ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

A History of the Art of War in the Sixteenth Century

Charles Oman

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A HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

by

SIR CHARLES OMAN

K.B.E., Hon. D.C.L. Oxon. and Hon. LL.D. Cambridge and Edinburgh, F.B.A.

FELLOW OF ALL SOULS, OXFORD , CHICHELE
PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY IN
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A HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THINGS I HAVE SEEN

A HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR IN THE MIDDLE AGES, A.D. 378–1485

ENGLAND BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST

STUDIES IN THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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WITH 33 MAPS AND 12 PLATES

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PREFACE

SINCE the publication in 1924 of the second edition of my *Art of War in the Middle Ages*, I have been asked by many friends to continue the survey of military science through that most interesting period the sixteenth century. The subject has received very imperfect treatment by technical historians, who generally hurry on to the days of Gustavus Adolphus and Cromwell, Turenne and Marlborough—concerning whom there is much narrative and comment. But there is little or none on Gonsalvo de Cordova, Alexander Farnese, or Henry of Navarre. As long as my time was to a great extent occupied by Parliamentary duties, I was unable to find leisure to put together into a logical thesis the results of much varied reading in the authors of a period that extends from Fornovo to Nieuport, starting with Comines and Machiavelli and going down to La Noue and Francis Vere. In the beginning we are still in the Middle Ages—Flodden Field or Novara might almost have been fought in the fifteenth century. At the end a formal battle like Nieuport might almost have been fought in the Thirty Years War. This volume is the result of an attempt to sum up the fundamental alterations in the Art of War between 1494 and 1600, and is intended to serve as an outline of military theory and practice between those dates.

It does not, of course, purport to give a complete annalistic record of all campaigns, nor to detail all the changes in military architecture and armament which were characteristic of the century, though I have endeavoured to furnish some account of them wherever they influence the course of events. I have rather tried to explain the strategy, tactics, and organization of armies, and especially (if I may use the phrase) the military psychology of the period. The Great Wars of Italy, the French 'Wars of Religion,' and the War of Independence in the Netherlands all require to be studied from the point of view of contemporary thought. So Machiavelli's misguided forecasts,

and La Noue's *Paradoxes* and *Commentaries* are of much more importance than drill books, treatises on artillery, or records of personal adventure. But I am far from underrating the interest of the mental outlook on the times of such personages as Bayard's *Loyal Serviteur*, or that self-centred old swashbuckler Blaise de Montluc. Indeed, one of the gaps in this survey is caused by the lack of any autobiographical record by English military men, till we have arrived at the very end of the Tudor period, when material begins to become abundant from Francis Vere and his less-remembered contemporaries. Patten's narrative of the Pinkie campaign is essentially that of a civilian though an eye-witness. For the earlier Tudor times we have to work from scattered letters and dispatches, and chaotic statistics in *State Papers Domestic*.

The battles, sieges, and campaigns which I have selected for detailed treatment are all typical examples of the military development of the period, each emphasizing some important phenomenon. For example, Fornovo illustrates the disastrous end of the old Italian theory of manœuvres unaccompanied by serious fighting. Ravenna is the first example of a battle won by a completely dominant artillery. The Garigliano and Pavia are ' victories by surprise,' where an incautious enemy is caught before he can get his army into proper array. Marignano and Pinkie are demonstrations of the fact that an old-fashioned infantry-army is helpless against the combination of all arms. Coutras settled the much-debated question as to the relative value of shallow or deep formation for cavalry. Arques is a fine example of the defence of a defile by very inferior numbers. The military moral of each of the other battles or sieges dealt with in detail is emphasized in the course of the narrative dealing with them.

I visited the sites of many of the battles and leaguers described in their volume, e.g. Fornovo, Ravenna, Flodden, Bicocca, Pavia, Boulogne, Calais, Vienna, Pinkie, St. Denis, and others. But in most cases three centuries have obliterated the old topography. The ground at Vienna, and St. Denis is built over by featureless suburbs. At Ravenna and Calais modern drainage has changed the whole outline. Flodden and Fornovo were about the only battlefields which seemed essentially unchanged. The old enceinte of Rhodes is intact, but I regret that I was not able to visit the island. In most instances I have been driven back on to more-or-less contemporary

maps and plans—some of them a full century too late for certain correctness.

In my earlier book I could give no absolutely contemporary battle-pictures: this disability comes to an end in the middle of our period—from Pavia onward there are many contemporary representations of battles and sieges, some of which I have utilized. The Pinkie and Nieuport pictures were designed by eye-witnesses. The Huguenot battles of the great series by Perissot and Tortorelle are at least drawn from the narratives of combatants by artists who engraved them a very few years after the event. I must express my high satisfaction at the way in which Mr. Richard Cribb has dealt with my battle-plans, which have been made admirably clear. My thanks are due to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd. for their courtesy in allowing me to reproduce the German woodcut of the Siege of Rhodes from Major Porter's *Knights of Malta*. Bodley's Librarian and the Curator of the Ashmolean Museum have also been kind in allowing me to utilize the drawing by John Ramsay of Pinkie, and the panoramic picture of Pavia from their respective collections.

My gratitude, so often expressed with regard to former books, must once more be rendered to the kindly hand and eyes which revised my proofs.

C. OMAN

OXFORD, *April* 1937

CONTENTS

BOOK I

BOOK II

THE GREAT BATTLES OF THE ITALIAN WARS, AND THEIR TACTICAL MEANING

BOOK III

THE LATER YEARS OF THE GREAT WARS (1527–59)

BOOK IV

MILITARY HISTORY OF ENGLAND UNDER THE TUDORS

BOOK V

THE WARS OF RELIGION IN FRANCE (1562–98)

BOOK VI

THE REVOLT OF THE NETHERLANDS AND THE DUTCH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1568–1609)

BOOK VII

THE TURKISH ATTACK ON CHRISTENDOM (1520–1606)

PLATES

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY DATA

THE military history of the fifteenth century may be described, not inaccurately, as being shut up in many water-tight compartments—(1) The wars of the English and the French; (2) the wars of the Castilians with their neighbours of Granada, Portugal, and Aragon; (3) the wars of the Italian States with each other, all waged by proxy with hired bands of condottieri; (4) the wars of the Hussites with the Germans and Hungarians; (5) the wars of the Kings of Hungary with the Ottoman Sultans, or with their Austrian neighbours; (6) the wars of the Russians with their former masters, the Tartars of the Steppes; (7) the continual bickering of the Danes and Swedes; (8) the aggressive wars of the Swiss Confederates with the Hapsburgs, the Lords of Milan, and later with the Duke of Burgundy. These can all be treated as separate stories, having few and infrequent cross-relations with each other.

Very rarely the stories get tangled together by the appearance of a belated Crusade, such as the attempt to crush the indomitable Hussites by the joint attack of the Germans and the Hungarians—which was possible because Sigismund, the Holy Roman Emperor, was also king of Hungary, and titular king of the revolted Bohemian sectaries. A second case was the Crusade of Ladislas of Poland, which ended so unhappily at Varna in 1444. He was king of his own country, elective king of Hungary, and captain of the inadequate crusading army collected by the propaganda of the Council of Basle, and headed by Cardinal Julian Cesarini. Hence not only Poles and Magyars but a miscellaneous collection of Western contingents marched under the banner of the Cross. Varna saw the end of a real Crusade—the last of the long series—but later attempts at an international movement of this sort failed entirely, from inter-state jealousy. The abortive end of one killed Pope Pius II, who broke his heart sitting at Ancona

waiting for contingents which never turned up (1464). The project of another inspired Charles VIII in 1494, but while he was really set on the reconquest of Constantinople—perhaps of Jerusalem—by a league of Christian states, his neighbours could only see that his first stage was the conquest of Naples, on a most flimsy claim, from another Christian king. Very naturally they fell upon him, with the Pope egging them on! The Crusade-theory lingered on into the sixteenth century, had a grip on the mind of Charles V—though he was hampered by too many other problems—and is set forth at length in the interesting 'Commentaries' of the old Huguenot captain La Noue. This admirable idealist dreamed of a Pan-Christian movement against Islam, and vainly conceived of a series of campaigns in which the Duke of Alva should lead one of two co-operating armies, and Henry of Navarre another![1] But the advocate of toleration and common Christian zeal against the encroaching Turk preached to a generation which was inspired by one or other of two incompatible ideals—the crushing of 'Heresy,' or, alternatively, the smashing up of the Papacy, and the establishment of national churches of the 'Reformed' sort.

But in the fifteenth century, if we put aside the international military aspirations which had the Crusade-theory at their base, there were very few other crises in which the wars of one of the eight categories quoted above in our first paragraph became connected with those of another. Alfonso of Aragon's occupation of Naples was not a Spanish attempt to conquer Italy, but a large specimen of condottiere warfare, practically Italian and not international. Charles the Rash was a more universally disturbing element, since, in the building up of his visionary 'middle-kingdom' of Burgundy, he contrived to clash with France, with the Empire, and with the Swiss. But he perished, leaving behind him little more than an unexpected advertisement for the military power of the Confederates, who (despite of Morgarten, Sempach, and Arbedo) had hitherto been a practically unknown factor in European politics.

It is barely needful to mention the claims of the Orleans dukes to get a footing in Italy, on their female descent from the Visconti lords of Milan, or the designs of Louis XI on the northern borders of the kings of Aragon—which led to no

[1] See the most interesting 21st and 22nd chapters of his *Quatre Paradoxes Militaires*, of which there will be much mention in later pages of this volume.

serious clash. The wars of the Middle Ages ended with something more ominous—the Flemish campaigns which had as their base the competition between Hapsburg and Valois for the Burgundian inheritance—typified by the rivalry for the hand of the heiress, Mary of Burgundy. But Maximilian of Hapsburg did not represent Germany, but only his own house, and his decisive battle of Guinegate (1479) was won with a purely Burgundian, *i.e.* Netherlandish, army. This war was not a strife of France and Germany, but a continuation of old contests running back to Roosebeke, Mons-en-Pevèle, and Courtray, which turned on the ambition of French kings to get control of what we should now call Belgium.

Everything is changed when we shift on from the fifteenth to the sixteenth century, and all the old local groups of war gradually grow into one single complex, in which Spain, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire are all involved together. Even England, cut off for sixty years from continental campaigns, joins in, intermittently and rather ineffectively, while at the other end of Europe the Sultan's main contest with Christendom on the Danube and the Mediterranean is slightly affected by the Russian expansion down the Volga and the Don, which impinged upon the Tartar vassals of the Porte, and once brought a Turkish army so far east as Astrachan, where it died of Russian frosts. About the only region of Europe in which the wars of the first half of the sixteenth century do not fit into the general scheme is Scandinavia—where the successful attempt of Sweden to cut itself out of the Union of Kalmar can hardly be brought into touch with other politics—though Charles V once lent his brother-in-law, Christian of Denmark, some landsknechts and some money.

The Pan-European complications which set nine-tenths of Europe ablaze started with the great Italian ventures of Charles VIII and Louis XII—the scheme of a French domination in Italy by the conquest of Naples and Milan. This brought in not only all the other Italian powers of any importance —the Sforzas of Milan, the Venetians, the Pope, the Florentines, the Dukes of Savoy and Ferrara, and the Marquises of Mantua and Montferrat—but Ferdinand of Aragon, interested for his kingdom of Sicily, the Emperor Maximilian, who was, after all, still the suzerain in theory of northern Italy, and not least the Swiss, who were at this moment fascinated by the idea of

getting hold of any convenient scraps on their borders—whether Savoyard, Milanese, or German—which could be won by lending military aid, wherever it could be best put on the market.

It resulted that all the various forms of warlike efficiency which prevailed in any corner of Western Europe were drawn into the general strife—the gendarmerie of the *compagnies d'ordonnance* which was the pride of France—the trained mercenary bands of the condottieri who had fought the wars of Italy for the last two centuries—the Swiss phalanx of pikemen, which had achieved such startling success in the recent strife with Burgundy—the German landsknechts whom the Emperor Maximilian had raised and trained in strict imitation of the Swiss—and the light horse 'genitors' of Spain, who had learned their tactics in the long Moorish wars. We may add that the problem of the use of firearms, small and great, became a prominent feature quite early in the struggle. The Spaniards, Swiss, and Germans had already arquebusiers in their ranks, while the French and Italians were still sticking to the old cross-bow. But, on the other hand, the French had, all through the commencement of the wars, a decided superiority in artillery; the Italians owned cannon, but were not yet skilled in their use; nor had the Swiss any proper provision of them; the Germans had progressed further in the theory than in the practice of the employment of field artillery, and the same was the case with the Spaniards, who had, it is true, brought forward guns for siege work in their Moorish wars, but were not accustomed to their skilful utilization in the field.

All these methods of warfare and of military equipment came into conflict before the fifteenth century was quite finished, starting from the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII in 1494. We may add that right down to the middle of the sixteenth century the archaic, but still not ineffective, English long-bow was occasionally seen in continental wars, when Henry VIII indulged in one or other of his misguided campaigns in northern France, in hope of playing a part of some importance in the world-conflict. It had no new triumphs, but was still considered by English soldiers to be decidedly superior for practical work to the new-fangled arquebus. It remained in practical use down to the days of Elizabeth, and even in the latest years of her reign there was a lively controversy between the admirers of the long-bow and those of the arquebus and musket—which is dealt with in its proper place.

During the first twenty years of the great Italian wars, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire were separate powers, whose policy was swayed by the individual interests of the Emperor Maximilian and of Ferdinand of Aragon—for it was Ferdinand who was primarily interested in Italy, though as long as she lived, his consort Isabella allowed herself to be guided by him in this sphere of politics. Spain and the Empire were by no means always in co-operation. And for several years there was no prospect of their being united under one dynasty, for Ferdinand and Isabella had a son named John, the natural heir of both Castile and Aragon, who attained marriageable years. It was not till his unexpected and much-lamented death in 1497, and that of his eldest sister in 1498, that the prospect arose of the possible dynastic union of Spain and the Hapsburg dominions, owing to the marriage of Juana, the second daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, to the short-lived Philip the Handsome, son of Maximilian. Their son Charles, born in 1500, became natural heir to both his grandfathers. Ferdinand hated the idea. The moment that Isabella died (1504) he deliberately married a second time, in the hope of getting issue on whom the kingdoms of Aragon and Sicily (if not that of Castile) would devolve (1505), as well as all his conquests in Italy.

Only the failure of his young queen, Germaine of Foix, to bear him a son and successor, brought about, at his decease in 1516, the union of the two great houses. The election of Charles as Emperor in 1519, in succession to his grandfather Maximilian, placed him in a position which no prince since Charlemagne had occupied, since he was not only the sole owner of the heritages of Hapsburg, Burgundy, Castile, and Aragon, and the possessor of half Italy, but also the titular head of the great hierarchy of the Holy Roman Empire. This not only gave him the precedence over all other rulers in Europe, but a chance of making imperial power in Germany a reality, after two centuries of impotence. For no emperor before had ever possessed such resources, territorial, financial, and military. Nothing looked more likely than the establishment of a Hapsburg domination over all Central and Southern Europe. This was made all the more possible by the fact that Charles possessed a share of the diplomatic ability of his grandfather Ferdinand, no small portion of the magnanimous and adventurous temperament of his other grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian, a strong sense of duty, and an untiring power of

work. Though not a genius, he was a prince of far more than average capacity, and his character was not stained by any of the outstanding vices which have sometimes ruined the careers of great monarchs.

This being so, it may appear extraordinary that Charles V did not rise to what seemed to be his obvious destiny, and after many wars and many victories, retired in his old age to a monastery, as a broken old man who had failed to achieve his purpose.

