

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

ITALIAN WARS.—GENERAL VIEW OF EUROPE.—INVASION OF ITALY BY CHARLES VIII., OF FRANCE.

1493 — 1495.

Europe at the Close of the Fifteenth Century.—More intimate Relations between States.—Italy the School of Politics.—Pretensions of Charles VIII. to Naples.—Treaty of Barcelona.—The French invade Naples.—Ferdinand's Dissatisfaction.—Tactics and Arms of the different Nations.—Preparations of Spain.—Mission to Charles VIII.—Bold Conduct of the Envoys.—The French enter Naples.

WE have now reached that memorable epoch, when the different nations of Europe, surmounting the barriers which had hitherto confined them within their respective limits, brought their forces, as if by a simultaneous impulse, against each other on a common theatre of action. In the preceding part of this work, we have seen in what manner Spain was prepared for the contest, by the concentration of her various states under one government, and by such internal reforms, as enabled the government to act with vigor. The genius of Ferdinand will appear as predominant in what concerns the foreign relations of the country, as was that of Isabella in its interior administration. So much so, indeed,

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that the accurate and well-informed historian, who has most copiously illustrated this portion of the national annals, does not even mention, in his introductory notice, the name of Isabella, but refers the agency in these events exclusively to her more ambitious consort.¹ In this he is abundantly justified, both by the prevailing character of the policy pursued, widely differing from that which distinguished the queen's measures, and by the circumstance that the foreign conquests, although achieved by the united efforts of both crowns, were undertaken on behalf of Ferdinand's own dominions of Aragon, to which in the end they exclusively appertained.

The close of the fifteenth century presents, on the whole, the most striking point of view in modern history; one from which we may contemplate the consummation of an important revolution in the structure of political society, and the first application of several inventions destined to exercise the widest influence on human civilization. The feudal institutions, or rather the feudal principle, which operated even where the institutions, strictly speaking, did not exist, after having wrought its appointed uses, had gradually fallen into decay; for it had not the power of accommodating itself to the increased demands and improved condition of society. However well suited to a barbarous age, it was found that the distribution of power among the members of an independent aristocracy, was unfa-

¹ Zurita, *Historia del Rey Don Hernando el Cathólico*, tom. v. vi., Zaragoza, 1580, lib. 1, introd.



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avorable to that degree of personal security and tranquillity indispensable to great proficiency in the higher arts of civilization. It was equally repugnant to the principle of patriotism, so essential to national independence, but which must have operated feebly among a people, whose sympathies, instead of being concentrated on the state, were claimed by a hundred masters, as was the case in every feudal community. The conviction of this reconciled the nation to the transfer of authority into other hands; not those of the people, indeed, who were too ignorant, and too long accustomed to a subordinate, dependent situation, to admit of it,—but into the hands of the sovereign. It was not until three centuries more had elapsed, that the condition of the great mass of the people was to be so far improved, as to qualify them for asserting and maintaining the political consideration which of right belongs to them.

In whatever degree public opinion and the progress of events might favor the transition of power from the aristocracy to the monarch, it is obvious that much would depend on his personal character; since the advantages of his station alone made him by no means a match for the combined forces of his great nobility. The remarkable adaptation of the characters of the principal sovereigns of Europe to this exigency, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, would seem to have something providential in it. Henry the Seventh of England, Louis the Eleventh of France, Ferdinand of Naples, John the Second of Aragon, and his son Ferdinand, and John

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the Second of Portugal, however differing in other respects, were all distinguished by a sagacity, which enabled them to devise the most subtle and comprehensive schemes of policy, and which was prolific in expedients for the circumvention of enemies too potent to be encountered by open force.

Improved political and moral condition.

Their operations, all directed towards the same point, were attended with similar success, resulting in the exaltation of the royal prerogative at the expense of the aristocracy, with more or less deference to the rights of the people, as the case might be; in France, for example, with almost total indifference to them, while in Spain they were regarded, under the parental administration of Isabella, which tempered the less scrupulous policy of her husband, with tenderness and respect. In every country, however, the nation at large gained greatly by the revolution, which came on insensibly, at least without any violent shock to the fabric of society, and which, by securing internal tranquillity and the ascendancy of law over brute force, gave ample scope for those intellectual pursuits, that withdraw mankind from sensual indulgence, and too exclusive devotion to the animal wants of our nature.

More intimate relations between states.

No sooner was the internal organization of the different nations of Europe placed on a secure basis, than they found leisure to direct their views, hitherto confined within their own limits, to a bolder and more distant sphere of action. Their international communication was greatly facilitated by several useful inventions coincident with this period, or then first extensively applied. Such was

the art of printing, diffusing knowledge with the speed and universality of light; the establishment of posts, which, after its adoption by Louis the Eleventh, came into frequent use in the beginning of the sixteenth century; and lastly, the compass, which, guiding the mariner unerringly through the trackless wastes of the ocean, brought the remotest regions into contact. With these increased facilities for intercommunication, the different European states might be said to be brought into as intimate relation with one another, as the different provinces of the same kingdom were before. They now for the first time regarded each other as members of one great community, in whose action they were all mutually concerned. A greater anxiety was manifested to detect the springs of every political movement of their neighbours. Missions became frequent, and accredited agents were stationed, as a sort of honorable spies, at the different courts. The science of diplomacy, on narrower grounds, indeed, than it is now practised, began to be studied.² Schemes of aggression and resistance, leading to political combinations the most complex and extended, were gradually formed. We are not to imagine, however, the existence of any well-defined ideas of a balance of power at this early

² The "Legazione," or official correspondence of Machiavelli, while stationed at the different European courts, may be regarded as the most complete manual of diplomacy as it existed at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It affords more copious and curious

information respecting the interior workings of the governments with whom he resided, than is to be found in any regular history; and it shows the variety and extent of duties attached to the office of resident minister, from the first moment of its creation.

