with the Sun. He would break the charm under which false prophets held the souls of men in bondage. His restless spirit led him to the Syrian deserts, and to the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. Thence he wandered back to the farthest West, and astonished the convents of Spain and the schools of France by his penances and vigils. The same lively imagination which had been employed in picturing the tumult of

unreal battles, and the charms of unreal queens, now peopled his solitude with saints and angels. The Holy Virgin descended to commune with him. He saw the Saviour face to face with the eye of flesh. Even those mysteries of religion which are the hardest trial of faith were in his case palpable to sight. It is difficult to relate without a pitying smile that, in the sacrifice of the mass, he saw transubstantiation take place, and that, as he stood praying on the steps of the Church of St. Dominic, he saw the Trinity in Unity, and wept aloud with joy and wonder. Such was the celebrated Ignatius Loyola, who, in the great Catholic reaction, bore the same part which Luther bore in the great Protestant movement.

Dissatisfied with the system of the Theatines, the enthusiastic Spaniard turned his face towards Rome. Poor, obscure, without a patron, without recommendations, he entered the city where now two princely temples, rich with painting and many-coloured marble, commemorate his great services to the Church; where his form stands sculptured in massive silver; where his bones, enshrined amidst jewels, are placed beneath the altar of God. His activity and zeal bore down all opposition; and under his rule the order of Jesuits began to exist, and grew rapidly to the full measure of his gigantic powers. With what vehemence, with what policy, with what exact discipline, with what dauntless courage, with what self-denial, with what forgetfulness of the dearest private ties, with what intense and stubborn devotion to a single end, with what unscrupulous laxity and versatility

in the choice of means, the Jesuits fought the battle of their Church, is written in every page of the annals of Europe during several generations. In the order of Jesus was concentrated the quintessence of the Catholic spirit; and the history of the order of Jesus is the history of the great Catholic reaction. That order possessed itself at once of all the strongholds which command the public mind, of the pulpit, of the press, of the confessional, of the academies. Wherever the Jesuit preached, the church was too small for the audience. The name of Jesuit on a title-page secured the circulation of a book. It was in the ears of the Jesuit that the powerful, the noble, and the beautiful, breathed the secret history of their lives. It was at the feet of the Jesuit that the youth of the higher and middle classes were brought up from childhood to manhood, from the first rudiments to the courses of rhetoric and philosophy. Literature and science, lately associated with infidelity or with heresy, now became the allies of orthodoxy. Dominant in the South of Europe, the great order soon went forth conquering and to conquer. In spite of oceans and deserts, of hunger and pestilence, of spies and penal laws, of dungeons and racks, of gibbets and quartering-blocks, Jesuits were to be found under every disguise, and in every country; scholars, physicians, merchants, serving-men; in the hostile Court of Sweden, in the old manor-houses of Cheshire, among the hovels of Connaught; arguing, instructing, consoling, stealing away the hearts of the young, animating the courage of the timid, holding up the crucifix before the eyes of the dying. Nor was it less their office

to plot against the thrones and lives of apostate kings, to spread evil rumours, to raise tumults, to inflame civil wars, to arm the hand of the assassin. Inflexible in nothing but in their fidelity to the Church, they were equally ready to appeal in her cause to the spirit of loyalty and to the spirit of freedom. Extreme doctrines of obedience and extreme doctrines of liberty, the right of rulers to misgovern the people, the right of every one of the people to plunge his knife in the heart of a bad ruler, were inculcated by the same man, according as he addressed himself to the subject of Philip or to the subject of Elizabeth. Some described these divines as the most rigid, others as the most indulgent of spiritual directors; and both descriptions were correct. The truly devout listened with awe to the high and saintly morality of the Jesuit. The gay cavalier who had run his rival through the body, the frail beauty who had forgotten her marriage-vow, found in the Jesuit an easy well-bred man of the world, who knew how to make allowance for the little irregularities of people of fashion. The confessor was strict or lax, according to the temper of the penitent. The first object was to drive no person out of the pale of the Church. Since there were bad people, it was better that they should be bad Catholics than bad Protestants. If a person was so unfortunate as to be a bravo, a libertine, or a gambler, that was no reason for making him a heretic too.

The Old World was not wide enough for this strange activity. The Jesuits invaded all the countries which the great maritime discoveries of the preceding age had laid open to European

enterprise. They were to be found in the depths of the Peruvian mines, at the marts of the African slave-caravans, on the shores of the Spice Islands, in the observatories of China. They made converts in regions which neither avarice nor curiosity had tempted any of their countrymen to enter; and preached and disputed in tongues of which no other native of the West understood a word.

The spirit which appeared so eminently in this order animated the whole Catholic world. The Court of Rome itself was purified. During the generation which preceded the Reformation, that Court had been a scandal to the Christian name. Its annals are black with treason, murder, and incest. Even its more respectable members were utterly unfit to be ministers of religion. They were men like Leo the Tenth; men who, with the Latinity of the Augustan age, had acquired its atheistical and scoffing spirit. They regarded those Christian mysteries, of which they were stewards, just as the Augur Cicero and the high Pontiff Caesar regarded the Sibylline books and the pecking of the sacred chickens. Among themselves, they spoke of the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and the Trinity, in the same tone in which Cotta and Velleius talked of the oracle of Delphi or the voice of Faunus in the mountains. Their years glided by in a soft dream of sensual and intellectual voluptuousness. Choice cookery, delicious wines, lovely women, hounds, falcons, horses, newly-discovered manuscripts of the classics, sonnets, and burlesque romances in the sweetest Tuscan, just as licentious as a fine sense

of the graceful would permit, plate from the hand of Benvenuto, designs for palaces by Michael Angelo, frescoes by Raphael, busts, mosaics, and gems just dug up from among the ruins of ancient temples and villas, these things were the delight and even the serious business of their lives. Letters and the fine arts undoubtedly owe much to this not inelegant sloth. But when the great stirring of the mind of Europe began, when doctrine after doctrine was assailed, when nation after nation withdrew from communion with the successor of St. Peter, it was felt that the Church could not be safely confided to chiefs whose highest praise was that they were good judges of Latin compositions, of paintings, and of statues, whose severest studies had a pagan character, and who were suspected of laughing in secret at the sacraments which they administered, and of believing no more of the Gospel than of the Morgante Maggiore. Men of a very different class now rose to the direction of ecclesiastical affairs, men whose spirit resembled that of Dunstan and of Becket. The Roman Pontiffs exhibited in their own persons all the austerity of the early anchorites of Syria. Paul the Fourth brought to the Papal throne the same fervent zeal which had carried him into the Theatine convent. Pius the Fifth, under his gorgeous vestments, wore day and night the hair shirt of a simple friar, walked barefoot in the streets at the head of processions, found, even in the midst of his most pressing avocations, time for private prayer, often regretted that the public duties of his station were unfavourable to growth in holiness, and edified his flock by

innumerable instances of humility, charity, and forgiveness of personal injuries, while at the same time he upheld the authority of his see, and the unadulterated doctrines of his Church, with all the stubbornness and vehemence of Hildebrand. Gregory the Thirteenth exerted himself not only to imitate but to surpass Pius in the severe virtues of his sacred profession. As was the head, such were the members. The change in the spirit of the Catholic world may be traced in every walk of literature and of art. It will be at once perceived by every person who compares the poem of Tasso with that of Ariosto, or the monuments Of Sixtus the Fifth with those of Leo the Tenth.

But it was not on moral influence alone that the Catholic Church relied. The civil sword in Spain and Italy was unsparingly employed in her support. The Inquisition was armed with new powers and inspired with a new energy. If Protestantism, or the semblance of Protestantism, showed itself in any quarter, it was instantly met, not by petty, teasing persecution, but by persecution of that sort which bows down and crushes all but a very few select spirits. Whoever was suspected of heresy, whatever his rank, his learning, or his reputation, knew that he must purge himself to the satisfaction of a severe and vigilant tribunal, or die by fire. Heretical books were sought out and destroyed with similar rigour. Works which were once in every house were so effectually suppressed that no copy of them is now to be found in the most extensive libraries. One book in particular, entitled *Of the Benefits of the Death of Christ*, had

this fate. It was written in Tuscan, was many times reprinted, and was eagerly read in every part of Italy. But the inquisitors detected in it the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone. They proscribed it; and it is now as hopelessly lost as the second decade of Livy.

Thus, while the Protestant reformation proceeded rapidly at one extremity of Europe, the Catholic revival went on as rapidly at the other. About half a century after the great separation, there were, throughout the North, Protestant governments and Protestant nations. In the South were governments and nations actuated by the most intense zeal for the ancient Church. Between these two hostile regions lay, morally as well as geographically, a great debatable land. In France, Belgium, Southern Germany, Hungary, and Poland, the contest was still undecided. The governments of those countries had not renounced their connection with Rome; but the Protestants were numerous, powerful, bold, and active. In France, they formed a commonwealth within the realm, held fortresses, were able to bring great armies into the field, and had treated with their sovereign on terms of equality. In Poland, the King was still a Catholic; but the Protestants had the upper hand in the Diet, filled the chief offices in the administration, and, in the large towns, took possession of the parish churches. "It appeared," says the Papal nuncio, "that in Poland, Protestantism would completely supersede Catholicism." In Bavaria, the state of things was nearly the same. The Protestants had a majority

in the Assembly of the States, and demanded from the duke concessions in favour of their religion, as the price of their subsidies. In Transylvania, the House of Austria was unable to prevent the Diet from confiscating, by one sweeping decree, the estates of the Church. In Austria Proper it was generally said that only one-thirtieth part of the population could be counted on as good Catholics. In Belgium the adherents of the new opinions were reckoned by hundreds of thousands.

The history of the two succeeding generations is the history of the struggle between Protestantism possessed of the North of Europe, and Catholicism possessed of the South, for the doubtful territory which lay between. All the weapons of carnal and of spiritual warfare were employed. Both sides may boast of great talents and of great virtues. Both have to blush for many follies and crimes. At first, the chances seemed to be decidedly in favour of Protestantism; but the victory remained with the Church of Rome. On every point she was successful. If we overleap, another half century, we find her victorious and dominant in France, Belgium, Bavaria, Bohemia, Austria, Poland, and Hungary. Nor has Protestantism, in the course of two hundred years, been able to reconquer any portion of what was then lost.

It is, moreover, not to be dissembled that this triumph of the Papacy is to be chiefly attributed, not to the force of arms, but to a great reflux in public opinion. During the first half century after the commencement of the Reformation, the current of feeling, in the countries on this side of the Alps and of the Pyrenees,

ran impetuously towards the new doctrines. Then the tide turned, and rushed as fiercely in the opposite direction. Neither during the one period, nor during the other, did much depend upon the event of battles or sieges. The Protestant movement was hardly checked for an instant by the defeat at Muhlberg. The Catholic reaction went on at full speed in spite of the destruction of the Armada. It is difficult to say whether the violence of the first blow or of the recoil was the greater. Fifty years after the Lutheran separation, Catholicism could scarcely maintain itself on the shores of the Mediterranean. A hundred years after the separation, Protestantism could scarcely maintain itself on the shores of the Baltic. The causes of this memorable turn in human affairs well deserve to be investigated.

The contest between the two parties bore some resemblance to the fencing-match in Shakspeare; "Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes." The war between Luther and Leo was a war between firm faith and unbelief, between zeal and apathy, between energy and indolence, between seriousness and frivolity, between a pure morality and vice. Very different was the war which degenerate Protestantism had to wage against regenerate Catholicism. To the debauchees, the poisoners, the atheists, who had worn the tiara during the generation which preceded the Reformation, had succeeded Popes who, in religious fervour and severe sanctity of manners, might bear a comparison with Cyprian or Ambrose. The order of Jesuits alone could show many men not inferior in

sincerity, constancy, courage, and austerity of life, to the apostles of the Reformation. But while danger had thus called forth in the bosom of the Church of Rome many of the highest qualities of the Reformers, the Reformers had contracted some of the corruptions which had been justly censured in the Church of Rome. They had become lukewarm and worldly. Their great old leaders had been borne to the grave, and had left no successors. Among the Protestant princes there was little or no hearty Protestant feeling. Elizabeth herself was a Protestant rather from policy than from firm conviction. James the First, in order to effect his favourite object of marrying his son into one of the great continental houses, was ready to make immense concessions to Rome, and even to admit a modified primacy in the Pope. Henry the Fourth twice abjured the reformed doctrines from interested motives. The Elector of Saxony, the natural head of the Protestant party in Germany, submitted to become, at the most important crisis of the struggle, a tool in the hands of the Papists. Among the Catholic sovereigns, on the other hand, we find a religious zeal often amounting to fanaticism. Philip the Second was a Papist in a very different sense from that in which Elizabeth was a Protestant. Maximilian of Bavaria, brought up under the teaching of the Jesuits, was a fervent missionary wielding the powers of a prince. The Emperor Ferdinand the Second deliberately put his throne to hazard over and over again, rather than make the smallest concession to the spirit of religious innovation. Sigismund of Sweden lost a crown which he might

have preserved if he would have renounced the Catholic faith. In short, everywhere on the Protestant side we see languor; everywhere on the Catholic side we see ardour and devotion.

Not only was there, at this time, a much more intense zeal among the Catholics than among the Protestants; but the whole zeal of the Catholics was directed against the Protestants, while almost the whole zeal of the Protestants was directed against each other. Within the Catholic Church there were no serious disputes on points of doctrine. The decisions of the Council of Trent were received; and the Jansenian controversy had not yet arisen. The whole force of Rome was, therefore, effective for the purpose of carrying on the war against the Reformation. On the other hand, the force which ought to have fought the battle of the Reformation was exhausted in civil conflict. While Jesuit preachers, Jesuit confessors, Jesuit teachers of youth, overspread Europe, eager to expend every faculty of their minds and every drop of their blood in the cause of their Church, Protestant doctors were confuting, and Protestant rulers were punishing, sectaries who were just as good Protestants as themselves.

“Cumque superba foret BABYLON spolianda tropaeis,
Bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos.”

In the Palatinate, a Calvinistic prince persecuted the Lutherans. In Saxony, a Lutheran prince persecuted the Calvinists. Everybody who objected to any of the articles of the

Confession of Augsburg was banished from Sweden. In Scotland, Melville was disputing with other Protestants on questions of ecclesiastical government. In England the gaols were filled with men, who, though zealous for the Reformation, did not exactly agree with the Court on all points of discipline and doctrine. Some were persecuted for denying the tenet of reprobation; some for not wearing surplices. The Irish people might at that time have been, in all probability, reclaimed from Popery, at the expense of half the zeal and activity which Whitgift employed in oppressing Puritans, and Martin Marprelate in reviling bishops.

As the Catholics in zeal and in union had a great advantage over the Protestants, so had they also an infinitely superior organisation. In truth, Protestantism, for aggressive purposes, had no organisation at all. The Reformed Churches were mere national Churches. The Church of England existed for England alone. It was an institution as purely local as the Court of Common Pleas, and was utterly without any machinery for foreign operations. The Church of Scotland, in the same manner, existed for Scotland alone. The operations of the Catholic Church, on the other hand, took in the whole world. Nobody at Lambeth or at Edinburgh troubled himself about what was doing in Poland or Bavaria. But Cracow and Munich were at Rome objects of as much interest as the purlieu of St. John Lateran. Our island, the head of the Protestant interest, did not send out a single missionary or a single instructor of youth to the scene of the great spiritual war. Not a single seminary was established

here for the purpose of furnishing a supply of such persons to foreign countries. On the other hand, Germany, Hungary, and Poland were filled with able and active Catholic emissaries of Spanish or Italian birth; and colleges for the instruction of the northern youth were founded at Rome. The spiritual force of Protestantism was a mere local militia, which might be useful in case of an invasion, but could not be sent abroad, and could therefore make no conquests. Rome had such a local militia; but she had also a force disposable at a moment's notice for foreign service, however dangerous or disagreeable. If it was thought at head-quarters that a Jesuit at Palermo was qualified by his talents and character to withstand the Reformers in Lithuania, the order was instantly given and instantly obeyed. In a month, the faithful servant of the Church was preaching, catechising, confessing, beyond the Niemen.

It is impossible to deny that the polity of the Church of Rome is the very master-piece of human wisdom. In truth, nothing but such a polity could, against such assaults, have borne up such doctrines. The experience of twelve hundred eventful years, the ingenuity and patient care of forty generations of statesmen, have improved that polity to such perfection that, among the contrivances which have been devised for deceiving and oppressing mankind, it occupies the highest place. The stronger our conviction that reason and scripture were decidedly on the side of Protestantism, the greater is the reluctant admiration with which we regard that system of tactics against which reason and

scripture were employed in vain.

If we went at large into this most interesting subject we should fill volumes. We will, therefore, at present, advert to only one important part of the policy of the Church of Rome. She thoroughly understands, what no other Church has ever understood, how to deal with enthusiasts. In some sects, particularly in infant sects, enthusiasm is suffered to be rampant. In other sects, particularly in sects long established and richly endowed, it is regarded with aversion. The Catholic Church neither submits to enthusiasm nor proscribes it, but uses it. She considers it as a great moving force which in itself, like the muscular power of a fine horse, is neither good nor evil, but which may be so directed as to produce great good or great evil; and she assumes the direction to herself. It would be absurd to run down a horse like a wolf. It would be still more absurd to let him run wild, breaking fences, and trampling down passengers. The rational course is to subjugate his will without impairing his vigour, to teach him to obey the rein, and then to urge him to full speed. When once he knows his master, he is valuable in proportion to his strength and spirit. Just such has been the system of the Church of Rome with regard to enthusiasts. She knows that, when religious feelings have obtained the complete empire of the mind, they impart a strange energy, that they raise men above the dominion of pain and pleasure, that obloquy becomes glory, that death itself is contemplated only as the beginning of a higher and happier life.

She knows that a person in this state is no object of contempt. He may be vulgar, ignorant, visionary, extravagant; but he will do and suffer things which it is for her interest that somebody should do and suffer, yet from which calm and sober-minded men would shrink. She accordingly enlists him in her service, assigns to him some forlorn hope, in which intrepidity and impetuosity are more wanted than judgment and self-command, and sends him forth with her benedictions and her applause.

In England it not unfrequently happens that a tinker or coal-heaver hears a sermon or falls in with a tract which alarms him about the state of his soul. If he be a man of excitable nerves and strong imagination, he thinks himself given over to the Evil Power. He doubts whether he has not committed the unpardonable sin. He imputes every wild fancy that springs up in his mind to the whisper of a fiend. His sleep is broken by dreams of the great judgment-seat, the open books, and the unquenchable fire. If, in order to escape from these vexing thoughts, he flies to amusement or to licentious indulgence, the delusive relief only makes his misery darker and more hopeless. At length a turn takes place. He is reconciled to his offended Maker. To borrow the fine imagery of one who had himself been thus tried, he emerges from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, from the dark land of gins and snares, of quagmires and precipices, of evil spirits and ravenous beasts. The sunshine is on his path. He ascends the Delectable Mountains, and catches from their summit a distant view of the shining city which is the end

of his pilgrimage. Then arises in his mind a natural and surely not a censurable desire, to impart to others the thoughts of which his own heart is full, to warn the careless, to comfort those who are troubled in spirit. The impulse which urges him to devote his whole life to the teaching of religion is a strong passion in the guise of a duty. He exhorts his neighbours; and, if he be a man of strong parts, he often does so with great effect. He pleads as if he were pleading for his life, with tears, and pathetic gestures, and burning words; and he soon finds with delight, not perhaps wholly unmixed with the alloy of human infirmity, that his rude eloquence rouses and melts hearers who sleep very composedly while the rector preaches on the apostolical succession. Zeal for God, love for his fellow-creatures, pleasure in the exercise of his newly discovered powers, impel him to become a preacher. He has no quarrel with the establishment, no objection to its formularies, its government, or its vestments. He would gladly be admitted among its humblest ministers, but, admitted or rejected, he feels that his vocation is determined. His orders have come down to him, not through a long and doubtful series of Arian and Popish bishops, but direct from on high. His commission is the same that on the Mountain of Ascension was given to the Eleven. Nor will he, for lack of human credentials, spare to deliver the glorious message with which he is charged by the true Head of the Church. For a man thus minded, there is within the pale of the establishment no place. He has been at no college; he cannot construe a Greek author or write a Latin theme; and he is told

that, if he remains in the communion of the Church, he must do so as a hearer, and that, if he is resolved to be a teacher, he must begin by being a schismatic. His choice is soon made. He harangues on Tower Hill or in Smithfield. A congregation is formed. A licence is obtained. A plain brick building, with a desk and benches, is run up, and named Ebenezer or Bethel. In a few weeks the Church has lost for ever a hundred families, not one of which entertained the least scruple about her articles, her liturgy, her government, or her ceremonies.

Far different is the policy of Rome. The ignorant enthusiast whom the Anglican Church makes an enemy, and whatever the polite and learned may think, a most dangerous enemy, the Catholic Church makes a champion. She bids him nurse his beard, covers him with a gown and hood of coarse dark stuff, ties a rope round his waist, and sends him forth to teach in her name. He costs her nothing. He takes not a ducat away from the revenues of her beneficed clergy. He lives by the alms of those who respect his spiritual character, and are grateful for his instructions. He preaches, not exactly in the style of Massillon, but in a way which moves the passions of uneducated hearers; and all his influence is employed to strengthen the Church of which he is a minister. To that Church he becomes as strongly attached as any of the cardinals whose scarlet carriages and liveries crowd the entrance of the palace on the Quirinal. In this way the Church of Rome unites in herself all the strength of establishment, and all the strength of dissent. With the utmost

pomp of a dominant hierarchy above, she has all the energy of the voluntary system below. It would be easy to mention very recent instances in which the hearts of hundreds of thousands, estranged from her by the selfishness, sloth, and cowardice of the benefited clergy, have been brought back by the zeal of the begging friars.

Even for female agency there is a place in her system. To devout women she assigns spiritual functions, dignities, and magistracies. In our country, if a noble lady is moved by more than ordinary zeal for the propagation of religion, the chance is that, though she may disapprove of no doctrine or ceremony of the Established Church, she will end by giving her name to a new schism. If a pious and benevolent woman enters the cells of a prison to pray with the most unhappy and degraded of her own sex, she does so without any authority from the Church. No line of action is traced out for her; and it is well if the Ordinary does not complain of her intrusion, and if the Bishop does not shake his head at such irregular benevolence. At Rome, the Countess of Huntingdon would have a place in the calendar as St. Selina, and Mrs. Fry would be foundress and first Superior of the Blessed Order of Sisters of the Gaols.

Place Ignatius Loyola at Oxford. He is certain to become the head of a formidable secession. Place John Wesley at Rome. He is certain to be the first General of a new society devoted to the interests and honour of the Church. Place St. Theresa in London. Her restless enthusiasm ferments into madness, not untinctured

with craft. She becomes the prophetess, the mother of the faithful, holds disputations with the devil, issues sealed pardons to her adorers, and lies in of the Shiloh. Place Joanna Southcote at Rome. She founds an order of barefooted Carmelites, every one of whom is ready to suffer martyrdom for the Church; a solemn service is consecrated to her memory; and her statue, placed over the holy water, strikes the eye of every stranger who enters St. Peter's.

We have dwelt long on this subject, because we believe that of the many causes to which the Church of Rome owed her safety and her triumph at the close of the sixteenth century, the chief was the profound policy with which she used the fanaticism of such persons as St. Ignatius and St. Theresa.

The Protestant party was now indeed vanquished and humbled. In France, so strong had been the Catholic reaction that Henry the Fourth found it necessary to choose between his religion and his crown. In spite of his clear hereditary right, in spite of his eminent personal qualities, he saw that, unless he reconciled himself to the Church of Rome, he could not count on the fidelity even of those gallant gentlemen whose impetuous valour had turned the tide of battle at Ivry. In Belgium, Poland, and Southern Germany, Catholicism had obtained complete ascendancy. The resistance of Bohemia was put down. The Palatinate was conquered. Upper and Lower Saxony were overflowed by Catholic invaders. The King of Denmark stood forth as the Protector of the Reformed Churches:

he was defeated, driven out of the empire, and attacked in his own possessions. The armies of the House of Austria pressed on, subjugated Pomerania, and were stopped in their progress only by the ramparts of Stralsund.

And now again the tide turned. Two violent outbreaks of religious feeling in opposite directions had given a character to the whole history of a whole century. Protestantism had at first driven back Catholicism to the Alps and the Pyrenees. Catholicism had rallied, and had driven back Protestantism even to the German Ocean. Then the great southern reaction began to slacken, as the great northern movement had slackened before. The zeal of the Catholics waxed cool. Their union was dissolved. The paroxysm of religious excitement was over on both sides. One party had degenerated as far from the spirit of Loyola as the other from the spirit of Luther. During three generations religion had been the mainspring of politics. The revolutions and civil wars of France, Scotland, Holland, Sweden, the long struggle between Philip and Elizabeth, the bloody competition for the Bohemian crown, had all originated in theological disputes. But a great change now took place. The contest which was raging in Germany lost its religious character. It was now, on one side, less a contest for the spiritual ascendancy of the Church of Rome than for the temporal ascendancy of the House of Austria. On the other side, it was less a contest for the reformed doctrines than for national independence. Governments began to form themselves into new combinations, in which community

of political interest was far more regarded than community of religious belief. Even at Rome the progress of the Catholic arms was observed with mixed feelings. The Supreme Pontiff was a sovereign prince of the second rank, and was anxious about the balance of power as well as about the propagation of truth. It was known that he dreaded the rise of an universal monarchy even more than he desired the prosperity of the Universal Church. At length a great event announced to the world that the war of sects had ceased, and that the war of states had succeeded. A coalition, including Calvinists, Lutherans, and Catholics, was formed against the House of Austria. At the head of that coalition were the first statesman and the first warrior of the age; the former a prince of the Catholic Church, distinguished by the vigour and success with which he had put down the Huguenots; the latter a Protestant king who owed his throne to a revolution caused by hatred of Popery. The alliance of Richelieu and Gustavus marks the time at which the great religious struggle terminated. The war which followed was a war for the equilibrium of Europe. When, at length, the peace of Westphalia was concluded, it appeared that the Church of Rome remained in full possession of a vast dominion which in the middle of the preceding century she seemed to be on the point of losing. No part of Europe remained Protestant, except that part which had become thoroughly Protestant before the generation which heard Luther preach had passed away.

Since that time there has been no religious war between

Catholics and Protestants as such. In the time of Cromwell, Protestant England was united with Catholic France, then governed by a priest, against Catholic Spain. William the Third, the eminently Protestant hero, was at the head of a coalition which included many Catholic powers, and which was secretly favoured even by Rome, against the Catholic Lewis. In the time of Anne, Protestant England and Protestant Holland joined with Catholic Savoy and Catholic Portugal, for the purpose of transferring the crown of Spain from one bigoted Catholic to another.

