

Ferdinand was on the very brink of ruin, and had it not been for his Jesuit training he would doubtless have yielded to the demands of the Protestants and have withdrawn from the conflict, leaving the entire empire in the hands of the Protestant aristocracy. Besieged in Vienna, where he was supported by only a few hundred troops, Thurn thought he had him at his mercy; and if he had not stopped to parley with him might easily have destroyed him. Ferdinand's dogged refusal to compromise his position stood him in good stead. Relief arrived and his enemies were glad to make good their own escape. Matthias died about this time (March 1619). Through the inability of Frederick of the Palatinate and the Elector John George of Saxony to agree upon any common basis of action in the interest of Protestantism, Ferdinand was elected Emperor in August following. Two days before, the Bohemian Protestants, having repudiated the claims of Ferdinand to the Bohemian crown, had elected Frederick king of Bohemia. The war was now well under way. Maximilian of Bavaria, who up to 1620 had held aloof from the controversy, now threw himself into the conflict with all his powers. By this time Spain also was ready to support with an army and with treasure the cause of Ferdinand. John George of Saxony, Lutheran though he was, could not endure to see Frederick succeed in so ambitious a scheme as that of adding Bohemia, and perhaps the rest of the territory of the house of Austria, to his hereditary possessions and thus have his own relative position dwarfed. Having secured from the Catholic League assurances that Protestantism would not be interfered with in his own territory, he joined hands with the Catholics in war against Frederick and the Bohemians. Frederick accepted the Bohemian crown against the advice of James of England, the Prince of Orange, and all the Electors. The result it would not have required prophetic foresight to have foretold. By this time Moravia, Silesia, Hungary, Lusatia and Austria were all in rebellion against Ferdinand; but he had the resources and the trained armies of Spain and Bavaria at his back, besides the help of the Protestant Elector of Saxony. The Bavarian army was led by Tilly, one of the most honorable and one of the most accomplished generals of the age. The Spanish army had for its head the famous