Melo, the Cardinal Infante’s successor, did not profit by his victory, turning back instead to oppose the Dutch and Guébriant. In Italy Thomas of Savoy and his brother, submitting to the regency of the duchess, led her troops in concert with the French against the Spaniards of the Milanese, and took Tortona. Louis himself conquered Roussillon, Richelieu crushed the conspiracy of Cinq Mars by executing its leaders, and Marshal de la Motte-Houden- court held Catalonia and defeated Leganez at Lerida (October 7th).

Before the next campaign opened Louis and Richelieu were dead. One of the last acts of the king was to designate the young duc d’Enghien, son of the incapable Condé, as general of his northern army. Harcourt had strangely failed, Gué­briant was far away, and the rest of the French marshals were experienced but incapable of commanding an army. Yet it was no small matter to put in their place a youth of twenty-one, who might prove not merely inexperienced but also incompetent. But Enghien’s victory was destined to be the beginning for the French army of a long hegemony of military Europe.

Melo had selected the Meuse route for his advance on Paris. On it he would meet only the places of Rocroi and Rethae; these mastered, he would descend upon Paris by the open lands between the Marne and the Oise. He began by a feint against Landrecies, and under cover of this secretly massed his Sambre and Ardennes corps on the Meuse, while Enghien, having the safety of Landrecies in mind, moved to St Quentin. There, however, the young general learned at the same moment that Louis XIII. was dead and that the Spaniards had invested Rocroi. With the resolution and swiftness which was to mark his whole career, he marched at once to offer them battle. Enghien’s more experienced counsellors, the generals of the old school, were for delay. To risk the only French army at such a moment would, they said, be madness, and even the fiery Gassion asked, “What will become of us if we are beaten?” But Enghien replied, “ That will not concern me, for I shall be dead,” and his personality overcame the fears of the doubters. The battle took place on the 19th of May 1643, in a plain before Rocroi, without any marked tactical advantage of ground in favour of either side. Melo's cavalry was routed, and nearly all the infantry, 18,000 men of the best regiments in the Spanish army, the old Low Countries *tercios,* with their general the Conde de Fuentes,@@1 a veteran of fifty years’ service, in their midst, stood their ground and were annihilated. 8500 were dead and 7000 prisoners. Two hundred and sixty colours and standards went to grace Nôtre Dame.

But even Rocroi, under the existing conditions of warfare, was decisive only in so far as, by the destruction of Spain’s superiority in Belgium, it saved France from further inroads from the north. Enghien indeed followed up the débris of Melo’s army beyond the Sambre, but on the Rhine Guébriant had marched away from the region of Cologne into Württemberg, and there was nothing to prevent the imperialists in the north­west from joining Melo. The thorough establishment of the French on the Rhine and the need of co-operating with the Swedes was considered by the young general to be more im­portant than fighting Melo in front of Brussels, and in spite of the protests of the Regent and Mazarin, he decided to attack Thionville. Taking a leaf out of Melo’s book, he threatened Brussels in order to draw all the defenders thither, and then suddenly turned eastward. Enghien arrived on June 18th, a corps from Champagne had already reached the place on the 16th, and on the 8th of August Thionville surrendered. The small fortress of Sierck followed suit (September 8th).

Guébriant meanwhile had attempted without success to cover the French and Protestant posts in Württemberg against the united forces of his old opponents from the lower Rhine (Hatzfeldt’s Bavarians) and a fresh Bavarian army under Mercy, and had retired into Alsace. Thither Enghien, before dispersing his army into rest-quarters in October, sent him a corps under Josias Rantzau to enable him to recross the Rhine and to seize winter-quarters in Germany so as to spare Alsace. Guébriant did so, but he was mortally wounded in the siege of Rottweil, a town at the source

of the Neckar, and Rantzau, taking over the command, allowed himself to be surprised in the act of dispersing into winter-quarters by Charles of Lorraine (who had again changed sides and now commanded his own, Hatzfeldt’s and Mercy's armies@@2). At Tutt­lingen on the headwaters of the Danube, Rantzau was taken prisoner with the greater part of his army of 12,000 men (November 24th), and the rest hurriedly fell back into Alsace.

