

bigotry, from their position as independent sovereigns, should have been attended with such fatal consequences as have left an indelible blot on the history of their reigns.<sup>4</sup>

On his return to Brussels, Philip busied himself with preparations for the campaign. He employed the remittances from Spain to subsidize a large body of German mercenaries. Germany was the country which furnished, at this time, more soldiers of fortune than any other; men who served indifferently under the banner that would pay them best. They were not exclusively made up of infantry, like the Swiss, but, besides pikemen,—*lanzknechts*,—they maintained a stout array of cavalry, *reiters*, as they were called,—“riders,”—who, together with the cuirass and other defensive armor, carried pistols, probably of rude workmanship, but which made them formidable from the weapon being little known in that day. They were, indeed, the most dreaded troops of their time. The men-at-arms, encumbered with their unwieldy lances, were drawn up in line, and required an open plain to manœuvre to advantage, being easily discomposed by obstacles; and once broken, they could hardly rally. But the *reiters*, each with five or six pistols in his belt, were formed into columns of considerable depth, the size of their weapons allowing them to go through all the evolutions of light cavalry, in which they were perfectly drilled. Philip's cavalry was further strengthened by a fine corps of Burgundian lances, and by a great number of nobles and cavaliers from Spain, who had come to gather laurels in the fields of France, under the eye of their young sovereign. The flower of his infantry, too, was drawn from Spain; men who, inde-

<sup>4</sup> See Tytler's valuable work, *Reigns of Edward VI. and Mary*. The compilation of this work led its

candid author to conclusions eminently favorable to the personal character of Queen Mary.

pendently of the indifference to danger, and wonderful endurance, which made the Spanish soldier inferior to none of the time, were animated by that loyalty to the cause which foreign mercenaries could not feel. In addition to these, the king expected, and soon after received, a reinforcement of eight thousand English under the earl of Pembroke. They might well fight bravely on the soil where the arms of England had won two of the most memorable victories in her history.

The whole force, exclusive of the English, amounted to thirty-five thousand foot and twelve thousand horse, besides a good train of battering artillery.<sup>5</sup> The command of this army was given to Emanuel Philibert, prince of Piedmont, better known by his title of duke of Savoy. No man had a larger stake in the contest, for he had been stripped of his dominions by the French, and his recovery of them depended on the issue of the war. He was at this time but twenty-nine years of age; but he had had large experience in military affairs, and had been intrusted by Charles the Fifth, who had early discerned his capacity, with important commands. His whole life may be said to have trained him for the profession of arms. He had no taste for effeminate pleasures, but amused himself, in seasons of leisure, with the hardy exercise of the chase. He strengthened his constitution, naturally not very robust, by living as much as possible in the open air. Even when conversing, or dictating to his secretaries, he preferred to do so

<sup>5</sup> Conf. De Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, tom. III. p. 148; Cabrera, *Filipe Segundo*, lib. IV. cap. 4; Campana, *Vita del Re Filippo Secondo*, parte II. lib. 9; Herrera, *Historia General*, lib. IV. cap. 14.

The historian here, as almost everywhere else where numerical estimates are concerned, must con-

tent himself with what seems to be the closest approximation to the truth. Some writers carry the Spanish foot to fifty thousand. I have followed the more temperate statement of the contemporary De Thou, who would not be likely to underrate the strength of an enemy.

walking in his garden. He was indifferent to fatigue. After hunting all day he would seem to require no rest, and in a campaign had been known, like the knights-errant of old, to eat, drink, and sleep in his armor for thirty days together.

He was temperate in his habits, eating little, and drinking water. He was punctual in attention to business, was sparing of his words, and, as one may gather from the piquant style of his letters, had a keen insight into character, looking below the surface of men's actions into their motives.<sup>6</sup>

His education had not been neglected. He spoke several languages fluently, and, though not a great reader, was fond of histories. He was much devoted to mathematical science, which served him in his profession, and he was reputed an excellent engineer.<sup>7</sup> In person the duke was of the middle size; well-made, except that he was somewhat bow-legged. His complexion was fair, his hair light, and his deportment very agreeable.

Such is the portrait of Emanuel Philibert, to whom Philip now intrusted the command of his forces, and whose pretensions he warmly supported as the suitor of Elizabeth of England. There was none more worthy of the royal maiden. But the duke was a Catholic; and Elizabeth, moreover, had seen the odium which her sister had incurred by her marriage with a foreign sovereign. Philip, who would have used some constraint in the matter, pressed it with such earnestness on the queen as proved how much importance he attached

<sup>6</sup> See the letters of the duke published in the *Papiers d'Etat de Granvelle*, (tom. V., passim.)—business-like documents, seasoned with lively criticisms on the characters of those

he had to deal with.

<sup>7</sup> *Relazione della Corte di Savoia di Gio. Francesco Morosini, 1570*, ap. *Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti*, vol. IV.

to the connection. Mary's conduct on the occasion was greatly to her credit; and, while she deprecated the displeasure of her lord, she honestly told him that she could not in conscience do violence to the inclinations of her sister.<sup>8</sup>

The plan of the campaign, as determined by Philip's cabinet,<sup>9</sup> was that the duke should immediately besiege some one of the great towns on the northern borders of Picardy, which in a manner commanded the entrance into the Netherlands. Rocroy was the first selected. But the garrison, who were well provided with ammunition, kept within their defences, and maintained so lively a cannonade on the Spaniards, that the duke, finding the siege was likely to consume more time than it was worth, broke up his camp, and resolved to march against St. Quentin. This was an old frontier town of Picardy, important in time of peace as an *entrepôt* for the trade that was carried on between France and the Low Countries. It formed a convenient place of deposit, at the present period, for such booty as marauding parties from time to time brought back from Flanders. It was well protected by its natural situation, and the fortifications had been originally strong; but, as in many of the frontier towns, they had been of late years much neglected.

Before beginning operations against St. Quentin, the duke of Savoy, in order to throw the enemy off his guard, and prevent his introducing supplies into the town, presented himself before Guise, and made a show of laying siege to that place. After this demonstration he resumed his march, and suddenly sat down before St. Quentin, investing it with his whole army.

<sup>8</sup> See the letter of the queen to Philip, in Strype, Catalogue of Originals, No. 56.

<sup>9</sup> Papiers d'Etat de Granvelle, tom. V. p. 115.

Meanwhile the French had been anxiously watching the movements of their adversary. Their forces were assembled on several points in Picardy and Champagne. The principal corps was under the command of the duke of Nevers, governor of the latter province, a nobleman of distinguished gallantry, and who had seen some active service. He now joined his forces to those under Montmorency, the constable of France, who occupied a central position in Picardy, and who now took the command, for which his rash and impetuous temper but indifferently qualified him. As soon as the object of the Spaniards was known, it was resolved to reinforce the garrison of St. Quentin, which otherwise, it was understood, could not hold out a week. This perilous duty was assumed by Gaspard de Coligni, admiral of France.<sup>10</sup> This personage, the head of an ancient and honored house, was one of the most remarkable men of his time. His name has gained a mournful celebrity in the page of history; as that of the chief martyr in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. He embraced the doctrines of Calvin, and by his austere manners and the purity of his life well illustrated the doctrines he embraced. The decent order of his household, and their scrupulous attention to the services of religion, formed a striking contrast to the licentious conduct of too many of the Catholics, who, however, were as prompt as Coligni to do battle in defence of their faith. In early life he was the gay companion of the duke of Guise.<sup>11</sup> But as the Calvinists, or

<sup>10</sup> De Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, tom. III. p. 147.—*Commentaires de François de Rabutin*, ap. *Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de France*, par MM. Michaud et Poujoulat, (Paris, 1838,) tom. VII. p. 535.—Herrera, *Historia General*, lib. IV. cap. 14.—Cabrera, *Filipe Segundo*, lib. IV. cap. 5.