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period. The object of these combinations was some positive act of aggression or resistance, for purposes of conquest or defence, not for the maintenance of any abstract theory of political equilibrium. This was the result of much deeper reflection, and of prolonged experience.

Foreign relations conducted by the sovereign.

The management of the foreign relations of the nation, at the close of the fifteenth century, was resigned wholly to the sovereign. The people took no further part or interest in the matter, than if it had concerned only the disposition of his private property. His measures were, therefore, often characterized by a degree of temerity and precipitation, that could not have been permitted under the salutary checks afforded by popular interposition. A strange insensibility, indeed, was shown to the rights and interests of the nation. War was regarded as a game, in which the sovereign parties engaged, not on behalf of their subjects, but exclusively on their own. Like desperate gamblers, they contended for the spoils or the honors of victory, with so much the more recklessness as their own station was too elevated to be materially prejudiced by the results. They contended with all the animosity of personal feeling; every device, however paltry, was resorted to; and no advantage was deemed unwarrantable, which could tend to secure the victory. The most profligate maxims of state policy were openly avowed by men of reputed honor and integrity. In short, the diplomacy of that day is very generally characterized by a low cunning, subterfuge, and petty trickery, which would

leave an indelible stain on the transactions of private individuals.

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Italy the
school of
politics.

Italy was, doubtless, the great school where this political morality was taught. That country was broken up into a number of small states, too nearly equal to allow the absolute supremacy of any one; while, at the same time, it demanded the most restless vigilance on the part of each to maintain its independence against its neighbours. Hence such a complexity of intrigues and combinations as the world had never before witnessed. A subtile, refined policy was conformable to the genius of the Italians. It was partly the result, moreover, of their higher cultivation, which naturally led them to trust the settlement of their disputes to superior intellectual dexterity, rather than to brute force, like the *barbarians* beyond the Alps.³ From these and other causes, maxims were gradually established, so monstrous in their nature as to give the work, which first embodied them in a regular system, the air of a satire rather than a serious performance, while the name of its author has been converted into a by-word of political knavery.⁴

³ "Sed diu," says Sallust, noticing the similar consequence of increased refinement among the ancients, "magnum inter mortales certamen fuit, vine corporis an virtute animi res militaris magis procederet. * * * * * Tum demum periculo atque negotiis compertum est, in bello plurimum ingenium posse." Bellum Catilinarium, cap. 1, 2.

⁴ Machiavelli's political treatises, his "Principe" and "Discorsi so-

pra Tito Livio," which appeared after his death, excited no scandal at the time of their publication. They came into the world, indeed, from the pontifical press, under the privilege of the reigning pope, Clement VII. It was not until thirty years later that they were placed on the Index; and this not from any exceptions taken at the immorality of their doctrines, as Ginguené has well proved, (*Histoire Littéraire d'Italie*, (Paris,

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powerful
states.

At the period before us, the principal states of Italy were, the republics of Venice and Florence, the duchy of Milan, the papal see, and the kingdom of Naples. The others may be regarded merely as satellites, revolving round some one or other of these superior powers, by whom their respective movements were regulated and controlled. Venice may be considered as the most formidable of the great powers, taking into consideration her wealth, her powerful navy, her territory in the north, and princely colonial domain. There was no government in that age which attracted such general admiration, both from natives and foreigners; who seem to have looked upon it as affording the very best model of political wisdom.⁵ Yet there was no country where the citizen enjoyed less positive freedom; none whose foreign relations were conducted with more absolute selfishness, and with a more narrow, bargaining spirit, savouring rather of a company of traders than of a great and powerful state. But all this was compensated, in the eyes of her contemporaries, by the stability of her institutions, which still remained unshaken, amidst revolutions which had convulsed or overturned every other social fabric in Italy.⁶

1811 - 19,) tom. viii. pp. 32, 74,) but from the imputations they contained on the court of Rome.

⁵ "Aquel Senado é Señoria de Venecianos," says Gonzalo de Oviedo, "donde me parece á mi que esta recogido todo el saber é prudencia de los hombres humanos; porque és la gente del mundo que mejor se sabe gobernar; é la

republica, que mas tiempo há durado en el mundo por la buena forma de su regimiento, é donde con mejor manera hán los hombres vivido en comunidad sin tener Rey;" &c. *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 3, dial. 44.

⁶ Of all the incense which poets and politicians have offered to the Queen of the Adriatic, none is

The government of Milan was at this time under the direction of Lodovico Sforza, or Lodovico the Moor, as he is commonly called; an epithet suggested by his complexion, but which he willingly retained, as indicating the superior craftiness on which he valued himself.⁷ He held the reins in the name of his nephew, then a minor, until a convenient season should arrive for assuming them in his own. His cool, perfidious character was stained with the worst vices of the most profligate class of Italian statesmen of that period.

The central parts of Italy were occupied by the republic of Florence, which had ever been the rallying point of the friends of freedom, too often of faction; but which had now resigned itself to the dominion of the Medici, whose cultivated tastes and munificent patronage shed a splendid illusion over their administration, which has blinded the eyes of contemporaries, and even of posterity.

The papal chair was filled by Alexander the Sixth, a pontiff whose licentiousness, avarice, and unblushing effrontery have been the theme of unmingled reproach, with Catholic as well as Protestant writers. His preferment was effected by lavish bribery, and by his consummate address, as well as energy of character. Although a native Spaniard, his election was extremely unpalatable to Ferdi-

more exquisite than that conveyed in these few lines, where Sannazaro notices her position as the bulwark of Christendom.

