COUNT BISMARCK

by

Ludwig Bamberger.
COUNT BISMARCK.

A political Biography

by

Ludwig Bamberger

(Member of the Zoll-parliament).

Translated from the German

by

CHARLES LEE LEWES.

Authorized Edition.

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Translator's preface.

The following work on Count Bismarck first appeared in French, at Paris, early in the present year.

The author has now superintended a translation of it into his own language, German, and has at the same time considerably extended the size of the work. Besides making slight additions here and there in the body of the text, he has added two chapters of supplementary matter, and also a chapter called "Germany, France, and the Revolution", designed to serve as an introduction.

The English translation has been made from the corrected proof-sheets of the German version, and appears simultaneously with it. As the chapter "Germany,
France, and the Revolution," is not necessarily required as an introduction, and is, it appears to me, to be regarded rather as a separate essay than as an essential part of the work itself, it has here been printed at the end, instead of at the beginning. Certain portions of it which would have no interest for the English public, have, with the Author's permission, been omitted.

I have only to add that for the headings to the chapters I am responsible, there being none in the French or German editions. In the Table of Contents these headings are collected together, so as to facilitate reference, and afford a general survey of the work.

*Hampstead*, December 1868.
# Table of Contents

**Chapter I**  
State of public feeling towards Bismarck before and after the war  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>State of public feeling towards Bismarck before and after the war</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Bismarck's parentage and opinions. — Sketch of the relations existing between Austria and Prussia during the last century. — Birth of the idea of a regenerated Germany with Prussia at its head</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Bismarck's conservative and Austrian sympathies. — Eight years ambassador to the Bund. — Change of opinions. — Demand for a reformed Zollverein. — Vacillating conduct of Prussia during the Italian war. — Bismarck ambassador at St. Petersburg. — A Prussian Germany or a German Prussia? — Meeting between the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia at Teplitz. — Bismarck's interview with the King at Baden-Baden and its results</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Constitutional government in Germany. — Army reorganisation scheme. — Bismarck ambassador at Paris; interviews with Napoleon. — Conduct towards the Chamber, as Minister President; acts of his administration. — Preparations for a rupture with Austria. — Austria's &quot;delegate scheme&quot;; its failure; reproduction of the scheme at the Congress of Princes. — Prussia's refusal to accept the scheme. — Her threats of war. — Incredulity of the Public. — Death of the King of Denmark</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter V.

Policy pursued by Bismarck in the Schleswig-Holstein question, more particularly towards Austria and the Bund, with its results

**Chapter VI.**

Attitude of the nation at the outbreak of the war. — Bismarck’s negotiations with the opposition. — The King’s absolutist principles. — Relations of the Cabinet Ministers in Prussia to the King. — Characteristics of Bismarck. — His interview with M. Vilbort. — His views on the German character. — Progress of Germany in the last eighty years. — Education of the sovereign by the people. — Bismarck the embodiment of two contradictory principles.

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### Supplementary Chapters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany, France, and the Revolution</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter I.
State of public feeling towards Bismarck before and after the war.

When the telegraph announced, on the morning of the 8th of May 1866, that the day before, five shots from a revolver had been fired from within a few paces at Count Bismarck without even touching him, many an exclamation might have been overheard, which viewed by the light of a strict morality were of a highly questionable character.* For those exclamations revealed the presence of a thought analogous to that which the votaries of the black art in the Middle Ages expressed by driving a dagger through the waxen image of a heart*, whilst performing certain ceremonies, and pronouncing

* The French call it: tuer le Mandarin, in allusion to Jean Jacques Rousseau's casuistical question: What would you do, if your happiness depended upon the death of a Mandarin in China, that is of some one far off and unknown to you, and your mere wish sufficed to send him out of the world? Count Bismarck.
the name of the person they wished removed from their path.

Germany at that time saw a fearful fate impending over her, which she could attribute to no other cause than the perversity — frivolity even it almost seemed — of one single man. The Prussian Minister was beyond a doubt the sole promoter of that fratricidal war, the bare approach of which Europe regarded with a mixed feeling of horror and incredulity. Was it to be conceived that the sons of quiet, peaceful Germany were about to engage in an internecine strife? To what end? To secure the triumph of Freedom's greatest enemy, the champion of the Middle Ages, the trampler upon the people's rights, — of him who had dared to proclaim publicly, that there was but one law in the world, the law of Might? Such were the cries which echoed everywhere, in Prussia as well as in all other German lands and abroad. Deputations were sent to Berlin from many large towns, and the most loyal unions and corporations, to implore the King with earnest entreaties to abandon the unhappy enterprise. More than once, the assembled soldiers refused to march. Weeping wives and mothers followed the departing columns, and called on heaven to curse the author of this disastrous war.

Ferdinand Cohn, or Blind (to use the name he had adopted, after his stepfather, Karl Blind), the young fa-
natic who had deliberately risked his life to stop the progress of events, was, like Karl Sand, the assassin of Kotzebue, and Oscar Becker, the author of the attempt on the life of the King of Prussia, one of those German students who in the retirement of a calm studious life mature the idea of political assassination. It is a remarkable fact that in France, where politics have long penetrated the masses and taken the form of a passion, the fanaticism which leads men on to assassination finds its instruments almost exclusively in the working classes; while in Germany where political consciousness is not yet imbibed with the mother's milk, but is rather the result of mental conviction, its instruments are young and thoughtful students.

Count Bismarck, in no way disconcerted by the sudden attack, had himself arrested and handed over to the police his assailant, who, after undergoing a preliminary examination before a magistrate, opened an artery, and died with the fortitude of an ancient Roman. This tragic ending to so young and hitherto blameless a life could not but increase the general consternation. By a kind of cruel irony, public feeling was almost in sympathy with the crime, whilst justice was necessarily forced to take the part of the great evildoer.

A few months later, and the same man who had brought down such execrations on his head was making
his solemn entry into Berlin, with bells ringing, the people tumultuously applauding, welcomed by young girls robed in white, — with all the surroundings, in short, of a Public Triumph. And truly this was something more than a mere ceremony. Although worn out with fatigue and indeed suffering from illness, Count Bismarck could not escape from this ovation.

Prodigious as his exertions were at ordinary times, during the last months he had redoubled them: superintending in person the execution of his plans, even on to the battle field, dismounting from his horse to preside at a council, taking into his own hands with irresistible power the negotiations for peace, surrounded as these were with a mass of conflicting interests and complications, and bringing the gigantic work to a happy issue with incredible rapidity. This excessive activity had at length shaken even his iron frame, and it was only by the greatest effort that he was able to bear up throughout that day of rejoicing, of which, in spite of the wreaths presented to King and Princes, he alone, was the hero.

Prussia admired him already. Germany and Europe followed, at a distance and as if against their will, with the secret feeling that the power here manifested was an extraordinary one, though perhaps less dangerous than had hitherto been feared. Yet was Count Bismarck right when he said to a Russian lady of rank,
as he was leaving France, four years before, to take the post of Minister President of Prussia, that before long he should be the most popular man of his country; the Cavour of Germany?

The analogies between Italy and Germany are so numerous and striking that every chapter of their history naturally offers a temptation to draw comparisons. Those which one might be inclined to draw between the founder of the Italian statuto and the destroyer of the Prussian constitution would certainly repay the trouble. But before proceeding to comparisons, we must have knowledge, and it is precisely because this essential condition to all sound judgment is lacking that it appears indispensable to collect first of all the materials which will place the chief events in the most exhaustive manner before the reader. We will therefore endeavour to complete the very superficial data upon which the great mass of the public have hitherto been contented to base their estimation of one of the most remarkable men of the day.

But whatever may be our opinion of Bismarck upon closer examination, we may at once affirm that he arrogated too much to himself when he asserted, that he should gain at one bound the popularity of Cavour. Probably he was himself too well aware of the difference between himself and Cavour to have meant it quite seriously; and
we may safely infer that there was a slight touch of irony in the assertion. Neither on the day of his triumphal entry, nor since that day, has Count Bismarck ever been a man after the heart of the people. Apart from the warmer temperament which nature and climate had given to the Italian, this haughty aristocrat who delights in sarcastic, scornful repartees was never made to be the favourite of a nation. His whole nature and his whole past stretch a deep gulf between him and the genius of popular favour. Moreover, to the incomparable glory of having given to Italy once more a place among the nations, Cavour had the good fortune to unite the still greater merit of establishing political liberty within it, in which he leaves the renovator of the German Empire far behind him.

Darkened as was that day of triumph by fresh sorrows and revived distrust, it was none the less the starting point of a remarkable revolution in public opinion towards Count Bismarck. From that time the vitality of his work and the force of his mind have gone on continually increasing in the estimation of Germany and of Europe generally; and thousands of people who before had execrated him, now submit to see in him, whether rightly or wrongly we will not stop to inquire, the creator of a new order of things, with the will and the capability of leading on the German nation, through many
trials yet perhaps to come, to a happier future. The public conscience could not however accept this new view without feeling deeply struck by the revolution which it had undergone, as it were against its own will.

It must be admitted that success, even when most illgotten, has never wanted admirers. Cromwell's saying will always remain true. Riding through the streets of London one day in great pomp, and complimented by some sycophant on the great numbers of the crowd: "Yes, but if it were to see me hanged", he said, "how many more would there be!" Nevertheless there is a wide difference, although on the surface it may not be so apparent, between merely gaining the applause of the multitude and gaining the approval of the public conscience. Our time has seen enterprises crowned with success which have reaped all the fruits of victory, without being able to boast that they had confused the public ideas of right and wrong. Now, it is precisely this fault — a most serious and harmful one — that many people are at this moment recklessly charging Germany with, and more particularly the enlightened part of the population, as, for example, the great majority of the liberals in Prussia and Baden. Such a phenomenon in itself lends a special interest to any inquiry into the ideas and development of the man who
was the author of this whole movement. And if his great importance and the mark he has made in contemporary history, make him deserving of close and earnest study, the fact that a whole nation has become morally responsible for his deeds, imposes such study upon us as an imperative duty.
Chapter II.

Bismarck's parentage and opinions. — Sketch of the relations existing between Austria and Prussia during the last century. — Birth of the idea of a regenerated Germany with Prussia at its head.

Politics are not a science; they are at most an art. Consequently, where they are concerned there is nothing more dangerous than trusting to ancient, stereotyped formulas. The French Revolution, immense benefit as it was, did not bequeath only advantages to the world. Human things are not of so unmixed a nature. And history being provided with no list of errata, we have inherited all the formulas which a flood of new truths had brought into the world, and to which an exaggerated value was attached at the time. Fascinated by the grandeur of those antitheses, the following generations believed that every problem of real life might be solved by applying the too simple alternative: Revolution or counter-revolution. Bismarck shared this error on his first entrance into political life. He now to a certain extent atones for it, now that he has discarded it; for those who
see no welfare, except in the stern application of revolutionary formulas, are precisely the most inexorable enemies of him who formerly knew no other aim than counter-revolution.

Otto Edward Leopold von Bismarck-Schönhausen was born on the 1st of April 1815 on the Schönhausen estate, from which he takes part of his name, — an estate situated in Prussian Saxony. The family originally came from the Mark of Brandenburg, the heart of the Prussian state, and is said to be very ancient: their name occurs in the army muster-rolls for some centuries back. They belong to what the Germans call the "junker" class, a term for which we have no equivalent. Our word Squire is perhaps the nearest; but for Squire in our sense of the word the Germans have the compound "Krautjunker" (cabbage planting squire), whilst the true junker is essentially the scion of a noble house which has devoted itself to military service, a mixture of Cavalier of Charles the First's time, Prussian Lieutenant, German feudal lord, and Spanish Don Quixote. Until the end of the last century, this aristocracy had possessed the exclusive privilege of supplying officers for the army; and even to this day, as we know, the majority of the officers are of noble blood. The father of Frederick the Great, the most sober of realists who ever sat on a throne, the grocer corporal, who when he had sold a patent of nobility to
some upstart during the day used at night to enter in his cashbook "Caught another hare, worth 600 Dollars",— even he could not bear the idea of admitting a plebeian amongst his officers. His son, in every other respect the complete reverse of his father, being as great a free-thinker as his father was orthodox a Christian, was full of aristocratic and military prejudices. We possess a letter of his in which he denounces the intention of a lieutenant to marry a burgher's daughter as an intolerable scandal. He decreed that a lieutenant who had made one campaign should take precedence of a privy councillor; and it was only as an especial favour that he made councillor Mayer, a burgher who presided over the Court of Accounts, a lieutenant, in order that he might not be obliged to give the precedence to the youngest officers.

This tender care of royalty for the junker class could not fail to make the latter the most devoted supporters of the throne, although occasionally the unruly spirit engendered by the consciousness of privileged rank would lead to conflicts between royalty and nobility. A certain Herr von Schlubhut, who had been found guilty of appropriating the public moneys, and who had provoked the displeasure of the King, Frederick William the First, by saying that a scaffold had never been erected for a nobleman, was hanged on the very same day by special order; which, however, has not prevented his compeers often since
down even to the present time, from meeting any inclinations towards progress on the part of the sovereign, with the meaning reminder that, after all, they were the masters before the Burgraves of Nuremberg ever came into the land.

Count Bismarck, although the son of a major, followed the military profession only for the regulation year. He was destined for the civil service, for which he qualified himself by the study of the law. He remained however unreservedly attached to the feudal traditions which he had inherited, and, with that fiery nature of which he has since given so many proofs, he soon became a perfect type of the overbearing, intolerant, pugnacious junker. Exuberant animal spirits, and an ambition reined in by narrow circumstances yet secretly stimulated by the spur of his still slumbering power, soon drove him into the most extreme section of his party; and when at the age of thirty-two he entered political life, he lost no time in drawing upon himself the hatred of his adversaries.

If extremes meet, it is because they all fly off at a tangent from the truth. Just as the ultra-protestants incline to the papacy, the Ultra-Prussians of the feudal party have always inclined to Austria. Faithful to this tradition, the man who was afterwards to force Austria out of the German Union began his career, not only by defending Austria's cause, but by going so far as to advocate the humble submission of Prussia to the legitimate
supremacy of the House of Hapsburg. To understand the full meaning of this contradiction between the worship of Austria on the one hand and the natural tendency of the Prussian State on the other, it is necessary to go back at least a century.

Let us therefore rapidly sketch the most striking incidents of this dynastic antagonism, an antagonism spreading through long years, now breaking out into open war, now lying silently slumbering under the delusive mask of a cordial alliance, until at last in our days it received a final solution, the violence of which revealed the deadly character of the enmity. The struggle between the two courts is so entirely the point on which the events of the year 1866 turn that, without making ourselves familiar with preceding history, we cannot hope to understand either the real significance or the actual motives of those events.*

The principle of hostility between Austria and Prussia, although signs of it are not wanting in the time of the great Elector, dates properly speaking from the reign of Frederick the Great; but it is neither synonymous nor contemporaneous with the rivalry for the German hegemony. Of the four wars which Frederick waged with

* See Ad. Schmidt's interesting book: "Preussen's deutsche Politik", Leipzig 1867, which we have largely availed ourselves of in the narration of the episode from 1785 to 1806.
Austria, and from which his kingdom emerged increased in size, firmly consolidated, and containing the germs of its wonderful after-development, the first and third had solely in view an extension of territory which was indispensable in order to establish the new kingdom on a firm basis. In the intrigues which sprang up around the question of the partition of Poland, and especially during the second act of that sad drama, the antagonism between the two powers had attained a degree of intensity comparable only to that of 1866, though there was not then the least question of the leadership or national supremacy. It was simply the struggle between two rapacious powers, fighting for the booty without the veriest shadow of an excuse. Alternately however with these party-wall, or neighbours' quarrels, there were hostilities of a wider bearing and deeper import. In the so-called war of the Austrian succession, the recognition of the Pragmatic Sanction played a very subordinate part beside the conquest of Silesia. In the following, or second Silesian war, the idea of obtaining the preponderance in Germany becomes clearly visible. After another war of entirely dynastic and European interests, viz: the Seven Years' war, Frederick in his last campaign again set up and then quite openly the standard of intestine and national strife. But those who can see beyond the surface of things will readily detect this deeper political thought even in the complications
where it would be most likely to be absent. Notwithstanding Frederick's efforts to prevent it, the death of Charles VII of Bavaria and the efforts of diplomacy had twice brought back the crown of the German Empire to the House of Austria, in the persons of Francis the First and Joseph the Second. The King of Prussia had been compensated by some territorial concessions, which were to give him the requisite strength for carrying out his delayed projects when the moment arrived, projects which he had distinctly formed and had made known to the intimate circle around him quite at the beginning of the Seven years' war. General Winterfeld, the confidant of the king, had already at that time boldly recommended that the whole of Germany should be conquered and united into one single state so as to enable it to resist foreign powers. In May 1757, he declared openly and without reserve that "in less than two years they would see the constitution overthrown and Frederick seated on the throne of the German Emperors." If we add that he suggested at the same time an advance into Hungary and an appeal to the malcontents, we shall find Bismarck's entire programme even down to the negotiations with Kossuth and Klapka, anticipated by a hundred and ten years.

From that time, Frederick was fully determined at any price to prevent the Hapsburgs extending their dominion in Germany. He maintained this
policy victoriously on the death, without issue, of the Elector Maximilian Joseph, in 1777, by supporting the Palatinate against the pretensions of Austria to the Bavarian succession; and at the peace of Teschen the matter was decided in his favour. But Austria felt only the more keenly the necessity of spreading her influence in South Germany. Bavaria and Wurtemberg appeared to her then, as they have done recently, the natural basis of all operations directed towards combating the ambition of Prussia. As she had failed to get these countries by force of arms, she set about obtaining them by negotiation. The ground was carefully sounded in Wurtemberg; and an exchange of provinces was boldly proposed to the new Elector of Bavaria.

It was at this period that the famous project was first broached of exchanging Belgium for Bavaria, a project, which was prosecuted by Austria with her proverbial tenacity through vicissitudes of all kinds, and which was continually re-appearing even down to her negotiations with the National Convention and the Directory. This persistent attempt of Austria to increase her power in Germany spurred Frederick on to seek by means of an equally well considered plan some wider combination which should be based on a principle capable of expansion.

For the first time since the peace of Westphalia which had virtually annihilated Germany's political existence, the idea of a possible and durable
fusion of the German States into one great whole took a definite shape. Frederick and his ministers drew out a plan, the avowed object of which was primarily to resist the invasions of Austria. Prussia had recourse to the same argument with which in a similar position Austria has since retorted upon her. She showed the small Princes the danger they ran from Austria's insatiable appetite and called upon them to place themselves under the King's protection if they would save their crowns.

In a letter to his ministers Frederick expresses himself as follows: "It is of the utmost importance that we should direct all our efforts towards establishing a kind of league such as that of Schmalkalden. The object of this union must be to maintain the rights of the small Princes against the meditated attacks of Austria. We must", he adds, "make these people (the princes) feel that they can reckon upon our assistance and that it is their own interests which make this association necessary; but we must not remain with our arms folded. These people will never initiate anything themselves. So strike while the iron is hot." This letter is dated the 6th of March 1784. From that time not a day was allowed to pass without his stirring up his ministers to let him have a plan of a constitution as quickly as possible; and at last tired of waiting, he, on the 24th of October, took them himself a work entitled "Plan for a league between the German
Princes on the pattern of the Schmalkalden league”. But things did not advance fast enough to suit his impatience. Not to take into account the various obstacles thrown in the way by foreign powers, six months of diplomatic negotiations were necessary before an understanding could be come to with the German Princes. Then as now, France and Prussia watched one another with suspicious eyes, each striving to find out and checkmate the other’s designs.