<sup>11</sup> "Ils furent tous deux, dans leur jeunes ans, . . . sy grands compagnons, amis et confederez de court, que j'ay ouy dire à plusieurs qui les ont veus habiller le plus souvant de mesmes parures, mesmes livrées, . . . tous deux fort enjouez et faisant des follies plus extravagantes que tous les autres; et sur tout ne faisoient nulles follies

Huguenots, were driven by persecution to an independent and even hostile position, the two friends, widely separated by opinion and by interest, were changed into mortal foes. That hour had not yet come. But the heresy that was soon to shake France to its centre was silently working under ground.

As the admiral was well instructed in military affairs, and was possessed of an intrepid spirit and great fertility of resource, he was precisely the person to undertake the difficult office of defending St. Quentin. As governor of Picardy he felt this to be his duty. Without loss of time, he put himself at the head of some ten or twelve hundred men, horse and foot, and used such despatch that he succeeded in entering the place before it had been entirely invested. He had the mortification, however, to be followed only by seven hundred of his men, the remainder having failed through fatigue, or mistaken the path.

The admiral found the place in even worse condition than he had expected. The fortifications were much dilapidated; and in many parts of the wall the masonry was of so flimsy a character, that it must have fallen before the first discharge of the enemy's cannon. The town was victualled for three weeks, and the magazines were tolerably well supplied with ammunition. But there were not fifty arquebuses fit for use.

St. Quentin stands on a gentle eminence, protected on one side by marshes, or rather a morass of great extent, through which flows the river Somme, or a branch of it. On the same side of the river with St. Quentin lay the army of the besiegers, with their glittering lines extending to the very verge of the morass.

qu'ils ne fissent mal, tant ils estoient leurs jeux." Brantome, Œuvres, rudes joueurs et malheureux en tom. III. p. 265.

A broad ditch defended the outer wall. But this ditch was commanded by the houses of the suburbs, which had already been taken possession of by the besiegers. There was, moreover, a thick plantation of trees close to the town, which would afford an effectual screen for the approach of an enemy.

One of the admiral's first acts was to cause a sortie to be made. The ditch was crossed, and some of the houses were burned to the ground. The trees on the banks were then levelled, and the approach to the town was laid open. Every preparation was made for a protracted defence. The exact quantity of provision was ascertained, and the rations were assigned for each man's daily consumption. As the supplies were inadequate to support the increased population for any length of time, Coligni ordered that all except those actively engaged in the defence of the place should leave it without delay. Many, under one pretext or another, contrived to remain, and share the fortunes of the garrison. But by this regulation he got rid of seven hundred useless persons, who, if they had staid, must have been the victims of famine; and "their dead bodies," the admiral coolly remarked, "would have bred a pestilence among the soldiers."<sup>12</sup>

He assigned to his men their several posts, talked boldly of maintaining himself against all the troops of Spain, and by his cheerful tone endeavored to inspire a confidence in others which he was far from feeling himself. From one of the highest towers he surveyed the surrounding country, tried to ascertain the most practicable fords in the morass, and sent intelligence to

<sup>12</sup> "Il falloit les nourrir ou les faire mourir de faim, qui eust peu apporter une peste dans la ville." Mémoires de Gaspard de Coligni,

ap. Collection Universelle des Mémoires particuliers relatifs à l'histoire de France, (Paris, 1788,) tom. XL. p. 252.

Montmorency, that, without relief, the garrison could not hold out more than a few days.<sup>13</sup>

That commander, soon after the admiral's departure, had marched his army to the neighborhood of St. Quentin, and established it in the towns of La Fère and Ham, together with the adjoining villages, so as to watch the movements of the Spaniards, and coöperate, as occasion served, with the besieged. He at once determined to strengthen the garrison, if possible, by a reinforcement of two thousand men under Dandelot, a younger brother of the admiral, and not inferior to him in audacity and enterprise. But the expedition miserably failed. Through the treachery or the ignorance of the guide, the party mistook the path, came on one of the enemy's outposts, and, disconcerted by the accident, were thrown into confusion, and many of them cut to pieces or drowned in the morass. Their leader, with the remainder, succeeded, under cover of the night, in making his way back to La Fère.

The constable now resolved to make another attempt, and in the open day. He proposed to send a body, under the same commander, in boats across the Somme, and to cover the embarkation in person with his whole army. His force was considerably less than that of the Spaniards, amounting in all to about eighteen thousand foot and six thousand horse, besides a train of artillery consisting of sixteen guns.<sup>14</sup> His levies, like those of his

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.—De Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, tom. III. p. 151.—Rabutin, *ap. Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires*, tom. VII. p. 540.—Garnier, *Histoire de France*, (Paris, 1787,) tom. XXVII. p. 358.

<sup>14</sup> There is not so much discrepancy in the estimates of the French as of the Spanish force. I have accepted the statements of the

French historians, Garnier, (*Histoire de France*, tom. XXVII. p. 354,) and De Thou, (tom. III. p. 148,) who, however, puts the cavalry at one thousand less. For authorities on the Spanish side, see Cabrera, *Filipe Segundo*, lib. IV. cap. 7.—Herrera, *Historia General*, lib. IV. cap. 15.—Campana, *Vita del Re Filippo Secondo*, parte II. lib. 9.

antagonist, were largely made up of German mercenaries. The French peasantry, with the exception of the Gascons, who formed a fine body of infantry, had long since ceased to serve in war. But the chivalry of France was represented by as gallant an array of nobles and cavaliers as ever fought under the banner of the lilies.

On the ninth of August, 1557, Montmorency put his whole army in motion; and on the following morning, the memorable day of St. Lawrence, by nine o'clock, he took up a position on the bank of the Somme. On the opposite side, nearest the town, lay the Spanish force, covering the ground, as far as the eye could reach, with their white pavilions; while the banners of Spain, of Flanders, and of England, unfurled in the morning breeze, showed the various nations from which the motley host had been gathered.<sup>15</sup>

On the constable's right was a windmill, commanding a ford of the river which led to the Spanish quarters. The building was held by a small detachment of the enemy. Montmorency's first care was to get possession of the mill, which he did without difficulty; and, by placing a garrison there, under the prince of Condé, he secured himself from surprise in that quarter. He then profited by a rising ground to get his guns in position, so as to sweep the opposite bank, and at once opened a brisk cannonade on the enemy. The march of the French had been concealed by some intervening hills, so that, when they suddenly appeared on the farther side of the Somme, it was as if they had dropped from the clouds; and the shot which fell among the Spaniards threw them into great disorder. There was hurrying to and fro, and some of the balls striking the duke of Savoy's tent, he had barely time to escape with his

<sup>15</sup> Rabutin, ap. Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires, tom. VII. p. 548.

armor in his hand. It was necessary to abandon his position, and he marched some three miles down the river, to the quarters occupied by the commander of the cavalry, Count Egmont.<sup>16</sup>

Montmorency, as much elated with this cheap success as if it had been a victory, now set himself about passing his troops across the water. It was attended with more difficulty than he had expected. There were no boats in readiness, and two hours were wasted in procuring them. After all, only four or five could be obtained, and these so small that it would be necessary to cross and recross the stream many times to effect the object. The boats, crowded with as many as they could carry, stuck fast in the marshy banks, or rather quagmire, on the opposite side; and when some of the soldiers jumped out to lighten the load, they were swallowed up and suffocated in the mud.<sup>17</sup> To add to these distresses, they were galled by the incessant fire of a body of troops which the Spanish general had stationed on an eminence that commanded the landing.

While, owing to these causes, the transportation of the troops was going slowly on, the duke of Savoy had called a council of war, and determined that the enemy, since he had ventured so near, should not be allowed to escape without a battle. There was a practicable ford in the river, close to Count Egmont's quarters; and that officer received orders to cross it at the head of his

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, ubi supra. — Monplein-champ, Histoire d'Emmanuel Philibert Duc de Savoie, (Amsterdam, 1699), p. 146. — De Thou, Histoire Universelle, tom. III. p. 157.