The geographical frontier between the two religions has continued to run almost precisely where it ran at the close of the Thirty Years' War; nor has Protestantism given any proofs of that "expansive power" which has been ascribed to it. But the Protestant boasts, and boasts most justly, that wealth, civilisation, and intelligence, have increased far more on the northern than on the southern side of the boundary, and that countries so little favoured by nature as Scotland and Prussia are now among the most flourishing and best governed portions of the world, while the marble palaces of Genoa are deserted, while banditti infest the beautiful shores of Campania, while the fertile sea-coast of the Pontifical State is abandoned to buffaloes and wild boars. It cannot be doubted that, since the sixteenth century, the Protestant nations have made decidedly greater progress than their neighbours. The progress made by those nations in which Protestantism, though not finally successful, yet maintained a

long struggle, and left permanent traces, has generally been considerable. But when we come to the Catholic Land, to the part of Europe in which the first spark of reformation was trodden out as soon as it appeared, and from which proceeded the impulse which drove Protestantism back, we find, at best, a very slow progress, and on the whole a retrogression. Compare Denmark and Portugal. When Luther began to preach, the superiority of the Portuguese was unquestionable. At present, the superiority of the Danes is no less so. Compare Edinburgh and Florence. Edinburgh has owed less to climate, to soil, and to the fostering care of rulers than any capital, Protestant or Catholic. In all these respects, Florence has been singularly happy. Yet whoever knows what Florence and Edinburgh were in the generation preceding the Reformation, and what they are now, will acknowledge that some great cause has, during the last three Centuries, operated to raise one part of the European family, and to depress the other. Compare the history of England and that of Spain during the last century. In arms, arts, sciences, letters, commerce, agriculture, the contrast is most striking. The distinction is not confined to this side of the Atlantic. The colonies planted by England in America have immeasurably outgrown in power those planted by Spain. Yet we have no reason to believe that, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Castilian was in any respect inferior to the Englishman. Our firm belief is, that the North owes its great civilisation and prosperity chiefly to the moral effect of the Protestant Reformation, and that the decay of the southern

countries of Europe is to be mainly ascribed to the great Catholic revival.

About a hundred years after the final settlement of the boundary line between Protestantism and Catholicism, began to appear the signs of the fourth great peril of the Church of Rome. The storm which was now rising against her was of a very different kind from those which had preceded it. Those who had formerly attacked her had questioned only a part of her doctrines. A school was now growing up which rejected the whole. The Albigenses, the Lollards, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, had a positive religious system, and were strongly attached to it. The creed of the new sectaries was altogether negative. They took one of their premises from the Protestants, and one from the Catholics. From the latter they borrowed the principle, that Catholicism was the only pure and genuine Christianity. With the former, they held that some parts of the Catholic system were contrary to reason. The conclusion was obvious. Two propositions, each of which separately is compatible with the most exalted piety, formed, when held in conjunction, the ground-work of a system of irreligion. The doctrine of Bossuet, that transubstantiation is affirmed in the Gospel, and the doctrine of Tillotson, that transubstantiation is an absurdity, when put together, produced by logical necessity, the inferences of Voltaire.

Had the sect which was rising at Paris been a sect of mere scoffers, it is very improbable that it would have left deep

traces of its existence in the institutions and manners of Europe. Mere negation, mere Epicurean infidelity, as Lord Bacon most justly observes, has never disturbed the peace of the world. It furnishes no motive for action. It inspires no enthusiasm. It has no missionaries, no crusaders, no martyrs. If the Patriarch of the Holy Philosophical Church had contented himself with making jokes about Saul's asses and David's wives, and with criticising the poetry of Ezekiel in the same narrow spirit in which he criticised that of Shakspeare, Rome would have had little to fear. But it is due to him and to his compeers to say that the real secret of their strength lay in the truth which was mingled with their errors, and in the generous enthusiasm which was hidden under their flippancy. They were men who, with all their faults, moral and intellectual, sincerely and earnestly desired the improvement of the condition of the human race, whose blood boiled at the sight of cruelty and injustice, who made manful war, with every faculty which they possessed, on what they considered as abuses, and who on many signal occasions placed themselves gallantly between the powerful and the oppressed. While they assailed Christianity with a rancour and an unfairness disgraceful to men who called themselves philosophers, they yet had, in far greater measure than their opponents, that charity towards men of all classes and races which Christianity enjoins. Religious persecution, judicial torture, arbitrary imprisonment, the unnecessary multiplication of capital punishments, the delay and chicanery of tribunals, the exactions of farmers of the

revenue, slavery, the slave trade, were the constant subjects of their lively satire and eloquent disquisitions. When an innocent man was broken on the wheel at Toulouse, when a youth, guilty only of an indiscretion, was beheaded at Abbeville, when a brave officer, borne down by public injustice, was dragged, with a gag in his mouth, to die on the Place de Greve, a voice instantly went forth from the banks of Lake Lemman, which made itself heard from Moscow to Cadiz, and which sentenced the unjust judges to the contempt and detestation of all Europe. The really efficient weapons with which the philosophers assailed the evangelical faith were borrowed from the evangelical morality. The ethical and dogmatical parts of the Gospel were unhappily turned against each other. On one side was a Church boasting of the purity of a doctrine derived from the Apostles, but disgraced by the massacre of St. Bartholomew, by the murder of the best of kings, by the war of Cevennes, by the destruction of Port-Royal. On the other side was a sect laughing at the Scriptures, shooting out the tongue at the sacraments, but ready to encounter principalities and powers in the cause of justice, mercy and toleration.

Irreligion, accidentally associated with philanthropy, triumphed for a time over religion accidentally associated with political and social abuses. Everything gave way to the zeal and activity of the new reformers. In France, every man distinguished in letters was found in their ranks. Every year gave birth to works in which the fundamental principles of the Church were attacked with argument, invective, and ridicule. The Church made no

defence, except by acts of power. Censures were pronounced: books were seized: insults were offered to the remains of infidel writers; but no Bossuet, no Pascal, came forth to encounter Voltaire. There appeared not a single defence of the Catholic doctrine which produced any considerable effect, or which is now even remembered. A bloody and unsparing persecution, like that which put down the Albigenses, might have put down the philosophers. But the time for De Montforts and Dominics had gone by. The punishments which the priests were still able to inflict were sufficient to irritate, but not sufficient to destroy. The war was between power on one side, and wit on the other; and the power was under far more restraint than the wit. Orthodoxy soon became a synonyme for ignorance and stupidity. It was as necessary to the character of an accomplished man that he should despise the religion of his country, as that he should know his letters. The new doctrines spread rapidly through Christendom. Paris was the capital of the whole Continent. French was everywhere the language of polite circles. The literary glory of Italy and Spain had departed. That of Germany had not dawned. That of England shone, as yet, for the English alone. The teachers of France were the teachers of Europe. The Parisian opinions spread fast among the educated classes beyond the Alps: nor could the vigilance of the Inquisition prevent the contraband importation of the new heresy into Castile and Portugal. Governments, even arbitrary governments, saw with pleasure the progress of this philosophy. Numerous reforms,

generally laudable, sometimes hurried on without sufficient regard to time, to place, and to public feeling, showed the extent of its influence. The rulers of Prussia, of Russia, of Austria, and of many smaller states, were supposed to be among the initiated.

The Church of Rome was still, in outward show, as stately and splendid as ever; but her foundation was undermined. No state had quitted her communion or confiscated her revenues; but the reverence of the people was everywhere departing from her.

The first great warning-stroke was the fall of that society which, in the conflict with Protestantism, had saved the Catholic Church from destruction. The Order of Jesus had never recovered from the injury received in the struggle with Port-Royal. It was now still more rudely assailed by the philosophers. Its spirit was broken; its reputation was tainted. Insulted by all the men of genius in Europe, condemned by the civil magistrate, feebly defended by the chiefs of the hierarchy, it fell: and great was the fall of it.

The movement went on with increasing speed. The first generation of the new sect passed away. The doctrines of Voltaire were inherited and exaggerated by successors, who bore to him the same relation which the Anabaptists bore to Luther, or the Fifth-Monarchy men to Pym. At length the Revolution came. Down went the old Church of France, with all its pomp and wealth. Some of its priests purchased a maintenance by separating themselves from Rome, and by becoming the authors of a fresh schism. Some, rejoicing in the new licence, flung away

their sacred vestments, proclaimed that their whole life had been an imposture, insulted and persecuted the religion of which they had been ministers, and distinguished themselves, even in the Jacobin Club and the Commune of Paris, by the excess of their impudence and ferocity. Others, more faithful to their principles, were butchered by scores without a trial, drowned, shot, hung on lamp-posts. Thousands fled from their country to take sanctuary under the shade of hostile altars. The churches were closed; the bells were silent; the shrines were plundered; the silver crucifixes were melted down. Buffoons, dressed in copes and surplices, came dancing the carmagnole even to the bar of the Convention. The bust of Marat was substituted for the statues of the martyrs of Christianity. A prostitute, seated on a chair of state in the chancel of Notre Dame, received the adoration of thousands, who exclaimed that at length, for the first time, those ancient Gothic arches had resounded with the accents of truth. The new unbelief was as intolerant as the old superstition. To show reverence for religion was to incur the suspicion of disaffection. It was not without imminent danger that the priest baptized the infant, joined the hands of lovers, or listened to the confession of the dying. The absurd worship of the Goddess of Reason was, indeed, of short duration; but the deism of Robespierre and Lepaux was not less hostile to the Catholic faith than the atheism of Cloutz and Chaumette.

Nor were the calamities of the Church confined to France. The revolutionary spirit, attacked by all Europe, beat all Europe

back, became conqueror in its turn, and, not satisfied with the Belgian cities and the rich domains of the spiritual electors, went raging over the Rhine and through the passes of the Alps. Throughout the whole of the great war against Protestantism, Italy and Spain had been the base of the Catholic operations. Spain was now the obsequious vassal of the infidels. Italy was subjugated by them. To her ancient principalities succeeded the Cisalpine republic, and the Ligurian republic, and the Parthenopean republic. The shrine of Loretto was stripped of the treasures piled up by the devotion of six hundred years. The convents of Rome were pillaged. The tricoloured flag floated on the top of the Castle of St. Angelo. The successor of St. Peter was carried away captive by the unbelievers. He died a prisoner in their hands; and even the honours of sepulture were long withheld from his remains.

It is not strange that in the year 1799, even sagacious observers should have thought that, at length, the hour of the Church of Rome was come. An infidel power ascendant, the Pope dying in captivity, the most illustrious prelates of France living in a foreign country on Protestant alms, the noblest edifices which the munificence of former ages had consecrated to the worship of God turned into temples of Victory, or into banqueting-houses for political societies, or into Theophilanthropic chapels, such signs might well be supposed to indicate the approaching end of that long domination.

But the end was not yet. Again doomed to death, the milk-

white hind was still fated not to die. Even before the funeral rites had been performed over the ashes of Pius the Sixth, a great reaction had commenced, which, after the lapse of more than forty years, appears to be still in progress. Anarchy had had its day. A new order of things rose out of the confusion, new dynasties, new laws, new titles; and amidst them emerged the ancient religion. The Arabs have a fable that the Great Pyramid was built by antediluvian kings, and alone, of all the works of men, bore the weight of the flood. Such as this was the fate of the Papacy. It had been buried under the great inundation; but its deep foundations had remained unshaken; and when the waters abated, it appeared alone amidst the ruins of a world which had passed away. The republic of Holland was gone, and the empire of Germany, and the great Council of Venice, and the old Helvetian League, and the House of Bourbon, and the parliaments and aristocracy of France. Europe was full of young creations, a French empire, a kingdom of Italy, a Confederation of the Rhine. Nor had the late events affected only territorial limits and political institutions. The distribution of property, the composition and spirit of society, had, through great part of Catholic Europe, undergone a complete change. But the unchangeable Church was still there.

Some future historian, as able and temperate as Professor Ranke, will, we hope, trace the progress of the Catholic revival of the nineteenth century. We feel that we are drawing too near our own time, and that, if we go on, we shall be in danger of

saying much which may be supposed to indicate, and which will certainly excite, angry feelings. We will, therefore, make only one more observation, which, in our opinion, is deserving of serious attention.

During the eighteenth century, the influence of the Church of Rome was constantly on the decline. Unbelief made extensive conquests in all the Catholic countries of Europe, and in some countries obtained a complete ascendancy. The Papacy was at length brought so low as to be an object of derision to infidels, and of pity rather than of hatred to Protestants. During the nineteenth century, this fallen Church has been gradually rising from her depressed state and reconquering her old dominion. No person who calmly reflects on what, within the last few years, has passed in Spain, in Italy, in South America, in Ireland, in the Netherlands, in Prussia, even in France, can doubt that the power of this Church over the hearts and minds of men, is now greater far than it was when the Encyclopaedia and the Philosophical Dictionary appeared. It is surely remarkable, that neither the moral revolution of the eighteenth century, nor the moral counter-revolution of the nineteenth, should, in any perceptible degree, have added to the domain of Protestantism. During the former period, whatever was lost to Catholicism was lost also to Christianity; during the latter, whatever was regained by Christianity in Catholic countries was regained also by Catholicism. We should naturally have expected that many minds, on the way from superstition to infidelity, or on the way

back from infidelity to superstition, would have stopped at an intermediate point. Between the doctrines taught in the schools of the Jesuits, and those which were maintained at the little supper parties of the Baron Holbach, there is a vast interval, in which the human mind, it should seem, might find for itself some resting-place more satisfactory than either of the two extremes. And at the time of the Reformation, millions found such a resting-place. Whole nations then renounced Popery without ceasing to believe in a first cause, in a future life, or in the Divine mission of Jesus. In the last century, on the other hand, when a Catholic renounced his belief in the real Presence, it was a thousand to one that he renounced his belief in the Gospel too; and, when the reaction took place, with belief in the Gospel came back belief in the real presence.

We by no means venture to deduce from these phenomena any general law; but we think it a most remarkable fact, that no Christian nation, which did not adopt the principles of the Reformation before the end of the sixteenth century, should ever have adopted them. Catholic communities have, since that time, become infidel and become Catholic again; but none has become Protestant.

Here we close this hasty sketch of one of the most important portions of the history of mankind. Our readers will have great reason to feel obliged to us if we have interested them sufficiently to induce them to peruse Professor Ranke's book. We will only caution them against the French translation, a performance

which, in our opinion, is just as discreditable to the moral character of the person from whom it proceeds as a false affidavit or a forged bill of exchange would have been, and advise them to study either the original, or the English version, in which the sense and spirit of the original are admirably preserved.

WAR OF THE SUCCESSION IN SPAIN

(January 1833) *History of the War of the Succession in Spain.*

By LORD MAHON. 8vo. London: 1832.

THE days when *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* by a Person of Honour, and *Romances of M. Scuderi*, done into English by a Person of Quality, were attractive to readers and profitable to booksellers, have long gone by. The literary privileges once enjoyed by lords are as obsolete as their right to kill the king's deer on their way to Parliament, or as their old remedy of *scandalum magnatum*. Yet we must acknowledge that, though our political opinions are by no means aristocratical, we always feel kindly disposed towards noble authors. Industry, and a taste for intellectual pleasures, are peculiarly respectable in those who can afford to be idle and who have every temptation to be dissipated. It is impossible not to wish success to a man who, finding himself placed, without any exertion or any merit on his part, above the mass of society, voluntarily descends from his eminence in search of distinctions which he may justly call his own.

This is, we think, the second appearance of Lord Mahon in the character of an author. His first book was creditable to him, but was in every respect inferior to the work which now

lies before us. He has undoubtedly some of the most valuable qualities of a historian, great diligence in examining authorities, great judgment in weighing testimony, and great impartiality in estimating characters. We are not aware that he has in any instance forgotten the duties belonging to his literary functions in the feelings of a kinsman. He does no more than justice to his ancestor Stanhope; he does full justice to Stanhope's enemies and rivals. His narrative is very perspicuous, and is also entitled to the praise, seldom, we grieve to say, deserved by modern writers, of being very concise. It must be admitted, however, that, with many of the best qualities of a literary veteran, he has some of the faults of a literary novice. He has not yet acquired a great command of words. His style is seldom easy, and is now and then unpleasantly stiff. He is so bigoted a purist that he transforms the Abbe d'Estrees into an Abbot. We do not like to see French words introduced into English composition; but, after all, the first law of writing, that law to which all other laws are subordinate, is this, that the words employed shall be such as convey to the reader the meaning of the writer. Now an Abbot is the head of a religious house; an Abbe is quite a different sort of person. It is better undoubtedly to use an English word than a French word; but it is better to use a French word than to misuse an English word.

Lord Mahon is also a little too fond of uttering moral reflections in a style too sententious and oracular. We shall give one instance: "Strange as it seems, experience shows that we

usually feel far more animosity against those whom we have injured than against those who injure us: and this remark holds good with every degree of intellect, with every class of fortune, with a prince or a peasant, a stripling or an elder, a hero or a prince.” This remark might have seemed strange at the Court of Nimrod or Chedorlaomer; but it has now been for many generations considered as a truism rather than a paradox. Every boy has written on the thesis “*Odisse quem loeseris.*” Scarcely any lines in English poetry are better known than that vigorous couplet,

“Forgiveness to the injured does belong;
But they ne’er pardon who have done the wrong.”

The historians and philosophers have quite done with this maxim, and have abandoned it, like other maxims which have lost their gloss, to bad novelists, by whom it will very soon be worn to rags.

It is no more than justice to say that the faults of Lord Mahon’s book are precisely the faults which time seldom fails to cure, and that the book, in spite of those faults, is a valuable addition to our historical literature.

Whoever wishes to be well acquainted with the morbid anatomy of governments, whoever wishes to know how great states may be made feeble and wretched, should study the history of Spain. The empire of Philip the Second was undoubtedly one

of the most powerful and splendid that ever existed in the world. In Europe, he ruled Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands on both sides of the Rhine, Franche Comte, Roussillon, the Milanese, and the Two Sicilies. Tuscany, Parma, and the other small states of Italy, were as completely dependent on him as the Nizam and the Rajah of Berar now are on the East India Company. In Asia, the King of Spain was master of the Philippines and of all those rich settlements which the Portuguese had made on the coast of Malabar and Coromandel, in the Peninsula of Malacca, and in the Spice-islands of the Eastern Archipelago. In America his dominions extended on each side of the equator into the temperate zone. There is reason to believe that his annual revenue amounted, in the season of his greatest power, to a sum near ten times as large as that which England yielded to Elizabeth. He had a standing army of fifty thousand excellent troops, at a time when England had not a single battalion in constant pay. His ordinary naval force consisted of a hundred and forty galleys. He held, what no other prince in modern times has held, the dominion both of the land and of the sea. During the greater part of his reign, he was supreme on both elements. His soldiers marched up to the capital of France; his ships menaced the shores of England.

It is no exaggeration to say that, during several years, his power over Europe was greater than even that of Napoleon. The influence of the French conqueror never extended beyond low-water mark. The narrowest strait was to his power what it was of old believed that a running stream was to the sorceries of a

witch. While his army entered every metropolis from Moscow to Lisbon, the English fleets blockaded every port from Dantzic to Trieste. Sicily, Sardinia, Majorca, Guernsey, enjoyed security through the whole course of a war which endangered every throne on the Continent. The victorious and imperial nation which had filled its museums with the spoils of Antwerp, of Florence, and of Rome, was suffering painfully from the want of luxuries which use had made necessaries. While pillars and arches were rising to commemorate the French conquests, the conquerors were trying to manufacture coffee out of succory and sugar out of beet-root. The influence of Philip on the Continent was as great as that of Napoleon. The Emperor of Germany was his kinsman. France, torn by religious dissensions, was never a formidable opponent, and was sometimes a dependent ally. At the same time, Spain had what Napoleon desired in vain, ships, colonies, and commerce. She long monopolised the trade of America and of the Indian Ocean. All the gold of the West, and all the spices of the East, were received and distributed by her. During many years of war, her commerce was interrupted only by the predatory enterprises of a few roving privateers. Even after the defeat of the Armada, English statesmen continued to look with great dread on the maritime power of Philip. "The King of Spain," said the Lord Keeper to the two Houses in 1593, "since he hath usurped upon the Kingdom of Portugal, hath thereby grown mighty, by gaining the East Indies: so as, how great soever he was before, he is now thereby manifestly more great: . . . He

keepeth a navy armed to impeach all trade of merchandise from England to Gascoigne and Guienne which he attempted to do this last vintage; so as he is now become as a frontier enemy to all the west of England, as well as all the south parts, as Sussex, Hampshire, and the Isle of Wight. Yea, by means of his interest in St. Maloes, a port full of shipping for the war, he is a dangerous neighbour to the Queen's isles of Jersey and Guernsey, ancient possessions of this Crown, and never conquered in the greatest wars with France."

The ascendancy which Spain then had in Europe was, in one sense, well deserved. It was an ascendancy which had been gained by unquestioned superiority in all the arts of policy and of war. In the sixteenth century, Italy was not more decidedly the land of the fine arts, Germany was not more decidedly the land of bold theological speculation, than Spain was the land of statesmen and of soldiers. The character which Virgil has ascribed to his countrymen might have been claimed by the grave and haughty chiefs, who surrounded the throne of Ferdinand the Catholic, and of his immediate successors. That majestic art, "regere imperio populos," was not better understood by the Romans in the proudest days of their republic, than by Gonsalvo and Ximenes, Cortes and Alva. The skill of the Spanish diplomatists was renowned throughout Europe. In England the name of Gondomar is still remembered. The sovereign nation was unrivalled both in regular and irregular warfare. The impetuous chivalry of France, the serried phalanx

of Switzerland, were alike found wanting when brought face to face with the Spanish infantry. In the wars of the New World, where something different from ordinary strategy was required in the general and something different from ordinary discipline in the soldier, where it was every day necessary to meet by some new expedient the varying tactics of a barbarous enemy, the Spanish adventurers, sprung from the common people, displayed a fertility of resource, and a talent for negotiation and command, to which history scarcely affords a parallel.

The Castilian of those times was to the Italian what the Roman, in the days of the greatness of Rome, was to the Greek. The conqueror had less ingenuity, less taste, less delicacy of perception than the conquered; but far more pride, firmness, and courage, a more solemn demeanour, a stronger sense of honour. The subject had more subtlety in speculation, the ruler more energy in action. The vices of the former were those of a coward; the vices of the latter were those of a tyrant. It may be added, that the Spaniard, like the Roman, did not disdain to study the arts and the language of those whom he oppressed. A revolution took place in the literature of Spain, not unlike that revolution which, as Horace tells us, took place in the poetry of Latium: "Capta ferum victorem cepit." The slave took prisoner the enslaver. The old Castilian ballads gave place to sonnets in the style of Petrarch, and to heroic poems in the stanza of Ariosto, as the national songs of Rome were driven out by imitations of Theocritus, and translations from Menander.

In no modern society, not even in England during the reign of Elizabeth, has there been so great a number of men eminent at once in literature and in the pursuits of active life, as Spain produced during the sixteenth century. Almost every distinguished writer was also distinguished as a soldier or a politician. Boscan bore arms with high reputation. Garcilaso de Vega, the author of the sweetest and most graceful pastoral poem of modern times, after a short but splendid military career, fell sword in hand at the head of a storming party. Alonzo de Ercilla bore a conspicuous part in that war of Arauco, which he afterwards celebrated in one of the best heroic poems that Spain has produced. Hurtado de Mendoza, whose poems have been compared to those of Horace, and whose charming little novel is evidently the model of *Gil-Blas*, has been handed down to us by history as one of the sternest of those iron proconsuls who were employed by the House of Austria to crush the lingering public spirit of Italy. Lope sailed in the Armada; Cervantes was wounded at Lepanto.

It is curious to consider with how much awe our ancestors in those times regarded a Spaniard. He was, in their apprehension, a kind of daemon, horribly malevolent, but withal most sagacious and powerful. "They be verye wyse and politicke," says an honest Englishman, in a memorial addressed to Mary, "and can, thorowe ther wysdome, reform and brydell theyr owne natures for a tyme, and applye their conditions to the maners of those men with whom they meddell gladlye by friendshippe; whose mischievous

maners a man shall never knowe untill he come under ther subjection: but then shall he perfectlye perceyve and fele them: which thyng I praye God England never do: for in dissimulations untill they have ther purposes, and afterwards in oppression and tyrarnnye, when they can obtayne them, they do exceed all other nations upon the earthe.” This is just such language as Arminius would have used about the Romans, or as an Indian statesman of our times might use about the English. It is the language of a man burning with hatred, but cowed by those whom he hates; and painfully sensible of their superiority, not only in power, but in intelligence.

But how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, that didst weaken the nations! If we overleap a hundred years, and look at Spain towards the close of the seventeenth century, what a change do we find! The contrast is as great as that which the Rome of Gallienus and Honorius presents to the Rome of Marius and Caesar. Foreign conquest had begun to eat into every part of that gigantic monarchy on which the sun never set. Holland was gone, and Portugal, and Artois, and Roussillon, and Franche Comte. In the East, the empire founded by the Dutch far surpassed in wealth and splendour that which their old tyrants still retained. In the West, England had seized, and still held, settlements in the midst of the Mexican sea.

The mere loss of territory was, however, of little moment. The reluctant obedience of distant provinces generally costs more

than it is worth. Empires which branch out widely are often more flourishing for a little timely pruning. Adrian acted judiciously when he abandoned the conquests of Trajan; and England was never so rich, so great, so formidable to foreign princes, so absolutely mistress of the sea, as since the loss of her American colonies. The Spanish Empire was still, in outward appearance, great and magnificent. The European dominions subject to the last feeble Prince of the House of Austria were far more extensive than those of Lewis the Fourteenth. The American dependencies of the Castilian Crown still extended far to the North of Cancer and far to the South of Capricorn. But within this immense body there was an incurable decay, an utter want of tone, an utter prostration of strength. An ingenious and diligent population, eminently skilled in arts and manufactures, had been driven into exile by stupid and remorseless bigots. The glory of the Spanish pencil had departed with Velasquez and Murillo. The splendid age of Spanish literature had closed with Solis and Calderon. During the seventeenth century many states had formed great military establishments. But the Spanish army, so formidable under the command of Alva and Farnese, had dwindled away to a few thousand men, ill paid and ill disciplined. England, Holland, and France had great navies. But the Spanish navy was scarcely equal to the tenth part of that mighty force which, in the time of Philip the Second, had been the terror of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The arsenals were deserted. The magazines were unprovided. The frontier fortresses were

ungarrisoned. The police was utterly inefficient for the protection of the people. Murders were committed in the face of day with perfect impunity. Bravoes and discarded serving-men, with swords at their sides, swaggered every day through the most public streets and squares of the capital, disturbing the public peace, and setting at defiance the ministers of justice. The finances were in frightful disorder. The people paid much. The Government received little. The American viceroys and the farmers of the revenue became rich, while the merchants broke, while the peasantry starved, while the body-servants of the sovereign remained unpaid, while the soldiers of the royal guard repaired daily to the doors of convents, and battled there with the crowd of beggars for a porringer of broth and a morsel of bread. Every remedy which was tried aggravated the disease. The currency was altered; and this frantic measure produced its never-failing effects. It destroyed all credit, and increased the misery which it was intended to relieve. The American gold, to use the words of Ortiz, was to the necessities of the State but as a drop of water to the lips of a man raging with thirst. Heaps of unopened despatches accumulated in the offices, while the ministers were concerting with bedchamber-women and Jesuits the means of tripping up each other. Every foreign power could plunder and insult with impunity the heir of Charles the Fifth. Into such a state had the mighty kingdom of Spain fallen, while one of its smallest dependencies, a country not so large as the province of Estremadura or Andalusia, situated under

an inclement sky, and preserved only by artificial means from the inroads of the ocean, had become a power of the first class, and treated on terms of equality with the Courts of London and Versailles.

