50,000 strong. The army of Lorraine under Duke Bernhard and Louis de Nogaret, Cardinal de La Valette (d. 1639), placed itself at Épinal to prevent any junction between Prince Thomas and the army of Gallas. But Gaston of Orleans, the king’s lieutenant at Compiègne, was no more enterprising as a de­fender of the country than he had been as a rebel and con­spirator, and the army itself was only half mobile owing to its rawness and its “ trained-band ” character, and the Spaniards and Bavarians retired unmolested to oppose Frederick Henry in the Low Countries. They left a garrison in the little fortress of Corbie, which Monsieur’s army recaptured in November. The gallantry of the defenders, which bore heavily on the towns­people, was alloyed with a singular trait of professionalism. The time had come for the Cardinal Infante to distribute his forces in winter quarters, and the garrison of Corbie, it is said, surrendered in good time in order not to be omitted in the allotment of comfortable billets in Belgium.

During the episode of Corbie another storm burst on the eastern frontier of France. The prince of Condé, governor of Burgundy, had in the spring entered Franche Comté and besieged Dôle, but the inhabitants as well as the Spanish troops vigorously opposed him, and his army ultimately went to swell that of Gaston. But, although Duke Charles IV. was active in repossessing himself of Lorraine, Gallas with the main imperialist army@@1 stood still in Lower Alsace during the summer. At first he had to await the coming of the nominal commander, Ferdinand's son, but afterwards, when heavy detach­ments from the defending armies had gone to Compïègne, Gallas himself missed his opportunity. It was not until September that he joined the duke of Lorraine, and later still when he made his inroad into Burgundy. He took a few small towns, but Dijon and the entrenchments of Bernhard’s army there defied him, and his offensive dwindled down to an attempt to establish his army in winter quarters in Burgundy, an attempt of which the heroic defence of the little town of St Jean-de-Losne sufficed to bring about the abandonment. Charles IV., however, continued a small war in Lorraine with some success.

In Italy the duke of Savoy with his own army and a French corps under Créqui advanced to the Ticino, and an action in which both sides lost several thousand men was fought at Tornavento a few miles from the future battlefield of Magenta, to which in its details this affair bears a singular resemblance (June 22, 1636). But the victory of the French was nulli­fied by the refusal of Victor Amadeus, for political reasons, to advance on Milan, and Rohan, who had come down from the Valtelline to co-operate, hastily drew back into his stronghold. On the edges of the western Pyrenees a few towns were taken and retaken.

The campaign of 1637, on the French and Spanish side, was not productive of any marked advantage to either party. From Cata- onia a Spanish army invaded Languedoc, but was brought to a standstill in front of the rocky fortress of Leucate and defeated with heavy losses by the French relieving army under Schomberg, duc d’Halluin. In Italy nothing was done. In the Valtelline the local regiments raised by Rohan mutinied for want of pay and Rohan had to retire to France. On the Low Countries frontier the cardinal de La Valette captured Câteau Cambrésis, Landrecies and Maubeuge. The deaths of Ferdinand II., the landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, the duke of Savoy and the duke of Mantua, which occurred almost simultaneously, affected the political foundations of the war but little. The balance, such as it was, however, was unfavourable to France, for the duchess of Mantua went over to the imperialists and the duchess of Savoy was opposed by the princes of her house. On the other hand, Ferdinand III., in spite of Spain, had to concede more power to the electors as the price of the imperial dignity.

On the Rhine and in the adjacent countries Johann von Weert, returning from Belgium with his Bavarians, captured Ehren- breitstein, the citadel of Coblenz, and expelled small French detachments from the electorate of Trier, whose ruler, the archbishop, had been put to the ban by the emperor. Then, passing into the Main valley, he took Hanau. The main imperialist army, still under Gallas, had departed from Alsace to the east in order to repair the disaster of Wittstock, and Charles of Lorraine, with his own small force and a detach­ment under Count Mercy left by Gallas, was defeated by Bernhard on the Saône in June, after which Bernhard advanced vigorously against Piccolomini, the imperialist commander in Alsace, and crossed the Rhine at Rheinau. But soon Piccolomini was joined by Johann von Wcert, and Bernhard retired again.