"Una Italum regina, altæ pulcherrima
Romæ
Emula, quæ terris, quæ dominaris aquis!

Tu tibi vel reges cives facis; O decus! O lux
Ausoniæ, per quam libera turba sumus;
Per quam barbaries nobis non imperat,
et Sol

Exoriens nostro clarius orbe micat!"

Opera Latina, lib. 3, eleg. 1, 95.

⁷ Guicciardini, Istoria, tom. i.
lib. 3, p. 147.

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nand and Isabella, who deprecated the scandal it must bring upon the church, and who had little to hope for themselves, in a political view, from the elevation of one of their own subjects even, whose mercenary spirit placed him at the control of the highest bidder.⁸

The Neapolitan sceptre was swayed by Ferdinand the First, whose father, Alfonso the Fifth, the uncle of Ferdinand of Aragon, had obtained the crown by the adoption of Joanna of Naples, or rather by his own good sword. Alfonso settled his conquest on his illegitimate son Ferdinand, to the prejudice of the rights of Aragon, by whose blood and treasure he had achieved it. Ferdinand's character, the very opposite of his noble father's, was dark, wily, and ferocious. His life was spent in conflict with his great feudal nobility, many of whom supported the pretensions of the Angevin family. But his superior craft enabled him to foil every attempt of his enemies. In effecting this, indeed, he shrunk from no deed of treachery or violence, however atrocious, and in the end had the satisfaction of establishing his authority, undisputed, on the fears of his subjects. He was about

⁸ Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, *epist.* 119, 123. — Fleury, *Histoire Ecclésiastique*, contin. (Paris, 1722,) tom. xxiv. lib. 117, p. 545. — Peter Martyr, whose residence and rank at the Spanish court gave him access to the best sources of information as to the repute in which the new pontiff was held there, expresses himself in one of his letters to Cardinal Sforza, who

had assisted at his election, in the following unequivocal language. "Sed hoc habeto, princeps illustrissime, non placuisse meis Regibus pontificatum ad Alexandrum, quamvis eorum ditionarium, pervenisse. Verentur namque ne illius cupiditas, ne ambitio, ne (quod gravius) mollities filialis Christianam religionem in præceps trahat." *Epist.* 119.

seventy years of age at the period of which we are treating, 1493. The heir apparent, Alfonso, was equally sanguinary in his temper, though possessing less talent for dissimulation than his father.

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Character of
Italian poli-
tics.

Such was the character of the principal Italian courts at the close of the fifteenth century. The politics of the country were necessarily regulated by the temper and views of the leading powers. They were essentially selfish and personal. The ancient republican forms had been gradually effaced during this century, and more arbitrary ones introduced. The name of freedom, indeed, was still inscribed on their banners, but the spirit had disappeared. In almost every state, great or small, some military adventurer, or crafty statesman, had succeeded in raising his own authority on the liberties of his country; and his sole aim seemed to be to enlarge it still further, and to secure it against the conspiracies and revolutions, which the reminiscence of ancient independence naturally called forth. Such was the case with Tuscany, Milan, Naples, and the numerous subordinate states. In Rome, the pontiff proposed no higher object than the concentration of wealth and public honors in the hands of his own family. In short, the administration of every state seemed to be managed with exclusive reference to the personal interests of its chief. Venice was the only power of sufficient strength and stability to engage in more extended schemes of policy, and even these were conducted, as has been already noticed, in the narrow and calculating spirit of a trading corporation.

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prosperity.

But, while no spark of generous patriotism seemed to warm the bosoms of the Italians ; while no sense of public good, or even menace of foreign invasion, could bring them to act in concert with one another,⁹ the internal condition of the country was eminently prosperous. Italy had far outstripped the rest of Europe in the various arts of civilized life ; and she everywhere afforded the evidence of faculties developed by unceasing intellectual action. The face of the country itself was like a garden ; “cultivated through all its plains to the very tops of the mountains ; teeming with population, with riches, and an unlimited commerce ; illustrated by many munificent princes, by the splendor of many noble and beautiful cities, and by the majesty of religion ; and adorned with all those rare and precious gifts, which render a name glorious among the nations.”¹⁰ Such are the glowing strains in which the Tuscan historian celebrates the prosperity of his country, ere yet the storm of war had descended on her beautiful valleys.

Intrigues of
Sforza.

This scene of domestic tranquillity was destined to be changed, by that terrible invasion which the ambition of Lodovico Sforza brought upon his country. He had already organized a coalition of the northern powers of Italy, to defeat the interference of the king of Naples in behalf of his grandson,

⁹ A remarkable example of this occurred in the middle of the fifteenth century, when the inundation of the Turks, which seemed ready to burst upon them, after overwhelming the Arabian and

Greek empires, had no power to still the voice of faction, or to concentrate the attention of the Italian states, even for a moment.

¹⁰ Guicciardini, *Istoria*, tom. i. lib. 1, p. 2.

the rightful duke of Milan, whom his uncle held in subjection during a protracted minority, while he exercised all the real functions of sovereignty in his name. Not feeling sufficiently secure from his Italian confederacy, Sforza invited the king of France to revive the hereditary claims of the house of Anjou to the crown of Naples, promising to aid him in the enterprise with all his resources. In this way, this wily politician proposed to divert the storm from his own head, by giving Ferdinand sufficient occupation at home.