The manner in which Lord Mahon explains the financial situation of Spain by no means satisfies us. "It will be found," says he, "that those individuals deriving their chief income from mines, whose yearly produce is uncertain and varying, and seems rather to spring from fortune than to follow industry, are usually careless, unthrifty, and irregular in their expenditure. The example of Spain might tempt us to apply the same remark to states." Lord Mahon would find it difficult, we suspect, to make out his analogy. Nothing could be more uncertain and varying than the gains and losses of those who were in the habit of putting into the State lotteries. But no part of the public income was more certain than that which was derived from the lotteries. We believe that this case is very similar to that of the American mines. Some veins of ore exceeded expectation; some fell below it. Some of the private speculators drew blanks, and others gained prizes. But the revenue of the State depended, not on any particular vein, but on the whole annual produce of two great continents. This annual produce seems to have been almost constantly on the increase during the seventeenth century. The Mexican mines were, through the reigns of Philip the Fourth and Charles the Second, in a steady course of improvement; and in South America, though the district of Potosi was not so

productive as formerly, other places more than made up for the deficiency. We very much doubt whether Lord Mahon can prove that the income which the Spanish Government derived from the mines of America fluctuated more than the income derived from the internal taxes of Spain itself.

All the causes of the decay of Spain resolve themselves into one cause, bad government. The valour, the intelligence, the energy which, at the close of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, had made the Spaniards the first nation in the world, were the fruits of the old institutions of Castile and Arragon, institutions eminently favourable to public liberty. These institutions the first Princes of the House of Austria attacked and almost wholly destroyed. Their successors expiated the crime. The effects of a change from good government to bad government are not fully felt for some time after the change has taken place. The talents and the virtues which a good constitution generates may for a time survive that constitution. Thus the reigns of princes, who have established absolute monarchy on the ruins of popular forms of government often shine in history with a peculiar brilliancy. But when a generation or two has passed away, then comes signally to pass that which was written by Montesquieu, that despotic governments resemble those savages who cut down the tree in order to get at the fruit. During the first years of tyranny, is reaped the harvest sown during the last years of liberty. Thus the Augustan age was rich in great minds formed in the generation of Cicero and Caesar. The fruits of the policy

of Augustus were reserved for posterity. Philip the Second was the heir of the Cortes and of the Justiza Mayor; and they left him a nation which seemed able to conquer all the world. What Philip left to his successors is well known.

The shock which the great religious schism of the sixteenth century gave to Europe, was scarcely felt in Spain. In England, Germany, Holland, France, Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, that shock had produced, with some temporary evil, much durable good. The principles of the Reformation had triumphed in some of those countries. The Catholic Church had maintained its ascendancy in others. But though the event had not been the same in all, all had been agitated by the conflict. Even in France, in Southern Germany, and in the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, the public mind had been stirred to its inmost depths. The hold of ancient prejudice had been somewhat loosened. The Church of Rome, warned by the danger which she had narrowly escaped, had, in those parts of her dominion, assumed a milder and more liberal character. She sometimes condescended to submit her high pretensions to the scrutiny of reason, and availed herself more sparingly than in former times of the aid of the secular arm. Even when persecution was employed, it was not persecution in the worst and most frightful shape. The severities of Lewis the Fourteenth, odious as they were, cannot be compared with those which, at the first dawn of the Reformation, had been inflicted on the heretics in many parts of Europe.

The only effect which the Reformation had produced in

Spain had been to make the Inquisition more vigilant and the commonalty more bigoted. The times of refreshing came to all neighbouring countries. One people alone remained, like the fleece of the Hebrew warrior, dry in the midst of that benignant and fertilising dew. While other nations were putting away childish things, the Spaniard still thought as a child and understood as a child. Among the men of the seventeenth century, he was the man of the fifteenth century or of a still darker period, delighted to behold an Auto da fe, and ready to volunteer on a Crusade.

The evils produced by a bad government and a bad religion, seemed to have attained their greatest height during the last years of the seventeenth century. While the kingdom was in this deplorable state, the King, Charles, second of the name, was hastening to an early grave. His days had been few and evil. He had been unfortunate in all his wars, in every part of his internal administration, and in all his domestic relations. His first wife, whom he tenderly loved, died very young. His second wife exercised great influence over him, but seems to have been regarded by him rather with fear than with love. He was childless; and his constitution was so completely shattered that, at little more than thirty years of age, he had given up all hopes of posterity. His mind was even more distempered than his body. He was sometimes sunk in listless melancholy, and sometimes harassed by the wildest and most extravagant fancies. He was not, however, wholly destitute of the feelings which became

his station. His sufferings were aggravated by the thought that his own dissolution might not improbably be followed by the dissolution of his empire.

Several princes laid claim to the succession. The King's eldest sister had married Lewis the Fourteenth. The Dauphin would, therefore, in the common course of inheritance, have succeeded to the crown. But the Infanta had, at the time of her espousals, solemnly renounced, in her own name, and in that of her posterity, all claim to the succession. This renunciation had been confirmed in due form by the Cortes. A younger sister of the King had been the first wife of Leopold, Emperor of Germany. She too had at her marriage renounced her claims to the Spanish crown; but the Cortes had not sanctioned the renunciation, and it was therefore considered as invalid by the Spanish jurists. The fruit of this marriage was a daughter, who had espoused the Elector of Bavaria. The Electoral Prince of Bavaria inherited her claim to the throne of Spain. The Emperor Leopold was son of a daughter of Philip the Third, and was therefore first cousin to Charles. No renunciation whatever had been exacted from his mother at the time of her marriage.

The question was certainly very complicated. That claim which, according to the ordinary rules of inheritance, was the strongest, had been barred by a contract executed in the most binding form. The claim of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria was weaker. But so also was the contract which bound him not to prosecute his claim. The only party against whom no instrument

of renunciation could be produced was the party who, in respect of blood, had the weakest claim of all.

As it was clear that great alarm would be excited throughout Europe if either the Emperor or the Dauphin should become King of Spain, each of those Princes offered to waive his pretensions in favour of his second son, the Emperor, in favour of the Archduke Charles, the Dauphin, in favour of Philip Duke of Anjou.

Soon after the peace of Ryswick, William the Third and Lewis the Fourteenth determined to settle the question of the succession without consulting either Charles or the Emperor. France, England, and Holland, became parties to a treaty by which it was stipulated that the Electoral Prince of Bavaria should succeed to Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands. The Imperial family were to be bought off with the Milanese; and the Dauphin was to have the Two Sicilies.

The great object of the King of Spain and of all his counsellors was to avert the dismemberment of the monarchy. In the hope of attaining this end, Charles determined to name a successor. A will was accordingly framed by which the crown was bequeathed to the Bavarian Prince. Unhappily, this will had scarcely been signed when the Prince died. The question was again unsettled, and presented greater difficulties than before.

A new Treaty of Partition was concluded between France, England, and Holland. It was agreed that Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands, should descend to the Archduke Charles. In

return for this great concession made by the Bourbons to a rival house, it was agreed that France should have the Milanese, or an equivalent in a more commodious situation, The equivalent in view was the province of Lorraine.

Arbuthnot, some years later, ridiculed the Partition Treaty with exquisite humour and ingenuity. Everybody must remember his description of the paroxysm of rage into which poor old Lord Strutt fell, on hearing that his runaway servant Nick Frog, his clothier John Bull, and his old enemy Lewis Baboon, had come with quadrants, poles, and inkhorns, to survey his estate, and to draw his will for him. Lord Mahon speaks of the arrangement with grave severity. He calls it “an iniquitous compact, concluded without the slightest reference to the welfare of the states so readily parcelled and allotted; insulting to the pride of Spain, and tending to strip that country of its hard-won conquests.” The most serious part of this charge would apply to half the treaties which have been concluded in Europe quite as strongly as to the Partition Treaty. What regard was shown in the Treaty of the Pyrenees to the welfare of the people of Dunkirk and Roussillon, in the Treaty of Nimeguen to the welfare of the people of Franche Comte, in the Treaty of Utrecht to the welfare of the people of Flanders, in the treaty of 1735 to the welfare of the people of Tuscany? All Europe remembers, and our latest posterity will, we fear, have reason to remember how coolly, at the last great pacification of Christendom, the people of Poland, of Norway, of Belgium, and of Lombardy, were allotted

to masters whom they abhorred. The statesmen who negotiated the Partition Treaty were not so far beyond their age and ours in wisdom and virtue as to trouble themselves much about the happiness of the people whom they were apportioning among foreign rulers. But it will be difficult to prove that the stipulations which Lord Mahon condemns were in any respect unfavourable to the happiness of those who were to be transferred to new sovereigns. The Neapolitans would certainly have lost nothing by being given to the Dauphin, or to the Great Turk. Addison, who visited Naples about the time at which the Partition Treaty was signed, has left us a frightful description of the misgovernment under which that part of the Spanish Empire groaned. As to the people of Lorraine, an union with France would have been the happiest event which could have befallen them. Lewis was already their sovereign for all purposes of cruelty and exaction. He had kept their country during many years in his own hands. At the peace of Ryswick, indeed, their Duke had been allowed to return. But the conditions which had been imposed on him made him a mere vassal of France.

We cannot admit that the Treaty of Partition was objectionable because it “tended to strip Spain of hard-won conquests.” The inheritance was so vast, and the claimants so mighty, that without some dismemberment it was scarcely possible to make a peaceable arrangement. If any dismemberment was to take place, the best way of effecting it surely was to separate from the monarchy those provinces which

were at a great distance from Spain, which were not Spanish in manners, in language, or in feelings, which were both worse governed and less valuable than the old kingdoms of Castile and Arragon, and which, having always been governed by foreigners, would not be likely to feel acutely the humiliation of being turned over from one master to another.

That England and Holland had a right to interfere is plain. The question of the Spanish succession was not an internal question, but an European question. And this Lord Mahon admits. He thinks that when the evil had been done, and a French prince was reigning at the Escorial, England and Holland were justified in attempting, not merely to strip Spain of its remote dependencies, but to conquer Spain itself; that they were justified in attempting to put, not merely the passive Flemings and Italians, but the reluctant Castilians and Asturians, under the dominion of a stranger. The danger against which the Partition Treaty was intended to guard was precisely the same danger which afterwards was made the ground of war. It will be difficult to prove that a danger which was sufficient to justify the war was insufficient to justify the provisions of the treaty. If, as Lord Mahon contends, it was better that Spain should be subjugated by main force than that she should be governed by a Bourbon, it was surely better that she should be deprived of Sicily and the Milanese than that she should be governed by a Bourbon.

Whether the treaty was judiciously framed is quite another question. We disapprove of the stipulations. But we disapprove

of them, not because we think them bad, but because we think that there was no chance of their being executed. Lewis was the most faithless of politicians. He hated the Dutch. He hated the Government which the Revolution had established in England. He had every disposition to quarrel with his new allies. It was quite certain that he would not observe his engagements, if it should be for his interest to violate them. Even if it should be for his interest to observe them, it might well be doubted whether the strongest and clearest interest would induce a man so haughty and self-willed to co-operate heartily with two governments which had always been the objects of his scorn and aversion.

When intelligence of the second Partition Treaty arrived at Madrid, it roused to momentary energy the languishing ruler of a languishing state. The Spanish ambassador at the Court of London was directed to remonstrate with the Government of William; and his remonstrances were so insolent that he was commanded to leave England. Charles retaliated by dismissing the English and Dutch ambassadors. The French King, though the chief author of the Partition Treaty, succeeded in turning the whole wrath of Charles and of the Spanish people from himself, and in directing it against the two maritime powers. Those powers had now no agent at Madrid. Their perfidious ally was at liberty to carry on his intrigues unchecked; and he fully availed himself of this advantage.

A long contest was maintained with varying success by the factions which surrounded the miserable King. On the side of the

Imperial family was the Queen, herself a Princess of that family. With her were allied the confessor of the King, and most of the ministers. On the other side were two of the most dexterous politicians of that age, Cardinal Porto Carrero, Archbishop of Toledo, and Harcourt, the ambassador of Lewis.

Harcourt was a noble specimen of the French aristocracy in the days of its highest splendour, a finished gentleman, a brave soldier, and a skilful diplomatist. His courteous and insinuating manners, his Parisian vivacity tempered with Castilian gravity, made him the favourite of the whole Court. He became intimate with the grandes. He caressed the clergy. He dazzled the multitude by his magnificent style of living. The prejudices which the people of Madrid had conceived against the French character, the vindictive feelings generated during centuries of national rivalry, gradually yielded to his arts; while the Austrian ambassador, a surly, pompous, niggardly German, made himself and his country more and more unpopular every day.

Harcourt won over the Court and the city: Porto Carrero managed the King. Never were knave and dupe better suited to each other. Charles was sick, nervous, and extravagantly superstitious. Porto Carrero had learned in the exercise of his profession the art of exciting and soothing such minds; and he employed that art with the calm and demure cruelty which is the characteristic of wicked and ambitious priests.

He first supplanted the confessor. The state of the poor King, during the conflict between his two spiritual advisers,

was horrible. At one time he was induced to believe that his malady was the same with that of the wretches described in the New Testament, who dwelt among the tombs, whom no chains could bind, and whom no man dared to approach. At another time a sorceress who lived in the mountains of the Asturias was consulted about his malady. Several persons were accused of having bewitched him. Porto Carrero recommended the appalling rite of exorcism, which was actually performed. The ceremony made the poor King more nervous and miserable than ever. But it served the turn of the Cardinal, who, after much secret trickery, succeeded in casting out, not the devil, but the confessor.

The next object was to get rid of the ministers. Madrid was supplied with provisions by a monopoly. The Government looked after this most delicate concern as it looked after everything else. The partisans of the House of Bourbon took advantage of the negligence of the administration. On a sudden the supply of food failed. Exorbitant prices were demanded. The people rose. The royal residence was surrounded by an immense multitude. The Queen harangued them. The priests exhibited the host. All was in vain. It was necessary to awaken the King from his uneasy sleep, and to carry him to the balcony. There a solemn promise was given that the unpopular advisers of the Crown should be forthwith dismissed. The mob left the palace and proceeded to pull down the houses of the ministers. The adherents of the Austrian line were thus driven from power, and the government

was intrusted to the creatures of Porto Carrero. The King left the city in which he had suffered so cruel an insult for the magnificent retreat of the Escorial. Here his hypochondriac fancy took a new turn. Like his ancestor Charles the Fifth, he was haunted by the strange curiosity to pry into the secrets of that grave to which he was hastening. In the cemetery which Philip the Second had formed beneath the pavement of the church of St. Lawrence, reposed three generations of Castilian princes. Into these dark vaults the unhappy monarch descended by torchlight, and penetrated to that superb and gloomy chamber where, round the great black crucifix, were ranged the coffins of the kings and queens of Spain. There he commanded his attendants to open the massy chests of bronze in which the relics of his predecessors decayed. He looked on the ghastly spectacle with little emotion till the coffin of his first wife was unclosed, and she appeared before him—such was the skill of the embalmer—in all her well-remembered beauty. He cast one glance on those beloved features, unseen for eighteen years, those features over which corruption seemed to have no power, and rushed from the vault, exclaiming, “She is with God; and I shall soon be with her.” The awful sight completed the ruin of his body and mind. The Escorial became hateful to him; and he hastened to Aranjuez. But the shades and waters of that delicious island-garden, so fondly celebrated in the sparkling verse of Calderon, brought no solace to their unfortunate master. Having tried medicine, exercise, and amusement in, vain, he returned to Madrid to die.

He was now beset on every side by the bold and skilful agents of the House of Bourbon. The leading politicians of his Court assured him that Lewis, and Lewis alone, was sufficiently powerful to preserve the Spanish monarchy undivided, and that Austria would be utterly unable to prevent the Treaty of Partition from being carried into effect. Some celebrated lawyers gave it as their opinion that the act of renunciation executed by the late Queen of France ought to be construed according to the spirit, and not according to the letter. The letter undoubtedly excluded the French princes. The spirit was merely this, that ample security should be taken against the union of the French and Spanish Crowns on one head.

In all probability, neither political nor legal reasonings would have sufficed to overcome the partiality which Charles felt for the House of Austria. There had always been a close connection between the two great royal lines which sprang from the marriage of Philip and Juana. Both had always regarded the French as their natural enemies. It was necessary to have recourse to religious terrors; and Porto Carrero employed those terrors with true professional skill. The King's life was drawing to a close. Would the most Catholic prince commit a great sin on the brink of the grave? And what could be a greater sin than, from an unreasonable attachment to a family name, from an unchristian antipathy to a rival house, to set aside the rightful heir of an immense monarchy? The tender conscience and the feeble intellect of Charles were strongly wrought upon by these

appeals. At length Porto Carrero ventured on a master-stroke. He advised Charles to apply for counsel to the Pope. The King, who, in the simplicity of his heart, considered the successor of St. Peter as an infallible guide in spiritual matters, adopted the suggestion; and Porto Carrero, who knew that his Holiness was a mere tool of France, awaited with perfect confidence the result of the application. In the answer which arrived from Rome, the King was solemnly reminded of the great account which he was soon to render, and cautioned against the flagrant injustice which he was tempted to commit. He was assured that the right was with the House of Bourbon, and reminded that his own salvation ought to be dearer to him than the House of Austria. Yet he still continued irresolute. His attachment to his family, his aversion to France, were not to be overcome even by Papal authority. At length he thought himself actually dying. Then the cardinal redoubled his efforts. Divine after divine, well tutored for the occasion, was brought to the bed of the trembling penitent. He was dying in the commission of known sin. He was defrauding his relatives. He was bequeathing civil war to his people. He yielded, and signed that memorable testament, the cause of many calamities to Europe. As he affixed his name to the instrument, he burst into tears. "God," he said, "gives kingdoms and takes them away. I am already one of the dead."

The will was kept secret during the short remainder of his life. On the third of November 1700 he expired. All Madrid crowded to the palace. The gates were thronged. The antechamber was

filled with ambassadors and grandees, eager to learn what dispositions the deceased sovereign had made. At length the folding doors were flung open. The Duke of Abrantes came forth, and announced that the whole Spanish monarchy was bequeathed to Philip, Duke of Anjou. Charles had directed that, during the interval which might elapse between his death and the arrival of his successor, the government should be administered by a council, of which Porto Carrero was the chief member.

Lewis acted, as the English ministers might have guessed that he would act. With scarcely the show of hesitation, he broke through all the obligations of the Partition Treaty, and accepted for his grandson the splendid legacy of Charles. The new sovereign hastened to take possession of his dominions. The whole Court of France accompanied him to Sceaux. His brothers escorted him to that frontier which, as they weakly imagined, was to be a frontier no longer. "The Pyrenees," said Lewis, "have ceased to exist." Those very Pyrenees, a few years later, were the theatre of a war between the heir of Lewis and the prince whom France was now sending to govern Spain.

If Charles had ransacked Europe to find a successor whose moral and intellectual character resembled his own, he could not have chosen better. Philip was not so sickly as his predecessor, but he was quite as weak, as indolent, and as superstitious; he very soon became quite as hypochondriacal and eccentric; and he was even more uxorious. He was indeed a husband of ten thousand. His first object, when he became King of Spain, was to procure

a wife. From the day of his marriage to the day of her death, his first object was to have her near him, and to do what she wished. As soon as his wife died, his first object was to procure another. Another was found, as unlike the former as possible. But she was a wife; and Philip was content. Neither by day nor by night, neither in sickness nor in health, neither in time of business nor in time of relaxation, did he ever suffer her to be absent from him for half an hour. His mind was naturally feeble; and he had received an enfeebling education. He had been brought up amidst the dull magnificence of Versailles. His grandfather was as imperious and as ostentatious in his intercourse with the royal family as in public acts. All those who grew up immediately under the eye of Lewis had the manners of persons who had never known what it was to be at ease. They were all taciturn, shy, and awkward. In all of them, except the Duke of Burgundy, the evil went further than the manners. The Dauphin, the Duke Of Berri, Philip of Anjou, were men of insignificant characters.

They had no energy, no force of will. They had been so little accustomed to judge or to act for themselves that implicit dependence had become necessary to their comfort. The new King of Spain, emancipated from control, resembled that wretched German captive who, when the irons which he had worn for years were knocked off, fell prostrate on the floor of his prison. The restraints which had enfeebled the mind of the young Prince were required to support it. Till he had a wife he could do nothing; and when he had a wife he did whatever she chose.

While this lounging, moping boy was on his way to Madrid, his grandfather was all activity. Lewis had no reason to fear a contest with the Empire single-handed. He made vigorous preparations to encounter Leopold. He overawed the States-General by means of a great army. He attempted to soothe the English Government by fair professions. William was not deceived. He fully returned the hatred of Lewis; and, if he had been free to act according to his own inclinations, he would have declared war as soon as the contents of the will were known. But he was bound by constitutional restraints. Both his person and his measures were unpopular in England. His secluded life and his cold manners disgusted a people accustomed to the graceful affability of Charles the Second. His foreign accent and his foreign attachments were offensive to the national prejudices. His reign had been a season of distress, following a season of rapidly increasing prosperity. The burdens of the late war and the expense of restoring the currency had been severely felt. Nine clergymen out of ten were Jacobites at heart, and had sworn allegiance to the new dynasty, only in order to save their benefices. A large proportion of the country gentlemen belonged to the same party. The whole body of agricultural proprietors was hostile to that interest which the creation of the national debt had brought into notice, and which was believed to be peculiarly favoured by the Court, the monied interest. The middle classes were fully determined to keep out James and his family. But they regarded William only as the less of two evils; and, as long

as there was no imminent danger of a counter-revolution, were disposed to thwart and mortify the sovereign by whom they were, nevertheless, ready to stand, in case of necessity, with their lives and fortunes. They were sullen and dissatisfied. "There was," as Somers expressed it in a remarkable letter to William, "a deadness and want of spirit in the nation universally."

Everything in England was going on as Lewis could have wished. The leaders of the Whig party had retired from power, and were extremely unpopular on account of the unfortunate issue of the Partition Treaty. The Tories, some of whom still cast a lingering look towards St. Germain's, were in office, and had a decided majority in the House of Commons. William was so much embarrassed by the state of parties in England that he could not venture to make war on the House of Bourbon. He was suffering under a complication of severe and incurable diseases. There was every reason to believe that a few months would dissolve the fragile tie which bound up that feeble body with that ardent and unconquerable soul. If Lewis could succeed in preserving peace for a short time, it was probable that all his vast designs would be securely accomplished. Just at this crisis, the most important crisis of his life, his pride and his passions hurried him into an error, which undid all that forty years of victory and intrigue had done, which produced the dismemberment of the kingdom of his grandson, and brought invasion, bankruptcy, and famine on his own.

James the Second died at St. Germain's. Lewis paid him a

farewell visit, and was so much moved by the solemn parting, and by the grief of the exiled queen, that, losing sight of all considerations of policy, and actuated, as it should seem, merely by compassion and by a not ungenerous vanity, he acknowledged the Prince of Wales as King of England.

The indignation which the Castilians had felt when they heard that three foreign powers had undertaken to regulate the Spanish succession was nothing to the rage with which the English learned that their good neighbour had taken the trouble to provide them with a king. Whigs and Tories joined in condemning the proceedings of the French Court. The cry for war was raised by the city of London, and echoed and re-echoed from every corner of the realm. William saw that his time was come. Though his wasted and suffering body could hardly move without support, his spirit was as energetic and resolute as when, at twenty-three, he bade defiance to the combined forces of England and France. He left the Hague, where he had been engaged in negotiating with the States and the Emperor a defensive treaty against the ambitious designs of the Bourbons. He flew to London. He remodelled the Ministry. He dissolved the Parliament. The majority of the new House of Commons was with the King; and the most vigorous preparations were made for war.

Before the commencement of active hostilities William was no more. But the Grand Alliance of the European Princes against the Bourbons was already constructed. "The master workman died," says Mr. Burke; "but the work was formed on

true mechanical principles, and it was as truly wrought." On the fifteenth of May, 1702, war was proclaimed by concert at Vienna, at London, and at the Hague.

Thus commenced that great struggle by which Europe, from the Vistula to the Atlantic Ocean, was agitated during twelve years. The two hostile coalitions were, in respect of territory, wealth, and population, not unequally matched. On the one side were France, Spain, and Bavaria; on the other, England, Holland, the Empire, and a crowd of inferior Powers.

That part of the war which Lord Mahon has undertaken to relate, though not the least important, is certainly the least attractive. In Italy, in Germany, and in the Netherlands, great means were at the disposal of great generals. Mighty battles were fought. Fortress after fortress was subdued. The iron chain of the Belgian strongholds was broken. By a regular and connected series of operations extending through several years, the French were driven back from the Danube and the Po into their own provinces. The war in Spain, on the contrary, is made up of events which seem to have no dependence on each other. The turns of fortune resemble those which take place in a dream. Victory and defeat are not followed by their usual consequences. Armies spring out of nothing, and melt into nothing. Yet, to judicious readers of history, the Spanish conflict is perhaps more interesting than the campaigns of Marlborough and Eugene. The fate of the Milanese and of the Low Countries was decided by military skill. The fate of Spain was decided by the peculiarities

of the national character.

When the war commenced, the young King was in a most deplorable situation. On his arrival at Madrid, he found Porto Carrero at the head of affairs, and he did not think fit to displace the man to whom he owed his crown. The Cardinal was a mere intriguer, and in no sense a statesman. He had acquired, in the Court and in the confessional, a rare degree of skill in all the tricks by which weak minds are managed. But of the noble science of government, of the sources of national prosperity, of the causes of national decay, he knew no more than his master. It is curious to observe the contrast between the dexterity with which he ruled the conscience of a foolish valetudinarian, and the imbecility which he showed when placed at the head of an empire. On what grounds Lord Mahon represents the Cardinal as a man “of splendid genius,” “of vast abilities,” we are unable to discover. Lewis was of a very different opinion, and Lewis was very seldom mistaken in his judgment of character. “Everybody,” says he, in a letter to his ambassador, “knows how incapable the Cardinal is. He is an object of contempt to his countrymen.”

A few miserable savings were made, which ruined individuals without producing any perceptible benefit to the State. The police became more and more inefficient. The disorders of the capital were increased by the arrival of French adventurers, the refuse of Parisian brothels and gaming-houses. These wretches considered the Spaniards as a subjugated race whom

the countrymen of the new sovereign might cheat and insult with impunity. The King sate eating and drinking all night, lay in bed all day, yawned at the council table, and suffered the most important papers to lie unopened for weeks. At length he was roused by the only excitement of which his sluggish nature was susceptible. His grandfather consented to let him have a wife. The choice was fortunate. Maria Louisa, Princess of Savoy, a beautiful and graceful girl of thirteen, already a woman in person and mind at an age when the females of colder climates are still children, was the person selected. The King resolved to give her the meeting in Catalonia. He left his capital, of which he was already thoroughly tired. At setting out he was mobbed by a gang of beggars. He, however, made his way through them, and repaired to Barcelona.