The reasons for the frustration of his career were three: one psychological, and two military. With the first we have nothing to do, as we are concerned with the art of war, not with the general history of culture and religion in Europe. This was, of course, the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation —a religious movement far more serious in its results than any preceding phenomenon of a more or less similar character— such as the wave of indignation that followed on the Great Schism, or the unrest that resulted in certain regions from the teaching of Wyclif in England or John Huss in Bohemia. The disruption of Germany that started with the rise of the Lutheran protest was undoubtedly one of the main causes of the failure of Charles V in his life's work.

But there were two military causes to be considered. The first was the irruption of the Ottoman Turks into Central Europe: they had been checked on the Danube for a hundred years, and it was a wholly new danger that threatened Christendom when they overran Hungary (1526), thundered at the gates of Vienna (1529), and gave the Emperor a suddenly developed Eastern war-front, which distracted his attention, and drew his armies away from France and Italy. Nor was it only on the Danube that the new peril was obvious. A few years before the disaster of Mohács had ruined Hungary and laid bare not merely the Hapsburg dominions but the whole of Germany, another danger had already begun to develop. It was not only on land that the Turkish Empire, under Soliman the Magnificent (1520–66), became in the time of Charles V a public terror to all Europe. When the pirate chiefs who had conquered Algiers and Tunis from decadent dynasties (1516–17) offered their homage to the Sultan, and placed their fleets at his disposal, the western Mediterranean ceased to be the undisturbed *mare nostrum* of the Italians, where for five hundred years no non-Christian flag had been seen. A new and serious naval peril

grew up for Italy and southern Spain, and the Emperor had twice, during his short intervals of peace on land, to direct his efforts against the pirate-scourge which was distracting his attention. His two great African campaigns against Tunis (1535) and Algiers (1541) were the one a transient success, the other a dreadful disaster, which destroyed an army which would have been invaluable in Italy a year later. It was the misfortune of Charles V that he had to deal with the most capable and ambitious of all the Sultans who ever reigned at Constantinople, a monarch as steadfast and obstinate as himself, and even more vigorous, for he died in his tent, still campaigning, at seventy-three, while Charles had retired, worn out, to his monastery at fifty-six.

If he had been engaged with the Turk alone, Charles might probably have restored the bounds of Christendom in the East, and swept the Mediterranean free from Barbary pirates. But the Turk was only his secondary enemy, against whom he marched or sailed in moments of special crisis or opportunity. His real foe was the King of France, still set beyond all reason on continuing the vain venture which had been commenced by Charles VIII, the conquest of Italy. It passes all reason to discover why this wild dream, after it had led to a dozen lost campaigns, and drained the best blood of France in a dozen disastrous battles, was still pursued with such obstinacy—not only by Francis I, whose military career had started with his one great victory of Marignano, but by Henry II, who never had any such an intoxicating glimpse of personal glory. It was not only the kings who were besotted, but the whole nation. As La Noue complained, the young men of his early days read too much of Amadis de Gaul, and their elders too much of Machiavelli. He doubted which was the more dangerous literary pabulum. For romances of chivalry, in which glory, wealth, and love are gained by mere knight-errantry, were demoralizing the young nobles and squires, who had lands and vassals at home, whose welfare they neglected while running abroad in search of 'adventure.' And also the study of Italian statecraft removed all traces of morality from the minds of princes and ministers, and taught them to laugh at the binding force of oaths, or the common Christian virtues of justice and mercy. Most of the romances are full of *amours deshonnêtes* and of exploits plainly impossible by any mortal man. What is the credit of winning a combat if

you have magic arms and armour, and are backed by a fairy or a magician ?[1] So the romances are fatal to the conceptions of duty and common sense, just as a study of Machiavelli saps all sense of righteousness in dealing with one's subjects or one's neighbours.

That there is a good deal of truth in La Noue's analysis of the mental condition of the ruling classes in France in the first half of the sixteenth century is obvious. Otherwise they would have refused to back their kings in their wild Italian schemes. This never was the case—an appeal to the charms of ' glory ' and adventure seldom failed in its effect. Criticism, if heard, was only on the lines that profit should be got rather by a solid attempt to win Flanders and Brabant, than by distant transalpine campaigns in Naples or Venetia. Chivalrous personal ambition combined with national pride to make the King's summons always effectual in raising a new army, even after the most disastrous failures. It is this that forms the most surprising feature in the mentality of the epoch ; it seemed impossible to teach the French that the dream of domination in Italy was a hopeless delusion ; and the strife was renewed again and again, the moment that Charles V was distracted by some urgent problem in Germany, Hungary, or on the High Seas.

The most immoral policy of all was alliance with the Turk, the common enemy of Christendom, which both Francis I and Henry II adopted without shame. There was some protest against it even among the French nobility : but the feeling of the man in the street was undoubtedly expressed by the old swashbuckler Montluc when he wrote :[2] ' Christian princes on the other side made much ado about our master calling in the Turk to his aid. But against one's enemy one may " make an arrow of any sort of wood." For my own part, I would call up all the devils of hell to help me break my enemy's head, when he is trying to break mine. I would do it cheerfully, and then may God pardon me.' This outburst refers to the time when Barbarossa's corsairs were driving off thousands of Christian men and women, to be sold in the slave market of Constantinople, while their French allies looked on, content to

[1] See the most interesting '*septième discours* ' in vol. i. p. 189–289 of the *Discours Politiques*.

[2] This is of the time when Barbarossa's Algerine fleet was sacking Nice—with French help. *Montluc* ii. p. 137.

have handed over to them the depopulated walls (1543).[1] One does not envy the task of the verbose French bishop who had to explain to the Venetian Senate that his master's policy was all for the good of Christendom, since Charles V was a much more sinister figure than the Sultan. Was he not the oppressor of Popes, and the sworn ally of that pestilent schismatic and heretic Henry Tudor, King of England? The Venetians, to whom Turkish naval predominance would mean the inevitable loss of Cyprus, Crete, and Corfu, were not favourably impressed by these arguments.

As it turned out, the repeated attacks of the French kings on the Emperor, at any moment when he was engaged with the Turk, or worried by princely rebellions in Germany, just sufficed to keep him from making a success of his reign. He had to have armies everywhere—on the Pyrenees, in Italy, in Flanders, on the Meuse and Rhine, and in his precarious African garrisons. And money to pay them was not always forthcoming—for the treasures of Mexico and Peru, on which his son could depend, were only just beginning to drift across the Atlantic to his treasury. When his mercenary troops were not paid, they indulged in mutinies—especially the Landsknechts —and fell upon the civil population, or deserted. The princes of the Empire grudged the money and contingents which they ought to have provided under the rule of the *Matricula*. Some of them, like Charles of Guelders and Robert of Bouillon, openly sided with the French in the earlier years of the reign, and let the enemy into frontier fortresses. Later on, the Protestants of the Schmalkaldic League were far more dangerous, and took most of northern Germany into a rebellion that came most inopportunely (1547), when a new king, more unscrupulous and quite as obstinate as his father, Francis I, had just mounted the throne of France.[2] Though victorious for a moment over

[1] The Bishop of Valence made a long exculpatory speech to the Venetian Senate, which may be found in the Appendix to vol. i. of Montluc's *Memoires*. It is a shameless production, trying to prove that the Emperor was as guilty as Francis, since he had offered to pay the Sultan a tribute for the restoration of the kingdom of Hungary. France could accept without scandal the naval help sent by the Grand Signor, because the checking of Charles V was the thing most necessary to Christendom. Had not the Emperor enlisted the aid of Henry of England, a notorious heretic and schismatic? And had not France, from the time of Charlemagne to that of St. Louis, done so much in the way of crusading for Christendom that now she could be trusted not to betray it? (pp. 414–25).

[2] The battle of Mühlberg was won by the Emperor in April 1547, a few days after the accession of Henry II on March 31.

the German rebels at Mühlberg, and vainly in hopes that he had settled the religious troubles of Germany by the *Interim*, Charles was forced to face the last and most unhappy of all his wars, attacked at once by Henry II, by Sultan Soliman, and by the German rebellion that flared up again under the leadership of the unscrupulous Maurice of Saxony. After several years of indecisive and sometimes disastrous campaigning—the French had taken Metz, and had once more got a lodgment in central Italy at Siena, the Turk was threatening Naples, while he had failed to get his son Philip elected as Emperor in his stead—the favourite scheme of his old age—Charles abdicated, being now no more than a gout-ridden invalid, and retired to the remote Estremaduran Monastery of Juste. The legend that he spent his last months in the vain endeavour to make a number of clocks keep exactly the same time, is probably an allegory, hinting that he had so many complicated pieces of political machinery in so many regions under his charge at the same time, that the happy moment when all should be right simultaneously never arrived.

So from the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII of France in 1494, down to the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis (April 3, 1559), there elapsed sixty-six years of almost continuous warfare between France and the Hapsburg dynasty, with little profit to either. Of all the Italian lands which the French kings had held for shorter or longer terms, there remained to Henry II in 1559 only the Alpine marquisate of Saluzzo. On the other hand, France made some small but valuable acquisitions on her northern frontier—Elizabeth of England resigned herself for the moment to the loss of Calais, which her sister Mary had let slip by careless mismanagement.[1] The Holy Roman Empire lost the three fortress-bishoprics in Lorraine—Metz, Toul, and Verdun. All other conquests on other frontiers were mutually restored—which meant that the Spanish crown kept Milan and Naples, so often contested, and the strong places on the Belgian frontier, which the French kings had so often coveted. The Duke of Savoy returned to Turin, and recovered those parts of his dominion which the French had been holding in 1559. The claim of the d'Albrets on the kingdom of Navarre dropped through—save for the small patch of it on the north side of the Pyrenees, which gave to the gallant Henry IV a

[1] But for years she tried to get it back by plots with the Huguenots, or threats to the French court.

royal title and a single mountain city as his sole inheritance from the old kings.

On the whole, then, the Hapsburgs had been the winners in the long game. But as they split into two branches—Philip II holding Spain and the Indies, the old Burgundian lands in the Netherlands, and the dominating position in Italy, while his uncle Ferdinand got the Imperial title and the old German lands of his ancestors—there was no individual of the house who held the position or the power of Charles V. Nevertheless the resources left to Philip II were tremendous, and but for his unhappy personality he might have had almost as good a chance of controlling all Europe as his father had enjoyed. For France fell into the civil wars of Huguenot and Catholic, and the Ottoman Empire passed from the hands of the great Soliman into those of a sot—who was followed on the divan by a miser. Philip's procrastination and indecision, his distrust of his best servants and his nearest kin, his leaden hand and his faithless pen, his secret treacheries and his open persecutions, saved Europe from falling under the black tyranny of a fanatic.

But his armies fought many a good fight, as we shall show in a later chapter, and their organization and efficiency were the admiration of all his contemporaries. He himself was neither a general nor an organizer, and the strength which he wielded was due to his father, and to the line of great generals bred in the Italian wars. He himself, shut up in the Escurial —an ascetic Tiberius in a very bleak Capreae—contributed nothing to the wars but orders difficult, and sometimes impossible, to execute, received with dismay by the reluctant commanders of his formidable hosts.

CHAPTER II

MILITARY GEOGRAPHY IN THE GREAT WARS (1494–1559)

THE most striking feature in the general aspect of the great struggle between the Hapsburgs and the Valois, which went on with certain short breaks for a period of sixty years, is that most of the more important and interesting campaigns of its earlier time were fought in the Italian peninsula, though the rivals had long continuous frontiers on the Pyrenees, in the Belgian Netherlands, and along the borders of western Germany. On the Spanish-French frontier there was much bickering, but no great invasions on either side. The Spaniards never got farther than Bayonne—which they once besieged but failed to take (1523). The French had for one short period possession of Navarre, into which they had come ostensibly to restore an expelled Francophil king, but they were driven out after a few months. In all the wars we find tedious operations around Fonterabia and Perpignan, which were obviously regarded by both sides as side-shows of no primary importance. The Pyrenees are a formidable obstacle, with no more than three difficult points of passage at their western end,[1] and two at their eastern end on the Mediterranean,[2] Their central length was impracticable for a hundred and fifty miles. It is easier to understand the hesitation of the French to commit themselves to an invasion of Spain on a large scale —the occupation of Navarre in 1521 was made for local political reasons and with a moderate force—than to comprehend the reasons for which Ferdinand of Aragon and his grandson Charles the Emperor never made a serious attempt to overrun the fertile lands of Aquitaine. Ferdinand once lured an English auxiliary army to Fonterabia, and spoke of a great enterprise to be carried out by its aid (1512), but made no use of it—it

[1] The coast road by Irun, and the passes of Mayya and Roncesvalles.

[2] The coast road Perpignan-Barcelona and the inland pass through Cerdagne on to Puycerda.

merely attracted the attention of the French while he was conquering Navarre, and never crossed the Bidassoa. Charles did once dispatch an army across that river, which forced its way as far as Bayonne, and was blocked there by that not very distinguished general, Lautrec. But this was obviously a diversion, as is shown by the moderate strength of the army of invasion—the Emperor's thoughts were all in Italy.

In the later years of the struggle there were no operations of any importance along the Pyrenean front, save the fruitless siege of Perpignan by the Dauphin Francis in 1543. It remains a source of wonder that, during the not infrequent periods of the long contest when the Emperor was in complete possession of the disputed lands in Italy, he made no attempt to break into south-western France, and apply pressure from that side. Provence was twice invaded (1523 and 1536), Guienne and Languedoc never, though there were bases both in Biscay and in Roussillon from which an attack on a large scale could easily have been planned. Spanish soldiers by the ten thousand were poured into Italy, but in Spain itself there was never more than a moderate covering force provided, along the two practicable fronts. This remains a subject of wonder. The entry into Languedoc or Gascony is far easier than the entry into Provence.

The only explanation that can be provided for part of this puzzle is that, at any rate in the early years of the wars, an irruption into Guienne would have brought England into the problem. Henry VIII had never forgotten the South-French lands which Henry VI had lost, and the army which he sent to Fonterabia in 1512 was intended to occupy Bayonne and Bordeaux. The treaty which he made with King Ferdinand stipulated that any conquests made in Aquitaine should be held by the English. But Ferdinand had no desire to see the old Plantagenet holding in English rather than in French hands; hence his deliberate wrecking of the plan. The danger was not quite so imaginary as might be thought—there were discontents in Guienne: the mildness of the old English administration had left pleasant memories behind it, and malcontents at Bordeaux, even as late as 1548, were heard to murmur the name of England at the time of the great 'Gabelle Rising.' Still it must be conceded that the possibility of a re-establishment of the old duchy of Aquitaine was a very chimerical idea, and can hardly have had any great effect on the general schemes

of policy of the Emperor Charles—he pretended to consent to it in 1523, but his promised attack on the south for Henry's benefit never came off. It would not have profited him.

