

CHAPTER XX

THE efforts of the league were attended with success in other places; but the King, when he was informed of the horrid tragedy that the Austrians had enacted in Hungary, repented that he had not set that crown upon the head of his son, when the Hungarians, won by his virtues, solicited him to do it after the battle of Vienna. He observed too that his health was decaying and hoped at least to transmit to him that which he wore himself and resolved to take advantage of the approaching Diet to make the Poles concur in his design, but this Diet afforded only a scene of distraction.

At the same time, however (1688), a scene of more joyful sort was preparing for the King at Wilna, the capital of Lithuania, a city which, having never seen its sovereign, was impatient to pay him its homage. The people took no part in quarrels of state; they were attentive only to the glory and the benevolent disposition of their sovereign and left it to the Grandees to criticise his faults. He was received upon the road, and in that great city with those acclamations and signs of joy which are never extorted from a free people against their will.