Lewis was perfectly aware that the Queen would govern Philip. He, accordingly, looked about for somebody to govern the Queen. He selected the Princess Orsini to be first lady of the bedchamber, no insignificant post in the household of a very young wife, and a very uxorious husband. The Princess was the daughter of a French peer, and the widow of a Spanish grandee. She was, therefore, admirably fitted by her position to be the instrument of the Court of Versailles at the Court of Madrid. The Duke of Orleans called her, in words too coarse for translation, the Lieutenant of Captain Maintenon: and the appellation was well deserved. She aspired to play in Spain the part which Madame de Maintenon had played in France. But,

though at least equal to her model in wit, information, and talents for intrigue, she had not that self-command, that patience, that imperturbable evenness of temper, which had raised the widow of a buffoon to be the consort of the proudest of kings. The Princess was more than fifty years old, but was still vain of her fine eyes, and her fine shape; she still dressed in the style of a girl; and she still carried her flirtations so far as to give occasion for scandal. She was, however, polite, eloquent, and not deficient in strength of mind. The bitter Saint Simon owns that no person whom she wished to attach could long resist the graces of her manners and of her conversation.

We have not time to relate how she obtained, and how she preserved, her empire over the young couple in whose household she was placed, how she became so powerful, that neither minister of Spain nor ambassador from France could stand against her, how Lewis himself was compelled to court her, how she received orders from Versailles to retire, how the Queen took part with her favourite attendant, how the King took part with the Queen, and how, after much squabbling, lying, shuffling, bullying, and coaxing, the dispute was adjusted. We turn to the events of the war.

When hostilities were proclaimed at London, Vienna, and the Hague, Philip was at Naples. He had been with great difficulty prevailed upon, by the most urgent representations from Versailles, to separate himself from his wife, and to repair without her to his Italian dominions, which were then menaced

by the Emperor. The Queen acted as Regent, and, child as she was, seems to have been quite as competent to govern the kingdom as her husband or any of his ministers.

In August 1702, an armament, under the command of the Duke of Ormond, appeared off Cadiz. The Spanish authorities had no funds and no regular troops. The national spirit, however, supplied, in some degree, what was wanting. The nobles and farmers advanced money. The peasantry were formed into what the Spanish writers call bands of heroic patriots, and what General Stanhope calls "a rascally foot militia." If the invaders had acted with vigour and judgment, Cadiz would probably have fallen. But the chiefs of the expedition were divided by national and professional feelings, Dutch against English, and land against sea. Sparre, the Dutch general, was sulky and perverse. Bellasys, the English general, embezzled the stores. Lord Mahon imputes the ill-temper of Sparre to the influence of the republican institutions of Holland. By parity of reason, we suppose that he would impute the peculations of Bellasys to the influence of the monarchical and aristocratical institutions of England. The Duke of Ormond, who had the command of the whole expedition, proved on this occasion, as on every other, destitute of the qualities which great emergencies require. No discipline was kept; the soldiers were suffered to rob and insult those whom it was most desirable to conciliate. Churches were robbed, images were pulled down; nuns were violated. The officers shared the spoil instead of punishing the spoilers; and

at last the armament, loaded, to use the words of Stanhope, "with a great deal of plunder and infamy," quitted the scene of Essex's glory, leaving the only Spaniard of note who had declared for them to be hanged by his countrymen. The fleet was off the coast of Portugal, on the way back to England, when the Duke of Ormond received intelligence that the treasure-ships from America had just arrived in Europe, and had, in order to avoid his armament, repaired to the harbour of Vigo. The cargo consisted, it was said, of more than three millions sterling in gold and silver, besides much valuable merchandise. The prospect of plunder reconciled all disputes. Dutch and English admirals and generals, were equally eager for action. The Spaniards might with the greatest ease have secured the treasure by simply landing it; but it was a fundamental law of Spanish trade that the galleons should unload at Cadiz, and at Cadiz only. The Chamber of Commerce at Cadiz, in the true spirit of monopoly, refused, even at this conjuncture, to bate one jot of its privilege. The matter was referred to the Council of the Indies. That body deliberated and hesitated just a day too long. Some feeble preparations for defence were made. Two ruined towers at the mouth of the bay of Vigo were garrisoned by a few ill-armed and untrained rustics; a boom was thrown across the entrance of the basin; and a few French ships of war, which had convoyed the galleons from America, were moored within. But all was to no purpose. The English ships broke the boom; Ormond and his soldiers scaled the forts; the French burned their ships, and escaped to the shore.

The conquerors shared some millions of dollars; some millions more were sunk. When all the galleons had been captured or destroyed came an order in due form allowing them to unload.

When Philip returned to Madrid in the beginning of 1703, he found the finances more embarrassed, the people more discontented and the hostile coalition more formidable than ever. The loss of the galleons had occasioned a great deficiency in the revenue. The Admiral of Castile, one of the greatest subjects in Europe, had fled to Lisbon and sworn allegiance to the Archduke. The King of Portugal soon after acknowledged Charles as King of Spain, and prepared to support the title of the House of Austria by arms.

On the other side, Lewis sent to the assistance of his grandson an army of 12,000 men, commanded by the Duke of Berwick. Berwick was the son of James the Second and Arabella Churchill. He had been brought up to expect the highest honours which an English subject could enjoy; but the whole course of his life was changed by the revolution which overthrew his infatuated father. Berwick became an exile, a man without a country; and from that time forward his camp was to him in the place of a country, and professional honour was his patriotism. He ennobled his wretched calling. There was a stern, cold, Brutus-like virtue in the manner in which he discharged the duties of a soldier of fortune. His military fidelity was tried by the strongest temptations, and was found invincible. At one time he fought against his uncle; at another time he fought against the cause of

his brother; yet he was never suspected of treachery or even of slackness.

Early in 1704 an army, composed of English, Dutch, and Portuguese, was assembled on the western frontier of Spain. The Archduke Charles had arrived at Lisbon, and appeared in person at the head of his troops. The military skill of Berwick held the Allies, who were commanded by Lord Galway, in check through the whole campaign. On the south, however, a great blow was struck. An English fleet, under Sir George Rooke, having on board several regiments commanded by the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, appeared before the rock of Gibraltar. That celebrated stronghold, which nature has made all but impregnable, and against which all the resources of the military art have been employed in vain, was taken as easily as if it had been an open village in a plain. The garrison went to say their prayers instead of standing on their guard. A few English sailors climbed the rock. The Spaniards capitulated; and the British flag was placed on those ramparts from which the combined armies and navies of France and Spain have never been able to pull it down. Rooke proceeded to Malaga, gave battle in the neighbourhood of that port to a French squadron, and after a doubtful action returned to England.

But greater events were at hand. The English Government had determined to send an expedition to Spain, under the command of Charles Mordaunt, Earl of Peterborough. This man was, if not the greatest, yet assuredly the most extraordinary

character of that age, the King of Sweden himself not excepted. Indeed, Peterborough may be described as a polite, learned, and amorous Charles the Twelfth. His courage had all the French impetuosity, and all the English steadiness. His fertility and activity of mind were almost beyond belief. They appeared in everything that he did, in his campaigns, in his negotiations, in his familiar correspondence, in his lightest and most unstudied conversation. He was a kind friend, a generous enemy, and in deportment a thorough gentleman. But his splendid talents and virtues were rendered almost useless to his country, by his levity, his restlessness, his irritability, his morbid craving for novelty and for excitement. His weaknesses had not only brought him, on more than one occasion, into serious trouble; but had impelled him to some actions altogether unworthy of his humane and noble nature. Repose was insupportable to him. He loved to fly round Europe faster than a travelling courier. He was at the Hague one week, at Vienna the next. Then he took a fancy to see Madrid; and he had scarcely reached Madrid, when he ordered horses and set off for Copenhagen. No attendants could keep up with his speed. No bodily infirmities could confine him. Old age, disease, imminent death, produced scarcely any effect on his intrepid spirit. Just before he underwent the most horrible of surgical operations, his conversation was as sprightly as that of a young man in the full vigour of health. On the day after the operation, in spite of the entreaties of his medical advisers, he would set out on a journey. His figure was that of a skeleton.

But his elastic mind supported him under fatigues and sufferings which seemed sufficient to bring the most robust man to the grave. Change of employment was as necessary to him as change of place. He loved to dictate six or seven letters at once. Those who had to transact business with him complained that though he talked with great ability on every subject, he could never be kept to the point. "Lord Peterborough," said Pope, "would say very pretty and lively things in his letters, but they would be rather too gay and wandering; whereas, were Lord Bolingbroke to write to an emperor, or to a statesman, he would fix on that point which was the most material, would set it in the strongest and fiercest light, and manage it so as to make it the most serviceable to his purpose." What Peterborough was to Bolingbroke as a writer, he was to Marlborough as a general. He was, in truth, the last of the knights-errant, brave to temerity, liberal to profusion, courteous in his dealings with enemies, the Protector of the oppressed, the adorer of women. His virtues and vices were those of the Round Table. Indeed, his character can hardly be better summed up, than in the lines in which the author of that clever little poem, *Monks and Giants*, has described Sir Tristram.

"His birth, it seems, by Merlin's calculation,
Was under Venus, Mercury, and Mars;
His mind with all their attributes was mixed,
And, like those planets, wandering and unfixed.

"From realm to realm he ran, and never staid:

Kingdoms and crowns he won, and gave away:
It seemed as if his labours were repaid
By the mere noise and movement of the fray:
No conquests or acquirements had he made;
His chief delight was, on some festive day
To ride triumphant, prodigal, and proud,
And shower his wealth amidst the shouting crowd.

“His schemes of war were sudden, unforeseen,
Inexplicable both to friend and foe;
It seemed as if some momentary spleen
Inspired the project, and impelled the blow;
And most his fortune and success were seen
With means the most inadequate and low;
Most master of himself, and least encumbered,
When overmatched, entangled, and outnumbered.”

In June 1705, this remarkable man arrived in Lisbon with five thousand Dutch and English soldiers. There the Archduke embarked with a large train of attendants, whom Peterborough entertained magnificently during the voyage at his own expense. From Lisbon the armament proceeded to Gibraltar, and, having taken the Prince of Hesse Darmstadt on board, steered towards the north-east along the coast of Spain.

The first place at which the expedition touched, after leaving Gibraltar, was Altea in Valencia. The wretched misgovernment of Philip had excited great discontent throughout this province. The invaders were eagerly welcomed. The peasantry flocked to

the shore, bearing provisions, and shouting, "Long live Charles the Third." The neighbouring fortress of Denia surrendered without a blow.

The imagination of Peterborough took fire. He conceived the hope of finishing the war at one blow. Madrid was but a hundred and fifty miles distant. There was scarcely one fortified place on the road. The troops of Philip were either on the frontiers of Portugal or on the coast of Catalonia. At the capital there was no military force, except a few horse who formed a guard of honour round the person of Philip. But the scheme of pushing into the heart of a great kingdom with an army of only seven thousand men, was too daring to please the Archduke.

The Prince of Hesse Darmstadt, who, in the reign of the late King of Spain, had been Governor of Catalonia, and who overrated his own influence in that province, was of opinion that they ought instantly to proceed thither, and to attack Barcelona, Peterborough was hampered by his instructions, and found it necessary to submit.

On the sixteenth of August the fleet arrived before Barcelona; and Peterborough found that the task assigned to him by the Archduke and the Prince was one of almost insuperable difficulty. One side of the city was protected by the sea; the other by the strong fortifications of Monjuich. The walls were so extensive, that thirty thousand men would scarcely have been sufficient to invest them. The garrison was as numerous as the besieging army. The best officers in the Spanish service were in

the town. The hopes which the Prince of Darmstadt had formed of a general rising in Catalonia were grievously disappointed. The invaders were joined only by about fifteen hundred armed peasants, whose services cost more than they were worth.

No general was ever in a more deplorable situation than that in which Peterborough was now placed. He had always objected to the scheme of besieging Barcelona. His objections had been overruled. He had to execute a project which he had constantly represented as impracticable. His camp was divided into hostile factions and he was censured by all. The Archduke and the Prince blamed him for not proceeding instantly to take the town; but suggested no plan by which seven thousand men could be enabled to do the work of thirty thousand. Others blamed their general for giving up his own opinion to the childish whims of Charles, and for sacrificing his men in an attempt to perform what was impossible. The Dutch commander positively declared that his soldiers should not stir: Lord Peterborough might give what orders he chose; but to engage in such a siege was madness; and the men should not be sent to certain death when there was no chance of obtaining any advantage.

At length, after three weeks of inaction, Peterborough announced his fixed determination to raise the siege. The heavy cannon were sent on board. Preparations were made for re-embarking the troops. Charles and the Prince of Hesse were furious, but most of the officers blamed their general for having delayed so long the measure which he had at last found it

necessary to take. On the twelfth of September there were rejoicings and public entertainments in Barcelona for this great deliverance. On the following morning the English flag was flying on the ramparts of Monjuich. The genius and energy of one man had supplied the place of forty battalions.

At midnight Peterborough had called out the Prince of Hesse, with whom he had not for some time been on speaking terms, "I have resolved, sir," said the Earl, "to attempt an assault; you may accompany us, if you think fit, and see whether I and my men deserve what you have been pleased to say of us." The Prince was startled. The attempt, he said, was hopeless; but he was ready to take his share; and, without further discussion, he called for his horse.

Fifteen hundred English soldiers were assembled under the Earl. A thousand more had been posted as a body of reserve, at a neighbouring convent, under the command of Stanhope. After a winding march along the foot of the hills, Peterborough and his little army reached the walls of Monjuich. There they halted till daybreak. As soon as they were descried, the enemy advanced into the outer ditch to meet them. This was the event on which Peterborough had reckoned, and for which his men were prepared. The English received the fire, rushed forward, leaped into the ditch, put the Spaniards to flight, and entered the works together with the fugitives. Before the garrison had recovered from their first surprise, the Earl was master of the outworks, had taken several pieces of cannon, and had thrown up a breastwork

to defend his men. He then sent off for Stanhope's reserve. While he was waiting for this reinforcement, news arrived that three thousand men were marching from Barcelona towards Monjuich. He instantly rode out to take a view of them; but no sooner had he left his troops than they were seized with a panic. Their situation was indeed full of danger; they had been brought into Monjuich, they scarcely knew how; their numbers were small; their general was gone: their hearts failed them, and they were proceeding to evacuate the fort. Peterborough received information of these occurrences in time to stop the retreat. He galloped up to the fugitives, addressed a few words to them, and put himself at their head. The sound of his voice and the sight of his face restored all their courage, and they marched back to their former position.

The Prince of Hesse had fallen in the confusion of the assault; but everything else went well. Stanhope arrived; the detachment which had marched out of Barcelona retreated; the heavy cannon were disembarked, and brought to bear on the inner fortifications of Monjuich, which speedily fell. Peterborough, with his usual generosity, rescued the Spanish soldiers from the ferocity of his victorious army, and paid the last honours with great pomp to his rival the Prince of Hesse.

The reduction of Monjuich was the first of a series of brilliant exploits. Barcelona fell; and Peterborough had the glory of taking, with a handful of men, one of the largest and strongest towns of Europe. He had also the glory, not less dear to his chivalrous temper, of saving the life and honour of the beautiful

Duchess of Popoli, whom he met flying with dishevelled hair from the fury of the soldiers. He availed himself dexterously of the jealousy with which the Catalonians regarded the inhabitants of Castile. He guaranteed to the province in the capital of which he was now quartered all its ancient rights and liberties, and thus succeeded in attaching the population to the Austrian cause.

The open country now declared in favour of Charles. Tarragona, Tortosa, Gerona, Lerida, San Mateo, threw open their gates. The Spanish Government sent the Count of Las Torres with seven thousand men to reduce San Mateo. The Earl of Peterborough, with only twelve hundred men, raised the siege. His officers advised him to be content with this extraordinary success. Charles urged him to return to Barcelona; but no remonstrances could stop such a spirit in the midst of such a career. It was the depth of winter. The country was mountainous. The roads were almost impassable. The men were ill-clothed. The horses were knocked up. The retreating army was far more numerous than the pursuing army. But difficulties and dangers vanished before the energy of Peterborough. He pushed on, driving Las Torres before him. Nules surrendered to the mere terror of his name; and, on the fourth of February, 1706 he arrived in triumph at Valencia. There he learned that a body of four thousand men was on the march to join Las Torres. He set out at dead of night from Valencia, passed the Xucar, came unexpectedly on the encampment of the enemy, and slaughtered, dispersed, or took the whole reinforcement. The

Valencians could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the prisoners brought in.

In the meantime the Courts of Madrid and Versailles, exasperated and alarmed by the fall of Barcelona and by the revolt of the surrounding country, determined to make a great effort. A large army, nominally commanded by Philip, but really under the orders of Marshal Tesse, entered Catalonia. A fleet under the Count of Toulouse, one of the natural children of Lewis the Fourteenth, appeared before the port of Barcelona. The city was attacked at once by sea and land. The person of the Archduke was in considerable danger. Peterborough, at the head of about three thousand men, marched with great rapidity from Valencia. To give battle, with so small a force, to a great regular army under the conduct of a Marshal of France, would have been madness. The Earl therefore made war after the fashion of the Minas and Empecinados of our own time. He took his post on the neighbouring mountains, harassed the enemy with incessant alarms, cut off their stragglers, intercepted their communications with the interior, and introduced supplies, both of men and provisions, into the town. He saw, however, that the only hope of the besieged was on the side of the sea. His commission from the British Government gave him supreme power, not only over the army, but, whenever he should be actually on board, over the navy also. He put out to sea at night in an open boat, without communicating his design to any person. He was picked up several leagues from the shore, by one of the ships of the

English squadron. As soon as he was on board, he announced himself as first in command, and sent a pinnace with his orders to the Admiral. Had these orders been given a few hours earlier, it is probable that the whole French fleet would have been taken. As it was, the Count of Toulouse put out to sea. The port was open. The town was relieved. On the following night the enemy raised the siege and retreated to Roussillon. Peterborough returned to Valencia, a place which he preferred to every other in Spain; and Philip, who had been some weeks absent from his wife, could endure the misery of separation no longer, and flew to rejoin her at Madrid.

At Madrid, however, it was impossible for him or for her to remain. The splendid success which Peterborough had obtained on the eastern coast of the Peninsula had inspired the sluggish Galway with emulation. He advanced into the heart of Spain. Berwick retreated. Alcantara, Ciudad Rodrigo, and Salamanca fell, and the conquerors marched towards the capital.

Philip was earnestly pressed by his advisers to remove the seat of government to Burgos. The advance guard of the allied army was already seen on the heights above Madrid. It was known that the main body was at hand. The unfortunate Prince fled with his Queen and his household. The royal wanderers, after travelling eight days on bad roads, under a burning sun, and sleeping eight nights in miserable hovels, one of which fell down and nearly crushed them both to death, reached the metropolis of Old Castile. In the meantime the invaders had entered Madrid in

triumph, and had proclaimed the Archduke in the streets of the imperial city. Arragon, ever jealous of the Castilian ascendancy, followed the example of Catalonia. Saragossa revolted without seeing an enemy. The governor whom Philip had set over Carthagea betrayed his trust, and surrendered to the Allies the best arsenal and the last ships which Spain possessed.

Toledo had been for some time the retreat of two ambitious, turbulent and vindictive intriguers, the Queen Dowager and Cardinal Porto Carrero. They had long been deadly enemies. They had led the adverse factions of Austria and France. Each had in turn domineered over the weak and disordered mind of the late King. At length the impostures of the priest had triumphed over the blandishments of the woman; Porto Carrero had remained victorious; and the Queen had fled in shame and mortification, from the Court where she had once been supreme. In her retirement she was soon joined by him whose arts had destroyed her influence. The Cardinal, having held power just long enough to convince all parties of his incompetency, had been dismissed to his See, cursing his own folly and the ingratitude of the House which he had served too well. Common interests and common enmities reconciled the fallen rivals. The Austrian troops were admitted into Toledo without opposition. The Queen Dowager flung off that mournful garb which the widow of a King of Spain wears through her whole life, and blazed forth in jewels. The Cardinal blessed the standards of the invaders in his magnificent cathedral, and lighted up his palace

in honour of the great deliverance. It seemed that the struggle had terminated in favour of the Archduke, and that nothing remained for Philip but a prompt flight into the dominions of his grandfather.

So judged those who were ignorant of the character and habits of the Spanish people. There is no country in Europe which it is so easy to overrun as Spain, there is no country in Europe which it is more difficult to conquer. Nothing can be more contemptible than the regular military resistance which Spain offers to an invader; nothing more formidable than the energy which she puts forth when her regular military resistance has been beaten down. Her armies have long borne too much resemblance to mobs; but her mobs have had, in an unusual degree, the spirit of armies. The soldier, as compared with other soldiers, is deficient in military qualities; but the peasant has as much of those qualities as the soldier. In no country have such strong fortresses been taken by surprise: in no country have unfortified towns made so furious and obstinate a resistance to great armies. War in Spain has, from the days of the Romans, had a character of its own; it is a fire which cannot be raked out; it burns fiercely under the embers; and long after it has, to all seeming, been extinguished, bursts forth more violently than ever. This was seen in the last war. Spain had no army which could have looked in the face an equal number of French or Prussian soldiers; but one day laid the Prussian monarchy in the dust; one day put the crown of France at the disposal of invaders. No Jena, no Waterloo, would have

enabled Joseph to reign in quiet at Madrid.

The conduct of the Castilians throughout the War of the Succession was most characteristic. With all the odds of number and situation on their side, they had been ignominiously beaten. All the European dependencies of the Spanish crown were lost. Catalonia, Arragon, and Valencia had acknowledged the Austrian Prince. Gibraltar had been taken by a few sailors; Barcelona stormed by a few dismounted dragoons. The invaders had penetrated into the centre of the Peninsula, and were quartered at Madrid and Toledo. While these events had been in progress, the nation had scarcely given a sign of life. The rich could hardly be prevailed on to give or to lend for the support of war; the troops had shown neither discipline nor courage; and now at last, when it seemed that all was lost, when it seemed that the most sanguine must relinquish all hope, the national spirit awoke, fierce, proud, and unconquerable. The people had been sluggish when the circumstances might well have inspired hope; they reserved all their energy for what appeared to be a season of despair. Castile, Leon, Andalusia, Estremadura, rose at once; every peasant procured a firelock or a pike; the Allies were masters only of the ground on which they trod. No soldier could wander a hundred yards from the main body of the invading army without imminent risk of being poniarded. The country through which the conquerors had passed to Madrid, and which, as they thought, they had subdued, was all in arms behind them. Their communications with Portugal were cut off. In the

meantime, money began, for the first time, to flow rapidly into the treasury of the fugitive King. "The day before yesterday," says the Princess Orsini, in a letter written at this time, "the priest of a village which contains only a hundred and twenty houses brought a hundred and twenty pistoles to the Queen. 'My flock,' said he, 'are ashamed to send you so little; but they beg you to believe that in this purse there are a hundred and twenty hearts faithful even to the death.' The good man wept as he spoke; and indeed we wept too. Yesterday another small village, in which there are only twenty houses, sent us fifty pistoles."

While the Castilians were everywhere arming in the cause of Philip, the Allies were serving that cause as effectually by their mismanagement. Galway staid at Madrid, where his soldiers indulged in such boundless licentiousness that one half of them were in the hospitals. Charles remained dawdling in Catalonia. Peterborough had taken Requena, and wished to march from Valencia towards Madrid, and to effect a junction with Galway; but the Archduke refused his consent to the plan. The indignant general remained accordingly in his favourite city, on the beautiful shores of the Mediterranean, reading Don Quixote, giving balls and suppers, trying in vain to get some good sport out of the Valencia bulls, and making love, not in vain, to the Valencian women.

At length the Archduke advanced into Castile, and ordered Peterborough to join him. But it was too late. Berwick had already compelled Galway to evacuate Madrid; and, when the

whole force of the Allies was collected at Guadalaxara, it was found to be decidedly inferior in numbers to that of the enemy.

Peterborough formed a plan for regaining possession of the capital. His plan was rejected by Charles. The patience of the sensitive and vainglorious hero was worn out. He had none of that serenity of temper which enabled Marlborough to act in perfect harmony with Eugene, and to endure the vexatious interference of the Dutch deputies. He demanded permission to leave the army. Permission was readily granted; and he set out for Italy. That there might be some pretext for his departure, he was commissioned by the Archduke to raise a loan in Genoa, on the credit of the revenues of Spain.

From that moment to the end of the campaign the tide of fortune ran strong against the Austrian cause. Berwick had placed his army between the Allies and the frontiers of Portugal. They retreated on Valencia, and arrived in that Province, leaving about ten thousand prisoners in the hands of the enemy.

In January 1707, Peterborough arrived at Valencia from Italy, no longer bearing a public character, but merely as a volunteer. His advice was asked, and it seems to have been most judicious. He gave it as his decided opinion that no offensive operations against Castile ought to be undertaken. It would be easy, he said, to defend Arragon, Catalonia, and Valencia, against Philip. The inhabitants of those parts of Spain were attached to the cause of the Archduke; and the armies of the House of Bourbon would be resisted by the whole population. In a short time the

enthusiasm of the Castilians might abate. The government of Philip might commit unpopular acts. Defeats in the Netherlands might compel Lewis to withdraw the succours which he had furnished to his grandson. Then would be the time to strike a decisive blow. This excellent advice was rejected. Peterborough, who had now received formal letters of recall from England, departed before the opening of the campaign; and with him departed the good fortune of the Allies. Scarcely any general had ever done so much with means so small. Scarcely any general had ever displayed equal originality and boldness. He possessed, in the highest degree, the art of conciliating those whom he had subdued. But he was not equally successful in winning the attachment of those with whom he acted. He was adored by the Catalonians and Valencians; but he was hated by the prince whom he had all but made a great king, and by the generals whose fortune and reputation were staked on the same venture with his own. The English Government could not understand him. He was so eccentric that they gave him no credit for the judgment which he really possessed. One day he took towns with horse-soldiers; then again he turned some hundreds of infantry into cavalry at a minute's notice. He obtained his political intelligence chiefly by means of love affairs, and filled his despatches with epigrams. The ministers thought that it would be highly impolitic to intrust the conduct of the Spanish war to so volatile and romantic a person. They therefore gave the command to Lord Galway, an experienced veteran, a man who was in war what Moliere's

doctors were in medicine, who thought it much more honourable to fail according to rule, than to succeed by innovation, and who would have been very much ashamed of himself if he had taken Monjuich by means so strange as those which Peterborough employed. This great commander conducted the campaign of 1707 in the most scientific manner. On the plain of Almanza he encountered the army of the Bourbons. He drew up his troops according to the methods prescribed by the best writers, and in a few hours lost eighteen thousand men, a hundred and twenty standards, all his baggage and all his artillery. Valencia and Arragon were instantly conquered by the French, and, at the close of the year, the mountainous province of Catalonia was the only part of Spain which still adhered to Charles.

“Do you remember, child,” says the foolish woman in the Spectator to her husband, “that the pigeon-house fell the very afternoon that our careless wench spilt the salt upon the table?” “Yes, my dear,” replies the gentleman, “and the next post brought us an account of the battle of Almanza.” The approach of disaster in Spain had been for some time indicated by omens much clearer than the mishap of the salt-cellar; an ungrateful prince, an undisciplined army, a divided council, envy triumphant over merit, a man of genius recalled, a pedant and a sluggard intrusted with supreme command. The battle of Almanza decided the fate of Spain. The loss was such as Marlborough or Eugene could scarcely have retrieved, and was certainly not to be retrieved by Stanhope and Staremberg.

Stanhope, who took the command of the English army in Catalonia, was a man of respectable abilities, both in military and civil affairs, but fitter, we conceive, for a second than for a first place. Lord Mahon, with his usual candour, tells us, what we believe was not known before, that his ancestor's most distinguished exploit, the conquest of Minorca, was suggested by Marlborough. Staremberg, a methodical tactician of the German school, was sent by the emperor to command in Spain. Two languid campaigns followed, during which neither of the hostile armies did anything memorable, but during which both were nearly starved.