“The French court”, wrote Baron Goltz, the Prussian ambassador at Paris in March 1785, “the French court will not find this league to its taste, preferring to keep the South German Princes under its exclusive subjection.” Frederick answered by return courier: “Whether France approve or not of an alliance between German Princes is after all a matter of indifference to us. The thing is good in itself, and that is what we must chiefly look at. I opine that we should be the servants neither of the French nor of the Austrians nor of the Russians.” At last, in the month of July 1785, the treaty was signed by Saxony, Hanover, and Prussia, with the express stipulation, that the other Princes should afterwards be invited to join. It was couched in rather general terms, with several secret clauses. These clauses related principally to the resistance to be offered, firstly to an exchange of Belgium for Bavaria, and secondly to the election of an Aus-
trian Prince when the throne of the German Empire should again become vacant. Fourteen Princes entered the confederation; and, which is specially worthy of remark viewed by the analogy of recent events, no sooner were the first three signatures obtained than Frederick took steps for concluding *Military Conventions* with the other Princes, by virtue of which the troops of those states were under certain conditions to be handed over to Prussia, who was to incorporate them in her army and pay them from her treasury. But Frederick was too near his end to introduce radical and permanent changes into the political relations of Europe. In the following year, the whole scheme was buried with him.

But little of the great monarch's genius was inherited by those who succeeded to the kingdom which he had enlarged and consolidated. The Prussian historians have spared no pains to leave us ideal portraits of these successors. But despite the labour which either real or affected veneration has spent on this task, we cannot be blind to the fact that after Frederick's death a series of rulers followed who, if utterly wanting in principle, were represented as extraordinarily clever, or, if utterly wanting in talent, were represented as extraordinarily virtuous. They were all equally imbued with that intolerable self-deification which naturally results from the literal acceptance of the theory of Divine right. As the anointed of
the Lord they were themselves the highest objects of their worship, and next to themselves they worshipped petty detail. We see pass before us in one dreary round, voluptuous mysticism and austere orthodoxy, romantic ardour and invincible cowardice, and as a final result a vacillating, finessing, and utterly incapable foreign policy.

They could not bring themselves either to rise up against the Austrian supremacy or to submit to it quietly. The jealousy and mistrust still remained, but the energy of Frederick's warlike time had fled. Prussia fought side by side with Austria against the French Revolution, while at the very same moment she was in open hostility with Austria in Poland. The generals following the example set by the cabinets, perpetually refused to march at the call of their allies, and exasperated them by wretched cavils, recriminations, and monetary stipulations. This state of things was brought to an end by the peace of Bale.

Of Frederick's degenerate successors the one who reigned the longest was also the most insignificant. Frederick William the Third was the contemporary of the French Revolution, of the Empire, of the Restoration and of the July monarchy, and was therefore in the foreground of events throughout a long, varied, and deeply agitated period. From beginning to end he appears as a poor-spirited creature, destitute of all energy of body
or mind. The official panegyrists have endeavoured to dignify as honest firmness that which was nothing but dry insipidity, capable on occasion of turning into sullen obstinacy. After the events of 1815 he committed one of the blackest acts of ingratitude which a nation has ever experienced from a sovereign, and that is saying a great deal. From a victory which had been won at the price of incredible sacrifices and most precious blood (the flower of the youth of all classes having entered the ranks as common soldiers), the sole fruits obtained were: the re-establishment of a barren despotism; the persecution of those whose devotion had saved the throne; a weak submission to the knout of the Emperor Nicholas; and the open violation of the king's pledged word; for the representative constitution which he had solemnly promised in the hour of danger was never granted.

If Count Bismarck sometimes complains of the mistrust which meets him now in the execution of his great projects, he should remember that there was a time when he took a pleasure in provoking these suspicions by standing up as the champion of the crying injustice of former days. In a speech which he made in 1847 in the United Diet, he declared that the sacrifices of 1813 had not given the Prussian nation any right to a constitution; that the Prussian sovereigns ruled by the grace of God and not by the favour of the people; and
that anything which they chose to grant was to be accepted as an act of spontaneous liberality. The man who has since introduced universal suffrage on the ground that it was necessary to "lift Germany into the saddle" would certainly not hold that language now. But life would be too pleasant if we could absolve ourselves from our past sins by a simple change of opinions. A Nemesis takes care to remind Man of the continuity of his being, when his interests would naturally lead him to desire to annul the past. It is unavoidable that the Bismarck of 1847 should sometimes rise up between the Bismarck of to day and those whose confidence would often be of infinite value to him.

But before entering more particularly into the history of the statesman, there remains the task of relating one of the most remarkable episodes in the history of the political idea which he was to realize.

In the summer of 1806, the complete subjection of South Germany to France was sealed. The Rhenish confederation was nothing less than a special form of servitude. The Princes who had put on the livery of their protector, received an advance in pay and rank, and their lands were enlarged at the expense of their oppressed neighbours. Prussia had looked on at Austria's defeat, and had withdrawn from her alliance with England, in order to enjoy in peace the possession of Hanover, the price
of her neutrality. The moment was auspicious for attempting a step in advance. Austria, conquered and cast down, had left a place vacant in the former empire; the "cousins" had all been promoted, the landgrave to duke, the duke to grandduke, and the grandduke to king. Prussia could not but expect an increase of rank as well. Moreover, the alternative was clearly imposed upon her of either extending her power sufficiently to enable her to hold her own, or of sharing the common fate, that of subjection to France. For the hour of reckoning approached, and the lion's insatiable appetite was continually growing. Ambition, rivalry, instinct of self-preservation, all pointed to the same conclusion: that it was necessary to take in hand again the projects of Frederick the Great, to realise the plan of 1785, mutatis mutandis. The king himself, it may be imagined, was not the man to originate such ideas; but his entourage was better provided with brains. Amongst the Princes there was the impetuous, high-spirited Louis-Ferdinand; amongst the councillors Baron Stein, the indefatigable adversary of Napoleon, the man who more than any other had always laid stress upon the necessity of creating a German Fatherland, and who was in those days prepared to go further than any one has yet ventured to go.

The map of Europe had undergone so much alteration since 1801, that the idea had sprung up in the
heads of many patriots that the time had come to take advantage of the general confusion to establish a united Germany. In memorials to the king, in pamphlets, and in the newspapers, the favourable nature of the moment was perpetually dwelt on. As regarded the choice of the remedy, there was no more unanimity than now. It was discussed whether there should be one great united Germany or only a North Germany (the provisional line of demarcation drawn at the peace of 1795 had first suggested the idea of this division); whether the lesser Princes should be indirectly subordinated to the higher powers or united into a confederation.

In the year 1804 the temptation had come from quite an opposite quarter. Napoleon, on the eve of proclaiming an hereditary empire, and inwardly desiring to be received as an equal by the ancient reigning families, had taken Frederick William the Third into his confidence, and had proposed that he should also assume the title of emperor. The King had warmly encouraged the first Consul to introduce the change into France, without, however, betraying his intentions as regarded his own position; and after an interchange of opinions had been carried on for some months, he at last declared that "he was contented with his lot, and desired nothing further than to keep the position which Providence had assigned to his house." In this answer we have the two
elements which characterised both the man and the situation: a well founded distrust of all the allurements of a dangerous tempter, and a repugnance to every step at all hazardous, especially if it had the remotest suspicion of a revolutionary origin. A sovereign who had felt within him the stirrings of a great ambition, would not so soberly have resisted this temptation; and the dry, selfsatisfied tone in which the refusal is conveyed, bears so manifestly the stamp of the king’s mind that we must look for the explanation not in his prudence, but rather in his lack of ambition. Had distrust of Napoleon been the sole motive of his refusal, he would not have vacillated during the war of 1805—1806 between Austria and France, between alliance and resistance, between a policy of petty devices and one of moral indignation, intent above everything on assuring himself of the newly acquired possession of the electorate of Hanover.

At last came the year 1806. France, after the Rhenish confederation had been formed, and the Emperor Francis the Second had laid down the crown of the German Empire, proposed to Prussia for the second time that she should place herself at the head of a North German confederation. On the 22nd of July, immediately after the signing of the deed establishing the Rhenish confederation, Talleyrand sent to Laforest, the French ambassador at Berlin, a copy of the document accom-
panied by the following commentary: "The moment has arrived for Prussia to profit by this favourable opportunity for extending and consolidating her position; she will find the Emperor Napoleon inclined to forward her views and projects. She can either reunite, by means of a new federal constitution, those states which still belong to the German Empire, and obtain the imperial crown for the house of Brandenburg. Or, if she prefers it, she can form a confederation of the North German States lying nearer to her frontiers. The Emperor gives, in anticipation, his approval to any arrangement of the kind which it is convenient to Prussia to make." The King at once replied in the warmest and most unqualified terms.

"The King," said Herr von Haugwitz to Laforest, "is highly delighted; he regards himself not only as the ally of France but as the personal friend of the Emperor Napoleon." Still he refused for the moment to give effect to these proposals; not that he despised the proposition in itself; but his dynastic and legitimist feelings rebelled against the idea of introducing this innovation unless with the consent of his brother princes. He even wished to gain that of the Emperor of Austria, who was accordingly sounded indirectly on the subject. His scruples, it will be seen, were precisely the same as those which forty-three years later prevented his son from
accepting the German crown when offered to him by the Frankfort National Assembly.

The rupture between Prussia and France, like the rupture between Prussia and Austria in 1866, came about in connection with the negotiations with the German petty states. Before M. de Talleyrand's overtures, Prussia had already invited the courts of Saxony and Elector Hesse to form with her a North German federation, on the understanding that all the other states not belonging to the Rhenish confederation should ultimately be also urged to join.

On the 12th of July appeared the first draft of a scheme, entitled: "Suggestions for a confederated North German Empire"; and after this had been twice revised, the definitive scheme consisting of twenty-four articles and a supplementary paragraph appeared in the middle of August. By the second article of this scheme, the King of Prussia "upon the invitation of the Electors of Saxony and Hesse" was to accept the dignity of "Emperor of North Germany"; the two Electors "upon the invitation of Prussia" to take the title of King. The number of contingents which each was to contribute to the federal army was determined. In time of war the Emperor was to have the supreme command. There was to be a federal assembly of delegates from the allied courts. — So far the resemblance to the latest constitution is striking; but there is one point, and
that the most important, in which the two organisations differ; there is no question in the older one of an elected representation of the people; there was to be merely a federal tribunal.

We will not linger here over all the wearisome formalities through which this scheme, destined never to come into operation, had to pass. Whilst Napoleon and Frederick William were publicly assuring each other of their friendly intentions, they carried on secretly a bitter diplomatic warfare, Frederick William to establish his confederation without the assistance of France, whose goodwill became increasingly unreliable; Napoleon to cut the ground from beneath the feet of the potentate whom he had so often encouraged to advance. Napoleon frightened first the Elector of Saxony, and then the Elector of Hesse, by those insinuations and cold two-edged menaces which he was so fond of employing. Much was not needed to shatter the Prussian plans, objectionable as these were in themselves to Princes whose only feelings towards Prussia and towards one another were those of jealousy.

We know the early end which awaited all these vain efforts for a confederation; how the court of Berlin, meeting Napoleon's secret wishes, and mistaking its own strength in an inconceivable manner, threw itself into that sad venture of Jena, which swept it away at one
blow. But the ideas which were buried under the ruins of Frederick William's kingdom had nevertheless acquired greater importance in appearing for the second time, — and this too in a more definite shape than when they had been first evolved by Frederick the Great. Link by link in one long chain, this traditional mission extends through the whole of modern German history; and without asserting that the mere fact of these historical precedents justifies further attempts in the same direction, it is of immense importance to demonstrate to contemporaries that the original causes of the undertakings of our days are not to be referred to any accidental ambitions or to arbitrary covetousness. Good or bad, it is an idea which, for the last hundred years and more, has forced itself upon the best patriots, whenever events have aroused Germany out of her sloth to a consideration of her insensate state of dismemberment. What especially invalidates the accusations brought against the Hohenzollerns of a grasping selfishness, and diminishes the distrust created by that dynasty, is the fact that, with the exception of Frederick the Great, the heads of that house have always been most inaccessible to ideas of aggrandizement. The kings do not give the impulsion; they simply follow it. And when they do so, it is against their will, with backslidings and half measures. The only one who was an exception to this rule was the only one who knew
how to identify himself with the general views. At his death, the thinkers of the nation, the patriots, authors and savants, succeeded to the heritage of his thought. The kings were incapable of soaring above that memorable avowal: We are contented with our lot and with the position which Providence has assigned to our house.

In the year 1813 the great uprising of the people against foreign dominion naturally carried the ideas of patriots back to the projects of 1806 and earlier. Logic and justice seemed to demand the suppression of the small principalities, the more stringently that they had followed Napoleon even against Germany itself. But Frederick William preferred to ally himself with the Princes, and, as a natural sequel, went so far later on as to imprison those who had forced him to unsheath the sword. The story has been told sufficiently often, of how, struck with dismay at the news of the Convention of Tauroggen, he would hear at first of nothing less than bringing General York, who had concluded the treaty which was to give him back his kingdom, before a court-martial; and who knows what would have happened if the patriotic party had not withdrawn him from the French influences at work around him. It is further related, that it was suggested to him that the French ambassador was making arrangements to carry him off from Berlin under cover of the night, and that it was by this means alone
that he was persuaded to repair to Breslau, where those near him succeeded in inducing him to declare war against Napoleon. This man who had often shown himself to be, like all his race, in no wise deficient in personal bravery, was utterly destitute of that higher courage with which a steadfast political idea inspires kings as well as citizens.

Finally in 1849 the same spectacle was renewed once more for the fourth time. In March of 1848, after the victory won by the people, Frederick William the Fourth seized the tricolour, paraded the streets of Berlin, and let himself be greeted as Emperor of Germany. A year later, after the triumph of the European reaction, he contemptuously refused the crown of Emperor when offered to him by a German deputation sent from the Frankfort Parliament. It is therefore clear that the idea of regenerating Germany by the aggrandizement of Prussia cannot be looked upon as a royal tradition. On the contrary, as often as events caused a political excitement in the nation and made the national thoughts tell, that idea came to the surface; as soon as the pressure from below relaxed and the power of the throne once more became firm, it was suppressed. Foolish as it may be to demand that the nation should trust the security of its future to the tender mercies of the Hohenzollerns, or of any other royal family armed with the supremacy in
Germany; stigmatise as one will the violent and mischievous measures adopted to induce the king to take up again this higher mission; it is impossible on looking honestly below the surface into the connection between the older events and the new, to deny the fact, that the idea, of which Count Bismarck undertook the realisation, is the outgrowth of the national mind and not of a narrow dynastic egotism.

If we have dwelt upon this consideration, it has been because it must be of material influence on our judgment of the man who has become the victorious personification of this idea. The Bismarck who devoted himself to the task of continuing and conducting to a successful issue, the work of Frederick the Great, — the freethinker and sworn enemy of the House of Hapsburg, — and of continuing the patriotic tradition of 1806, 1813, and 1848, cannot be the same man, who from 1847 to 1851 was the champion of the wildest feudalism, and the traducer of the great national movement. Many changes must have taken place in his views and opinions since then; and it is these changes, concealed and distorted as they may often have been by the repellant exterior habitual with Prussian officials and Junkers; it is these internal but unmistakeable changes, which serve to explain the attractive power exercised by the creator of the new order of things on public opinion. Let those who pride themselves on
their constancy and integrity say what they may, public opinion is not so foolish and thoughtless as they are pleased to represent it. It has by no means taken a violent, blind, and allconfiding love for Count Bismarck. It sees in him nothing more than what he is, a man gifted in a high degree with that quality so rare in history and especially in German history: the will and the power to give a strong impulsion to a great national cause. It knows his faults; indeed if it were tempted to ignore them, it could not succeed; he takes too good care to display them and remind people of them on every occasion. He once characterised himself by the confession, which though perhaps too sweeping and general is not without interest, that he did not feel he had any aptitude for internal affairs; a confession which must be taken as meaning that his reckless and impatient spirit could not adapt itself to the requirements of the law and to a respect for individual interests, which is necessary in even the most despotically governed of our communities with their civilisation many hundred years old, it being impossible for any one long to pursue an object in the midst of our thickly grown civil institutions without turning to right or left; whilst a temperament like his feels more at ease in a foreign policy with the prospect of a not distant war. This confession, and the explanation we have suggested, form the key to the altercations in which Bismarck was
continually involved, both before and after the crisis of 1866, in working with the representatives of the law. He belongs to those of whom it has been said: "To do great things you must have the Devil in you." But even if indispensable, this condition does not suffice. Great things are only such as are durable; they are durable only if they correspond to a generally felt want; and herein lies the difference between the statesman and the adventurer. The one is guided in his undertakings by the great march of ideas and events, the other makes capital out of a momentary situation; the one takes counsel by the law of perpetual development, the other by the favour of the hour. Whatever may have been his errors and his faults, Count Bismarck has in this sense unquestionably a right to be called a statesman. Hardly a year has passed since Germany, thanks to his initiative, entered on a new phase, and already there is no longer a question of whether it depends for stability on the life or death of its initiator.
Chapter III.

Bismarck's conservative and Austrian sympathies. — Eight years as ambassador to the Bund. — Change of views. — Demand for a reformed Zollverein. — Vacillating conduct of Prussia during the Italian war. — Bismarck ambassador at St. Petersburg. — A Prussian Germany or a German Prussia? — Meeting between the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia at Teplitz. — Bismarck's interview with the King at Baden-Baden and its results.

When Count Bismarck became Prime Minister in 1862, the world saw in him simply a man of reckless daring, who had set himself the task of introducing a reign of reaction. After a somewhat stormy youth, in which he had thrown himself into the pleasures of life, with the impetuosity that might naturally have been expected from one of his temperament, and had indulged, it is said, after the manner of his German ancestors in deep potations, he had entered the political arena a perfect Hotspur. An impartial or, rather, a friendly writer says of him: "It is well known that during the time of his parliamentary activity from 1847 to 1851, in spite
of his great and rare powers, Bismarck was the leader of the conservative party in its narrowest and most bigoted sense, the chief of the extreme right, the advocate of patrimonial jurisdiction and trade guilds, the most obstinate adversary of democracy and parliamentary government, and the most zealous worshipper of solidarity between the autonomy of the sovereign and the privileges of the aristocracy.” *

In a speech made in 1850, he openly avowed that in his opinion, the mission of Prussia lay in subordinating herself to Austria and fighting at her side against the German democracy. In the same speech, he insisted on the necessity of terminating the then existing occupation of Schleswig-Holstein, which he designated as a “stupid undertaking” into which the unfortunate policy of 1848 had drawn Prussia. And to crown all, he ended in these words: “Owing to some singular modesty, people refrain from calling Austria a German power, because she has the good fortune to exercise dominion over other peoples. For my part, I cannot admit that, because Slaves and Ruthenians are subject to Austria, it is they who principally represent that state, leaving the German element only a subordinate part to play. On the contrary, I respect in Austria the representative of an an-

* Adolf Schmidt.
cient German power." Thus spoke the man, who ten years later was to give the cabinet of Vienna to understand, that nothing remained for the Emperor but to abandon his position in Germany, and seek his welfare by transporting his centre of gravity to Ofen (the capital of Hungary). Thus spoke the man, who later on had no peace nor rest until the Emperor had solemnly renounced all interference in German affairs. In the question of the Duchies, in questions of policy affecting trade and commerce, not to mention universal suffrage, he was destined to experience the same entire reversal of his opinions.

The events which had furnished him with the occasion for thus pronouncing himself for Austria and against the Duchies, were the last throes of the revolutionary epoch of 1848. During the revolutionary interregnum, Count Bismarck had retired from parliamentary life; but, in 1849, he once more reappeared to take his part in crushing the last, desperate efforts which were being made by the national party, who, although in the final agonies, were never weary of placing their hopes in the Prussian crown. That crown had just attempted one of those half measures for which it is famous, in order to secure, by means of dynastic treaties, the Prussian supremacy, which it had not ventured to accept at the hands of parliament.

Negotiations were entered into, just as in 1806, with
the courts of Saxony and Hanover, which, now as then, cared for nothing so much as that the negotiations should end in smoke. Austria was at hand ready to reinstate the ancient Diet at Frankfort. Saxony and Hanover, whilst affixing their signatures to the alliance with Prussia (called the alliance of the Three Kings) sided in their hearts with Austria, just as Saxony and Hesse in 1806, whilst signing the treaty of alliance with Frederick William the Third, had been at the beck of the Emperor Napoleon.