The first of these writers, François de Rabutin, is one of the best authorities for these transactions, in which he took part as a follower of the duc de Nevers.

<sup>17</sup> "Encore à sortir des bateaux, à cause de la presse, les soldats ne pouvoient suivre les addresses et sentes qui leur estoient appareillées; de façon qu'ils s'escartoient et se jettoient à costé dans les creux des marets, d'où ils ne pouvoient sortir, et demouroient là embourbez et noyez." Rabutin, ap. Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires, tom. VII. p. 549.

cavalry, and amuse the enemy until the main body of the Spanish army, under the duke, should have time to come up.

Lamoral, Count Egmont, and prince of Gavre, a person who is to occupy a large space in our subsequent pages, was a Flemish noble of an ancient and illustrious lineage. He had early attracted the notice of the emperor, who had raised him to various important offices, both civil and military, in which he had acquitted himself with honor. At this time, when thirty-five years old, he held the post of lieutenant-general of the horse, and that of governor of Flanders.

Egmont was of a lofty and aspiring nature, filled with dreams of glory, and so much elated by success, that the duke of Savoy was once obliged to rebuke him, by reminding him that he was not the commander-in-chief of the army.<sup>18</sup> With these defects he united some excellent qualities, which not unfrequently go along with them. In his disposition he was frank and manly, and, though hasty in temper, had a warm and generous heart. He was distinguished by a chivalrous bearing, and a showy, imposing address, which took with the people, by whom his name was held dear in later times for his devotion to the cause of freedom. He was a dashing officer, prompt and intrepid, well fitted for a brilliant *coup de main*, or for an affair like the present, which required energy and despatch; and he eagerly undertook the duty assigned him.

The light horse first passed over the ford, the existence of which was known to Montmorency; and he had detached a corps of German pistoleers, of whom there was a body in the French service, to defend the passage. But the number was too small, and the Burgundian

<sup>18</sup> Brantome, Œuvres, tom. I. p. 361.

horse, followed by the infantry, advanced, in face of the fire, as coolly and in as good order as if they had been on parade.<sup>19</sup> The constable soon received tidings that the enemy had begun to cross; and, aware of his mistake, he reinforced his pistoleers with a squadron of horse under the duc de Nevers. It was too late; when the French commander reached the ground, the enemy had already crossed in such strength that it would have been madness to attack him. After a brief consultation with his officers, Nevers determined, by as speedy a countermarch as possible, to join the main body of the army.

The prince of Condé, as has been mentioned, occupied the mill which commanded the other ford, on the right of Montmorency. From its summit he could descry the movements of the Spaniards, and their battalions debouching on the plain, with scarcely any opposition from the French. He advised the constable of this at once, and suggested the necessity of an immediate retreat. The veteran did not relish advice from one so much younger than himself, and testily replied, "I was a soldier before the prince of Condé was born; and, by the blessing of Heaven, I trust to teach him some good lessons in war for many a year to come." Nor would he quit the ground while a man of the reinforcement under Dandelot remained to cross.<sup>20</sup>

The cause of this fatal confidence was information he had received that the ford was too narrow to allow more than four or five persons to pass abreast, which would

<sup>19</sup> I quote the words of Monplein-champ, (*Histoire du Duc de Savoie*, p. 147,) who, however, speaks of the fire as coming from the artillery,—hardly probable, as the French batteries were three miles distant, up the river. But accuracy does not appear to be the chief virtue of this writer.

<sup>20</sup> "Manda au prince, pour toute réponse, qu'il étoit bien jeune pour vouloir lui apprendre son metier, qu'il commandoit les armées avant que celui-ci fût au monde, et qu'il comptoit bien en vingt ans lui donner encore des leçons." Garnier, *Histoire de France*, tom. XXVII. p. 364.

give him time enough to send over the troops, and then secure his own retreat to La Fère. As it turned out, unfortunately, the ford was wide enough to allow fifteen or twenty men to go abreast.

The French, meanwhile, who had crossed the river, after landing on the opposite bank, were many of them killed or disabled by the Spanish arquebusiers; others were lost in the morass; and of the whole number not more than four hundred and fifty, wet, wounded, and weary, with Dandelot at their head, succeeded in throwing themselves into St. Quentin. The constable, having seen the last boat put off, gave instant orders for retreat. The artillery was sent forward in the front, then followed the infantry, and, last of all, he brought up the rear with the horse, of which he took command in person. He endeavored to make up for the precious time he had lost by quickening his march, which, however, was retarded by the heavy guns in the van.

The duc de Nevers, as we have seen, declining to give battle to the Spaniards who had crossed the stream, had prepared to retreat on the main body of the army. On reaching the ground lately occupied by his countrymen, he found it abandoned; and joining Condé, who still held the mill, the two officers made all haste to overtake the constable.

Meanwhile, Count Egmont, as soon as he was satisfied that he was in sufficient strength to attack the enemy, gave orders to advance, without waiting for more troops to share with him the honors of victory. Crossing the field lately occupied by the constable, he took the great road to La Fère. But the rising ground which lay between him and the French prevented him from seeing the enemy until he had accomplished half a league or more. The day was now well advanced, and the Flemish

captain had some fears that, notwithstanding his speed, the quarry had escaped him. But, as he turned the hill, he had the satisfaction to descry the French columns in full retreat. On their rear hung a body of sutlers and other followers of the camp, who, by the sudden apparition of the Spaniards, were thrown into a panic, which they had wellnigh communicated to the rest of the army.<sup>21</sup> To retreat before an enemy is in itself a confession of weakness sufficiently dispiriting to the soldier. Montmorency, roused by the tumult, saw the dark cloud gathering along the heights, and knew that it must soon burst on him. In this emergency, he asked counsel of an old officer near him as to what he should do. "Had you asked me," replied the other, "two hours since, I could have told you; it is now too late."<sup>22</sup> It was indeed too late, and there was nothing to be done but to face about and fight the Spaniards. The constable, accordingly, gave the word to halt, and made dispositions to receive his assailants.

Egmont, seeing him thus prepared, formed his own squadron into three divisions. One, which was to turn the left flank of the French, he gave to the prince of Brunswick and to Count Hoorne,—a name afterwards associated with his own on a sadder occasion than the present. Another, composed chiefly of Germans, he placed under Count Mansfeldt, with orders to assail the centre. He himself, at the head of his Burgundian lances, rode on the left against Montmorency's right

<sup>21</sup> Rabutin, who gives this account, says it would be impossible to tell how the disorder began. It came upon them so like a thunder-clap, that no man had a distinct recollection of what passed. Rabutin, ap. Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires, tom. VII. p. 550.

<sup>22</sup> "Appellant à lui dans ce trouble

le vieux d'Oignon, officier expérimenté, il lui demanda: Bon homme, que faut-il faire? Monseigneur, répondit d'Oignon, il y a deux heures que je vous l'aurois bien dit, maintenant je n'en sais rien." Garnier, Histoire de France, tom. XXVII. p. 368.

flank. Orders were then given to charge, and, spurring forward their horses, the whole column came thundering on against the enemy. The French met the shock like well-trained soldiers, as they were; but the cavalry fell on them with the fury of a torrent sweeping everything before it, and for a few moments it seemed as if all were lost. But the French chivalry was true to its honor, and, at the call of Montmorency, who gallantly threw himself into the thick of the fight, it rallied, and, returning the charge, compelled the assailants to give way in their turn. The struggle, now continued on more equal terms, grew desperate; man against man, horse against horse,—it seemed to be a contest of personal prowess, rather than of tactics or military science. So well were the two parties matched, that for a long time the issue was doubtful; and the Spaniards might not have prevailed in the end, but for the arrival of reinforcements, both foot and heavy cavalry, who came up to their support. Unable to withstand this accumulated force, the French cavaliers, overpowered by numbers, not by superior valor, began to give ground. Hard pressed by Egmont, who cheered on his men to renewed efforts, their ranks were at length broken. The retreat became a flight; and, scattered over the field in all directions, they were hotly pursued by their adversaries, especially the German *schwarzreiters*,—those riders “black as devils,”<sup>23</sup>—who did such execution with their fire-arms as completed the discomfiture of the French.