At length, in 1710, the chiefs of the Allied forces resolved to venture on bolder measures. They began the campaign with a daring move, pushed into Arragon, defeated the troops of Philip at Almenara, defeated them again at Saragossa, and advanced to Madrid. The King was again a fugitive. The Castilians sprang to arms with the same enthusiasm which they had displayed in 1706. The conquerors found the capital a desert. The people shut themselves up in their houses, and refused to pay any mark of respect to the Austrian prince. It was necessary to hire a few children to shout before him in the streets. Meanwhile, the Court of Philip at Valladolid was thronged by nobles and prelates. Thirty thousand people followed their King from Madrid to his new residence. Women of rank, rather than remain behind, performed the journey on foot. The peasants enlisted by thousands. Money, arms, and provisions, were supplied in

abundance by the zeal of the people. The country round Madrid was infested by small parties of irregular horse. The Allies could not send off a despatch to Arragon, or introduce a supply of provisions into the capital. It was unsafe for the Archduke to hunt in the immediate vicinity of the palace which he occupied.

The wish of Stanhope was to winter in Castile. But he stood alone in the council of war; and, indeed it is not easy to understand how the Allies could have maintained themselves, through so unpropitious a season, in the midst of so hostile a population. Charles, whose personal safety was the first object of the generals, was sent with an escort of cavalry to Catalonia in November; and in December the army commenced its retreat towards Arragon.

But the Allies had to do with a master-spirit. The King of France had lately sent the Duke of Vendome to command in Spain. This man was distinguished by the filthiness of his person, by the brutality of his demeanour, by the gross buffoonery of his conversation, and by the impudence with which he abandoned himself to the most nauseous of all vices. His sluggishness was almost incredible. Even when engaged in a campaign, he often passed whole days in his bed. His strange torpidity had been the cause of some of the most serious disasters which the armies of the House of Bourbon had sustained. But when he was roused by any great emergency, his resources, his energy, and his presence of mind, were such as had been found in no French general since the death of Luxembourg.

At this crisis, Vendome was all himself. He set out from Talavera with his troops, and pursued the retreating army of the Allies with a speed perhaps never equalled, in such a season, and in such a country. He marched night and day. He swam, at the head of his cavalry, the flooded stream of Henares, and, in a few days, overtook Stanhope, who was at Brihuega with the left wing of the Allied army. "Nobody with me," says the English general, "imagined that they had any foot within some days' march of us and our misfortune is owing to the incredible diligence which their army made." Stanhope had but just time to send off a messenger to the centre of the army, which was some leagues from Brihuega, before Vendome was upon him. The town was invested on every side. The walls were battered with cannon. A mine was sprung under one of the gates. The English kept up a terrible fire till their powder was spent. They then fought desperately with the bayonet against overwhelming odds. They burned the houses which the assailants had taken. But all was to no purpose. The British general saw that resistance could produce only a useless carnage. He concluded a capitulation; and his gallant little army became prisoners of war on honourable terms.

Scarcely had Vendome signed the capitulation, when he learned that Staremberg was marching to the relief of Stanhope. Preparations were instantly made for a general action. On the day following that on which the English had delivered up their arms, was fought the obstinate and bloody fight of Villa Viciosa.

Staremborg remained master of the field. Vendome reaped all the fruits of the battle. The Allies spiked their cannon, and retired towards Arragon. But even in Arragon they found no place to rest. Vendome was behind them. The guerilla parties were around them. They fled to Catalonia; but Catalonia was invaded by a French army from Roussillon. At length the Austrian general, with six thousand harassed and dispirited men, the remains of a great and victorious army, took refuge in Barcelona, almost the only place in Spain which still recognised the authority of Charles.

Philip was now much safer at Madrid than his grandfather at Paris. All hope of conquering Spain in Spain was at an end. But in other quarters the House of Bourbon was reduced to the last extremity. The French armies had undergone a series of defeats in Germany, in Italy, and in the Netherlands. An immense force, flushed with victory, and commanded by the greatest generals of the age, was on the borders of France. Lewis had been forced to humble himself before the conquerors. He had even offered to abandon the cause of his grandson; and his offer had been rejected. But a great turn in affairs was approaching.

The English administration which had commenced the war against the House of Bourbon was an administration composed of Tories. But the war was a Whig war. It was the favourite scheme of William, the Whig King. Lewis had provoked it by recognising, as sovereign of England, a prince peculiarly hateful to the Whigs. It had placed England in a position of

marked hostility to that power from which alone the Pretender could expect efficient succour. It had joined England in the closest union to a Protestant and republican State, to a State which had assisted in bringing about the Revolution, and which was willing to guarantee the execution of the Act of Settlement. Marlborough and Godolphin found that they were more zealously supported by their old opponents than by their old associates. Those ministers who were zealous for the war were gradually converted to Whiggism. The rest dropped off, and were succeeded by Whigs. Cowper became Chancellor. Sunderland, in spite of the very just antipathy of Anne, was made Secretary of State. On the death of the Prince of Denmark a more extensive change took place. Wharton became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Somers, President of the Council. At length the administration was wholly in the hands of the Low Church party.

In the year 1710 a violent change took place. The Queen had always been a Tory at heart. Her religious feelings were all on the side of the Established Church. Her family feelings pleaded in favour of her exiled brother. Her selfish feelings disposed her to favour the zealots of prerogative. The affection which she felt for the Duchess of Marlborough was the great security of the Whigs. That affection had at length turned to deadly aversion. While the great party which had long swayed the destinies of Europe was undermined by bedchamber women at St. James's, a violent storm gathered in the country. A foolish parson had preached

a foolish sermon against the principles of the Revolution. The wisest members of the Government were for letting the man alone. But Godolphin, inflamed with all the zeal of a new-made Whig, and exasperated by a nickname which was applied to him in this unfortunate discourse, insisted that the preacher should be impeached. The exhortations of the mild and sagacious Somers were disregarded. The impeachment was brought; the doctor was convicted; and the accusers were ruined. The clergy came to the rescue of the persecuted clergyman. The country gentlemen came to the rescue of the clergy. A display of Tory feelings, such as England had not witnessed since the closing years of Charles the Second's reign, appalled the ministers and gave boldness to the Queen. She turned out the Whigs, called Harley and St. John to power, and dissolved the Parliament. The elections went strongly against the late Government. Stanhope, who had in his absence, been put in nomination for Westminster, was defeated by a Tory candidate. The new ministers, finding themselves masters of the new Parliament, were induced by the strongest motives to conclude a peace with France. The whole system of alliance in which the country was engaged was a Whig system. The general by whom the English armies had constantly been led to victory, and for whom it was impossible to find a substitute, was now whatever he might formerly have been, a Whig general. If Marlborough were discarded it was probable that some great disaster would follow. Yet if he were to retain his command, every great action which he might perform would

raise the credit of the party in opposition.

A peace was therefore concluded between England and the Princes of the House of Bourbon. Of that peace Lord Mahon speaks in terms of the severest reprehension. He is, indeed, an excellent Whig of the time of the first Lord Stanhope. "I cannot but pause for a moment," says he, "to observe how much the course of a century has inverted the meaning of our party nicknames, how much a modern Tory resembles a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, and a Tory of Queen Anne's reign a modern Whig."

We grant one half of Lord Mahon's proposition: from the other half we altogether dissent. We allow that a modern Tory resembles, in many things, a Whig of Queen Anne's reign. It is natural that such should be the case. The worst things of one age often resemble the best things of another. A modern shopkeeper's house is as well furnished as the house of a considerable merchant in Anne's reign. Very plain people now wear finer cloth than Beau Fielding or Beau Edgeworth could have procured in Queen Anne's reign. We would rather trust to the apothecary of a modern village than to the physician of a large town in Anne's reign. A modern boarding-school miss could tell the most learned professor of Anne's reign some things in geography, astronomy, and chemistry, which would surprise him.

The science of government is an experimental science; and therefore it is, like all other experimental sciences, a progressive

science. Lord Mahon would have been a very good Whig in the days of Harley. But Harley, whom Lord Mahon censures so severely, was very Whiggish when compared even with Clarendon; and Clarendon was quite a democrat when compared with Lord Burleigh. If Lord Mahon lives, as we hope he will, fifty years longer, we have no doubt that, as he now boasts of the resemblance which the Tories of our time bear to the Whigs of the Revolution, he will then boast of the resemblance borne by the Tories of 1882 to those immortal patriots, the Whigs of the Reform Bill.

Society, we believe, is constantly advancing in knowledge. The tail is now where the head was some generations ago. But the head and the tail still keep their distance. A nurse of this century is as wise as a justice of the quorum and custalorum in Shallow's time. The wooden spoon of this year would puzzle a senior wrangler of the reign of George the Second. A boy from the National School reads and spells better than half the knights of the shire in the October Club. But there is still as wide a difference as ever between justices and nurses, senior wranglers and wooden spoons, members of Parliament and children at charity schools. In the same way, though a Tory may now be very like what a Whig was a hundred and twenty years ago, the Whig is as much in advance of the Tory as ever. The stag, in the Treatise on the Bathos, who "feared his hind feet would o'ertake the fore," was not more mistaken than Lord Mahon, if he thinks that he has really come up with the Whigs. The absolute position of the

parties has been altered; the relative position remains unchanged. Through the whole of that great movement, which began before these party-names existed, and which will continue after they have become obsolete, through the whole of that great movement of which the Charter of John, the institution of the House of Commons, the extinction of Villanage, the separation from the see of Rome, the expulsion of the Stuarts, the reform of the Representative System, are successive stages, there have been, under some name or other, two sets of men, those who were before their age, and those who were behind it, those who were the wisest among their contemporaries, and those who gloried in being no wiser than their great-grandfathers. It is dreadful to think, that, in due time, the last of those who straggle in the rear of the great march will occupy the place now occupied by the advanced guard. The Tory Parliament of 1710 would have passed for a most liberal Parliament in the days of Elizabeth; and there are at present few members of the Conservative Club who would not have been fully qualified to sit with Halifax and Somers at the Kit-cat.

Though, therefore, we admit that a modern Tory bears some resemblance to a Whig of Queen Anne's reign, we can by no means admit that a Tory of Anne's reign resembled a modern Whig. Have the modern Whigs passed laws for the purpose of closing the entrance of the House of Commons against the new interests created by trade? Do the modern Whigs hold the doctrine of divine right? Have the modern Whigs laboured

to exclude all Dissenters from office and power? The modern Whigs are, indeed, at the present moment, like the Tories of 1712, desirous of peace, and of close union with France. But is there no difference between the France of 1712 and the France of 1832? Is France now the stronghold of the “Popish tyranny” and the “arbitrary power” against which our ancestors fought and prayed? Lord Mahon will find, we think, that his parallel is, in all essential circumstances, as incorrect as that which Fluellen drew between Macedon and Monmouth, or as that which an ingenious Tory lately discovered between Archbishop Williams and Archbishop Vernon.

We agree with Lord Mahon in thinking highly of the Whigs of Queen Anne’s reign. But that part of their conduct which he selects for especial praise is precisely the part which we think most objectionable. We revere them as the great champions of political and of intellectual liberty. It is true that, when raised to power, they were not exempt from the faults which power naturally engenders. It is true that they were men born in the seventeenth century, and that they were therefore ignorant of many truths which are familiar to the men of the nineteenth century. But they were, what the reformers of the Church were before them, and what the reformers of the House of Commons have been since, the leaders of their species in a right direction. It is true that they did not allow to political discussion that latitude which to us appears reasonable and safe; but to them we owe the removal of the Censorship. It is true that they did not carry the

principle of religious liberty to its full extent; but to them we owe the Toleration Act.

Though, however, we think that the Whigs of Anne's reign were, as a body, far superior in wisdom and public virtue to their contemporaries the Tories, we by no means hold ourselves bound to defend all the measures of our favourite party. A life of action, if it is to be useful, must be a life of compromise. But speculation admits of no compromise. A public man is often under the necessity of consenting to measures which he dislikes, lest he should endanger the success of measures which he thinks of vital importance. But the historian lies under no such necessity. On the contrary, it is one of his most sacred duties to point out clearly the errors of those whose general conduct he admires.

It seems to us, then, that, on the great question which divided England during the last four years of Anne's reign, the Tories were in the right, and the Whigs in the wrong. That question was, whether England ought to conclude peace without exacting from Philip a resignation of the Spanish crown?

No parliamentary struggle, from the time of the Exclusion Bill to the time of the Reform Bill, has been so violent as that which took place between the authors of the Treaty of Utrecht and the War Party. The Commons were for peace; the Lords were for vigorous hostilities. The Queen was compelled to choose which of her two highest prerogatives she would exercise, whether she would create Peers, or dissolve the Parliament.

The ties of party superseded the ties of neighbourhood and of

blood. The members of the hostile factions would scarcely speak to each other, or bow to each other. The women appeared at the theatres bearing the badges of their political sect. The schism extended to the most remote counties of England. Talents, such as had seldom before been displayed in political controversy, were enlisted in the service of the hostile parties. On one side was Steele, gay, lively, drunk with animal spirits and with factious animosity, and Addison, with his polished satire, his inexhaustible fertility of fancy, and his graceful simplicity of style. In the front of the opposite ranks appeared a darker and fiercer spirit, the apostate politician, the ribald priest, the perjured lover, a heart burning with hatred against the whole human race, a mind richly stored with images from the dung-hill and the lazar-house. The ministers triumphed, and the peace was concluded. Then came the reaction. A new sovereign ascended the throne. The Whigs enjoyed the confidence of the King and of the Parliament. The unjust severity with which the Tories had treated Marlborough and Walpole was more than retaliated. Harley and Prior were thrown into prison; Bolingbroke and Ormond were compelled to take refuge in a foreign land. The wounds inflicted in this desperate conflict continued to rankle for many years. It was long before the members of either party could discuss the question of the peace of Utrecht with calmness and impartiality. That the Whig ministers had sold us to the Dutch; that the Tory ministers had sold us to the French; that the war had been carried on only to fill the pockets of Marlborough;

that the peace had been concluded only to facilitate the return of the Pretender; these imputations and many others, utterly ungrounded, or grossly exaggerated, were hurled backward and forward by the political disputants of the last century. In our time the question may be discussed without irritation. We will state, as concisely as possible, the reasons which have led us to the conclusion at which we have arrived.

The dangers which were to be apprehended from the peace were two; first, the danger that Philip might be induced, by feelings of private affection, to act in strict concert with the elder branch of his house, to favour the French trade at the expense of England, and to side with the French Government in future wars; secondly, the danger that the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy might become extinct, that Philip might become heir by blood to the French crown, and that thus two great monarchies might be united under one sovereign.

The first danger appears to us altogether chimerical. Family affection has seldom produced much effect on the policy of princes. The state of Europe at the time of the peace of Utrecht proved that in politics the ties of interest are much stronger than those of consanguinity or affinity. The Elector of Bavaria had been driven from his dominions by his father-in-law; Victor Amadeus was in arms against his sons-in-law; Anne was seated on a throne from which she had assisted to push a most indulgent father. It is true that Philip had been accustomed from childhood to regard his grandfather with profound veneration. It was

probable, therefore, that the influence of Lewis at Madrid would be very great. But Lewis was more than seventy years old; he could not live long; his heir was an infant in the cradle. There was surely no reason to think that the policy of the King of Spain would be swayed by his regard for a nephew whom he had never seen.

In fact, soon after the peace, the two branches of the House of Bourbon began to quarrel. A close alliance was formed between Philip and Charles, lately competitors for the Castilian crown. A Spanish princess, betrothed to the King of France, was sent back in the most insulting manner to her native country; and a decree was put forth by the Court of Madrid commanding every Frenchman to leave Spain. It is true that, fifty years after the peace of Utrecht, an alliance of peculiar strictness was formed between the French and Spanish Governments. But both Governments were actuated on that occasion, not by domestic affection, but by common interests and common enmities. Their compact, though called the Family Compact, was as purely a political compact as the league of Cambrai or the league of Pilnitz.

The second danger was that Philip might have succeeded to the crown of his native country. This did not happen; but it might have happened; and at one time it seemed very likely to happen. A sickly child alone stood between the King of Spain and the heritage of Lewis the Fourteenth. Philip, it is true, solemnly renounced his claim to the French crown. But the manner in

which he had obtained possession of the Spanish crown had proved the inefficacy of such renunciations. The French lawyers declared Philip's renunciation null, as being inconsistent with the fundamental law of the realm. The French people would probably have sided with him whom they would have considered as the rightful heir. Saint Simon, though much less zealous for hereditary monarchy than most of his countrymen, and though strongly attached to the Regent, declared, in the presence of that prince, that he never would support the claims of the House of Orleans against those of the King of Spain. "If such," he said, "be my feelings, what must be the feelings of others?" Bolingbroke, it is certain, was fully convinced that the renunciation was worth no more than the paper on which it was written, and demanded it only for the purpose of blinding the English Parliament and people.

Yet, though it was at one time probable that the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy would become extinct, and though it is almost certain that, if the posterity of the Duke of Burgundy had become extinct, Philip would have successfully preferred his claim to the crown of France, we still defend the principle of the Treaty of Utrecht. In the first place, Charles had, soon after the battle of Villa-Viciosa, inherited, by the death of his elder brother, all the dominions of the House of Austria. Surely, if to these dominions he had added the whole monarchy of Spain, the balance of power would have been seriously endangered. The union of the Austrian dominions and Spain would not, it is true,

have been so alarming an event as the union of France and Spain. But Charles was actually Emperor. Philip was not, and never might be, King of France. The certainty of the less evil might well be set against the chance of the greater evil.

But, in fact, we do not believe that Spain would long have remained under the government either of an Emperor or of a King of France. The character of the Spanish people was a better security to the nations of Europe than any will, any instrument of renunciation, or any treaty. The same energy which the people of Castile had put forth when Madrid was occupied by the Allied armies, they would have again put forth as soon as it appeared that their country was about to become a French province. Though they were no longer masters abroad, they were by no means disposed to see foreigners set over them at home. If Philip had attempted to govern Spain by mandates from Versailles, a second Grand Alliance would easily have effected what the first had failed to accomplish. The Spanish nation would have rallied against him as zealously as it had before rallied round him. And of this he seems to have been fully aware. For many years the favourite hope of his heart was that he might ascend the throne of his grandfather; but he seems never to have thought it possible that he could reign at once in the country of his adoption and in the country of his birth.

These were the dangers of the peace; and they seem to us to be of no very formidable kind. Against these dangers are to be set off the evils of war and the risk of failure. The evils of the

war, the waste of life, the suspension of trade, the expenditure of wealth, the accumulation of debt, require no illustration. The chances of failure it is difficult at this distance of time to calculate with accuracy. But we think that an estimate approximating to the truth may, without much difficulty, be formed. The Allies had been victorious in Germany, Italy, and Flanders. It was by no means improbable that they might fight their way into the very heart of France. But at no time since the commencement of the war had their prospects been so dark in that country which was the very object of the struggle. In Spain they held only a few square leagues. The temper of the great majority of the nation was decidedly hostile to them. If they had persisted, if they had obtained success equal to their highest expectations, if they had gained a series of victories as splendid as those of Blenheim and Ramilies, if Paris had fallen, if Lewis had been a prisoner, we still doubt whether they would have accomplished their object. They would still have had to carry on interminable hostilities against the whole population of a country which affords peculiar facilities to irregular warfare, and in which invading armies suffer more from famine than from the sword.

We are, therefore, for the peace of Utrecht. We are indeed no admirers of the statesmen who concluded that peace. Harley, we believe, was a solemn trifler, St. John a brilliant knave. The great body of their followers consisted of the country clergy and the country gentry; two classes of men who were then inferior in intelligence to decent shopkeepers or farmers of our time. Parson

Barnabas, Parson Trulliber, Sir Wilful Witwould, Sir Francis Wronghead, Squire Western, Squire Sullen, such were the people who composed the main strength of the Tory party during the sixty years which followed the Revolution. It is true that the means by which the Tories came into power in 1710 were most disreputable. It is true that the manner in which they used their power was often unjust and cruel. It is true that, in order to bring about their favourite project of peace, they resorted to slander and deception, without the slightest scruple. It is true that they passed off on the British nation a renunciation which they knew to be invalid. It is true that they gave up the Catalans to the vengeance of Philip, in a manner inconsistent with humanity and national honour. But on the great question of Peace or War, we cannot but think that, though their motives may have been selfish and malevolent, their decision was beneficial to the State.

But we have already exceeded our limits. It remains only for us to bid Lord Mahon heartily farewell, and to assure him that, whatever dislike we may feel for his political opinions, we shall always meet him with pleasure on the neutral ground of literature.

FREDERIC THE GREAT

(April 1842) *Frederic the Great and his Times. Edited, with an Introduction, By THOMAS CAMPBELL, Esq. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1842.*

THIS work, which has the high honour of being introduced to the world by the author of *Lochiel* and *Hohenlinden*, is not wholly unworthy of so distinguished a chaperon. It professes, indeed, to be no more than a compilation; but it is an exceedingly amusing compilation, and we shall be glad to have more of it. The narrative comes down at present only to the commencement of the Seven Years' War, and therefore does not comprise the most interesting portion of Frederic's reign.

It may not be unacceptable to our readers that we should take this opportunity of presenting them with a slight sketch of the life of the greatest king that has, in modern times, succeeded by right of birth to a throne. It may, we fear, be impossible to compress so long and eventful a story within the limits which we must prescribe to ourselves. Should we be compelled to break off, we may perhaps, when the continuation of this work appears, return to the subject.

The Prussian monarchy, the youngest of the great European states, but in population and revenue the fifth among them, and in art, science, and civilisation entitled to the third, if not to the second place, sprang from a humble origin. About the beginning

of the fifteenth century, the marquisate of Brandenburg was bestowed by the Emperor Sigismund on the noble family of Hohenzollern. In the sixteenth century that family embraced the Lutheran doctrines. It obtained from the King of Poland, early in the seventeenth century, the investiture of the duchy of Prussia. Even after this accession of territory, the chiefs of the house of Hohenzollern hardly ranked with the Electors of Saxony and Bavaria. The soil of Brandenburg was for the most part sterile. Even round Berlin, the capital of the province, and round Potsdam, the favourite residence of the Margraves, the country was a desert. In some places, the deep sand could with difficulty be forced by assiduous tillage to yield thin crops of rye and oats. In other places, the ancient forests, which the conquerors of the Roman Empire had descended on the Danube, remained untouched by the hand of man. Where the soil was rich it was generally marshy, and its insalubrity repelled the cultivators whom its fertility attracted. Frederic William, called the Great Elector, was the prince to whose policy his successors have agreed to ascribe their greatness. He acquired by the peace of Westphalia several valuable possessions, and among them the rich city and district of Magdeburg; and he left to his son Frederic a principality as considerable as any which was not called a kingdom.

Frederic aspired to the style of royalty. Ostentatious and profuse, negligent of his true interests and of his high duties, insatiably eager for frivolous distinctions, he added nothing to

the real weight of the state which he governed; perhaps he transmitted his inheritance to his children impaired rather than augmented in value; but he succeeded in gaining the great object of his life, the title of King. In the year 1700 he assumed this new dignity. He had on that occasion to undergo all the mortifications which fall to the lot of ambitious upstarts. Compared with the other crowned heads of Europe, he made a figure resembling that which a Nabob or a Commissary, who had bought a title, would make in the Company of Peers whose ancestors had been attainted for treason against the Plantagenets. The envy of the class which Frederic quitted, and the civil scorn of the class into which he intruded himself, were marked in very significant ways. The Elector of Saxony at first refused to acknowledge the new Majesty. Lewis the Fourteenth looked down on his brother King with an air not unlike that with which the Count in Moliere's play regards Monsieur Jourdain, just fresh from the mummery of being made a gentleman. Austria exacted large sacrifices in return for her recognition, and at last gave it ungraciously.

Frederic was succeeded by his son, Frederic William, a prince who must be allowed to have possessed some talents for administration, but whose character was disfigured by odious vices, and whose eccentricities were such as had never before been seen out of a madhouse. He was exact and diligent in the transacting of business; and he was the first who formed the design of obtaining for Prussia a place among the European powers, altogether out of proportion to her extent and population

by means of a strong military organisation. Strict economy enabled him to keep up a peace establishment of sixty thousand troops. These troops were disciplined in such a manner, that, placed beside them, the household regiments of Versailles and St. James's would have appeared an awkward squad. The master of such a force could not but be regarded by all his neighbours as a formidable enemy and a valuable ally.

But the mind of Frederic William was so ill regulated, that all his inclinations became passions, and all his passions partook of the character of moral and intellectual disease. His parsimony degenerated into sordid avarice. His taste for military pomp and order became a mania, like that of a Dutch burgomaster for tulips, or that of a member of the Roxburghe Club for Caxtons. While the envoys of the Court of Berlin were in a state of such squalid poverty as moved the laughter of foreign capitals, while the food placed before the princes and princesses of the blood-royal of Prussia was too scanty to appease hunger, and so bad that even hunger loathed it, no price was thought too extravagant for tall recruits. The ambition of the King was to form a brigade of giants, and every country was ransacked by his agents for men above the ordinary stature. These researches were not confined to Europe. No head that towered above the crowd in the bazaars of Aleppo, of Cairo, or of Surat, could escape the crimps of Frederic William. One Irishman more than seven feet high, who was picked up in London by the Prussian ambassador, received a bounty of near thirteen hundred pounds sterling, very much more

than the ambassador's salary. This extravagance was the more absurd, because a stout youth of five feet eight, who might have been procured for a few dollars, would in all probability have been a much more valuable soldier. But to Frederic William, this huge Irishman was what a brass Otho, or a Vinegar Bible, is to a collector of a different kind.

It is remarkable, that though the main end of Frederic William's administration was to have a great military force, though his reign forms an important epoch in the history of military discipline, and though his dominant passion was the love of military display he was yet one of the most pacific of princes. We are afraid that his aversion to war was not the effect of humanity, but was merely one of his thousand whims. His feeling about his troops seems to have resembled a miser's feeling about his money. He loved to collect them, to count them, to see them increase; but he could not find it in his heart to break in upon the precious hoard. He looked forward to some future time when his Patagonian battalions were to drive hostile infantry before them like sheep; but this future time was always receding; and it is probable that, if his life had been prolonged thirty years, his superb army would never have seen any harder service than a sham fight in the fields near Berlin. But the great military means which he had collected were destined to be employed by a spirit far more daring and inventive than his own.

