

became objects of idolatrous worship. Many corruptions of the Greek Church were imitated, many Syrian and Greek saints introduced into the calendar, and many Eastern legends and superstitions acquired currency.

The mediæval history of Europe is chiefly that of kings, and courts, and camps. The great mass of the nation served but as the pawns, with which monarchs played the game of war. The intrigues of palaces have little to do with the great movements of humanity. Often the pettiness of human nature in high places is all the more conspicuous, on account of the very elevation of the platform on which the kingly puppets play their parts. The drama is sometimes amusing, sometimes trivial, and sometimes deeply tragical. One which seems to blend all three is the story of the nuptials of Charles VIII. of France, and the Princess Anna of Brittany. It reads more like a romancer's story than like a piece of sober history. The Princess had been already betrothed to the Emperor Maximilian, of Austria, and, indeed, was married by proxy, and had assumed the title of Queen of the Romans; and the Princess Marguerite, daughter of Maximilian was betrothed to Charles VIII., and actually wore the title of Queen of France. At this juncture Charles VIII. "fell politically in love with the heiress of Brittany," as Dr. Ridpath expresses it; that is he fell in love with Brittany, advanced at the head of his army and besieged its princess at Rennes. He wooed her as the lion woos his bride, and straightway married her. He not only robbed Maximilian of his bride, but grossly insulted him by the public rejection of his daughter. But statecraft rendered an open rupture inexpedient, and the Emperor's wounded honour was salved by the cession of two or three provinces with their willing, or unwilling, subjects. The great artist, De Neuville, has given a graphic illustration of the strange nuptials, half hostile menace, half persuasive intrigue. An avenging Nemesis followed this strange marriage. A reckless and wicked life impaired the health of Charles VIII. He was ingloriously defeated in battle. At the early age of twenty-eight he knocked his head against a low arch in his palace and died. His children died in infancy; the lands for which he had perjured his soul, and even his ancestral inheritance, passed away from the house of Valois forever.

Dr. Ridpath does not fail to treat with ample fulness that great religious movement, the German Reformation, which