Amidst this confusion, the Gascons, the flower of the French infantry, behaved with admirable coolness.<sup>24</sup> Throwing themselves into squares, with the pikemen

<sup>23</sup> “Noirs comme de beaux diables.” Brantome, Œuvres, tom. III. p. 185.

<sup>24</sup> “Icelles compagnies de fanterie, en ce peu qu’elles se comportoient, autant belles, bien completes et bien

armed with their long pikes in front, and the arquebusiers in the centre, they presented an impenetrable array, against which the tide of battle raged and chafed in impotent fury. It was in vain that the Spanish horse rode round the solid masses bristling with steel, if possible, to force an entrance, while an occasional shot, striking a trooper from his saddle, warned them not to approach too near.

It was in this state of things that the duke of Savoy, with the remainder of the troops, including the artillery, came on the field of action. His arrival could not have been more seasonable. The heavy guns were speedily turned on the French squares, whose dense array presented an obvious mark to the Spanish bullets. Their firm ranks were rent asunder; and, as the brave men tried in vain to close over the bodies of their dying comrades, the horse took advantage of the openings to plunge into the midst of the phalanx. Here the long spears of the pikemen were of no avail, and, striking right and left, the cavaliers dealt death on every side. All now was confusion and irretrievable ruin. No one thought of fighting, or even of self-defence. The only thought was of flight. Men overturned one another in their eagerness to escape. They were soon mingled with the routed cavalry, who rode down their own countrymen. Horses ran about the field without riders. Many of the soldiers threw away their arms, to fly the more quickly. All strove to escape from the terrible pursuit which hung on their rear. The artillery and ammunition-wagons choked up the road, and obstructed the flight of the fugitives. The slaughter was dreadful. The best blood of France flowed like water.

Yet mercy was shown to those who asked it. Hun-

armées, que l'on en avoit veu en butin, ap. Nouvelle Collection des France il y avoit long-temps." Ra- Mémoires, tom. VII. p. 551.

dreds and thousands threw down their arms, and obtained quarter. Nevers, according to some accounts, covered the right flank of the French army. Others state that he was separated from it by a ravine or valley. At all events, he fared no better than his leader. He was speedily enveloped by the cavalry of Hoorne and Brunswick, and his fine corps of light horse cut to pieces. He himself, with the prince of Condé, was so fortunate as to make his escape, with the remnant of his forces, to La Fère.

Had the Spaniards followed up the pursuit, few Frenchmen might have been left that day to tell the story of the rout of St. Quentin. But the fight had already lasted four hours; evening was setting in; and the victors, spent with toil and sated with carnage, were content to take up their quarters on the field of battle.

The French, in the mean time, made their way, one after another, to La Fère, and, huddling together in the public squares, or in the quarters they had before occupied, remained like a herd of panic-struck deer, in whose ears the sounds of the chase are still ringing. But the loyal cavaliers threw off their panic, and recovered heart, when a rumor reached them that their commander, Montmorency, was still making head, with a body of stout followers, against the enemy. At the tidings, faint and bleeding as they were, they sprang to the saddles which they had just quitted, and were ready again to take the field.<sup>25</sup>

But the rumor was without foundation. Montmorency was a prisoner in the hands of the Spaniards.

<sup>25</sup> "A ces nouvelles s'esleverent tellement leurs esprits et courages, qu'ils recoururent incontinent aux armes, et n'oyoit-on plus partout que demander harnois et chevaux, et trompettes sonner à cheval, ayant

chacun recouvert ses forces et sentimens pour venger la honte précédente; toutefois ce murmure se trouva nul, et demeura assoupi en peu d'heure." Ibid., p. 552.

The veteran had exposed his own life throughout the action, as if willing to show that he would not shrink in any degree from the peril into which he had brought his followers. When he saw that the day was lost, he threw himself into the hottest of the battle, holding life cheap in comparison with honor. A shot from the pistol of a *schwarzreiter*, fracturing his thigh, disabled him from further resistance; and he fell into the hands of the Spaniards, who treated him with the respect due to his rank. The number of prisoners was very large,—according to some accounts, six thousand, of whom six hundred were said to be gentlemen and persons of condition. The number of the slain is stated, as usual, with great discrepancy, varying from three to six thousand. A much larger proportion of them than usual were men of family. Many a noble house in France went into mourning for that day. Among those who fell was Jean de Bourbon, count d'Enghien, a prince of the blood. Mortally wounded, he was carried to the tent of the duke of Savoy, where he soon after expired, and his body was sent to his countrymen at La Fère for honorable burial. To balance this bloody roll, no account states the loss of the Spaniards at over a thousand men.<sup>26</sup>

More than eighty standards, including those of the cavalry, fell into the hands of the victors, together with all the artillery, ammunition-wagons, and baggage of the enemy. France had not experienced such a defeat since the battle of Agincourt.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Campana, *Vita del Re Filippo Secondo*, parte II. lib. 9.

According to some accounts, the loss did not exceed fifty. This, considering the spirit and length of the contest, will hardly be credited. It reminds one of the wars with the Moslems in the Peninsula, where, if we are to take the account of the

Spaniards, their loss was usually as one to a hundred of the enemy.

<sup>27</sup> For the preceding pages, see Rabutin, ap. *Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires*, tom. VII. pp. 548—552.—Cabrera, *Filipe Segundo*, lib. IV. cap. 7.—Campana, *Vita del Re Filippo Secondo*, parte II. lib. 9.—*Monpleinchamp, Vie du Duc de*

King Philip had left Brussels, and removed his quarters to Cambrai, that he might be near the duke of Savoy, with whom he kept up daily communication throughout the siege. Immediately after the battle, on the eleventh of August, he visited the camp in person. At the same time, he wrote to his father, expressing his regret that he had not been there to share the glory of the day.<sup>28</sup> The emperor seems to have heartily shared this regret.<sup>29</sup> It is quite certain, if Charles had had the direction of affairs, he would not have been absent. But Philip had not the bold, adventurous spirit of his father. His talent lay rather in meditation than in action; and his calm, deliberate forecast better fitted him for the council than the camp. In enforcing levies, in raising supplies, in superintending the organization of the army, he was indefatigable. The plan of the campaign was determined under his own eye; and he was most sagacious in the selection of his agents. But to those agents he prudently left the conduct of the war, for which he had no taste, perhaps no capacity, himself. He did not, like his rival, Henry the Second, fancy himself a great captain because he could carry away the prizes of a tourney.

Philip was escorted to the camp by his household troops. He appeared on this occasion armed *cap-à-pie*,—a thing by no means common with him. It seems to have pleased his fancy to be painted in military costume.

Savoie, pp. 146—150.—Herrera, Historia General, lib. IV. cap. 15.—De Thou, Histoire Universelle, tom. III. pp. 154—160.—Garnier, Histoire de France, tom. XXVII. pp. 361—372.—Carta de Felipe 2<sup>do</sup> à su padre anunciándole la victoria de San Quentin, MS.

<sup>28</sup> "Pues yo no me hallé allí, de que me pesa lo que V. M. no puede

pensar, no puedo dar relación de lo que paso sino de oydas." Carta de Felipe 2<sup>do</sup> à su padre, 11 de Agosto, 1557, MS.

<sup>29</sup> This appears by a letter of the major-domo of Charles, Luis Quixada, to the secretary, Juan Vazquez de Molina, MS.

"Siento que no se puede conortar de que su hijo no se hallase en ello."

