VARIOUS

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Содержание

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THE HOUSE OF GUISE. [1]

Upon the page of history are inscribed the names of many great men, uncrowned, but more illustrious than most kings, whose biography essentially involves the records of their country and times. The cases are very rare in which this occurs of an entire lineage; when through several successive generations the same extraordinary qualities are transmitted, and the hero or statesman who perished yesterday, to-day and to-morrow seems to start again to life in the persons of descendants who rival and even eclipse his fame. These remarkable and most unfrequent instances are exemplified in the house of Guise, those puissant nobles of Lorraine, immigrant into and naturalised in France, who for eighty years led the armies and directed the councils of their adopted country. Great warriors, bold and

[1] *Histoire des Ducs de Guise.* Par Réné de Bouillé, ancien ministre plénipotentiaire. Volume the First. Paris: 1849.

profound politicians, unscrupulous and interested champions of Rome, alternately defenders of and competitors for thrones, they upheld their power and pretensions by the double lever of religious enthusiasm, and of skilful appeals to the sympathy of the people. Rich in glory, in wealth, in popularity, they were alternately indispensable and formidable to their sovereigns, and were virtually the last representatives of that energetic, able, and arrogant aristocracy, whose services to the state were often limited by the jealousy their power inspired, and whose patriotism was not unfrequently tarnished by their factious temper and unbounded ambition. From an early period of the sixteenth century, the influence of Guise was felt in France, for the most part paramount to that of royalty itself; until the might and glory of the house sank and disappeared beneath the daggers of assassins, and before the conquering sword of the Fourth Henry.

The history of France during the sixteenth century necessarily comprises the public acts of the family of Guise, and the memoirs of the time abound in personal details of the members of that renowned house; but a work especially devoted to them was still a desideratum, until the appearance of that which M. Réné de Bouillé has just produced. One of the chief difficulties of his task must have been to avoid including the history of the century in that of the extraordinary men so intimately connected with its chief events. Whilst confining himself as much as possible to his immediate subject, he has yet, as he himself

says, found his horizon of necessity extensive. And in order to assemble in one frame the various members of that celebrated family, he has been compelled to admit with them a host of other personages, who in their turn have brought a retinue, and have insisted on at least a corner of the canvass being allotted to their deeds. The manner in which M. de Bouillé has treated this great historical picture, whose magnitude and difficulty must have deterred a less zealous and persevering artist, is most judicious. "I have been as sparing as possible of discussion," he says, "prodigal perhaps, on the other hand, of cotemporary evidence, of faithful quotations, of such details as bring facts into a stronger light, exhibit the actors on the stage in a more animated manner, and display and make known, of and by themselves, the personages, parties, manners and spirit of the times, and the character of the situations." M. de Bouillé claims, as a matter of justice, credit for conscientious application, and declares his whole aim will have been attained if his work be admitted to possess historical interest and utility. No impartial critic will refuse it these qualities. It is at once substantial and agreeable; valuable to the student, and attractive to those who consider histories of the Middle Ages as fascinating collections of strange adventures and romantic enterprises.

Réné the Second, reigning duke of Lorraine – the same who fought and conquered with the Swiss at Morat, and defeated Charles the Bold at Nancy – desired to see one of his sons settled in France. He selected the fifth, Claude, to whom he left by will

his various lordships in Normandy, Picardy, and other French provinces, causing him to be naturalised a Frenchman, and sending him at a very early age to the court of France, where he was presented as Count de Guise, a title derived from one of his domains. The young count found immediate favour with Louis XII., to the hand of whose daughter Renée he was considered a likely aspirant. But he fell in love with Antoinette de Bourbon, daughter of Count de Vendôme, (the great-grandfather of Henry IV.,) asked and obtained her in marriage, and celebrated his wedding, when he was but sixteen years of age, in 1513, at Paris, in presence of the whole French court. The following year another wedding occurred, but this time youth was on one side only. In his infirm and declining age, Louis XII. took to wife the blooming sister of Harry VIII. of England, and honoured Guise by selecting him to go, in company with the Duke of Angoulême and other princes of the blood, to receive his bride at Boulogne. The wedding was quickly followed by a funeral, and Francis I. sat upon the throne. This chivalrous and warlike monarch at once took his young cousin of Guise into high favour, to which he had a fair claim, not only by reason of his birth, and of his alliance with the house of Bourbon, but on account of his eminent capacity, and of the martial qualities whose future utility Francis doubtless foresaw. To his triumphs in the field, Guise preluded by others less sanguinary, but in their kind as brilliant, in the lists and in the drawing room. His grace and magnificence were celebrated even at a court

of which those were the distinguishing characteristics, thronged as it was with princes and nobles, most of them, like the king himself, in the first flush of youth, and with keen appetites for those enjoyments which their wealth gave them ample means to command. He gained great credit by his prowess at the jousts and tournament held at Paris on occasion of the coronation, and his conduct in another circumstance secured him the favour of the ladies of that gallant and voluptuous court. "One night," says his historian, "he accompanied Francis I. to the queen's circle, composed of those ladies most distinguished by their charms and amiability. Struck by the brilliancy and fascination of the scene, unusual at a time when custom, by assigning to women a sort of inferior position, or at least of reserve, interdicted their mingling in the conversation, and to a certain extent in the society of men, Guise communicated his impression to the king, who received it favourably, and at once decided that, throughout the whole kingdom, women should be freed from this unjust and undesirable constraint." It will easily be conceived that such an emancipation insured Guise the suffrages of the fair and influential class who benefited by it. From his first arrival at the French court he seems to have made it his study to win universal favour; and he was so promptly successful that, at the end of a very few months, he had conquered the goodwill of both nobility and army. He took pains to study and adapt his conduct to the character of all with whom he came in contact, thus laying the foundation of the long popularity which he and his successors

enjoyed in France.

But courtly pleasures and diversions were quickly to be succeeded by the sterner business of war. At his death, Louis XII. had left all things prepared for an Italian campaign; and Francis, eager to signalise his accession by the recovery of the Milanese, moved southwards in the month of August 1515, at the head of the finest troops that had yet crossed the boundary line between France and Italy. His army consisted of fifteen thousand excellent cavalry, twenty-two thousand lansquenets, fourteen thousand French and Gascon infantry, besides pioneers and a numerous artillery. The Constable of Bourbon led the van, the Duke of Alençon commanded the rear; Francis himself headed the main body, accompanied by Duke Anthony of Lorraine, (eldest brother of Guise,) with Bayard for his lieutenant, and by the Duke of Gueldres, captain-general of the lansquenets, whose lieutenant was the Count de Guise. If the army was good, none, assuredly, ever reckoned greater warriors amongst its leaders. Guise, during the passage of the Alps – accomplished by extraordinary labour, and which completely surprised the enemy – made himself remarkable by his constancy and activity, by the wisdom of his counsels, and by his generosity to the soldiers, thus further augmenting the affection they already bore him. Bayard and other illustrious officers formed his habitual society; and in him they found the most cordial and affable of comrades, as well as the most zealous advocate of their interests with the king. Devoted to his sovereign, Guise, when Francis

somewhat over-hastily promised the Swiss an exorbitant sum of money as the price of the Milanese, nobly offered to contribute to it to the extent of all he possessed. The treaty, however, was broken by the Swiss. Steel, not gold, was to settle the dispute; and the plains of Marignano already trembled at the approach of the hostile armies. At the age of eighteen, Guise found himself general-in-chief of twenty thousand men. The Duke of Gueldres, having been recalled to his dominions by an invasion of the Brabanters, transferred his command to his young lieutenant, at the unanimous entreaty of the lansquenets, and in preference to all the French princes there present. In the quickly ensuing battle, Guise showed himself worthy of his high post. In the course of the combat, when the Swiss, with lowered pikes and in stern silence, made one of those deadly charges which in the wars of the previous century had more than once disordered the array of Burgundy's chivalry, the lansquenets, who covered the French artillery, gave way. Claude of Lorraine, immovable in the front rank, shamed them by his example; they rallied; the guns, already nearly captured, were saved; the battle continued with greater fierceness than before, and ceased only with darkness. Daybreak was the signal for its resumption, and at last the Swiss were defeated. After breaking their battalions, Guise, over eager in pursuit, and already twice wounded, had his horse killed under him, was surrounded, overmatched, and left for dead, with twenty-two wounds. Nor would these have been all, but for the devotedness of an esquire, whose name Brantôme has

handed down as a model of fidelity. Adam Fouvert of Nuremberg threw himself on his master's body, and was slain, serving as his shield. After the action, Guise was dragged out from amongst the dead, and conveyed by a Scottish gentleman to the tent of the Duke of Lorraine. He was scarcely recognisable, by reason of his wounds; he gave no sign of life, and his recovery was deemed hopeless. He did recover, however, thanks to great care, and still more to the vigorous constitution and energetic vitality which distinguished all of his house, and without which the career of most of them would have been very short. Scarcely one of the prominent members of that family but received, in the martial ardour of his youth, wounds whose severity made their cure resemble a miracle. A month after the battle of Marignano, Guise, although still suffering, was able to accompany Francis I. on his triumphant entry into Milan, "as captain-general of the lansquenets, with four lieutenants, all dressed in cloth of gold and white velvet." One of his arms was in a scarf, one of his thighs had to be supported by an esquire, but still, by his manly beauty and martial fame, he attracted the admiring gaze of both army and people. Francis, in his report to his mother of the battle, named Guise amongst the bravest, as well he might; and thenceforward his great esteem for the young hero was testified in various ways – amongst others, by intrusting to him several important and delicate diplomatic missions. At Bologna, on occasion of the interview between Francis and Leo X., the Pope addressed to Guise the most flattering eulogiums. "Your

holiness," replied the ardent soldier, in a prophetic spirit, "shall see that I am of Lorraine, if ever I have the happiness to draw sword in the Church's quarrel."

Master of the Milanese, Francis I. returned to France and beheld his alliance courted by all the powers of Europe, when suddenly the death of the Emperor Maximilian (15th January 1519) proved a brand of discord. Francis and Charles were the only serious candidates for the vacant dignity. Guise, with a secret view, perhaps, to the crown of Jerusalem for himself, strained every nerve, exerted all his influence, on behalf of the French King. But Charles, the more skilful intriguer, prevailed; and Francis, deeply wounded and humiliated by his failure, revolved in his mind projects of war. In these the king did not lose sight of the great assistance he might expect from Guise, brave, skilful, and prudent as he was; and the esteem in which the young chief was held at court increased so greatly, that the French nobles came to consider him almost the equal of the members of the royal family. Guise, on the other hand, by reason of his enormous fortune and high birth, and in his quality of a foreign prince, spared no effort to place himself on the footing of an ally rather than of a subject of the King of France.

Pretexts for hostilities were not wanting; and soon we find Guise, at the head of his lansquenets, fighting victoriously over the very same ground upon which, in our day, French armies contended with very different results. Maya, Fontarabia, and the banks of the Bidassoa witnessed his prowess; he himself,

a half-pike in his hand, led his men through the river, with water to his armpits, dislodging the enemy by the mere terror his audacity inspired. When he returned to Compiègne, where the court then was, the King hurried forth from his chamber to meet him, embraced him warmly, and gaily said, "that it was but fair he should go out to meet his old friend, who, on his part, always made such haste to meet and revenge him on his enemies." His summer triumphs in the Pyrenees were followed by a winter campaign in Picardy, where he succeeded in preventing the junction of the English and Imperialists, besides obtaining some advantages over the former, and harassing their retreat to the coast. He thus added to his popularity with the army, and acquired strong claims to the gratitude of the Parisians, deeply alarmed by the proximity of the enemy to the capital, and who viewed him as their saviour.