In the east the campaign had as usual turned more upon sub­sistence than upon military operations. Torstensson, by his halt before Leipzig after Breitenfeld, had given the emperor a whole winter in which to assemble a new army. The hereditary provinces, as the devastations of war ap­proached their own borders, willingly supplied a force of 12,000 men, which under Piccolomini manoeuvred for a while to the west of Dresden. But Piccolomini was replaced by Gallas, who, though cherishing visionary schemes of uniting Hatzfeldt’s troops and Götz’s Cologne-Bavarian-North German army with his own for a decisive blow, had in fact to fall back through Bohemia. The Swedes followed. Taking the small towns and avoiding the large places, Torstensson swept through Bohemia and Moravia, his steps dogged through the devastated country by Gallas, until he reached Brünn. Thence, however, he suddenly retreated to the shores of the Baltic. Christian of Denmark had declared war on Sweden, and threatened to isolate the Swedish forces in Germany. Torstensson, therefore, wintered in Holstein, Gallas, unable to follow him through districts already eaten up, in Saxony. In Italy and Spain there was no event of any importance.

In 1644 Gaston of Orleans, with La Meilleraye and Gassion under him, began the conquest of the Dunkirk region, capturing Gravelines in July. Melo, having no army to oppose them, remained inactive. In Italy Prince Thomas and Marshal Plessis-Praslin undertook nothing serious, while in Spain La Motte-Houdcncourt lost Lerida, and was imprisoned by Mazarin in consequence. But the Rhine campaign is memorable for the first appearance of Turenne at the head of an army, and for the terrible battle of Freiburg.

The momentary combination of forces on the other side that had ruined Guébriant’s expedition soon broke up. Hatzfeldt was called by the emperor to join Gallas, Charles of Lorraine wandered with his mercenaries to the Low Countries, and Mercy’s Bavarians alone were left to oppose Turenne, who spent the first months of the year in restoring discipline and confidence in the shaken Weimar Army. But Mercy was still considerably superior in strength, and, repulsing Turenne’s. first inroad into the Black Forest, besieged Freiburg. Turenne made one cautious attempt at relief, then waited for reinforcements. These came in the shape of Enghien’s army, and Enghien as a prince of the blood took over the supreme command. But both armies together numbered hardly 17,000 men when Enghien and Turenne united at Breisach on the 2nd of August. On the 3rd, although Freiburg had meantime surrendered, they crossed the Rhine and attacked Mercy's position, which was of great natural and artificial strength, in front and flank. Three separate battles, which cost the Bavarians one-third of their force and the French no less than half of theirs, ended in Mercy’s retreat (see Freibprg) on the 10th of August. Enghien did not follow him into the mountains, but having assured himself that he need not fear inter­ference, he proceeded to the methodical conquest of the middle Rhine fortresses (Philippsburg, Heidelberg, Mannheim, Mainz, &c.), and returned with his own army to the Moselle, leaving Turenne and the Weimar Army at Spire.

In the east, or rather in the north, a desultory campaign was carried on during 1644 between Torstensson and the younger Wrangel, on the one side, the Danes and Gallas on the other, and in the end Gallas retreated to Austrian territory, so completely demoralized that for want of supervision his army dwindled on the way from 20,000 men to 2000. Torstensson followed him, having little to fear from the Danes. Meanwhile the. prince of Transylvania, George Rakóczy, playing the part of Gabriel Bethlen his predecessor, made war upon the emperor, who not being able on that account to send fresh troops against Torstensson, called upon Hatzfeldt, as above mentioned, to reform the wrecks of Gallas's army on the nucleus of his own. Maximilian of Bavaria sent most of his own troops under Weert on the same errand—hence Mercy’s defeat at Freiburg. But Torstensson pressed on by Eger, Pilsen and Budweis towards Vienna, and on the 24 February/6 March 1645 he inflicted a crushing defeat on Götz, Weert and Hatzfeldt at Jankau near Tabor. Götz was killed and half of his army dead or captive. In his extremity Ferdinand offered part of Bohemia and Silesia to Maximilian in return for soldiers. But the Bavarian ruler had no soldiers to give, for Turenne was advancing again from the Rhine.

At the end of March the Weimar Army was at Durlach, on the 6th of April at Pforzheim. Thence it marched to Heilbronn, and Rothenburg-on-Tauber, when. Turenne resolved to go northward in search of supplies and recruits in the territories of his ally and

@@@1 Paul Bernard Fontaine de Fougerolles, a noble of Franche Comté.

@@@2 The three “ armies ” combined were hardly more than 25,000 strong.