in oppoſition to Ferdinand, Caſtaldo, the Auſtrian gene­ral, was obliged to abandon Tranſylvania to Iſabella and the Turks.

In order to counterbalance theſe and other loſſes, the emperor, in 1554, concerted a marriage between his ſon Philip and Mary of England, in hopes of adding that kingdom to his other dominions. Meanwhile the war between Henry and Charles was carried on with various ſucceſs in the Low Countries, and in Italy much to the diſadvantage of France. The French, under the com­mand of Strozzi, were defeated in the battle of Merciano ; Sienna was reduced by Medicino, the Florentine general, after a ſiege of ten months ; and the gallant Sienese were ſubjected to the Spaniſh yoke. Much about the ſame time a plot was formed by the Franciſcans, but happily diſcovered before it could be carried into execution, to betray Metz to the Imperialiſts. The father-guardian, and twenty other monks, received ſentence of death on account of this conſpiracy ; but the guardian, before the time appointed for his execution, was murdered by his incenſed accomplices, whom he had ſeduced ; and six of the youngeſt were pardoned.

While war thus raged in Italy and the Low Coun­tries, Germany enjoyed ſuch profound tranquillity, as afforded the diet full leiſure to confirm and perfect the plan of religious pacification agreed upon at Paſſau, and referred to the conſideration of the next meeting of the Germanic body. During the negociation of this treaty, an event happened which aſtoniſhed all Europe, and confounded the reaſonings of the wiſeſt politicians. The emperor Charles V. though no more than 56, an age when objects of ambition operate with full force on the mind, and are generally purſued with the greateſt ardour, had for ſome time formed the reſolution of reſigning his hereditary dominions to his ſon Philip. He now determined to put it in execution. Various have been the opinions of hiſtorians concerning a reſolution ſo singular and unexpected; but the moſt probable ſeem to be, the diſappointments which Charles had met with in his ambitious hopes, and the daily decline of his health. He had early in life been attacked with the gout ; and the fits were now become ſo frequent and ſevere, that not only the vigour of his conſtitution was broken, but the faculties of his mind were ſenſibly im­paired. He therefore judged it more decent to con­ceal his infirmities in ſome ſolitude, than to expoſe them any longer to the public eye ; and as he was unwilling to forfeit the same, or loſe the acquiſitions of his better years, by attempting to guide the reins of government when he was no longer able to hold them with ſteadiness, he determined to ſeek in the tranquillity of retirement, that happineſs which he had in vain pur­ſued amidſt the tumults of war and the intrigues of ſtate.

In conſequence of this reſolution, Charles, who had already ceded to his ſon Philip the kingdom of Naples and the duchy of Milan, assembled the ſtates of the Low Countries at Bruſſels ; and ſeating himſelf for the laſt time in the chair of ſtate, he explained to his ſub­jects the reaſons of his reſignation, and ſolemnly de­volved his authority upon Philip. He recounted with dignity, but without oſtentation, all the great things which he had undertaken and performed ſince the commencement of his adminiſtration. “ I have dedicated

(obſerved he), from the 17th year of my age, all my thoughts and attention to public objects, reſerving no portion of my time for the indulgence of ease, and very little for the enjoyment of private pleaſure. Either in a pacific or hoſtile manner, I have visited Germany nine times, Spain six times, France four times, Italy ſeven times, the Low Countries ten times, England twice, Africa as often ; and while my health permitted me to diſcharge the duty of a ſovereign, and the vigour of my conſtitution was equal in any degree to the arduous of­fice of governing ſuch extenſive dominions, I never ſhunned labour, nor repined under fatigue ; but now, when my health is broken, and my vigour exhauſted by the rage of an incurable diſtemper, my growing infirmities admoniſh me to retire ; nor am I ſo fond of reigning, as to retain the ſceptre in an impotent hand, which is no longer able to protect my ſubjects. Inſtead of a ſovereign worn out with diſeaſes (continued he), and ſcarce half alive, I give you one in the prime of life, already accuſtomed to govern, and who adds to the vi­gour of youth all the attention and ſagacity of maturer years.” Then turning towards Philip, who fell on his knees, and kiſſed his father’s hand, “ It is in your power (ſaid Charles), by a wiſe and virtuous admini­ſtration, to juſtiſy the extraordinary proof which I give this day of my paternal affection, and to demonſtrate that you are worthy of the extraordinary confidence which I repoſe in you. Preſerve (added he) an in­violable regard tor religion ; maintain the Catholic faith in its purity ; let the laws of your country be ſacred in your eyes ; encroach not on the rights of your people; and if the time ſhould ever come when you ſhall wiſh to enjoy the tranquillity of private life, may you have a ſon to whom you can reſign your ſceptre with as much ſatisfaction as I give up mine to you.” A few weeks after, he reſigned to Philip the ſovereignty of Spain and America; reſeiving nothing to himſelf out of all theſe vaſt poſſeſſions but an annual penſion of 100,000 crowns.

Charles was now impatient to embark for Spain, where he had fixed on a place of retreat ; but by the advice of his phyſicians, he put off his voyage for ſome months, on account of the ſeverity of the ſeaſon ; and, by yielding to their judgment, he had the ſatisfaction before he left the Low Countries of taking a conſider­able ſtep towards a peace with France. This he ar­dently longed for; not only on his ſon’s account, whoſe adminiſtration he wiſhed to commence in quietneſs, but that he might have the glory, when quitting the world, of reſtoring to Europe that tranquillity which his am­bition had baniſhed out of it almoſt from the time that he aſſumed the reins of government.

The great bar to ſuch a pacification, on the part of France, was the treaty which Henry had concluded with the Pope ; and the emperor’s claims were too numerous to hope for adjuſting them ſuddenly. A truce of five years was therefore propoſed by Charles ; during which term, without diſcuſſing their reſpective pretenſions, each ſhould retain what was in his poſſeſſion ; and Henry, through the perſuasion of the con­ſtable Montmorency, who repreſented the imprudence of ſacrificing the true intereſts of his kingdom to the raſh engagements that he had come under with Paul, authoriſed his ambaſſadors to ſign at Vaucelles a treaty,