Much more obvious than the notion of invading France from across the Pyrenees was that of bringing pressure to bear against her northern frontiers on the side of Picardy and Champagne, and here there was constant and sometimes rather important fighting in progress, though never till the later years of the struggle did events in the north have the same decisive effect as events in Italy. Considering the shortness of the distance between Paris and the frontier of the Hapsburg possessions in the Netherlands, which then ran so much farther south than in later centuries, it is surprising that the main contest was not fought out on this front. Montmédy, Maubeuge, Valenciennes, Cambray, Landrécies, Douai, were imperialist fortresses, and the French line of defence lay from Mezières by Guise, St. Quentin, and Peronne, to Abbeville, places all far inside the boundary of modern France. North of them again were Montreuil and Boulogne, dangerous advanced positions. There were no Alps or Pyrenees along this border, where the whole countryside was good fighting-ground. When France was in the ascendant, why was not Flanders overrun, and when the Hapsburg eagle was triumphant, why was not the short push of a hundred miles to Paris ever carried through? Charles in his farthest advance once got to Reims and Soissons —his English allies on one occasion made Montdidier, well south of Amiens—their stopping-point (1522), though on another occasion (1544) they got no farther than Montreuil. From Soissons or Montdidier the distance to Paris was about fifty miles—three days' march—but the last push was never made. In each case the excuse which contemporary historians proffer is that the invading army was short of supplies, and had in front of it considerable forces gathered for the defence of the French capital. Charles contented himself with dictating a moderately advantageous peace at Crépy in 1544. The Duke of Suffolk at Montdidier in 1523 pleaded the non-appearance of the imperialist reinforcements that had been promised him, early frosts, and the fact that La Tremouille's army in front of him was intact, when he made an ignominous retreat without a battle. Philibert of Savoy in 1557 was the only imperialist commander who resolved to make a desperate rush on Paris, after his victory at St. Quentin : he was absolutely

prohibited from doing so by his master, Philip II, and the French had time to rally.

It may be observed that, from the other point of view, when the French cause was in the ascendant, it might have been expected that a serious invasion would have been launched against the Belgian Netherlands, where France had old ambitions going back for centuries, and where Flanders and Artois had been in theory fiefs of the French crown. Louis XI had made a vigorous attempt to rake in those regions, and Louis XIV in the seventeenth century was destined to carry out in a great measure his predecessor's designs. But all the four kings who reigned between 1494 and 1559 treated the Netherlands as a secondary theatre of war, when they had their hands comparatively free, and poured their main armies into Italy rather than into the lands of the Scheldt and Sambre. Yet Flanders, Artois, and Namur were prizes quite as attractive as Milan, and much more easily to be seized. If in the later wars there were large concentrations of force on the northern front, it was because the Emperor was at last putting in pressure from that direction, and it was necessary to hold him back. It was with the greatest reluctance that Francis I in 1543 and 1544, and Henry II in 1557, called back reinforcements from the army of Italy, because the armies of the Hapsburgs were striking deep into Champagne or Picardy.

Only at long-spaced intervals during the larger part of the struggle did the war develop any importance on the north-eastern, as opposed to the north-western, frontier of France. The Dukes of Guelders and Bouillon, those persistent rebels against the Holy Roman Empire, were never able to let their French patron into the Rhineland—at most they gave trouble on the Meuse. Bayard's famous defence of Mezières in 1521 was not against an enemy of any overpowering strength, and the German force which entered Champagne in 1523, and was defeated by Claude of Guise, was rated at the modest total of 12,000 men of all arms. With such numbers nothing of importance could be accomplished; the days of small armies were over.

In the year 1543 it looked for a moment as if the war might spread into Germany, when the Duke of Cleves rose in rebellion and asked for aid from France, for Francis sent a considerable force under his son, the Duke of Orleans, to attack the duchy of Luxemburg, and to open up communication with the rebel.

But though the bands of Cleves raided as far as the gates of Antwerp, and though Orleans conquered all Luxemburg save the single fortress of Thionville, they never succeeded in getting into communication. And the only result of the campaign was to draw the Emperor with his main army into western Germany, where he crushed the rebel duke, and came down through the Netherlands for the first serious attack on the northern frontier of France that had been seen since Suffolk hurried back from Montdidier twenty years before. To face the Emperor was urgent; the French were driven out of Luxemburg with ease, and their King, abandoning all other enterprises, came up to defend Picardy and Champagne.

One of the military puzzles of the time is to discover why there was no decisive battle about Landrécies in September 1543—both Charles and Francis were in full force, with no great advantage of position or number on either side. There were continuous deployments and manœuvres, and plenty of opportunities for a general action—but Francis, after having thrown supplies into the beleagued Landrécies, drew back, and Charles did not resume the siege but retired to St. Omer—pleading the approach of winter. Clearly it would have been to his advantage to risk a battle, since he not only had the better army, but also the more to gain by victory. Francis had the last levy of his realm with him, and Paris close at his back; his defeat would have been fatal. Charles could have endured misfortune with much less ruinous results. But he was no Napoleon—as is sufficiently shown again by the inadequate result of his advance into Champagne in the following year.

An even greater reluctance to push things to a decisive result, at the risk of a possible but improbable check, was shown by Philip II after the victory of St. Quentin, when he laid a positive prohibition on Philibert of Savoy's proposal to march straight on Paris, disregarding all fortresses still untaken, while the enemy's field army was in a state of rout and dispersion. But, as we shall see in a later chapter, a reluctance to put the fate of war to the arbitrament of battle, to push an advantage to extremes, was a common fault of kings and generals during all the final stages of the great struggle of Hapsburg and Valois. After half a century strategy had drifted back into the same state in which it is found in Italy during the age of the old condottieri —much manœuvring with few general actions was again the order of the day, as in the times of Colleone and Carmagnola.

By far the most interesting campaigns from first to last are these fought on the Italian front, where one would have supposed that the formidable barrier of the Alps would have made invasion far more difficult, whether from west to east, or from east to west, than in the plains of Picardy and Champagne, or of Flanders and Hainault. But as a matter of fact, there was never during the whole series of wars a competent attempt made by either side to defend the entire line of the Alps from the Swiss border to the sea. The nearest approach to such a scheme was when the Italo-Swiss confederates in 1515 made disposition to cover the passes, with a central reserve at Susa in Piedmont, ready to reinforce the point on which the enemy might make his thrust. But the enemy crossed the mountains at unguarded gaps, and descended on the rear of the defenders, while their general asked plaintively whether the French were birds, to fly over such obstacles.

The real explanation of the ease with which the French launched successive expeditions into Lombardy is that during the first half of the wars they had the rulers of Savoy as their allies, and when 'the porter of the Alps' opened the doors, passage was simple, if occasionally laborious from mere physical hindrances. The houses of France and Savoy were linked by marriage, and the Duke Philip II, the regent-Duchess Blanche, Philibert II, and Charles III all through his early years, were successively committed to the French cause, and always gave an invading army a welcome at Turin. It was not till 1536 that this long subjection came to an end. But when Charles III, now a middle-aged man, broke with his uncle Francis I, and refused him a passage over his lands, a French army took him unawares, and drove him from well-nigh all his heritage before the Emperor could succour him. From 1536 to the end of the wars in 1559, the French never lost control of Turin and all the central passes, so that there could not be, and never was, any possibility for the ruler of Lombardy to prevent an invading army from debouching into Piedmont. When the Constable Bourbon in 1523, and the Emperor Charles in 1536, launched retaliatory invasions westward into Provence, they had to use the southern passes, because the northern ones were still in hostile hands.

It may be added that the minor princes of the Western Alps were generally on the side of the Valois kings. Ludovico, Marquis of Saluzzo, was for many years a commander in the

armies of Charles VIII and Louis XII, and the important fortress of Casale, the stronghold of the Marquises of Montferrat, was often a French base of operations. Gianludovico of Saluzzo broke with France in 1536, but the greater part of his Marquisate and its useful pass remained in French hands till the end of the wars, when it was left to Henry II by the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis—the only relic of all the transalpine conquests which four successive kings of France had won in fifty years of fighting.

The French invasions of Italy, therefore, were seldom complicated by any necessity for forcing any of the possible debouches into the plains of the Po. But when an army of invasion had descended into Lombardy the problems began. They differed greatly at various periods of the war. At the first start in 1494, Charles VIII had as his objective the kingdom of Naples, at the other end of the Italian peninsula. He was able to reach its capital, in February 1495, because he not only enjoyed the friendship of Savoy, but had, at that moment, the alliance of the Duke of Milan, across whose front he was about to march, and could scare the Florentines and the Pope into granting him free passage. His enemy Ferdinand II of Naples fled to Sicily, after seeing his armies retreat and disintegrate, while his fleet had proved unable to dispute the command of the Tyrrhenian Sea. After no fighting worthy of mention, Charles VIII found himself master of the whole kingdom of Naples, save a few outlying fortresses of the south. The house of Alfonso the Magnanimous had been profoundly unpopular among its subjects: the military strength of his descendants had been wholly dependent on hired bands of mercenaries, and the native nobility were mostly hostile. Their greatest families had belonged to the old 'Angevin' faction, and welcomed the arrival of its representative—even if his title was not quite clear.[1] Charles had himself crowned in great state, but soon began to rouse the jealousy of his local supporters by lavish grants of land and offices to his French followers, and to win unpopularity by the plundering habits of his mercenary army. Never-

[1] This claim to the Angevin inheritance rested on a cession of his rights to Naples by Charles of Anjou, Count of Maine, to Louis XI. This was to the detriment of his cousin Réné of Lorraine, son of the daughter of 'Good King Réné,' the last king of his line. But Naples was a kingdom where no 'Salic Law' prevailed, indeed the record of its two Queens regnant, the two Joannas, is sufficiently notorious. Charles of Maine could not cede the rights of his uncle's descendants in the female line.

theless he was in military possession of practically the whole kingdom of Naples, when the storms burst upon him which clear-sighted politicians had seen to be inevitable.[1]

All the Italian powers of the greater sort, Milan, Venice, and the Pope, had been terrified by the sudden and unexpected collapse of the King of Naples, and had banded themselves together to resist the danger of a complete French domination in Italy. They had drawn into their league both the Emperor Maximilian and the two sovereigns of Spain. The treaty of alliance was signed at Venice on March 31, 1495, only a month after Charles had made his triumphant entry into Naples.

The strategical position then produced was that the French king was in possession of Naples, but was completely cut off from his base. Between him and the Alps there was nothing friendly save the faction-ridden city of Florence, and a strong French garrison at Asti, in Piedmont, under the Duke of Orleans. The situation would have been much less dangerous if Charles had been in secure command of the sea. But though he had a considerable fleet in hand, it could not hope to compete with the united naval forces of Venice and Spain. Communication between Naples and Marseilles was intermittent, and often intercepted, all through these wars.

The problem thus developed was not to be settled in one campaign, but its solution was inevitable from the first. No foreign power can hold Naples, when central Italy is not in its hands, unless it has complete command of the sea. Subsequent history showed that a foreign power, even when it was beginning to show signs of decay, might retain its grip under that one essential condition. For a century and a half the heirs of Charles V, three Philips, and Charles II, ruled the Neapolitan kingdom as a viceroyalty harshly held down by alien governors. But Spain was mistress of the western Mediterranean in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. France never had such a predominance in the period with which we have to deal. It was therefore a wild endeavour on the part of Charles VIII, Louis XII, and Francis I to hold on to the old and doubtful Angevin claim. Lautrec's invasion of Naples in 1528, ruined by the intervention of Andrea Doria's Genoese fleet, proves the case.[2] If the sea were not always secure, Naples could only

[1] As did Commines, vii. cap. 19.

[2] When Doria drove off the French fleet and occupied Gaeta, the fate of Lautrec's army was sealed.

be held by a power dominant also at Rome, Florence, Milan, and Turin—if not also at Venice. This France would never be: the game was a hopeless one.

But there was a secondary French claim on an important part of Italy. If it were insane from a military point of view to persist in attempts to hold Naples, the design on Milan, which came to the point a little later, does not appear quite so reckless. For the duchy of Milan is not, like Naples, four hundred miles distant from the French border. The Orleans claim to the duchy came from the descent of the family from Valentina Visconti, the wife of that Louis, first Duke of Orleans, who had been murdered by John of Burgundy nearly a hundred years back. The last of the Visconti lords of Milan had been slain in a republican outbreak in 1447, and after a three-year interval the Sforzas had made themselves masters of the duchy. Ludovico Sforza, 'il Moro,' was the fourth of his house to hold possession of it, and his position had been fully legalized by the Emperor, for Milan was an Imperial fief. To raise claims founded on a remote connection with the Visconti 'tyrants' was as out of date as it was absurd. But successive heads of the house of Orleans had advertised their pretensions, and endeavoured to stir up trouble. This did not much matter[1] while the elder line of Valois reigned in France. But when, on the death of Charles VIII, last of that race, his distant cousin, Louis of Orleans, came to the French throne, the claim was urged by a much more formidable pretender, who declared his intentions by assuming the title of Duke of Milan immediately after his accession. In the following year he invaded the duchy and conquered it with ease, when the unhappy Ludovico Sforza had been betrayed by his Swiss mercenaries. He was handed over to the French King, who kept him a close prisoner at Loches till he died in 1510.

For thirteen years [1500–12] Louis of Orleans was in possession of the Milanese duchy, but this was used by him only as a step towards the reconquest of Naples, and the gaining of that general predominance in Italy on which his predecessor had been set. By the infamous Treaty of Granada (1500) King Ferdinand of Aragon betrayed the cause of his cousins of Naples, who had been restored by Spanish arms to their lost

[1] Though one of the reasons for Ludovico Sforza's desertion of the French cause in 1495 was his suspicion of Louis of Orleans, who lay at Asti with a large French force.

throne after the expulsion of the armies of Charles VIII in 1496, and agreed to partition their kingdom with Louis XII. King Frederic, last of the house of Alfonso the Magnanimous, could make no resistance against such allies, and vanished from history as a pensioned captive in France. Hence came the second French occupation of Naples, and the northern half of the Neapolitan kingdom, while the Spaniards took the southern half. The partners in such an iniquitous enterprise were bound to quarrel, and the result was a precise repetition of the original French disaster of 1496. Even though Milan was in the hands of King Louis, his base was too far away, and his sea communications were too uncertain. The rash venture ended in the disaster of the Garigliano (December 29, 1503) and the surrender of Gaeta (January 1, 1504).

Louis had to give up Neapolitan ambitions, and by the Treaty of Lyons (February 25, 1504) resigned his half of the kingdom to the Spaniards, who were to maintain their hold upon the ' Two Sicilies ' without a break till the days of Marlborough and Eugène, when the Austrian Hapsburgs made an end of the long and blighting Spanish domination of Italy, and replaced it by their own equally alien and unpopular régime. But this was, in essence, a demonstration of the fact that Spain was no longer mistress of the western Mediterranean. English fleets had appeared for the first time in those waters—and the capture of Gibraltar in 1702 was the first evidence of the fact that a new period of naval history had begun. The second was the destruction of Cardinal Alberoni's forlorn fleet off Cape Passaro by Admiral Byng in 1719, when Spain made an attempt to reconquer her old Italian viceroyalty, landed an army in Sicily, but saw its communication with its base at once severed by a superior naval power.

But dismissing the fate of Naples as a settled matter after 1504—despite of vain after-adventures in 1525, 1528, and 1557, all doomed to disaster—there remained the very important problem as to whether the French might not at least become masters of northern Italy. Milan was in the hands of Louis XII, and the Duke of Savoy (not to speak of the Marquis of Saluzzo) gave him free passage through the Alps. The only independent power surviving in the north was the Venetian Republic. If Venice were stripped of her lands in the Lombard plain, all Italy north of the Po would be French. When the intrigues which ended in the formation of the League of

Cambray (December 1508) are considered, it is hard to understand how the other members of that iniquitous conspiracy were induced to join in a plan of robbery by which the best spoils of Venice were to go to France. The gains of Ferdinand of Spain, the Emperor Maximilian, and the Pope, though appreciable, would be trifling compared with those of King Louis.[1] In April a French army crossed the Alps, established its base at Milan, and took in hand the conquest of the Venetian provinces. There was but one attempt to meet the invader in the open—the battle of Agnadello (May 14, 1509)—in which the great condottieri the Count of Pitigliano and Bartolo de Alviano, with one of those mercenary armies which were all that Venice ever put in the field, were easily discomfited after much manœuvring. They tried to hold their own in a chosen position, but were edged out of it by flank manœuvres, and in the plain their heterogeneous bands could not resist the French fury. Louis took all the western cities of the Venetian *terra firma*, Bergamo, Brescia, Peschiera, Crema, and Cremona, while his ally the Emperor occupied Vicenza, Verona, and Bassano. It seemed as if the last day of Venice as a land power had come—nothing remained to her outside the lagoons save Padua, which made a most creditable resistance against the Emperor, and some outlying territory on the side of Friuli.