The year 1523 opened under menacing auspices. Germany, Italy, England, were leagued against France, whose sole allies were Scotland, the Swiss, (the adhesion of these depending entirely on regular subsidies,) and the Duke of Savoy, whose chief merit was that he could facilitate the passage of the Alps. Undeterred, almost foolhardy, Francis, instead of prudently standing on the defensive, beheld, in each new opponent, only a fresh source of glory. Unhappily for him, at the very moment he had greatest need of skilful captains, the Constable of Bourbon, irritated and persecuted in France, courted and seduced by the astute Charles V., entered into a treasonable combination with

the Imperialists. It was discovered; he fled, and effected his escape. Out of France, he was but one man the less, but that man was such a leader as could hardly be replaced, and Charles gave him command of his troops in the Milanese. The Constable's misconduct brought disfavour on the princes of the house of Bourbon, (of that of Valois none remained,) and this further increased the credit and importance of the Count of Guise. He was already governor of Champagne and Burgundy, provinces the Emperor was likely to attack. This command, however, was not the object of his desires; he would rather have gone to Italy, and applied to do so; but the King, rendered suspicious by the Constable's defection, began to consider, with some slight uneasiness, the position acquired by the Count of Guise; and it was probably on this account only that he would not confer on the Lorraine prince the direction of the Italian war. The glory of Guise lost nothing by the refusal, although that of France grievously suffered by the army of Italy being confided to the less capable hands of Admiral Bonnivet. Fortune soon afforded the younger general one of those opportunities of high distinction, of which no leader ever was more covetous or better knew how to take advantage. A large body of Imperialist infantry having made an irruption into Burgundy, he assembled the nobility of the province and about nine hundred men-at-arms, with which force he deemed himself able to keep the field against the twelve thousand lansquenets that Count Furstemberg led to meet him. By an odd accident, he had no infantry, his adversary no cavalry.

By dividing his horsemen into small parties, and maintaining an incessant harassing warfare, Guise prevented the Germans from foraging; and at last, compelled by famine, they prepared to recross the Meuse, abandoning two forts they had captured, and carrying off a large amount of spoil. Thus encumbered, and vigorously pursued, their rearguard was cut to pieces, and their retreat converted into a rout. "With a feeling of chivalrous gallantry," says M. de Bouillé, "Guise desired to procure the duchess his sister-in-law, Antoinette de Bourbon, and the ladies of the court of Lorraine, then assembled at Neufchâteau, the enjoyment of this spectacle, (the battle), to them so new. Warned by him, and stationed at windows, out of reach of danger, whence they looked out upon the plain, they had the pastime, and were able to recompense, by their applause and cries of joy, the courage of the troops whom their presence animated."

But such partial successes, however glorious to him by whom they were achieved, were all insufficient to turn the tide of disaster that had set in against the French arms. The defeat of Bonnivet, the invasion of Provence by the Constable, were succeeded by that terrible day before the walls of Pavia, when Francis I., vanquished, wounded, made prisoner by a rebellious subject, beheld his army destroyed, and the battle-field strewn with the bodies of his best generals, whilst, bleeding at his feet, slain in his defence, lay Francis of Lorraine, a younger brother of the Count of Guise, the second of that brave brotherhood who

had fallen in arms under the *fleur-de-lis*.[2] When the brave but most imprudent monarch was carried into captivity, his mother, regent in his absence, placed her chief trust and dependence in Guise. Of these he proved himself worthy. He checked the ambition of the Duke of Vendôme, who, as first prince of the blood, showed a disposition to seize upon the regency; he advised the ransoming of the French prisoners taken at Pavia, and exercised altogether a most salutary influence upon the circumstances of that critical time. His good sword, as well as his precocious wisdom, was soon in request. A large body of German fanatics, proclaiming the doctrine of absolute equality, and the abolition of all human superiority, had swept over Suabia, Wurtemberg, and Franconia, burning churches and slaying priests, and threatened to carry the like excesses into Lorraine and Burgundy. By aid of his brothers, at much expense and with great difficulty, Guise got together ten thousand men, four thousand of whom were cavalry. The double cross was the rallying sign of this little army. The time was come for Guise to perform his promise to Pope Leo, to fight stoutly in defence of the Church. And truly his hand was heavy upon the unfortunate and half frantic Lutherans, although to a certain extent he tempered its weight with mercy. Besieged in Saverne, the fanatics put to death the herald who summoned them to surrender. Learning that reinforcements from Germany were at

[2] Francis of Lorraine was eighteen years old when slain at Pavia. One of his brothers had fallen, at about the same age, at the battle of Marignano.

hand, Guise hurried to meet them with three thousand men, and encountered them at the village of Lupstein, into which the Germans retreated, after a terrible conflict outside the place, and threw up a barricade as best they could, of carts, casks, and gabions. From the cover of these, and of the adjacent hedges, they kept up so obstinate a defence, that Guise, whose men fell fast, caused fire to be applied to the houses. But hardly had the flames begun their ravages, when the Count, seized with compassion, threw himself from his horse to assist in extinguishing them, and succeeded, at imminent risk to his own life, in saving upwards of four thousand persons of all ages. Nearly double that number perished; as many more at Saverne and in the mountains, to which the unfortunate Germans fled; and about fifteen thousand in a final engagement at Chenouville, which broke the strength of the fanatic host, and finally closed the campaign. During one of these battles, the soldiers of Guise beheld in the air the image of the Saviour attached to the cross, a phenomenon in which they saw assurance of victory.

"Once more," says M. de Bouillé, "Guise had rendered a most important service to the kingdom; he had also assumed a peculiar and marked position, and had fixed a point of departure for himself and his descendants, by striking, of his own accord, and without instructions from the Government, the first blows that Protestantism received in France: a circumstance often recalled, with more or less exultation, by the panegyrists of that family, and which procured Claude de Lorraine the nickname of the

Great Butcher, given him by the heretics, who were exasperated by the loss of nearly forty thousand men, caused them by his arms in that fatal expedition."

Determined foes to the Reformed faith as both of them were, a distinction must yet be made between the Count of Guise assailing and slaughtering, with far inferior forces, a formidable body of armed and aggressive foreigners, and the fierce *Balafré*, wielding a murderous sword against his defenceless and inoffensive Huguenot countrymen, on the terrible night of St Bartholomew. If the amount of bloodshed at Saverne and Chenouville appears excessive, and implies that little quarter was given, it must yet be remembered that greater clemency to the vanquished might have had the most disastrous consequences to the handful of conquerors. The Council of Regency disapproved of Guise's conduct in the affair; taxing him with rashness in risking the whole of the small number of regular troops disposable for the defence of the kingdom. But there could hardly have been more pressing occasion to expose them; and Francis I., on returning from exile, recognised and rewarded that and other good services by elevating the county of Guise into a duchy and peerage – further enriching the newly-made duke with a portion of the crown domains. Such honours and advantages had previously been almost exclusively reserved for persons of the blood-royal. The Parliament remonstrated in vain; but Francis himself, before very long, repented what he had done. He took umbrage at the increasing popularity of the Duke

of Guise, and gave ear to the calumnies and insinuations of the French nobles, who were irritated by the haughty bearing, great prosperity, and ambitious views of the house of Lorraine. The manner in which Francis testified his jealousy and distrust was unworthy of a monarch who has left a great name in history. He showed himself indulgent to those of his courtiers and officers who organised resistance to the influence and pretensions of the Guises. "One time, amongst others," says M. de Bouillé, "the Duke of Guise, governor of Burgundy, wishing to visit the castle of Auxonne, whose governorship was a charge distinct from that of the province, the titulary, Rouvray, a French gentleman, refused him admittance, which he would not have dared to do had Guise been recognised as prince. When the Duke complained of this treatment, the King, delighted, whilst taking advantage of his services, to see his pride and ambition thwarted, lauded the conduct of Rouvray, and laughed at him who had wished to play the prince of royal blood." For annoyances of this kind Guise sought compensation in popularity, thus tracing out for his descendants the line they should most advantageously follow.

The partial disfavour into which the Guises had fallen, during an interval of peace when their services were not indispensable, was dissipated by the zeal and talents exhibited by the Duke's brother, John Cardinal of Lorraine, in a most difficult and delicate negotiation with Charles V., and by the prompt good-will with which, when negotiation failed and war broke out, the Duke hurried to the relief of Peronne, accompanied by his

eldest son, the Count of Aumale, then scarcely nineteen years old. Peronne la Pucelle was hard beset by the Count of Nassau, who pounded its ramparts with seventy-two pieces of cannon, and was defended with equal valour by Fleuranges, Marshal de la Marck, who repulsed an assault made simultaneously by two breaches, and destroyed a mine on which the enemy reckoned for his discomfiture. Want of supplies, and especially of powder, must soon, however, have compelled him to yield, but for a stratagem practised by Guise. That able commander selected four hundred resolute soldiers, loaded each of them with a bag containing ten pounds of powder, and set out, at six in the evening, from his headquarters at Ham, with the Count of Aumale, whose first experience of war this was, and to whom Guise, as he wrote to the King, "intended soon to give up his sword, as capable of doing better service in his young hands than in his own." Two hundred horsemen escorted them as far as the edge of the marshes of Peronne, and at midnight Guise, who had brought with him a large number of drummers and trumpeters, distributed these at different points around the besiegers' camp. Whilst they sounded and beat the charge, and the Imperialist generals, believing themselves attacked on all sides, hastily formed their troops for the combat, the powder-bearers, guided by a soldier of the garrison who had borne news of its distress from Fleuranges to Guise, crossed the marshes by means of a number of little roads and bridges, which the enemy himself had made to maintain his communications, and reached

the moat, whence by means of ropes and ladders they entered the fortress. The last of them were just getting in when day broke, and the Count of Nassau discovered the trick that had been played him, and detached a body of cavalry to pursue Guise, then retreating with his drums and trumpets, and whose steady array discouraged attack. A few days later the Imperialists raised the siege, and Paris, which had been in consternation at the danger of Peronne, its last bulwark against the advancing foe, knew no bounds in its gratitude to the man to whom it thus, for the second time, was indebted for its salvation. Guise's great services in this and the following campaign rendered Francis I. indulgent to his still-recurring pretensions; to the arrogance which led him frequently to refuse obeying orders that did not emanate directly from the King, and to assume a sort of independence and irresponsibility in the exercise of his government. Looking back, through the clarifying medium of history, upon the character and conduct of Claude of Lorraine, we are disinclined to think that Francis had ever serious cause for mistrusting the loyalty of his powerful subject; whose encroachments, however, it cannot be denied, were sufficient grounds for jealousy and uneasiness. And on more than one occasion we find the royal anger – perhaps complete disgrace – averted from him only by the interest of his brother the Cardinal, to whom Francis could refuse nothing.

As a diplomatist and patron of the arts, Cardinal John of Lorraine occupies almost as elevated a pedestal in the gallery of distinguished Frenchmen of the sixteenth century, as does

his brother Claude in his more active capacity of general of armies and administrator of provinces. His courtly qualities, and a congeniality of tastes – some of which, although they might be held excusable in a king, were scarcely to be palliated in a prelate, even in that age of lax morality – endeared him to Francis, who associated with him on a footing of great familiarity. His generosity and charity were on such a scale as at times to resemble prodigality and ostentation; his love of pleasure and addiction to gallantry were in like manner excessive. "He was," says M. de Bouillé, "a very lettered prince, a splendid patron of learned men, whom he treated as friends, and in whose labours he associated himself. A writer named Bertrand de Vaux, having presented and read to him a critical work, containing low personality, awaited, notwithstanding its base character, the recompense which the Cardinal always granted to those authors with whose productions he was satisfied. The prelate accordingly handed him a golden etui. 'Take this, friend Bertrand,' he said; 'it is to pay the fatigue and salary of the reader. The writer must seek payment from some more malignant man than myself.'" The celebrated Erasmus, Clement Marot the poet, and Rabelais the satirist, all benefited by the patronage or enjoyed the intimacy of the Cardinal, who, conjointly with his nephew the Cardinal Charles of Lorraine, is believed by some to have been indicated by the witty priest of Meudon in the character of Panurge. Passionately fond of art, the prelate-prince gathered around him the men of genius whom the largesses and magnificence of