Frederic, surnamed the Great, son of Frederic William, was born in January 1712. It may safely be pronounced that he had

received from nature a strong and sharp understanding, and a rare firmness of temper and intensity of will. As to the other parts of his character, it is difficult to say whether they are to be ascribed to nature, or to the strange training which he underwent. The history of his boyhood is painfully interesting. Oliver Twist in the parish workhouse, Smike at Dotheboys Hall, were petted children when compared with this heir apparent of a crown. The nature of Frederic William was hard and bad, and the habit of exercising arbitrary power had made him frightfully savage. His rage constantly vented itself to right and left in curses and blows. When his Majesty took a walk, every human being fled before him, as if a tiger had broken loose from a menagerie. If he met a lady in the street, he gave her a kick, and told her to go home and mind her brats. If he saw a clergyman staring at the soldiers, he admonished the reverend gentleman to betake himself to study and prayer, and enforced this pious advice by a sound caning, administered on the spot. But it was in his own house that he was most unreasonable and ferocious. His palace was hell, and he the most execrable of fiends, a cross between Moloch and Puck. His son Frederic and his daughter Wilhelmina, afterwards Margravine of Bareuth, were in an especial manner objects of his aversion. His own mind was uncultivated. He despised literature. He hated infidels, papists, and metaphysicians, and did not very well understand in what they differed from each other. The business of life, according to him, was to drill and to be drilled. The recreations suited to a

prince, were to sit in a cloud of tobacco smoke, to sip Swedish beer between the puffs of the pipe, to play backgammon for three halfpence a rubber, to kill wild hogs, and to shoot partridges by the thousand. The Prince Royal showed little inclination either for the serious employments or for the amusements of his father. He shirked the duties of the parade; he detested the fume of tobacco; he had no taste either for backgammon or for field sports. He had an exquisite ear, and performed skilfully on the flute. His earliest instructors had been French refugees, and they had awakened in him a strong passion for French literature and French society. Frederic William regarded these tastes as effeminate and contemptible, and, by abuse and persecution, made them still stronger. Things became worse when the Prince Royal attained that time of life at which the great revolution in the human mind and body takes place. He was guilty of some youthful indiscretions, which no good and wise parent would regard with severity. At a later period he was accused, truly or falsely, of vices from which History averts her eyes, and which even Satire blushes to name, vices such that, to borrow the energetic language of Lord Keeper Coventry, "the depraved nature of man, which of itself carrieth man to all other sin, abhorreth them." But the offences of his youth were not characterised by any peculiar turpitude. They excited, however, transports of rage in the King, who hated all faults except those to which he was himself inclined, and who conceived that he made ample atonement to Heaven for his brutality, by holding

the softer passions in detestation. The Prince Royal, too, was not one of those who are content to take their religion on trust. He asked puzzling questions, and brought forward arguments which seemed to savour of something different from pure Lutheranism. The King suspected that his son was inclined to be a heretic of some sort or other, whether Calvinist or Atheist his Majesty did not very well know. The ordinary malignity of Frederic William was bad enough. He now thought malignity a part of his duty as a Christian man, and all the conscience that he had stimulated his hatred. The flute was broken: the French books were sent out of the palace: the Prince was kicked and cudgelled, and pulled by the hair. At dinner the plates were hurled at his head: sometimes he was restricted to bread and water: sometimes he was forced to swallow food so nauseous that he could not keep it on his stomach. Once his father knocked him down, dragged him along the floor to a window, and was with difficulty prevented from strangling him with the cord of the curtain. The Queen, for the crime of not wishing to see her son murdered, was subjected to the grossest indignities. The Princess Wilhelmina, who took her brother's part, was treated almost as ill as Mrs. Brownrigg's apprentices. Driven to despair, the unhappy youth tried to run away. Then the fury of the old tyrant rose to madness. The Prince was an officer in the army: his flight was therefore desertion; and, in the moral code of Frederic William, desertion was the highest of all crimes. "Desertion," says this royal theologian, in one of his half-crazy letters, "is from hell. It is a work of the children

of the Devil. No child of God could possibly be guilty of it." An accomplice of the Prince, in spite of the recommendation of a court martial, was mercilessly put to death. It seemed probable that the Prince himself would suffer the same fate. It was with difficulty that the intercession of the States of Holland, of the Kings of Sweden and Poland, and of the Emperor of Germany, saved the House of Brandenburg from the stain of an unnatural murder. After months of cruel suspense, Frederic learned that his life would be spared. He remained, however, long a prisoner; but he was not on that account to be pitied. He found in his gaolers a tenderness which he had never found in his father; his table was not sumptuous, but he had wholesome food in sufficient quantity to appease hunger: he could read the *Henriade* without being kicked, and could play on his flute without having it broken over his head.

When his confinement terminated he was a man. He had nearly completed his twenty-first year, and could scarcely be kept much longer under the restraints which had made his boyhood miserable. Suffering had matured his understanding, while it had hardened his heart and soured his temper. He had learnt self-command and dissimulation; he affected to conform to some of his father's views, and submissively accepted a wife, who was a wife only in name, from his father's hand. He also served with credit, though without any opportunity of acquiring brilliant distinction, under the command of Prince Eugene, during a campaign marked by no extraordinary events. He was now

permitted to keep a separate establishment, and was therefore able to indulge with caution his own tastes. Partly in order to conciliate the King, and partly, no doubt, from inclination, he gave up a portion of his time to military and political business, and thus gradually acquired such an aptitude for affairs as his most intimate associates were not aware that he possessed.

His favourite abode was at Rheinsberg, near the frontier which separates the Prussian dominions from the Duchy of Mecklenburg. Rheinsberg, is a fertile and smiling spot, in the midst of the sandy waste of the Marquisate. The mansion, surrounded by woods of oak and beech, looks out upon a spacious lake. There Frederic amused himself by laying out gardens in regular alleys and intricate mazes, by building obelisks, temples, and conservatories, and by collecting rare fruits and flowers. His retirement was enlivened by a few companions, among whom he seems to have preferred those who, by birth or extraction, were French. With these intimates he dined and supped well, drank freely, and amused himself sometimes with concerts, and sometimes with holding chapters of a fraternity which he called the Order of Bayard; but literature was his chief resource.

His education had been entirely French. The long ascendancy which Lewis the Fourteenth had enjoyed, and the eminent merit of the tragic and comic dramatists, of the satirists, and of the preachers who had flourished under that magnificent prince, had made the French language predominant in Europe. Even

in countries which had a national literature, and which could boast of names greater than those of Racine, of Moliere, and of Massillon, in the country of Dante, in the country of Cervantes, in the country of Shakspeare and Milton, the intellectual fashions of Paris had been to a great extent adopted. Germany had not yet produced a single masterpiece of poetry or eloquence. In Germany, therefore, the French taste reigned without rival and without limit. Every youth of rank was taught to speak and write French. That he should speak and write his own tongue with politeness, or even with accuracy and facility, was regarded as comparatively an unimportant object. Even Frederic William, with all his rugged Saxon prejudices, thought it necessary that his children should know French, and quite unnecessary that they should be well versed in German. The Latin was positively interdicted. "My son," his Majesty wrote, "shall not learn Latin; and, more than that, I will not suffer anybody even to mention such a thing to me." One of the preceptors ventured to read the Golden Bull in the original with the Prince Royal. Frederic William entered the room, and broke out in his usual kingly style.

"Rascal, what are you at there?"

"Please your Majesty," answered the preceptor, "I was explaining the Golden Bull to his Royal Highness."

"I'll Golden Bull you, you rascal!" roared the Majesty of Prussia. Up went the King's cane away ran the terrified instructor; and Frederic's classical studies ended for ever. He now and then affected to quote Latin sentences, and produced

such exquisitely Ciceronian phrases as these: “Stante pede morire”—“De gustibus non est disputandus,”—“Tot verbas tot spondera.” Of Italian, he had not enough to read a page of Metastasio with ease; and of the Spanish and English, he did not, as far as we are aware, understand a single word.

As the highest human compositions to which he had access were those of the French writers, it is not strange that his admiration for those writers should have been unbounded. His ambitious and eager temper early prompted him to imitate what he admired. The wish, perhaps, dearest to his heart was, that he might rank among the masters of French rhetoric and poetry. He wrote prose and verse as indefatigably as if he had been a starving hack of Cave or Osborn; but Nature, which had bestowed on him, in a large measure, the talents of a captain and of an administrator, had withheld from him those higher and rarer gifts, without which industry labours in vain to produce immortal eloquence and song. And, indeed, had he been blessed with more imagination, wit, and fertility of thought, than he appears to have had, he would still have been subject to one great disadvantage, which would, in all probability, have for ever prevented him from taking a high place among men of letters. He had not the full command of any language. There was no machine of thought which he could employ with perfect ease, confidence, and freedom. He had German enough to scold his servants, or to give the word of command to his grenadiers; but his grammar and pronunciation were extremely bad. He found it

difficult to make out the meaning even of the simplest German poetry. On one occasion a version of Racine's Iphigenie was read to him. He held the French original in his hand; but was forced to own that, even with such help, he could not understand the translation. Yet, though he had neglected his mother tongue in order to bestow all his attention on French, his French was, after all, the French of a foreigner. It was necessary for him to have always at his beck some men of letters from Paris to point out the solecisms and false rhymes of which, to the last, he was frequently guilty. Even had he possessed the poetic faculty, of which, as far as we can judge, he was utterly destitute, the want of a language would have prevented him from being a great poet. No noble work of imagination, as far as we recollect, was ever composed by any man, except in a dialect which he had learned without remembering how or when, and which he had spoken with perfect ease before he had ever analysed its structure. Romans of great abilities wrote Greek verses; but how many of those verses have deserved to live? Many men of eminent genius have, in modern times, written Latin poems; but, as far as we are aware, none of those poems, not even Milton's, can be ranked in the first class of art, or even very high in the second. It is not strange, therefore, that, in the French verses of Frederic, we can find nothing beyond the reach of any man of good parts and industry, nothing above the level of Newdigate and Seatonian poetry. His best pieces may perhaps rank with the worst in Dodsley's collection. In history, he succeeded better.

We do not, indeed, find, in any of his voluminous Memoirs, either deep reflection or vivid painting. But the narrative is distinguished by clearness, conciseness, good sense, and a certain air of truth and simplicity, which is singularly graceful in a man who, having done great things, sits down to relate them. On the whole, however, none of his writings are so agreeable to us as his Letters, particularly those which are written with earnestness, and are not embroidered with verses.

It is not strange that a young man devoted to literature, and acquainted only with the literature of France, should have looked with profound veneration on the genius of Voltaire. "A man who has never seen the sun," says Calderon, in one of his charming comedies, "cannot be blamed for thinking that no glory can exceed that of the moon. A man who has seen neither moon nor sun, cannot be blamed for talking of the unrivalled brightness of the morning star." Had Frederic been able to read Homer and Milton or even Virgil and Tasso, his admiration of the *Henriade* would prove that he was utterly destitute of the power of discerning what is excellent in art. Had he been familiar with Sophocles or Shakspeare, we should have expected him to appreciate *Zaire* more justly. Had he been able to study Thucydides and Tacitus in the original Greek and Latin, he would have known that there were heights in the eloquence of history far beyond the reach of the author of the *Life of Charles the Twelfth*. But the finest heroic poem, several of the most powerful tragedies, and the most brilliant and picturesque historical work

that Frederic had ever read, were Voltaire's. Such high and various excellence moved the young Prince almost to adoration. The opinions of Voltaire on religious and philosophical questions had not yet been fully exhibited to the public. At a later period, when an exile from his country, and at open war with the Church, he spoke out. But when Frederic was at Rheinsberg, Voltaire was still a courtier; and, though he could not always curb his petulant wit, he had as yet published nothing that could exclude him from Versailles, and little that a divine of the mild and generous school of Grotius and Tillotson might not read with pleasure. In the *Henriade*, in *Zaire*, and in *Alzire*, Christian piety is exhibited in the most amiable form; and, some years after the period of which we are writing, a Pope condescended to accept the dedication of Mahomet. The real sentiments of the poet, however, might be clearly perceived by a keen eye through the decent disguise with which he veiled them, and could not escape the sagacity of Frederic, who held similar opinions, and had been accustomed to practise similar dissimulation.

The Prince wrote to his idol in the style of a worshipper; and Voltaire replied with exquisite grace and address. A correspondence followed, which may be studied with advantage by those who wish to become proficient in the ignoble art of flattery. No man ever paid compliments better than Voltaire. His sweetest confectionery had always a delicate, yet stimulating flavour, which was delightful to palates wearied by the coarse preparations of inferior artists. It was only from his hand that so

much sugar could be swallowed without making the swallower sick. Copies of verses, writing-desks, trinkets of amber, were exchanged between the friends. Frederic confided his writings to Voltaire; and Voltaire applauded, as if Frederic had been Racine and Bossuet in one. One of his Royal Highness's performances was a refutation of Machiavelli. Voltaire undertook to convey it to the press. It was entitled the Anti-Machiavel, and was an edifying homily against rapacity, perfidy, arbitrary government, unjust war, in short, against almost everything for which its author is now remembered among men.

The old King uttered now and then a ferocious growl at the diversions of Rheinsberg. But his health was broken; his end was approaching; and his vigour was impaired. He had only one pleasure left, that of seeing tall soldiers. He could always be propitiated by a present of a grenadier of six feet four or six feet five; and such presents were from time to time judiciously offered by his son.

Early in the year 1740, Frederic William met death with a firmness and dignity worthy of a better and wiser man; and Frederic, who had just completed his twenty-eighth year, became King of Prussia. His character was little understood. That he had good abilities, indeed, no person who had talked with him, or corresponded with him, could doubt. But the easy Epicurean life which he had led, his love of good cookery and good wine, of music, of conversation, of light literature, led many to regard him as a sensual and intellectual voluptuary. His habit

of canting about moderation, peace, liberty, and the happiness which a good mind derives from the happiness of others, had imposed on some who should have known better. Those who thought best of him, expected a Telemachus after Fenelon's pattern. Others predicted the approach of a Medicean age, an age propitious to learning and art, and not unpropitious to pleasure. Nobody had the least suspicion that a tyrant of extraordinary military and political talents, of industry more extraordinary still, without fear, without faith, and without mercy, had ascended the throne.

The disappointment of Falstaff at his old boon-companion's coronation was not more bitter than that which awaited some of the inmates of Rheinsberg. They had long looked forward to the accession of their patron, as to the event from which their own prosperity and greatness was to date. They had at last reached the promised land, the land which they had figured to themselves as flowing with milk and honey; and they found it a desert. "No more of these fooleries," was the short, sharp admonition given by Frederic to one of them. It soon became plain that, in the most important points, the new sovereign bore a strong family likeness to his predecessor. There was indeed a wide difference between the father and the son as respected extent and vigour of intellect, speculative opinions, amusements, studies, outward demeanour. But the groundwork of the character was the same in both. To both were common the love of order, the love of business, the military taste, the parsimony, the imperious spirit,

the temper irritable even to ferocity, the pleasure in the pain and humiliation of others. But these propensities had in Frederic William partaken of the general unsoundness of his mind, and wore a very different aspect when found in company with the strong and cultivated understanding of his successor. Thus, for example, Frederic was as anxious as any prince could be about the efficiency of his army. But this anxiety never degenerated into a monomania, like that which led his father to pay fancy prices for giants. Frederic was as thrifty about money as any prince or any private man ought to be. But he did not conceive, like his father, that it was worth while to eat unwholesome cabbages for the purpose of saving four or five rixdollars in the year. Frederic was, we fear, as malevolent as his father; but Frederic's wit enabled him often to show his malevolence in ways more decent than those to which his father resorted, and to inflict misery and degradation by a taunt instead of a blow. Frederic, it is true, by no means relinquished his hereditary privilege of kicking and cudgelling. His practice, however, as to that matter, differed in some important respects from his father's. To Frederic William, the mere circumstance that any persons whatever, men, women, or children, Prussians or foreigners, were within reach of his toes and of his cane, appeared to be a sufficient reason for proceeding to belabour them. Frederic required provocation as well as vicinity; nor was he ever known to inflict this paternal species of correction on any but his born subjects; though on one occasion M. Thiebault had reason,

during a few seconds, to anticipate the high honour of being an exception to this general rule.

The character of Frederic was still very imperfectly understood either by his subjects or by his neighbours, when events occurred which exhibited it in a strong light. A few months after his accession died Charles the Sixth, Emperor of Germany, the last descendant, in the male line, of the House of Austria.

Charles left no son, and had, long before his death, relinquished all hopes of male issue. During the latter part of his life, his principal object had been to secure to his descendants in the female line the many crowns of the House of Hapsburg. With this view, he had promulgated a new law of succession, widely celebrated throughout Europe under the name of the Pragmatic Sanction. By virtue of this law, his daughter, the Archduchess Maria Theresa, wife of Francis of Lorraine, succeeded to the dominions of her ancestors.

No sovereign has ever taken possession of a throne by a clearer title. All the politics of the Austrian cabinet had, during twenty years, been directed to one single end, the settlement of the succession. From every person whose rights could be considered as injuriously affected, renunciations in the most solemn form had been obtained. The new law had been ratified by the Estates of all the kingdoms and principalities which made up the great Austrian monarchy. England, France, Spain, Russia, Poland, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, the Germanic body, had bound themselves by treaty to maintain the Pragmatic Sanction.

That instrument was placed under the protection of the public faith of the whole civilised world.

Even if no positive stipulations on this subject had existed, the arrangement was one which no good man would have been willing to disturb. It was a peaceable arrangement. It was an arrangement acceptable to the great population whose happiness was chiefly concerned. It was an arrangement which made no change in the distribution of power among the states of Christendom. It was an arrangement which could be set aside only by means of a general war; and, if it were set aside, the effect would be, that the equilibrium of Europe would be deranged, that the loyal and patriotic feelings of millions would be cruelly outraged, and that great provinces which had been united for centuries would be torn from each other by main force.

The sovereigns of Europe were, therefore, bound by every obligation which those who are intrusted with power over their fellow-creatures ought to hold most sacred, to respect and defend the rights of the Archduchess. Her situation and her personal qualities were such as might be expected to move the mind of any generous man to pity, admiration, and chivalrous tenderness. She was in her twenty-fourth year. Her form was majestic, her features beautiful, her countenance sweet and animated, her voice musical, her deportment gracious and dignified, In all domestic relations she was without reproach. She was married to a husband whom she loved, and was on the point of giving birth to a child, when death deprived her of her father. The loss

of a parent, and the new cares of empire, were too much for her in the delicate state of her health. Her spirits were depressed, and her cheek lost its bloom. Yet it seemed that she had little cause for anxiety. It seemed that justice, humanity, and the faith of treaties would have their due weight, and that the settlement so solemnly guaranteed would be quietly carried into effect. England, Russia, Poland, and Holland, declared in form their intention to adhere to their engagements. The French ministers made a verbal declaration to the same effect. But from no quarter did the young Queen of Hungary receive stronger assurances of friendship and support than from the King of Prussia.

Yet the King of Prussia, the Anti-Machiavel, had already fully determined to commit the great crime of violating his plighted faith, of robbing the ally whom he was bound to defend, and of plunging all Europe into a long, bloody, and desolating war; and all this for no end whatever, except that he might extend his dominions, and see his name in the gazettes. He determined to assemble a great army with speed and secrecy, to invade Silesia before Maria Theresa should be apprised of his design, and to add that rich province to his kingdom.

We will not condescend to refute at length the pleas which the compiler of the Memoirs before us has copied from Doctor Preuss. They amount to this, that the House of Brandenburg had some ancient pretensions to Silesia, and had in the previous century been compelled, by hard usage on the part of the Court of Vienna, to waive those pretensions. It is certain that,

whoever might originally have been in the right, Prussia had submitted. Prince after prince of the House of Brandenburg had acquiesced in the existing arrangement. Nay, the Court of Berlin had recently been allied with that of Vienna, and had guaranteed the integrity of the Austrian states. Is it not perfectly clear that, if antiquated claims are to be set up against recent treaties and long possession, the world can never be at peace for a day? The laws of all nations have wisely established a time of limitation, after which titles, however illegitimate in their origin, cannot be questioned. It is felt by everybody, that to eject a person from his estate on the ground of some injustice committed in the time of the Tudors would produce all the evils which result from arbitrary confiscation, and would make all property insecure. It concerns the commonwealth—so runs the legal maxim—that there be an end of litigation. And surely this maxim is at least equally applicable to the great commonwealth of states; for in that commonwealth litigation means the devastation of provinces, the suspension of trade and industry, sieges like those of Badajoz and St. Sebastian, pitched fields like those of Eylau and Borodino. We hold that the transfer of Norway from Denmark to Sweden was an unjustifiable proceeding; but would the King of Denmark be therefore justified in landing, without any new provocation in Norway, and commencing military operations there? The King of Holland thinks, no doubt, that he was unjustly deprived of the Belgian provinces. Grant that it were so. Would he, therefore, be justified in marching with an army on Brussels? The case

against Frederic was still stronger, inasmuch as the injustice of which he complained had been committed more than a century before. Nor must it be forgotten that he owed the highest personal obligations to the House of Austria. It may be doubted whether his life had not been preserved by the intercession of the prince whose daughter he was about to plunder.

To do the King justice, he pretended to no more virtue than he had. In manifestoes he might, for form's sake, insert some idle stories about his antiquated claim on Silesia; but in his conversations and Memoirs he took a very different tone. His own words are: "Ambition, interest, the desire of making people talk about me, carried the day; and I decided for war."

Having resolved on his course, he acted with ability and vigour. It was impossible wholly to conceal his preparations; for throughout the Prussian territories regiments, guns, and baggage were in motion. The Austrian envoy at Berlin apprised his court of these facts, and expressed a suspicion of Frederic's designs; but the ministers of Maria Theresa refused to give credit to so black an imputation on a young prince, who was known chiefly by his high professions of integrity and philanthropy. "We will not," they wrote, "we cannot, believe it."

In the meantime the Prussian forces had been assembled. Without any declaration of war, without any demand for reparation, in the very act of pouring forth compliments and assurances of goodwill, Frederic commenced hostilities. Many thousands of his troops were actually in Silesia before the Queen

of Hungary knew that he had set up any claim to any part of her territories. At length he sent her a message which could be regarded only as an insult. If she would but let him have Silesia, he would, he said, stand by her against any power which should try to deprive her of her other dominions; as if he was not already bound to stand by her, or as if his new promise could be of more value than the old one.

It was the depth of winter. The cold was severe, and the roads heavy with mire. But the Prussians pressed on. Resistance was impossible. The Austrian army was then neither numerous nor efficient. The small portion of that army which lay in Silesia was unprepared for hostilities. Glogau was blockaded; Breslau opened its gates; Ohlau was evacuated. A few scattered garrisons still held out; but the whole open country was subjugated: no enemy ventured to encounter the King in the field; and, before the end of January 1741, he returned to receive the congratulations of his subjects at Berlin.

Had the Silesian question been merely a question between Frederic and Maria Theresa, it would be impossible to acquit the Prussian King of gross perfidy. But when we consider the effects which his policy produced, and could not fail to produce, on the whole community of civilised nations, we are compelled to pronounce a condemnation still more severe. Till he began the war, it seemed possible, even probable, that the peace of the world would be preserved. The plunder of the great Austrian heritage was indeed a strong temptation; and in more than

one cabinet ambitious schemes were already meditated. But the treaties by which the Pragmatic Sanction had been guaranteed were express and recent. To throw all Europe into confusion for a purpose clearly unjust, was no light matter. England was true to her engagements. The voice of Fleury had always been for peace. He had a conscience. He was now in extreme old age, and was unwilling, after a life which, when his situation was considered, must be pronounced singularly pure, to carry the fresh stain of a great crime before the tribunal of his God. Even the vain and unprincipled Belle-Isle, whose whole life was one wild day-dream of conquest and spoliation, felt that France, bound as she was by solemn stipulations, could not, without disgrace, make a direct attack on the Austrian dominions. Charles, Elector of Bavaria, pretended that he had a right to a large part of the inheritance which the Pragmatic Sanction gave to the Queen of Hungary; but he was not sufficiently powerful to move without support. It might, therefore, not unreasonably be expected that, after a short period of restlessness, all the potentates of Christendom would acquiesce in the arrangements made by the late Emperor. But the selfish rapacity of the King of Prussia gave the signal to his neighbours. His example quieted their sense of shame. His success led them to underrate the difficulty of dismembering the Austrian monarchy. The whole world sprang to arms. On the head of Frederic is all the blood which was shed in a war which raged during many years and in every quarter of the globe, the blood of the column of Fontenoy,

the blood of the mountaineers who were slaughtered at Culloden. The evils produced by his wickedness were felt in lands where the name of Prussia was unknown; and, in order that he might rob a neighbour whom he had promised to defend, black men fought on the coast of Coromandel, and red men scalped each other by the Great Lakes of North America.

Silesia had been occupied without a battle; but the Austrian troops were advancing to the relief of the fortresses which still held out. In the spring Frederic rejoined his army. He had seen little of war, and had never commanded any great body of men in the field. It is not, therefore, strange that his first military operations showed little of that skill which, at a later period, was the admiration of Europe. What connoisseurs say of some pictures painted by Raphael in his youth, may be said of this campaign. It was in Frederic's early bad manner. Fortunately for him, the generals to whom he was opposed were men of small capacity. The discipline of his own troops, particularly of the infantry, was unequalled in that age; and some able and experienced officers were at hand to assist him with their advice. Of these, the most distinguished was Field-Marshal Schwerin, a brave adventurer of Pomeranian extraction, who had served half the governments in Europe, had borne the commissions of the States-General of Holland and of the Duke of Mecklenburg, had fought under Marlborough at Blenheim, and had been with Charles the Twelfth at Bender.

Frederic's first battle was fought at Molwitz; and never did

the career of a great commander open in a more inauspicious manner. His army was victorious. Not only, however, did he not establish his title to the character of an able general; but he was so unfortunate as to make it doubtful whether he possessed the vulgar courage of a soldier. The cavalry, which he commanded in person, was put to flight. Unaccustomed to the tumult and carnage of a field of battle, he lost his self-possession, and listened too readily to those who urged him to save himself. His English grey carried him many miles from the field, while Schwerin, though wounded in two places, manfully upheld the day. The skill of the old Field-Marshal and the steadiness of the Prussian battalions prevailed; and the Austrian army was driven from the field with the loss of eight thousand men.

The news was carried late at night to a mill in which the King had taken shelter. It gave him a bitter pang. He was successful; but he owed his success to dispositions which others had made, and to the valour of men who had fought while he was flying. So unpromising was the first appearance of the greatest warrior of that age.

The battle of Molwitz was the signal for a general explosion throughout Europe. Bavaria took up arms. France, not yet declaring herself a principal in the war, took part in it as an ally of Bavaria. The two great statesmen to whom mankind had owed many years of tranquillity, disappeared about this time from the scene, but not till they had both been guilty of the weakness of sacrificing their sense of justice and their love of peace to the

vain hope of preserving their power. Fleury, sinking under age and infirmity, was borne down by the impetuosity of Belle-Isle. Walpole retired from the service of his ungrateful country to his woods and paintings at Houghton; and his power devolved on the daring and eccentric Carteret. As were the ministers, so were the nations. Thirty years during which Europe had, with few interruptions, enjoyed repose, had prepared the public mind for great military efforts. A new generation had grown up, which could not remember the siege of Turin or the slaughter of Malplaquet; which knew war by nothing but its trophies; and which, while it looked with pride on the tapestries at Blenheim, or the statue in the Place of Victories, little thought by what privations, by what waste of private fortunes, by how many bitter tears, conquests must be purchased.

For a time fortune seemed adverse to the Queen of Hungary. Frederic invaded Moravia. The French and Bavarians penetrated into Bohemia, and were there joined by the Saxons. Prague was taken. The Elector of Bavaria was raised by the suffrages of his colleagues to the Imperial throne, a throne which the practice of centuries had almost entitled the House of Austria to regard as a hereditary possession.