The throne of France was at that time filled by Charles the Eighth, a monarch scarcely twenty-two years of age. His father, Louis the Eleventh, had given him an education unbecoming, not only a great prince, but even a private gentleman. He would allow him to learn no other Latin, says Brantôme, than his favorite maxim, "Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare."¹¹ Charles made some amends for this, though with little judgment, in later life, when left to his own disposal. His favorite studies were the exploits of celebrated conquerors, of Cæsar and Charlemagne particularly, which filled his young mind with vague and visionary ideas of glory. These dreams were still further nourished by the tourneys and other chivalrous spectacles of the age, in which he delighted, until he seems to have imagined himself some doughty paladin of romance, destined to the achievement of a grand and perilous enterprise. It affords some proof of

Charles
VIII., of
France.

¹¹ Brantôme, *Vies des Hommes illustres*, Œuvres Complètes, (Paris, 1822-3,) tom. ii. disc. 1, pp. 2, 20.

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this exalted state of his imagination, that he gave his only son the name of Orlando, after the celebrated hero of Roncesvalles.¹²

With a mind thus excited by chimerical visions of military glory, he lent a willing ear to the artful propositions of Sforza. In the extravagance of vanity, fed by the adulation of interested parasites, he affected to regard the enterprise against Naples as only opening the way to a career of more splendid conquests, which were to terminate in the capture of Constantinople, and the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. He even went so far as to purchase of Andrew Paleologus, the nephew and heir of Constantine, the last of the Cæsars, his title to the Greek empire.¹³

Nothing could be more unsound, according to the principles of the present day, than Charles's claims to the crown of Naples. Without discussing the original pretensions of the rival houses of Aragon and Anjou, it is sufficient to state, that, at the time of Charles the Eighth's invasion, the Neapolitan throne had been in the possession of the Aragonese family more than half a century, under three successive princes solemnly recognised by the people, sanctioned by repeated investitures of the papal suzerain, and admitted by all the states of Europe.

¹² Sismondi, *Hist. des Français*, tom. xv. p. 112. — Gaillard, *Rivalité*, tom. iv. pp. 2, 3.

¹³ Daru, *Histoire de la République de Venise*, (Paris, 1821,) tom. iii. liv. 20. — See the deed of cession, in the memoir of M. de Foncemagne. (*Mémoires de l'Académie*

des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, tom. xvii. pp. 539-579.) This document, as well as some others which appeared on the eve of Charles's expedition, breathes a tone of Quixotic and religious enthusiasm, that transports us back to the days of the crusades.

If all this did not give validity to their title, when was the nation to expect repose? Charles's claim, on the other hand, was derived originally from a testamentary bequest of René, count of Provence, operating to the exclusion of the son of his own daughter, the rightful heir of the house of Anjou; Naples being too notoriously a female fief to afford any pretext for the action of the Salic law. The pretensions of Ferdinand, of Spain, as representative of the legitimate branch of Aragon, were far more plausible.¹⁴

Independently of the defects in Charles's title, his position was such as to make the projected expedition every way impolitic. A misunderstanding had for some time subsisted between him and the Spanish sovereigns, and he was at open war with Germany and England; so that it was only by large concessions, that he could hope to secure their acquiescence in an enterprise most precarious in its character, and where even complete success could be of no permanent benefit to his kingdom. "He did not understand," says Voltaire, "that a dozen villages adjacent to one's territory, are of more value than a kingdom four hundred leagues distant."¹⁵ By the treaties of Etaples and Senlis, he

¹⁴ The conflicting claims of Anjou and Aragon are stated at length by Gaillard, with more candor and impartiality than were to be expected from a French writer. (*Histoire de François I.*, (Paris, 1769,) tom. i. pp. 71-92.) They form the subject of a juvenile essay of Gibbon, in which we may discern the germs of many of the peculiarities which afterwards characterized

the historian of the Decline and Fall. *Miscellaneous Works*, (London, 1814,) vol. iii. pp. 206-222.

¹⁵ *Essai sur les Mœurs*, chap. 107. — His politic father, Louis XI., acted on this principle, for he made no attempt to maintain his pretensions to Naples; although Mably affects to doubt whether this were not the result of necessity rather than policy. "Il est

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respecting
Roussillon.

purchased a reconciliation with Henry the Eighth of England, and with Maximilian, the emperor elect; and finally, by that of Barcelona, effected an amicable adjustment of his difficulties with Spain.¹⁶

This treaty, which involved the restoration of Roussillon and Cerdagne, was of great importance to the crown of Aragon. These provinces, it will be remembered, had been originally mortgaged by Ferdinand's father, King John the Second, to Louis the Eleventh of France, for the sum of three hundred thousand crowns, in consideration of aid to be afforded by the latter monarch against the Catalan insurgents. Although the stipulated sum had never been paid by Aragon, yet a plausible pretext for requiring the restitution was afforded by Louis the Eleventh's incomplete performance of his engagements, as well as by the ample reimbursement, which the French government had already derived from the revenues of these countries.¹⁷ This treaty

douteux si cette modération fut l'ouvrage d'une connoissance approfondie de ses vrais intérêts, ou seulement de cette défiance qu'il avoit des grands de son royaume, et qu'il n'osoit perdre de vue." Observations sur l'Histoire de France, Œuvres, (Paris, 1794-5,) liv. 6, chap. 4.

¹⁶ Flissan, *Histoire de la Diplomatie Française*, (Paris, 1809,) tom. i. pp. 254-259. — Dumont, *Corps Universel Diplomatique du Droit des Gens*, (Amsterdam, 1726-31,) tom. iii. pp. 297-300.

¹⁷ See the narrative of these transactions in the Fifth and Sixth Chapters of Part I. of this History.