The conflict which had begun between Electoral Hesse and its Prince, a perfect type of the petty German despot, presented an opportunity, which was eagerly seized, for putting an end to all doubt, and for extinguishing the last flickering light of the liberal aspirations. It had always been the practice of the ancient Diet to declare the Princes to be right and the states to be wrong. This sacred tradition it was necessary to re-consecrate. For this purpose, the Austrian army advanced to take possession of the Electorate, and to lend a helping hand to the constitution-violator. For the space of several hours, Prussia vacillated, and it seemed as if she would come to the rescue of the down-trodden national rights. Her army was put in motion. The two powers met, and the result was the celebrated battle of Bronzell, which cost the life of one Austrian white horse,
made immortal as a martyr to the devotion of the King of Prussia to a national cause. After this propitiatory sacrifice, the two rulers thought the moment had come for the bloodshed to cease, and threw themselves into each other's arms.

Baron Manteuffel the Prussian Prime Minister, set out for Olmütz, and there acting on what Count Bismarck had declared to be the height of a good policy, he signed Prussia's submission to the pleasure of the Emperor. The Diet was reopened under the presidency of Austria. German history had to record one more example, and this perhaps the most lamentable of all, of the vanity of placing hopes in Prussian royalty.

Count Bismarck naturally recommended himself to a government which had so literally followed his programme; the more so as he had distinguished himself, not only by the vehemence of his convictions but also by his promptitude and vigour of mind. Count Bismarck is certainly no orator in the usual sense of the word, yet in spite of many defects in his delivery, he commands the attention of his audience by the evident force with which his thoughts work within him. It seems, besides, as if the habit of speaking in public, and especially the certainty, which is so requisite, and which he now possesses, of obtaining the ear of his audience, had materially contributed of late years to the development of his par-
liamentary faculty. Yet in the year 1866, one of his admirers who had attended a sitting of the Reichstag drew his portrait in the following terms: "No oratorical ornamentation, no choice of words, nothing which carries the audience away. His voice, although clear and audible, is dry and unsympathetic, the tone monotonous; he interrupts himself and stops frequently; sometimes even he stutters, as if his recalcitrant tongue refused obedience, and as if he had difficulty in finding words in which to express his thoughts. His uneasy movements, somewhat lolling and negligent, in no wise aid the effect of his delivery. Still, the longer he speaks, the more he overcomes these defects; he attains more precision of expression, and often ends with a well-delivered, vigorous, sometimes, as every one is aware, too vigorous, peroration." Any one hearing him now for the first time would not consider this description altogether just. It is true that his words still come slowly, by starts and with hesitation; but, except for those who regard a melodious uninterrupted flow of language as the only true form of oratory, his mode of speech is not without charm, for it allows the listener to assist at the working out of the speaker's thought, and thereby chains his attention much more forcibly than many a smooth sounding or even finely rolling diction which has no internal difficulties to contend with. Often he succeeds in presenting his
subject in sharp, happy touches, pressing into his service similes from real life with wonderful audacity, and in a cool unprejudiced kind of way overthrowing tenderly revered traditions by a reference to stern realities. It should be added that his style, although unstudied, is often not wanting in imagery. His bright and clear intellect does not despise colouring any more than his strong constitution is free from nervous irritability.

Baron Manteuffel had, then, every reason to avail himself of the powers of such an able and thoroughgoing partisan. In May 1851, he sent him to the restored Diet at Frankfort as first secretary of legation, and, three months later, promoted him to the rank of ambassador in the place of Herr von Rochow. Count Bismarck occupied this post for eight years, till the spring of 1859, and during this period his opinions underwent that process of metamorphosis the surprising effects of which the world has since witnessed. How did this transformation take place; and by what influences was it brought about? Can we trace the path by which his mind gradually advanced to this point? It is only latterly that attention has been drawn to these questions. Before the great crisis of 1866, neither the public nor Count Bismarck had felt any necessity for explanation on this part of the subject. Vague rumours were indeed afloat as to the unfriendly relations existing between the representatives
of the two great German powers at Frankfort. Political gossip related all kinds of wonderful things as to the contentions between the two diplomatists, and even hinted that there had once been more than a figurative collision. The same two men, who then, in their characters of representatives of their respective courts at the Diet, so violently opposed one another, were afterwards as prime ministers to be opposed to one another in the decisive struggle, to which their former skirmishes had been the prelude. The name of Count Bismarck's colleague was Herr von Rechberg. It is only since the events of 1866 have revealed the whole bearing of the plans prepared so long beforehand, that attention has been awakened to the psychological problem underlying those events; and though, no complete investigation of that problem is yet possible, still there are materials at hand of undoubted interest and well worth being consulted, — with proper caution.

In a conversation of tolerably recent date, which for this reason we shall not give now, but in the sequel, Count Bismarck laid great stress on the fact that when he arrived at Frankfort, his Austrian sympathies were in their full youthful bloom. He had paid a visit to the High-priest of conservative nihilism, Prince Metternich, at his country seat at Johannisberg, near Frankfort; and there, on the shores of the classic stream, which washes the
foot of the vineclad hills so dear to German poets, the cordial alliance between the two monarchies, established for the annihilation of the German people, had celebrated its last idyll. Count Bismarck and his apologists are fond of representing, that it was in consequence of the opportunity, which he now had for the first time of observing Austria's system more nearly, that he came to see through her objectionable and dangerous policy; in short, that the conversion of the politician was principally the result of the moral indignation of the man. We already know enough of the personage we are studying to be careful how we accept explanations which savour rather strongly of idealism.

Properly understood, the statement amounts, without however thereby losing its value, simply to this, that the new ambassador with the energy and faculties we know him to have possessed was urged, from the very beginning of his career, by the irresistible impulse to be something, to do something in the world. Far less vigour and fire than he possessed would have been quite enough to provoke a collision with the Austrian stubbornness; more especially as this stubbornness, which generally proceeded from sheer force of inertia, was to be found in the present instance in men who were not deficient in aggressiveness. It did not suit the nature either of the prime minister, Prince Schwarzenberg, or of his representative,
Herr von Rechberg, to assume an air of goodnatured stupidity and pretended cordiality, the mask under which, formerly, the Emperor Francis had concealed from the world the cunning and malicious character of his diplomacy. The too easy victory of Olmütz was followed by one of those strange moments of illusion at Vienna, in which the Austrians — drunk with the recollection of their proverbial good fortune — give themselves up to a fit of that irrepressible bragging, of which the orders of the day of General Benedek have since furnished so wonderful a specimen. In the drawing-rooms of the imperial palace, Prince Schwarzenberg had thrown out the phrase: "Il faut avilir la Prusse d'abord pour ensuite la démolir" (Prussia must first be humbled, that she may be then destroyed). Things of this kind were snapped up by the lesser German Princes, who vied with each other in the amusement of letting fly the shafts of their humour against this Prussia, — the smallest of the Great Powers as it was the fashion to call her, — who had taken it into her head to attempt to play a part in Germany.

Imagine a man of the temperament of Count Bismarck, reduced to the position of a jeered-at Masetto in the illustrious Frankfort Diet, and it will be readily understood that this was sufficient to incense him beyond bounds, and to open his eyes to the abject character of the policy he represented. It had been said that Count Branden-
burg, a natural son of Frederick William the Second, the general under whose ministry the coup d'état against the Berlin national assembly took place at the end of 1848, had died of grief at the humiliation suffered by Prussia at Olmütz. Upon Count Bismarck it had precisely the opposite effect: it was the starting point of a new policy, which was to be crowned with success. In a letter, written in the year 1856, from Rheinfelden in Pomerania, we find him already standing up boldly against Austria, and full of sympathy for the Duchies. In a second letter, dated Frankfort the 2nd of April 1858, he plunges deep into the main question. It is the Zollverein that more than anything else reveals to him the utter want of proper organisation in Germany. His views as enunciated in this document are as follows:

"Our position in the Zollverein is altogether a bungle. I am convinced that we shall be obliged to terminate the treaty, as soon as the period arrives for doing so. To continue it, is absolutely impossible so long as, in addition to twentyeight governments, some fifty independent corporations governed by private interests exercise a liberum veto. The equality-frenzy of the German governments drives them to use this as a means for making themselves important. In order to avoid these rocks, I think that in a reformed Zollverein, after 1865, we must, for the exercise of the right of consent which the corporations possess in Zollverein matters, borrow an idea from the unionist projects of 1848, and establish a kind of customs parliament. — — — The governments would be strongly averse to this, but with boldness and persistence we might effect much. The Chambers and the press might be of the utmost assistance to our foreign policy; they would have to discuss the organisation of the
German customhouse from the Prussian point of view, broadly and without reserve. Then the attention of Germany, now flagging, would once more revive, and our Chambers would become a power in Germany”.

Observe, this was written in a private letter a whole year before the outbreak of the Italian war, the signal that awoke the continental nations from the torpor in which they had lain since 1849. Is it sufficient, in the face of such testimony, to explain so striking a change of opinion by some fit of spleen at the proceedings of the Austrian diplomatists? Is it not evident, that Count Bismarck was feeling all the effects of a transplantation into the open air, after the atmosphere of the narrow, formal Potsdam world? Do we not see distinctly, in the ideas here presented by him on paper, the result of the thought which has been working within him, and which is unavoidably forcing him to the recognition: that the celestial dew of Divine right does not of itself suffice to regenerate a dynasty; that to grow, it must assimilate the living forces of the soil in which it has its roots? His starting point was beyond a doubt dynastic interests. From his royalist education, it was natural that the greatness of the Fatherland should be to him synonymous with the greatness of the monarchy. As his views widened, he proceeded by the inductive path of experience, and finally arrived at those first principles, which we, ordinary mortals, unhampered by traditionary prejudices, reach by a direct
road. And there can be no doubt that, in the depths of his heart, he has remained what he was. There will always be something of his old self about him, which will recall his early opinions, and the experimental, inductive road by which they have reached their present stage. He is an empiric in matters of the public weal; but precisely that higher instinct which makes the great empiric, has led him to the discovery of the laws which political science evolves by the reverse process (synthesis).

The national party had long since come to the conclusion that the Prussian monarchy would serve admirably as a lever to their views. A man now came upon the scene who saw that, for the extension of the monarchy, it was necessary to have recourse to the principle of nationality and all which that principle involves. The events of 1866 followed as the natural consequence of the meeting of these two views.

That he should have taken up questions of political economy, with such vigour and comprehension, alone suffices to show how far behind him Count Bismarck had already left the petty spirit of his ancient party, which had always looked upon the progress of industry as upon the approach of a deadly enemy. In the preceding reign, for instance, the President of the Rhenish provinces, Herr von Kleist-Retzow, one of the leaders and at the same
time one of the best types of the members of the upper house, had allowed no opportunity to pass without giving vent to his holy horror at the flourishing state of those intelligent and industrious provinces. He did not conceal, that, when making his periodical rounds, the noise of the forges, the sight of the high chimneys, which he averred to be the work of the devil, caused him the deepest pain. Soldiers and peasants — what more was wanted for happiness? As to whether peasants alone were able to maintain soldiers he did not trouble himself to inquire.

Can it now be denied that a man bred in such a school must have advanced far beyond his colleagues to render it possible that he should make the administration of the customs a subject of earnest study and solicitude, and that he should cry with a loud voice for a reform assisted by Chambers and Press?

The Italian war found him engrossed in such thoughts, and it will be readily divined what course he would have wished his government to pursue. Germany was then on the eve of making a serious and irretrievable mistake. For a short time, a false sentimentality and an artificial patriotism, excited in favour of Austria, especially in the South, threatened to drag Germany into a war for that power. The court of Berlin had not remained unaffected by this movement. It had va-
ciliated during the whole war between its rational interests, which were against, and its legitimist instincts, which were for Austria. As the nation came round to the right view and took the side of Italy, the Prussian crown inclined towards Austria, whose cause was upheld by influential personages at the palace of Potsdam. The defeat of Magenta came most opportunely to the aid of these machinations, to show the Prince Regent (the present King) that the revolutionary principle was threatening the whole of Europe. Prussia despatched a circular to the German courts, announcing her intention of intervening in favour of Austria, in order to maintain that power in her territorial statu quo. To support these demonstrations six corps d'armée (250,000 men) were mobilized. At the same time, Prussia proposed that the Diet should put two other German corps d'armée on a war footing, and place them under her command. Fortunately, these measures which would have drawn Germany much too far into the quarrel, were not sanctioned by Austria. Prince Windischgrätz was sent to Berlin with the information that, so far as Prussia was concerned, there was no question either of intervention or of supreme command; that on the contrary her duty was to take the field at Austria's side; and that Austria would not think of giving up a single Lombard village.

Count Bismarck.
These cross and counter movements, which pressed one upon another with the rapidity of the events, were still going on when the battle of Solferino took place; and at the actual moment when the Austrian negotiator was urging Prussia to hasten her declaration of war with France, and was telegraphing to Verona that the alliance was certain, and that peace should not be concluded, behold the Emperor Francis Joseph had already thrown himself into the arms of Napoleon and signed the peace of Villafranca.

The apprehension that Prussia might not be disposed to act as her vassal, and the fear, quite pardonable in the face of the vacillating, overcautious policy of the court of Berlin, that she might herself get placed between hammer and anvil, if she allied herself with Prussia in a war against France, had induced Austria to effect a speedy reconciliation with the latter; preferring to receive peace from Napoleon, as she lately preferred to place Venice in his hands.

She now turned her wrath upon Prussia. A manifesto dated from the palace of Luxembourg, 25th of July 1859, accused the Prussian court in the bitterest terms of having been the sole cause of the defeat by leaving its old ally in the lurch. An Austrian journal added the naïve confession, that Austria would rather have lost three Lombardies than afford Prussia an opportunity of extending her position in Germany.*

* Die neue Aera. Sondershausen 1862.
This violent outbreak of the old spirit of rivalry found Count Bismarck no longer in his seat at the Diet. At the beginning of the war, Prussia, in the course of her traditional vacillating policy, had thought it better to remove so redoubtable a personage from the immediate vicinity of events, and had appointed him ambassador at the court of St. Petersburg, which was quite disposed to agree with him in his sympathy for Italy.

He entered on his new office in April 1859. No sooner was he installed than (on the 12th of May, a fortnight after the passage of the Ticino by the Austrian troops), he addressed to Herr von Schleinitz, the minister for Foreign Affairs at Berlin, a letter, which is one of the most remarkable of the documents throwing a retrospective light upon the plans, that, after ripening long and patiently in silence, were to take the world so violently by surprise. In this letter, which deserves to be called historical, Count Bismarck begins by explaining that the experience gained by him during the eight years he sat in the Diet of Frankfort might be summed up in a few words: In all questions great or small, home or foreign, the wishes or wants of Prussia are stifled by the majority, which Austria, thanks to her solidarity with the other Princes, entirely commands:

"In the Eastern question," he says, "the Princes declared from
the outset that they would side with Austria, although this was unquestionably an overstepping and violation of the federal law. Did they ever do the like for Prussia? Certainly not, for it is their interest to oppose every development on the part of Prussia; and we shall never be in a position to conquer this resistance, unless we emancipate ourselves from the situation made for us by the existing treaties.” And after further developing this idea he adds: “The opportunity of casting off these fetters will not soon come again, if we neglect to reap advantage from the present situation; and we shall be forced to resign ourselves in the future, as we have done in the past, to the conviction that in ordinary times there is no possibility of introducing reforms. If the South German statesmen wish to draw us into a war (with France), it is perhaps not without the comfortable reflection that it is easy for a small state to wheel round according to the turn taken by events.”

In the following sentence we have a clear foreshadowing of the programme of 1866: “I think we should hasten to take up the gauntlet, and I should regard it as no misfortune, but rather as a salutary crisis and a means of progress, if the majority at Frankfort were to pass some resolution, in which we could discover an attack on the principle of the confederation, an abuse of power, and a violation of the treaties.”

This was, word for word, the argument invoked seven years later to set the army in motion for Bohemia, after the Diet had voted the mobilisation of three corps d’armée.

“The clearer the violation,” pursues the writer, “the better for us. Neither Austria, nor France, nor Russia, will readily present us with so favourable an opportunity for improving our position in Germany, and our allies are on the high road to offer us most righteous motives, without our being under the necessity of stimulating them to further excesses. Even the Kreuzzeitung is beginning to grow angry with their proceedings.”

And in his further remarks on this newspaper, he
unhesitatingly classes it in the ranks of his adversaries — Austria’s partisans. He bitterly denounces the attitude of the papers subsidized, he says, by Austria, and complains of the timidity of others, which only venture to defend Prussia’s cause by concealing Prussian, under the guise of German, sympathies. What is wanted is the courage to plant openly the flag of a Prussian policy; and this policy should be supported by military measures.

The letter ends with the following curious passage:

“As regards the use of the word German in the place of Prussian, I should desire to see the former on our flag only when we have become united to our German fellow countrymen in a closer and more effectual bond; it loses its charm if, from the beginning, it is misused by being applied to the state of things represented by the Diet. I fear that your Excellency will interrupt me in this digression into the domain of my former activity with the cry: Ne sutor ultra crepidam. And I had no intention of making an official report, but simply wished to give an expert’s opinion concerning the Diet. I perceive something defective in our position in the Bund, which sooner or later we shall be obliged to repair ferro et igne, unless we submit it in time and at a favourable opportunity to serious treatment. I believe that, if the Confederation were put an end to this very day, and were even not replaced by anything else, this negative result alone would suffice, in a short time, to establish better and more natural relations between Prussia and her German neighbours.”

Here, in the spring of 1859, we have the literal programme of 1866. Nothing is wanting, not even the phrase which was destined, when repeated subsequently before a committee of the Prussian Chambers, to call for
general indignation against its author — the since famous phrase of "Blood and Iron". But the most interesting point is where the writer touches on the vital question: the absorption of Prussia by Germany or the absorption of Germany by Prussia? What were Count Bismarck's real sentiments at that time? In hinting that, later on, the word "Germany" would have to take the place of "Prussia", had he recourse to that eternal stratagem of governments, which expect the heaviest sacrifices from their subjects, consoling them with prospective advantages to be reaped at some indefinite future? Did he imagine in offering this solution, that he should flatter the liberal tendencies of the chief, to whom the letter was addressed, Count Schleinitz, Prime Minister during that time of modest illusions which has been called "the new era"? Or was he really in earnest? — We will content ourselves for the present with putting this question. The answer we shall endeavour to give in the sequel.

We have seen that Prussia had allowed the interlude of the Italian war to come to an end without benefiting by Bismarck's counsels. Counsels had also not been wanting from the liberal side.

All the spleen and wrath, which the Vienna cabinet had vented upon that of Berlin, had intimidated rather than roused it. The court-spirit and the influences already referred to, were at work to bring about a
reconciliation, by borrowing from German patriotism some specious reasonings, which had made a deep impression on public opinion during the war. The Southern Alpine passes, it was said, were an indispensable bulwark to Germany; and to let Austria be weakened, it was added, would be like cutting off one arm, with the certainty of losing the other in the unequal conflict which France would not hesitate to provoke at an early date.

Put thus, the argument had the greater chance of success that, then as since, France was not wanting in fatal counsellors, who lost no opportunity of bringing forward the question of the Rhine frontiers. Towards the end of July 1860, the interview at Teplitz between the Austrian and Prussian sovereigns had given rise to numerous comments on certain secret conventions, the object of which was said to be to guarantee the possession of Venetia to the house of Hapsburg.