That Venice contrived to protract the war for two years, till her oppressors fell out, is surprising, and only comprehensible when it is remembered that the Pope and the King of Spain had got all that they wanted and had ceased to push on, while the Emperor was beginning to be seized with doubts as to the intention of his French ally—'he was the most suspicious man in the world,'[2] and in this case not without reason. The result in 1510 much resembled the conjunction of affairs in 1495, after Charles VIII's first conquest of Naples. The French had conquered all western Lombardy and were trespassing into those regions of Venetia which the Emperor had earmarked for himself. Once more it looked as if a French domination of all northern Italy, if not this time of all Italy,

[1] Ferdinand got various towns in the heel of Italy, Brindisi, Otranto, etc., which had been pledged to Venice for war expenses some years back. The Pope was aiming at Forli Faénza and Ravenna, and to assert his much-disputed suzerainty over the duchy of Ferrara.

[2] 'N'estoit possible trouver un meilleur prince, mais ung mal avoit en luy, quil ne se fioit en personne,' says Bayard's *Loyal Servitor*, cap. xxxviii., and again: 'Le plus supsonneux homme du Monde,' cap. lxi.

was in process of establishing itself. Hence the great project of Pope Julius II, to 'expel the barbarians'—though to get rid of the alien Frenchman he had to buy the support of the equally alien Spaniard.

It is surprising to find that King Louis, when he found that his allies had leagued with the Venetians, and that he had no friend left in north Italy save the Duke of Ferrara—whose duchy the Pope coveted—did not draw in his armies to defend the Milanese and his recent conquests in western Lombardy, but launched an offensive against the Papal States, which led to the fatal victory of Ravenna (April 11, 1512). Here he lost his brilliant general, Gaston de Foix, and his army was so shaken by its hard-won success, that the successors of Gaston gave up the offensive, and recrossed the Po. While they were at Ravenna, a Swiss and Venetian army had slipped behind their backs, and was threatening Milan, while the Emperor had not only thrown up his French alliance, and ordered his troops who had been serving under Gaston to return to Germany, but had openly made a pact with Venice. By the end of 1512 the French had been manœuvred out of the Milanese, and had retired as far as Alessandria, having lost all their gains in northern Italy save a few isolated fortresses, which were bound to fall sooner or later from starvation. King Louis refused to give up the game, and in the next year heavy reinforcements crossed the Alps to pick up the shattered army of Italy.

Once more the Milanese was in danger of being overrun. The endeavour came to a disastrous end at Novara (June 6, 1513) where the Swiss phalanx won its last decisive victory. Though almost unaided by their allies, for there were no Spanish and only a few hundred Italian horse with them, the Swiss made complete havoc of the army of La Tremouille. Fighting in the traditional order of the three columns in échelon, they drove off the French gendarmerie, and cut the French infantry —mostly mercenary landsknechts—to pieces. Once more the French were thrust completely out of northern Italy, and back to the line of the Alps. Maximilian Sforza, the heir of the imprisoned Ludovico il Moro, was restored to the duchy of Milan. But he had a very unhappy existence; for his Swiss allies occupied his fortresses, annexed his northern Alpine borders—what is now the canton of Ticino—raised his taxes, and left him only a show of authority.

After Novara the end of the French attempt to establish

a transalpine empire in Italy might reasonably have come to an end—all the more easily because Louis XII, who was so devoted to the adventure, and who had actually reigned in Milan for thirteen years, died at midwinter 1514–15. Unfortunately for Italy, and for the rest of Christendom, his young and ambitious successor, Francis of Angoulême, took up the unhappy old game—intoxicated, as it seems, by the ambition to show himself a mighty man-at-arms, and a conquering hero in the style of Charlemagne. The idea of re-establishing a French empire in Italy was as insane as ever, but his first campaign (for his future unhappiness) was preposterously successful. He crossed the Alps unopposed, by a hazardous march, and beat at Marignano (August 15, 1515) the Swiss army, which maintained Duke Maximilian on his uncomfortable throne at Milan, and made him intolerable to his subjects by perpetual exactions and oppressions. Marignano was a very unscientific fight, but it was a turning-point in the history of the Art of War—the ' steam-roller ' attack of the Swiss array of columns in échelon was brought to a stand, and repelled with fearful loss by an effective if haphazard combination of cavalry charges and salvos of field artillery. There were to be no more Gransons or Morats ; and Novara was to be the last triumph of the old Swiss style.

Any chance that this brilliant campaign of King Francis was to lead to a permanent establishment of French power in north Italy was made impossible not merely by geographical hindrances, but by the oncoming dynastic complications. Only seven months after Marignano, died Ferdinand of Aragon (February 22, 1516), and by his death his grandson Charles, already master of all the ' Burgundian ' lands, from Flanders to Franche Comté, received possession of Spain, and of all Spain's outlying dominions—Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia—not to speak of the as-yet-unrealized resources of the newly discovered America.[1] This accumulation of kingdoms would have sufficed by itself to make French designs for an Italian empire impracticable. But when in 1519 Kaiser Maximilian, the only survivor of the elder generation, passed away and left all the Austrian lands to his grandson, the idea of a France predominant in Europe ought to have been dropped by any French king or statesman of ordinary sense. The odds were too great.

[1] Technically his mother, the mad Queen Juana, who still lived, was Queen of Castile ; but he acted as her representative and co-regent

Nevertheless Francis and his son Henry II persisted in the project for nearly forty disastrous years, though France was now surrounded by hostile territory on every one of her land frontiers. Why the struggle was able to continue so long has already been demonstrated. Without the Turk and the convulsions of the Reformation in Germany the contest must have come to an end much earlier. The French kings made five successive attempts between 1521 and 1559 to renew the struggle for domination in Italy. In each case the attack was beaten off, yet the vanquished but obstinate head of the house of Valois renewed the war, whenever another promising opportunity of assailing the Emperor seemed to have arrived. The most astonishing part of the contest is that, scorning all geographical hindrance, both Francis and Henry tried again and again to win back not only Milan but Naples. Preposterous attempts to get a footing once more in the south of Italy, while the Emperor was in command of the sea, occurred in 1525, 1527–28, 1553–55, and 1557. The southern enterprises of Albany in 1525, of Lautrec in 1527–28, of Strozzi and Montluc in 1553–55, and of Guise in 1557 each resulted in the ruin of an army sent on a wildly impossible task. For to establish a holding in southern Italy required either that the invader should have permanent possession of a supremacy at sea, or else be in occupation of the whole of the northern and central region of the great peninsula.

The French twice, once under Louis XII and once under Francis, got possession of the duchy of Milan for a term of years, more by reason of the divisions and selfishness of their enemies than by the real practicability of the enterprise. But both these occupations occurred before Charles V had united the forces of Spain, the Empire, and the Low Countries. After his accession the enterprise became hopeless, even while the Duke of Savoy, whose dominion lay between France and Milan, was dominated by French influence, or in later years the victim of an armed French occupation. Francis and Henry could never spend their whole strength on an Italian war—they might send armies over the Alps, but never their whole striking force, when defence was also required on the Pyrenees, on the borders of Champagne and Burgundy, and in the far north beyond the Somme. The nature of the Lombard plain, with no real defensive position upon it between the Adige and the Alps—for the line of the Ticino (or any other of the rivers

that flow into the Po) is untenable—is such that it may be lost or won by a single great battle. There is no natural front of defence between Verona and Mantua on one side and the foot-hills of Piedmont on the other. Hence the way in which, after a decisive defeat in the neighbourhood of Milan, French armies always had to give back to the foot of the Alps. The same thing was to be seen in later centuries, whether the push was French from the west, or Austrian from the east. When once there has been a general action, which ruined the main army of one of the combatants, he cannot find any line in the plains of Lombardy on which to rally, but the Frenchman retires to the Alps, or the Austrian to the Mincio-Adige positions, which were guarded in later centuries by the famous 'Quadrilateral' of Verona, Mantua, Peschiera, and Legnago.

The only military fact which, in the days before artillery reached its later developments, prevented the results of one of the decisive battles from being complete and instantaneous in northern Italy, was the immense amount of fortified places. Obstinate garrisons, which refused to acknowledge the logic of a lost campaign, often held out for an unconscionable time. And just at this period the resources of fortification were beginning to outrun those of the artillerist. In the fifteenth century, as has been shown in an earlier volume, the improved gun had demonstrated the impotence of mediaeval walls and castles of the old style—as witness the fall of Constantinople and the theatrical speed with which the brothers Bureau battered the English out of Normandy and Guienne. In the sixteenth century the engineer had his revenge on the gunner, and scientific fortification developed so fast that the predominance of artillery came to an end for a time. Hence the whole military annals of the century tended gradually to become a record of sieges—a fact most evident in the story of the Dutch-Spanish struggle in its later decades, but progressively visible in the Italian wars that filled its central years. After Pavia pitched battles became rare, and sieges innumerable and tedious. Even before Pavia they were tending to grow longer and often fruitless, as the engineer—generally an accomplished Italian mathematician—replaced the old high-lying walls of towns with new, low, bastioned enceintes, shielded with ditch and glacis and thickly gunned on points that gave cross-fire. The fortification of places like Milan or Verona was an immense task—but well repayed the trouble and expense.

Victorious sixteenth-century generals disliked leaving unsubdued fortresses behind them, and the 'mopping up' of a region full of strong points held by resolute garrisons took time. This fact it is which explains in part the comparatively disappointing sequel of several successful campaigns. The same phenomenon was to be seen two centuries later in the wars of Louis XIV and Marlborough.

CHAPTER III

STRATEGY AND TACTICS IN THE GREAT ITALIAN WARS

WE have already shown that in the history of the Art of War, the break between the Middle Ages and modern times can be fixed very definitely at the start of Charles VIII of France on his great expedition of 1494, which was intended by the feckless young King to be the commencement of a Crusade, but which developed into an attempt to build up a French Empire in Italy—the first of a series of such attempts which were to last for a period of over sixty years. It seems certain that Charles was honestly convinced that he was predestined to be the champion of Christendom against the Turk, and that his occupation of Naples on the way eastward, as heir to the Angevin claim on that realm, was in his estimation to be an incident of secondary importance in his victorious march to Constantinople and Jerusalem.

He was under the impression that he had cleared his path by the one necessary preliminary precaution—the securing of the neutrality and alliance of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain by the very surprising Treaty of Barcelona [1493]. By this he had restored to them his father's acquisitions in Rousillon and Cerdagne, without any counterbalancing advantage save their supposed friendship. If the Spanish danger were removed, he cared little for the views of the various states of Italy —involved in their usual rivalries and intrigues. Nor was he, perhaps, very wrong in his estimate of their importance. Without the unexpected Spanish intervention, he might not only have overthrown the shaky throne of Alfonso of Naples, but have viewed with contempt the machinations of Pope Alexander, Ludovico of Milan, and the Venetians. That he marched all down Italy almost without opposition, 'marking his billets day by day with chalk'[1] as the Pope sarcastically

[1] Comines, iii. cap. 14.

observed, is a sufficient proof of the terror which his appearance inspired. But the Spanish intervention changed the whole face of affairs, and when once Gonsalvo de Cordova had landed in Calabria, there was to be no further thought of Constantinople or Jerusalem. The affair that had begun was a struggle for domination in Italy between Spain and France, and it was to endure for a couple of centuries—with a break in the middle during the sixty years of the French Wars of Religion, which put France out of the game for two generations, and left Spain temporarily triumphant.

When King Charles crossed the Alps, with his head full of reminiscences of Charlemagne and Godfrey of Bouillon, and his chancellor's wallet duly stuffed with documents ceding to him all the rights of the last of the Paleologi on the vanished Byzantine Empire, and of the younger branch of Anjou on the Neapolitan kingdom, it can hardly be supposed that he realized that he was opening out a series of interesting technical experiments in the Art of War. He marched in great state, with his glittering *gendarmerie*, his train of field artillery, which had no match in Europe, and his blocks of Swiss pikeman—all the best material of the kind, as contemporary Europe supposed. How these weapons were to be utilized, and against what sort of hostile tactics, was the problem. Probably the King conceived of his army as a sort of steam-roller, which would crush down everything that stood in its way. His captains were well acquainted with the ridiculous details of fifteenth-century Italian campaigning—those battles of manœuvre, at which Guicciardini and Machiavelli laughed, where general actions were fought with a casualty list of one man killed and two wounded, and armies surrendered when they were technically outflanked or cut off from their base.[1] They may even have been looking up Turkish tactics, with a view to operations beyond the Adriatic—there is evidence that the name and moral of Nicopolis—the last French disaster in the East—was known to some[2] French soldiers of the sixteenth century. But what was actually before them were complicated problems of the combined employment of heavy and light cavalry, of pikemen as confronted or assisted by men bearing firearms, and of the best manner of making use of the smaller and larger field artillery. There were to be many disastrous experiments, and

[1] See *Art of War in the Middle Ages*, vol. ii. pp. 306–309, for examples.
[2] De La Noue, *Discourses*, p. 613.

many inconclusive results, as all manners of combination of arms were tried by one side or the other.

When dealing with the last fifteenth-century battles of continental Europe—Montl'héry, Granson, Morat, etc., we had arrived at the period when the two distinctive tactical novelties were the revindication of heavy cavalry, and the triumph of the Swiss technique of masses of pikemen moving in échelon. The English system of dismounting the men-at-arms and flanking them with archery, which had started at Dupplin and gone on successfully down to Agincourt and Verneuil, had passed away, except in England itself, where it was to continue not only till Bosworth (1485), but till Flodden (1514). But on the Continent it had been recognized that the system was essentially a defensive one, only effective against an enemy who was obliging enough to attack an English army placed in a good position. And the two last English fights in France had demonstrated its weakness. At Formigny (1450) the little army of Gough and Kyriel had been bombarded by artillery in its position, till it was forced to come out and counter-attack the pestilent guns—with disastrous results. At Castillon (1453) Talbot had failed hopelessly in an assault upon an intrenched line well garnished with artillery. Oddly enough we shall find in the first section of our discussion of Renaissance tactics two battles that remind us of Formigny and Castillon. At Ravenna the Spanish-Papal army was nicely placed in a defensive position, but forced to take the offensive by persistent pounding by gunfire, which was becoming unendurable. At Bicocca (1522) the Swiss columns tried, like Talbot at Castillon, to run over a line of trenches by sheer impact, but were so shattered by the fire of greater and smaller firearms that it was turned back in complete rout.

These two battles bear testimony to the fact that we are coming to the times when firearms were beginning to play an important part in tactics. But in the early years of the Great Wars they could hardly be called normal or typical exhibitions of the military art of the period, and there were still battles to come where artillery and arquebuses had little to do with the fate of the day. Sometimes the victory was won by the charge of heavy cavalry, as at Fornovo and the first Seminara (1495), sometimes by the wild impact of masses of pikemen, as at Novara (1513). Some of the acutest thinkers of the time still maintained that artillery was too slow-firing and slow-moving

to be effective against a general who knew how to manœuvre, and was not intending to run in headlong frontally against guns in line. Machiavelli, writing as late as 1515, in his *Arte della Guerra*, was of opinion that a commander, with lightly moving and well-trained troops, could count on so making his attack that the enemy would not be able to get more than two or three volleys at him.