Francis I. seduced from Italy to France. He showed particular favour to Benvenuto Cellini, who presented him with some of his works and received from him costly gifts. "When in full blaze of fortune and favour, he caused to be built and decorated, with blind prodigality, after the designs of Primaticcio and by the pupils of that famous artist, the superb chateau of Meudon, in whose park was constructed, amongst other costly ornaments, a grotto, 'excellently fine and pleasant to save oneself from being wetted by the rain.' He had musicians in his service, and Arcadelt, a distinguished composer, some of whose works are still preserved and esteemed, was his *maître de chapelle*." His charity, although often too indiscriminate, sprang from real kindness of heart. Numerous children, belonging to poor families, were educated at his expense in the Paris schools. And his good grace in conferring favours doubled their value. The farmer of his abbey of Fécamp, having made the same receipt serve for three separate payments, and endeavouring to make it pass a fourth time, the Cardinal's receivers refused to admit it, and the case was referred to the prelate himself, who, having examined and recognised his signature, merely said, "Since John is there, John shall be believed," and ordered it to be definitively admitted. When he went abroad, "he usually," says Brantôme, "carried a great pouch, which his *valet-de-chambre*, who had charge of the money for his petty expenses, failed not to fill each morning with three or four hundred crowns: and as many poor as he met he put his hand into the pouch and gave, without

stint or consideration, whatever he drew forth." The story is well known of the blind mendicant, who, having implored an alms of him in the streets of Rome, exclaimed, on receiving a handful of gold: "*O tu sei Christo, o veramente il cardinal di Loriena*." By the light which these details throw upon his character, it is not difficult to discern that the magnificent cardinal must have been a welcome courtier to the sumptuous Francis, who, during the period of his favour, made him his constant companion and delighted to do him honour. He sat upon the King's left hand on occasion of the *lit de justice* held at Paris on New Year's day 1537, at which Francis declared Charles of Austria attainted of rebellion and felony, and deprived of Artois, Flanders, and all the domains that he held *en mouvance* of the crown of France – a sentence more easily pronounced than enforced, and which of course entailed a war. Peace again concluded, in great measure by the diplomacy of the Cardinal, he it was, according to Du Bellay, who alone accompanied the King and Queen at dinner, on the day of Charles V.'s entrance into Paris. The friendship borne him by Francis, was the cause of his being charged to break to that monarch the death of his son, the Dauphin of France. Of the familiarity with which the King treated him, M. de Bouillé gives a specimen in a curious anecdote: "One day, at mass, the Cardinal did not perceive that a thief, who had managed to enter the chapel, had picked his pocket. The rogue, observing that the King had his eyes fixed upon him, with extraordinary coolness and audacity put his finger on his lips, looking at the same time

significantly at Francis I., who took the hint and said nothing, in order not to spoil what he imagined to be an adroit practical joke. Service over, however, he made an observation which induced the Cardinal to put his hand in his pocket, when he discovered his loss. When the King had amused himself at his surprise, he ordered that what had been stolen should be restored; but the thief, who was perfectly serious in his intentions, had made his escape, which greatly increased the mirth of the monarch, thus cleverly duped. 'On the word of a gentleman,' he exclaimed, 'the rogue has made me his accomplice!'"

Powerfully supported at court by his brother, Claude of Lorraine was no less ably seconded in the field by his son Francis, Count of Aumale, a young hero destined ultimately to surpass even him in glory, and to raise the name of Guise to its apogee of splendour. The constantly-recurring wars with the Emperor yielded him abundant opportunities to display his prowess. In the campaign of 1543 he did good service, until, at the siege of Luxemburg, he was dangerously wounded above the ankle by an arquebuse ball. "Carried, almost without hopes – on account of the fracture of the bones and the injury to the nerves – first to his tent and then to Longwy, five leagues in rear, he owed his recovery to the attention of the King, who sent him his own physicians, and to the care bestowed upon him by his father. And nevertheless, when he suffered signs of pain to escape him during the dressing, the Duke of Guise addressed to him reproaches by which it will be seen that he subsequently profited,

saying to him – a noble and stoical maxim – 'That persons of his rank ought not to feel their wounds, but, on the contrary, to take pleasure in building up their reputation on the ruin of their bodies.'" It was in no feather-bed school that the Guises were educated. Nearly at the same time that the Count d'Aumale was hit before Luxemburg, Gaspard de Coligny-Châtillon, then his rival in valour, and at a subsequent day his deadly foe, was severely wounded in the throat at the siege of Binche.

In the war in which these incidents occurred, England was allied with the Emperor against France. Personal motives combined with political irritation to dispose the violent and uxorious Henry VIII. to a rupture with Francis I. Mary of Lorraine, daughter of the Duke of Guise, and widow of Louis of Orleans, duke of Longueville, had been given in marriage to James V. of Scotland, in preference to Henry, who, inflamed by the report of her beauty, had solicited her hand as a pledge of perpetual alliance with France. Dazzling as was the offer of so powerful a sovereign, his anti-catholic acts, and his evil reputation as a husband, deterred the Guises from entertaining it; and Francis I., obeying the dictates of feeling rather than those of prudence, extricated them from a dilemma by alleging a previous promise to the Scottish king. It is said that Henry would then gladly have espoused Louisa, second daughter of the Duke, and that, means being found to elude his pursuit, this second disappointment further augmented his rancorous feelings towards Francis and the house of Guise. However this

may have been, the war with England continued subsequently to the conclusion of peace between Francis and Charles – chiefly in Picardy, around Boulogne, which Henry held, and in whose neighbourhood his army was encamped. Some severe skirmishes and partial engagements occurred, and in one of these the Count of Aumale received a wound, probably the severest ever survived by mortal man, from the lance of an English officer. The weapon, according to the description of Ambrose Paré, entered "above the right eye, declining towards the nose, and piercing through on the other side, between the nape and the ear." So violent was the blow that the weapon broke in the head, into which it had penetrated more than half a foot, the entire lance-iron and two fingers' breadth of the staff remaining in the wound. Paré explains the possibility of such a wound, in an age when helmets and visors were in use, by mentioning that the Count always went into action with his face bare.

"Terrible as was the shock," says M. de Bouillé, "it did not unhorse d'Aumale. He still made head against his foes, succeeded in forcing a passage through them, aided by his young and valiant brother Claude, and by de Vieilleville – who, alone of all, had not abandoned him – and rode gloriously into camp. His appearance was frightful; his face, armour, and clothes were deluged with blood. The surgeons, stupified by the depth and gravity of the wound, despaired of cure, and refused to inflict useless sufferings upon the patient. But Ambrose Paré, the King's surgeon, sent by Francis with orders to try every means of saving the hero's life,

was not discouraged. Confiding in his skill, and in the firmness of the wounded man, he resolved to attempt an operation, terrible indeed, but admirable for those days, and worthy alone to insure celebrity to him who imagined it. The lance-head was broken off so short, that it was impossible to grasp it with the hand. Taking then a blacksmith's pincers, to draw it out with great force, and assisted, amongst others, by Master Nicolle Lavernan, a very experienced surgeon, he asked the Lorraine prince, in presence of a crowd of officers shuddering with horror, if he would submit to the employment of such means, and would suffer him to place his foot upon his face. 'I consent to everything; proceed,' replied d'Aumale. Nor did his fortitude abandon him for an instant during this cruel operation, which was not effected without fracture of bones, nerves, veins, and arteries, and other parts, and which he endured as if they had only pulled out a hair. The agony extorted from him but the single exclamation – 'Ah! my God!' Transported afterwards in a litter to Pecquigny, he remained for three days in a hopeless state: early on the fifth day more favourable symptoms declared themselves, and nature made such powerful efforts, that the cure was completed without leaving the Count d'Aumale any trace of this astonishing wound, except a scar, equally glorious for him and for Ambrose Paré. That skilful surgeon was wont modestly to say, when speaking of the marvellous cure of Francis of Lorraine – 'I dressed it, and God healed it.' As soon as he began to get better, the Count d'Aumale hastened to write to the King, with a hand

still unsteady, the following note, characterised by a calmness remarkable in such circumstances: – 'Sire, I take the liberty to inform you that I find myself well, hoping not to lose an eye. Your very humble servant, Le Guizard.'" Admiring his energy, and in recompense of his services, Francis I. made him governor of Dauphiny; whilst the numerous partisans of the house of Guise attributed his cure to a miracle wrought by the prayers of his pious mother, Antoinette of Bourbon. This princess carefully preserved till her death the lance-point which had penetrated her son's head. The extent of the wound, as described by Paré, would be scarcely credible, but for the testimony of that learned and excellent man, and of other cotemporary writers quoted by M. de Bouillé. In a short time the heroic Count had forgotten his hurt, and was again in arms against the English, with whom, however, peace was shortly afterwards concluded.

Notwithstanding the frequent uneasiness occasioned him by the power and ambition of the family of Guise, Francis I. continued, almost to the close of his reign, to enrich and aggrandise them. The magnitude of their services, and their many great qualities, at intervals elicited his gratitude and generosity, to the oblivion of mistrust and apprehension. Thus, only three years prior to his death, he erected into a marquisate certain lands and lordships of the Duke of Guise, and immediately afterwards elevated the marquisate to a duchy, in consideration, said the letters patent, of the great, virtuous, and commendable services that the Duke of Guise had long

rendered to king and country, without sparing his own person, his children, or goods; "and also that our said cousin Duke of Guise is of the house of Lorraine, descended by wife and alliance from the house of Anjou, and from our predecessors, kings of France." Thus was the title of Duke of Mayenne provided for a younger son of Claude of Lorraine. Such laudatory declarations as the one above cited were concurrent, however, with the systematic restriction of the Guises' direct influence on state affairs. And on his deathbed, when dividing his last hours upon earth between religious duties and sage counsels to his son, Francis enjoined this prince not to recall the Constable of Montmorency, or to admit to a share of government the princes of the house of Guise. Montmorency had incurred disgrace and banishment by exciting the King's conjugal jealousy. Henry II. showed slight regard to his father's dying injunctions. Scarcely had the earth closed over the deceased monarch, when those he had recommended to his son's favour were removed from their posts; Montmorency was recalled, and the Guises were taken into favour; the Count of Aumale, and Charles, Cardinal of Lorraine, dividing between them Henry's whole confidence. It must be admitted, that the means to which they resorted to secure and preserve this favour, were not of the most delicate description, although, doubtless, they would be very differently estimated then and now. They sustained their credit with Henry II. by their attentions to Diana of Poitiers, his all-powerful mistress, whose eldest daughter one of the brothers, Claude,

Marquis of Mayenne, had just married. From this discreditable alliance Châtillon, afterwards the Admiral de Coligny, had tried to dissuade them, by pointing out, says Brantôme, in his Life of the Admiral, "that it was not very honourable for them, and that an inch of authority and favour with honour was better than an armful without." The Count of Aumale, up to that time the inseparable companion of Coligny, was but ill-pleased by the freedom of this advice, which, he said, was less that of a friend than of one envious of the good fortune such an alliance insured to his family. This difference, however, cast but a slight cloud over the intimacy which thereafter was exchanged for so bitter an enmity. Meanwhile the royal favour, lavished on the young Guises, was not extended to their father, who was excluded from the government which his sons freely exercised, and who, immediately after the coronation of Henry, left the court, to live in retirement in his castle of Joinville. The prudence and moderation of the elder Guise were probably less welcome to the young king than the bolder and more impetuous counsels of his sons. There were six of these, all pretty well provided for when Claude of Lorraine retired into private life: Francis, Count of Aumale; Claude, Marquis of Mayenne; Charles, Archbishop of Rheims; Louis, Bishop of Troyes, and Francis, Chevalier of Lorraine, afterwards grand-prior and general of the galleys of France. "During his stay at Paris, after the campaign of 1544, the Duke of Guise frequently went, accompanied by his six young sons, to pay his devoirs to the King, who always

graciously received and congratulated him, saying 'that he was six times fortunate in seeing himself live again, before his death, in a posterity of such great promise.' One day Charles, the second brother, who was intended for the church, presented to Francis I. some moral and theological theses, accompanying them with an eloquent and tasteful harangue. His promotion to the archbishopric of Rheims, the richest benefice in France, was, it is said, the munificent reward of this precocious ability." Henry II. received his crown from the hands of this youthful archbishop, upon whom the Pope, five days after the ceremony, conferred a cardinal's hat. Charles of Lorraine can have been but thirty or thirty-one years old, when he thus attained to the highest dignities of the church.