On the 22nd August, Count Bismarck wrote a letter from St. Petersburg, in which he expressed the apprehensions which those reports had awakened in him. He says:

"I am quite out of the way of home politics, for the newspapers give me hardly anything but official reports, which furnish only a bare and general outline. According to them, we have promised nothing definite at Teplitz, but made our assistance of Austria dependent, on her first giving us a practical proof of her friendly disposition towards us in German politics; after she has
done this, she will be able to reckon on our gratitude. With this, I should be quite satisfied; one hand washes the other, and if we have once seen the lather of the Austrian soap, we will willingly return the service. Indirect accounts, however, which arrive here from other Courts speak differently. If they are correct, we have not indeed concluded any guarantee-treaty, but we have bound ourselves verbally to stand by Austria, under all circumstances in which she may be attacked by France in Italy. If Austria sees herself compelled to act on the offensive, our consent is necessary, if she is to expect our assistance. This version sounds more innocent than, in reality, it would be. If Austria has the certainty of our standing by her in the Venetian question, she will manage matters so as to provoke France to attack her in Italy; and, indeed, it is already asserted that, since Teplitz, her conduct in Italy has been bold and defiant. A well-informed, but rather Bonapartist, correspondent writes to me from Berlin: 'we were nicely taken in at Teplitz by the Austrian blandishments; we sold our rights for nothing, not even for a mess of potage... What would the Prussian Chambers say to Teplitz, and what to the reorganisation of the Army?' In the latter question, all rational people will side with the government; but the impression on foreign policy will first be appreciable when it is more accurately known what is the meaning of Teplitz.

He takes the opportunity of this mention of the "rather Bonapartist correspondent" to complain in the most lively terms, that the liberal press carry on "a systematic campaign of calumny" against him. "He has openly favoured Russo-French intentions upon the Rhine frontier on the understanding of a compensating increase of territory nearer home".

"I will give," he cries "a thousand Friedrechts’d’or to any one, who can prove that any such Russo-French propositions have ever been made to me. Never have I suggested anything else than our
depending upon our own strength, and in case of war, upon an appeal to the national forces. Those silly geese in the German press do not in the least see that they are defeating whatever is best in their own efforts in attacking me." Then turning to the feudal party, he says: 'If I were an Austrian statesman, or a German Prince and Austrian reactionist, like the Duke of Meiningen, our Kreuzzeitung would have taken me under its wing as it has done him. The mendacity of those suspicions is well known to all our political friends, but as I am only an old member of their party, who has in addition the misfortune of having peculiar views on many points, they allow people to slander me to their hearts' content. The inquisitor is most stern to those on his own side; and friends who have long drunk from the same cup, are more unjust than enemies.'

Thus, then, Herr von Bismarck although banished to the rear of German politics, had not only not ceased to busy himself about them, but had even succeeded in drawing general attention to the active part he was taking in them.

The ferment, which the peace of Villafranca had left behind it, did not allow the Court of Berlin to sink back into its inanity. The Venetian question was an open wound, and every new effort to heal it could not but bring into the foreground the embarrassing alternative: either of assisting Austria against France and Italy, or of profiting by the complications, to advance a step towards securing that German supremacy, which was so ardently desired by a part of the nation.

A year after the date of the letter just quoted, Bismarck had an interview with the King at Baden-Baden,
when he explained his views, not without making some impression. (The Baths have the peculiar property of acting as a stimulant on the political mind.) Everyone who has had an opportunity of talking to Count Bismarck in private, recognises in him that power which is to be found in superior men, and especially statesmen, of laying the listener under a spell by their intellectual ascendancy and winning manner. Imagine a man of Bismarck's position and ability, overflowing with ideas which had long been working in his mind, in the presence of the monarch whose co-operation it was most essential to obtain! The King neither remained quite deaf nor allowed himself to be carried away. At the beginning of his regency he had enjoyed a cheaply bought popularity and like everyone else had found a charm in it. The Queen, whilst she was still only Princess of Prussia, had always made visible efforts to win the sympathies of the people by those slight attentions which so richly repay the great.

Perhaps, too, we ought to reckon amongst the peculiar circumstances of the situation, the attempt on the life of King William at Baden-Baden. Oscar Becker thought he was doing something meritorious in trying to send out of the world a Prince, who was inaccessible to the wishes of the nation. Who knows, whether this desperate attempt may not have excited some reflections in
the young fanatic's intended victim? Such a thing would not be altogether unknown in modern history.

Finally, even the air of the country in which the King and the minister met, was favourable to liberal ideas. The inhabitants of the Grand Duchy have been in the enjoyment of political liberty longer than those of most German states. The Grand Duke, the King's son-in-law, who had begun his reign at the time of greatest reaction, and was at first completely in its favour, had suddenly, as if inspired by an inner light, become a liberal, and had, from that time, been the most beloved, we might say the most advanced man of his country, enjoying the meed of a well-earned popularity.

Thus, everything combined to open the mind of the King to the plans of future grandeur, which the Minister unrolled before his eyes. Still, "he hastened but slowly" to enter into them. Of an unpliant mind, brought up under the severest military discipline, perpetually haunted by the spectre of the Revolution, which had risen up before him in 1848, he felt little inclination to embark for unknown shores, where he had forebodings that he should find too much that was new. Finally, he desired Count Bismarck to put the substance of their conversation on paper in the form of a memorandum.

On the 15th of September, 1861, Count Bismarck sent a short abstract of this conversation to a friend,
dated from Stolpemünde, in Pomerania, and accompanied by a letter no less interesting than those already given. In it, he lays especial stress on the inopportuneness of a purely conservative programme which would sacrifice Prussia’s future position in Germany to the intractable love of sovereignty and the vanity of the petty princes. He would have preferred to find the reactionist journals, instead of launching invectives against the German republic, making definite proposals for a suitable reform of the national organisation:

“We need, as much as our daily bread, a firmer consolidation of our powers of defence; we need a new and pliant system of customs, and numerous institutions in common to protect Germany’s material interests from the disadvantages resulting from her unnatural configuration. We ought to clear away every species of doubt as to the sincerity and earnestness of our intention to forward these objects. — Moreover, I do not see why we should start back so coyly at the idea of a representation of the people, — be it in the Diet, be it in a customs-parliament. An institution which is legally established in every German state, and which we conservatives would not wish to do without in Prussia, can hardly be attacked as revolutionary. In national matters very moderate concessions have hitherto always been recognised as valuable. We might create a thoroughly conservative national representation, and yet earn thanks from the liberals. The sounds of preparation for my departure prevent my continuing. In case you should have the opportunity of explaining my views on these subjects to our friends, I forward with this letter the sketch I read to you, but I beg you not to divulge its contents, as I do not know whether it would be agreeable to the King that this account of the conversation which I had with him, and which I have put on paper at his command,
should become known, especially after its having, as I hear, furnished the subject of certain discussions".

A fortnight later he informs the same friend, in a letter dated from Berlin, the 2nd of October 1861, that he had been to Coblentz, where his Majesty was then staying, and that his visit had not been altogether without result as regarded German politics; that the King had commanded him to elaborate and complete the sketch which he had presented to him at Baden-Baden.

On the 15th of the same month, he had to attend the coronation, and it was there probably that he placed in the King's hands his exposition of the necessity for a thorough reform in German affairs. It is to be supposed that, in this exposition, he endeavoured as far as possible to conform his ideas to those of a sovereign, who, that same day, astonished the modern world by the formula he used in placing the crown on his head: "I take it," he said "from the table of the Lord", meaning thereby that he was superior to every human authority, and thus implying also that he was above all responsibility.

Such was the monarch whom it was necessary to bring to the point of placing himself at the head of a national, united, progressive movement; a movement which should be based on the broad foundation of universal suffrage, and on a right conception of economical
interests. The antagonistic elements with which he had to deal, are not sufficient to justify Count Bismarck's proceedings, but they perhaps explain, why only a man of his stamp had any chance of impressing the mind of the King, with the necessity of combating the doctrine of Divine Right by the side of Garibaldi and Kossuth.
Chapter IV.

Constitutional government in Germany. — Army reorganisation scheme. — Bismarck ambassador at Paris; interviews with Napoleon. — Conduct towards the Chamber as Minister President; acts of his administration. — Preparations for rupture with Austria. — Austria's "delegate scheme"; its failure; reproduction of scheme at the Congress of Princes. — Prussia's refusal of adherence. — Her threats of war. — Incredulity of the Public. — Death of the King of Denmark.

Constitutional government has hitherto been little more than a name in Germany. The ministers have, practically, never obeyed the will of the majority however clearly expressed. In the forty years during which the States have possessed representative chambers, the event of a ministry resigning after a parliamentary defeat has not occurred more than once or twice, in all the states put together great and small. The views of the reigning families on this subject are firmly fixed, once for all. It seems to them nothing short of monstrous to think of setting up the will of the subject in place of
the sovereign decision of the ruler. In Berlin, particularly, royalty has always regarded it as a ridiculous assumption that a Prussian sovereign should submit to have ministers forced upon him by the representatives of the people.

In what sense, then, did King William, in spite of this absolute conviction, declare in his speeches — in very vague terms, it is true — that he would faithfully observe the constitution? What was his idea of a constitution, which allowed him for four years to dispose of the taxes without the sanction of the Chambers? Ever since the existence of a constitution on paper, the liberal party had lived in the hope of seeing the rulers gradually adopt constitutional practices. But the tranchant tone, taken by the King at his coronation roughly dispelled all such illusions. It was unmistakeably a proclamation of personal and absolute government. Thenceforward, to introduce a legislative measure as the personal work of the sovereign, was to insure its meeting with opposition from the whole country; whilst the king naively thought, that he must necessarily silence all opposition by announcing any innovation as due to his initiative and suggestion.

Here we have the key to the history of that famous project of military re-organisation, which formed the central point of the violent conflict between the Prussian people and its government; a conflict which rose to such a
degree of bitterness and obstinacy that, for a long time, the war of 1866 was generally regarded as merely an expedient for diverting public attention from the question at stake, so as to obtain the consent of the country to internal changes by the help of foreign complications. A serious mistake indeed, but solely to be ascribed to the attitude which the King and his ministry had adopted, from the time of the coronation till the events of the year before last. As to whether this project of reorganisation, to the authorship of which King William laid claim, would answer its purpose of improving the country's means of defence, public opinion would not condescend seriously to inquire. The increase of the regiments of the line, and of the length of service, was looked upon simply as a measure, the secret object of which was the suppression of the Landwehr, an institution sprung from the popular movement of the year 1813. It seemed a mere question of sacrificing the civil to the military element, and of multiplying the number of military posts which by traditional right belonged to the sons of the nobility. No one saw in it any warlike intention.

The Chambers rejected the budget, which provided the necessary means for carrying out the measure. Thereupon followed, on the 6th of March 1862, one of those dissolutions which have often since been repeated, and always with the same result. At the same time the mi-
nisters who represented the last faint vestiges of the liberal tendencies of the regency, were replaced by a cabinet firmly resolved to assist the royal prerogative, as it was called in court language, to gain the victory.

The King, remembering the ability and energy which he had had the opportunity of observing in Count Bismarck, recalled him from St. Petersburg, and invited him to enter the ministry. For the time being he declined the honour. His motive, some say, was that he did not wish to be subordinate to Herr von der Heydt, an influential man who had steered through the last crisis. Others say, and according to all appearance with more reason, that this farsighted calculator felt the necessity, before undertaking the realisation of his great schemes, of examining from near at hand the sentiments of the Court of the Tuileries, and securing its eventual cooperation. At the time of his embassy in Russia, he had already made a short sojourn in Paris, and had shown a great desire to enter into intimate relations with France. But the Schleinitz Ministry feeling little inclination to be dragged into a more active policy, and mistrusting the adventurous character of the man, had given him to understand in so many words, that he must moderate his zeal and return to his post in Russia.

This time, however, it cost him no trouble to procure a hearing for his proposals. He was appointed am-
bassador at Paris; or rather he appointed himself, for from this time forth he was virtually at the head of the Government, and it only depended on him to choose the moment for assuming the presidency of the cabinet.

Once in Paris, he lost no time. A single summer sufficed for him to secure the secret understanding which subsequently created such grave embarrassment to France. Numerous conjectures have been hazarded as to the secret interviews which marked Count Bismarck's stay in Paris, and, even more, his stay at Biarritz. As however we pretend to chronicle only that which may reasonably be known, we will not seek to penetrate the privacy of those conferences. That the intimacy was great, and the negotiations earnest, may be gathered from the one significant fact that, in the autumn of the same year, when Count Bismarck was called to Berlin to take definitively the head of the ministry, he would not forego the honour of returning for a short time to his post of ambassador, that he might take leave in due form, and doubtless also make a final statement as to his views.

We should risk wearying the reader, if we were to require him to follow us through all the mazes of this long painful struggle, which, for three years and a half, roused the indignation of the civilised world against Count Bismarck. Now that we have seen the fifth act of this drama, and know the mainsprings of the chief actions,
we are perhaps inclined to judge the enormities into which the Prime Minister allowed himself to be betrayed, a little less harshly. It must be admitted that he was playing a very difficult game, being forced to hide his hand not only from his chief adversary but also from his natural allies. Perhaps, even, we ought to make allowance for him on the ground, that animated by his governing idea, and convinced of its final justifiableness, he lost all patience — wrongly indeed, but still in good faith, — at a resistance which to him seemed blindness.

But, however this may be, history will never grant him the bill of indemnity which he obtained from the representatives of the nation. They had to yield to necessity and accomplished facts; their vote was but a compromise between the mistakes of yesterday and the interests of the morrow. But history has other duties. Like a court of Justice, its province is to deliver judgments, and not to render services. And, however much we might be disposed to take the outward circumstances into consideration, — even admitting up to a certain point the necessity which Count Bismarck was under of concealing his schemes by an unpleasant exterior, yet the question remains: Whether the aristocratic sentiments and the contempt for law, which lie at the root of his conduct, are not too intrinsically a part of his nature to allow of his throwing the responsibility on circumstances?
He has displayed too much natural inclination for an odious part, and betrayed too much talent in playing with public morality, to make us believe that his nature had nothing to do with these excesses, and that they were forced upon him entirely by the situation.

Since public attention has been turned to the examination of his past acts, it has been asserted by himself and his apologists, that when he took the head of the ministry, on the 24th of September 1862, he seriously entertained the belief that he should succeed in bringing the liberal party over to his side, and that he should be able to work in harmony with it. Those who maintain this assertion, add even, that in refusing office the first time, he acted under the impression that the conflict, which had arisen out of the army-organisation question, would not be lasting, and that it would be better in the interests of his great plans to enter the cabinet after the solution of this difficulty, with the prospect of obtaining the good-will of the Chamber. In nowise did the attitude of the progress-party justify this hope. To imagine that they would consent to the idea of a propaganda backed by military measures, argued a singular misapprehension of their character. It could not even be said that they rejected the idea with horror: no, so far from rejecting it were they, that they had not even conceived the possibility of anyone earnestly entertaining such
an idea, so monstrous and impossible did it seem to them. They still held to the doctrine of moral conquests — a doctrine dating from the time of the regency. They had the firm conviction that, if Prussia were to mount the liberal colours, she would be irresistible, and that Austria and the lesser Princes would then lay down their arms at her feet without firing a single shot. They fondly clung to the belief that the head of the Hohenzollerns would consciously and openly embrace the cause of the German people. On all these points, Count Bismarck was of precisely the opposite opinion, and it is not impossible that, in spite of his clear-sightedness he may have deceived himself with the illusion that he should be able to convert his opponents. For he, too, is not exempt from that law of nature, which permits the most striking contradictions to exist side by side in one and the same individual. He has astonished the world no less by his openness than by his astuteness; we have seen him at one time preparing for events with the utmost circumspection, at another braving them with boundless levity. Moreover, it is in the nature of enterprising characters to place their goal at a great distance, and to rely on their talent of improvisation for overcoming any obstacles which may start up in their path. To Count Bismarck the difficulties he might meet with in Parliament, in the constitution, in public opinion, appear-
ed in the light of incidents, mere details, questions of home affairs, for which, from want of natural inclination as we know, he cared but little, and whose importance he was therefore exposed to the danger of misconceiving.

Nor did he reflect that the circumstances under which he had taken the helm, and the reputation which preceded him, were of a kind to alarm public opinion, and that instead of making sure of a favourable welcome, he should have done all in his power to inspire confidence. The intimate relations which had existed latterly between him and the court of the Tuileries, had put the finishing stroke to his already great unpopularity. He was openly accused of having cemented more firmly the union between feudal Royalism and modern Cæsarism. Certain allusions which had fallen from him, and had been immediately circulated, made him appear not only as the author of a sinister plot against all ideas of progress, but also as an apt pupil in the art of making false use of democratic principles. There was nothing, down to universal suffrage, which he was not thought capable of employing as an engine for suppressing liberty.

Instead of seeing that there was some justice in these suspicions, Count Bismarck lost patience at the first opposition he encountered. He instinctively felt that tact and delicacy were requisite towards the King, but
he condescended to take no precautionary measures for securing public approbation. He threw himself into the arms of the Junker party, although in lucid moments he had entirely recognised their nullity. Nothing, of course, could be more welcome to that party than the possession once more of their old favourite.

The parliamentary strife almost always turned upon the army question. The Chambers were twice dissolved; a third time the deputies were simply sent home, with the information that their services could be dispensed with in settling the budget. Defiance and insult of every kind were heaped on the people. Count Bismarck and his chief colleague, Herr von Roon, the minister for war, had at times fits of audacious cynicism. One day, a speaker having raised grave complaints against the ministers, and Herr Virchow having desired that they should attend the sittings, in order that they might be able to answer, Count Bismarck coolly stepped forth from an adjoining room, and stated in a contemptuous way, that it would be superfluous to recommence the discussion, inasmuch as what was going on amongst the gentlemen could be heard well enough in the room where he had been. Another time, in a public sitting of the House he told the deputies to their face: "If we think it necessary to make war, we shall do so with, or without, your consent."
The Minister of War, on being called to order on one occasion by the President of the House, replied that the President had no right to interrupt him, that a minister was not amenable to the regulations of the House, and that he was superior to the President. A long contest ensued, which ended in an open violation of the Constitution: the King sent a message to the House without any ministerial counter-signature. The Chambers were at the same time dismissed (27th of May 1863).

A few days later, appeared the ordinances on the press. A system of cautions and confiscations, manifestly borrowed from abroad, was brought into operation against the newspapers. Violent pressure was put upon all officials, without any attempt at concealment. Whoever had the courage to resist was persecuted to the utmost, was placed under strict surveillance, or transferred to some remote corner of the country.

A cry of indignation arose on all sides, so loud that even the Crown Prince could not stand aloof from the general agitation. At a public meeting in Dantzig, he declared that the ordinances on the press had been issued without his knowledge, and that he entirely disapproved of them. He even wrote to the King, his father, to protest against a government, which, he said, endangered his rights to the crown. The only result of his letter was that for some time he was obliged to remain away from Court.

Count Bismarck.
The famous sentence of the Berlin supreme tribunal—a tribunal constituted expressly for the occasion in imitation of the packed juries of the time of James the Second—at last filled the measure to overflowing. The verdicts of acquittal, which had been pronounced at the first and second trials of the deputies, prosecuted for having attacked the ministers in their speeches, were reversed; liberty of speech in Parliament, which had been expressly guaranteed by one of the articles of the constitution, was suppressed by penal enactment. The Judges whose incorruptibility had become proverbial, — although perhaps on too easy terms, — the government employés who, if stiff and pedantic, had nevertheless, with all their servility, retained a sort of rugged honesty, — in a word, everyone who had any connection, intimate or remote, with the official world, was exposed to a treatment of systematic demoralisation. The traffic in consciences came into full play; a new word was coined for the young officials, who rose rapidly with no other merit than that of being ready to do anything for a little promotion. They were called the "aspirers" (die Streber). The moment seemed to have come when the predictions of the pessimists were about to be fulfilled. The world was to see all the evils of the ancient régime, coupled with all the wiles of modern despotism; the prejudices of a narrow orthodoxy in league with the lax
views of an unprincipled realism: "One such open violation of the Constitution as was perpetrated at that time", it is thus that a writer of the most moderate opinions* expresses himself, "would have been enough to kindle a revolution in a less cold-blooded people."

If all these measures were not the personal work of Count Bismarck, — even if the most obnoxious of them were the entire work of his colleague, the Minister of Justice, a feudalist of the purest water and a favourite with the King, — still, in the eyes of the world, he, as Minister President was responsible for them; and, considering his recognised superiority, this was no more than just: if he did not do the things himself, he at any rate allowed them to be done. His attention was entirely absorbed in watching the course of external events; he sought for the long desired pretext to proclaim a violation of the federal law, which might be used as a handle for a rupture with Austria.