In the north-east, the effect of Wittstock proved but transient. The widow of the landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, after an attempt at resistance, agreed to the treaty of Prague. In 1638 Banér after taking Erfurt and Torgau found himself the target of several opponents—the Bavarians under Götz, who had remained on the Weser to subdue Hesse-Cassel when their comrades passed into Belgium in 1635, the beaten army of Witt­stock, and a potential Brandenburg contingent. The Saxons did no more than defend their own country, but the imperialists and Bavarians uniting under General Geleen manoeuvred Banér out of his strongholds on the Elbe. He retreated on the Oder, but there found, not the expected assistance of Wrangel's Pomeranian army, but Gallas with the main imperial army which had hurried over from the west to cut off the Swedes. Banér escaped only by a stratagem. Deluding Gallas with an appearance of retreat into Poland, he turned north­wards, joined Wrangel,and established himself for a time in Pome­rania. But Gallas ruined his army by exposing it to an open winter in this desolate country, and at last retired to the Elbe. Pomerania, by the death of the old duke Bogislav, became a bone of contention between rival claimants, and in the prevailing equili­brium of greater powers its fate remained unsettled, while a feeble small war slowly consumed what Wallenstein and Gustavus, Gallas and Wrangel had spared.

In 1638 the French operations in Italy, Belgium and Spain were in the main unsuccessful. In Italy Créqui was killed in an action on the 17th of March, and the Spanish commander in the Milanese, Leganez, advanced to the Sesia and took Vercelli. In the Low Countries Prince Thomas and Piccolomini repulsed in turn the Dutch and the French. In the south Condé led from Bayonne an invading army that was to dictate terms at Madrid, but the fortress of Fontarabia, though invested by land and sea, checked the French until a relieving army arrived and drove Condé in dis­order to Bayonne. So angry was King Louis at this failure that Condé’s lieutenant-general, the brother of Cardinal de La Valette, was condemned for high treason. But the case was different in Alsace. There Richelieu was more than ever determined to 6trike at the Spanish power, and there too was Bernhard, who hoped that Alsace was to be his future principality, and under whom served the survivors of Breitenfeld and Nördlingen, now in French pay under the name of the “ Weimar Army.” After the raid into south Germany Bernhard had wintered about Basle, and began operations by taking a few towns in the Black Forest. He then besieged Rheinfelden. Johann von Wcert, however, fell upon him by surprise and drove him away (February 28th). Rohan was amongst the dead on the French side. But Bernhard reassembled his adventurers and invited them to return and beat the imperialists at once. The outcome was the battle of Rheinfelden, in which the redoubtable Weert, who had terrified Paris in 1636, was taken prisoner and his army dissipated (March 3rd). Although the Bavarians in the Weser country hurried south to oppose him, Bernhard took Rheinfelden and Freiburg. Lastly he invested Breisach—the town that, scarcely known to-day, was then the “ Key of Alsace.” Götz's Bavarians and Charles of Lorraine’s army hastened thither, but Bernhard beat them in turn at Witten- weiher (August 9th) and Thann (October 15th), and received the surrender of Breisach, when the garrison had eaten the cats, dogs and rats in the place, on the 17th of December.

In the course of 1638 peace negotiations were carried on at Cologne and Hamburg, but the war still dragged on. In the east, 1639 began with Banér’s pursuit of the retreating Gallas. Thanks to his skill the Swedish star was again in the ascendant. Banér crossed the Elbe, captured Halle and Freiburg, inflicted a severe defeat on the imperialists at Chemnitz (April 14, 1638), and then after overrunning western Saxony advanced into Bohemia, judging rightly that Bernhard was too much occupied with his prospective duchy to co­operate with him in the south-west. Ferdinand III. sent his brother, the archduke Leopold William, to take command of Gallas's army and sent all available reinforcements to Bohemia. But Banér contented himself, after an unsuccessful attempt upon Prague, with thoroughly eating up the country and, as winter came on, he retired into the Saxon mountains. The other Swedish troops overran Brandenburg and fomented a revolt in Silesia.

In 1639, as before, Richelieu’s attacks on Spain, other than those directed upon Alsace and Baden, were unsuccessful. In the north the French devoted this year, as they had devoted 1637 and 1638, to a methodical conquest of walled towns in view of a future *frontière de fer.* The two objectives selected, Hesdin and Thionville, were far apart, and a covering army to protect both sieges against Piccolomini was posted midway between them. Piccolomini, by a forced march from Liége and Huy through the Ardennes, flung himself upon the besiegers of Thionville before their "circumvallation” was completed, and being greatly superior in numbers he almost annihilated them (June 7, 1639) before the covering or rescuing army had even passed the Argonne. Then, however, Piccolomini, whose troops had bought the victory dearly, 6tood still for a time,

@@@1 For the first time in the history of western Europe Cossacks appeared on the Rhine. Their march through Germany was marked by extraordinary atrocities. They did not remain long at the front, for their insubordination and misconduct were so flagrant that even Gallas found them intolerable and dismissed them.