A few days before the coronation, Henry II. sanctioned by his presence the celebrated judicial duel – which gave rise to a proverb still current in France – between Guy Chabot de Jarnac, and François de Vivonne. It took place in lists erected near the chateau of St Germains. Vivonne's second (or godfather, as it was then called) was the Count of Aumale, who attracted universal attention by the grandeur of his air and the lustre of his renown. "Towards half-past seven in the morning," says M. de Bouillé, "d'Aumale pronounced it time to bring the arms, and the combatants appeared in the lists, Vivonne conducted by d'Aumale; and, after the customary salutations and injunctions, the king-at-arms, Normandy, having thrice exclaimed —*Laissez aller les bons combattants!* the combat commenced with skill and

fury. In a few moments, however, by a blow, since proverbial, dealt and repeated on the left ham, Vivonne was prostrated by his adversary. The Count d'Aumale sprang to the assistance of the vanquished man, and to calm the rage which made him tear open his own wounds. But Vivonne survived only three days, and, after his death, d'Aumale had the following inscription engraved upon his tomb: 'A great prince *Lorrain et François*, much grieved and afflicted by so unexpected an event, has dedicated this to the manes of a brave knight of Poitou.' In these few words was revealed a pretension constantly entertained by the house of Guise, and which then appeared surprising, but which received a sort of consecration from its silent toleration by the King." It was doubtless this toleration, combined with the sentiment of growing power and influence, which raised the arrogance of the Guises to such a pitch that, on occasion of Henry II.'s solemn entrance into Chambery, during a visit of inspection to his frontier fortresses, we find the Count of Aumale placing himself on the same line with the Duke of Vendôme, first prince of the blood, and afterwards King of Navarre. The angry dispute to which this gave rise was terminated by the King, who maintained Guise in the place he had audaciously assumed. Like his father, Henry was nurturing a pride which was afterwards to give him umbrage. Already d'Aumale's influence and popularity were so great as to make him courted by all classes, even to the highest, not excluding persons of blood-royal; and only a few months after the dispute at Chambery,

we find the same King of Navarre thanking him, conjointly with the Cardinal of Bourbon, for services he had rendered to friends of theirs. The first nobles of the land had recourse to his protection and support, and strove to propitiate him by presents and flattering letters. From all quarters he received offerings of "wine, fruit, confections, ortolans, horses, dogs, hawks, and gerfalcons, the letters accompanying these very often containing a second paragraph, petitioning for pensions or grants from the King, or for places, even down to that of apothecary, or of barber to the Dauphin, &c." The memoirs and manuscripts of the time furnish many curious particulars of this kind, especially the MSS. Gaignières, often referred to by M. de Bouillé. And they further show that d'Aumale, amidst his countless occupations, found leisure to listen to all petitioners, and means to content many. There exist the most flattering letters written to him by the hand of kings; the humblest supplications addressed to him by great state corporations, such as the parliaments of Paris, Bordeaux, and other cities; testimony of the profoundest deference from the nobles of the court – names such as Brézé and Brissac being affixed to fulsome protestations of service and thanks for favour shown. Such was the immense position of the Duke d'Aumale, (that county also had become a duchy,) who now openly affected the state and quality of prince of the blood. Then, as afterwards, (when he was duke of Guise,) he always received the title of *monseigneur*, (except from the princes of the blood, who called him *monsieur*,) and that of *vostre excellence or vostre seigneurie*.

And in 1548 the nuns of Bonneuil addressed him a supplication as *vostre haulte et puissante majesté et seigneurie*. So great was his reputation for magnanimity, so popular his rule, that those provinces rejoiced over which he was appointed governor. And the affection borne him by the French people became at last so great "that it may be said it was carried to an excess, even to the point of making them forget their fidelity to the King." For a time the favour and confidence of the King kept pace with the love of the nation; and it was augmented by the ability with which d'Aumale pacified several revolted provinces, where his presence alone sufficed, for the most part, to calm angry passions and revive the loyalty of the population. Soon after this expedition, occurred his marriage with Anne d'Est, daughter of the Duke of Ferrara, a beautiful, virtuous, and well-dowered princess who had been sought in marriage by Sigismund, King of Poland, but whom an innate sympathy for France, combined with the able management of Cardinal de Guise, induced to give the preference to the Duke d'Aumale.

In his castle of Joinville, on the 12th April 1550, Claude, first duke of Guise, piously and resignedly terminated his illustrious and honourable career. His duchess, Antoinette de Bourbon, one of the most virtuous and amiable princesses of her time, his eldest son and the Marquis of Elbeuf, were beside his dying bed; and during his illness the King sent frequent expresses to inquire his state. His premature death, at the age of fifty-three, after a short but violent illness, – combined with some solemn and

generous expressions he used a few minutes before breathing his last, to the effect that he heartily forgave the person, whosoever it might be, who had given him "*le morceau pour mourir*," – gave rise to a belief, further accredited by his funeral oration and by the inscription on his tomb, that he had perished by poison. History has difficulty in confirming this popular notion, in support of which no evidence was ever produced, nor anything beyond a vague supposition that the author of the Duke's death was a Genoese, an agent of the Emperor, then in France to watch the measures taken by that republic to obtain from Henry II. means of resistance to the party of Ferdinand, in opposition to whom there was little doubt that Guise would advise the King to give his support to Genoa. Considering, however, that Claude of Lorraine lived away from court, where his son had succeeded to his influence, this is rather a far-fetched story; and the probability is that the Duke died of some unusual malady, misunderstood by, perhaps wholly unknown to, the imperfect medical science of those days. But natural deaths were rare in the house of Guise; and in the sixteenth century poison had no unimportant share in the bills of mortality. Some indeed have hinted its possible agency in the death of John, Cardinal of Lorraine, which occurred within forty days of that of his brother Claude. This prelate was on his way back from Rome, where he had been an unsuccessful aspirant to the papal tiara, when he was suddenly informed, on his passage through Lyons, of the Duke's decease. It was possibly the shock of this intelligence

that brought on an attack of apoplexy under which he sank and shortly expired. "Providence," says M. de Bouillé, "had perhaps resolved to consecrate, by an almost simultaneous death, the union which had so constantly and advantageously existed between him and his brother, and which the cotemporary writers characterise, in their mythological style, by comparing the two princes to Castor and Pollux. Their place was not to remain vacant, but was about to be even more than filled by two brothers, also 'the happiest pair of brothers that ever were seen;' one an accomplished warrior and magnanimous hero, the other a skilful and enterprising prelate, who, by renewing the example of a constant agreement of views, by putting in practice that useful and remarkable combination of the churchman and the man of the sword, peculiar to their family, and efficaciously applied by them to politics and ambition, realised an immense amount of favour and authority. The first generation of this dynasty – if not sovereign, at least so brilliantly episodical – had passed away, already almost surpassed in grandeur by its successor, destined to elevate itself in the inverse ratio of the wearer of that crown which gradually became almost illusory."

Certain it is that the figure of Francis, second Duke of Guise, surnamed the Great, occupies, upon the canvass of French history, a far more remarkable and important place than that of any one of the three kings whose reigns were cotemporary with his power. Early distinguished in arms, his generosity, urbanity, and irresistible valour made him the idol of the army, whilst the

prudence and precocious wisdom he inherited from his father, rendered him invaluable at the council board, and secured him the favour of his sovereign; to such a point that Henry II. had no secrets from him, but caused all important despatches to be communicated to him as punctually as they were to himself. Nor was his brother Charles inferior to him in talent, although their difference of profession rendered its display less striking in the cardinal. Both possessed of admirable tact and judgement in the conduct of public affairs, the one was not more terrible in the battle-field than the other was skilful and seductive in diplomatic negotiations, and in the graceful intercourse of private life. The cardinal's learning and eloquence, his fine countenance, his dignified bearing, his richly-stored memory, combined to exercise a powerful fascination upon all he met. "Had I the elegance of Monsieur le Cardinal de Lorraine," said Theodore de Beze one day, when mounting his horse to leave Rheims, where he had had a conference with the accomplished prelate, "I should expect to convert half the persons in France to the religion I profess."

At the date of the death of Claude of Lorraine, Charles V. was the sole survivor of the three remarkable sovereigns who had simultaneously filled the three most important European thrones. With him the Duke and Cardinal now impelled Henry II. into a war, which had for its real object the realisation of a bold and extensive scheme greatly to increase the authority of France in Europe, and at the same time to establish the omnipotence of

the Guises in France. One of the most remarkable events of this war was the siege of Metz, in which large ill-fortified place the Duke, with a small number of men, was exposed to the assaults of an army consisting of one hundred thousand infantry, twenty-three thousand horse, and one hundred and twenty pieces of artillery. Guise displayed extraordinary skill and energy, leading sorties himself, and even issuing forth at the head of a mere handful of men to skirmish with the enemy. Fortunately he had had time to lay in good store of provisions; but his cannon were few in number and for the most part unserviceable, and he was fain to defend with falconets and other small guns, the breaches which the Imperialists soon made in his walls. In an action that occurred during the siege, in the neighbourhood of Nancy, Claude de Guise – that brother of the Duke who, when a mere youth, had powerfully and valiantly contributed to deliver him, in front of Boulogne, from an overwhelming number of assailants – was taken prisoner. Thrice wounded, and with his horse killed under him, he had no choice but to yield or die. This disaster deprived Metz of a gallant defender, and plunged Guise and the whole army into deep affliction; the Duke, however, consoling himself by the resolution to make the Emperor dearly pay for his brother's ransom, and by the reflection that d'Aumale had not yielded until he was knocked down and had a cocked pistol at his throat. The sorties continued with great vigour, but at the expense of many wounded men, of whom so large a proportion died, for want of efficient medical assistance, that a rumour gained

credit that the drugs were poisoned. Guise begged the King to send him Ambrose Paré with a stock of fresh medicaments, and, by the connivance of an Italian officer in the Imperialist camp, that skilful leech was introduced at midnight into the town, with the apothecary Daigue and a horse-load of medical stores. Paré was bearer of a letter from the King, thanking Guise and the other princes and nobles for all they had done and were doing to preserve his town of Metz, and assuring them he would remember and reward their services. Thus encouraged, and confident in his troops, Guise wrote to the King, with whom he found means constantly to correspond in cypher, that Metz could hold out six months without succour. On the other hand the Imperialists redoubled their efforts for success. The Emperor, who lay at Thionville, sick of the gout and expectant of triumph, at last judged his presence indispensable for the fortunate conclusion of the siege, and made his appearance in the camp, mounted on an Arab horse, "his face very pale and wasted, his eyes sunken, his head and beard white." His coming was the signal for so great a salvo of artillery and small arms, that the besieged flew to arms, expecting a general attack. Until the neighbouring castle of La Horgne could be prepared for his reception, he took up his quarters in a small wooden house, hastily constructed with the ruins of an abbey. "A fine palace," he said, "when I shall receive in it the keys of Metz." But the keys were long in coming, although the fierceness of the attack was redoubled – fourteen thousand cannon-shots being fired

against the ramparts in one day, the noise of which was said to have been heard beyond the Rhine, at forty leagues from Metz. The constancy of the besieged was a match for the fury of the assailants. Breaches were diligently repaired, and sorties continued – the French actually seeking the Imperialists under their tents. Suddenly the latter changed the point of attack, and directed their cannonade against one of the very strongest parts of the rampart, behind which the besieged hastened to construct a second wall, also of great strength. The sudden change of plan is attributed by Ambrose Paré in his *Voyage à Metz*, to a stratagem employed by Guise. The Duke, according to the learned physician and chronicler, wrote a letter to Henry II. with the intention of its being intercepted by the enemy, in which he said, that if Charles V. persisted in his plan of attack, he would be compelled to raise the siege, but that a very different result was to be apprehended, if unfortunately the enemy directed his attention to a certain point, cunningly indicated in the despatch. Sewn, with an affectation of mystery, under the doublet of a clumsy peasant, this letter was destined for the perusal of the Duke of Alva, one of whose patrols did not fail to seize and search the unfortunate messenger, who was forthwith hanged. Misled by the information thus obtained, the besiegers changed the position of their batteries. In two days a breach was effected, the old wall crumbling into the ditch, amidst the acclamations of the assailants. But their joy was exchanged for rage and disgust when, upon the subsidence of the dust, they beheld a second wall

in rear of the breach. The French began to scoff and abuse them, but Guise commanded silence, under pain of death, lest some traitor should take advantage of the tumult to convey information to the enemy; whereupon his soldiers fastened live cats to the end of their pikes, whose discordant cries mocked the enemy. The enthusiasm of the besieged now knew no bounds. Men, women, and young girls toiled day and night to strengthen the inner wall. Guise's gay and encouraging words gave confidence to all. Collecting his soldiers upon the breach, which was ninety feet wide: "I rejoice," he said, "that the enemy have at last overthrown this barrier, more useful to them than to you. You have so often visited them in their camp, that it is only just they should have an opportunity of reconnoitring the town upon whose capture they so boastfully reckoned." Charles ordered the assault; but when his troops saw the French crowning the breach, with Guise at their head, they recoiled as if already attacked, and neither entreaties nor threats could move them forward. "How is it," the Emperor had exclaimed with a great oath, when he saw the gaping breach, "that they do not enter? It is so large and level with the ditch; *vertu de Dieu!* what means this?" He had himself conveyed in a litter to the foremost ranks, to animate the soldiers by his presence. When he beheld their retreat, he mournfully desired to be carried back to his quarters. "Formerly," he said, "I was followed to the fight, but I see that I have now no men around me; I must bid adieu to empire and immure myself in a monastery; before three years are over, I will turn Franciscan."