To obtain this, he first had recourse to a method peculiarly his own, consisting in extreme frankness. In December 1862, two months after he had become Premier, he exchanged explanations with Count Karolyi, the Austrian ambassador at Berlin, accounts of which we possess from each of the two diplomatists. These accounts agree in the main and are highly instructive.

* Adolph Schmidt.
In a circular note addressed to the German Courts, on the 24th of January 1863, Count Bismarck says that he has intimated to Count Karolyi his opinion, that the relations between the two powers cannot continue on their present footing; that they must change either for the better or the worse. That it is the honest desire of the King’s government that they should change for the better, but that if the necessary advances are not made by the Imperial Cabinet, it will be requisite for Prussia to look the other alternative in the face, and to make her preparations accordingly. That he has reminded Count Karolyi that, in the period before 1848 a tacit agreement existed between the two monarchies, in virtue of which Austria was secure of Prussia’s support in European questions, whilst Prussia had a free field left to her in German politics, as evidenced in the formation of the Zollverein.

“I have left untouched”, he proceeds, “the question as to whose fault it was that analogous relations were not again established after the reconstitution of the Diet, because my desire was not to enter into recriminations for the past, but to shape out some practical course for the present; in which present we feel an antagonistic Austrian influence at work in precisely those states on whose friendship, owing to their geographical position, Prussia must set an especial value. I begged Count Karolyi to reflect, that Austria by this course would perhaps win the sympathies of the governments of the states in question, but would alienate the sympathies of Prussia, to the prejudice of the common interests of the Bund. The Imperial Cabinet consoled itself with the idea, that in
any war which threatened to be dangerous to Austria, the two powers would nevertheless be found acting together as allies.

In this assumption there lies to my thinking a grave error, which may perhaps not become apparent until the final moment, but will then come out with fatal clearness; and I earnestly besought Count Karolyi to use all his influence at Vienna to contradict it. I pointed out that even in the last war, the alliance had not been so serviceable to Austria as might have been the case, if the two powers had not, during the preceding eight years, fought one another on the field of German politics in a manner which could only in the end be of advantage to others, and had undermined all mutual confidence. Nevertheless, in the fact that Prussia had not turned Austria's difficulties in 1859 to her own advantage, but on the contrary had armed in order to assist Austria, the results of the former intimate relations are clearly discernible. Should those relations however not be renewed and revivified, Prussia would, under similar circumstances, be as little debarred from forming an alliance with an adversary of Austria, as, in the opposite case, from forming a firm and faithful alliance with Austria against a common enemy. I, at any rate, as I scrupled not to tell Count Karolyi, should never be able to bring myself under such circumstances to counsel my royal master to neutrality. It rests with Austria to choose whether she will continue her present anti-prussian policy of securing a coalition of the lesser states, or seek an honest union with Prussia. That she should choose the latter, is my most sincere desire. But this can be obtained only by her giving up her inimical policy at the German Courts.

Count Karolyi replied, that it was not practicable for the imperial house to give up its traditional influence on the German governments. I contradicted the existence of any such tradition, by pointing to the fact that Hanover and Hesse had for a hundred years, — from the commencement of the Seven Years War, — been led principally by Prussian influence, and that, in Prince Metternich's time, the said states were guided by Vienna in a direction consonant with the union between Prussia and Austria; so that the supposed
tradition of the Austrian Imperial house dates only from the time of Prince Schwarzenberg; and the system of which it is a part has not hitherto proved conducive to the consolidation of the German confederacy.

I stated that I had hoped on my arrival at Frankfort in the year 1851, after the conversations I had previously had with Prince Metternich, who was then living at his seat on the Johannisberg, that Austria would herself recognise the policy of creating a position for us in the German confederation, which might make it worth Prussia’s while to exert her whole power for joint purposes. Instead of that, Austria has endeavoured, and with success, to embitter and render difficult our position in the German Confederation, and to force us in fact to seek other allies. The whole treatment of Prussia by the Vienna Cabinet seems founded on the supposition that we, more than any other State, are exposed to attack from without, against which we need foreign help, and that we must, on that account, put up with contemptuous treatment at the hands of those states from which we expect that help. The task of a Prussian government, having at heart the interests of the royal house as well as those of the country at large, would therefore be to prove, by deeds, the erroneousness of this supposition, if no heed were paid to its words and wishes.

Our dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the Bund has received fresh stimulant, during the last few months, from the determination with which the German governments more intimately linked with Austria, have offensively stood out against Prussia in the delegate question. Before 1848 it was unheard of, that questions of any great importance should be brought before the Bund, unless the concurrence of the great powers had been previously secured. Even in cases, in which the opposition came from the less powerful states, as in the matter of the South German fortresses, it had been considered preferable to let objects of this importance and urgency remain unaccomplished for years rather than enforce submission by the dictates of a majority. Nowadays, however, the opposition offered by Prussia to a proposal, not merely on the
ground of its demerits, but on the ground even of its illegality, is treated as an incident unworthy of notice, by which no one should be deterred from deliberately pursuing the chosen path. I begged Count Karolyi to communicate the substance of the foregoing conversation to Count Rechberg, as accurately as possible, but confidentially, and to express at the same time my conviction that the wounds which our mutual relations have sustained can be healed only by unreserved frankness."

Some days later, on the 13th of December, Count Bismarck had a second interview with the same diplomatist. In examining what passed on this occasion, we cannot help observing that, as early as the beginning of 1863, Germany was, quite unconsciously, standing within a hair's breadth of the final catastrophe, which was at that time delayed solely by the death of the King of Denmark and the Schleswig-Holstein war. Count Bismarck sought Count Karolyi, and pointed out to him, that it appeared from the dispatches received from the Prussian ambassador at Frankfort, that matters were taking a very serious turn at the Diet.

"I did not conceal from Count Karolyi", he says in the circular of the 24th of January 1863 already referred to, "that the continuance of the majority in a course pronounced by us to be contrary to federal law, would place us in a very disagreeable position; that we foresaw as a consequence the rupture of the Bund; that Herr von Usedom had left Herr von Kübeck and Baron von der Pfordten in hardly any doubt as to our view of the matter, but had received answers to his intimation which showed no desire for compromise, inasmuch as Baron von der Pfordten pressed for the delivery of our minority-vote."
I remarked on this point that, under such circumstances, our dignity would not permit us any longer to evade the conflict provoked by the other side, and that I had therefore telegraphed to our ambassador to give in his vote. I intimated that we should regard the overstepping of the legitimate powers of the Diet, by decrees of a majority, as a breach of the federal treaties, and that we should act accordingly by recalling the Prussian representative at the Diet. I pointed out the practical consequences which in a very short time must naturally ensue from such a situation, namely that we should cease to recognise the legality as regards all federal power, of an assembly from which we had withdrawn on lawful grounds. Nor should we any longer be able to subordinate the Prussian garrisons in the federal fortresses to the decrees of the Diet. It is untrue that I spoke of the withdrawal of the garrisons in such a case. On the contrary, I called attention to the conflict, which might arise from their remaining, after their commanders had ceased to recognise the authority of the Diet."

The despatch concludes by stating, that all Prussia could do, in the face of this attempt to carry measures by means of new and forced interpretations of the federal treaties, was to leave to those governments which by their aggressive proceedings had compromised the internal harmony of the Bund, the task of settling the difficulties, or, failing that, the responsibility for all the consequences of the conflict which they themselves had evoked.

Here we have the identical formula used by Prussia three years later in preparing her casus belli, and in the presence of this striking analogy, no doubt can exist that from thenceforth the intention to drive things to extremities was firmly fixed in the mind of the Minister
President. The intervention of unforeseen events alone made him give up his intended plan of campaign, but it was only the better to attain the accomplishment of his object by new and much more circuitous paths.

The report made by Count Karolyi to Count Rechberg (dated 18th February 1863) a month after the despatch of Bismarck's circular, completes the account by giving us the Austrian point of view in this question of rivalry. Count Karolyi is of opinion, that Prussia's pretensions to a preponderating influence in the internal affairs of Germany have no lawful basis; that Prussia in wishing to obtain this, at the cost of Austria, demands the sacrifice of a position which belongs to her, — by right of a tradition a century old, by right of treaties, and by right of the greatness of her dynasty.

"Finally", adds the ambassador, and the saying has now become historical, "finally, Bismarck placed before us in so many words the alternative of withdrawing from Germany and transporting our centre of gravity to Ofen, or of seeing Prussia in the ranks of our enemies on the occasion of the first European war." The report ends with the following words: "It behoves us to unmask in time the pretext of which Prussia would wish to avail herself for the achievement of her ends."

Austria, it must be admitted, had herself under-
taken to furnish this pretext by making the "delegate scheme" her own. This scheme had been elaborated by the leaders of the lesser States with a view to organise a species of diplomatic guerilla to thwart Bismarck's unionist tendencies. The absence of all serious purpose in this would-be reform was so manifest, that no one was caught in the net, — except perhaps the originators. It amounted practically to nothing more than a proposal to convoque, by way of experiment, an assembly composed of delegates from the Chambers of the various states, which should discuss subjects of civil legislation, but should have deliberative powers only.

This was tantamount to playing into Bismarck's hands, and he immediately took the opportunity offered him of overthrowing his enemies. A vote being called for on the subject, on the 28th of January 1863, his ambassador at the Diet insisted on earnest reforms, particularly on the convocation of a real German parliament. Under these conditions he promised Prussia's support. But, if the majority attempted to impose half measures upon him, he should cease to recognise the authority of the Diet.

These threats made the majority vacillate. The German governments, always glad to sink back into their comfortable state of traditional inaction, sacrificed their desires for reform, without much regret, on the altar of
peace. According to custom, Hanover and Hesse were the first to give the signal for a general stampede.

But Austria did not consider herself beaten. Now that she had lost Lombardy and found herself threatened in Venetia, the idea had become more than ever fixed in her head that her welfare depended on her supremacy in Germany. When she perceived that the delegate scheme had foundered from its insufficiency, she thought she would astonish Germany with something grand and unheard-of. If her powers had been equal to her intentions, she might easily have seized this moment to play the leading part. For no one had seriously believed Count Bismarck's threats. The cry about nationality and a representation of the people, coming from a minister, who treated his country with unparalleled arrogance, was looked upon as bitter mockery. An Austria, courageously taking up the tradition of 1849, straightway convening a parliament on the basis of the constitution, which had been given by the Frankfort parliament, and forcing the Princes to hold themselves subordinate to the national authority, would at least have had some chance of success.

Instead of doing this, Austria imagined that the delegate comedy had been a failure only in consequence of not being brilliantly enough placed on the stage. To increase the splendour of the show, seemed to her all that
was required. She thought it was a stroke of genius to assemble a congress of Princes at Frankfort, at which all the crowned heads of Germany were to appear in person to play the part of fathers of their country; and that the public would certainly not be able to resist such a sensational effect. She found favourable adherents to this scheme, not only in the little Princes, always ready to parade themselves and while away the time, but also in a class of politicians, who, thanks to the influence of Austria, and to their affinities with her leaders, had attained the post of prime-ministers, and, — it is difficult to say how, — the fame of statesmen, at some of the small courts.

All these people, who thought themselves so wonderfully wise and clever, had thus agreed to produce at Frankfort during August 1863 a master-piece of festive solemnity, dazzling and imposing. Frankfort was one scene of solemn entries, grand processions, orations, uniforms, carriages, majesties, highnesses, excellencies, the whole arranged so as to call up as vividly as possible the memory of the Imperial coronations of the good old times. To the honour of the public be it said, the spectators' gallery remained in a state of magnificent indifference. The sight of all these great people, with their suites of gilt lacqueys, made the citizens think of their sad past; and in spite of the antipathy felt to
Prussia, no one was duped by the hollow demonstrations organised by Prussia's adversaries.

The reorganisation plan submitted to the congress was, in its main features, nothing less than the old delegate scheme painted afresh and regilt. The most patent embellishment consisted in the appointment of Austria as president, who was to be supported by several directors chosen from among the other sovereigns.

The King of Prussia had been invited the last to this assembly, four days after the other princes. Count Bismarck replied that propositions of this kind required consideration, and that Prussia would come to a conference in the month of October; that, in this way, the King would have time to discuss the various articles of the scheme with his ministers. But the congress went forward, and, after a short deliberation, the Austrian project was accepted as it stood. A note was sent to Prussia leaving her the option of agreeing to the scheme or of seeing herself excluded from the new organisation. On the 15th of September Prussia answered by a refusal, grounded on the inadequacy of the proposed changes; repeating at the same time her chief conditions: namely, German supremacy to be shared between Prussia and Austria on a footing of complete equality, and a real parliament with legislative power. Austria and the other states rejoined in identical notes, that these conditions could not be accepted.
At last, after a series of demonstrations on both sides, each more violent than the last, the diplomatists of the confederated states met together in Nuremberg to consider what preventive measures should be taken against Prussia, who had talked of a *casus belli*.

When we look back on these events, it seems strange that the public did not, at that time, manifest more attention and alarm. In the whole of Germany — at the seat of the Diet, as well as at Vienna and Berlin, — newspaper readers treated both the accounts of the mutual recriminations between Austria and Prussia, and the accounts of the busy doings of the Small-states' Conference, with no more interest or attention than if they had concerned a squabble between Turkey and Servia. This indifference to menaces, the full gravity of which we are now able to appreciate, is explained by the scepticism with which the German people had been accustomed, for half a century, to look on at the skirmishing between its two great powers. Each time that one of them asked for assistance against the other, people shrugged their shoulders as a matter of course. "Hawks don't pick out hawks' eyes," they said. In spite of all the hard words that had passed, the country thought, with Austria, that, at the decisive moment, the solidarity of reactionary tendencies would prevail, and that there would be a reconciliation. To believe in political earnest-
ness in the head of the Prussian government, except where internal reaction was concerned, never once occurred to friend or foe.

But things would unquestionably have taken a serious turn at that time, and have brought the German people to a sense of their mistake, if the course of events had not been interrupted in an unforeseen manner.

During the night between the 14th and the 15th of November Frederick VII, King of Denmark, died at Copenhagen. This event was destined by circumstances to be of the gravest importance.
Chapter V.

Policy pursued by Bismarck in the Schleswig-Holstein question, more particularly towards Austria and the Bund, with its results.

The episode of the Schleswig-Holstein war, looked at as a whole, so completely exhibits the character of a dramatic intrigue, — the cleverest and most successful ever seen on the political stage, — that friends and enemies have long agreed in regarding it as Bismarck's masterpiece. If it be true that the series of incidents which followed in succession after the sudden death of the King of Denmark up to the Bohemian campaign, were the result of a pre-conceived plan, it must be admitted that Machiavellism, in its boldest flights, has never produced anything parallel to it.

To have found Austria on the high road to popularity, supported by the German princes with complete devotion, firmly ensconced in the Diet at which she presided; to have found Austria the representative of legiti-
macy, the ancient friend and ally of the Great European Powers, and at the end of two years to have isolated her from everybody; to have lowered her in the eyes of the masses, to have brought her into deadly antagonism with the Princes and the Bund; to have made her disown the principle of legitimacy and federal authority, and led her into a course directly opposed, not only to France and England, but also to her own former policy; to have thus taken her in tow, and led her on from one folly to another, in order finally to turn against her and ride over her when she was robbed of all internal support, and had no longer friends, allies, system, nor aim; to have done all this, must certainly be reckoned the highest perfection of that art of duping, which was formerly held to be the quintessence of diplomatic skill.

We must, however, resist the temptation to dramatise, into which we may too readily be led. Life, certainly, often produces combinations much more wonderful than have ever come out of poet’s brain; but this very richness of incident in life should put us on our guard against the tendencies of our imagination, which delights in seeing in every coincidence of events the work of some human hand. In the sixteenth century, everyone would have agreed that Count Bismarck had poisoned the King of Denmark, because he knew how to turn this sudden death to such great account in the realisation of
his plans. If, however, we examine more narrowly the various phases of this period, we shall rather come to the conviction that the Prussian Premier evinced neither that unity of method nor that diabolical premeditation, which those who love to find a romance in all history would fain see in this tangled web of circumstances.

During the course of events, the diplomatic current impelled him into such direct opposition to himself, that he might be accused of having too lightly counted on the resources of his talent for improvisation. His mode of profiting by circumstances often reminds one of that novelist, who to characterise his inventive talent said: "When I make some one knock at the door of my hero's room, I don't myself know who will come in."

The question of the succession to the Duchies afforded an opportunity, which Count Bismarck hastened to seize, of killing two birds with one stone: namely of provoking a conflict with the Diet, and of, at the same time, acquiring a valuable piece of territory.

Austria had two possible paths open before her: either she could firmly adhere to the treaties concluded under her auspices in London in 1852, and recognise the dynastic rights of the King of Denmark; or she could place herself at the head of the national German movement in favour of the independence of the Duchies.

Count Bismarck, whose interests were precisely the re-
verse, who wanted neither to leave the Duchies to Denmark nor to put them under federal jurisdiction, — a sure way to secure their being refused to Prussia, manoeuvred so well that, through all the tortuous paths into which he successively struck in order to achieve his object, Austria followed him.

The affair of the Duchies was one which had always provided the small Princes of the confederation with a means of displaying patriotism at little cost. It was a safe outlet for the national effervescence, and an ever welcome pretext for playing at soldiers. In the present case, there came, in addition to these two motives, a third of special attraction. The widest-spread and most popular views favoured the pretensions of the Duke of Augustenburg to the Duchies. This was at once a recognition of the principle of legitimacy, and of that of the small sovereignties, the number of which would have been augmented by the addition of this new state. The Diet had caused the Duchies to be occupied by a federal corps d'armée consisting of Saxons and Hanoverians. Count Bismarck, above all imbued with the supreme importance of an accomplished fact, lost not a moment, but sent his Prussians under some pretence or other into Schleswig to take up their post beside the federal troops. Austria in her turn, seeing Prussia march, declared that she could not remain an indifferent spectator, and determined to march into Schleswig also.
In this position of affairs, Count Bismarck offered to forget all quarrels, and to come to an agreement to act in common, throwing out a bait which the Vienna cabinet could not resist. Alleging that the Princes of the confederation, by making common cause with the clamorous demands of the masses, were dragging the Diet into the revolutionary whirlpool of national pretensions, he pointed out to Herr von Rechberg, what fearful consequences monarchy would expose itself to, by the recognition of this subversive principle. He made him feel how much wiser and more dignified it would be to keep on the ground of high diplomacy, to repulse the turbulent intervention of the Diet, which obeyed the pressure of public opinion, and so to enter into intimate relations with the great European powers, not in the character of representatives of the German confederation, but in virtue of being independent German powers.

A reconciliation with Prussia on this reactionary basis seemed to Herr von Rechberg to offer a double advantage, and straightway he fell into the trap. Eagerly embracing the part, which Count Bismarck had assigned to him, he commissioned his representative at the Diet to submit to the latter a proposition, according to which the Prince of Augustenburg should be ordered to quit the Duchies, and all public demonstrations in his favour in the states of the confederation should be suppressed.
The Diet refused. Then Austria and Prussia combined in a demand that the Diet should at least authorise their occupation of Schleswig in their quality of Great Powers. Fresh refusal on the part of the Diet. After this double check, sustained in January 1864, the two governments determined to set themselves in direct opposition to the Diet and to march into Schleswig in spite of it.

Thus then, Austria, who for half a century had based her whole system on the solidarity with the sovereigns of the second and third class, and on the institution of the Diet, had allowed herself to be seduced into breaking this bond, and making common cause with Prussia, who was guided by altogether opposite interests.

By the time the two armies set out on their march, the conflict had arrived at such a point that Saxony, destined two years later to be crushed by Austria's side at Sadowa, refused a passage to the Imperial army, which was therefore obliged to make a detour through Prussia. To crown all, one of the secretaries of state (Herr von Biegeleben) formally declared in the name of the Government in the Austrian Lower House, that Austria undertook this campaign against the movement set on foot in Germany, solely because she never would recognise the principle of nationalities.