At least, there are several portraits of him in complete mail,—one from the pencil of Titian. A picture taken at the present time was sent by him to Queen Mary, who, in this age of chivalry, may have felt some pride in seeing her lord in the panoply of war.

On the king's arrival at the camp, he was received with all the honors of a victor; with flourishes of trumpets, salvos of artillery, and the loud shouts of the soldiery. The duke of Savoy laid at his feet the banners and other trophies of the fight, and, kneeling down, would have kissed Philip's hand; but the king, raising him from the ground, and embracing him as he did so, said that the acknowledgments were due from himself to the general who had won him such a victory. At the same time, he paid a well-deserved compliment to the brilliant part which Egmont and his brave companions had borne in the battle.<sup>30</sup>

The first thing to be done was to dispose of the prisoners, whose number embarrassed the conquerors. Philip dismissed all those of the common file, on the condition that they should not bear arms for six months against the Spaniards. The condition did no great detriment to the French service, as the men, on their return, were sent to garrison some distant towns, and their places in the army filled by the troops whom they had relieved. The cavaliers and persons of condition were lodged in fortresses, where they could be securely detained till the amount of their respective ransoms was determined. These ransoms formed an important part of the booty of the conqueror. How important, may be inferred from the sum offered by the constable on his own account and that of his son,—no less, it is said, than a hundred and sixty-five thousand gold crowns!<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Cabrera, Filipe Segundo, lib. IV, cap. 7.

<sup>31</sup> De Thou, Histoire Universelle, tom. III. p. 246.

The soldier of that day, when the penalty was loss of fortune as well as of freedom, must be confessed to have fought on harder conditions than at present.

A council of war was next called, to decide on further operations. When Charles the Fifth received tidings of the victory of St. Quentin, the first thing he asked, as we are told, was "whether Philip were at Paris."<sup>32</sup> Had Charles been in command, he would doubtless have followed up the blow by presenting himself at once before the French capital. But Philip was not of that sanguine temper which overlooks, or at least overleaps, the obstacles in its way. Charles calculated the chances of success; Philip, those of failure. Charles's character opened the way to more brilliant achievements, but exposed him also to severer reverses. His enterprising spirit was more favorable to building up a great empire; the cautious temper of Philip was better fitted to preserve it. Philip came in the right time; and his circumspect policy was probably better suited to his position, as well as to his character, than the bolder policy of the emperor.

When the duke of Savoy urged, as it is said, the expediency of profiting by the present panic to march at once on the French capital, Philip looked at the dangers of such a step. Several strong fortresses of the enemy would be left in his rear. Rivers must be crossed, presenting lines of defence which could easily be maintained

<sup>32</sup> It is Brantôme who tells the anecdote, in his usual sarcastic way. "Encor, tout religieux, demy saint qu'il estoit, il ne se peut en garder que quant le roy son fils eut gaigné la bataille de Saint-Quentin de demander aussi tost que le courrier luy apporta des nouvelles, s'il avoit bien poursuivi la victoire, et jusques aux portes de Paris." *Œuvres*,

tom. I. p. 11.

Luis Quixada, in a letter written at the time from Yuste, gives a version of the story, which, if it has less point, is probably more correct. "S. Mag<sup>a</sup>. está con mucho cuidado por saber que camino arrá tomado el Rey despues de acabada aquella empresa de San Quintin." Carta de 27 de septiembre, 1557, MS.

against a force even superior to his own. Paris was covered by formidable works, and forty thousand citizens could be enrolled, at the shortest notice, for its protection. It was not wise to urge the foe to extremity, to force a brave and loyal people, like the French, to rise *en masse*, as they would do for the defence of their capital. The emperor, his father, had once invaded France with a powerful army, and laid siege to Marseilles. The issue of that invasion was known to everybody. "The Spaniards," it was tauntingly said, "had come into the country feasting on turkeys; they were glad to escape from it feeding on roots!"<sup>33</sup> Philip determined, therefore, to abide by his original plan of operations, and profit by the late success of his arms to press the siege of St. Quentin with his whole force.—It would not be easy for any one, at this distance of time, to pronounce on the wisdom of his decision. But subsequent events tend considerably to strengthen our confidence in it.

Preparations were now made to push the siege with vigor. Besides the cannon already in the camp, and those taken in the battle, a good number of pieces were brought from Cambray to strengthen the battering-train of the besiegers. The river was crossed; and the Faubourg d'Île was carried by the duke, after a stout resistance on the part of the French, who burned the houses in their retreat. The Spanish commander availed himself of his advantage to establish batteries close to the town, which kept up an incessant cannonade, that shook the old walls and towers to their foundation. The miners also carried on their operations, and galleries were excavated almost to the centre of the place.

<sup>33</sup> "Parano entrar en Francia como su padre comiendo pabos, i salir comiendo raizes." Cabrera, Filipe Segundo, lib. IV. cap. 8.

The condition of the besieged, in the mean time, was forlorn in the extreme; not so much from want of food, though their supplies were scanty, as from excessive toil and exposure. Then it was that Coligni displayed all the strength of his character. He felt the importance of holding out as long as possible, that the nation might have time to breathe, as it were, and recover from the late disaster. He endeavored to infuse his own spirit into the hearts of his soldiers, toiling with the meanest of them, and sharing all their privations. He cheered the desponding, by assuring them of speedy relief from their countrymen. Some he complimented for their bravery; others he flattered by asking their advice. He talked loudly of the resources at his command. If any should hear him so much as hint at a surrender, he gave them leave to tie him hand and foot, and throw him into the moat. If he should hear one of them talk of it, the admiral promised to do as much by him.<sup>34</sup>

The duc de Nevers, who had established himself, with the wreck of the French army and such additional levies as he could muster, in the neighborhood of St. Quentin, contrived to communicate with the admiral. On one occasion he succeeded in throwing a reinforcement of a hundred and twenty arquebusiers into the town, though it cost him thrice that number, cut to pieces by the Spaniards in the attempt. Still the number of the garrison was altogether inadequate to the duties imposed on it. With scanty refreshment, almost without repose, watching and fighting by turns, the day passed in defending the breaches which the night was not long

<sup>34</sup> " Si l'on m'oyoit tenir quelque langage, qui approchast de faire composition, je les suppliois tous qu'ils me jettassent, comme un poltron, dedans le fossé par dessus les

murailles : que s'il y avoit quelqu'un qui m'en tint propos, je ne lui en ferois pas moins.<sup>35</sup> Coligni, Mémoires, ap. Collection Universelle des Mémoires, tom. XL. p. 272.

enough to repair. No frame could be strong enough to endure it.

Coligni had, fortunately, the services of a skilful engineer, named St. Rémy, who aided him in repairing the injuries inflicted on the works by the artillery, and by the scarcely less destructive mines of the Spaniards. In the want of solid masonry, every material was resorted to for covering up the breaches. Timbers were thrown across; and boats filled with earth, laid on the broken rampart, afforded a good bulwark for the French musketeers. But the time was come when neither the skill of the engineer nor the courage of the garrison could further avail. Eleven practicable breaches had been opened, and St. Rémy assured the admiral that he could not engage to hold out four-and-twenty hours longer.<sup>35</sup>

The duke of Savoy also saw that the time had come to bring the siege to a close by a general assault. The twenty-seventh of August was the day assigned for it. On that preceding he fired three mines, which shook down some fragments of the wall, but did less execution than was expected. On the morning of the twenty-seventh, his whole force was under arms. The duke divided it into as many corps as there were breaches, placing these corps under his best and bravest officers. He proposed to direct the assault in person.

Coligni made his preparations also with consummate coolness. He posted a body of troops at each of the breaches, while he and his brother Dandelot took charge of the two which, still more exposed than the others, might be considered as the post of danger. He had the satisfaction to find, in this hour of trial, that the men, as well as their officers, seemed to be animated with his own heroic spirit.