Finally, on the 26th December, provisions running short, and his army weakened one-third by sickness and the sword, Charles, with a sad heart, raised the siege, uttering, in the bitterness of his shame and disappointment, the well-known words, "I plainly see that Fortune, like a true woman, prefers a young king to an old emperor." The imperial camp and artillery crossed the Moselle, and in the night the Duke of Alva evacuated his position, leaving behind a quantity of stores and tents. Guise, who had expressed, that very evening, in a letter to his brother the Cardinal, his conviction that the Emperor would never endure the shame of abandoning the siege, was greatly astonished in the morning to find that the enemy had decamped. His skill and constancy had triumphed, and France was saved from invasion. When he reappeared at court, the King embraced him with transport, and called him his brother. "You have vanquished me as well as the Emperor," said Henry, "by the obligations you have laid me under."

The Duke of Guise's humanity after the siege did him as much honour as his bravery during it. A large number of sick men remained in the Imperialist camp; the rearguard of the retreating army were in a pitiable state, and, unable to proceed, yielded themselves ready prisoners. The commander of a troop of Spanish cavalry, pursued by the Prince of *la Roche-sur-Yon*, who would fain have brought him to battle, suddenly faced about, exclaiming, "How should we have strength to defend ourselves, when you see we have not enough left to fly?" In the hospitals

of Metz and Thionville, the sick and wounded Imperialists were carefully tended by order of Guise; non-combatant prisoners were sent back to the Duke of Alva, with the offer of covered boats to transport his exhausted soldiers; the bodies of the dead received suitable burial. The magnanimous general's courtesy and humanity bore their fruits. In the following campaign, when the town of Therouenne, in Picardy, was surprised by the Imperialists, the Germans and Flemings were putting inhabitants and garrison to the sword, without distinction of age or sex, when the Spanish officers, with a lively and grateful remembrance of the good treatment received from Guise and the French, united their voices and efforts to check the carnage. "*Bonne guerre, compagnons,*" they cried; "*souvenez-vous de la courtoisie de Metz!*"

It was during the following campaign (1554) that there occurred the first marked manifestations of discord between the Duke of Guise and the Admiral de Coligny. In the combat of Renty, near St Omer, Coligny commanded the infantry, in his quality of colonel-general of that arm. Victory declared itself for the French; already many trophies had been taken, and heavy loss inflicted on the Imperialists, who were on the brink of a general rout, when Guise "feeling" says M. de Bouillé, "that he was not supported by the Constable de Montmorency – the retreat also, according to a report current at the time, having been sounded *by the breath of envy*– was unable to follow up his advantage, and could but maintain himself on the field, whilst

the Imperialists, although defeated, succeeded in entering the besieged fort." The chief merit of this imperfect victory was attributed by the Constable to his nephew Coligny, who, on his part, was said to have asserted that, during the heat of the fight, Guise had not been in his right place. This led, upon the evening of the action, to a violent altercation, which would have ended with drawn swords but for the intervention of the King, in whose tent it occurred. He compelled them to embrace; but the reconciliation was only skin-deep, and from that day forwards a rancorous dislike was substituted for the close intimacy which had existed in their youth between these two great soldiers, and which had been carried to such a point that they "could not live without each other, wearing the same colours, and dressing in the same manner." Henceforward they were constant antagonists, the chiefs of two parties under whose banners nobles, soldiers, and courtiers ranged themselves, according to the dictates of their sympathies or interests. And soon their rivalry for fame and influence was inflamed and envenomed by the ardour of religious passions, and of combats for their respective creeds.

It is here impossible to trace, even in outline, the events that crowded the reign of Henry II., and in which the Duke, the Cardinal, and their brother d'Aumale played a most conspicuous part. It was a constant succession of battles and intrigues, for the most part terminating, in spite of formidable foes both in the field and at court, to the advantage of the Guises. And when, a few weeks after the battle of St Quintin, so disastrous to the

French arms – where the Constable de Montmorency, who had boasted beforehand of victory, beheld his entire army slain or taken, and himself a prisoner – the Duke of Guise returned from Italy, "to save the state," as the King himself expressed it, he found himself at the utmost pinnacle of power a subject could possibly attain. On the very day of his arrival, Henry declared him lieutenant-general of the French armies, in and out of the kingdom; a temporary dignity, it is true, but one superior to that of Constable, and which usually was bestowed only in times of regency and minority. That nothing should be wanting to the exorbitant authority thus conferred upon the man to whom sovereign and nation alike were wont to turn in the day of danger and disaster, the King addressed to all the provincial authorities particular injunctions to obey the orders of the Duke of Guise as though they emanated from himself; and truly it was remarked, says Dauvigny in his *Vies des Hommes Illustres*, that never had monarch in France been obeyed more punctually and with greater zeal. The whole business of the country now rested upon the shoulders of Guise. But even whilst thus exalting him, Henry, conscious of his own weakness, and haunted, perhaps, by his father's dying injunction, was actually plotting how to lessen the power of his great subject, so soon as the period of peril should have passed, during which his services were indispensable. With strange infatuation, the feeble monarch expected to be able to clip at will the wings of that soaring influence, when victory over the foreigner and the liberation of

the country should have confirmed its domination.

Invested with his new dignities, whose importance his sagacity fully appreciated, Guise, with the least possible delay, set out for Compiègne, which, since the recent disasters of the French arms, was a frontier town. Those disasters, he felt, could be effectually repaired only by a brilliant feat of arms, at once useful to the state, and flattering to the national pride. Upon such a one he resolved. Calais, now upwards of two centuries in possession of the English, to the great humiliation of France, was the object of destined attack. Skilled in the stratagems of war, the Duke contrived, by a series of able manœuvres, to avert suspicion of his real design, until, on the 1st January 1558, he suddenly appeared before the ramparts of Calais. The siege that ensued has been often narrated. It terminated, after an obstinate resistance, in the capitulation of the garrison, which had scarcely been executed, when an English fleet appeared off the port, bearing succours that came too late. The triumph excited indescribable astonishment and joy throughout France. It was a splendid revenge for the defeat of St Quintin, and produced a marked change in the sentiments of several foreign potentates, who believed that reverse to have prostrated the French power for some time to come. The Grand Signior offered the co-operation of his fleet, and the German princes hastened, with redoubled good-will, the levies that had been demanded of them. Pope Paul IV., when congratulating the French ambassador, pronounced the highest eulogiums on Guise, and declared the conquest of

Calais preferable to that of half England. At court, the partisans of the Constable were in dismay, and tried to lessen the merit of the victor by attributing its success to the adoption of a plan sketched by Coligny. But even if this were true, the merit of the execution was all the Duke's own. Upon the heels of this triumph, quickly followed the capture of Guines and the evacuation by the English of the castle of Hames, their last possession in the county of Oye. "In less than a month," says M. de Bouillé, "Francis of Lorraine had accomplished the patriotic but difficult enterprise so often and fruitlessly attempted during two centuries, and had cancelled the old proverb applied in France, in those days, to generals of slight merit, of whom it was derisively said, 'He will never drive the English out of France.'"

Henry II., accompanied by the Dauphin, the Cardinals of Lorraine and Guise, and several nobles of the court, made a journey to Calais, which he entered with great pomp. The object of this expedition was to sustain the courage and zeal of the troops, who endured much fatigue and hardship, in that inclement season and in the midst of the marshes. The King also wished to testify his gratitude to his lieutenant-general, showing him great confidence, referring to him all who requested audience on business, and presenting him, in the most flattering terms, with a house in Calais. The Duke returned with Henry to Paris, where great feasts and rejoicings were held in his honour, and, on occasion of the Dauphin's marriage with Mary Queen of Scots, which shortly followed, Guise filled, in the absence of

Montmorency, the office of grand-master, which he long had coveted. Concurrently, however, with this great apparent favour, Henry was secretly uneasy at the power and pretensions of the family of Guise, and maintained a constant and confidential correspondence with their inveterate enemy the Constable de Montmorency. On the other hand the Guises were on their guard, labouring to countermine and defeat the intrigues levelled against them. Urged on by his brother, and feeling that, in their position, if they did not advance they must recede, the Duke directed all his efforts to an effectual concentration in his own hands of the entire military power of the kingdom. Should he fail in this, he at least was resolved to leave none in those of his rivals. By this time the progress of the Reformed religion in France had attracted great attention. It was an abomination in the eyes of Henry; and of this the Duke and Cardinal took advantage to work the downfall of d'Andelot, brother of Coligny, and colonel-general of the French infantry, the only military commander who at that moment caused them any uneasiness. Accused of heresy, and summoned before the King, who received him kindly, and, expecting he would so reply as to disconcert his enemies, "commanded him to declare, in presence of all the court, his belief with respect to the holy sacrifice of mass; d'Andelot proudly replied that his gratitude for the King's favours doubtless rendered entire devotedness incumbent upon him, but that his soul belonged to God alone; that, enlightened by the torch of Scripture, he approved the doctrines of Calvin, and considered

mass a horrible profanation and an abominable invention of man." Furious at what he deemed a blasphemy, the King, who was at supper, snatched a basin from the table and hurled it at d'Andelot; but it struck the Dauphin. He was then tempted, says one of his historians, to pierce the offender with his sword, but finally contented himself with sending him to prison, and the post of colonel-general was bestowed upon Montluc, an ex-page of Guise's grandfather, and a devoted partisan of the house of Lorraine. This brave Gascon officer at first scrupled to accept it, for he feared to incur the hatred of the Colignys and the Constable. Wily and wary, like most of his countrymen, he declared himself willing to serve as a private soldier under the Duke, but modestly declined the command offered him. The King insisting, he alleged a dysentery, as rendering him incapable of the needful activity. This and other objections being overruled, he took possession of his important command, and speedily proved himself worthy to hold it – notably at the siege of Thionville on the Moselle. This fortress, one of the strongest the Imperialists owned, was defended by Jean de Caderebbe, a brave gentleman of Brabant, at the head of three thousand picked men. The Dukes of Guise and Nevers, and Marshal Strozzi, were the leaders of the besieging army; Montluc joined them on the eve of the opening of the batteries, and did excellent service. On the fifteenth day of the siege, Guise was in the trenches, talking to Strozzi, on whose shoulder his hand rested, when the Marshal was struck by an arquebuse ball, a little above the heart.

On feeling himself hit, "*Ah! tête Dieu, Monsieur*," exclaimed this brave and able general, "the King loses to-day a good servant, and your Excellency also." He did himself no more than justice. Guise was deeply affected, but, repressing his emotion, he tried to fix Strozzi's thoughts on religion. The veteran's death was less exemplary than his life; he died in profession of unbelief; and Guise, much scandalised, but perhaps doubly furious at the thought that the soul as well as the body of his old comrade had perished by the sudden manner of his death, prosecuted the siege with fresh ardour, eager for revenge, and suppressing for the moment, as far as he was able, the disastrous news, which could not but produce a most unfavourable impression. Valiantly seconded by Montluc and Vieilleville, on the 22d June, two days after Strozzi's death, he received the capitulation of the garrison. His triumph was well earned. Besides the exhibition, throughout the siege, of the genius and inventive resource that constitute a general of the highest order, he had toiled and exposed himself like a mere subaltern, constantly under fire, personally superintending the pioneers and artillerymen, and rarely sleeping; so that it was no wonder (considering he had not had a single night's rest during the operations against Thionville) that on the 1st July, when preparing for the siege of the rich little town of Arlon, he complained of being very drowsy, and left Montluc to invest the place – himself retiring to bed in a cottage, and giving orders to let him sleep till he awoke of himself. "It is very quick work," he observed, crossing himself, when he

was the next day informed, in reply to his inquiry whether the batteries had opened fire, that Montluc had surprised and taken the place in the night.