Having thus practically suppressed the Diet, and induced Austria to disown its authority, Count Bismarck
saw himself, *nolens volens*, under the necessity of throwing overboard the Treaty of London, which was as great an obstacle as the federal law to the annexation of the Duchies by Prussia. Like a skilful general, he had at first occupied himself exclusively with one of his adversaries, and now that this one lay at his mercy, he turned against the other. He had more than once recognised the validity of the above-mentioned treaty. This however did not deter him, when the time came, from absolving himself from its obligations. On the 15th of May, 1864, he announced that he should no longer regard himself as bound towards Denmark by the treaty of 1852, because that power had itself broken the treaty, and could not therefore claim its advantages. The day after this official announcement, that is on the 16th of May, 1864, he confessed in a letter to a friend that the legal difficulties in regard to the succession, were merely a pretext for achieving by hook or by crook the annexation of the Duchies. This friend, who belonged to the conservative party, had been alarmed in reading the draft of the address of the Prussian Chamber, which expressed itself very strongly against Denmark. Count Bismarck answers him:

"I understand your objection to the address which nevertheless is, in my opinion, calculated to render us a service by putting a certain pressure on the progress of the diplomatic negotiations. I
may of course be deceived, for the longer I occupy myself with po-

tics the weaker becomes my belief in human calculations. . . . . . .

But the present situation is of such a nature, that it seems advis-
sable to me to let loose upon the Danophilists at the Conference
all the dogs who want to bark (excuse this hunter's simile); the
barking of the whole pack in chorus is likely to produce a
good effect on foreign nations, making the subjection of the Duchies
to Denmark impossible in their eyes. . . . . . The Duchies have
hitherto been treated like spoilt children, and have been accustomed
to think that we would willingly sacrifice ourselves on the altar of
their private interests, and that Prussia's existence is to be hazard-
ed for every individual German in the North of Schleswig. The
address will serve as a useful, counteracting influence on this wild
notion . . . . . . I do not fear that the address will have so
great an effect as to cause us embarrassment. I should by no
means complain if the nation were to be so seized with Prussian
ambition as to require that the government, instead of stimulating,
should be obliged to moderate, the general ardour.

You see from this how I look at the matter according to
human lights. For the rest, the feeling of gratitude to God for
His support hitherto, raises in me the confidence that the Lord
knows how to turn even our faults to our advantage; this I learn
daily to my salutary humbling.

Finally, I may observe that annexation is not the chief and
necessary aim of my efforts, although it may be their most pleasant
result."

And at the same time that he thus spoke out his
real thoughts, he was not satisfied with disguising them in
discussing a very doubtful point of law with Denmark,
but played, as it were for his amusement, a third game
with England. To Lord Wodehouse, who had been
sent from London to make a last attempt at reconcilia-
tion, he replied that Prussia could never come to an
understanding with Denmark so long as the latter maintained a democratic government; that a coup d'état at Copenhagen was the sole means of preventing war!

All these prevarications at length opened Austria's eyes, and thenceforth she began definitively to lean to the Pretender's side. Count Bismarck for his part, not feeling that the situation was yet sufficiently prepared to show his hand, thought he could not do better than add a little to the general confusion. Following Austria on her own ground, he pretended to take the rights of the Prince of Augustenburg into consideration, whereas all he sought was to gain time in order to profit by any new incidents which might arise. At length, after having made use of the Treaty of London at Copenhagen, the democracy of Copenhagen in London and the Prince of Augustenburg at Vienna, the time arrived when he could give up this triple subterfuge.

The war with Denmark which had been interrupted by the London conference, had recommenced, the term fixed for diplomatic negotiations having expired without result. The second campaign, with its decisive success and the invasion of Jutland, led to the peace of Vienna, which, on the 30th of October, 1864, placed the Duchies at the absolute disposal of the allied Great Powers. Thereupon Prussia laid hold of this new point of law, raised solely by the accomplished fact, to set aside all
parchment questions, and to take possession in virtue alone of the right of conquest. Once more Austria, to whom this opposing of brute force to principles offered too pleasant a temptation to be resisted, adopted Prussia's views. Under the title of co-possessors, Austria and Prussia installed themselves in the Duchies, intimating to the Diet that the matter concerned it no further. From that date, the hostilities between the two rivals necessarily began, Austria seeking to re-establish her connection with the Diet, which more than ever supported the Pretender, and Count Bismarck interposing all kinds of difficulties to the admission of his claims. Matters soon went so far that, for three months, all negotiations were broken off between the courts of Vienna and Berlin. Resumed once more in June, 1865, they ended a second time on the 22nd of July, in a Prussian ultimatum.

On the 15th of that month, Count Bismarck had said to the Duke of Grammont at Karlsbad, that war between Prussia and Austria had become inevitable; that he wished to come to blows as quickly as possible; and that it was the mission of Prussia to take the destinies of Germany into her hands. He was not however allowed this time to invoke the decision of arms. The two reigning families notwithstanding all their irritation against one another, felt an extreme repugnance to draw the sword. Though they cherish a strong love for military govern-
ment, they are not, at bottom, of a warlike nature. The thought of breaking the bond of the sacred alliance, and of spilling German blood, filled them with horror. These hesitations at the last moment brought about a final attempt at a compromise.

On the 17th of August, the Gastein convention created an interim, which was intended to put an end to the condominium. Austria obtained provisionally the exclusive possession of Holstein, Prussia that of Schleswig which was less advantageous, inasmuch as Schleswig is cut off by Holstein from all direct communication with Germany. But the man who had piled all these complications one upon another in order to effect a rupture, could not let a situation which he had brought with such pains to this point of maturity slip through his hands unused. The Italian war and the Congress of Princes had been allowed to pass by without any advance towards a decisive solution having been made. Not to have seized this third opportunity, would have been flying in the face of fortune. The acquisition of two new provinces was, beyond a doubt, much more calculated to please the King than any national sentiment, and the prospect of this acquisition, joined to the late military successes, must have made it possible to Count Bismarck to obtain at last the consent of the King, who till then had always shrunk back from every extreme measure.
Thenceforward it became merely a question of "How?"
The Prussian cabinet not only renewed its demands that certain conditions should be imposed on the future sovereign of the Duchies, but also had a case prepared by the crown lawyers resolutely contesting the rights of the Pretender. And in order to advance with all its means of attack simultaneously, it repeated the proposal to convokе a German parliament, accompanying this proposal with a diplomatic circular note, in which it called on Germany, in the most solemn terms, to flock round the standard of unity, if she did not wish to suffer a fate similar to that of Poland (24th of March 1866). Even then, the public remained unmoved. In consequence of his conduct towards the Chambers, Count Bismarck had forfeited every shadow of confidence amongst thinking people. If he had wished to obtain the slightest credence for his assertions, he should have refrained from the audacious accusation against Austria that she cherished warlike designs against Prussia, swearing, by all the gods, that as to himself no idea of aggression had ever entered his head. It was asking too much of the credulity of even the simplest minds.

It is true that Austria had at that period addressed a confidential note to its most faithful adherents inviting them to arm (16th of March 1866); but we need scarcely add that never was such a precaution less superfluous. The
alliance between Prussia and Italy, traces of which are to be found as far back as the year 1863, was already in such an advanced stage that, three weeks after the date of the above mentioned Prussian circular note, the formal treaty between Victor Emmanuel and King William was signed at Berlin (8th of April). Austria had long groaned at the recollection of the immense mistake she had made in letting herself be separated from her old allies. She had at last done penance in order to be again taken into favour by the Diet. As long ago as the beginning of 1865, Herr von Schmerling, the Minister of State, had formally avowed that Austria had completely gone astray in her policy in the Schleswig Holstein question. As it now suited her to substitute the principle of the autonomy of the provinces for the rude rights of conquest, Austria convoked the states of the Duchies to consult them as to their wishes. At the same time, she appeared in sackcloth and ashes at the Diet, and laid at the feet of the so long disowned federal jurisdiction the right of deciding on this immortal question. This was on the 1st of June, 1866.

Thus had it come to pass, that Prussia and the Diet stood in a position of direct antagonism to each other. In accordance with an Austrian proposal, the Diet voted the mobilisation of three corps d'armée as a demonstration against Prussia's threats; and this vote gave Prussia the signal which she had awaited for years, to declare the
treaty of the confederation violated by the Diet itself (14th of June).

And so, at last, the decisive moment had arrived for Count Bismarck to settle with "blood and iron" the question of the German hegemony.

Not quite a year before, on the 23rd of July 1865, he had said in an interview with the Bavarian Minister Herr von der Pfordten, at Salzburg, that the inevitable duel between Prussia and Austria could not be postponed much longer, but that it would be quickly finished: "One single encounter, one decisive battle, and Prussia will have it in her power to dictate the conditions." Never has programme been more distinctly announced; never more literally carried out.
Chapter VI.

Attitude of the nation at the outbreak of the war. — Bismarck's negotiations with the opposition. — The King's absolutist principles. Relations of the Cabinet Ministers in Prussia to the King. — Characteristics of Bismarck. — His interview with M. Vilbort. — His views on the German character. — Progress of Germany in the last eighty years. — Education of the sovereign by the people. — Bismarck the embodiment of two contradictory principles.

If we were to judge by the attitude of the German people towards Count Bismarck, at the outbreak of the war of 1866, we should not only be inclined to deny him all mental superiority, but we should be forced to admit that, after four years passed in preparing the ground for the struggle, he had achieved a result exactly opposite to his intention. For he had himself destroyed his last chance of obtaining that moral support which the sympathy of the country would have given him. But we should never get to a comprehension of the true motives of those arduous labours, of those endless moves on the political chess-board, were we to content ourselves with
explaining them as strenuous endeavours by which Count Bismarck sought to conciliate public opinion. His mind was bent on very different things. His practical way of handling great questions led him to look for support elsewhere than in the theoretic concurrence of the masses; and whenever we see him in the act of some apparent contradiction we must expect that he will appeal to certain mysterious difficulties, which may be said to lie in a choice between two evils, — the less being always in his eyes that requiring the sacrifice of the moral co-operation of the country to the practical co-operation of the powers that be.

So much is certain, that at the decisive moment he obtained no moral support from the nation. Of what use had it been to him that he had led astray and compromised Austria, by setting the Diet and public opinion in hostility to her? On the day on which he accused the Court of Vienna of wishing for war, and of arming with that purpose, the cruel irony, the utter defiance of common sense, forced every impartial mind to defend Austria against the insinuation which would have been odious if it had not been absurd. When Prussia first marched against Austria, the German people, always ready to take political matters on their sentimental side, looked upon the struggle as that of an innocent victim with a wicked aggressor. The mass of the nation had steadily repelled
the idea of this war as something morally impossible. The consequence was that, in the presence of the actual accomplishment of the fact, public opinion stood confounded.

There were people so wedded to their conviction that, even after Prussia had fought several battles, they still persisted that she would never venture on such a war. Public opinion was, therefore, placed under the necessity of performing one of the most difficult strategic movements, namely a change of front on the field of battle.

The first to make up their minds to this were those who regarded the question as altogether simplified by the fact that war had broken out. From that moment, they no longer asked who was the aggressor, nor who had most offended the liberal party. They saw in Prussia and Austria simply the embodiments of two principles; and decided for Prussia. In the second rank came those to whom the question of existence, which was being fought out between the two governments, was not a determining motive. They had first to have their eyes opened, to see that all the intelligence and power were on one side, and all the incapability on the other, before they could understand which of the two promised political life and future. The adhesion of these came with victory. The last to be convinced were those who required the physical assurance of a new order of things — thrones overturned, North Germany endowed with a constitution, the South
summoned to an early reunion — to confess that a great step had been made in advance, and that arresting Germany in its onward course towards true and perfect unity was a thing no longer to be thought of. The number of these last is not yet exhausted. It augments from day to day.

Although Count Bismarck was far from representing the national cause in all its purity, we must at least recognise the fact that he had developed wonderfully since the commencement of his political career, and had climbed to a much higher point of view. The man, who dictated the peace of Nicolsburg, and almost on the battlefield proclaimed the necessity of new railways, of fresh channels for commerce, of free trade, was evidently not the same, man who, on the 15th October 1849, in a discussion on the freedom of trades, demanded that the number of apprentices in each trade should be limited, and that the guilds should have the power of regulating qualities and prices. And he was certainly, after the alliance with Victor Emmanuel, no longer an adherent of his old party, which had presented a golden shield to the King of Naples. In 1849, he had shown himself the most resolute opponent of an amnesty; in 1866 he wrested from the King, on the night before the entry of the troops into Berlin, the decree granting a free pardon to all political offenders.

The admission that he has a flexible mind, accessible to ideas of progress, is all the more important, since we
cannot well deny to a man of his penetration the ability to foresee the consequences of his own actions. It must have been clear to him — of this no doubt can exist — that to free Venice was to attack Rome; that to defeat Austria was to undermine the Concordat and raise Hungary; that to unite Germany was to break with legitimacy.

If he, however, was determined not to shrink from the consequences of his undertaking, those with whom he had first to deal were animated by a very different spirit.

We meet with no allusion to this state of things in the earlier confessions of Count Bismarck, made previously to his entering the Ministry, but after that time we find them occurring, and ever increasingly dwelt on as his policy advances towards its final consummation.

The moment had come for him to count upon the effective strength of the nation; to assure himself of the co-operation of the advanced patriots and of the enthusiasm of the liberal party. For it was necessary to take into consideration the possibility of a defeat. He had had no personal relations with the opposition during the conflict which arose out of the army and budget questions. But in the beginning of June 1866, when war had become inevitable, he endeavoured to enter into negotiations with the most influential and intelligent of his opponents.

He invited them to private confidential interviews,
in which he asked them, whether they would vote the necessary supplies for the war, and whether they would support him in the event of a reverse. He besought them to abandon their hostile attitude for a season, and to think only of Germany. They pointed out to him that it was he himself, who had opened an abyss between the people and the King by the insensate way in which he had persistently defied public opinion, and had rendered all confidence in the Government impossible. Count Bismarck did not dispute the justice of these complaints, but he intrenched himself behind the inextricable difficulties of his position, with a royal master opposed to all modern ideas, surrounded by ultra-aristocratic influences, and, at his advanced age, little inclined to change his opinions. He conjured them for the time being to think only of the State and of their common country; and explained that, without indulging in vain illusions, they might hope better things from the future. He did not disguise that some of his colleagues in the Cabinet deserved dismissal, and that the government had done wrong not to show more consideration for the wishes of the Chamber on the army question; that he, for his own part, would have wished to attain both these objects, but that his influence was over-rated; he had to contend with insuperable difficulties. The King, he said, would hear nothing of any step towards reconciliation which would have neces-
sitated any reduction whatever in the army; and it would have been mere waste of time to ask him to alter the composition of the Cabinet.

Under these circumstances, the minister said, he had been obliged to sacrifice everything to the great object which he had been pursuing for eight years. This object was the expulsion of Austria from Germany, the primary condition of German unity. To have assisted Austria in the Italian war would have been suicidal, and it was by saying this to the King, in so many words, that he had dissuaded him from that course, which for a short time had seemed likely to be adopted. "My greatest triumph", he exclaimed several times in the course of these interviews, "is to have obtained from the King of Prussia the declaration of war against Austria, and the permission to convocate a German parliament. Leave the rest to the future, and do not ask me why I could not achieve this, my highest aim, without turning the Chamber and the Press against me. There are great things which no discussions or votes can give us. To obtain them, we must have five hundred thousand bayonets."

It was not difficult to Count Bismarck to convince those to whom he unbosomed himself in these most interesting avowals, that his resignation could be ill afforded at this critical juncture; as for himself, he added, he could not increase the difficulties of his position by adopting
a policy radically different from that of the last four years. "I can resign," he said, "but I cannot expose myself to the appearance of changing from one day to another like a weathercock, especially since it would let loose upon me all those who are hostile to my foreign policy."

Explanations of this kind, given in a tone of winning frankness, paved the way to an understanding between the Minister-President and an influential part of the opposition, which decided to support him, not after the victory had been won, but long before even the thunder of the cannon at Sadowa had come to the assistance of his arguments.

If any one were to collect the explanations, given by Bismarck in diplomatic notes and official speeches since he has been in power, he would find in all of them the substance of the conversation just described — the same train of ideas closely linked together: the will to regenerate the political body of the state, subordinated to the necessity of having great material power at disposal, in order to drive Austria from the field; and at the same time, parallel with this main principle, the unexpressed thought always recurring, that the greatest difficulty lay in winning over the King to his side. The problem was the more delicate that the King, honest in his way, always thought he was within the bounds of the constitution even when he was most egregiously violating it. He thought it
monstrous that the Opposition should presume to interfere in the choice of his ministers and to watch over the expenditure incurred in supporting the army, though this did not in the least prevent him from protesting his unshakeable fidelity to the constitution. Up to 1848, he had seen but two things in the State,—the Crown and the Army; and his opinions were considered to be so imbued with absolutism that, at the time of the revolution, the Court itself had begged him to withdraw out of the reach of public resentment. For a long while, the words "National Property" were to be seen inscribed on his palace in large letters. He was at that time only heir presumptive to the throne. The bitter memory of those days made him the natural chief of the counter-revolution (reaction). He commanded the campaign against the Baden insurrection in 1849, and with his own hand signed the numerous death-warrants which threw such dark shadows over that event,—not allowing himself to be softened either by the celebrity of the leaders, or by the integrity of the citizens, or by the tender age of the youths whose blood the military tribunals demanded. Since that period, whenever, as has happened from time to time, the murmurs of the Berlin populace have reached the doors of the Royal Palace, the Prussian sovereigns have been wont to say they were well aware that the revolutionists menaced them with the fate of Louis XVI.
Does any one imagine that it was an easy task to erect, on such a foundation, an alliance with Italy and Hungary against the Hapsburgs and the Guelphs? The King, besides being under the dominion of doubts created by his legitimist sentiments, was also influenced by that horror of war which filled the liberal party. The Queen, a grand-daughter of the Mæcenas-like Prince of Weimar, more accessible than the King to modern ideas, shared the feeling of the liberals on the question of war. Count Bismarck, therefore, saw the necessity imposed upon himself of overcoming, not only the King’s own sentiments, but also those inspired by his immediate and most intimate surroundings. Even after war had been declared, the Court still continued to negotiate with Austria, behind the back of the Prime Minister, but with the cognisance of the King. Bound to face all the difficulties of this position, Bismarck was undoubtedly always readier to sacrifice the claims of the country than those of the crown; still he never remained quite deaf to the objections urged on the opposite side. “I pass my life”, he used to say, “in acting as a buffer between the King and the liberals”.

This dualism was not apparent only in the difference of view existing between the King and his Prime Minister, but also in the perhaps still greater divergence between the latter and his chief colleagues, who were conservatives
to the backbone. This difference of opinions in the midst of the same government, which elsewhere would be quite inadmissible, has nothing in it that clashes with the traditions of the Court of Berlin. The Prussian state is, above all, the personal work of Frederick-William the First and his son, Frederick the Great. The whole system bears to this day the impress of those two powerful minds. Both were sole and absolute masters of the Kingdom, keeping in their own hands the general supervision of affairs, and jealously guarding against the ministers extending their acquaintance with affairs beyond their own departments.*

On the death of Frederick the Great, the administration of finance was found to be dispersed over so many different offices, that no general survey was possible; and the absurd report got spread about, that the King had destroyed the accounts on purpose to embarrass his successor. His father had never permitted the foreign ambassadors to see a minister; and Frederick followed this example. Nor did the ministers ever meet together in council, or consult one another; often for long periods together, they did not even see the King; they communicated with him simply in writing, and that only on matters of secondary importance. It is reported of Fre-

* Twesten, der Preussische Beamtenstaat.
derick-William the Third who died in 1840, that he let ten years pass without once receiving his enlightened minister Herr von Altenstein. Under his successor, the last King, it was not uncommon to hear a minister complaining that he could not obtain audience of his sovereign to report some matter to him. Under Frederick William the Second the contemporary of the French Revolution, the numerous favourites, composed of adventurers of all kinds, looked down on the ministers with utter contempt; and even during the present reign, the after effects of these anomalies have only lately begun to disappear. It is not more than two years since a number of officers of high rank, who composed the so-called military cabinet, a cabinet existing — quite contrary to the constitution — independently of the ministry, altogether the lamed the power of the latter. It was in this military cabinet that all great questions were discussed and decided. And one understands how this dualism accorded with the tradition preserved in the family of the Hohenzollerns, that the state consists of soldiers and that the soldiers are the King's. Even at the present day, it sometimes happens that the King interrupts his work with his ministers on a colonel being announced.