Yet was the spirit of the haughty daughter of the Caesars unbroken. Hungary was still hers by an unquestionable title; and although her ancestors had found Hungary the most mutinous of all their kingdoms, she resolved to trust herself to the fidelity of a people, rude indeed, turbulent, and impatient of oppression,

but brave, generous, and simple-hearted. In the midst of distress and peril she had given birth to a son, afterwards the Emperor Joseph the Second. Scarcely had she arisen from her couch, when she hastened to Presburg. There, in the sight of an innumerable multitude, she was crowned with the crown and robed with the robe of St. Stephen. No spectator could restrain his tears when the beautiful young mother, still weak from child-bearing, rode, after the fashion of her fathers, up the Mount of Defiance, unsheathed the ancient sword of state, shook it towards north and south, east and west, and, with a glow on her pale face, challenged the four corners of the world to dispute her rights and those of her boy. At the first sitting of the Diet she appeared clad in deep mourning for her father, and in pathetic and dignified words implored her people to support her just cause. Magnates and deputies sprang up, half drew their sabres, and with eager voices vowed to stand by her with their lives and fortunes. Till then, her firmness had never once forsaken her before the public eye; but at that shout she sank down upon her throne, and wept aloud. Still more touching was the sight when, a few days later, she came again before the Estates of her realm, and held up before them the little Archduke in her arms. Then it was that the enthusiasm of Hungary broke forth into that war-cry which soon resounded throughout Europe, "Let us die for our King, Maria Theresa!"

In the meantime, Frederic was meditating a change of policy. He had no wish to raise France to supreme power on the Continent, at the expense of the House of Hapsburg. His first

object was to rob the Queen of Hungary. His second object was that, if possible, nobody should rob her but himself. He had entered into engagements with the powers leagued against Austria; but these engagements were in his estimation of no more force than the guarantee formerly given to the Pragmatic Sanction. His plan now was to secure his share of the plunder by betraying his accomplices. Maria Theresa was little inclined to listen to any such compromise; but the English Government represented to her so strongly the necessity of buying off Frederic, that she agreed to negotiate. The negotiation would not, however, have ended in a treaty, had not the arms of Frederic been crowned with a second victory. Prince Charles of Lorraine, brother-in-law to Maria Theresa, a bold and active, though unfortunate general, gave battle to the Prussians at Chotusitz, and was defeated. The King was still only a learner of the military art. He acknowledged, at a later period, that his success on this occasion was to be attributed, not at all to his own generalship, but solely to the valour and steadiness of his troops. He completely effaced, however, by his personal courage and energy, the stain which Molwitz had left on his reputation.

A peace, concluded under the English mediation, was the fruit of this battle. Maria Theresa ceded Silesia: Frederic abandoned his allies: Saxony followed his example; and the Queen was left at liberty to turn her whole force against France and Bavaria. She was everywhere triumphant. The French were compelled to evacuate Bohemia, and with difficulty effected

their escape. The whole line of their retreat might be tracked by the corpses of thousands who had died of cold, fatigue, and hunger. Many of those who reached their country carried with them the seeds of death. Bavaria was overrun by bands of ferocious warriors from that bloody debatable land which lies on the frontier between Christendom and Islam. The terrible names of the Pandour, the Croat, and the Hussar, then first became familiar to Western Europe. The unfortunate Charles of Bavaria, vanquished by Austria, betrayed by Prussia, driven from his hereditary states, and neglected by his allies, was hurried by shame and remorse to an untimely end. An English army appeared in the heart of Germany, and defeated the French at Dettingen. The Austrian captains already began to talk of completing the work of Marlborough and Eugene, and of compelling France to relinquish Alsace and the three Bishoprics.

The Court of Versailles, in this peril, looked to Frederic for help. He had been guilty of two great treasons: perhaps he might be induced to commit a third. The Duchess of Chateauroux then held the chief influence over the feeble Lewis. She, determined to send an agent to Berlin; and Voltaire was selected for the mission. He eagerly undertook the task; for, while his literary fame filled all Europe, he was troubled with a childish craving for political distinction. He was vain, and not without reason, of his address, and of his insinuating eloquence: and he flattered himself that he possessed boundless influence over the King of Prussia. The truth was that he knew, as yet, only one corner of

Frederic's character. He was well acquainted with all the petty vanities and affectations of the poetaster; but was not aware that these foibles were united with all the talents and vices which lead to success in active life, and that the unlucky versifier who pestered him with reams of middling Alexandrines, was the most vigilant, suspicious, and severe of politicians.

Voltaire was received with every mark of respect and friendship, was lodged in the palace, and had a seat daily at the royal table. The negotiation was of an extraordinary description. Nothing can be conceived more whimsical than the conferences which took place between the first literary man and the first practical man of the age, whom a strange weakness had induced to exchange their parts. The great poet would talk of nothing but treaties and guarantees, and the great King of nothing but metaphors and rhymes. On one occasion Voltaire put into his Majesty's hands a paper on the state of Europe, and received it back with verses scrawled on the margin. In secret they both laughed at each other. Voltaire did not spare the King's poems; and the King has left on record his opinion of Voltaire's diplomacy. "He had no credentials," says Frederic, "and the whole mission was a joke, a mere farce."

But what the influence of Voltaire could not effect, the rapid progress of the Austrian arms effected. If it should be in the power of Maria Theresa and George the Second to dictate terms of peace to France, what chance was there that Prussia would long retain Silesia? Frederic's conscience told him that

he had acted perfidiously and inhumanly towards the Queen of Hungary. That her resentment was strong she had given ample proof; and of her respect for treaties he judged by his own. Guarantees, he said, were mere filigree, pretty to look at, but too brittle to bear the slightest pressure. He thought it his safest course to ally himself closely to France, and again to attack the Empress Queen. Accordingly, in the autumn of 1744, without notice, without any decent pretext, he recommenced hostilities, marched through the electorate of Saxony without troubling himself about the permission of the Elector, invaded Bohemia, took Prague, and even menaced Vienna.

It was now that, for the first time, he experienced the inconstancy of fortune. An Austrian army under Charles of Lorraine threatened his communications with Silesia. Saxony was all in arms behind him. He found it necessary to save himself by a retreat. He afterwards owned that his failure was the natural effect of his own blunders. No general, he said, had ever committed greater faults. It must be added, that to the reverses of this campaign he always ascribed his subsequent successes. It was in the midst of difficulty and disgrace that he caught the first clear glimpse of the principles of the military art.

The memorable year 1745 followed. The war raged by sea and land, in Italy, in Germany, and in Flanders; and even England, after many years of profound internal quiet, saw, for the last time, hostile armies set in battle array against each other. This year is memorable in the life of Frederic, as the date

at which his noviciate in the art of war may be said to have terminated. There have been great captains whose precocious and self-taught military skill resembled intuition. Conde, Clive, and Napoleon are examples. But Frederic was not one of these brilliant portents. His proficiency in military science was simply the proficiency which a man of vigorous faculties makes in any science to which he applies his mind with earnestness and industry. It was at Hohenfriedberg that he first proved how much he had profited by his errors, and by their consequences. His victory on that day was chiefly due to his skilful dispositions, and convinced Europe that the prince who, a few years before, had stood aghast in the rout of Molwitz, had attained in the military art a mastery equalled by none of his contemporaries, or equalled by Saxe alone. The victory of Hohenfriedberg was speedily followed by that of Sorr.

In the meantime, the arms of France had been victorious in the Low Countries. Frederic had no longer reason to fear that Maria Theresa would be able to give law to Europe, and he began to meditate a fourth breach of his engagements. The Court of Versailles was alarmed and mortified. A letter of earnest expostulation, in the handwriting of Lewis, was sent to Berlin; but in vain. In the autumn of 1745, Frederic made Peace with England, and, before the close of the year, with Austria also. The pretensions of Charles of Bavaria could present no obstacle to an accommodation. That unhappy Prince was no more; and Francis of Lorraine, the husband of Maria Theresa, was raised, with the

general assent of the Germanic body, to the Imperial throne.

Prussia was again at peace; but the European war lasted till, in the year 1748, it was terminated by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Of all the powers that had taken part in it, the only gainer was Frederic. Not only had he added to his patrimony the fine province of Silesia: he had, by his unprincipled dexterity, succeeded so well in alternately depressing the scale of Austria and that of France, that he was generally regarded as holding the balance of Europe, a high dignity for one who ranked lowest among kings, and whose great-grandfather had been no more than a Margrave. By the public, the King of Prussia was considered as a politician destitute alike of morality and decency, insatiably rapacious, and shamelessly false; nor was the public much in the wrong. He was at the same time, allowed to be a man of parts, a rising general, a shrewd negotiator and administrator. Those qualities wherein he surpassed all mankind, were as yet unknown to others or to himself; for they were qualities which shine out only on a dark ground. His career had hitherto, with little interruption, been prosperous; and it was only in adversity, in adversity which seemed without hope or resource, in adversity which would have overwhelmed even men celebrated for strength of mind, that his real greatness could be shown.

He had, from the commencement of his reign, applied himself to public business after a fashion unknown among kings. Lewis the Fourteenth, indeed, had been his own prime minister, and had exercised a general superintendence over all the departments

of the Government; but this was not sufficient for Frederic. He was not content with being his own prime minister: he would be his own sole minister. Under him there was no room, not merely for a Richelieu or a Mazarin, but for a Colbert, a Louvois, or a Torcy. A love of labour for its own sake, a restless and insatiable longing to dictate, to intermeddle, to make his power felt, a profound scorn and distrust of his fellow-creatures, made him unwilling to ask counsel, to confide important secrets, to delegate ample powers. The highest functionaries under his government were mere clerks, and were not so much trusted by him as valuable clerks are often trusted by the heads of departments. He was his own treasurer, his own commander-in-chief, his own intendant of public works, his own minister for trade and justice, for home affairs and foreign affairs, his own master of the horse, steward, and chamberlain. Matters of which no chief of an office in any other government would ever hear, were, in this singular monarchy, decided by the King in person. If a traveller wished for a good place to see a review, he had to write to Frederic, and received next day, from a royal messenger, Frederic's answer signed by Frederic's own hand. This was an extravagant, a morbid activity. The public business would assuredly have been better done if each department had been put under a man of talents and integrity, and if the King had contented himself with a general control. In this manner the advantages which belong to unity of design, and the advantages which belong to the division of labour, would have been to a great extent combined. But such a

system would not have suited the peculiar temper of Frederic. He could tolerate no will, no reason, in the State, save his own. He wished for no abler assistance than that of penmen who had just understanding enough to translate and transcribe, to make out his scrawls, and to put his concise Yes and No into an official form. Of the higher intellectual faculties, there is as much in a copying machine, or a lithographic press, as he required from a secretary of the cabinet.

His own exertions were such as were hardly to be expected from a human body or a human mind. At Potsdam, his ordinary residence, he rose at three in summer and four in winter. A page soon appeared, with a large basket full of all the letters which had arrived for the King by the last courier, despatches from ambassadors, reports from officers of revenue, plans of buildings, proposals for draining marshes, complaints from persons who thought themselves aggrieved, applications from persons who wanted titles, military commissions, and civil situations. He examined the seals with a keen eye; for he was never for a moment free from the suspicion that some fraud might be practised on him. Then he read the letters, divided them into several packets, and signified his pleasure, generally by a mark, often by two or three words, now and then by some cutting epigram. By eight he had generally finished this part of his task. The adjutant-general was then in attendance, and received instructions for the day as to all the military arrangements of the kingdom. Then the King went to review his guards, not as kings

ordinarily review their guards, but with the minute attention and severity of an old drill-sergeant. In the meantime the four cabinet secretaries had been employed in answering the letters on which the King had that morning signified his will. These unhappy men were forced to work all the year round like negro slaves in the time of the sugar-crop. They never had a holiday. They never knew what it was to dine. It was necessary that, before they stirred, they should finish the whole of their work. The King, always on his guard against treachery, took from the heap a handful of letters at random, and looked into them to see whether his instructions had been exactly followed. This was no bad security against foul play on the part of the secretaries; for if one of them were detected in a trick, he might think himself fortunate if he escaped with five years of imprisonment in a dungeon. Frederic then signed the replies, and all were sent off the same evening.

The general principles on which this strange government was conducted, deserve attention. The policy of Frederic was essentially the same as his father's; but Frederic, while he carried that policy to lengths to which his father never thought of carrying it, cleared it at the same time from the absurdities with which his father had encumbered it. The King's first object was to have a great, efficient, and well-trained army. He had a kingdom which in extent and population was hardly in the second rank of European powers; and yet he aspired to a place not inferior to that of the sovereigns of England, France, and Austria. For that

end it was necessary that Prussia should be all sting. Lewis the Fifteenth, with five times as many subjects as Frederic, and more than five times as large a revenue, had not a more formidable army. The proportion which the soldiers in Prussia bore to the people seems hardly credible. Of the males in the vigour of life, a seventh part were probably under arms; and this great force had, by drilling, by reviewing, and by the unsparing use of cane and scourge, been taught to form all evolutions with a rapidity and a precision which would have astonished Villars or Eugene. The elevated feelings which are necessary to the best kind of army were then wanting to the Prussian service. In those ranks were not found the religious and political enthusiasm which inspired the pikemen of Cromwell, the patriotic ardour, the thirst of glory, the devotion to a great leader, which inflamed the Old Guard of Napoleon. But in all the mechanical parts of the military calling, the Prussians were as superior to the English and French troops of that day as the English and French troops to a rustic militia.

Though the pay of the Prussian soldier was small, though every rixdollar of extraordinary charge was scrutinised by Frederic with a vigilance and suspicion such as Mr. Joseph Hume never brought to the examination of an army estimate, the expense of such an establishment was, for the means of the country, enormous. In order that it might not be utterly ruinous, it was necessary that every other expense should be cut down to the lowest possible point. Accordingly Frederic, though his dominions bordered on the sea, had no navy. He neither had

nor wished to have colonies. His judges, his fiscal officers, were meanly paid. His ministers at foreign courts walked on foot, or drove shabby old carriages till the axle-trees gave way. Even to his highest diplomatic agents, who resided at London and Paris, he allowed less than a thousand pounds sterling a year. The royal household was managed with a frugality unusual in the establishments of opulent subjects, unexampled in any other palace. The King loved good eating and drinking, and during great part of his life took pleasure in seeing his table surrounded by guests; yet the whole charge of his kitchen was brought within the sum of two thousand pounds sterling a year. He examined every extraordinary item with a care which might be thought to suit the mistress of a boarding-house better than a great prince. When more than four rixdollars were asked of him for a hundred oysters, he stormed as if he had heard that one of his generals had sold a fortress to the Empress Queen. Not a bottle of champagne was uncorked without his express order. The game of the royal parks and forests, a serious head of expenditure in most kingdoms, was to him a source of profit. The whole was farmed out; and though the farmers were almost ruined by their contract, the King would grant them no remission. His wardrobe consisted of one fine gala dress, which lasted him all his life; of two or three old coats fit for Monmouth Street, of yellow waistcoats soiled with snuff, and of huge boots embrowned by time. One taste alone sometimes allured him beyond the limits of parsimony, nay, even beyond the limits of prudence, the taste for

building. In all other things his economy was such as we might call by a harsher name, if we did not reflect that his funds were drawn from a heavily taxed people, and that it was impossible for him, without excessive tyranny, to keep up at once a formidable army and a splendid court.

Considered as an administrator, Frederic had undoubtedly many titles to praise. Order was strictly maintained throughout his dominions. Property was secure. A great liberty of speaking and of writing was allowed. Confident in the irresistible strength derived from a great army, the King looked down on malcontents and libellers with a wise disdain; and gave little encouragement to spies and informers. When he was told of the disaffection of one of his subject, he merely asked, "How many thousand men can he bring into the field?" He once saw a crowd staring at something on a wall. He rode up and found that the object of curiosity was a scurrilous placard against himself. The placard had been posted up so high that it was not easy to read it. Frederic ordered his attendants to take it down and put it lower. "My people and I," he said, "have come to an agreement which satisfies us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please." No person would have dared to publish in London satires on George the Second approaching to the atrocity of those satires on Frederic, which the booksellers at Berlin sold with impunity. One bookseller sent to the palace a copy of the most stinging lampoon that perhaps was ever written in the world, the *Memoirs of Voltaire*, published by Beaumarchais, and asked for

his Majesty's orders. "Do not advertise it in an offensive manner," said the King; "but sell it by all means. I hope it will pay you well." Even among statesmen accustomed to the licence of a free press, such steadfastness of mind as this is not very common.

It is due also to the memory of Frederic to say that he earnestly laboured to secure to his people the great blessing of cheap and speedy Justice. He was one of the first rulers who abolished the cruel and absurd practice of torture. No sentence of death, pronounced by the ordinary tribunals, was executed without his sanction; and his sanction, except in cases of murder, was rarely given. Towards his troops he acted in a very different manner. Military offences were punished with such barbarous scourging that to be shot was considered by the Prussian soldier as a secondary punishment. Indeed, the principle which pervaded Frederic's whole policy was this, that the more severely the army is governed, the safer it is to treat the rest of the community with lenity.

Religious persecution was unknown under his government, unless some foolish and unjust restrictions which lay upon the Jews may be regarded as forming an exception. His policy with respect to the Catholics of Silesia presented an honourable contrast to the policy which, under very similar circumstances, England long followed with respect to the Catholics of Ireland. Every form of religion and irreligion found an asylum in the States. The scoffer whom the parliaments of France had sentenced to a cruel death, was consoled by a commission in the

Prussian service. The Jesuit who could show his face nowhere else, who in Britain was still subject to penal laws, who was proscribed by France, Spain, Portugal, and Naples, who had been given up even by the Vatican, found safety and the means of subsistence in the Prussian dominions.

Most of the vices of Frederic's administration resolve selves into one vice, the spirit of meddling. The indefatigable activity of his intellect, his dictatorial temper, his military habits, all inclined him to this great fault. He drilled his people as he drilled his grenadiers. Capital and industry were diverted from their natural direction by a crowd of preposterous regulations. There was a monopoly of coffee, a monopoly of tobacco, a monopoly of refined sugar. The public money, of which the King was generally so sparing, was lavishly spent in ploughing bogs, in planting mulberry trees amidst the sand, in bringing sheep from Spain to improve the Saxon wool, in bestowing prizes for fine yarn, in building manufactories of porcelain, manufactories of carpets, manufactories of hardware, manufactories of lace. Neither the experience of other rulers, nor his own, could ever teach him that something more than an edict and a grant of public money was required to create a Lyons, a Brussels, or a Birmingham.

For his commercial policy, however, there was some excuse. He had on his side illustrious examples and popular prejudice. Grievously as he erred, he erred in company with his age. In other departments his meddling was altogether without apology. He

interfered with the course of justice as well as with the course of trade; and set up his own crude notions of equity against the law as expounded by the unanimous voice of the gravest magistrates. It never occurred to him that men whose lives were passed in adjudicating on questions of civil right were more likely to form correct opinions on such questions than a prince whose attention was divided among a thousand objects, and who had never read a law-book through. The resistance opposed to him by the tribunals inflamed him to fury. He reviled his Chancellor. He kicked the shins of his judges. He did not, it is true, intend to act unjustly. He firmly believed that he was doing right, and defending the cause of the poor against the wealthy. Yet this well-meant meddling probably did far more harm than all the explosions of his evil passions during the whole of his long reign. We could make shift to live under a debauchee or a tyrant; but to be ruled by a busybody is more than human nature can bear.

The same passion for directing and regulating appeared in every part of the King's policy. Every lad of a certain station in life was forced to go to certain schools within the Prussian dominions. If a young Prussian repaired, though but for a few weeks, to Leyden or Gottingen for the purpose of study, the offence was punished with civil disabilities, and sometimes with the confiscation of property. Nobody was to travel without the royal permission. If the permission were granted, the pocket-money of the tourist was fixed by royal ordinance. A merchant might take with him two hundred and fifty rixdollars in gold, a

noble was allowed to take four hundred; for it may be observed, in passing, that Frederic studiously kept up the old distinction between the nobles and the community. In speculation, he was a French philosopher, but in action, a German prince. He talked and wrote about the privileges of blood in the style of Sieyes; but in practice no chapter in the empire looked with a keener eye to genealogies and quarterings.

Such was Frederic the Ruler. But there was another Frederic, the Frederic of Rheinsberg, the fiddler and flute-player, the poetaster and metaphysician. Amidst the cares of State the King had retained his passion for music, for reading, for writing, for literary society. To these amusements he devoted all the time that he could snatch from the business of war and government; and perhaps more light is thrown on his character by what passed during his hours of relaxation, than by his battles or his laws.

It was the just boast of Schiller that, in his country, no Augustus, no Lorenzo, had watched over the infancy of poetry. The rich and energetic language of Luther, driven by the Latin from the schools of pedants, and by the French from the palaces of kings, had taken refuge among the people. Of the powers of that language Frederic had no notion. He generally spoke of it, and of those who used it, with the contempt of ignorance. His library consisted of French books; at his table nothing was heard but French conversation. The associates of his hours of relaxation were, for the most part, foreigners. Britain furnished to the royal circle two distinguished men, born in the highest rank,

and driven by civil dissensions from the land to which, under happier circumstances, their talents and virtues might have been a source of strength and glory. George Keith, Earl Marischal of Scotland, had taken arms for the House of Stuart in 1715; and his younger brother James, then only seventeen years old, had fought gallantly by his side. When all was lost they retired together to the Continent, roved from country to country, served under various standards, and so bore themselves as to win the respect and good-will of many who had no love for the Jacobite cause. Their long wanderings terminated at Potsdam; nor had Frederic any associates who deserved or obtained so large a share of his esteem. They were not only accomplished men, but nobles and warriors, capable of serving him in war and diplomacy, as well as of amusing him at supper. Alone of all his companions, they appear never to have had reason to complain of his demeanour towards them. Some of those who knew the palace best pronounced that the Lord Marischal was the only human being whom Frederic ever really loved.

Italy sent to the parties at Potsdam the ingenious and amiable Algarotti, and Bastiani, the most crafty, cautious, and servile of Abbes. But the greater part of the society which Frederic had assembled round him, was drawn from France. Maupertuis had acquired some celebrity by the journey which he had made to Lapland, for the purpose of ascertaining, by actual measurement, the shape of our planet. He was placed in the chair of the Academy of Berlin, a humble imitation of the renowned academy

of Paris. Baculard D'Arnaud, a young poet, who was thought to have given promise of great things, had been induced to quit his country, and to reside at the Prussian Court. The Marquess D'Argens was among the King's favourite companions, on account, as it should seem, of the strong opposition between their characters. The parts of D'Argens were good, and his manners those of a finished French gentleman; but his whole soul was dissolved in sloth, timidity, and self-indulgence. He was one of that abject class of minds which are superstitious without being religious. Hating Christianity with a rancour which made him incapable of rational inquiry, unable to see in the harmony and beauty of the universe the traces of divine power and wisdom, he was the slave of dreams and omens, would not sit down to table with thirteen in company, turned pale if the salt fell towards him, begged his guests not to cross their knives and forks on their plates, and would not for the world commence a journey on Friday. His health was a subject of constant anxiety to him. Whenever his head ached, or his pulse beat quick, his dastardly fears and effeminate precautions were the jest of all Berlin. All this suited the King's purpose admirably. He wanted somebody by whom he might be amused, and whom he might despise. When he wished to pass half an hour in easy polished conversation, D'Argens was an excellent companion; when he wanted to vent his spleen and contempt, D'Argens was an excellent butt.

With these associates, and others of the same class, Frederic

loved to spend the time which he could steal from public cares. He wished his supper parties to be gay and easy. He invited his guests to lay aside all restraint, and to forget that he was at the head of a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers, and was absolute master of the life and liberty of all who sat at meat with him. There was, therefore, at these parties the outward show of ease. The wit and learning of the company were ostentatiously displayed. The discussions on history and literature were often highly interesting. But the absurdity of all the religions known among men was the chief topic of conversation; and the audacity with which doctrines and names venerated throughout Christendom were treated on these occasions startled even persons accustomed to the society of French and English freethinkers. Real liberty, however, or real affection, was in this brilliant society not to be found. Absolute kings seldom have friends: and Frederic's faults were such as, even where perfect equality exists, make friendship exceedingly precarious. He had indeed many qualities which, on a first acquaintance were captivating. His conversation was lively; his manners, to those whom he desired to please, were even caressing. No man could flatter with more delicacy. No man succeeded more completely in inspiring those who approached him with vague hopes of some great advantage from his kindness. But under this fair exterior he was a tyrant, suspicious, disdainful, and malevolent. He had one taste which may be pardoned in a boy, but which, when habitually and deliberately indulged by a

man of mature age and strong understanding, is almost invariably the sign of a bad heart—a taste for severe practical jokes. If a courtier was fond of dress, oil was flung over his richest suit. If he was fond of money, some prank was invented to make him disburse more than he could spare. If he was hypochondriacal, he was made to believe that he had the dropsy. If he had particularly set his heart on visiting a place, a letter was forged to frighten him from going thither. These things, it may be said, are trifles. They are so; but they are indications, not to be mistaken, of a nature to which the sight of human suffering and human degradation is an agreeable excitement.

Frederic had a keen eye for the foibles of others, and loved to communicate his discoveries. He had some talent for sarcasm, and considerable skill in detecting the sore places where sarcasm would be most acutely felt. His vanity, as well as his malignity, found gratification in the vexation and confusion of those who smarted under his caustic jests. Yet in truth his success on these occasions belonged quite as much to the king as to the wit. We read that Commodus descended, sword in hand, into the arena, against a wretched gladiator, armed only with a foil of lead, and, after shedding the blood of the helpless victim, struck medals to commemorate the inglorious victory. The triumphs of Frederic in the war of repartee were of much the same kind. How to deal with him was the most puzzling of questions. To appear constrained in his presence was to disobey his commands, and to spoil his amusement. Yet if his associates were enticed by his

graciousness to indulge in the familiarity of a cordial intimacy, he was certain to make them repent of their presumption by some cruel humiliation. To resent his affronts was perilous; yet not to resent them was to deserve and to invite them. In his view, those who mutinied were insolent and ungrateful; those who submitted were curs made to receive bones and kickings with the same fawning patience. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive how anything short of the rage of hunger should have induced men to bear the misery of being the associates of the Great King. It was no lucrative post. His Majesty was as severe and economical in his friendships as in the other charges of his establishment, and as unlikely to give a rixdollar too much for his guests as for his dinners. The sum which he allowed to a poet or a philosopher was the very smallest sum for which such poet or philosopher could be induced to sell himself into slavery; and the bondsman might think himself fortunate, if what had been so grudgingly given was not, after years of suffering, rudely and arbitrarily withdrawn.

Potsdam was, in truth, what it was called by one of its most illustrious inmates, the Palace of Alcina, At the first glance it seemed to be a delightful spot, where every intellectual and physical enjoyment awaited the happy adventurer. Every newcomer was received with eager hospitality, intoxicated with flattery, encouraged to expect prosperity and greatness. It was in vain that a long succession of favourites who had entered that abode with delight and hope, and who, after a short term of delusive happiness, had been doomed to expiate their folly by

years of wretchedness and degradation, raised their voices to warn the aspirant who approached the charmed threshold. Some had wisdom enough to discover the truth early, and spirit enough to fly without looking back; others lingered on to a cheerless and unhonoured old age. We have no hesitation in saying that the poorest author of that time in London, sleeping on a bulk, dining in a cellar, with a cravat of paper, and a skewer for a shirt-pin, was a happier man than any of the literary inmates of Frederic's Court.