Most historians seem to take it for granted, that Louis XI. advanced a sum of money to the king

of Aragon; and some state, that payment of the debt, for which the provinces were mortgaged, was subsequently tendered to the French king. (See, among others, Sismondi, *Républiques Italiennes*, tom. xii. p. 93. — Roscoe, *Life and Pontificate of Leo X.*, (London, 1827,) vol. i. p. 147.) The first of these statements is a palpable error; and I find no evidence of the last in any Spanish authority, where, if true, it would naturally have been noticed. I must, indeed, except Bernáldez, who says, that Ferdinand having repaid the money, borrowed by his father from Louis XI., to Charles VIII., the latter monarch returned it to Isabella, in consideration of the great expenses incurred by the Moorish war. It is

had long been a principal object of Ferdinand's policy. He had not, indeed, confined himself to negotiation, but had made active demonstrations more than once of occupying the contested territory by force. Negotiation, however, was more consonant to his habitual policy; and, after the termination of the Moorish war, he pressed it with the utmost vigor, repairing with the queen to Barcelona, in order to watch over the deliberations of the envoys of the two nations at Figueras.¹⁸

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The French historians accuse Ferdinand of bribing two ecclesiastics, in high influence at their court, to make such a representation of the affair, as should alarm the conscience of the young monarch. These holy men insisted on the restoration of Roussillon as an act of justice; since the sums for which it had been mortgaged, though not repaid, had been spent in the common cause of Christendom, the Moorish war. The soul, they said, could never hope to escape from purgatory, until restitution was made of all property unlawfully held during life. His royal father, Louis the Eleventh, was clearly in this predicament, as he himself would hereafter be, unless the Spanish territories should be relinquished; a measure, moreover, the more obligatory on him, since it was well known to be the dying request of his parent. These

Charles's
counsellors
in the pay of
Ferdinand.

a pity that this romantic piece of gallantry does not rest on any better foundation than the Curate of Los Palacios, who shows a degree of ignorance in the first part of his statement, that entitles him to little credit in the last. Indeed, the worthy curate, although much to

be relied on for what passed in his own province, may be found frequently tripping in the details of what passed out of it. Bernaldez, Reyes Católicos, MS., cap. 117.

¹⁸ Zurita, Hist. del Rey Hernando, lib. 1, cap. 4, 7, 10.

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arguments made a suitable impression on the young monarch, and a still deeper on his sister, the duchess of Beaujeu, who exercised great influence over him, and who believed her own soul in peril of eternal damnation by deferring the act of restoration any longer. The effect of this cogent reasoning was no doubt greatly enhanced by the reckless impatience of Charles, who calculated no cost in the prosecution of his chimerical enterprise. With these amicable dispositions an arrangement was at length concluded, and received the signatures of the respective monarchs on the same day, being signed by Charles at Tours, and by Ferdinand and Isabella at Barcelona, January 19th, 1493.¹⁹

The principal articles of the treaty provided, that the contracting parties should mutually aid each other against all enemies; that they should reciprocally prefer this alliance to that with any other, *the vicar of Christ excepted*; that the Spanish sovereigns should enter into no understanding with any power, *the vicar of Christ excepted*, prejudicial to the interests of France; that their children should not be disposed of in marriage to the kings of England, or of the Romans, or to any enemy of France, with-

¹⁹ Fleury, *Histoire Ecclésiastique*, contin., tom. xxiv. pp. 533-555. — Zurita, *Hist. del Rey Hernando*, lib. 1, cap. 14. — Daru, *Hist. de Venise*, tom. iii. pp. 51, 52. — Gaillard, *Rivalité*, tom. iv. p. 10. — Abarca, *Reyes de Aragon*, tom. ii. rey 30, cap. 6.

Comines, alluding to the affair of Roussillon, says that Ferdinand and Isabella, whether from motives of economy or hypocrisy, always

employed priests in their negotiations. "Car toutes leurs œuvres ont fait mener et conduire par telles gens (religieux), ou par hypocrisie, ou afin de moins despendre." (*Mémoires*, p. 211.) The French king, however, made more use of the clergy in this very transaction than the Spanish. Zurita, *Hist. del Rey Hernando*, lib. 1, cap. 10.

out the French king's consent. It was finally stipulated that Roussillon and Cerdagne should be restored to Aragon; but that, as doubts might be entertained to which power the possession of these countries rightfully appertained, arbitrators *named by Ferdinand and Isabella* should be appointed, if requested by the French monarch, with full power to decide the question, by whose judgment the contracting parties mutually promised to abide. This last provision, obviously too well guarded to jeopard the interests of the Spanish sovereigns, was introduced to allay in some measure the discontents of the French, who loudly inveighed against their cabinet, as sacrificing the interests of the nation; accusing, indeed, the cardinal D'Albi, the principal agent in the negotiation, of being in the pay of Ferdinand.²⁰

The treaty excited equal surprise and satisfaction in Spain, where Roussillon was regarded as of the last importance, not merely from the extent of its resources, but from its local position, which made it the key of Catalonia. The nation, says Zurita, looked on its recovery as scarcely less important

Its importance to Spain.

²⁰ Paolo Giovio, *Historia sui Temporis*, (Basilæ, 1578,) lib. 1, p. 16.—The treaty of Barcelona is given at length by Dumont. (*Corps Diplomatique*, tom. iii. pp. 297-300.) It is reported with sufficient inaccuracy by many historians, who make no hesitation in saying, that Ferdinand expressly bound himself, by one of the articles, not to interfere with Charles's meditated attempt on Naples. (Gaillard, *Rivalité*, tom. iv. p. 11. — Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs*, chap. 107.—Comines, *Mémoires*, liv. 8, chap. 23.—Giovio, *Hist. sui Temporis*, lib. 1, p. 16.—Varillas, *Politique d'Espagne, ou du Roi Ferdinand*, (Amsterdam, 1688,) pp. 11, 12.—Roscoe, *Life of Leo X.*, tom. i. chap. 3.) So far from this, there is no allusion whatever to the proposed expedition in the treaty, nor is the name of Naples once mentioned in it.