But on the whole we find two tendencies gradually growing—the progressive importance of firearms, and (partly in consequence of that progress) the utilization of field entrenchments, which would make cavalry charges less and less practicable. With both these developments the name of Gonsalvo de Cordova may be associated, as the first general who made decisive use both of the smaller firearms and of field fortifications. His triumph at Cerignola (April 1503) shows the combination of the two in very clear purpose, though his 'crowning mercy' of the Garigliano (December 1503) was not a battle won by any such devices, but was a simple 'victory by surprise,' a plunge into the scattered cantonments of an enemy who was not expecting to be attacked. At Ravenna, as we have already mentioned, the day was settled by a superiority of artillery, though the enemy had entrenched himself. At the very confused fight of Marignano (1515), the Swiss pike-phalanx was broken by a combination of the old-fashioned cavalry charge with overpowering salvos of artillery—but each would have been insufficient for victory if not helped by the other. Bicocca (1522) was won in the classic style of Gonsalvo de Cordova, by arquebus fire from impregnable entrenchments. At Pavia (1525) there was no question of entrenchments in the actual fighting, though both sides had been 'digging themselves in' for three weeks before the day of battle. Quitting their elaborate lines, the Imperialists turned one end of the French position by a night march, and forced King Francis to attack them on unprepared ground with hastily moved troops, coming up at irregular intervals into an array that was never properly formed. But the decisive blow in the actual fighting was given by the Spanish arquebusiers, who gradually shot down the French cavalry, which had broken into the centre of the Imperialist army, but was not properly supported by its late-arriving infantry.

After Pavia pitched battles of primary importance became rare. The only one, indeed, which was fought in the good old

style, by two armies deliberately marching against each other with intent to come to close quarters, was Ceresole (1544). St. Quentin (1557) was not of this sort, for the French had no desire for a general action, but were caught while manœuvring by an enemy who suddenly struck home. In many ways it was comparable to Henry VIII's solitary victory of Guinegate (1513), *alias* the Battle of the Spurs, where the French, bent on demonstrations only, were suddenly attacked by a rapidly moving force of all arms while their infantry was miles to the rear, and gave way in disorder, without being able to form up for a regular fight. Gravelines (1558), the last battle of the war, was fought by two small forces, each detached from its main army which was lying far south in Picardy. Its character reverted somewhat to the ancient type, as the horse on each side fought sharply before the infantry became engaged. But its termination can be paralleled only by that of Pinkie—fought ten years before (1547)—among all battles; the decision was given by gunfire from a fleet belonging to one of the parties, when the other had incautiously taken up a position of which a wing rested on the sea, without any thought of possible naval intervention.

For many years after the Great Wars began, the mediaeval system of dividing an army into 'vaward,' 'main-battle,' and 'rearward' continued to prevail, in name at least. Each of these sections should have been composed of cavalry and infantry combined, and normally the wings would be more or less equal, while the 'main-battle' would be much larger than either. But this system gradually became one of mere administrative units, with little or no reference to position in the actual line of battle. And one wing might be very much smaller than the other, or occasionally was dispensed with altogether. At Novara and Bicocca the Swiss fought with only two divisions, not the normal three, as did the English at Flodden. At Pavia the Imperialist 'rearward' contained only 2000 men out of an army of 20,000, and all the heavy cavalry were in the centre corps, while the light cavalry went on with the 'vaward.' It is of this battle that du Bellay humorously observes that as a matter of fact the French main-battle became *their* 'vaward,' and the Imperialist 'rearward' became *their* 'vaward'—meaning that, as things went, the names implied nothing. As armies grew larger—and by the end of the war there were sometimes 50,000 men in line, corps of both arms got

distributed just as they came upon the field, with no reference to the old idea that a 'rearward' should always be upon the left and a 'vaward' upon the right of a central 'main-battle.' Indeed, an army sometimes deployed with a second line in reserve, and that reserve might be formed of elements of any arm and from any division of the three. The term 'wing' [*esle, flügel*] comes into use in describing battle-array, replacing the old 'vaward' and 'rearward,' though the centre is still often called the 'battle.'

And so a line, as the years went on, might be formed by troops of either arm in any juxtaposition, sometimes with all the cavalry on one wing, sometimes with a concentration of it in the centre. But as a rule there were always flanking bodies of light horse, kept some way out on the flanks, not so much for utilization in the general clash of two armies, but for services of information and scouting, or—in the case of a victory—for the pursuit of broken hostile troops.

The use of the heavy cavalry for desperate charges to break the hostile line became less frequent as firearms grew more efficient, and the combination of pike and arquebus gave the infantry not only the resisting power which the old Swiss phalanx had possessed, but also the capacity for thinning the ranks of charging cavalry while it was striving with the pikes. Pavia, of course, was the battle where this form of tactics won its supreme vindication. In later fights when the heavy horse were let loose, it was generally to fall on infantry already engaged with other infantry from the flank, or to sweep away the hostile cavalry as a preliminary measure before attacking the enemy's main central block of foot, as at Ceresole and at several fights in the French 'Wars of Religion.'

But, as we shall see when investigating the later campaigns of the war, general engagements became very rare after Pavia, the will to fight for the pleasure of victory, which was predominant in the earlier years—especially among French generals—seems to have died out, and the risk of thinning away an army by misplaced pugnacity seems to have been felt in a fashion that was unknown in the earlier years of the contest. If success could be achieved by manœuvre, by cutting the enemy's line of communication, or starving him out in the face of impregnable lines, or distracting him by a sudden transference of troops to an unguarded front, it was no longer considered less creditable than success won in a pitched battle.

We shall note occasions in these later campaigns when armies of first-rate strength lay opposite each other so close that a general action seemed inevitable, yet drew off because each was loth to try the final arbitrament of war. This was especially notable in the years 1553–54, when Charles V and Henry II faced each other on the borders of Picardy, each with his main army at his back, yet parted without any decisive action —as Edward III and Philip of Valois had done at La Flamengerie (1339) many generations before, on fields not far distant. The risk to the attacking party in assailing an enemy in a good position seemed too great, when the consequences might be complete disaster. Before one of the rare general actions of the later wars a French commander—the Count of Enghien—actually sent to Paris for leave to fight a general action (Ceresole, 1544), a thing which would have seemed incredible to Gaston de Foix and his contemporaries. Hence many campaigns which seem most disappointing to the student of the Art of War, when a battle seemed to be the inevitable consequence of the situation, yet never took place—e.g. during the invasion of Provence by the Emperor in 1536, or the deadlock in Champagne in 1544.

This phenomenon has many side-causes : it was not always mere reluctance to take a risk—which might mean the destruction of an army or the loss of a province—which led to inconclusive manœuvring or retreat. When we read the decidedly tedious records of the later Italian campaigns, we are astonished to find how often cautious generals refused to put matters to the hazard of battle, and moved off. Sometimes the risk was starvation—an army which had exhausted its supplies, and harried the neighbouring region bare, and had lost secure communication with its base, almost always drew back, instead of delivering an attack. Sometimes, and this was a very characteristic feature of these wars, the reasons for a retreat were as much financial as strategical. The mercenaries whom both sides were using on the largest scale, were very badly disciplined troops. When pay was many months in arrears, the individual soldier deserted the colours without scruple. This was true on both sides, but the French, in the later years of the war, were under the special disadvantage that the Swiss, who formed the core of their infantry force, did not abscond individually, but went off in whole corps, after making representations through their captains to the effect that their

contract had been broken, and that they considered themselves no longer bound by it. And they were such an important element in the French army that we never find an attempt made to treat them as mutineers and apply force to them.

On several occasions a body of several thousand men went off home in the midst of a strategical deadlock, or a crisis of manœuvring. At Bicocca (1522), as we shall presently see, the Swiss captains offered their French commander Lautrec the choice between delivering a battle immediately, or seeing them march away home. A few days before Pavia 6000 Swiss went off, even though no pay was owing! In these cosmopolitan and heterogeneous armies desertion often meant not mere absconding, but going over to the enemy. Du Bellay complains that in 1521, at the siege of Parma, of 5000 Italian foot in the French garrison 3000 deserted, and the majority of them enlisted in the enemy's army.[1] This sort of thing continued right down to the Thirty Years' War in the next century. Gustavus and Wallenstein enlisted deserters wholesale.

Landsknechts were quite as bad as Italians in this way. Every French army had several thousands of them in its ranks. They were all Germans, technically, therefore, rebels fighting against their sovereign the Emperor. But there never seems to have been any difficulty in recruiting them on a large scale—it was done as a rule through the German princes who were opposed to the Hapsburg domination, and had no scruple in helping the French against their suzerain. In the first half of the war the chief leaders of sedition were Charles of Egmond, Duke of Guelders, and Robert de la Marck, Duke of Bouillon, each of whom is found raising without any trouble corps of 5000 or 6000 landsknechts for the French service. When expelled from their own dominions by the Imperial armies, they became mere condottiere-generals in the French pay, but the astounding thing is that they never seem to have had any difficulty in keeping their corps afoot by finding new recruits. Apparently the landsknecht had so little national feeling that it was rather indifferent to him whether he served for or against the Emperor. And he would enlist under any competent and popular leader who offered good pay. The only general sentiment of a non-material kind that seems to have affected him was a dislike for the Swiss. When they met in battle they never gave quarter to each other: one was

[1] Du Bellay, i. p. 177.

as bad as the other. This was called ' bad war,' as opposed to ' good war,' in which the normal practice of taking prisoners and getting ransom for them was prevalent. On one occasion we find a French general, after a series of massacres and counter-massacres, giving formal permission to his Swiss to kill even prisoners in camp, who had been brought in after a surrender ! [1]

As far as one can make out, there must have been thousands of these German mercenaries who served indifferently on either side. On one occasion in 1512 we read of a special summons by the Emperor Maximilian for Germans in the French service to throw up their employment and come home. But a considerable proportion disobeyed, headed by a captain who explained that he had nothing to lose in Germany, and had a good job in the service of King Louis. This was evidently a prevalent conception in the landsknecht mind.[2]

It was this absolutely conscienceless mentality on the part of the mercenary troops which made the position of a general so difficult. If pay or provisions failed, he might see his army melt away without remedy. Hence the curious fact that enemies, conscious of the distress in the hostile camp, while their own was comparatively in good order, deliberately waited to see the balance of force changing—the historians of the war make no secret of the fact that tactical advantages were sometimes neglected by both sides, because there was a general impression that a few weeks more of privations and bankruptcy would ruin the opponent. The starving-match was not only physical but financial—because the Swiss or the landsknecht would go on strike or march off, not only because he was being kept on short commons, but because he was weeks or months in arrears of his pay. We shall see the phenomenon arising not only before Bicocca and before Pavia, but much later. It was common during the French and Dutch ' Wars of Religion ' in the later half of the century.

These armies, on both sides, were singularly leaky, if we may use the term. Inspired neither by loyalty to a sovereign, nor devotion to a cause (such as was often to be found later in the Huguenot and the Dutch wars) they were at the best held together by *esprit de corps*. Some of the bands undoubtedly followed a favourite captain, whatever side he

[1] The general was Bonnivet. See Du Bellay, ii. 314–15.
[2] Bayard, lv. p. 213.

might choose, as did apparently the Italian 'Black Bands' of Giovanni dei Medici,[1] and the landsknechts of Georg von Fründsberg, but this was exceptional rather than normal. The national French and Spanish units were less given to desertion to the other side, but we must not forget that when the Constable Bourbon defied his master, Francis I, and joined the Emperor, he was followed by a very considerable number of gentlemen of his personal clientèle. And that even Spaniards would desert, when they considered themselves wronged, was shown by the case of the great engineer Pedro Navarro, who made no scruple of transferring his admirable talents of fortification and road-making to the side of the old enemy.

It was hazardous to seek battle with an army whose morale was low, since some unit might fail in the moment of the clash. Even war-tried troops were known to belie their reputation—like the Swiss of King Francis on the day of Pavia, or the French horse at the Battle of the Spurs. Hence much cautious manœuvring and avoidance of a decision. A general who met no disaster was sometimes as much esteemed as one who secured a positive success — such was the case with La Tremouille in 1523, in his campaign against the English along the Somme. The invaders marched much where they pleased, burning right and left as far as Roye and Montdidier, but as they never could force him to fight, and turned back from a harried land when winter drew near, he was regarded as a master of Fabian tactics. Picardy had been ravaged from end to end, but the army was intact. If it had fought and been beaten, there would have been nothing between the English and the walls of Paris. But La Tremouille's reputation for cleverness in avoiding battle was nothing to that of Prosper Colonna, on whom his Italian admirers bestowed the nickname of 'Fabius Cunctator,' a classical reminiscence from the fame of the ancient Roman general who foiled Hannibal by refusing to fight him.

[1] When Giovanni was wounded at the siege of Pavia his corps melted away at once: *Ses soldats, étants sans chef, se débandèrent, de sorte qu'ils devienrent à rien.*— Du Bellay, ii. p. 388.

CHAPTER IV

THE FRENCH ARMY IN THE GREAT ITALIAN WARS

IN the later years of Louis XI the core of the French armies had consisted of the *compagnies d'ordonnance* which his father had organized, each consisting of a hundred 'lances,' which meant not only the hundred men-at-arms but their retinue of 'archers,' *gros valets*, *couteilleurs*, etc. The archers, despite of their name, were mounted men and armoured.[1] Many of them were drawn from the noblesse. The famous Montluc, though of the best blood of Gascony (as he never ceased to boast), started in 1521 as a simple archer in the company of Thomas de Lescun, which, as he observed, was considered quite an honourable post in those days, 'though since then everything has got degraded.' He was only promoted to be a man-at-arms in the company of the Marshal de Foix two years after.[2]

Besides the *compagnies d'ordonnance* there served as heavy cavalry the King's personal retinue, his archers of the guard, and his 'pensioners' or 'gentlemen of the *vingt escus*'[3] —also many volunteers, who were under no proper organization, and sometimes caused trouble by turning up when they were not expected. If France was invaded—which happened less frequently than might have been expected, it was possible to call out the 'arrière ban' of all those who owed fiefs held under military tenure. Professional soldiers did not think much of the men-at-arms who came out on this obligation.[4] The best of the noblesse had already gone to the front in the

[1] As, of course, were the famous Scottish archers of the royal bodyguard. 'Le archers de la Garde avoient des coignées, qui étaient pendues à l'arson de la selle des chevaux, ils les mirent en besogne et donnoient de rudes coups sur l'armets des Espagnolz,' says Bayard's 'Loyal Serviteur,' describing the battle of Ravenna, liv. p. 208. Archers are mentioned as taking part in the general cavalry charge, also in Comines' account of the battle of Fornovo, and much later at Ceresole.

[2] Montluc, i. pp. 20 and 24.

[3] So called from the 20 crowns a month of their pay.

[4] See the very interesting pages of La Noue, 320–27.

companies or as volunteers. ' Fort peu de gentilhommes se trouvent dans l'arrière ban : ils courent quasi tous à la solde, les honneurs, et les récompenses militaires, et n'y trouvent que gens de petite expérience. Ainsi ne les employoit-on qu'a garder les provinces esloignées des dangers de la guerre.' Many military fiefs had been given to the Church, others by royal leave had been sold to courtiers, financiers, or merchants. The sort of deputies that these clerics or civilians sent to the levy were very worthless. However, in times of need and crisis—*e.g.* during Charles V's invasion of Provence, the ' arrière ban ' was called out, and apparently did not distinguish itself.

