next fourteen years Germany was simply the battle-ground of French, Spanish, Austrian and Swedish armies, which, having learned the impunity and advantages of plunder in the school of Mansfeld and Wallenstein, reduced the country to a state of misery that no historian has been able to describe, save by detailing the horrors of one or other village among the thousands that were ruined, and by establishing the net result that Germany in 1648 was worse off than England in 1485, so much worse that while England was the healthier for having passed through the fever of the Wars of the Roses, Germany remained for 150 years more in the stillness of exhaustion.

Success was for the present with the emperor and Spain. Gallas, now appointed to Wallenstein’s place, was Aidringer's companion from boyhood, whereas Bernhard, the Rupert of the German war, disagreed with Horn. Under the leadership nominally of the king of Hungary, Ferdinand's heir, but really of Gallas, the army re­captured Regensburg and Donauwörth, and when the Spanish Cardinal Infante joined them with 15,000 men on his way from Italy to the Netherlands, they were invincible. Bernhard attacked them in an entrenched position at Nördlingen (27 August/ 6 September 1634) and was beaten with a loss of 17,000 men to 2000 of the defenders. Nördlingen was to the Swedes what Malplaquet was seventy-five years later to the Dutch. The model army of Gustavus perished there, and for the rest of the war a Swedish army, except for some advantages of organization and technical form, was intrinsically no better than another. Gallas reconquered the towns in southern Franconia. John George, having obtained from Ferdinand a compromise on the question of the Edict—its complete revocation Wallenstein’s death and Bernhard's defeat had made impossible—agreed to the peace of Prague (20/30 May 1635), wherein all that was Protestant in 1627 was to remain so, or if since resumed by the Roman Church to be returned to the Lutherans. A certain number of princes followed John George’s example on the same terms, but those who were excepted by name from the amnesty and those who had to gain or to regain the lands lost before 1627 continued the war. There was now no ideal, no objective, common even to two or three parties. The Catholic claims were settled by compromise. The power of the central authority, save in so far as the army could without starvation make itself successively felt at one place and another, had long disappeared. Gustavus's *Corpus Evangelicorum* as a German institution was moribund since Nördlingen, and Richelieu and the Spaniards stepped forward as the protagonists, the League of Heilbronn and the emperor respectively Being the puppets.

The centre of gravity was now the Rhine valley, the highroad between Spanish Italy and the Spanish Netherlands. Richelieu had, as the price of his assistance after Nördlingen, taken over the Alsatian fortresses held by Bernhard, and in May, just before the treaty of Prague was signed, he declared war on Spain. The French army numbered 130,000 men in 1635, and 200,000 in the year after. One army assembled in Upper Alsace for the attack of the Spaniards in Franche Comté; another occupied Lorraine, which had been conquered in 1633; a corps under Henri de Rohan was despatched from the same quarter across Switzerland, doubling itself from soldiers of fortune met with *en route,* to expel the enemy from the Valtelline, and so to cut the route to the Netherlands. Another force, co-operating with the duke of Savoy, was to attack the Milanese. Bernhard was to operate in the Rhine and Main country, French garrisons holding the places of Alsace. Having thus arranged to isolate the Spanish Netherlands, Richelieu sent his main army, about 30,000 strong, thither to join Frederick Henry of Orange and so to crush the Cardinal Infante. This was strategy on a scale hitherto unknown in the war. Tilly, Wallenstein and Gustavus had made war in the midst of political and religious troubles that hung over a confused country. They had therefore made war as they could, not as they wished. Richelieu had unified France under the single authority of the king, and his strategy, like his policy, was masterful and clear. But the event proved that his scheme was too comprehensive. To seize and to hold with an unshakeable grip the neck of the Spanish power when Gallas and the imperialists were at hand was a great undertaking in itself and absorbed large forces. But not content with this Richelieu proposed to strike at each of the two halves of his enemy's power at the same time as he separated them. His forces were not sufficient for these tasks and he was therefore compelled to eke them out, both in Italy and the Netherlands, by­working with allies whose interests were not his. The army on the Meuse won a victory at Avins, south of Huy, and afterwards joined Frederick Henty in the siege of Maestricht. But the Brabanters and Flemings had

in sixty years of warfare parted so far from their former asso­ciates over the Waal that the inroad of Frederick Henry’s army produced one of those rare outbursts of a momentary “ people's war," which occur from time to time in the wars of the 17th and 18th centuries. The effect of it was that Frederick Henry withdrew to his own country, and in 1636 the French northern army had to face the whole of the Cardinal Infante’s forces. In Italy the Franco-Piedmontese army achieved practically nothing, the gathering of the French contingent and its passage of the Alps consuming much time. In the Valtelline Rohan conducted a suc­cessful mountain campaign, which even to-day is quoted as a model of its kind.@@1