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than the conquest of Granada; and they doubted some sinister motive, or deeper policy than appeared in the conduct of the French king. He was influenced, however, by no deeper policy than the cravings of a puerile ambition.²¹

Alarm at the
French invasion,
in Italy.

The preparations of Charles, in the mean while, excited general alarm throughout Italy. Ferdinand, the old king of Naples, who in vain endeavoured to arrest them by negotiation, had died in the beginning of 1494. He was succeeded by his son Alfonso, a prince of bolder but less politic character, and equally odious, from the cruelty of his disposition, with his father. He lost no time in putting his kingdom in a posture of defence; but he wanted the best of all defences, the attachment of his subjects. His interests were supported by the Florentine republic and the pope, whose family had intermarried with the royal house of Naples. Venice stood aloof, secure in her remoteness, unwilling to compromise her interests by too precipitate a declaration in favor of either party.

In Europe,
especially
Spain.

The European powers regarded the expedition of Charles the Eighth with somewhat different feelings; most of them were not unwilling to see so formidable a prince waste his resources in a remote and chimerical expedition; Ferdinand, however, contemplated with more anxiety an event, which might terminate in the subversion of the Neapolitan branch of his house, and bring a powerful and active neighbour in contact with his own

²¹ Zurita, *Hist. del Rey Hernando*, lib. 1, cap. 18. — Abarca, *Reyes de Aragon*, ubi supra.

dominions in Sicily. He lost no time in fortifying the faltering courage of the pope by assurances of support. His ambassador, then resident at the papal court, was Garcilasso de la Vega, father of the illustrious poet of that name, and familiar to the reader by his exploits in the Granadine war. This personage with rare political sagacity combined an energy of purpose, which could not fail to infuse courage into the hearts of others. He urged the pope to rely on his master, the king of Aragon, who, he assured him, would devote his whole resources, if necessary, to the protection of his person, honor, and estate. Alexander would gladly have had this promise under the hand of Ferdinand; but the latter did not think it expedient, considering his delicate relations with France, to put himself so far in the power of the wily pontiff.²²

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I.

In the mean time, Charles's preparations went forward with the languor and vacillation resulting from divided councils and multiplied embarrassments. "Nothing essential to the conduct of a war was at hand," says Comines. The king was very young, weak in person, headstrong in will, surrounded by few discreet counsellors, and wholly destitute of the requisite funds.²³ His own impatience, however, was stimulated by that of the youthful chivalry of his court, who burned for an opportunity of distinction; as well as by the repre-

Preparations
of Charles.

²² Zurita, *Hist. del Rey Hernando*, lib. 1, cap. 28. — Bembo, *Istoria Viniziana*, (Milano, 1809,) tom. i. lib. 2, pp. 118, 119. — Oviedo,

Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 3, dial. 43.

²³ Comines, *Mémoires*, liv. 7, introd.

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sentations of the Neapolitan exiles, who hoped, under his protection, to reëstablish themselves in their own country. Several of these, weary with the delay already experienced, made overtures to King Ferdinand to undertake the enterprise on his own behalf, and to assert his legitimate pretensions to the crown of Naples, which, they assured him, a large party in the country was ready to sustain. The sagacious monarch, however, knew how little reliance was to be placed on the reports of exiles, whose imaginations readily exaggerated the amount of disaffection in their own country. But, although the season had not yet arrived for asserting his own paramount claims, he was determined to tolerate those of no other potentate.²⁴

Charles entertained so little suspicion of this, that, in the month of June, he despatched an envoy to the Spanish court, requiring Ferdinand's fulfilment of the treaty of Barcelona, by aiding him with men and money, and by throwing open his ports in Sicily for the French navy. "This gracious proposition," says the Aragonese historian, "he accompanied with information of his proposed expedition against the Turks; stating incidentally, as a thing of no consequence, his intention to take Naples by the way."²⁵

²⁴ Zurita, *Hist. del Rey Hernando*, lib. 1, cap. 20. — Peter Martyr, *Opus Epist.*, epist. 123. — Comines, *Mémoires*, liv. 7, chap. 3. — Mariana, *Hist. de España*, tom. ii. lib. 26, cap. 6. — Zurita concludes the arguments which decided Ferdinand against assuming

the enterprise, with one which may be considered the gist of the whole matter. "El Rey entendia bien que no era tan facil la causa que se proponia." lib. 1, cap. 20.

²⁵ Zurita, *Hist. del Rey Hernando*, lib. 1, cap. 31.

Ferdinand saw the time was arrived for coming to an explicit declaration with the French court. He appointed a special mission, in order to do this in the least offensive manner possible. The person selected for this delicate task was Alonso de Silva, brother of the count of Cifuentes, and *clavero* of Calatrava, a cavalier possessed of the coolness and address requisite for diplomatic success.²⁶

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I.

An envoy
sent to the
French
court.

The ambassador, on arriving at the French court, found it at Vienne in all the bustle of preparation for immediate departure. After seeking in vain a private audience from King Charles, he explained to him the purport of his mission in the presence of his courtiers. He assured him of the satisfaction which the king of Aragon had experienced, at receiving intelligence of his projected expedition against the infidel. Nothing gave his master so great contentment, as to see his brother monarchs employing their arms, and expending their revenues, against the enemies of the Cross; where even failure was greater gain than success in other wars. He offered Ferdinand's assistance in the prosecution of such wars, even though they should be directed against the Mahometans of Africa, over whom the papal sanction had given Spain exclusive rights of conquest. He besought the king not to employ the forces destined to so glorious a purpose against any one of the princes of Europe, but to

Announces
Ferdinand's
views.