Whilst Guise was thus not only rendering great services himself, but bringing forward leaders whose exploits honoured the French arms, in other quarters affairs went less favourably for France. Near Dunkirk, Marshal Thermes was beaten and taken prisoner, and Guise, whose frequent lot it was to repair the blunders or misfortunes of less capable generals, marched to Picardy; on the frontier of which province, at a grand review passed by Henry II., the Duke's son and successor, Henry, Prince of Joinville, then but eight years old, appeared for the first time in public, with his cousin, the Count of St Vallier, son of the Duke d'Aumale. Accompanied by their preceptors and some other gentlemen, and mounted on ponies, they rode through the ranks, until they reached the troops commanded by Montluc. "*Cà, çà*, my little princes," exclaimed that brave captain, "dismount; for I was brought up in the house of which you are issue, which is the house of Lorraine, where I was page, and I will be the first to put arms in your hands." The two cousins dismounted, and Montluc, taking off the little silken *robons* that covered their shoulders, placed a pike in the hand of each of them. "I hope," he said, "that God will give you grace to resemble your fathers, and that I shall have brought you good fortune by being the first to invest you with arms. To me they have hitherto been favourable. May God render you as brave as you are handsome, and sons of very good

and generous fathers." After this species of martial baptism, the two children, conducted by Montluc, passed along the front of the troops, objects of the admiration and good wishes of men and officers. A few months later, one of them was dead; the other, heir to most of the great qualities, whether good or bad, that distinguished his race, lived to prosecute, and at one time almost to realise, the most ambitious designs his father and grandfather had conceived. The fair-haired boy of the review at Pierrepont, was the stern *Balafré* of the wars of the League.

The spring of the year 1559 found the Guises in marked disfavour with the King. The great services of the Duke, the capture of Calais and Thionville, and the many other feats of arms by which he had reduced the power of the enemy, at moments when it was about to be fatal to France, were insufficient to counterbalance the alarm felt by Henry II. at his and the Cardinal's influence and ambition. The star of the Constable was in the ascendant. Chiefly by his intervention, a disadvantageous peace was concluded, and, at his request, d'Andelot was recalled to court. Montmorency and Coligny triumphed. The efforts of the Protestants combined with court intrigues to ruin the credit of the house of Lorraine. The two brothers were attacked on all sides, and in every manner: epigram and satire furiously assailed them, and they were denounced as aspiring, one to the tiara, the other to the crown of France. However doubtful – or at least remote from maturity – these projects were, they were yet sufficiently probable for their

denunciation to produce the desired effect on the mind of Henry, already writhing impatiently under the domination of the Guises, against whom he was further prejudiced by his mistress, the Duchess de Valentinois, (Diane de Poitiers,) still influential, in spite of her threescore winters. Never had circumstances been so menacing to the fortunes of the Guises; and perhaps it was only the subtle and temporising line of conduct they adopted in this critical conjuncture, that saved them from utter disgrace and downfall. Things had been but a short time in this state, and already, from the skilful manœuvres of the Cardinal, their side of the balance acquired an upward inclination, when the whole aspect of affairs was changed by the death of Henry II. With the reign of his feeble successor, there commenced for the restless princes of Lorraine a new epoch of power and renown.

MY PENINSULAR MEDAL

BY AN OLD PENINSULAR

PART VIII. – CHAPTER XIX

Now for the fight. On the morning of the battle of Toulouse we left Grenade. It was known amongst us that the battle was coming off; and we started in the expectation of passing the night either in the city itself, or in its immediate vicinity. We ascended towards the city by the left bank of the Garonne, but reached a pontoon bridge, which enabled us to cross to the right bank, where the main body of our troops was posted. The fight had commenced. We heard the firing as we advanced; and while we approached the scene of action, it became gradually louder and more distinct. Immediately in the rear of the British lines we halted, not knowing the ground, and withdrew from the road into a field which was close at hand, in order that our numerous party might not prove an obstacle to passing troops, ammunition, or artillery. Our forces held the low ground, and closed, in a sort of semicircle, around the heights occupied by the French. As it so happened that I was not only at this battle, but in it, I here beg

leave to relate the circumstances which led to my finding myself in a position where, as a civilian, I was so little wanted, and so much out of my ordinary sphere of duty.

Sancho did it all. We were sitting upon our nags, speculating upon the fight, and seeing all that could be seen, till we began to think we knew something of what was going on. At this moment rode up from the rear, coming across the fields, an old officer of rank, a major-general, well known at headquarters, without aide-de-camp, orderly, or any kind of attendant. He inquired eagerly, "Where are the troops? – Where are the troops?" We pointed forward; little was visible but trees. He looked rather at a loss, but turned his horse's head in the direction we had indicated. That villain Sancho, seeing another horse go on, snorted, and pulled at the bridle. He was tired of standing still. I, ever indulgent to Sancho, followed the old general, and soon overtook him. "I believe I know the position of the troops, sir. Will you give me leave to show you?"

"Thank you, sir, thank you," said he; "I shall really be much obliged."

We rode on till we reached a British regiment, drawn up in line. With renewed acknowledgments he then took his leave. The air was musical above our heads with whistling and humming missiles. I was now fairly upon the ground, and didn't like to go back.

There was a lull in the fight. The spectacle was singular. Some firing was kept up on both sides, but not sufficient to obscure the

view of the French position, which rose immediately in front, a bare range of hills, crowned by their redoubts. The atmosphere was bright; and though the skirmishers on the declivity were discoverable only by small white jets of smoke, as they fired from time to time, every movement of the enemy on the summit, with the sky for its background, was perfectly visible. I noticed a single horseman, probably an aide-de-camp bearing orders, as distinct and diminutive as if seen through the wrong end of a telescope. You might perceive the very action of his horse, that laborious up-and-down gallop of the French manége, which throws away so much of the animal's strength, and sacrifices speed without securing elegance.

The combat, at this moment, was renewed, and our troops went to work in earnest. The Spanish army ascended the hill to assault the enemy's redoubts. This movement, at first, had all the regularity of a review. But the redoubts opened their fire; as the Spaniards moved up, the smoke rolled down; and, when the wind swept it away, their broken bands were seen in precipitate retreat, followed by a large body of the French, who swarmed out from their intrenchments. Instantly, and just in front of me, our artillery opened upon the pursuing foe. The round-shot plumped into their columns, knocking up clods as high as a house; and the enemy, not relishing this salutation, hastily fell back to their former position. Sancho now became a dreadful plague. He had for some time been getting unquiet, and, with the continual firing, he grew worse and worse. I believe this was his first battle,

as it was mine. Not content with a little extra restiveness at every fresh discharge of artillery, he had worked himself into a state of chronic excitement, and, at intervals, attempted to bolt. It was clear I must get rid of Sancho, or see no more of the fight; so I deposited him in a stable, under care of a cottager, in the adjoining village.

Still moving towards the left, along the base of the hill, I reached a part of the British position, where a number of our troops were waiting to storm the heights, when the flank movement against the enemy's right, which was his weakest point, should be sufficiently advanced. All at once I plumped upon "Cousin Tom," whom I had not met since he embarked, three years before, a raw subaltern, at Portsmouth. There he now stood, as large as life, rough and ugly, at the head of his regiment, a regular "Old Peninsular;" and on him had devolved the duty, as he gave me to understand, of "taking those fellows up the hill." This service, I thought, would have fallen to some officer of higher rank; but Tom explained. The regiment having been reduced, either by losses or detachment, its numbers in the field were small, and he, being the senior officer present, of course had to "carry them up." "Come," said he, "we are going to take a look at those monsieurs above there; you may as well go with us."

The proposal was coolly made, so I took it coolly. "With all my heart," said I. "You know what is the feeling towards an amateur. If he makes an ass of himself, he's laughed at; and if he gets hit, they only say, it serves him right. If it's of any use, I'll go with

pleasure."

"Use?" said Tom; "the greatest use. Why, I want to ask you twenty questions about friends in England. Besides, you know, if I am knocked over, you can pick me up."

"Very well, then; and you can do the same for me."

"No, no," said cousin Tom; "I don't promise that. Got my men to attend to. If I am hit, you must take care of me. If you are hit, you must take care of yoursel – Oh, that's the signal. Come along." Away we went, up the hill.

Rank and file – double-quick time – a capital pace for opening the chest. Tom took it easy, trotting on at a steady pace, and assailing me with a running fire of questions; while the row that had already commenced above prevented my returning categorical replies. "Is your father at sea now?" – Bang! from one of the big guns in the French batteries right over our heads. "Got any brandy?" – A shout from a thousand throats, in the rush and shock of a charge with bayonets. "Had breakfast this morning?" – Pop! pop! pop! a running fire of musketry. Pop! pop! pop! "Got any cigars?" – Bang! bang! the big guns at it again. "When did you hear from your mother?" A new sound, less loud and sudden, but, from its peculiarity, distinct amidst the din; a spiteful, whirling, whizzing noise, ten thousand skyrockets combined in one; not, though, like the skyrocket, first loud, then less audible – quite the contrary. Commencing with a faint and distant hiss, it grew louder and louder, came singing on, nearer and nearer, till a shell dropped a few yards in front of

our column! The hiss was now an angry roar, like the blowing off of steam. There lay the bottled demon, full in our path, threatening instant destruction, and daring us to advance. Our column halted. "Hurra! my lads," cried Cousin Tom, waving his sword. "Come along, old Five-and-threepennies. Push by it at once, before it *spreads*." The game old Five-and-threepennies gave a shout – rushed forward – got by in time; each yelping and capering as he passed the fizzing foe. Bang went the shell. For a few seconds I was stone deaf. Never felt such an odd sensation. Not the deafness, but the return of hearing. First, perfect silence in the midst of the turmoil – then the crack! crack! bang! bang! as if you had suddenly flung open a door. Not a man of us was hurt. "Got an English paper?" said Tom.

"I've got some intelligence for you, old chap, not in this morning's *Times*. Just look up there, in front."

The view in front was striking and picturesque. Right above us, dimly visible through the smoke, on the verge of the platform or table-land which we were mounting to assault, appeared a regiment of French infantry, enough of them to eat us up, advancing upon us with an irregular fire, and led on by their colonel. He rode a showy horse; and, hat in hand, waved them on, while his white hairs streamed in the wind, and his whole bearing announced the brave old soldier. "We must form line," said Tom. It was done forthwith, with steadiness, order, and rapidity. "Make ready – present – fire." Crack! went all the muskets together. I saw the gallant old colonel, with outspread

arms, tumbling from his horse. – "Charge!" We rushed upon the foe; but, when the smoke had cleared away, found no foe to fight withal. Nothing was visible, save their knapsacks in the distance, poppling up and down in the smoke, as they scampered off. We still continued advancing in pursuit, and now were fairly in for it, half choked with dust and sulphur. If it be asked, how far I personally contributed to the triumphs of that glorious day, I beg leave to answer: – Unquestionably my arm performed prodigies of valour; of that there neither is, nor can be, the shadow of a doubt. But as I should have felt it extremely difficult to give a distinct account of my exploits if questioned on the day, why, of course you won't expect it now, after the lapse of six-and-thirty years. Suffice it to say, we made good our footing on the platform, drove the enemy from their position, occupied it ourselves, took possession of their redoubts, and formed, with the rest of the British forces, on the summit of the heights. The day was our own. But there was one unfortunate circumstance to damp our exultation; Cousin Tom was missing. A sergeant now informed me he was wounded, and had gone to the rear.

CHAPTER XX. AND LAST

As victory had crowned our efforts, and my valuable services were now no longer required, I determined to look for Cousin Tom, and walked down the hill for that purpose. At its base, I entered a long thicket or shrubbery. There, amongst the trees,

I found several wounded men, whom their comrades were removing off the ground. No one could give me the information that I sought; no one knew anything of Cousin Tom. Saw a sergeant sitting on a bank, who, I soon discovered, was also wounded. He knew no such officer; had seen no one answering the description. "What's your injury, sergeant?"

"A musket-ball in my ankle, sir."

"Well, but hadn't I better help you to a place of shelter?"

"Much obliged to you, sir; but I couldn't walk, even with your support. I'd rather wait till my turn comes to be carried, if you've no objections, sir. Much obliged to you, equally all the same, sir."

"As you please. Can I render you any assistance? What can I do for you?"