<sup>35</sup> Gaillard, Rivalité, tom. V. p. 253.

Before proceeding to storm the place, the duke of Savoy opened a brisk cannonade, in order to clear away the barricades of timber, and other temporary defences, which had been thrown across the breaches. The fire continued for several hours, and it was not till afternoon that the signal was given for the assault. The troops rushed forward,—Spaniards, Flemings, English, and Germans,—spurred on by feelings of national rivalry. A body of eight thousand brave Englishmen had joined the standard of Philip in the early part of the campaign; <sup>36</sup> and they now eagerly coveted the opportunity for distinction which had been denied them at the battle of St. Quentin, where the fortune of the day was chiefly decided by cavalry. But no troops felt so keen a spur to their achievements as the Spaniards, fighting as they were under the eye of their sovereign, who from a neighboring eminence was spectator of the combat.

The obstacles were not formidable in the path of the assailants, who soon clambered over the fragments of masonry and other rubbish which lay scattered below the ramparts, and, in the face of a steady fire of musketry, presented themselves before the breaches. The brave men stationed to defend them were in sufficient strength to occupy the open spaces; their elevated position gave them some advantage over the assailants, and they stood to their posts with the resolution of men prepared to die rather than surrender. A fierce conflict now ensued along the whole extent of the ramparts; and the French, sustained by a dauntless spirit, bore themselves as stoutly in the fight as if they had been in training for it of late, instead of being enfeebled by scanty subsistence and excessive toil. After a severe struggle, which lasted nearly an hour, the Spaniards were driven back at all

<sup>36</sup> Burnet, Reformation, vol. III. p. 636.

points. Not a breach was won; and, broken and dispirited, the assailants were compelled to retire on their former position.

After this mortifying repulse, the duke did not give them a long time to breathe, before he again renewed the assault. This time he directed the main attack against a tower where the resistance had been weakest. In fact, Coligni had there placed the troops on whom he had least reliance, trusting to the greater strength of the works. But a strong heart is worth all the defences in the world. After a sharp but short struggle, the assailants succeeded in carrying the tower. The faint-hearted troops gave way; and the Spaniards, throwing themselves on the rampart, remained masters of one of the breaches. A footing once gained, the assailants poured impetuously into the opening, Spaniards, Germans, and English streaming like a torrent along the ramparts, and attacking the defenders on their flank. Coligni, meanwhile, and his brother Dandelot, had rushed, with a few followers, to the spot, in the hope, if possible, to arrest the impending ruin. But they were badly supported. Overwhelmed by numbers, they were trodden down, disarmed, and made prisoners. Still the garrison, at the remaining breaches, continued to make a desperate stand. But, with one corps pressing them on flank, and another in front, they were speedily cut to pieces, or disabled and taken. In half an hour resistance had ceased along the ramparts. The town was in possession of the Spaniards.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For notices of the taking of St. Quentin, in greater or less detail, see Coligni, Mémoires, ap. Collection Universelle des Mémoires, tom. XL.; Rabutin, Mémoires, ap. Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires, tom. VII. p. 556 et seq.; De Thou, Histoire

Universelle, tom. III. pp. 164—170; Campana, Vita del Re Filippo Secondo, parte II. lib. 9; Cabrera, Filipe Segundo, lib. IV. cap. 9; Monpleinchamp, Vie du Duc de Savoie, p. 152.

Juan de Pinedo, in a letter to the

A scene of riot and wild uproar followed, such as made the late conflict seem tame in comparison. The victorious troops spread over the town in quest of plunder, perpetrating those deeds of ruthless violence, usual, even in this enlightened age, in a city taken by storm. The wretched inhabitants fled before them; the old and the helpless, the women and children, taking refuge in garrets, cellars, and any other corner where they could hide themselves from their pursuers. Nothing was to be heard but the groans of the wounded and the dying, the cries of women and children,—“so pitiful,” says one present, “that they would grieve any Christian heart,”<sup>38</sup>—mingled with the shouts of the victors, who, intoxicated with liquor, and loaded with booty, now madly set fire to several of the buildings, which soon added the dangers of conflagration to the other horrors of the scene. In a short time, the town would have been reduced to ashes, and the place which Philip had won at so much cost would have been lost to him by the excesses of his own soldiers.

The king had now entered the city in person. He had never been present at the storming of a place, and the dreadful spectacle which he witnessed touched his heart. Measures were instantly taken to extinguish the flames, and orders were issued that no one, under pain of death, should offer any violence to the old and infirm, to the women and children, to the ministers of religion, to religious edifices, or, above all, to the relics of the

secretary Vazquez, (dated St. Quentin, August 27,) speaking of the hard fighting which took place in the assault, particularly praises the gallantry of the English: “Esta tarde entre tres y quatro horas se ha entrado San Quentin à pura fuerça peleando muy bien los de dentro y los de fuera, muy escogi-

damente todos, y por extremo los Ingleses.” MS.

<sup>38</sup> Letter of the earl of Bedford to Sir William Cecil, (dated “from our camp beside St. Quentin, the 3rd of Sept. 1557,”) ap. Tytler, Edward VI. and Mary, vol. II. p. 493.

blessed St. Quentin. Several hundred of the poor people, it is said, presented themselves before Philip, and claimed his protection. By his command they were conducted, under a strong escort, to a place of safety.<sup>39</sup>

It was not possible, however, to prevent the pillage of the town. It would have been as easy to snatch the carcass from the tiger that was rending it. The pillage of a place taken by storm was regarded as the perquisite of the soldier, on which he counted as regularly as on his pay. Those who distinguished themselves most, in this ruthless work, were the German mercenaries. Their brutal rapacity filled even their confederates with indignation. The latter seem to have been particularly disgusted with the unscrupulous manner in which the *schwarzreiters* appropriated not only their own share of the plunder, but that of both English and Spaniards.<sup>40</sup>

Thus fell the ancient town of St. Quentin, after a defence which reflects equal honor on the courage of the garrison, and on the conduct of their commander. With its fortifications wretchedly out of repair, its supplies of arms altogether inadequate, the number of its garrison at no time exceeding a thousand, it still held out for near a month against a powerful army, fighting under the eyes of its sovereign, and led by one of the best captains of Europe.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> According to Sepulveda, (De Rebus Gestis Philippi II., lib. I. cap. 30,) no less than four thousand women. It is not very probable that Coligni would have consented to cater for so many useless mouths.

<sup>40</sup> "The Swartzrotters, being masters of the king's whole army, used such force, as well to the Spaniards, Italians, and all other nations, as unto us, that there was none could enjoy nothing but themselves. They have now showed such cruelty, as the like hath not been seen for gree-

diness: the town by them was set a-fire, and a great piece of it burnt." Letter of the earl of Bedford to Cecil, ap. Tytler, Edward VI. and Mary, vol. II. p. 493.

<sup>41</sup> Rabutin, Mémoires, ap. Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires, tom. VII. pp. 537—564.—De Thou, Histoire Universelle, tom. III. pp. 149—170. Campana, Vita di Filippo Secondo, parte II. lib. 9.

The best account of the siege of St. Quentin is to be found in Coligni's Mémoires, (ap. Collection

Philip, having taken measures to restore the fortifications of St. Quentin, placed it under the protection of a Spanish garrison, and marched against the neighboring town of Catelet. It was a strong place, but its defenders, unlike their valiant countrymen at St. Quentin, after a brief show of resistance, capitulated on the sixth of September. This was followed by the surrender of Ham, once renowned through Picardy for the strength of its defences. Philip then led his victorious battalions against Noyon and Chaulny, which last town was sacked by the soldiers. The French were filled with consternation, as one strong place after another, on the frontier, fell into the hands of an enemy who seemed as if he were planting his foot permanently on their soil. That Philip did not profit by his success to push his conquests still further, is to be attributed not to remissness on his part, but to the conduct, or rather the composition, of his army, made up, as it was, of troops, who, selling their swords to the highest bidder, cared little for the banner under which they fought. Drawn from different countries, the soldiers, gathered into one camp, soon showed all their national rivalries and animosities. The English quarrelled with the Germans, and neither could brook the insolent bearing of the Spaniards. The Germans complained that their arrears were not paid,—a complaint probably well founded, as, notwithstanding his large resources, Philip, on an emergency, found the difficulty in raising funds, which every prince in that day felt, when there was no such thing known as a well-arranged system of taxation. Tempted by the superior offers of

Universelle des Mémoires, tom. XL. pp. 217—290,) written by him in his subsequent captivity, when the events were fresh in his memory. The narrative is given in a simple,

unpretending manner, that engages our confidence, though the author enters into a minuteness of detail which the general historian may be excused from following.