²⁶ Oviedo notices Silva as one of three brothers, all gentle cavaliers, of unblemished honor, remarkable for the plainness of their persons, the elegance and courtesy

of their manners, and the magnificence of their style of living. This one, Alonso, he describes as a man of a singularly clear head. Quincuagenas, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 4.

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reflect how great a scandal this must necessarily bring on the Christian cause ; above all, he cautioned him against forming any designs on Naples, since that kingdom was a fief of the church, in whose favor an exception was expressly made by the treaty of Barcelona, which recognised her alliance and protection as paramount to every other obligation. Silva's discourse was responded to by the president of the parliament of Paris in a formal Latin oration, asserting generally Charles's right to Naples, and his resolution to enforce it previously to his crusade against the infidel. As soon as it was concluded, the king rose and abruptly quitted the apartment.²⁷

Charles's dissatisfaction.

Some days after, he interrogated the Spanish ambassador, whether his master would not, in case of a war with Portugal, feel warranted by the terms of the late treaty in requiring the coöperation of France, and on what plea the latter power could pretend to withhold it. To the first of these propositions the ambassador answered in the affirmative, if it were a defensive war, but not, if an offensive one, of his own seeking ; an explanation by no means satisfactory to the French monarch. Indeed, he seems not to have been at all prepared for this interpretation of the compact. He had relied on this, as securing without any doubt the non-interference of Ferdinand, if not his actual coöperation in his designs against Naples. The clause touching the rights of the church was too frequent

²⁷ Zurita, Hist. del Rey Hernando, ubi supra.

in public treaties to excite any particular attention ; and he was astounded at the broad ground, which it was now made to cover, and which defeated the sole object proposed by the cession of Roussillon. He could not disguise his chagrin and indignation at what he deemed the perfidy of the Spanish court. He refused all further intercourse with Silva, and even stationed a sentinel at his gate, to prevent his communication with his subjects ; treating him as the envoy, not of an ally, but of an open enemy.²⁸

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The unexpected and menacing attitude, however, assumed by Ferdinand, failed to arrest the operations of the French monarch, who, having completed his preparations, left Vienne in the month of August, 1494, and crossed the Alps at the head of the most formidable host which had scaled that mountain barrier since the irruption of the northern barbarians.²⁹ It will be unnecessary to follow his movements in detail. It is sufficient

The French
cross the
Alps.

²⁸ Zurita, Hist. del Rey Hernando, lib. 1, cap. 31, 41.

²⁹ Villeneuve, Mémoires, apud Petitot, Collection des Mémoires, tom. xiv. pp. 255, 256.

The French army consisted of 3,600 gens d'armes, 20,000 French infantry, and 8,000 Swiss, without including the regular camp followers. (Sismondi, Républiques Italiennes, tom. xii. p. 132.)

The splendor and novelty of their appearance excited a degree of admiration, which disarmed in some measure the terror of the Italians. Peter Martyr, whose distance from the theatre of action enabled him to contemplate more calmly the operation of events, be-

held with a prophetic eye the magnitude of the calamities impending over his country. In one of his letters, he writes thus ; " Scribitur exercitum visum fuisse nostrâ tempestate nullum unquam nitidiorum. Et qui futuri sunt calamitatis participes, Carolum aciesque illius ac peditum turmas laudibus extollunt ; sed Italarum impensâ instructas." (Opus Epist., epist. 143.) He concludes another with this remarkable prediction ; " Perimeris, Galle, ex majori parte, nec in patriam redibis. Jacobis insepultus ; sed tua non restituetur strages, Italia." Epist. 123.

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to remark, that his conduct throughout was equally defective in principle and in sound policy. He alienated his allies by the most signal acts of perfidy, seizing their fortresses for himself, and entering their capitals with all the vaunt and insolent port of a conqueror. On his approach to Rome, the pope and the cardinals took refuge in the castle of St. Angelo, and on the 31st of December, Charles defiled into the city at the head of his victorious chivalry; if victorious they could be called, when, as an Italian historian remarks, they had scarcely broken a lance, or spread a tent, in the whole of their progress.³⁰

The Italians were panic-struck at the aspect of troops so different from their own, and so superior to them in organization, science, and military equipment; and still more in a remorseless ferocity of temper, which had rarely been witnessed in their own feuds. Warfare was conducted on peculiar principles in Italy, adapted to the character and circumstances of the people. The business of fighting, in her thriving communities, instead of forming part of the regular profession of a gentleman, as in other countries at this period, was intrusted to the hands of a few soldiers of fortune, *condottieri*, as they were called, who hired themselves out, with the forces under their command, consisting exclusively of heavy-armed cavalry, to

³⁰ Guicciardini, *Istoria*, tom. i. lib. 1, p. 71. — Scipione Ammirato, *Istorie Fiorentine*, (Firenze, 1647,) p. 205. — Giannone, *Istoria di Napoli*, tom. iii. lib. 29, introd. — Comines, *Mémoires*, liv. 7, chap. 17. — Oviedo, *Quincuagenas*, MS., bat. 1, quinc. 3, dial. 43.