"If you'd have the kindness, sir, perhaps you'd be so good and take off my gaiter. I can't take it off myself, sir, though I've tried; it does hurt me so when I stoop forward. I'm afraid the bleeding will spoil it, sir; and then I shall be forced to take out a new pair."

Having performed this office, and administered a little brandy both topically and constitutionally, I once more ascended the hill, thinking it possible Cousin Tom might be somewhere nearer the scene of action. I inquired and looked in every direction, but without success. Where are you, Cousin Tom? This time my steps brought me into one of the redoubts, which had been carried by our troops. When I entered, there were not a dozen men in it. Sunset was near, and everything over for the day. Yet just at that moment, for what reason I know not, perhaps for a

freak, the enemy thought fit to open upon this all but unoccupied post, from their own lines nearer the city, with a heavy fire of shot and shell. Bang went a shell, knocking up bushels of earth and mire. Plump came a round-shot, into the mud parapet of the redoubt. It was no use moving; one place was as hot as another. So we had nothing to do for it but to stand still and exchange grins till the pelting was over. I then took my leave for the evening. The day indeed was drawing to a close as I descended the hill; and happily I succeeded in reaching the village, and finding the cottage where Sancho had been left in charge, just after it became pitch-dark. A cheering light streamed through the cottage window; and, on entering, I found comfortably seated by the blazing hearth a veterinary surgeon, who was there in charge of wounded horses. He very civilly informed me there were two good beds, so all was right with respect to accommodation; and, more civilly still, invited me to partake of his supper, which was boiling on the fire. Not having eaten a morsel since my early breakfast at Grenade, and having just discovered that I was enormously hungry, I accepted the invitation with glee, took my seat, and cast many a glance at the boiling, bubbling, and steaming kettle. Presently the contents were turned out into a large, old-fashioned tureen, and displayed to my eager gaze a compound of various materials, the chief of which were a fowl, and – what d'ye think? – a pig's heart. Supper excellent. Bed ditto.

Next day early I resumed my search for Cousin Tom, but still, alas! without success. Went from village to village, inquired

from house to house, searched the whole neighbourhood. Lots of wounded officers, but not the man I sought. Throughout the day my search was unsuccessful. Towards night I was passing through a street of scattered houses, a sort of hamlet, and was beginning to think of securing a lodging and a dinner. Wolves rouse at sunset; and I distinctly felt one gnawing at my stomach. At this painful juncture, much to my satisfaction, at the door of a cottage I discovered a jolly acquaintance, whom I beg to introduce as my "Fat Friend." He was one of the smartest clerks amongst our civilians, and probably the youngest; under, rather than over fifteen; in short, a chubby boy, who somehow or other had broken away from his mother's apron-strings, and obtained a post, which he filled in a way that did him credit. In one respect he was precocious; namely, that he soon proved himself up to all the waggery and villainy of headquarters. Moreover, he had a vast idea of maintaining his importance, and could take his own part; was touchy in anything that affected his manhood; and, if you offended him, punched your head; brushed up to fine women, with a marked preference for a bouncer. Yet, after all, he was but an overgrown boy, and often afforded us sport by his mannish airs. "Ah, Fatty, is that you? Glad to see you. Got any room?"

"Plenty, plenty," said Fatty; "good entertainment for man and horse. Glad to see you; and glad to see the pony. Here, Francisco, take Sancho, and give him some corn. Come in, old fellow. Sit down, and make yourself comfortable. Dreadful dull here –

horrid! Left in charge of the departmental boxes."

"I say, Fatty; have you dined?"

"Dined? We dined an hour ago." Fatty saw his advantage, and was resolved to make the most of it.

"Well, what did you have for dinner? Got any cold beef?"

"Why, where have you been?" said Fatty; "haven't seen you these two days. Oh, I suppose you got into Toulouse. Lots of fine gals?"

"Answer my question, and I'll answer yours."

"Come out, old fellow. Let's take a turn through village before it gets dark. Dinner? Why, a turkey. Sorry you were not with us to partake. Not a morsel left. Picked the old gobbler clean, drumsticks and all."

"I wish you'd let me send your fellow for some beef."

"Oh yes," said Fatty, "send him by all means. Sorry to inform you it's no use, though. Not a morsel of rations to be had; not a biscuit. What, haven't you *dined*?" I saw he meant to have his joke, so made no reply.

There was a dodge, though; my remedy was in my pocket. Brought out a cigar, one of my choice grenadiers; struck a light, blew a fragrant cloud, took it easy. The rich odour diffused itself through the apartment.

Fatty, knowing in cigars, soon discovered that mine was no common weed. He first drew a sniff; then gave utterance to his emotions in a coaxing and admiring "Oh!" I took no notice.

"Come, old fellow," said Fatty; "hand out one of those."

"Lost your cigar-case?"

"No, no; nonsense. Come, give us one; that's a good chap."

Failing in his request, Fatty sat silent and fidgetty. The first finished, I lit a second.

Fatty watched his opportunity; made a vicious grab at the case. I was too quick for him – knew his ways. Down he sat again; tried all the varieties of entreating, threatening, bullying, wheedling, till cigar the second was burnt out. When I extracted the third, Fatty could stand it no longer; made a rush, and commenced a ferocious assault, pitching it in, right and left. The punches came so fierce and fast, I was at length compelled, in self-defence, to administer a slight persuader, and Fatty found it convenient to resume his seat. He sat awhile, sulky and all but blubbering; then hastily rose, and stalked out of the room in high dudgeon. I presently found him stationed at the front door with his hands in his pocket, very pensive and dignified. Shortly after, he slipped into the house; Francisco appeared with the tablecloth and a bottle of wine; then came half a turkey and the cold beef. After dinner we clubbed our resources, and closed the evening with whisky punch and prime cigars.

Next morning early, started afresh in search of Cousin Tom. Near Toulouse, fell in with Gingham – told him my difficulties. "Come up the hill," said Gingham; "I'll go with you. There, no doubt, we shall find your cousin's regiment." On reaching the summit of the heights, we found our way in the first instance into the Colombette redoubt; the same in which, on the day of the

fight, the brave Forty-second had been suddenly overwhelmed by a superior force, and had lost four-fifths of its numbers. Within the redoubt were standing two or three privates; they belonged to the Forty-second. The uniform at once reminded me of Corporal Fraser, the trusty companion of my march to headquarters. I asked one of the privates, did he know the Corporal. "He joined about three weeks ago, sir."

"Hope he's well. Where is he now?"

"He's there, sir," said the man, pointing to the parapet of the redoubt. I looked, but saw no one.

"The earth," said Gingham, "seems to have been recently stirred there. That mound, I think, is not many days old." Then, addressing the soldier, "your regiment suffered a heavy loss. Is that where you buried after the action?"

"That's the place, sir." The man then walked away, as if little disposed for conversation.

We did not pause to calculate how many bodies would fill a space commensurate with the length, breadth, and altitude of the soil displaced. There lay the slain of a gallant regiment, in the redoubt they had so nobly won. There lay Corporal Fraser, who, in all the difficulties of our march, had shown himself trustworthy, fearless, intelligent, and energetic. He had longed to join ere the day of combat, and had found a soldier's grave.

We discovered at length the sergeant who had informed me of my cousin's wound. He now pointed to a large house, near the thicket at the bottom of the hill. While searching for Cousin

Tom on the day of the fight, I was close to that same house, but without seeing it. From our present elevated position it was distinctly visible, though not from the low ground, amongst trees and underwood.

Our approach to the house led us through the thicket. While making our way among the trees, we both, Gingham and I, came to a halt at the same instant. The sight which arrested our steps was new to Gingham, not to me. I saw, on that spot, an object that I had seen two days before. The sergeant whom I had then found wounded was still sitting there, on the same bank, in the same attitude! There he had sat the whole time, overlooked by the bearers, and unable to move. Viewed at the distance of a few paces, his aspect scarcely appeared changed. It was the identical figure – I remembered him at once. But on a nearer inspection, the alteration was but too manifest. His eye was glazed, and half shut. His face was that of a corpse. He sat up, like a dead man galvanised. "What, still here, sergeant? Has nobody come to remove you yet."

He attempted to speak – paused – at length found utterance. "Sorry I didn't accept your offer, sir." His voice was low and husky, but distinct.

"Come," said Gingham, "you mustn't refuse this time. We'll soon carry you into the house just by."

"Thank you, sir; thank you, gentlemen. Would you have the kindness though – I should be sorry to lose my gaiter."

The gaiter secured, we prepared to lift the sufferer from his

seat, and he on his part made a feeble effort to rise. The attempt brought on a gush of pain. For a moment, his features were distorted with intolerable anguish; the next, he fainted in our arms.

"Now then," said Gingham, thrusting back into his sidepocket a small flask which he had just drawn out. "Now then; away with him at once, before he recovers. Come, Mr Y – ; you take his shoulders, I'll take his legs. It may save him further pain."

We bore the sufferer, still senseless, to the house. Gingham, not having a hand to spare, banged at the door with his foot. It was opened by Mr Staff-surgeon Pledget, who bowed on recognising us, but looked rather perplexed at the unexpected addition to his duties.

Pledget gave instant directions for the accommodation of the wounded man, and informed me, in reply to my inquiries for Cousin Tom, that he had an officer under his care, answering to my description. Pledget appeared bewildered, and stood with us in the passage a few moments, without speaking. At length he opened the door of a small chamber close by, and begged us to enter. He placed chairs for us, and seated himself on the bed. "I'm rather exhausted," said he.

"I fear after such a fight," said Gingham, "your duties must be heavy indeed."

"Oh yes," said Pledget, looking distressed and rather wild. "I have had much work, and little assistance; a long spell, too."

"Why, you began, I suppose," replied Gingham, "early on the

day of the fight."

"Yes," said Pledget; "and I've been at it ever since. Let me see: two days and two nights, isn't it? Yes, and now going on for the third. Here have I been operating, bandaging, taking up arteries, taking off arms and legs, night and day, without time to lie down, almost without a moment to eat. In fact," said he, looking about the room like a man lost, "this is the first time I've sat down these eight-and-forty hours."

Pledget's look bore full testimony to his toils. Three weeks' illness could hardly have wrought a greater change. Nor was his appearance mended by his garb. He wore a sort of operating gown similar to that employed in dissecting; a long pinafore with sleeves, protecting the whole person from the chin to the feet, tied round the middle, and closing with a fold behind. The front was spotted in every part with jets of blood from wounded arteries. Some of the stains had dried on, and blackened where they dried; others, more recent, were still moist and crimson. Blood was on his unshaven and haggard face; and on his hands, too, wore marks of blood.

Gingham eyed him with a look of deep concern. "I really fear," said Gingham, "you've been quite overdone."

"I did hope, before this," replied Pledget, "to be relieved by other gentlemen of my own department. I have but one medical assistant, and he, at this moment, can afford me no help, for I have been forced to leave him sitting with his finger on a wounded artery; and if he takes it off but for a few seconds, the

major's a dead man."

Pledget now looked like a man that can't remember what's next. "Oh," said he, in all absent tone, "so peace is really concluded. Come, Mr Y – , suppose we go and look for your cousin. His case, I'm happy to say, is not serious. The ball will be extracted this evening, and then, I hope, he will do well."

Pledget spoke, but did not stir. "By the bye," he added, "you know Captain Gabion? I think you do. Oh yes, I recollect; we were all three fellow-passengers from Lisbon to Falmouth. No, no, what am I saying? From Falmouth to Lisbon. His case is past hope. He can hardly live through the night."

Gingham and I rose at once from our seats. For the moment, the imminent danger of a man we so highly esteemed, expelled from my thoughts even Cousin Tom. Pledget also rose, as if to lead the way, but again lapsed into forgetfulness. His mind was evidently worn out, as well as his body. "Well," said he, "I'm glad we've got Toulouse. – Gentlemen, I beg your pardon. This way, if you please; up stairs."

He led the way. Every open door, as we passed through the spacious mansion, discovered a room crowded with wounded and dying men, in beds, or on the ground. Or, if we saw not into the apartment, sounds were heard, which told of anguish and laceration within. We were conducted by Pledget into a large room on the first floor, filled, like the others, with every form of suffering. Some, slightly wounded, sat round the fire, on which cookery was proceeding in kettles of every size and shape. One

officer, bandaged round the head, had become delirious. He alternately laughed and whimpered, muttered and sang. Another sat near him, moaning, with his arm in a sling. A spent cannon ball had smashed the bones from the elbow to the wrist, without inflicting an external wound. Every bed had an occupant; and many lay upon the floor, with only a blanket under them. My eye glanced round the apartment, and lighted on the pinched features and pallid visage of Captain Gabion.