There were no light cavalry in the French armies at the commencement of the Great Wars, save some mounted cross-bowmen, who were intended to be used for skirmishing alone —the cross-bow is a very bad weapon for use on horseback. We hear of them as early as the day of Fornovo. But experience of the trouble caused by the Venetian ' Stradiots,' and later by the Spanish ' genetaires,' led French kings to raise more ' chevaux légers,' who were to carry out the same functions of exploration, raiding, and light expeditions that the Stradiots and genetaires discharged for the enemy. The Stradiots were especially admired, and Louis XII succeeded in raising a considerable number of these raiders, trained in the practice of war as it went on in the Balkan peninsula. How far they were really Albanian or other Eastern folks it is not easy to judge—but they were trained in the fashion of the old Venetian mercenaries. We hear of French stradiots in the campaign of Novara (1513) and in many later affairs for thirty years.

When the cross-bow went out, we often read for a time of *arquebusiers à cheval*, but the arquebus was little better for a horseman than the cross-bow, and by the end of the Great Wars many light horse had developed into ' pistoleers '—a sort of cavalry whose efficiency was first learnt from the Germans. The *chevaux légers* wore breastplate and open helmet, with mail sleeves, but no leg armour. They were often used in line of battle, but were not expected to have the same weight and impetus as the gendarmerie. By the middle of the century the ' pistoleers ' had developed the very unsound habit of working on the ' caracole,' a system of riding up by successive ranks to fire, and then wheeling off to let the next rank make its discharge. La Noue, as we shall see later on, rightly con-

demned these tactics. Bad ' pistoleers ' let fly too early, knowing that they have to retreat and reload as fast as they can. Rear-rank men fire in the air. When the first rank has gone back to rearrange itself, cowards take the opportunity of riding off to the rear instead of halting. Pistol-fire is no good except at very close range, and only very tough and experienced troopers have the resolution to continue a ' caracole ' manœuvre, without getting clubbed or scattered.[1]

Unlike the *chevaux légers* the heavy gendarmes of the old *compagnies d'ordonnance* charged in line, *en haye*, invariably, and this habit was continued all through the Italian wars, down to the time of the French civil ' Wars of Religion ' which filled the last dismal forty years of the sixteenth century. The tactical problem as to whether the line or the squadron-in-column was preferable, exercised all French military writers for a generation. In the end, as we shall see, the deep order—borrowed from the Germans—prevailed, and its adoption synchronized with the rejection of the lance, which disappeared from the French army for two hundred years. From Henry IV to Napoleon there were no lancers in the army list,[2] and they only reappeared when the Emperor, after 1806, first enlisted Poles armed with their national weapon, and afterwards turned many dragoon regiments into *chevaux légers lanciers*. This reminds us of an eighteenth-century experiment, when the later Bourbons adopted from the Hungarians the name and equipment of the ' hussar.' But the *houssards* of Louis XV had sabre and carbine, never the lance.

So much for the cavalry arm : it remains to speak of the foot-soldiery. Louis XI in the middle of his reign had intended to constitute a national infantry force, by the institution of the *Francs Archers*, of whom he raised at least 16,000 men. But the experiment proved a failure, and after the disaster of the battle of Guinegate (1479), where the indiscipline and weakness of the *Francs Archers* lost the day,[3] the King took no further interest in them, and turned to the Swiss. He had witnessed their efficiency in his own battle of St Jacques-by-Basle (1444),

[1] See La Noue, *Discourses*, pp. 444–45. Yet he held what he called the ' paradox ' that the deep formation of the German ' reiters ' was preferable to the *en haye* formation of the French heavy cavalry.

[2] Except a ' freak ' regiment of Uhlans raised by Maurice de Saxe at his own expense, and disbanded at his death.

[3] At Novara and Ravenna the French pike-battalions were all landsknechts, the Swiss being at the moment hostile.

and had noted their three victorious campaigns against his rival Charles the Bold. He took 6000 of these pikemen into his service—their pay was 4½ Rhenish gold florins per month—and retained them as a permanent force for the remaining five years of his life. This, as Machiavelli remarks, was an unwise policy for a very wise King ; to trust foreign mercenaries rather than one's own born subjects is a fundamental error.

Though some of Louis's 6000 Swiss were paid off after his death, a large nucleus was retained by the regents who followed him, and Charles VIII brought it up to a considerable corps before starting on his Italian campaign in 1494—8000 men in all. The French commanders of the succeeding age regarded the Swiss pikemen as the dominating power in war, and on the rare occasions when the Swiss were hostile, and could not be enlisted, hired German landsknechts, trained on the same principle, as the best substitute that could be found.[1] Such French infantry as did appear in the earlier years of the Italian war were mainly cross-bowmen from Gascony, the district of France where military spirit was highest, according to that very typical Gascon Montluc. We occasionally hear of Picards and Bretons, but they appear with much less regularity. The French infantry, raised by captains who received commissions from the King, but were not taken into permanent service, seem to have been rather a haphazard assembly, always liable to be disbanded, and looking forward to plunder rather than to regular pay. They are often called *aventuriers* as opposed to the gendarmerie and the regularly hired Swiss and landsknechts.

Arquebusiers were known, but there were very few of them in the early years of the war : it was only in the second generation that the arquebus superseded the cross-bow. Montluc remarks that in 1523, when he was ensign in the company of Monsieur de la Clotte, he had only six arquebusiers with him, and they were all deserters from the Spanish army. ' Encore en ce temps la il n'y avait point d'arquebusiers parmi notre nation.' He then proceeds to remark that he wishes that the arquebus had never been invented. ' Would to God that this unhappy weapon had never been devised, and that so many brave and valiant men had never died by the hands of those who are often cowards and shirkers, who would never dare to look in the face those whom they lay low with their wretched bullets. They are tools invented by the devil to make it easier for us to

[1] Comines, vi. chap. iii.

kill each other.'[1] The day had gone by when a certain commander used to order that quarter should never be given to men carrying firearms,[2] but they were still hated and despised, and it took some time to teach French generals that they must rather be encouraged, and introduced on the largest scale possible.[3]

Apparently the date at which the systematic introduction of firearms appears in the French army may be fixed after the battle of Pavia (1525), at which every soldier realized that it was the Spanish arquebusiers who had a decisive part in determining the event of the day. But it was recognized that they were helpless against cavalry, if they had no covering force of pikes attached to them. As La Noue observes, a body of 5000 arquebusiers marching across open country and intercepted by 1500—or even 600 or 700—horse would probably come to grief. But if they had a few thousand pikes with them they would not have the least difficulty in driving off the cavalry.[4] He quotes as the clearest example of the efficiency of a mixed force of pikemen and arquebusiers, assailed by swarms of horsemen, a retreat made by the Spanish captain Alvaro de Saude in one of the African campaigns of Charles V. With only 4000 men he marched through a mob of 18,000 or 20,000 Moorish horse, received and beat off dozens of charges, and came through with a loss of only 80 men, while 'the barbarians' lost at least 700. But of course the enemy had neither infantry nor guns—which made all the difference. Incidentally we may remark that Saude's exploit foreshadows precisely the achievements of Kleber's small squares at the battle of Mount Tabor in 1799.

For a long time the French commanders, after they had recognized the necessity of the combination of pike and arquebus, persisted in using foreign pikemen to serve their purpose, and so we find Swiss or landsknechts used to support the squads of arquebusiers, and not native bands. Even when compelled by necessity to arm Frenchmen with the pike, they seem to have looked upon them as less reliable than the foreigners. These troops were called 'corselets' from the breastplate with which (like the best of the landsknechts) they were

[1] Montluc, i. p. 2.

[2] This amiable person was the condottiere Vitelli.

[3] The first French-made arquebuses were reckoned poor stuff, and officers tried at all costs to get Italian weapons of the manufacture of Milan, says Brantôme.

[4] Cf. La Noue's *Discours*, pp. 387, 450, 455.

provided. La Noue says that several causes might be alleged for their comparative inefficiency—the first was that the best recruits were by now wishing to serve with firearms, preferring to shoot, rather than to be shot at without power to retaliate, as pikemen often had to do. The second, that captains only looked out for men with stout shoulders, not for men with stout hearts, and would enlist any big men that they could lay hands upon, without regard to their *morale*, whereas among the Swiss and even among the landsknechts the very best material served with the pike, and the 'doppelsöldner,' or soldiers with extra pay, who fought in the front ranks, were formidable veterans. Montluc often mentions that he dismounted to fight with his pikemen to keep them in heart, and made his officers do the same, in order to be sure of steadiness at the first clash.

A very clear cause of the recognized inferiority of the French infantry was that, outside the standing force of Swiss, the units were perpetually being raised in a hurry, and disbanded when a crisis was over. Montluc mentions that during the unexpected Spanish invasion of southern France in 1523, which ended in the abortive siege of Bayonne, King Francis raised fourteen or fifteen companies (*enseignes*, to be accurate) of foot in Gascony or Guienne,[1] But the moment that the Spaniards had retreated into Navarre, half of these new corps were disbanded, and finally only two were kept under arms. The officers and men were thrown upon the world, and had to seek service where they could get it—mainly in the army of Italy, to which Montluc himself repaired, when he found himself thus stranded. At each of the four treaties of peace which diversify the Italian wars, all the foot companions were disbanded, save a very few kept for garrison duty.

There were as yet no permanent units larger than the band or company (*enseigne*) ; several of these might be thrown together for some time under a single chief, but the organization was not permanent, and the word 'regiment' has not yet appeared. The first attempt to create something like an organized force of native infantry was made by Francis I in 1531, when he raised the so-called 'legions,' a name very typical of the Renaissance, when not only students but soldiers were interested in classical antiquity. The 'legions' were quite large bodies, 6000 strong, which is an obvious echo from the Roman original. 'Quite a good invention,' says Montluc, if it had only been well

[1] Montluc, i. pp. 25 and 43.

carried through, for though ordinances and our laws were kept up for some time, after a bit everything went to pieces. For the right way to get a good permanent army is to do like the Romans, and keep one's people accustomed to war. Whether this move was for the best I can not be sure, but I would always rather trust my own countrymen rather than foreigners.' [1]

There were to be four legions, named Picardy, Champagne, Normandy, and Languedoc, each to be composed of a mixture of pikemen and arquebusiers, with a small additional proportion of halberdiers—obviously a copy of the organization already in use by the Spaniards. Originally Francis intended to raise seven legions, but his financial straits forced him to reduce the number to four. Each was composed of six ' bands ' of 1000 men, a figure much resembling the later battalion with which we shall grow familiar. The very scanty corps of officers only included for each 1000 men a captain, two lieutenants, two ensigns, and ten centurions (centenniers). The arquebusiers were to be only 300, compared with 600 pikemen (' corselets ') and 100 halberdiers : they were to be the special charge of one of the two lieutenants of the band. The commander of the whole legion was called a colonel ; this is the first time the title appears formally in the French military annals.[2] But, as we shall see, it had been already in use among the Spaniards.

The system appears to have been a bad one—an infantry division of 6000 men without any attached cavalry, guns, or engineers, is an unwieldy body, and the idea seems to have prevailed of considering it as a mediaeval ' battle,' or great mass, such as were the Swiss columns which had been the terror of Europe during the preceding generation. The record of the legions seems to be unsatisfactory—in 1543, 10,000 of them, set to defend Luxemburg against a German army of Charles V, gave way very weakly, and many deserted,[3] so that the fortress was lost. There was also little good heard of them in their campaign against the English of Henry VIII, at the time of the siege of Boulogne in 1544. The Marshal de Vielleville declares in his memoirs that in 1557 he found his legionaries

[1] Montluc, i. 91–2.

[2] But that it was used a little earlier in common parlance is shown by the fact that in 1528 Montluc says that his company and some others had Pedro Navarro as their ' colonel.'

[3] Du Bellay, book x. p. 60, says that of many companies there were not thirty men left with the colours, and that he did not believe that either Champagne or Normandie had much over 300 men under arms —all the rest had shirked back to France.

little better than peasants, and most of them had only four or five months' service. The legions, we are somewhat surprised to find, did not disappear when the peace of Cateau Cambréis brought the Great Wars to an end. For even during the last twenty years of the great struggle between Valois and Hapsburg all French commanders had preferred to have Swiss or lands-knechts under their hand rather than their native infantry.

The legions of Normandy, Picardy, and Champagne were still in existence, though with a reduced effective, and no longer on the vast 6000-man scale, during the Wars of Religion—they formed a nucleus of trained troops in the hand of the government, always ready to be opposed to the hastily raised bands of the Huguenots. The legion of Languedoc broke up in 1562, when its colonel, the Baron des Adrets, took off the greater part of it to join the rebels. The legion of Normandy was disbanded in 1593. Picardy and Champagne, after many reformations and reorganizations, went on into the seventeenth century, and may be considered ancestors of the 'regiments' of the same name, which were famous in many a war of the later Louis. The name 'legion' died out with the sixteenth century —as had already the unwieldy number of rank and file attributed to it: the 'regiment' which was to replace it was a much less ponderous formation.

The non-legionary French infantry was, as we have already said, a very casual and improvised force, always being raised and disbanded, as the long stretches of war and the short intervals of peace succeeded each other during the struggle of France and the Hapsburg power. After Cateau Cambrésis it naturally disappeared altogether. By the end of one of the longer periods of war there were, of course, corps which had been under arms for a good many continuous years, and had come to be considered veterans. Such were the 'vielles bandes de Piémont,' of which we read during the latter period of the reign of Henry II. They had obviously much greater value than the hastily raised corps which were to be found at the beginning of a war-period. The normal practice was that at the start of a new war, or after a great disaster or crisis, when an army had been destroyed, the King commissioned well-known captains to raise 'enseignes' or 'compagnies' or 'bandes' from the drifting mass of old soldiers out of employment, who were always to be found, supplemented by volunteer recruits. In the earliest period of the wars these corps must have been predominantly

cross-bowmen; but after 1525 arquebusiers only were sought after. French pikemen seem hardly to be mentioned before Ravenna (1512), but are forthcoming in all the later fights.

Montluc, among the many disappointments of his life which he is always so careful to chronicle, gives one of 1527. He was commissioned to raise a new company in Gascony, and in a few days had collected no less than 800 men, of whom quite 400 were arquebusiers, though firearms were still rather a novelty in the French army. When he reached Alessandria, in Piedmont, on his way to the front, half of his arquebusiers were requisitioned from him, to give some 'shot' to the company of M. d'Ausun—which had none.[1] When it was that a 'band' or 'company' came to be considered incomplete without a certain allowance of 'corselets' (pikemen), in spite of the general prejudice against French pikemen, is hard to discover. Certainly it was long before the end of the reign of Francis I: we have distinct mention of bands with pikemen in their ranks, as early as the battle of Ravenna (1512). Yet thirty years after, at Ceresole (1544), they were still so distrusted that Montluc takes no mean credit to himself for having beaten a column of landsknechts in frontal pike-fighting with his own bands of Gascons.[2]

It is rather surprising to find in the later years of the war a considerable number of Italian units serving in the French army. With the officers this is not difficult to understand—there was a very important faction of Neapolitan nobles of the old Angevin party, who had lost their estates for siding with Charles VIII at the first invasion. The most notable of these were the San Severino family, the house of Carraccioli, a much ramified and once wealthy race. There were also exiled Florentines. Piero dei Medici died in the French service at the battle of the Garigliano; his illegitimate cousin Giovanni was the founder of the 'Black Bands' which had considerable repute in the army of Francis I. We find officers like Trivulzio, Strozzi, Birague, Visconti, Malaspina, Sforza, in high command. Some were experienced condottieri, who had no national prejudice, and took service wherever they could get it; they were welcomed by the French kings for their technical

[1] Montluc, i. p. 56. Just after this spoliation occurred another of Montluc's usual pieces of bad luck—he was wounded in the trenches before Vigevano, and was out of the service till the spring of the following year.