whatever state would pay them best. These forces constituted the capital, as it were, of the military chief, whose obvious interest it was to economize as far as possible all unnecessary expenditure of his resources. Hence, the science of defence was almost exclusively studied. The object seemed to be, not so much the annoyance of the enemy, as self-preservation. The common interests of the *condottieri* being paramount to every obligation towards the state which they served, they easily came to an understanding with one another to spare their troops as much as possible; until at length battles were fought with little more personal hazard than would be incurred in an ordinary tourney. The man-at-arms was riveted into plates of steel of sufficient thickness to turn a musket-ball. The ease of the soldier was so far consulted, that the artillery, in a siege, was not allowed to be fired on either side from sunset to sunrise, for fear of disturbing his repose. Prisoners were made for the sake of their ransom, and but little blood was spilled in an action. Machiavelli records two engagements, at Anghiari and Castracaro, among the most noted of the time for their important consequences. The one lasted four hours, and the other half a day. The reader is hurried along through all the bustle of a well-contested fight, in the course of which the field is won and lost several times; but, when he comes to the close, and looks for the list of killed and wounded, he finds to his surprise not a single man slain, in the first of these actions; and in the second, only one, who, having

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tumbled from his horse, and being unable to rise, from the weight of his armour, was suffocated in the mud! Thus war became disarmed of its terrors. Courage was no longer essential in a soldier; and the Italian, made effeminate, if not timid, was incapable of encountering the adventurous daring and severe discipline of the northern warrior.³¹

The Swiss
infantry.

The astonishing success of the French was still more imputable to the free use and admirable organization of their infantry, whose strength lay in the Swiss mercenaries. Machiavelli ascribes the misfortunes of his nation chiefly to its exclusive reliance on cavalry.³² This service, during the whole of the middle ages, was considered among the European nations the most important; the horse being styled by way of eminence "the battle." The memorable conflict of Charles the Bold with the Swiss mountaineers, however, in which the latter broke in pieces the celebrated Burgundian *ordonnance*, constituting the finest body of chivalry of the age, demonstrated the capacity of infantry; and the Italian wars, in which we are now engaged, at length fully reëstablished its ancient superiority.

The Swiss were formed into battalions varying from three to eight thousand men each. They wore little defensive armour, and their principal weapon was the pike, eighteen feet long. Formed into these solid battalions, which, bristling with spears all around, received the technical appellation

³¹ Du Bos, Histoire de la Ligue faite à Cambray, (Paris, 1728), tom. i. dissert. prélim. — Machiavelli, Istorie Fiorentine, lib. 5. —

Denina, Rivoluzioni d' Italia, lib. 18, cap. 3.

³² Arte della Guerra, lib. 2.

of the *hedgheg*, they presented an invulnerable front on every quarter. In the level field, with free scope allowed for action, they bore down all opposition, and received unshaken the most desperate charges of the steel-clad cavalry on their terrible array of pikes. They were too unwieldy, however, for rapid or complicated manœuvres; they were easily disconcerted by any unforeseen impediment, or irregularity of the ground; and the event proved, that the Spanish foot, armed with its short swords and bucklers, by breaking in under the long pikes of its enemy, could succeed in bringing him to close action, where his formidable weapon was of no avail. It was repeating the ancient lesson of the Roman legion and the Macedonian phalanx.³³

In artillery, the French were at this time in advance of the Italians, perhaps of every nation in Europe. The Italians, indeed, were so exceedingly defective in this department, that their best field-pieces consisted of small copper tubes, covered with wood and hides. They were mounted on unwieldy carriages drawn by oxen, and followed by cars or wagons loaded with stone balls. These guns were worked so awkwardly, that the besieged, says Guicciardini, had time between the discharges to repair the mischief inflicted by them. From these

French artillery.

³³ Machiavelli, *Arte della Guerra*, lib. 3. — Du Bos, *Ligue de Cambray*, tom. i. dis. prélim. — Giovio, *Hist. sui Temporis*, lib. 2, p. 41.

Polybius, in his minute account of this celebrated military institution of the Greeks, has recapitulated nearly all the advantages and

defects imputed to the Swiss *hérison*, by modern European writers. (See lib. 17, sec. 25 et seq.) It is singular, that these exploded arms and tactics should be revived, after the lapse of nearly seventeen centuries, to be foiled again in the same manner as before.

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circumstances, artillery was held in so little repute, that some of the most competent Italian writers thought it might be dispensed with altogether in field engagements.³⁴

The French, on the other hand, were provided with a beautiful train of ordnance, consisting of bronze cannon about eight feet in length, and many smaller pieces.³⁵ They were lightly mounted, drawn by horses, and easily kept pace with the rapid movements of the army. They discharged iron balls, and were served with admirable skill, intimidating their enemies by the rapidity and accuracy of their fire, and easily demolishing their fortifications, which, before this invasion, were constructed with little strength or science.³⁶

The rapid successes of the French spread consternation among the Italian states, who now for the first time seemed to feel the existence of a common interest, and the necessity of efficient concert. Ferdinand was active in promoting these dispositions, through his ministers, Garcilasso de la Vega and Alonso de Silva. The latter had quitted the French court on its entrance into Italy, and withdrawn to Genoa. From this point he opened a correspondence with Lodovico Sforza, who now began to understand, that he had brought a terrible engine into play, the movements of which, however

Sforza jealous of the French.

³⁴ Guicciardini, *Istoria*, tom. i. pp. 45, 46. — Machiavelli, *Arte della Guerra*, lib. 3. — Du Bos, *Ligue de Cambrai*, ubi supra.

³⁵ Guicciardini speaks of the name of "cannon," which the

French gave to their pieces, as a novelty at that time in Italy. *Istoria*, pp. 45, 46.

³⁶ Giovio, *Hist. sui Temporis*, lib. 2, p. 42. — Machiavelli, *Arte della Guerra*, lib. 7.