He lay on his back in bed. Death was legible in his aspect. His eyes were all but shut; but, from time to time, a convulsive twitching of the muscles suddenly expanded them to their full width. To all appearance, he was perfectly insensible. His breathing was irregular and laborious; but the expression of his countenance, except when disfigured by the spasms which occasionally shot through his frame, and jerked him from head to foot, was, as in health, calm and dignified. Strange indeed were the vicissitudes, strange was the contrast, between the rigid tranquillity of one moment, and the awful distortion of the next. Now, it was the quivering play of features pulled by muscular contraction; now, the monumental repose of marble.

"I fear," whispered Gingham to Pledget, "you view the case unfavourably." Pledget hopelessly raised his eyes.

"The Captain has been insensible," said Pledget, "ever since he was brought in; and probably will continue so till he expires."

We turned from this sad spectacle, without exchanging a syllable. A handkerchief was whisked in my face. I looked round;

there was the man I wanted. In the next bed, tucked in, with smiling face, little changed since we parted, a splendid specimen of the ugly-handsome – those fellows that make the biggest holes in ladies' hearts – lay Cousin Tom. Gingham, my object attained, forthwith took a temporary leave – had urgent business in Toulouse – an appointment – would return as soon as possible.

"Fine fellow, that" said Cousin Tom, craning round, and nodding at Captain Gabion.

"Well, Tom," said I; "what's the matter with YOU? What brought YOU here?"

"Oh, not much; nothing," replied Tom, curling out his lips contemptuously, like a disappointed man; "only a musket-shot. It won't get me a step, I'm afraid; no, nor a pension neither."

"Well, but how was it? When was it? We lost you in a moment."

"I'll tell you just how it happened," said Tom. "You saw the old colonel knocked over. Ah! Don't touch the bed; that's a good fellow. Well. Directly after, you know, we charged. I was running on; felt a smart crack in the small of my leg. Thought it was a stone; took no notice. A few paces further, though, found I couldn't walk. The sergeant looked at my leg; said 'You're wounded, sir.' Wounded I was, sure enough; and disabled, too. Got carried to the rear; placed myself in the doctor's – "

Here Tom suddenly knit his brows. His colour changed in an instant from florid to livid; his whole face was distorted with pain. Clapping his handkerchief to his mouth, he chewed away

at it with all his might, while big drops of sweat started out on his forehead, and he drew in breath till the bedclothes heaved. Next moment he was himself again.

Once more Tom nodded at the next bed. "Known him long? The doctor knows him."

"We came over from England, all three of us in a ship."

"Doctor was out, though, in one thing," said Cousin Tom. "Told you he was insensible ever since he came in. No such thing; this morning he revived; for about an hour seemed quite himself. Told me how he got hit."

"Then tell me. I must communicate with his friends in England."

"Well," replied Tom, "the Captain wasn't on duty here at headquarters; was doing some field-works on the left bank of the river, to be ready for Soult in case of his bolting again for the south. He heard, though, that the fight was coming off; so rode in on the morning. Found out there was to be a flank movement to the left; thought he might as well explore the line of march; went forward alone. Passed through the thicket on foot; made his way from one end to the other. When he reached the further extremity, just where our men got such a pounding afterwards from the guns on the heights, he looked out for the enemy's skirmishers; saw no one; thought he might as well go a little further. Just then our batteries at the right opened on the French position; some of our shots flew too high, and came clean over the hill into the lane, just exactly where he was standing." –

Indeed! I thought of Captain Gabion's dream. – "Well; he saw one coming; didn't trouble himself; it seemed spent. Just when he thought it was going to stop, it fetched a pitch; took him in the side. He was found when our troops advanced, and brought in here." At this moment the pain returned. Tom again made wry faces, took another chew at his handkerchief, and soon recovered as before.

"Well, Tom; I'm a leisure man. What can I do for you? Is there anything you want? – anything I can get you?"

Cousin Tom looked very much as if there was something he did want, yet was backward to speak. "Why," said he, "I suppose by this time you can get into Toulouse. I wish you would make inquiries; try and find me some – But never mind; it's of no use. The ball will be extracted this evening, and to-morrow I shall go in myself."

"Nonsense, nonsense; I'll go this instant."

"Don't be too sure of that, though," said Tom. "Yesterday morning I tried it. Told the servant to have my mule ready; got my things on while the doctor was sawing away on the other floor; slipped down stairs; gave him the go-by. Mounted – rode to the top of the hill – was riding down into the city – almost rode into a French piquet."

"No fear of that now, Tom; the city is ours. I saw the French troops marching out. Come, tell us, old fellow. What is it you fancy? Anything the doctor sanctions, you know. A quarter of mutton? – a dozen of pigeons? – some prime French sausages? –

a bushel or so of oysters? What do you say to a brace of biddies?"

"Oh, no! – oh, no!" said Tom, as if the very mention of biddies made him sick. "We were always in advance; got fowls and turkeys till we hated the sight of them."

"Any dish from a French cuisine, then?"

"Oh, no – oh, no! Nothing French, nothing Frenchified. What I want, if it's to be got at all, is not to be got good, except in England – or the West Indies."

"Well, but, you know, Bordeaux is open; West India produce has come into the country by ship-loads. What is it? Come, just tell us, old chap, and I'll go and get it for you at once, if it's to be had in Toulouse."

Tom was not so well as he looked; and there was evidently something for which, like other sick persons, he was inwardly pining. Now that I had held out a prospect of its attainment, his cheek flushed, and his eye gleamed with feverish eagerness.

"Well, then," said Tom, "I wish you would try and get me – but it's no use; it's a shame to bother you. – I say, though, can you spare the time? Have you really nothing to do? Upon your honour? – I've been longing for them, day and night, ever since I got here. Oh, if you could only get me – some tamarinds!"

His eye, while he spoke, fixed full on mine. He watched my countenance with the anxiety of a dying man when he makes his last request. "I'll be off and try this instant," said I, though really fearing there was little chance of success.

"Oh, thank you – thank you!" cried Cousin Tom. I was going.

"Here – here! Come back! I want to speak to you!" I returned. "Old fellow," said Tom, with a coaxing, eager grin, "make haste now, will you? Bring 'em directly – that's a good chap."

"Well, but, you know – if tamarinds can't be had for love or money, is there nothing else?"

"No, stupid – no! Tamarinds, I say; get me some tamarinds. What did I tell you? Didn't I tell you tamarinds? Now then; what are you waiting for? Cut away, and be hanged to you! Be off! – be off!"

I entered the ancient and very interesting city of Toulouse, and rushed through streets choked with cars of wounded men, in search of tamarinds. The search was tedious, and far from satisfactory. I inquired at all the likeliest shops; found only two where they professed to sell tamarinds. The samples were similar: a made-up, sticky mess; a black, nauseous electuary, with a beastly pharmaceutical odour, and barely the flavour of tamarinds.

It was no pleasant thought returning to poor Tom with a big gallipot of this filthy compound stowed in each of my coat pockets. Yet, though bad thus to baulk him, it was worse to keep him in suspense; so I started on my return with all speed, and, in my speed, came full butt against a passenger, who hugged me like a wrestler, to prevent a mutual capsize.

"Well, Mr Y – ! Glad to see you so active. Something of importance, no doubt: official duty, I suppose."

It was Gingham! I told him my troubles, my pursuit in

behalf of Cousin Tom, and my disappointment. Had searched all Toulouse, and could find no good tamarinds.

"Shall be happy to supply you," said Gingham, "in any quantity your cousin can require. Got a whole kegful – capital. Always take some with me when I visit the Continent. Got them on Fish-street Hill." We walked off forthwith to Gingham's quarters.

I was speedily on my return to Cousin Tom, with Gingham for my companion, and a good jar of prime, sweet, wholesome, unsophisticated tamarinds. On approaching Tom's bed, I held up the jar in triumph. Tom raised himself without saying a word, tucked his handkerchief under his chin, and sat up, poor fellow, like a child, with eyes half-closed and mouth half-open, eager to be fed. In went a spoonful. The next instant – bolt! – it was gone! What a swallow! He sat as before, ready for another. A second allowance vanished with equal speed. Down it goes! Why, it's like feeding a young rook! – Tom now laid himself down again, exhausted. "Here," said he; and made me a present of a handful of tamarind stones. "Now put a good lot in that jug, and fill it up with water."

While the drink was mixing, an unusual sound called our attention to the adjoining bed. Captain Gabion was fast sinking. His respiration, laborious from the first, had now become painfully audible; in fact, he did not breathe, he gasped. The convulsive movements had ceased. His face retained its natural expression; but there was that in his look which told us he was

a dying man. I felt at the moment an impression, – He is not insensible! His lips moved. Surely he is trying to speak! He strove to fix his eyes on us, but could not. I stooped down, observing his lips again in motion. Yes, he was speaking. I caught only the words – "On the platform."

"The Calvinet platform?" I whispered in reply. "Is that the spot where you wish – ?"

Feebly, tremulously he pressed my hand, which had just before taken his. I had caught his last request, then; a grave on the summit of Mount Rave, the key of the French position, where the table-land, crowned with redoubts, had been carried by our troops. His breathing became gradually feebler and less perceptible. The moment when it ceased entirely, no one present could determine. This only was evident: – a minute before, he had given signs of life; and now, he had passed into another world!

Cousin Tom's bullet was extracted the same afternoon, with immediate relief to the patient. During the operation I was present, by Tom's request; and friendship, let me tell you, has more pleasing duties than that of attending on such emergencies. Tom, however, made it as agreeable as he could. Throughout the process he viciously stared me full in the face, grinning most horribly from time to time, half in agony, half in fun. When the forceps was produced, he caught a glimpse of that terrific implement, and twisted his ugly mug into such a comical grimace, that mine, spite of the solemnity of the occasion, was screwed into a smile. Tom thereupon clenched his fist, with a

look that said ferociously, "Laugh again, and I'll punch your eye."

The bullet, doctor, had lodged between the bones of the leg, a little above the ankle, and, I need not inform you, came out rather flattened. Tom kept it as a bijou, in a red morocco case made express by an artist in Toulouse. Tom called it his pill-box. Neither bone was broken; but the strain of this disagreeable visitant wedged in between them, and rending them apart, had occasioned from time to time those awful twinges, which Tom assuaged by taking a chew at his handkerchief. The enemy removed, he not only found himself in a state of comparative ease, but was relieved from the constitutional irritation which had begun to manifest itself by hardness of pulse, dryness of the mouth, parched lips, a dull, hectic, brickdust-coloured patch on each cheek, a feverish lustre of the eye, and an enormous appetite for tamarinds.

The operation, though, I ought to have said, was not performed by Pledget, but by another army surgeon, who had arrived in the course of the day, not before he was wanted. Poor Pledget was quite done up. His powers, both mental and physical, had evidently been over-taxed. He looked haggard and wild. Yet still, though relieved, anxious about his cases, he wandered from room to room, and fidgeted from one patient to another; standing a while in silence, with his hands behind him, first by an amputation, then by a wounded artery, then by a contusion, then by a broken head; while his care-worn countenance expressed pleasure or pain, according to the symptoms. As Cousin Tom

was now in a dreadful fuss to be off for Toulouse, Gingham and I applied to the newly-arrived surgeon, and consulted him as to the removal.

"I think, gentlemen," said he, "if no bad symptoms supervene in the night, it may safely be effected to-morrow; that is, of course, with proper care and precautions."

"You are not afraid, sir," said Gingham, "that to-morrow may be too early a day, then?"

"Why, sir, to say the truth," replied the doctor, "if we had more room here, better accommodations, and a less vitiated atmosphere, I should say a later day would be better. But, under existing circumstances, less evil, I think, is likely to arise from the patient's removal, than from his remaining. In his case, what we now have most to look to, is the general health. Keep that right, and the wound, I hope, will do well. Therefore the sooner he is withdrawn from the bad air, and the associations which surround him here, the better for him." The doctor paused. – "Pray, sir," said he, looking Gingham full in the face, as though intuitively knowing he spoke to a real good fellow, "pray, sir, if you will permit me to ask the question, is Mr Pledget a friend of yours?"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.