Henry the Second, the *schwarzreiters* left the standard of Philip in great numbers, to join that of his rival.

The English were equally discontented. They had brought from home the aversion for the Spaniards which had been festering there since the queen's marriage. The sturdy islanders were not at all pleased with serving under Philip. They were fighting, not the battles of England, they said, but of Spain. Every new conquest was adding to the power of a monarch far too powerful already. They had done enough, and insisted on being allowed to return to their own country. The king, who dreaded nothing so much as a rupture between his English and his Spanish subjects, to which he saw the state of things rapidly tending, was fain to consent.

By this departure of the English force, and the secession of the Germans, Philip's strength was so much impaired, that he was in no condition to make conquests, hardly to keep the field. The season was now far advanced, for it was the end of October. Having, therefore, garrisoned the conquered places, and put them in the best posture of defence, he removed his camp to Brussels, and soon after put his army into winter-quarters.<sup>42</sup>

Thus ended the first campaign of Philip the Second; the first, and, with the exception of the following, the only campaign in which he was personally present. It had been eminently successful. Besides the important places which he had gained on the frontier of Picardy, he had won a signal victory in the field.

But the campaign was not so memorable for military results as in a moral view. It showed the nations of Europe that the Spanish sceptre had passed into the

<sup>42</sup> De Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, tom. III. pp. 173—177.—Cabrera, *Filipe Segundo*, lib. IV. cap. 13.—

Sepulveda, *De Rebus Gestis Philippi* II., lib. I. cap. 32.

hands of a prince who was as watchful as his predecessor had been over the interests of the state; and who, if he were not so actively ambitious as Charles the Fifth, would be as little likely to brook any insult from his neighbors. The victory of St. Quentin, occurring at the commencement of his reign, reminded men of the victory won at Pavia by his father, at a similar period of his career, and, like that, furnished a brilliant augury for the future. Philip, little given to any visible expression of his feelings, testified his joy at the success of his arms, by afterwards raising the magnificent pile of the Escorial, in honor of the blessed martyr St. Lawrence, on whose day the battle was fought, and to whose interposition with Heaven he attributed the victory.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife  
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

## CHAPTER VIII.

## WAR WITH FRANCE.

Extraordinary Efforts of France.—Calais surprised by Guise.—The French invade Flanders.—Bloody Battle of Gravelines.—Negotiations for Peace.—Mary's Death.—Accession of Elizabeth.—Treaty of Cateau-Cambresis.

1557—1559.

THE state of affairs in France justified Philip's conclusions in respect to the loyalty of the people. No sooner did Henry the Second receive tidings of the fatal battle of St. Quentin, than he despatched couriers in all directions, summoning his chivalry to gather round his banner, and calling on the towns for aid in his extremity. The nobles and cavaliers promptly responded to the call, flocking in with their retainers; and not only the large towns, but those of inferior size, cheerfully submitted to be heavily taxed for the public service. Paris nobly set the example. She did not exhaust her zeal in processions of the clergy, headed by the queen and the royal family, carrying with them relics from the different churches. All the citizens capable of bearing arms enrolled themselves for the defence of the capital; and large appropriations were made for strengthening Montmartre, and for defraying the expenses of the war.<sup>1</sup>

With these and other resources at his command,

<sup>1</sup> De Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, *Histoire de France*, tom. XXVII. p. tom. III. pp. 163, 176.—Garnier, 377 et seq.

Henry was speedily enabled to subsidize a large body of Swiss and German mercenaries. The native troops serving abroad were ordered home. The veteran Marshal Termes came, with a large corps, from Tuscany, and the duke of Guise returned, with the remnant of his battalions, from Rome. This popular commander was welcomed with enthusiasm. The nation seemed to look to him as to the deliverer of the country. His late campaign in the kingdom of Naples was celebrated as if it had been a brilliant career of victory. He was made lieutenant-general of the army, and the oldest captains were proud to take service under so renowned a chief.

The government was not slow to profit by the extraordinary resources thus placed at its disposal. Though in the depth of winter, it was resolved to undertake some enterprise that should retrieve the disasters of the late campaign, and raise the drooping spirits of the nation. The object proposed was the recovery of Calais, that strong place, which for more than two centuries had remained in possession of the English.

The French had ever been keenly sensible to the indignity of an enemy thus planting his foot immovably, as it were, on their soil. They had looked to the recovery of Calais with the same feelings with which the Spanish Moslems, when driven into Africa, looked to the recovery of their ancient possessions in Granada. They showed how constantly this was in their thoughts, by a common saying respecting any commander whom they held lightly, that he was "not a man to drive the English out of France."<sup>2</sup> The feelings they entertained, how-

<sup>2</sup> "C'étoit un proverbe reçu en France pour désigner un mauvais général, un guerrier sans mérite, de dire: *il ne chassera pas les Anglois*

*de la France.*" Gaillard, *Rivalité de France et de l'Espagne*, tom. V. p. 260.

ever, were rather those of desire than of expectation. The place was so strong, so well garrisoned, and so accessible to the English, that it seemed impregnable. These same circumstances, and the long possession of the place, had inspired the English, on the other hand, with no less confidence, as was pretty well intimated by an inscription on the bronze gates of the town,—“When the French besiege Calais, lead and iron will swim like cork.”<sup>3</sup> This confidence, as it often happens, proved their ruin.

The bishop of Acqs, the French envoy to England, on returning home, a short time before this, had passed through Calais, and gave a strange report of the decay of the works, and the small number of the garrison, in short, of the defenceless condition of the place. Guise, however, as cautious as he was brave, was unwilling to undertake so hazardous an enterprise without more precise information. When satisfied of the fact, he entered on the project with his characteristic ardor. The plan adopted was said to have been originally suggested by Coligni. In order to deceive the enemy, the duke sent the largest division of the army, under Nevers, in the direction of Luxemburg. He then marched with the remainder into Picardy, as if to menace one of the places conquered by the Spaniards. Soon afterwards the two corps united, and Guise, at the head of his whole force, by a rapid march, presented himself before the walls of Calais.

The town was defended by a strong citadel, and by two forts. One of these, commanding the approach by water, the duke stormed and captured on the second of

<sup>3</sup> “Aussi les Anglois furent si glorieux (car ils le sont assez de leur naturel) de mettre sur les portes de la ville que, lors que les François

assiègeront Calais, l'on verra le plomb et le fer nager sur l'eau comme le liege.” Brantôme, Œuvres, tom. III. p. 203.

January, 1558. The other, which overlooked the land, he carried on the following day. Possessed of these two forts, he felt secure from any annoyance by the enemy, either by land or by water. He then turned his powerful battering-train against the citadel, keeping up a furious cannonade by day and by night. On the fifth, as soon as a breach was opened, the victorious troops poured in, and, overpowering the garrison, planted the French colors on the walls. The earl of Wentworth, who commanded in Calais, unable, with his scanty garrison, to maintain the place now that the defences were in the hands of the enemy, capitulated on the eighth. The fall of Calais was succeeded by that of Guisnes and of Hames. Thus, in a few days, the English were stripped of every rood of the territory which they had held in France since the time of Edward the Third.

