

## Chapter XX.

THE GROWTH OF THE POWER  
OF FRANCE.

(1600-1815 A.D.)

DURING the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the glory of Spain had faded almost entirely away, France came forward upon the stage of empire history and played a prominent part.

For more than a hundred years she kept Europe engaged in constant warfare both by land and sea. Then came a brief period during which she was engaged in an internal conflict of a terrible and bloody character. From thence she emerged with fresh energy and enterprise, and for the next twenty odd years attempted to make for herself a vast European Empire under the head of one who loved to regard himself as a second Charlemagne—Napoleon Bonaparte.

As usual, this prominence among the other countries of Europe was due, not to any great increase of wealth or to provocation from outside, but to the strength of character and the boundless ambition of a series of great men. Let us glance at them as they pass us by upon the march for Empire.

First comes Richelieu, with his small, peaked beard, keen eyes, and inscrutable expression. He was the great cardinal who held all France within his hand