[2] Montluc, ii. p. 283.

knowledge and military skill. But it is more strange to note that numerous 'bands' of the rank and file of Italian mercenaries were normally employed, though every French writer is wont to allude to them with some disparagement, and to quote cases where they were the first to give way at a critical moment, when Swiss or landsknechts would have kept their ranks. Frequently Italians were found useful as light horse and arquebusiers, elements in which the French army was notoriously deficient for many years. But there were certainly men-at-arms and pikemen among them, though the French considered Spanish and German horse, and Swiss and German pikemen superior to anything that came out of Italy.[1] But to keep up numbers, in the time when the force of France was failing, any military material had to be utilized. It is curious to find Italian foot-companies employed not only in their own country, but in the northern campaigns against the English. Montluc had two with him in the attempt to storm the lower town of Boulogne (1545) under captains named Cesare de Porto and Geronimo Migrano, and he was not at all satisfied with their conduct.[2] Probably these units were mainly arquebusiers—the French were still short of foot-soldiers skilled in the use of firearms.

Through all the early stages of the war, the French had a decided preponderance over all their enemies in the matter of artillery. The great royal train which had been organized under Charles VII by the brothers Bureau, and which had so successfully blasted the English out of the castles of Normandy and Guienne in 1450–53, had never been allowed to fall behind the times. Jacques de Genouillac, the successor of Gaspard Bureau as Grand Master of the Ordnance, is said to have been adding continually new technical improvements. When Charles VIII crossed the Alps in 1494, his long train of cannon, small and great, provoked the wonder of the Italians. They were mostly of bronze, drawn by horses, and able to keep up with the marching speed of an army. The condottieri in their indecisive wars had only employed a few big iron guns, painfully drawn by oxen at the rear of the host, and slow to get into action. Such was the artillery which Machiavelli had

[1] Comines' account of the behaviour of the Italian men-at-arms at the battle of Fornovo shows a deep contempt for them. Montluc shows the same feeling on many occasions.

[2] Montluc, ii. 310.

known in his youth, and which left on him such an impression of inefficiency that he regarded it as practically useless when he wrote the *Arte della Guerra*, and only allowed that it might get off one or two discharges before battle was joined. The French guns moved much more rapidly, and the gunners had reached a skill in rapid reloading, and of change of direction of fire, which had previously been unknown. We shall note that their action was of decisive importance at Ravenna (1512) and Marignano (1525). Still, as has been already observed, the cases of battles won by artillery fire were rare compared with the number of those in which the matter was settled by the infantry or the cavalry. And in campaigns of manœuvring, ending in a fight which developed unexpectedly, there was generally little time to form up the line of artillery, which was mainly useful in set battles, where the defensive party had settled down into a position, and sometimes even entrenched itself more or less, with its guns placed in commanding positions. At Ceresole, however, as late as 1544, both sides indulged in a three-hour cannonade to little effect.

CHAPTER V

THE SPANISH ARMY, GONSALVO DE CORDOVA, AND THE ARQUEBUSIERS

ON the occasions where we have had to deal with Spanish armies in the earlier centuries, we have seen that they were originally a cavalry organization, with two sorts of horsemen: the heavy man-at-arms in the knightly equipment prevalent all over the rest of Western Europe, and the 'genitors' or 'genetaires,' who were peculiar to Spain. Of infantry, much despised in comparison with the horse, there were many cross-bowmen, either mercenaries or town levies (ballasteros). The Basques had once been famous for javelin-men, and the sword-and-buckler infantry of the Aragonese are occasionally mentioned. But the cavalry was considered all-important, and the national and most impressive part of it was the horde of 'genitors' whose tactics had been developed in centuries of war with the Moorish light horse. Armed with steel-cap and mail-shirt only, for their essential weapon was the javelin not the lance, and casting the javelin would have been impossible if the rider was cumbered with cuirass and brassards, they rode upon completely unarmoured horses. Down to the fifteenth century they seem to have retained the round Moorish shield for protection against the darts of the enemy—at any rate the capering 'genitors' of the great picture of the battle of Fuentehiguerola, illustrated in the preceding volume, have shields (sometimes bearing armorial devices) just like the Granadan horse with whom they are contending.[1] The tactics of the 'genitors' were to swarm round the enemy, to overwhelm him with darts, to draw off if he charged in mass, but to hang upon his flanks and charge him when he grew tired, or fell into disorder. They carried swords for close combat, when their store of javelins should have been exhausted.

In support of the 'genitors' there marched squadrons of heavy men-at-arms, the King's bodyguard, the contingents of

[1] See Illustration in vol. ii. p. 180.

the great nobles, and of the four Military Orders. Their number was not very great compared with the extent of the realms of Castile and Aragon, since the national preference lay in the development of the light horse. When Spain was drawn into the great Italian wars, the proportion of men-at-arms was always low in her armies. The new development was in the matter of infantry, which became all important. When first Gonsalvo de Cordova crossed into Calabria in 1495 with 600 horse and 1500 foot, it was on his 500 ' genitors ' that he relied, not on his 100 men-at-arms or his rather miscellaneous infantry, of whom many were cross-bowmen, the majority Aragonese sword-and-buckler men, and a few arquebusiers.

From causes which it is impossible to discover, the Spaniards had taken to the smaller firearms much earlier than the French or the English or the Italians, to all of whom they were unfamiliar in 1495 — though the Burgundian dukes, the Hussites, and even the Swiss, had already begun to employ them a generation earlier. Gonsalvo's first—and only disastrous—battle at Seminara, in the very toe of the Calabrian peninsula, seems to have set him searching for new tactics. His ' genitors ' were completely driven off by the charge of the French gendarmes, and the Swiss pikemen ran over his miscellaneous infantry in one rush. Henceforth he not only set himself for a time to avoiding battles, and adopting *guerillero* methods of surprising detachments and cutting off convoys, but took to providing himself with pikemen to cover his cross-bowmen and arquebusiers. The sword-and-buckler men were placed in rear of the pikemen, with directions to run in with their short weapons, when the pikes should have got locked in a frontal crash. This was the same function which the halberdiers were supposed to discharge in the Swiss service, but the short stabbing sword was much more effective than the halberd in a jammed formation, since the latter required not only strong arms but room to swing the ponderous weapon. Moreover, the arquebusiers were multiplied as fast as possible, and the cross-bowmen cut down in numbers.

Gonsalvo also adopted the system of ' digging himself in ' whenever possible, and receiving charges rather than delivering them. His first great triumph, the investing and staving out of Montpensier's army at Atella (July 1496), was achieved, without any general action, by a combination of partial attacks and careful entrenchment. His second, the battle of Cerignola

(April 1503) was a case of inducing an enemy to charge in upon a prepared position. The Duke of Nemours had taken the offensive, with the usual combination of gendarmerie and Swiss pikes, hoping to run down the enemy by a determined rush. The Spaniard had taken up his position on the lower slopes of a vine-clad hill, and had set himself to throw up a hasty field-fortification at its foot. He dug a ditch along his whole front, made a bank behind it of the excavated earth, and planted it with stakes grubbed up from the vineyards. The whole line was held by infantry; the comparatively few Spanish men-at-arms were in reserve, the 'genitors' were sent out to worry and delay the advancing French. Nemours, arriving in front of the enemy late in the afternoon, and prevented from reconnoitring Gonsalvo's position by the 'genitors' who were hanging about his vanguard, was persuaded by his captains to attack headlong in échelon—the men-at-arms leading as the right échelon, the Swiss pikes and Gascon cross-bowmen formed as a 'main-battle' and 'rereward.' He had no knowledge of the existence of the ditch, and his leading horsemen were precipitated into it; the mass had to halt, and while the general was riding along the front, looking in vain for a gap, he was shot by an arquebusier. The cavalry came to a stand in disorder. Meanwhile the French and Swiss infantry arrived on the ground and charged the centre of the Spanish position, but entirely failed to cross the trenches, owing to a hail of arquebus-fire, which brought down all their leaders while they were trying to scramble up the bank of loose earth, after having jumped down into the ditch. When it was clear that the attack had failed, and that the enemy was morally beaten, Gonsalvo ordered his whole line to advance, his cavalry from the reserve coming round the two flanks of the French, while his infantry passed the ditch, and fell on the Swiss and Gascons frontally. The enemy, having no leader to issue orders, since Nemours had been shot, gave way in all directions; most of the gendarmerie got off, but the infantry, retreating in disorder, were dreadfully cut up by the 'genitors,' who pursued them for many miles. The French train of artillery, which had never got into effective action, was captured on the road behind the battlefield; so was the whole of the baggage of Nemours' army.

Fabrizio Colonna, the celebrated Italian condottiere, who had been with Gonsalvo's cavalry-reserve this day, made the

very sarcastic remark that it was neither the courage of the troops nor the steadfastness of the general that won the day, but a little ditch, and a parapet of earth, and the arquebus.[1] But surely Gonsalvo deserves all the credit for having made the combination of entrenchment and small-arms fire. Of course, the enemy had been most obliging!

The Spanish cavalry was never the decisive factor in any of the Italian campaigns. The 'genitors' were always useful, and superior to any other light horse that the enemy put into the field, particularly to the 'stradiots' whom the Venetians also, and the French occasionally, employed. But the heavy men-at-arms, though fairly good in quality—whatever Machiavelli may say against them—were always too few to cope with the French [2]—hence the way in which we find Gonsalvo and his successors habitually enlisting Italian condottiere men-at-arms, though aware of their doubtful quality. But such Spanish heavy cavalry as there was was reckoned useful and reliable, and French narratives such as that of Bayard's 'Loyal Servitor' repeatedly mention knights of distinction, such as Pedro de la Paz and Alonzo Sotomayor, who were well worth fighting. One nasty habit, however, is laid to their charge—that of aiming at the horse rather than the horseman in close combat, which was reckoned unknightly. The 'Loyal Servitor' says that they had a proverb, 'Muerto el caballo perdido el hombre,' [3] and regularly practised horse-killing as good tactics. This came out very strongly in the celebrated combat of thirteen French with thirteen Spanish knights in front of Barletta in 1503, during a truce which had been agreed upon by Gonsalvo and the Duke of Nemours. Though this was supposed to be a chivalrous contest, 'lesditz Espaignoles ne taschérent pas aux hommes, mais à tuer les chevaulx, ce qu-ils firent jusqu' au nombre de onze, et ne resta à cheval que le seigneur d'Oroze et le bon chevalier Bayard. Mais cette tromperie ne servit guères aux Espaignolz: et lesditz seigneur d'Oroze et le bon chevalier leur livroient aspres assaultz, et quand la grosse troupe les vouloit charger, se retirent derrière les chevaulz morts de leur compagnons, ou ils éstoient comme contre un rempart. Pour conclusion les Espaignolz, quoique

[1] See Paulus Jovius, *Vitae Illustrorum Virorum*, pp. 253–55.

[2] When the campaign of 1536 was starting, the emperor's muster-rolls show us that there were only 580 Spanish men-at-arms in Italy. Clonard, iii. 326.

[3] Bayard, liv. p. 47.

ilz fussent treize à cheval contre deux, ne sœurent obtenir le champ jusqu' a la nuyt feust survenu.'[1] Evil habits (such as the use of poison gas) easily spread from one enemy to another, and much later in the wars we find a French knight confessing that, he in his turn, once practised the ungentlemanly trick when in a desperate strait.

At Gonsalvo's ' crowning mercy,' the battle of the Garigliano (December 29, 1503), he completely destroyed the French army of Italy—both the wrecks which had escaped from Cerignola, and the heavy reinforcements which Louis XII had sent down to join them under the Marquis of Mantua, the condottiere-prince who plays a considerable part in all these wars. At Fornovo he had commanded against the French—seven years later he is in charge of a French army, and apparently saw nothing very odd in the change. National feeling in Italy was still very far in the future! When this Gonzaga of Mantua retired, really or officially sick from November chills, his place was taken by Ludovico, Marquis of Saluzzo—just such another princely professional soldier. The campaign to which the battle, or rather rout, gave its conclusion, reads much more like a modern than a mediaeval series of operations, and must be dealt with in detail, when we are considering the great general actions of the war. There was no set and orderly clash of armies in array, but a series of manœuvres, depending on the maintenance by Gonsalvo's army of the line of the lower Garigliano—then swollen by autumn rains and ending near the sea in the celebrated ' Marshes of Minturnae,' where Marius of old sought refuge in the mud. The game was won this time by ' major tactics,' not by armament—the Spaniard having attacked, at mid-winter and in wild weather, an enemy who had left his lines along the river undermanned. A sudden and unexpected passage of the river by a concealed bridge brought the Spaniards into the middle of the French cantonments, and the Marquis of Saluzzo, failing to concentrate in time his much dispersed detachments, was chased into Gaeta after a series of rear-guard skirmishes.[2] A few days later he capitulated, on much the same terms that Junot got from Sir Hew Dalrymple at the Convention of Cintra—leave to depart by sea

[1] Bayard, xxiii. p. 77.

[2] It is amusing to find that the ' Loyal Servitor ' of Bayard has no more to tell of this campaign than a rather incredible story of how his master held a bridge alone against *two hundred* Spanish men-at-arms till succour came. Bayard, chap. xxxv. There is nothing about the disaster in which the whole army was routed.

on evacuating Gaeta and the other forts which he was holding, and abandoning all their guns and military stores.

If armament seems to count for little at the Garigliano, it is otherwise with the next battle in which the Spaniards took a leading part. Ramon de Cardona, the successor of Gonsalvo as viceroy of Naples, was endeavouring to relieve Ravenna, then closely pressed by Gaston de Foix and likely to fall. Cardona, trying the same game of fortification which his predecessor had carried to such a successful end at Cerignola, entrenched himself, and asked to be attacked. The experiment failed disastrously, because the French, who had a superior artillery, bombarded the entrenchments, and after a while forced the Spanish horse to take an unintended and hopeless offensive. But, as will be told elsewhere, the battle was largely remembered not so much for the Spanish defeat, as for the frightful slaughter which the sword-and-buckler men and the arquebusiers made of the French infantry—landsknechts and Gascons—whom they beat most effectively in the centre of the battle. Though the day ended in disaster, owing to the complete rout of the Spanish cavalry, the good effect of the sword-and-buckler fighting was the main thing which struck contemporaries; it is one of the main arguments used by Machiavelli in his *Arte della Guerra* for his scheme for arming infantry with short weapons, and not with the unwieldy pike which the Swiss and landsknechts had made famous. He was scholar enough to quote, as parallel instances, the way in which the short sword of the Roman legionary in days of old had hewed its way through the Macedonian phalanx—a formation much like the Swiss pike-column—which had formed the best part of the army of Pyrrhus of Epirus, at the battles of Heraclea and Beneventum seventeen centuries before.[1]

Of Ravenna much must be said in detail elsewhere, since it was a fight of high tactical interest. One of the notable features in it is the fact that the Spaniards were making tentative experiments in the way of forming units larger than the company, though much smaller than the ' tercio ' which was to form the normal basis of organization twenty years later. As early as 1505, King Ferdinand had made a list of twenty superior officers, who were to be entrusted with charge of several companies, apparently some of pikemen and some of arquebusiers, with a proportion of sword-and-buckler men. It is not clear

[1] Cf. Machiavelli, *Principe*, § 26, and Guicciardini, book x. 285.

that the companies were permanently attached to each other, or that the pike and arquebus elements were always of the same strength. These officers are called ' coloneles '—which the French and English shortened into ' colonels ' by the middle of the century ; originally it would seem that the proper title was ' cabo de colunela '—head of a column. But the perversion into ' coronel ' is found as early as 1508.[1] It is interesting to find that of the twenty original colonels of 1505, five were killed at the battle of Ravenna—each at the head of his ' colonelcy.' Of the twelve actual colonels of 1512 present at Ravenna, no less than eleven fell. The strength of these bodies must be gauged from the fact that eleven were in the field that day, but the whole showed only 9000 present. Apparently, then, a ' colonelcy ' was probably in theory 1000 strong, and composed of about four companies of 250 men — or conceivably five, allowing for one of ' sword-and-buckler men.' No doubt they were all under strength on the battle morning.