The fall of Calais caused the deepest sensation on both sides of the Channel. The English, astounded by the event, loudly inveighed against the treachery of the commander. They should rather have blamed the treachery of their own government, who had so grossly neglected to provide for the defence of the place. Philip, suspecting the designs of the French, had intimated his suspicions to the English government, and had offered to strengthen the garrison by a reinforcement of his own troops. But his allies, perhaps distrusting his motives, despised his counsel, or at least failed to profit by it.<sup>4</sup> After the place was taken, he made another offer to send a strong force to recover it, provided the English would support him with a sufficient fleet. This also, perhaps from the same feeling of distrust, though on the plea of inability to meet the expense, was

<sup>4</sup> Burnet, History of the Reformation, vol. III. p. 646.

declined, and the opportunity for the recovery of Calais was lost for ever.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, in truth, it was no great loss to the nation. Like more than one, probably, of the colonial possessions of England at the present day, Calais cost every year more than it was worth. Its chief value was the facility it afforded for the invasion of France. Yet such a facility for war with their neighbors, always too popular with the English before the time of Philip the Second, was of questionable value. The real injury from the loss of Calais was the wound which it inflicted on the national honor.

The exultation of the French was boundless. It could not well have been greater, if the duke of Guise had crossed the Channel and taken London itself. The brilliant and rapid manner in which the exploit had been performed, the gallantry with which the young general had exposed his own person in the assault, the generosity with which he had divided his share of the booty among the soldiers, all struck the lively imagination of the French; and he became more than ever the idol of the people.

Yet, during the remainder of the campaign, his arms were not crowned with such distinguished success. In May he marched against the strong town of Thionville, in Luxemburg. After a siege of twenty days, the place surrendered. Having taken one or two other towns of less importance, the French army wasted nearly three weeks in a state of inaction, unless, indeed, we take into account the activity caused by intestine troubles of the army itself. It is difficult to criticize fairly the conduct of a commander of that age, when his levies were made up so largely of foreign mercenaries, who

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 650.

felt so little attachment to the service in which they were engaged, that they were ready to quarrel with it on the slightest occasion. Among these the German *schwarzreiters* were the most conspicuous, manifesting too often a degree of insolence and insubordination that made them hardly less dangerous as friends than as enemies. The importance they attached to their own services made them exorbitant in their demands of pay. When this, as was too frequently the case, was in arrears, they took the matter into their own hands, by pillaging the friendly country in which they were quartered, or by breaking out into open mutiny. A German baron, on one occasion, went so far as to level his pistol at the head of the duke of Guise. So widely did this mutinous spirit extend, that it was only by singular coolness and address that this popular chieftain could bring these adventurers into anything like subjection to his authority. As it was, the loss of time caused by these troubles was attended with most disastrous consequences.

The duke had left Calais garrisoned by a strong force, under Marshal Termes. He had since ordered that veteran to take command of a body of fifteen hundred horse and five thousand foot, drawn partly from the garrison itself, and to march into West Flanders. Guise proposed to join him there with his own troops, when they would furnish such occupation to the Spaniards as would effectually prevent them from a second invasion of Picardy.

The plan was well designed, and the marshal faithfully executed his part of it. Taking the road by St. Omer, he entered Flanders in the neighborhood of Dunkirk, laid siege to that flourishing town, stormed and gave it up to pillage. He then penetrated as far

as Nieuport, when the fatigue and the great heat of the weather brought on an attack of gout, which entirely disabled him. The officer on whom the command devolved allowed the men to spread themselves over the country, where they perpetrated such acts of rapacity and violence as were not sanctioned even by the code of that unscrupulous age. The wretched inhabitants, driven from their homes, called loudly on Count Egmont, their governor, to protect them. The duke of Savoy lay with his army, at this time, at Maubeuge, in the province of Namur; but he sent orders to Egmont to muster such forces as he could raise in the neighboring country, and to intercept the retreat of the French, until the duke could come to his support and chastise the enemy.

Egmont, indignant at the wrongs of his countrymen, and burning with the desire of revenge, showed the greatest alacrity in obeying these orders. Volunteers came in from all sides, and he soon found himself at the head of an army consisting of ten or twelve thousand foot and two thousand horse. With these he crossed the borders at once, and sent forward a detachment to occupy the great road by which De Termes had penetrated into Flanders.

The French commander, advised too late of these movements, saw that it was necessary to abandon at once his present quarters, and secure, if possible, his retreat. Guise was at a distance, occupied with the troubles of his own camp. The Flemings had possession of the route by which the marshal had entered the country. One other lay open to him along the seashore, in the neighborhood of Gravelines, where the Aa pours its waters into the ocean. By taking advantage of the ebb, the river might be forded, and a direct road to Calais would be presented.

Termes saw that no time was to be lost. He caused himself to be removed from his sick-bed to a litter, and began his retreat at once. On leaving Dunkirk, he fired the town, where the houses were all that remained to the wretched inhabitants of their property. His march was impeded by his artillery, by his baggage, and especially by the booty which he was conveying back from the plundered provinces. He however succeeded in crossing the Aa at low water, and gained the sands on the opposite side. But the enemy was there before him.<sup>6</sup>

Egmont, on getting tidings of the marshal's movements, had crossed the river higher up, where the stream was narrower. Disencumbering himself of artillery, and even of baggage, in order to move the lighter, he made a rapid march to the sea-side, and reached it in time to intercept the enemy. There was no choice left for Termes but to fight his way through the Spaniards or surrender.

Ill as he was, the marshal mounted his horse, and addressed a few words to his troops. Pointing in the direction of the blazing ruins of Dunkirk, he told them that they could not return there. Then turning towards Calais, "There is your home," he said, "and you must beat the enemy before you can gain it." He determined, however, not to begin the action, but to secure his position as strongly as he could, and wait the assault of the Spaniards.

He placed his infantry in the centre, and flanked it on either side by his cavalry. In the front he established his artillery, consisting of six or seven falconets,

<sup>6</sup> De Thou, *Histoire Universelle*, tom. III. p. 238.—Garnier, *Histoire de France*, tom. XXVII. p. 512.—Rabutin, *ap. Nouvelle Collection des Mémoires*, tom. VII. p. 598.—Campana, *Vita del Re Filippo Se-*

*condo*, parte II. lib. 10.—Cabrera, *Filipe Segundo*, lib. IV. cap. 21.—Herrera, *Historia General*, lib. V. cap. 5.—Monpleinchamp, *Vie du Duc de Savoie*, p. 154.

—field-pieces of smaller size. He threw a considerable body of Gascon pikemen in the rear, to act as a reserve wherever their presence should be required. The river Aa, which flowed behind his troops, formed also a good protection in that quarter. His left wing he covered by a barricade made of the baggage and artillery wagons. His right, which rested on the ocean, seemed secure from any annoyance on that side.

Count Egmont, seeing the French thus preparing to give battle, quickly made his own dispositions. He formed his cavalry into three divisions. The centre he proposed to lead in person. It was made up chiefly of the heavy men-at-arms and some Flemish horse. On the right he placed his light cavalry, and on the left wing rode the Spanish. His infantry he drew up in such a manner as to support the several divisions of horse. Having completed his arrangements, he gave orders to the centre and the right wing to charge, and rode at full gallop against the enemy.

Though somewhat annoyed by the heavy guns in their advance, the battalions came on in good order, and fell with such fury on the French left and centre, that horse and foot were borne down by the violence of the shock. But the French gentlemen who formed the cavalry were of the same high mettle as those who fought at St. Quentin. Though borne down for a moment, they were not overpowered; and, after a desperate struggle, they succeeded in rallying and in driving back the assailants. Egmont returned to the charge, but was forced back with greater loss than before. The French, following up their advantage, compelled the assailants to retreat on their own lines. The guns, at the same time, opening on the exposed flank of the retreating troopers, did them considerable mischief.