But of all who entered the enchanted garden in the inebriation of delight, and quitted it in agonies of rage and shame, the most remarkable was Voltaire. Many circumstances had made him desirous of finding a home at a distance from his country. His fame had raised him up enemies. His sensibility gave them a formidable advantage over him. They were, indeed, contemptible assailants. Of all that they wrote against him, nothing has survived except what he has himself preserved. But the constitution of his mind resembled the constitution of those bodies in which the slightest scratch of a bramble, or the bite of a gnat, never fails to fester. Though his reputation was rather raised than lowered by the abuse of such writers as Freron and Desfontaines, though the vengeance which he took on Freron and Desfontaines was such, that scourging, branding, pillorying, would have been a trifle to it, there is reason to believe that they gave him far more pain than he ever gave them. Though he enjoyed during his own lifetime the reputation

of a classic, though he was extolled by his contemporaries above all poets, philosophers, and historians, though his works were read with as much delight and admiration at Moscow and Westminster, at Florence and Stockholm, as at Paris itself, he was yet tormented by that restless jealousy which should seem to belong only to minds burning with the desire of fame, and yet conscious of impotence. To men of letters who could by no possibility be his rivals, he was, if they behaved well to him, not merely just, not merely courteous, but often a hearty friend and a munificent benefactor. But to every writer who rose to a celebrity approaching his own, he became either a disguised or an avowed enemy. He slyly depreciated Montesquieu and Buffon. He publicly, and with violent outrage, made war on Rousseau. Nor had he the heart of hiding his feelings under the semblance of good humour or of contempt. With all his great talents, and all his long experience of the world, he had no more self-command than a petted child, or a hysterical woman. Whenever he was mortified, he exhausted the whole rhetoric of anger and sorrow to express his mortification. His torrents of bitter words, his stamping and cursing, his grimaces and his tears of rage, were a rich feast to those abject natures, whose delight is in the agonies of powerful spirits and in the abasement of immortal names. These creatures had now found out a way of galling him to the very quick. In one walk, at least, it had been admitted by envy itself that he was without a living competitor. Since Racine had been laid among the great men whose dust made the holy

precinct of Port-Royal holier, no tragic poet had appeared who could contest the palm with the author of *Zaire*, of *Alzire*, and of *Merope*. At length a rival was announced. Old Crebillon, who, many years before, had obtained some theatrical success, and who had long been forgotten, came forth from his garret in one of the meanest lanes near the Rue St. Antoine, and was welcomed by the acclamations of envious men of letters, and of a capricious populace. A thing called *Catiline*, which he had written in his retirement, was acted with boundless applause. Of this execrable piece it is sufficient to say, that the plot turns on a love affair, carried on in all the forms of Scudery, between *Catiline*, whose confidant is the Praetor *Lentulus*, and *Tullia*, the daughter of *Cicero*. The theatre resounded with acclamations. The King pensioned the successful poet; and the coffee-houses pronounced that *Voltaire* was a clever man, but that the real tragic inspiration, the celestial fire which had glowed in *Corneille* and *Racine*, was to be found in *Crebillon* alone.

The blow went to *Voltaire's* heart. Had his wisdom and fortitude been in proportion to the fertility of his intellect, and to the brilliancy of his wit, he would have seen that it was out of the power of all the puffers and detractors in Europe to put *Catiline* above *Zaire*; but he had none of the magnanimous patience with which *Milton* and *Bentley* left their claims to the unerring judgment of time. He eagerly engaged in an undignified competition with *Crebillon*, and produced a series of plays on the same subjects which his rival had treated. These pieces were

coolly received. Angry with the court, angry with the capital, Voltaire began to find pleasure in the prospect of exile. His attachment for Madame du Chatelet long prevented him from executing his purpose. Her death set him at liberty; and he determined to take refuge at Berlin.

To Berlin he was invited by a series of letters, couched in terms of the most enthusiastic friendship and admiration. For once the rigid parsimony of Frederic seemed to have relaxed. Orders, honourable offices, a liberal pension, a well-served table, stately apartments under a royal roof, were offered in return for the pleasure and honour which were expected from the society of the first wit of the age. A thousand louis were remitted for the charges of the journey. No ambassador setting out from Berlin for a court of the first rank, had ever been more amply supplied. But Voltaire was not satisfied. At a later period, when he possessed an ample fortune, he was one of the most liberal of men; but till his means had become equal to his wishes, his greediness for lucre was unrestrained either by justice or by shame. He had the effrontery to ask for a thousand louis more, in order to enable him to bring his niece, Madame Denis, the ugliest of coquettes, in his company. The indelicate rapacity of the poet produced its natural effect on the severe and frugal King. The answer was a dry refusal. "I did not," said his Majesty, "solicit the honour of the lady's society." On this, Voltaire went off into a paroxysm of childish rage. "Was there ever such avarice? He has hundreds of tubs full of dollars in his vaults,

and haggles with me about a poor thousand louis." It seemed that the negotiation would be broken off; but Frederic, with great dexterity, affected indifference, and seemed inclined to transfer his idolatry to Baculard D'Arnaud. His Majesty even wrote some bad verses, of which the sense was, that Voltaire was a setting sun, and that D'Arnaud was rising. Good-natured friends soon carried the lines to Voltaire. He was in his bed. He jumped out in his shirt, danced about the room with rage, and sent for his passport and his post-horses. It was not difficult to foresee the end of a connection which had such a beginning.

It was in the year 1750 that Voltaire left the great capital, which he was not to see again till, after the lapse of near thirty years, he returned bowed down by extreme old age, to die in the midst of a splendid and ghastly triumph. His reception in Prussia was such as might well have elated a less vain and excitable mind. He wrote to his friends at Paris, that the kindness and the attention with which he had been welcomed surpassed description, that the King was the most amiable of men, that Potsdam was the paradise of philosophers. He was created chamberlain, and received, together with his gold key, the cross of an order, and a patent ensuring to him a pension of eight hundred pounds sterling a year for life. A hundred and sixty pounds a year were promised to his niece if she survived him. The royal cooks and coachmen were put at his disposal. He was lodged in the same apartments in which Saxe had lived, when, at the height of power and glory, he visited Prussia.

Frederic, indeed, stooped for a time even to use the language of adulation. He pressed to his lips the meagre hand of the little grinning skeleton, whom he regarded as the dispenser of immortal renown. He would add, he said, to the titles which he owed to his ancestors and his sword, another title, derived from his last and proudest acquisition. His style should run thus: Frederic, King of Prussia, Margrave of Brandenburg, Sovereign Duke of Silesia, Possessor of Voltaire. But even amidst the delights of the honeymoon, Voltaire's sensitive vanity began to take alarm. A few days after his arrival, he could not help telling his niece that the amiable King had a trick of giving a sly scratch with one hand while patting and stroking with the other. Soon came hints not the less alarming, because mysterious. "The supper parties are delicious. The King is the life of the company. But—I have operas and comedies, reviews and concerts, my studies and books. But—but—Berlin is fine, the princesses charming, the maids of honour handsome. But—"

This eccentric friendship was fast cooling. Never had there met two persons so exquisitely fitted to plague each other. Each of them had exactly the fault of which the other was most impatient; and they were, in different ways, the most impatient of mankind. Frederic was frugal, almost niggardly. When he had secured his plaything he began to think that he had bought it too dear. Voltaire, on the other hand, was greedy, even to the extent of imprudence and knavery; and conceived that the favourite of a monarch who had barrels full of gold and silver

laid up in cellars ought to make a fortune which a receiver-general might envy. They soon discovered each other's feelings. Both were angry; and a war began, in which Frederic stooped to the part of Harpagon, and Voltaire to that of Scapin. It is humiliating to relate, that the great warrior and statesman gave orders that his guest's allowance of sugar and chocolate should be curtailed. It is, if possible, a still more humiliating fact, that Voltaire indemnified himself by pocketing the wax candles in the royal antechamber. Disputes about money, however, were not the most serious disputes of these extraordinary associates. The sarcasms of the King soon galled the sensitive temper of the poet. D'Arnaud and D'Argens, Guichard and La Metrie, might, for the sake of a morsel of bread, be willing to bear the insolence of a master; but Voltaire was of another order. He knew that he was a potentate as well as Frederic, that his European reputation, and his incomparable power of covering whatever he hated with ridicule, made him an object of dread even to the leaders of armies and the rulers of nations. In truth, of all the intellectual weapons which have ever been wielded by man, the most terrible was the mockery of Voltaire. Bigots and tyrants, who had never been moved by the wailing and cursing of millions, turned pale at his name. Principles unassailable by reason, principles which had withstood the fiercest attacks of power, the most valuable truths, the most generous sentiments, the noblest and most graceful images, the purest reputations, the most august institutions, began to look mean and loathsome as

soon as that withering smile was turned upon them. To every opponent, however strong in his cause and his talents, in his station and his character, who ventured to encounter the great scoffer, might be addressed the caution which was given of old to the Archangel:

“I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow: neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though temper'd heavenly; for that fatal dint,
Save Him who reigns above, none can resist.”

We cannot pause to recount how often that rare talent was exercised against rivals worthy of esteem; how often it was used to crush and torture enemies worthy only of silent disdain; how often it was perverted to the more noxious purpose of destroying the last solace of earthly misery, and the last restraint on earthly power. Neither can we pause to tell how often it was used to vindicate justice, humanity, and toleration, the principles of sound philosophy, the principles of free government. This is not the place for a full character of Voltaire.

Causes of quarrel multiplied fast. Voltaire, who, partly from love of money, and partly from love of excitement, was always fond of stock-jobbing, became implicated in transactions of at least a dubious character. The King was delighted at having such an opportunity to humble his guest; and bitter reproaches and complaints were exchanged. Voltaire, too, was soon at war

with the other men of letters who surrounded the King; and this irritated Frederic, who, however, had himself chiefly to blame: for, from that love of tormenting which was in him a ruling passion, he perpetually lavished extravagant praises on small men and bad books, merely in order that he might enjoy the mortification and rage which on such occasions Voltaire took no pains to conceal. His Majesty, however, soon had reason to regret the pains which he had taken to kindle jealousy among the members of his household. The whole palace was in a ferment with literary intrigues and cabals. It was to no purpose that the imperial voice, which kept a hundred and sixty thousand soldiers in order, was raised to quiet the contention of the exasperated wits. It was far easier to stir up such a storm than to lull it. Nor was Frederic, in his capacity of wit, by any means without his own share of vexations. He had sent a large quantity of verses to Voltaire, and requested that they might be returned, with remarks and corrections. "See," exclaimed Voltaire, "what a quantity of his dirty linen the King has sent me to wash!" Talebearers were not wanting to carry the sarcasm to the royal ear; and Frederic was as much incensed as a Grub Street writer who had found his name in the Dunciad.

This could not last. A circumstance which, when the mutual regard of the friends was in its first glow, would merely have been matter for laughter, produced a violent explosion. Maupertuis enjoyed as much of Frederic's goodwill as any man of letters. He was President of the Academy of Berlin; and he stood second to

Voltaire, though at an immense distance, in the literary society which had been assembled at the Prussian Court. Frederic had, by playing for his own amusement on the feelings of the two jealous and vainglorious Frenchmen, succeeded in producing a bitter enmity between them. Voltaire resolved to set his mark, a mark never to be effaced, on the forehead of Maupertuis, and wrote the exquisitely ludicrous Diatribe of Doctor Akakia. He showed this little piece to Frederic, who had too much taste and too much malice not to relish such delicious pleasantry. In truth, even at this time of day, it is not easy for any person who has the least perception of the ridiculous to read the jokes on the Latin city, the Patagonians, and the hole to the centre of the earth, without laughing till he cries. But though Frederic was diverted by this charming pasquinade, he was unwilling that it should get abroad. His self-love was interested. He had selected Maupertuis to fill the chair of his Academy. If all Europe were taught to laugh at Maupertuis, would not the reputation of the Academy, would not even the dignity of its royal patron, be in some degree compromised? The King, therefore, begged Voltaire to suppress this performance. Voltaire promised to do so, and broke his word. The Diatribe was published, and received with shouts of merriment and applause by all who could read the French language. The King stormed. Voltaire, with his usual disregard of truth, asserted his innocence, and made up some lie about a printer or an amanuensis. The King was not to be so imposed upon. He ordered the pamphlet to be burned by the common

hangman, and insisted upon having an apology from Voltaire, couched in the most abject terms. Voltaire sent back to the King his cross, his key, and the patent of his pension. After this burst of rage, the strange pair began to be ashamed of their violence, and went through the forms of reconciliation. But the breach was irreparable; and Voltaire took his leave of Frederic for ever. They parted with cold civility; but their hearts were big with resentment. Voltaire had in his keeping a volume of the King's poetry, and forgot to return it. This was, we believe, merely one of the oversights which men setting out upon a journey often commit. That Voltaire could have meditated plagiarism is quite incredible. He would not, we are confident, for the half of Frederic's kingdom, have consented to father Frederic's verses. The King, however, who rated his own writings much above their value, and who was inclined to see all Voltaire's actions in the worst light, was enraged to think that his favourite compositions were in the hands of an enemy, as thievish as a daw and as mischievous as a monkey. In the anger excited by this thought, he lost sight of reason and decency, and determined on committing an outrage at once odious and ridiculous.

Voltaire had reached Frankfort. His niece, Madame Denis, came thither to meet him. He conceived himself secure from the power of his late master, when he was arrested by order of the Prussian resident. The precious volume was delivered up. But the Prussian agents had, no doubt, been instructed not to let Voltaire escape without some gross indignity. He was confined

twelve days in a wretched hovel. Sentinels with fixed bayonets kept guard over him. His niece was dragged through the mire by the soldiers. Sixteen hundred dollars were extorted from him by his insolent gaolers. It is absurd to say that this outrage is not to be attributed to the King. Was anybody punished for it? Was anybody called in question for it? Was it not consistent with Frederic's character? Was it not of a piece with his conduct on other similar occasions? Is it not notorious that he repeatedly gave private directions to his officers to pillage and demolish the houses of persons against whom he had a grudge, charging them at the same time to take their measures in such a way that his name might not be compromised? He acted thus towards Count Bruhl in the Seven Years' War. Why should we believe that he would have been more scrupulous with regard to Voltaire?

When at length the illustrious prisoner regained his liberty, the prospect before him was but dreary. He was an exile both from the country of his birth and from the country of his adoption. The French Government had taken offence at his journey to Prussia, and would not permit him to return to Paris; and in the vicinity of Prussia it was not safe for him to remain.

He took refuge on the beautiful shores of Lake Lemman. There, loosed from every tie which had hitherto restrained him, and having little to hope, or to fear from courts and churches, he began his long war against all that, whether for good or evil, had authority over man; for what Burke said of the Constituent Assembly, was eminently true of this its great forerunner:

Voltaire could not build: he could only pull down: he was the very Vitruvius of ruin. He has bequeathed to us not a single doctrine to be called by his name, not a single addition to the stock of our positive knowledge. But no human teacher ever left behind him so vast and terrible a wreck of truths and falsehoods, of things noble and things base, of things useful and things pernicious. From the time when his sojourn beneath the Alps commenced, the dramatist, the wit, the historian, was merged in a more important character. He was now the patriarch, the founder of a sect, the chief of a conspiracy, the prince of a wide intellectual commonwealth. He often enjoyed a pleasure dear to the better part of his nature, the pleasure of vindicating innocence which had no other helper, of repairing cruel wrongs, of punishing tyranny in high places. He had also the satisfaction, not less acceptable to his ravenous vanity, of hearing terrified Capuchins call him the Antichrist. But whether employed in works of benevolence, or in works of mischief, he never forgot Potsdam and Frankfort; and he listened anxiously to every murmur which indicated that a tempest was gathering in Europe, and that his vengeance was at hand.

He soon had his wish. Maria Theresa had never for a moment forgotten the great wrong which she had received at the hand of Frederic. Young and delicate, just left an orphan, just about to be a mother, she had been compelled to fly from the ancient capital of her race; she had seen her fair inheritance dismembered by robbers, and of those robbers he had been the foremost. Without

a pretext, without a provocation, in defiance of the most sacred engagements, he had attacked the helpless ally whom he was bound to defend. The Empress Queen had the faults as well as the virtues which are connected with quick sensibility and a high spirit. There was no peril which she was not ready to brave, no calamity which she was not ready to bring on her subjects, or on the whole human race, if only she might once taste the sweetness of a complete revenge. Revenge, too, presented itself, to her narrow and superstitious mind, in the guise of duty. Silesia had been wrested not only from the House of Austria, but from the Church of Rome. The conqueror had indeed permitted his new subjects to worship God after their own fashion; but this was not enough. To bigotry it seemed an intolerable hardship that the Catholic Church, having long enjoyed ascendancy, should be compelled to content itself with equality. Nor was this the only circumstance which led Maria Theresa to regard her enemy as the enemy of God. The profaneness of Frederic's writings and conversation, and the frightful rumours which were circulated respecting the immorality of his private life, naturally shocked a woman who believed with the firmest faith all that her confessor told her, and who, though surrounded by temptations, though young and beautiful, though ardent in all her passions, though possessed of absolute power, had preserved her fame unsullied even by the breath of slander.

To recover Silesia, to humble the dynasty of Hohenzollern to the dust, was the great object of her life. She toiled during many

years for this end, with zeal as indefatigable as that which the poet ascribed to the stately goddess who tired out her immortal horses in the work of raising the nations against Troy, and who offered to give up to destruction her darling Sparta and Mycenae, if only she might once see the smoke going up from the palace of Priam. With even such a spirit did the proud Austrian Juno strive to array against her foe a coalition such as Europe had never seen. Nothing would content her but that the whole civilised world, from the White Sea to the Adriatic, from the Bay of Biscay to the pastures of the wild horses of the Tanais, should be combined in arms against one petty State.

She early succeeded by various arts in obtaining the adhesion of Russia. An ample share of spoil was promised to the King of Poland; and that prince, governed by his favourite, Count Bruhl, readily promised the assistance of the Saxon forces. The great difficulty was with France. That the Houses of Bourbon and of Hapsburg should ever cordially co-operate in any great scheme of European policy, had long been thought, to use the strong expression of Frederic, just as impossible as that fire and water should amalgamate. The whole history of the Continent, during two centuries and a half, had been the history of the mutual jealousies and enmities of France and Austria. Since the administration of Richelieu, above all, it had been considered as the plain policy of the Most Christian King to thwart on all occasions the Court of Vienna, and to protect every member of the Germanic body who stood up against the dictation of

the Caesars. Common sentiments of religion had been unable to mitigate this strong antipathy. The rulers of France, even while clothed in the Roman purple, even persecuting the heretics of Rochelle and Auvergne, had still looked with favour on the Lutheran and Calvinistic princes who were struggling against the chief of the empire. If the French ministers paid any respect to the traditional rules handed down to them through many generations, they would have acted towards Frederic as the greatest of their predecessors acted towards Gustavus Adolphus. That there was deadly enmity between Prussia and Austria was of itself a sufficient reason for close friendship between Prussia and France. With France Frederic could never have any serious controversy. His territories were so situated that his ambition, greedy and unscrupulous as it was, could never impel him to attack her of his own accord. He was more than half a Frenchman: he wrote, spoke, read nothing but French: he delighted in French society: the admiration of the French he proposed to himself as the best reward of all his exploits. It seemed incredible that any French Government, however notorious for levity or stupidity, could spurn away such an ally.

The Court of Vienna, however, did not despair. The Austrian diplomatists propounded a new scheme of politics, which, it must be owned, was not altogether without plausibility. The great powers, according to this theory, had long been under a delusion. They had looked on each other as natural enemies, while in truth they were natural allies. A succession of cruel wars had

devastated Europe, had thinned the population, had exhausted the public resources, had loaded governments with an immense burden of debt; and when, after two hundred years of murderous hostility or of hollow truce, the illustrious Houses whose enmity had distracted the world sat down to count their gains, to what did the real advantage on either side amount? Simply to this, that they had kept each other from thriving. It was not the King of France, it was not the Emperor, who had reaped the fruits of the Thirty Years' War, or of the War of the Pragmatic Sanction. Those fruits had been pilfered by states of the second and third rank, which, secured against jealousy by their insignificance, had dexterously aggrandised themselves while pretending to serve the animosity of the great chiefs of Christendom. While the lion and tiger were tearing each other, the jackal had run off into the jungle with the prey. The real gainer by the Thirty Years' War had been neither France nor Austria, but Sweden. The real gainer by the War of the Pragmatic Sanction had been neither France nor Austria, but the upstart of Brandenburg. France had made great efforts, had added largely to her military glory, and largely to her public burdens; and for what end? Merely that Frederic might rule Silesia. For this and this alone one French army, wasted by sword and famine, had perished in Bohemia; and another had purchased with flood of the noblest blood, the barren glory of Fontenoy. And this prince, for whom France had suffered so much, was he a grateful, was he even an honest ally? Had he not been as false to the Court of Versailles as to the Court of Vienna?

Had he not played, on a large scale, the same part which, in private life, is played by the vile agent of chicane who sets his neighbours quarrelling, involves them in costly and interminable litigation, and betrays them to each other all round, certain that, whoever may be ruined, he shall be enriched? Surely the true wisdom of the great powers was to attack, not each other, but this common barrator, who, by inflaming the passions of both, by pretending to serve both, and by deserting both, had raised himself above the station to which he was born. The great object of Austria was to regain Silesia; the great object of France was to obtain an accession of territory on the side of Flanders. If they took opposite sides, the result would probably be that, after a war of many years, after the slaughter of many thousands of brave men, after the waste of many millions of crowns, they would lay down their arms without having achieved either object; but, if they came to an understanding, there would be no risk, and no difficulty. Austria would willingly make in Belgium such cessions as France could not expect to obtain by ten pitched battles. Silesia would easily be annexed to the monarchy of which it had long been a part. The union of two such powerful governments would at once overawe the King of Prussia. If he resisted, one short campaign would settle his fate. France and Austria, long accustomed to rise from the game of war both losers, would, for the first time, both be gainers. There could be no room for jealousy between them. The power of both would be increased at once; the equilibrium between them would

be preserved; and the only sufferer would be a mischievous and unprincipled buccaneer, who deserved no tenderness from either.

These doctrines, attractive from their novelty and ingenuity, soon became fashionable at the supper-parties and in the coffee-houses of Paris, and were espoused by every gay marquis and every facetious abbe who was admitted to see Madame de Pompadour's hair curled and powdered. It was not, however, to any political theory that the strange coalition between France and Austria owed its origin. The real motive which induced the great continental powers to forget their old animosities and their old state maxims was personal aversion to the King of Prussia. This feeling was strongest in Maria Theresa; but it was by no means confined to her. Frederic, in some respects a good master, was emphatically a bad neighbour. That he was hard in all dealings, and quick to take all advantages, was not his most odious fault. His bitter and scoffing speech had inflicted keener wounds than his ambition. In his character of wit he was under less restraint than even in his character of ruler. Satirical verses against all the princes and ministers of Europe were ascribed to his pen. In his letters and conversation he alluded to the greatest potentates of the age in terms which would have better suited Colle, in a war of repartee with young Crebillon at Pelletier's table, than a great sovereign speaking of great sovereigns. About women he was in the habit of expressing himself in a manner which it was impossible for the meekest of women to forgive;

and, unfortunately for him, almost the whole Continent was then governed by women who were by no means conspicuous for meekness. Maria Theresa herself had not escaped his scurrilous jests. The Empress Elizabeth of Russia knew that her gallantries afforded him a favourite theme for ribaldry and invective. Madame de Pompadour, who was really the head of the French Government, had been even more keenly galled. She had attempted, by the most delicate flattery, to propitiate the King of Prussia; but her messages had drawn from him only dry and sarcastic replies. The Empress Queen took a very different course. Though the haughtiest of princesses, though the most austere of matrons, she forgot in her thirst for revenge both the dignity of her race and the purity of her character, and condescended to flatter the lowborn and low-minded concubine, who, having acquired influence by prostituting herself, retained it by prostituting others. Maria Theresa actually wrote with her own hand a note, full of expressions of esteem and friendship to her dear cousin, the daughter of the butcher Poisson, the wife of the publican D'Etioules, the kidnapper of young girls for the haram of an old rake, a strange cousin for the descendant of so many Emperors of the West! The mistress was completely gained over, and easily carried her point with Lewis, who had, indeed, wrongs of his own to resent. His feelings were not quick, but contempt, says the Eastern proverb, pierces even through the shell of the tortoise; and neither prudence nor decorum had ever restrained Frederic from expressing his measureless contempt

for the sloth, the imbecility, and the baseness of Lewis. France was thus induced to join the coalition; and the example of France determined the conduct of Sweden, then completely subject to French influence.

The enemies of Frederic were surely strong enough to attack him openly; but they were desirous to add to all their other advantages the advantage of a surprise. He was not, however, a man to be taken off his guard. He had tools in every Court; and he now received from Vienna, from Dresden, and from Paris, accounts so circumstantial and so consistent, that he could not doubt of his danger. He learnt, that he was to be assailed at once by France, Austria, Russia, Saxony, Sweden, and the Germanic body; that the greater part of his dominions was to be portioned out among his enemies; that France, which from her geographical position could not directly share in his spoils, was to receive an equivalent in the Netherlands; that Austria was to have Silesia, and the Czarina East Prussia; that Augustus of Saxony expected Magdeburg; and that Sweden would be rewarded with part of Pomerania. If these designs succeeded, the House of Brandenburg would at once sink in the European system to a place lower than that of the Duke of Wurtemberg or the Margrave of Baden.

And what hope was there that these designs would fail? No such union of the continental powers had been seen for ages. A less formidable confederacy had in a week conquered, all the provinces of Venice, when Venice was at the height, of

power, wealth, and glory. A less formidable confederacy had compelled Lewis the Fourteenth to bow down his haughty head to the very earth. A less formidable confederacy has, within our own memory, subjugated a still mightier empire, and abused a still prouder name. Such odds had never been heard of in war. The people whom Frederic ruled were not five millions. The population of the countries which were leagued against him amounted to a hundred millions, The disproportion in wealth was at least equally great. Small communities, actuated by strong sentiments of patriotism or loyalty, have sometimes made head against great monarchies weakened by factions and discontents. But small as was Frederic's kingdom, it probably contained a greater number of disaffected subjects than were to be found in all the states of his enemies. Silesia formed a fourth part of his dominions; and from the Silesians, born under Austrian princes, the utmost that he could expect was apathy. From the Silesian Catholics he could hardly expect anything but resistance.

Some states have been enabled, by their geographical position, to defend themselves with advantage against immense force. The sea has repeatedly protected England against the fury of the whole Continent. The Venetian Government, driven from its possessions on the land, could still bid defiance to the confederates of Cambray from the arsenal amidst the lagoons. More than one great and well appointed army, which regarded the shepherds of Switzerland as an easy prey, has perished in the passes of the Alps. Frederic hid no such advantage. The

form of his states, their situation, the nature of the ground, all were against him. His long, scattered, straggling territory seemed to have been shaped with an express view to the convenience of invaders, and was protected by no sea, by no chain of hills. Scarcely any corner of it was a week's march from the territory of the enemy. The capital itself, in the event of war, would be constantly exposed to insult. In truth there was hardly a politician or a soldier in Europe who doubted that the conflict would be terminated in a very few days by the prostration of the House of Brandenburg.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.