In Alsace and Lorraine, besides the Spaniards, the dispossessed duke of Lorraine was in the field against the French. Neither side was strong enough to prevail completely. Bernhard waged a desultory campaign in Germany, and then, when supplies gave out and Gallas advanced, joined the French. Towards the end of the year his army was taken into the French service, he himself remaining in command and receiving vague promises of a future duchy of Alsace. Gallas’s army from Frankfurt-on-Main pushed far into Lorraine, but it was late in the season and want of food com­pelled it to retreat. In eastern Germany the consequences of the peace of Prague were that Saxony, Brandenburg and other states, signatories to the treaty, were *ipso facto* the enemies of those who continued the war. Thus John George turned his arms against the Swedes in his neighbourhood. But their commander Banér was as superior in generalship as he was inferior in numbers, and held the field until the renewal of Gustavus’s truce with Poland, which expired in this year, set free a fresh and uncorrupted Swedish corps that had been held ready for eventualities in that country. This corps, under Torstensson, joined him in October, and on the 1st of November they won an action at Dömitz on the Elbe.

Thus Richelieu's great scheme was only very partially executed. The battle of Avins and Rohan’s Valtelline campaign, the only important military events of the year, took place outside Germany; within Germany men were chiefly occupied in considering whether to accept the terms of the peace of Prague. But the land had no rest, for the armies were not disbanded.

in 1636 the movements foreshadowed in 1635 were carried out with energy. John George, aided by an imperialist army, captured Magdeburg, drove back Banér to Luneburg, and extended his right wing (imperialists) through Mecklenburg into Pomerania, where, however, a Swedish force under the elder Wrangel checked its progress. The Saxons then passed over the Elbe at Tangermünde and joined the imperialists, threatening to interpose between Banér and the Baltic. But Banér was too quick for them. He destroyed an isolated brigade of imperialists at Perlcberg, and before the Brandenburg contingent could join John George, brought on a general action at Wittstock (24 September /4 October 1636). The elector ha<l 30,000 men against 22,000 and sought to attack both in front and rear. But while his entrenchments defied the frontal attack Banér threw most of his army upon the enveloping force and crushed it. The Swedes lost 5000 killed and wounded, the combined army 11,000 killed and wounded and 8000 prisoners. The prestige of so brilliant a victory repaired even Nördlingen, and many North German princes who were about to make peace took fresh heart.

In the west, though there were no such battles as Wittstock, the campaign of 1636 was one of the most remarkable of the whole war. The Cardinal Infante was not only relieved by the retreat of the Dutch, but also reinforced by a fresh army@@2 under a famous cavalry officer, Johann von Weert. He pre­pared, therefore, to invade France from the north-west. Even though the army that had fought at Avins and Maestricht re­turned by sea from Holland, the French were too much scattered to offer an effective resistance, and Prince Thomas of Savoy- Carignan and Johann von Weert, the Cardinal Infante’s generals, took Corbie, La Capelle, and some other places, passed the Somme and advanced on Compiègne. For a moment Paris was terror-stricken, but the Cardinal Infante, by ordering Prince Thomas not to go too far in case he were needed to repel a Dutch inroad into Belgium, missed his opportunity. Louis XIII. and Richelieu turned the Parisians from panic to enthusiasm. The burghers armed and drilled, the workmen laboured unceasingly at the dilapidated walls, and the old Huguenot marshal, Jacques Nompart, duc de La Force (d. 1642), standing on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, raised men for the regular army by the hundred. Money, too, was willingly given, and some 12,000 volunteers went to Compiègne, whither Gaston from Orleans, Longueville from Normandy, and Condé, from Franche Comté, brought levies and reinforcements. Thus the army at Compiègne was soon

@@@1 See Shadwell, *Mountain Warfare;* and Hardÿ de Périni, *Batailles françaises,* vol. iii., for details.

@@@2 Composed partly of Bavarians, who had fought their way from the Danube to the Weser, partly of Cologne troops who had joined the Bavarians against the Protestants of north-west Germany.