

That city, well fortified, had for governor Antonio de Leva, a great captain, commanding a numerous and warlike garrison.

The French monarch attacked the place with vigor, but he evinced indecision in his points of attack. The siege was protracted. Pavia was reduced to extremity; the garrison mutinied more than once for want of pay; the governor was even in dread of seeing the city delivered up to the French by his unruly troops; but his genius equally firm and fertile in resources, contrived to keep them to their duty. (Charles de) Lannoi, viceroy of Naples for Charles V., was informed of the distress of Pavia.

The taking of that place might complete the disbanding of the imperial troops for want of money and subsistence; he felt that this was the moment to venture to attack his enemy, and to attempt an action, hazardous without doubt, but which might re-establish the affairs of Charles V. in Italy. He set out then, accompanied by the Marquis de-Pascara and the constable de Bourbon. At his approach, the French monarch called a council; prudence would have commanded him to avoid an engagement, to raise the siege, and to refresh and enlarge his army: "Sire," said La-Trémouille to him, "the true honor in war is to succeed."

"A defeat can never be justified by a battle; you risk your army, your person, and your kingdom, and you risk nothing by raising the siege." The monarch was deaf to the councils of wisdom; his romantic spirit fancied that his honor would be compromised.

The Admiral Bonnevert promised so to dispose his troops that he should conquer his enemies, that the imperialists should not dare to attack him, and that Pavia should fall into his hands. The king followed this fatal and pernicious advice. The troops were nearly equal in numbers on both sides, each reckoning about 30,000 men. The imperialists first fell upon the rear guard of the French, placed at the castle and in the park of Mirabel. They expected to carry it if the king did not come to its assistance; and if he did come, they should make him lose the advantage of the position in which he was fortified.

What Lannoi anticipated, happened. Scarcely did the French monarch perceive the danger of his brother-in-law the Duke of Alençon, who commanded the rear guard, than, impatient to signalize himself he rushed forward at the head of his cavalry, and fell upon the imperialists. His artillery, placed with much skill by Gailon-de-Genouillac, and served with much spirit, fired at first with such success, that every volley carried away a file. The Spanish infantry being unable to resist this terrible fire precipitately broke their ranks, to seek shelter, in great disorder, in a hollow way. Such a brilliant commencement dazzled Francis; he forgot that he owed all his success to his artillery, believed himself already the conqueror, and came out from his lines.

This inconsiderate movement placed the prince between his own artillery and the fugitives and rendered his cannon useless. The face of the battle was changed in a moment; the viceroy advanced with the *gend'armerie* and a body of arquebusiers; the King was pressed on all sides. The French *gend'armerie* did not, in this