The old corps were practically destroyed at Ravenna—only 3000 men at most got away. But when the army was reformed, the organization seems to have remained the same, perhaps with a strengthening of the proportion provided with firearms. In the battles of the middle section of the Great Wars the Spanish generals practised intrenching more carefully then ever. The object was to induce the enemy to take the offensive against a prepared position well garnished with arquebusiers, so that even if they succeeded in closing, it would be in a thinned and disordered array, which the pikemen could easily cast back. In the next Spanish battle after Ravenna, that against the Venetians at La Motta (October 7, 1513), the Viceroy Cardona saw his horse badly cut up, but the hostile infantry advance came to a disastrous stop, along a trench thickly lined with arquebusiers. The credit of the day fell entirely to the Spanish infantry, commanded on that occasion by the Marquis of Pescara—an unlucky combatant at Ravenna, but fated twelve years later to be the most prominent actor in the great victory of Pavia, where the arquebus settled everything.

There does not seem much to be discovered of either tactical interest or details of changing armament by a study of the Spanish conquest of Navarre, which was conducted in the same year during which Cardona was fighting his battles in Italy, We read of manœuvring, of a long siege of Pampeluna by the

[1] For all this, see Clonard, vol. ii. pp. 414–16—careful documentary evidence.

French, and of their final retreat across the Pyrenees, abandoning the kingdom of the d'Albrets, which came to an end in 1513, though its vain title remained to their descendants, along with the single town of St. Jean Pied-du-Port. This was the only scrap of real Navarrese territory that was in the possession of the prince who made his name famous as 'Henry of Navarre' seventy years after.

But military history on its Spanish side commences again to be of note when we reach the period of the central campaigns in Lombardy which started with the second occupation of Milan by the French after the victory of Marignano. Bicocca (1522) was somewhat of a repetition of Gonsalvo's victory at Cerignola—a complete and disastrous repulse of an attempt to storm by heavy infantry columns a well-garnished position lined with arquebusiers supported by pikes. The frontal hindrance on this occasion was not, however, an intrenchment, but a deep-sunk country lane, ten feet deep—which came to much the same thing. Lautrec, the French commander, had not wished to make a frontal attack, but the Swiss mercenaries who formed the bulk of his infantry, persisted in bringing on a battle despite of his remonstrances, and got a most bloody repulse. The heads of their columns were shot to pieces by arquebus fire helped by artillery fire, and such disorderly remnants as crossed the lane were driven back by a general charge of Spanish and German pikemen.

At Pavia (1525) the Spanish arquebusiers got more credit than at any of their earlier successes, for this was not a battle in which they were attacked while under good cover of an entrenched position, but a case where they were on the offensive and in open ground. It will be necessary to describe this complicated battle at length elsewhere. Here it must suffice to say that the army in which they were serving had turned the flank of the French position, and forced Francis I to come out and form 'front to flank' on unexpected ground. The desperate charges of the French gendarmerie are recounted to have failed not so much from the frontal resistance which they met, as from the perpetual rolling fire of arquebuses which beat upon them from the side. The Spaniards had moved forward and turned the King's flank, and could not be driven away by any small or partial charge.

It will be remembered that it was in 1533 that Francis I took in hand the reorganization of the French army into

'legions.' It is interesting to find that it was in the following year 1534 that we find the first mention of the creation of large infantry units in the Spanish host, thrice the size of the 'colonelcies' of the previous generation. These were the 'Tercios' whose name was famous for many a day. Apparently the style came from the old military tradition that an army in array was divided into three divisions—van, main-battle, and rear—as we have so often seen. A 'tercio,' or third, was therefore a body sufficient to make up one of these normal divisions.

The most striking fact in the 'tercio' organization is that we find only pikemen and arquebusiers. There is no mention of the once-celebrated 'sword-and-buckler men' whom Machiavelli so much admired, and we discover only the modest number of eight halberdiers, and they apparently attached to the person of the commander of the 'tercio' as bodyguard, or perhaps rather as orderlies. The companies or bands, which used to be separate units, though often employed in blocks of any number from two to ten, now form one large regiment —almost we would say brigade. This curious and interesting organization of the three original great 'tercios' of the old army of Italy—named Lombardy, Naples, and Sicily—as approved by Charles V in 1534, is worth giving, for with slight modifications it continued in use for the core of the Spanish infantry for two centuries. These heavy corps of over 3000 men of all ranks were organized as follows:

(1) Staff—

1 maestre de campo [colonel]	at 40	escudos	*per mensem.*
1 serjeanto mayor [major]	at 20	,,	,,
1 furriel mayor [adjutant]	at 20	,,	,,
1 municionario [quartermaster and armament officer]	at 10	,,	,,
1 staff captain [capitan barrichel]	at 12	,,	,,
1 lieutenant of the above captain	at 6	,,	,,
1 physician	at 12	,,	,,
1 surgeon and 1 apothecary	at 10	,,	,,
1 chief chaplain	at 12	,,	,,
1 drum-major	at 10	,,	,,
8 halberdiers, attached to the colonel, each	at 4	,,	,,

Total of regimental staff, 19 persons, costing 194 escudos *per mensem.*

(2) The 12 [sometimes only 10] companies, 6 of arquebusiers, 6 of pikemen [or 5 and 5], each consisted of—

1 captain	at 15	escudos	*per mensem.*
1 alferez [ensign]	at 12	,,	,,

1 serjeant	at 10 escudos	*per mensem*.
10 corporals	at 4 „	„
1 'furriel' [quartermaster]	at 3 „	„
240 privates; the pikeman had all 3 escudos *per mensem*, but among the arquebusiers there were extra allowances for distinguished soldiers, which brought some of them up to 4 escudos *per mensem*.		
1 captain's page [batman]	at 4 escudos	*per mensem*.
1 drummer and 1 fifer	at 3 escudos	each.
1 chaplain	at 10 escudos.	

Total in the companies, 3096 of all ranks for a 12-company 'tercio.' Cost for a pike-company 815 escudos *per mensem*, for the arquebusier companies something more, owing to the 'extra testoon' given to first-class privates, which brought the total to sums varying up from 900 to 950 escudos.

There are many points to notice in this table, the first of its kind available.

(1) The arquebusier is reckoned more valuable than the pikeman, the premium to the best shots in the company raising their pay to 4 escudos a month, while no pikeman draws more than 3.

(2) The rank of lieutenant in a company has not yet come into being; it is clear that the single sergeant in each company must have been practically treated as a commissioned officer. But, even so, the allowance of officers—only 3 to a company of 258, is very low. The only lieutenant mentioned is the assistant of the staff captain. Later, under Philip II every company had a lieutenant, who ranked above the alferez, and also four sergeants (now clearly non-commissioned officers) instead of one.

(3) The allowance of chaplains is enormous, one chief and 12 company clergy—13 in all to the equivalent of a brigade. In this, as might have been expected, the Spanish army was exceptional!

(4) On the other hand, the medical staff is very moderate—only 3 to 3096 persons!

(5) The brigade music runs to a chief and 24 other ranks; the drummers and fifers draw the same pay as a pikeman. The enormous salary of the drum-major (10 escudos) is explained by the fact that he was not only a director of music but a sort of specialist: 'he is expected not only to

> teach marches, calls to arms, and calls to retreat, but to be acquainted with the military music of other armies, even the Turkish, so that he can judge the meaning of the sounds heard in the enemy's camp, or line of march, or battle array, and report to the colonel.' [1]

While the 'tercios' remained at their very high establishment, the units which Charles V and Philip II raised during the wars of the middle and later years of the century were usually much smaller in size. They were habitually called 'regiments,' and their commanders were 'colonels'; but their strength varied in the most irregular fashion. Four or five companies, and no more, put together formed a regiment, sometimes named after its colonel, sometimes after the province in which it had been originally raised. The number of 'tercios viejos' of the original army of Charles V and Philip II was limited, the units being so large; they all had local designations, like the first three which have been mentioned above.[2] 'Sicilia' and 'Lombardia' [3] survived for a very long time, but 'Naples' was disbanded in disgrace for a series of mutinies by Philip II in 1566.[4]

The muster-roll of the Spanish army in July 1536, when Charles V was commencing his third war with Francis I, happens to have been preserved, and is interesting as showing the exact force of the Spanish and non-Spanish elements in the Emperor's army of Italy. There are found--

Heavy cavalry [gente d'armas]	580
Spanish Light Cavalry	1,730
'Tercios' of Naples and Sicily	5,000
28 unregimented companies	4,850

At the same time the Emperor had in Italy of foreign troops:

German cavalry	2,060
Italian cavalry	950
German infantry	24,080
Italian infantry	25,903

[1] For an example of the way in which a knowledge of military music might prove profitable, see Bayard's escape from Rebecco, during a night surprise, when he got off because he knew that the drums heard behind him were Spanish infantry drums 'beating the alert,' and could be nothing else. Bayard, cap. lxiii.

[2] The Tercios of Portugal, 'Armada,' *i.e.* Marines, and Brabant were early corps. All this from the invaluable Conde de Clonard's *History of the Spanish Army*, vol. iii.

[3] Lombardia changed its name to Principe after Italy was lost in the eighteenth century.

[4] But a 'Tercio Nuevo de Napoles' was raised to replace it, which changed its name in 1718 to 'Corona' now that Naples was no longer Spanish.

The Italian contingents included those of the duchy of Milan, the Marquises of Saluzzo and Mantua, of the newly made Duke of Florence, and the Duke of Savoy. The rest were mercenaries.

A muster-roll of the national Spanish cavalry existing in the Iberian Peninsula two years later, at a time when the French were active on the Pyrenean front (1538), gives the very modest total of 961 men-at-arms and 655 'Ginetes.' It is clear from these figures, and from those quoted above, that Spanish armies had always a sad deficiency in the mounted arm, according to sixteenth-century ideas. In the army of Italy in 1536 there were only 5320 horse in an army of 67,155 of all arms and all nations. We find at Ceresole in 1544 under 1000 to 18,000 foot.

Of the numbers, organization, and tactics of the Spanish armies in the second half of the century, and more particularly during the Great Wars that followed the Insurrection of the Netherlands, much will be gathered from a later chapter. The tactics are particularly noteworthy, and were the admiration of all professional soldiers. The main points to be noted were the supersession of the old light horse by squadrons furnished with firearms, both mounted arquebusiers, and *herreruelos* who carried a shorter weapon which could be more easily used from the saddle, and the multiplication of small foot regiments as opposed to the immense 'tercios' of the earlier wars. The combination of pike and firearms continued, as in other European armies, far into the seventeenth century. The heavy cavalry, never proportionately numerous, continued to use the lance long after it had been abandoned in other armies. It was only discontinued by an edict of Philip III at the very end of the Netherland 'Wars of Religion.' The least admirable trait of the very formidable Spanish troops of this later generation was their proneness to mutinies or strikes on account of the non-appearance of their pay—a foible in which they rivalled the landsknechts and Swiss of the earlier years of the century. A regiment would put its commander under arrest, appoint an *eletto* or substitute, generally a veteran non-commissioned officer, and settle down in its cantonments, living on the countryside by organized requisitions, till the Viceroy of the Netherlands produced the missing dollars. How maddening this habit could be to commanders-in-chief hardly requires explanation. Only men like Alexander of Parma or Spinola could cope with it. But of this more in its proper place.

CHAPTER VI

THE SWISS AND THE PIKE-PHALANX

IN the narrative of the wars of the fifteenth century no small space had to be devoted to the growth and perfection of Swiss military tactics. And after the disasters which ended the dream of Charles the Bold for the establishment of his 'middle kingdom' of Burgundy, the eyes of soldiers all over Europe were turned on to the new form of warlike efficiency which had been proved to exist in the dense columns of the pike-men, who swept everything before them at Granson, Morat, and Nancy. Imitation is the best form of flattery, and before Charles the Bold had been twenty years in his grave, many professional soldiers had begun to think out the problem of how the Swiss tactics could best be reproduced. On the other hand, there were others who were pondering how those tactics could be met and frustrated. For some forty years the steam-roller-like advance of the three great masses of pikes in échelon struck dismay into enemies, and flattened out everything that dared to stand in its way. Its last typical triumph was at Novara (1513), its first notable check at Marignano (1515); after the bloody battle of Bicocca (1522) hostile generals thought that they had discovered the secret of how to deal with the Swiss.[1] And it is said that they themselves never again displayed the same magnificent confidence in victory which they had hitherto shown after that very depressing failure.[2] Certainly three years later, at Pavia, they showed that they had lost some of their old fury, and indeed disappointed the King of France in the most unexpected fashion.

The psychology of the Swiss during the period of their military predominance is very curious. They seem to have had little desire to build up a 'greater Switzerland' by foreign

[1] But on a very small scale Gonsalvo de Cordova had tried the same trick of getting them to attack intrenchments well manned. See p. 53.

[2] Guicciardini, xix. p. 128. Cf. Montluc, i. p. 24, and Du Bellay, ii. pp. 220–21.

conquest, contenting themselves with small territorial annexation near at hand; Vaud, taken from the dukes of Savoy, was an obvious acquisition: the nibblings off the northern edge of the duchy of Milan—Bellinzona, Lugano, and the Valtelline were mere trifles. They never annexed the lands of the minor ecclesiastical states which bordered on them—such as the bishoprics of Basle and Sion, and the Abbacy of St. Gall, but contented themselves with treating them as 'allies'—subject-allies of course, and leaving them alone. Only once does it appear that they displayed any broader views of conquest—this was during the three years 1512–15, when, having restored Maximilian Sforza to his duchy of Milan, they took over all authority from him, garrisoned his towns, raised his taxes, and allowed him to issue no political orders. But they did not actually annex the Milanese, and apparently were more set on getting money than on extending their borders.

Money, it must be confessed, was at the root of all the actions of these formidable and rather enigmatic mountaineers. 'Point d'argent, point de Suisse,' as was so often remarked. Indeed, the policy of the Confederates, speaking generally, was to exploit the foreigner to the utmost possible limit—but this renaissance 'fremdenindustrie' was carried out by the simple expedient of selling military aid, but withdrawing it with the sharpest accuracy when payment ran short. At one time or another the dukes of Milan, the Venetians, and the Pope bought their pikes, but the King of France was the most usual purchaser, and indeed after the so-called 'perpetual peace' of 1516 he enjoyed almost a monopoly of their costly service.

These Swiss troops were most tiresome material: if pay was a little in arrears they went on a passive strike, or simply marched back to their mountains. They had the strangest ideas of their privileges. When the Marshal de Montmorency once told them off for siege operations, they answered 'that they were always ready to fight in the open field, but that it was not their business to assault breaches.'[1] Four days before the battle of Pavia, while the French and the Imperialists were already facing each other in their trenches, a corps of 6000 Grisons suddenly marched off from the French camp. They had received news that the enemy had captured Chiavenna, their chief fortress in the Valtelline, and was threatening their

[1] Du Bellay, ii. p. 210; *ibid.* iii. p. 385.