With these views and customs, it can be imagined what a constitutional government was, as interpreted by a King of Prussia, and it will be readily believed that
the sovereign looked upon his ministers as his personal servants, and did not admit that he had to consult anything but his own taste in selecting and dismissing them. If it was pointed out to him that this or that minister exasperated the nation without benefiting the Crown; that he was not only a scourge to the country but indolent and incapable, the King rejoined that the man's manners did not displease him, and that he had got accustomed to working with him. If the answer was not accepted as conclusive, the King complained that they wanted to take away a faithful servant from him — from him an old man of seventy; and if this consideration was also unavailing, he got angry and turned on his heel.

In the year 1866, the ministry was composed of three different elements. Count Bismarck and Herr von Roon represented the enlightened, active aristocracy, comparatively accessible to the ideas of the time and of progress. Beside them was Herr von der Heydt, the minister of finance, a man of great ability in his special line, who had survived all governments, professing liberal or reactionary views according as circumstances served. Finally, there was the pure feudal system, represented by the Minister of the Interior, Count Eulenburg, and the Minister of Justice, Count zur Lippe, both in great favour at Court. The Ministers of Public Wor-
ship, of Trade and of Agriculture played but a subordinate part.

Those who refuse to recognise in Count Bismarck even after 1866, anything more than the chief of the European counter-revolution have always endeavoured to deny the secret conflict which he has for a long time past sustained with the more conservative of his colleagues. In especial, they have always maintained that the hostility shown by the Minister President to Count zur Lippe, the Minister of Justice, was a mere piece of acting, and have made it a butt for their wit.* But events have completely contradicted this opinion. For the keeper of the Seals, after having been attacked, blamed, and abused by the Minister-President, in a public sitting of Parliament, on the 10th of October 1867, was at last dismissed, principally no doubt in order to put a stop to the insensate prosecutions against the freedom of debate in Parliament. Since then a fresh incident has brought the conflict between Bismarck and Count Eulenburg to a crisis. The question of the Hanoverian provincial funds undoubtedly seemed for an instant to have shaken the position of the Minister of the Interior, and on the same occasion the rupture between Count Bismarck and the whole of

* Apropos of this the word “Zwei-Seelen-Ministerium” (Ministry with two souls) was invented, in parody of a verse well known in Germany.
the ultra-conservative party became clearly manifest. In addition to these facts, we could adduce many others, of less weight but equally significant, to show that the embarrassments created by the reactionary tendencies of the court, were no mere chimeras of Bismarck's, and that there was considerable truth in the assurance, made by him over and over again in private conversations, that his power in home matters bore no proportion to the part he played in foreign politics.

Is it to be understood by this, that in the midst of a reactionary court and under a more or less despotic government, Count Bismarck represented justice and liberty? After all that has been said, we could hardly be suspected of defending such a paradox. Moreover, in history, as in a novel, it is better to represent the characters in action than to describe them. We need only cast a strong light upon them from all sides, and they will save us the trouble of analysing them. Count Bismarck lends himself to this mode of treatment all the more readily that there is nothing of the actor about him, as is so often the case with eminent politicians. Not, however, that blind confidence is to be placed in the frankness with which he is accustomed to startle the world. All who have had dealings with him, thoroughly well know how much faith they may put in those surprisingly confidential revelations, which are calculated to bewilder, now by an excess of
sincerity, now by an excess in the opposite direction, according as circumstances dictate. When he dissembles, he exaggerates so much that he overshoots his mark; and it may be safely said, that he has oftener deceived his opponents by speaking the truth than by denying it. Did he succeed in duping any one, either when, in his diplomatic circulars of April and May 1866, he bewailed the warlike preparations of bellicose Austria, who had made up her mind to fall upon inoffensive Prussia at all costs? Or when he affirmed before the Chambers that in governing without a budget he considered himself acting strictly within the pale of the constitution, — he who afterwards demanded the bill of indemnity? He may deny without much scruple, but he denies also without much art. In spite of his boldness of assertion, we feel that he is laughing in his sleeve. To an opponent he can be provoking, malicious, even malignant; but he is not treacherous; he offends against morality and justice, but against good taste, by pathetic appeals, never. He is not of the tribe of paragraph-writers, who imagine that the world is governed by fine phrases, and that public evils are to be mastered by wrapping them up in pompous commonplaces. On the contrary, he is one of those who delight in heightening a contrast by exaggeration, and who thus overshoot their mark. What induced him to confess his principle of Blood and Iron at that Committee meeting? Those who really
act upon such principles do not boast of them, but rather are full of professions of benignity and human kindness.

His contempt for appearances extends even to a defective state of hat and necktie. Something about him reminds one of that mixture of insolence and good humour, the German student, with his bumptious, pugnacious, jovial, and yet, in the inmost recesses of the soul, some what sentimental nature. He told a friend after Sadowa that the sight of the ghastly battle-field had robbed him for some days of all enjoyment in his triumph. A shade of melancholy occasionally appears in his letters. At the end of the letter from St. Petersburg which has been quoted, he says, in complaining of the suspicions of the Kreuzzzeitung party: "The inquisitor is most stern to those on his own side, and friends who have long drunk from the same cup are more unjust than enemies. I am content it should be so; we are not intended to depend on others, and I am grateful for everything that drives me back on myself." The following sounds almost Ossianic: "I yearn for my home on the Quai Anglais (in St. Petersburg) with its quieting outlook on the ice of the Neva." The joke has often been told of the olive-leaf, which he one day drew from his cigar-case, saying to a member of the liberal party that he had picked it at Avignon to offer to the opposition, but that the moment was not yet come, and that he kept it for a future time.
He is a great smoker, and this habit contributes to the recklessness of his appearance. Whilst he was ambassador at Frankfort, his particular enemy, Herr von Rechberg, called a council of the members of the Diet at his house, and received them in his dressing-gown. Count Bismarck, to pay him in his own coin, immediately drew his cigar-case out of his pocket, took a cigar, offered a second to his neighbour, and said, whilst lighting his own, and without waiting for an answer, "You have no objection, dear Count"? This levity which is apt sometimes to give offence is connected with the activity and restlessness of his mind, which desires to do, to see, and to know everything for itself. He tormented the very life out of the Chambers and the press. But as soon as he thought he could win over a deputy or a journalist by a confidence or an explanation, he took pains to attract him, and on such occasions he not seldom entered in the easiest way, and often without the slightest reserve, into conversations concerning the machinery of the State. In 1849, he sent a challenge to the editor of the Kladderadatsch (the Berlin Punch). Later on, during his ambassadorship at the Diet, the public strongly suspected that he wrote secretly for that paper, particularly whenever a specially good skit appeared on an Austrian diplomatist.

But it was in committees of the House, that he liked best to let himself go just as the humour, now reckless and
defiant, now winning and genial might seize him. The unconstrained talk which he could indulge in with closed doors suited his disposition much better than public oratory. "At such times", reports a witness to these discussions, "everything passed before our eyes in kaleidoscopic confusion, and with such rapidity that it was impossible to follow. There was a strange contrast between the grave and matter of fact talk of the commissioners and the brilliant rattle of the Minister with its strong sprinkling of foreign words."

To complete the picture, we must supplement the testimony given by facts and lookers-on by the document in which the Prime-Minister himself undertook one day to give the public, and more particularly the French public, an account of himself. The confession is not one which can be unreservedly accepted; but although we must not forget that he is a witness in his own cause, we cannot, if we are to form an opinion of Count Bismarck, altogether refuse to hear him when he wishes to explain himself. He is of course not on oath, and we shall reserve to ourselves the liberty of accepting his statement with caution.

A French journalist, M. Vilbort, who had accompanied the Prussian army during the campaign, begged to be allowed to have an audience of the Prime-Minister before his return to France, and an account of this in-
terview appeared in the "Siècle" for the 10th of June 1866. However much the writer may have endeavoured to preserve his independence of mind, both during and after this visit, still we must presuppose that he would not have taken the step of publishing the conversation without assuring himself of the concurrence of the Minister. We are therefore safe in saying that in the following pages it is Count Bismarck himself who speaks to the reader. But the air of lofty patronage with which the French journalist makes known his approbation of the German people is of course entirely the journalists. M. Vilbort's report runs as follows:

"On my arrival in Berlin, M. de Bismarck was described to me as quite inaccessible. People said to me: "Do not attempt to see him, you will be merely throwing away your time. He sees no one, but lives retired in the recesses of his study, shut in with doubly locked doors. He leaves it only to go to the King, and it is with the greatest difficulty that his most intimate friends can get access to him."

Nevertheless, I ventured to ask for an audience of the Prime Minister of the King of Prussia. M. de Bismarck immediately sent word that he would receive me that evening.

On entering that study, where the peace of Europe hangs as it were by a thread, but which I found was guarded by no bolt, I saw before me a man of high stature and with a strongly marked face; on his broad, high, and full forehead, I perceived, with some surprise, the presence of much benevolence blended with obstinacy. Monsieur de Bismarck is fair, somewhat bald, wears a military moustache, and has in his speech more of the bluntness of the soldier than the caution of the diplomatist. He has the air of a nobleman and a courtier, and the charm given by the most finished politeness. He came towards me, took me by the hand, led me to an armchair and offered me a cigar.

Count Bismarck.
“Monsieur le ministre’, I said to him after a little preliminary conversation, “I, like many of my countrymen, am most anxious to enlighten myself, as thoroughly as possible, on the true interests of Germany. Allow me, therefore, to speak to you with perfect frankness. I willingly grant that, in her foreign policy, Prussia seems to be pursuing ends with which the French nation eminently sympathises, namely the complete emancipation of Italy from the Austrian yoke, and the establishment of a united Germany, based on the principle of universal suffrage. But between your foreign policy and your home policy, is there not a flagrant contradiction? You declare a national parliament to be the only means by which Germany can be regenerated, — the only form of government by which she can work out her future destiny, — whilst, at the same time, you treat the second Chamber at Berlin in the same fashion as Louis XIV, when he entered the Houses of Parliament whip in hand. In France, we do not admit the possibility of any intimate union between absolutism and democracy. And to speak the whole truth, I may tell you that in Paris your plan of a national parliament has not been taken seriously. It is generally regarded simply as a cleverly-devised engine of war, and it is commonly thought that, when it has served your purpose, you will yourself get rid of it, and that too the moment it becomes inconvenient or useless.”

“A la bonne heure, you go at once to the root of things”, replied M. de Bismarck. “In France, I know, I am as unpopular as in Germany. Everywhere I am considered responsible for a state of things that I have not created, but which has been forced upon me, as upon every one else. I am the scapegoat of public opinion; but that does not much trouble me. I pursue the course which I believe to be beneficial to my country, and to Germany, with a perfectly easy conscience. As to the means, I have used those which were within my reach in default of better. Much might be said as to the internal condition of Prussia. In order to judge of it impartially it is necessary to study thoroughly, and to know to the very bottom, the peculiar character of the people of this country. Whilst France and Italy are compact wholes, each animated
by one spirit and one sentiment, Germany is given up to the spirit of individualism. Here everyone lives apart in his own little corner; with his own opinion; with his wife and children round him; always in a state of antagonism to the government as well as to his neighbour; judging everything from his own point of view and never from that of other. The sentiment of individualism and the necessity for contradiction are developed to an inconceivable degree in the German. Show him an open door and, rather than go through it, he will obstinately determine to force a passage through the wall at its side. No government, whatever it may do, will ever be popular in Prussia. The majority in the country will always be opposed to it. Simply in virtue of being the government, and of holding authority over the individual, it is doomed to be constantly opposed by the moderates, and decried and despised by the ultras. This has been the common fate of all successive governments since the beginning of the present dynasty. Neither liberal ministries, nor reactionary ministries, have found favour with our politicians."

And, passing in review the various reigns and governments which have existed since the foundation of the monarchy, M. de Bismarck applied himself to the task of proving to me, in brilliant, graphic language, sparkling with wit, that the Auerswalds and the Manteuffels had shared the same fate as himself, and that Frederick-William III., surnamed the Just, no less than Frederick-William IV., had wasted his pains in trying to satisfy the Prussian nation. "They shouted", he added, "at the victories of Frederick the Great, but they rubbed their hands together at the thought of being delivered from their tyrant. Nevertheless, with this antagonism there co-exists a deep attachment to the royal house. No sovereign-no minister, no government can win the favour of Prussian in individualism. Yet all cry, from the depths of their hearts,—God save the King! And they obey when the King commands."

"Yet some say, M. le Ministre, that this discontent is capable of growing into rebellion."

"The government does not believe that this is to be feared,
and does not fear it. Our revolutionists are not formidable. Their hostility exhausts itself in invectives against the Prime Minister, but they respect the King. It is I who have done all the evil, and it is to me alone that they wish evil. Perhaps they might see, if they were only a little more impartial, that I have not acted otherwise, simply because I could not. In Prussia's present position in Germany, and with Austria opposed to her, an army is imperatively necessary. In Prussia it is the only force capable of discipline. A Prussian who got his arm broken on a barricade, would go home crestfallen, and his wife would look upon him as a madman. But in the army, he is an admirable soldier, and fights like a lion for the honour of his country. A carping policy has not chosen to recognise the necessity imposed on us by circumstances of maintaining a large armed force — evident as that necessity is. As to my own course, I could not hesitate; all the influences of birth and education led me to the side of the King. The King however clung to the idea of military organisation as firmly as to his crown, because he was convinced heart and soul of its indispensible necessity. No one could make him yield or vacillate on that point. At his age — he is seventy — and with his traditions, people persist in an idea; above all if they feel it to be good. Besides on the subject of the army, I entirely agree with his views.

"Sixteen years ago, I was living as a country gentleman, when the King appointed me the envoy of Prussia at the Frankfort Diet. I had been brought up to admire, I might almost say to worship, Austrian policy. Much time however was not needed to dispel my youthful illusions with regard to Austria, and I became her declared opponent. The humiliation of my country; Germany sacrificed to the interests of a foreign nation; a crafty and perfidious line of policy; — these were not things calculated to give me satisfaction. I did not know that the future would call upon me to take any important part in public events, but from that period I conceived the idea, which at the present day I am still working out — the idea of withdrawing Germany from Austrian pressure; at any rate that part of Germany whose tone of thought, religion, manners, and interests, identify her destinies with those of Prussia — I speak of
Northern Germany. In the plan which I brought forward, there has been no question of overthrowing thrones, of taking a duchy from one ruler, or some petty domain from another. The King, moreover, would lend no hand to such schemes. And then there are all the interests of relationships, cousinships, a host of antagonistic influences against which I have had to sustain a daily and hourly warfare.

“But neither all this, nor the opposition which I have had to struggle against in Prussia, could prevent my devoting myself, heart and soul, to the idea of a Northern Germany, constituted in her logical and natural form under the ægis of Prussia. To attain this end, I would brave all dangers, exile — the scaffold itself. I said to the Crown Prince, whose education and natural tendencies incline him rather to the side of parliamentary government: what matter if they hang me, provided the rope by which I am hung bind this new Germany firmly to your throne!”

“May I also ask, M. le ministre, how you reconcile the principle of freedom, which is embodied in the existence of a national parliament, with the despotic treatment to which the Berlin Chamber has had to submit? How, above all, have you been able to induce the King, the representative of the principle of divine right, to accept universal suffrage which is par excellence the principle of democracy.”

M. de Bismarck answered with animation:

“That is a victory achieved after four years of struggle. When the King sent for me, four years ago, the situation of affairs was most critical. His Majesty laid before me a long list of liberal concessions, but none of them touched upon the military question. I said to the King: ‘I accept; and the more liberal the government can prove itself the stronger it will be.’ The Chamber has been obdurate on one side and the Crown on the other. In the conflict, I have remained by the King. My veneration for him, all my antecedents, all the traditions of my family made that course my duty. But that I am, either by nature or from principle, an adversary of national representation, a born enemy of parliamentary government, is a perfectly gratuitous supposition. During those discussions when the
Chamber of Berlin set itself in opposition to a line of policy, which circumstances had imposed on Prussia as a necessity of the most pressing kind, I did not choose to separate myself from the King. But no one has a right to insult me by the supposition that I am only mystifying Germany, in bringing forward my project of a parliament. Should the day come, when my task being accomplished, I find it impossible to reconcile my duties to my King with my duties to my country, I shall know how to blot myself out of political existence without denying the work I have done."

"Such are, substantially," says M. Vilbort in conclusion, "the political views which M. de Bismarck expressed to me. His thought, as conveyed by my pen, may be somewhat weakened or somewhat unduly emphasized, but I have endeavoured to render it as faithfully as possible."

In this sprightly dialogue, Count Bismarck advanced theories on the nature of the German character, which in more than one point cannot be accepted without reservation. At the same time, we must admit that amongst the traits on which he lays stress, there is one of which he, more than any other man, is qualified to judge; and he rightly assumed that the mind of his French hearer would be specially open to its consideration. This is the question, how much weight is to be attached in the progress of German development to the intervention of the revolutionary element.

And it is in this question that we must seek for a practical explanation of all that has happened during the last two years. The first ground for consideration in judging between the Prussian Minister and the nation must be
supposed stated somewhat as follows: "Whereas, whether from natural inclination or from habit, whether for their happiness or their misfortune, the German people have hitherto in no way given proof of a vocation for revolutions . . . . ." Count Bismarck himself was particularly well able to discover the want of this natural inclination, for he unquestionably possessed the revolutionary element, so wanting in the masses with whom he had to cope. It cannot be doubted for a moment that he is a born revolutionist. For a man is born a revolutionist, as he is born a legitimist, by the conformation of the brain, though chance alone determines the exact direction which the revolutionary tendencies shall take. When we hear this aristocrat proclaiming at every opportunity the value of an accomplished fact, — the remedy of Blood, Iron, and Fire, — are we not forcibly reminded of those famous thunderers of a former epoch, who used to say that revolutions were not made with rose-water; that bread and steel would carry you to the end of the world? The revolutionist is he who believes himself to be in possession of a heroic remedy for the attainment of the highest good.

This conviction was one day expressed by Count Bismarck to Herr Virchow in the words: "You perhaps imagine that you understand the national policy better than I do; but I know that I understand better than you or
the Chamber what I call political policy (die politische Politik).”

And the further he advanced, the more this feeling of assurance gained upon him. His mode of proceeding might be compared with that of engineers, when they build a railway-bridge over a river. Before they trust the fate of travellers to it, they load it with a weight greater than any which it will ever be called upon to bear, and then they observe how many millimetres the supports have sunk. In the same way, Count Bismarck had burdened the country with an immense weight of arbitrary rules, and the country had indicated the pressure only by a movement of the slightest possible dimensions, which statics would take no note of. The trial was made, and the train could now securely carry over the King and his soldiers, with their bag and baggage. From this moment, the choice was made of the means by which the problem of German unity was to be solved.

That which Count Bismarck said to the French journalist in the confidence of a tête-à-tête, was one day flung in the face of the Chamber by his colleague, Herr von Roon. A deputy was alluding to the possibility of a general insurrection when the Minister of War, turning to the majority on the opposition benches, cried: "I see here many earnest and honest faces, but not one
which could inspire me with fear of such a thing.” — And Count Bismarck seldom let an opportunity pass without showing how the democrats had been defeated in 1848, owing to their want of energy and practical ability, as well as to their childlike trust in a theoretic propaganda.

It would, nevertheless, be a grave error were we to judge of the degree of development of the German nation exclusively from the point of view just enunciated. A personal and monarchical government on the one side and obedience on the other, exist (in Prussia, as well as, though less apparently, in the smaller states) side by side with an intellectual development, and a general moral sense, surpassed by no country in the world. The statesman whose successes have jeopardised the people’s good name is certainly least inclined to dispute this intellectual and moral worth. He once alluded to it in his sarcastic way, when he put forward in a parliamentary committee the assertion that Germany was perhaps too advanced to bear a constitution. But what he, with his impatient desire for action, and his practical nature, had his eye mainly fixed upon, was the then existing status quo.

This great, perhaps exaggerated, estimate of the importance of a status quo as a basis for operations, formed a striking contrast to the views of an essentially idealistic
opposition. The more a nation devotes itself to intellectual work, the greater becomes its danger of underrating both the strength of existing ties, which bind it to its past, and the power exercised by tradition. The advanced part of the nation, a very considerable part, with that craving for knowledge, and those cosmopolitan sympathies, which characterise it, has lived not only its own life, but, in thought, that of all other civilised nations.

After having sympathetically taken part in all the great reform movements, Germany thought she could take up the broken thread of general liberation at the point where other nations had dropped it. But the axiom of political economy, that capital is nothing more than accumulated labour, applies equally to the law of human development. The more or less fruitful result of revolutionary undertakings depends, above all, on the inner work from which they have been evolved. The notion that one may profit by a simple appropriation of the ideas of a neighbour, is founded on a radical error. But Germany has never gone through a revolution of her own. She has the fame of having established Protestantism and developed philosophical freedom; but, as regards political liberty, she has never created anything original, independent, or permanent. She cannot in this respect compare with England, nor with America, France, Switzerland, Holland or Belgium. She is the youngest
of political nations; and the year 1866 brought her for the first time a great organic change without any impulse from without. It is true this impulse came from above and not from below, from the people; but still it came at least from within. Nations are in the lowest stage of progress when they are driven forward only by the blows of fate. Thus Russia after the fall of Sebastopol abandoned serfdom; and France after Leipzig and Waterloo, and Austria each time after the defeats of 1859 and 1866, returned to constitutional government.

The same rule applied formerly to Germany. The hostile invasion under the first Republic awoke her out of her sleep. Buonaparte performed an incalculable service to Germany when he swept away her three hundred rulers, leaving only thirty in their place. Since that time, it has only been on occasions when, as in 1830 and 1848, the echo of the Parisian revolutions frightened her Princes, that Germany has found strength within herself for united opposition.

The struggle of constitutionalism carried on in Prussia from 1859 to 1866 by the Chambers and the country against the principle of an absolute monarchy, presents for the first time the spectacle of a great, independent, and enduring endeavour, eminently calculated to forward the political education of the people. The fruits of this struggle, in spite of Count Bismarck’s final
triumph, have not been lost. The liberal party can fairly take credit for a large share of the progress made in Germany, which has been brought about by the man who had so harshly abused them.

But the more palpable are the results obtained by the assiduous labours of these last years, the more chimerical were the results upon which the radicals based their hopes of continuing the revolutionary rising of 1848. In spite of all intellectual progress, personal government did still practically prevail above, and blunt insensibility below. In this state of things, Count Bismarck did not long hesitate, but ventured his whole stake on personal government.

Does this justify the conclusion that his victory was but the victory of military despotism? This is precisely the mistake made by those who take account only of the external train of events, and discern no difference between the end and the means. We will not here discuss the famous thesis that the end justifies the means, which the Jesuits are reproached with, and everybody acts upon; nor the question, whether the fruits of a victory, which has been gained by doubtful means, will not for a long time to come bear traces of their origin. It was not, from the first, our intention to show the advantages or disadvantages of the great changes which have recently taken place in Germany, the subject since then of such
numerous and lively discussions, but simply to get at the ideas, both individual and national, which formed the moving principle of those changes. Although the greatness of the result cannot fail to enlarge the horizon of those who are the first to derive profit and honour from it, yet it cannot be urged too often upon the nation that it should grant them only a limited confidence and should take the management of its affairs into its own hands as soon as possible.

Above all, let us not confound just apprehensions with that blind fear, by means of which certain radicals are seeking to set the French liberals against the work of German unity. "Take care", they say, "a military Prussia at the head of a new Germany means an approaching reactionary campaign against revolutionary France". Singular! Those who hold this language to France are the very same who declare that, if Germany had waited but a quarter of an hour longer, she would certainly have attained unity through a general rising of the people; and they reproach those who have given in their adhesion to the new order of things, with having too readily despaired of the revolutionary power of their country.

We must admire the naïveté that can so beautifully reconcile the most glaring contradictions! These highly imaginative politicians get up in the morning with the hope of seeing Germany at once enter upon the road
followed by the National Convention of 1793; they go to bed in the evening in the firm conviction that the same Germany will carry out the decrees of the Congress of Pillnitz. Thus it happens — always according to the theories of this profound science — that the same people perform, on the same day, things of the most opposite nature, just as chance may ordain. Had they been allowed to do as they pleased, Germany would have struck up the Marseillaise; unfortunately Count Bismarck was allowed to have his way, and immediately these same good people place their bayonets at the service of the Brunswick manifesto. If those who talk thus call themselves the friends of the people, it must be confessed that their friendship is not founded on respect. Such self-contradiction would be incredible, did we not know the extravagancies of which party spirit, with its in-fatuation for itself and its formulas, is capable in a moment of anger. In the eyes of all orthodoxies, by nature indolent and narrow, there is but one choice, and that lies between two extremes which are eternally the same: between the Council of Trent and heresy, between Danton and Coburg.

Those, however, who see the world as it is, recognise, though they may not be able to shut their eyes to the lingering existence in Germany of powers now obsolete, the results of eighty years’ progress. Eighty
years! It is a long time. And there are people who would incite the French by telling them that the Germany of the present day, is the Germany of the Congress of Pillnitz, and that the two countries, now as then, represent the two opposite poles, the modern spirit and the ancient spirit!

Is then France still, in her own eyes and in the eyes of the world, as she was eighty years ago, the embodiment of freedom; the only nation which has thought on social problems and has worked at their solution? Has not the German nation long since shared the light of modern civilisation? Does it not work earnestly at its political advancement? Is it an inert and unintelligent mass, which any knight errant of legitimacy could some fine morning let loose upon a France engaged on the work of regeneration?

The Coalition itself was beaten, as it deserved to be, and at that time there was no question either of a German or of a Prussian nation. And the Prussian monarchy defeated France only when the modern genius of Frederick the Great stood opposed to the disgraceful government of Louis XV, and when the nation rose against the insatiable Cæsarism of Napoleon I. If ever again a King of Prussia should be so misguided as to undertake a crusade against a France raising the standard of liberty, he would be left destitute of everything which
could give him the victory. He would be beaten, as he would deserve to be; as his predecessor was before him, and even more ignominiously than his predecessor. The progress of freedom in France has always been fraught with good to the liberal parties in Germany. Does any one imagine that, in the future, a Germany breathing the purer air of its new life, will let itself be drawn into a legitimist crusade?

In the eternal conflict of nations with their rulers, there are properly but two courses open to the people; either to overthrow the sovereign or to endeavour to educate him. Experience has proved that there is little practical value in the middle course — that of limiting the power of the sovereign by coercive measures, by charters and constitutional restrictions. Wherever the spirit of a government is in a state of more or less open revolt against the authority of public opinion, wherever the rulers consider themselves unjustly restrained by the limits of a constitution, the concentrated power at the head of the state will always have a chance of prevailing against the diffused power of the many. The real triumph of civilisation in monarchical states consists in raising the hereditary mind of the reigning families to a height where a conflict with the public opinion of their country seems to them a moral impossibility; an enormity which could not enter the mind of a rational human creature.
The German people, after suffering shipwreck in their feeble attempt at revolution, themselves perceived, that the past had not sufficiently developed the elementary powers, which are absolutely necessary for the complete success of a great national rising. They were forced, therefore, to content themselves with that other alternative of educating the existing rulers. It was hopeless to attempt this task with thirty ruling houses. A probability of success with one would be much. History and circumstances had for a century pointed to Prussia.

For half a century the Prussian monarchy had by its complete nullity reduced its adherents to despair. At last, in the year 1866, it gave evidences of powers of perception, of vigour, and of wholesome ambition. For all those who had the least comprehension of their country's policy, this was the moment to rally round, and support, the chief author of this memorable undertaking in his difficult, and — let us openly confess — venturesome task of infusing something of the modern spirit into the heart of an ancient military dynasty.

Is it not now apparent, that he who would attempt such a task with any prospect of success must combine in his own person the two elements which it was necessary to unite? He could not be other than a man of aristocratic descent and feelings and a man of powerful and flexible
mind, forced by the law of its own development to serve the cause of modern progress.

Clearly a wonderful apparition, this alliance of *junkerdom* with a national idea; of aristocracy with universal suffrage; of cavalier with roundhead. But, in fact, it was nothing more than the incarnation of the two contradictory principles, which it was necessary to reconcile, if the Prussian Monarchy was to be forced to enter on a new life.

Up to what point will this man be permitted to develop, in his own mind and in the Cabinet, which he governs by the weight of his personal influence, the germs of progress? Nothing leads us to infer that he has ceased to advance. More than once during the last two years he has given proof that he feels the necessity of following a policy of progress, so as to make head against the reaction which is on the watch for the moment to displace him. On the other hand, he has demanded considerable sacrifices from the liberal party to disarm the opposing influences which surround the throne. To maintain this equilibrium, he makes a too unsparing use of his weapon for frightening the liberals, — the threat of resignation. At the least contradiction — this is his old fault — he loses patience and levels a pistol at their breast, making their surrender a cabinet question. And then the opposition knowing
the secret weakness of its very difficult situation, shrinks from the responsibility of shaking the position of a man who forms the hyphen as it were between the past and the future.

All is compromise in this Janus-headed policy — all — its ruling mind included. Count Bismarck, in spite of the elasticity of his mind, will always be a fertile source of embarrassment to those who flatter themselves that they can perceive in him anything more than an aristocrat, who makes use of progress, not from the love of liberty, but for the purposes of policy.
Supplementary Chapters.

I.

The foregoing work, written in the Autumn of 1867, first appeared in Paris in the Révue Moderne in February, 1868. It was published in a separate form in the following June and has now been translated into German, without the Author having felt called upon to make more than a few slight alterations in the text when revising the translation. Whether the fact that he has found nothing to improve, implies excellence in the original conception, or a present want of critical judgment, he must leave to the reader to decide. He feels, however, that the lapse of a year, important and eventful from many points of view, has furnished additional material which will be useful, if not for the correction of previous views, at any rate for their completion.

Three circumstances have beyond all others contributed to this result. The writer had the opportunity of
seeing events from a nearer point of view; events explained themselves as they proceeded; and the prime movers in the events gave explanations which served to place these in their true light. Let us see what additional insight each of these three circumstances will afford us.

The personal question is soon disposed of. For the first time, after a long involuntary absence, the writer was enabled to pass the summer of 1866 in Germany, and thenceforward kept himself in close sympathy with the re-awakened life of political opinion. Materials for more exact judgment of events, past and present, were furnished by his own observation, by a study of all attainable sources of information, and by personal intercourse with many men who, through their position in the van of German political life, had gained extensive knowledge of men and things. In this way, he was able to form a conscientious opinion without any assistance from specially confidential communications; and while saved from the temptation of revealing secrets, he could rejoice in the privilege of speaking his mind freely, without the restraint of any personal obligation. Now, although the fact of becoming a member of the Customs-Parliament, cannot be regarded as opening a sanctuary closed to ordinary mortals, yet the various relations of the position would naturally entail revelations, of which it would be very unsuitable to make any public use. This con-
sideration had a large share in inducing the writer to leave his work in the form originally given to it in the Autumn of 1867, on the coast of Normandy, when he was far from the seat of the events, and had never seen the chief characters in his story.

If we now proceed to the explanations given by the events, we shall find that they have very distinctly shown the correctness of the fundamental ideas of our sketch.

One chief reason for attempting this work, was the feeling that it cannot be a matter of indifference with what eyes France and Germany regard each other. Now, experience has shown that the questions immediately affecting German development, are visibly influenced by French politics, and that therefore nothing is at the moment of such vital importance to us, as the attitude of France towards us. It is true, that official France, with which we have practically to deal, is not the same as the French public to which a theoretic study like the present appeals, but still no one will maintain that the foreign policy of France, especially in our case, is entirely uninfluenced by public opinion. On the contrary, it daily becomes more dependent on public opinion, and shows its dependence, not by doing the will of the nation, but by its attempts to escape down by-paths; and these by-paths, as is well known, lead at the first turning to the Rhine.

Even, if it be true that a ruler who wishes to bring
about a war, is never at a loss for an excuse, the government of Napoleon no longer stands firmly enough, either at home or abroad, for any mere pretext to suffice, for undertaking the responsibility of a struggle the cost of which cannot be estimated. There always exists, therefore, a strong tie of connection between the attitude of public opinion in France towards us, and our internal affairs.

If it were possible (unfortunately it is not so) to gain over this opinion entirely to our side, we should not require to give any heed to the intentions of the French Cabinet; just as, on the other hand, the whole South-German agitation of people, priest, and prince, would have died away without result, had it not been upheld by the universal excitement of the French people.

It may, to return to the testimony of later events, be regarded as a notorious fact, that the debate on the Address in the Customs-Parliament would not have led to an anti-national result under the influence of the Prussian ministerial party, had it not been for this regard to the opinion of France; and it may be affirmed with equal truth, that the egregious folly of a half North-German half South-German Kingdom of Hesse is to be ascribed, not to the line of the Main, but to the point of the French sword.

Further, the facts have given plenty of fresh proofs,
that the key to our internal events is to be found in the relative strength of the ruling political opinions in Germany. The result of our whole investigation might be summed up thus: that the urgent problem of uniting Germany was to be solved either by conservative or by revolutionary methods, and that the method actually employed, was precisely the one which met the demands of the majority of the nation. The elections for the Reichstag and the Customs-Parliament were, notwithstanding the few exceptions, which may be said to prove the rule, as free from Government influence and bribery (the influence of the Priests is an element of the people’s thought) as those of any country, whether on this side or on the other side of the Atlantic; and yet the various conservative elements displayed so great and even, as it appears, so increasing a preponderance, that we must be struck with party-blindness to attribute this melancholy result to the conservatism at the summit, instead of to the conservatism at the base of the social scale.

The majority of the German nation, which is so much abused by the high and mighty chiefs of the popular party, might reply to them as the dyer about to take an oath did to the Judge. “Witness”, said the Judge, “take off your gloves.” — “Judge”, rejoined the dyer, “put on yourspectacles”. We cannot free ourselves from the reaction by the use of hasty and superficial remedies; we must slowly change the nation’s
vital fluids. We are suffering the evil consequences of the disorganised state of Germany, in the fact that the regeneration of the country has commenced under the auspices of personal Monarchy and that it could not even be begun without taking into account the influence of France, an influence which during the internal dissensions of the last two centuries, has become as it were naturalised in Germany. It is a terrible commentary on the state of our affairs, that a Minister who only considered himself fitted for foreign politics, should have felt himself called to the creation of our inner unity; and though it is very true, that he need have been less anxiously observant of external relations, if he had been endowed with greater gifts for the internal development of justice and freedom, his defenders will always have a last impregnable position in the fact, that a man with a higher feeling for justice and freedom, would never have attained such a position in the existing Prussian Monarchy (itself a part of the common German responsibility) as to enable him to break the wretched spell of German small stateisma.

This consideration naturally leads us to the question, whether the experience of a year may not have thrown some light upon a delicate point. Can the spirit of progress adduce any new proof for the assertion that it can call even the smallest corner of Bismarck's heart its own? or again, is there any ground for affirming more Count Bismarck.
strongly that the throne and its surroundings, so constantly put forward by him as a protection against the urgency of the Liberals, is anything more than a clever cover for his own reactionary designs? As is well known, opinions are still divided on this point.

For our own part, having deduced from the broad features of the great events what seemed to us the impartial truth, we remain firm to our first opinion, — the after-effects of the great volcanic action leaving us unmoved. We continue to see the same Pilot steering, now to the left, now as much or even more to the right, as winds and waves or even his own fancy may direct. Perhaps the current itself tends towards the quiet side of the stream, in natural sympathy with the calmer state of the weather, or perhaps the accusers, looking only from their lofty heights at the most distant marks, are unable to perceive the small advantages which the good cause, steadily fighting for the daily bread of progress, gains in a comparatively quiet time. The undecided state of the contest is most distinctly shown in the fact, that Count Bismarck's enemies sometimes rejoice that he is not a whit better than the worst Eulenburgs and then again that he has been worsted by the latter, and that his reign is coming to an end. Here the domain of politics ends and that of gossip begins.

The party which has adopted Count Bismarck's
creation and which considers it a gain to know that he is at the helm, has in no way decreased the manifestation of its doubts, cold reservations, and prudent sense of duty. If it has altered its attitude at all, it has been to withdraw slightly from him, on the ground that the impatience of contradiction, and disregard for legality in the Minister make him unable to preserve inward and hardly outward respect for Parliament, which, if only in consistency to his own creation, is due from him. If the North German navy had not been as shadowy and unformidable an existence as the North German Reichstag, it might have been a crime to throw back its formation by years, to set it formally aside, in a fit of ill humour, simply in order to embarrass an opposition, which was discharging its legislative duty.

In a country with a full-grown constitution, and a full-grown Navy, a Minister who gave such an order (if indeed such a thing were conceivable) would have risked his life; and when the leader of a great state takes such means to punish his opponents, and through them the country, for what seems to him party narrowness or party ambition, there can be no doubt which of the two sides has lost sight of the standard of dignified behaviour.

At a time when parliamentary government is on its final trial for an indefinite time to come, and is being
attacked from above and from below, it is possibly no misfortune that the union into which Count Bismarck has entered with the Reichstag and Customs-Parliament is more a marriage of head than of heart; for this origin promises under the circumstances greater stability. But granting that the victory-laden leader imagines himself in this union to have espoused his maid, who is to humbly wait upon him at home, so that he may carry on his conquests abroad, he should not forget that in such cases a man, for his own sake, vows equality to his low-born wife, and that if the mother is not honoured in the house, the children can only be neglected and disowned. The Parliamentary opposition wisely held in this instance to the maxim, that he who wishes to be respected by others must first respect himself.

In the contest on the subject of the pecuniary liabilities of the Bund, and more especially on the right of control over the money matters of the Empire, the opposition were the more determined not to give way, as this was not a case in which Count Bismarck could take refuge in his favourite excuse. This resistance to all legal control in small matters could not be laid by him upon his royal master’s shoulders, for it is as repugnant to the royal ideas, as it is natural to those of the Minister. His antipathy to anything that looks like pedantic interference with the judicial power, has been greatly strengthened
by the impunity with which in his character of revolutionist at a great crisis, he set himself above all considerations of law; and he thus exposed himself to the same danger as is incurred by his extreme opponents, that of keeping up revolution as a permanent institution and as a good in itself.

The idea that the final motive of every retrograde movement might be traced to higher and occult influences, at work behind Count Bismarck's back as it were, had gradually somewhat lost its force with those who for a long time had set down a good deal to his credit on this score. Before the great turning point of events, the plea of want of power, put forward to excuse his at the best but indifferent attitude in regard to "home affairs," might perhaps be allowed to pass; but the notion that a man in his position, who had performed such services and given such proofs of ability, should still have so little authority, one might even add, consciousness of his own importance, was incredible to all thinking minds. He had on several occasions proved plainly enough that, when he was in earnest, he could, either in legal or judicial matters, carry his point in spite of reactionary colleagues; and he is certainly not too scrupulous to make use of so very convenient a means of escape from an embarrassing position, as that of throwing the responsibility of unpalatable actions on irresponsible shoulders.
One circumstance especially attracted the attention of those who were making it their aim to clear up these doubts. The uncertain and incomplete condition, in which South Germany had been left by the peace of Prague, and the increasing desire on the part of France to interfere, gradually led people's minds back to the consideration of the first issue. Every day afresh the thought came up: was the creation of such an unbearable state of things really an unavoidable necessity? Was it not too feeble a result of so great a success, that Germany should have prepared such a rod for her own back, at a moment when the whole of Europe, stunned by the thunder of victory, and dazzled by the resistless force of Prussian arms, stood wondering and unprepared for any emphatic word of interference? These questions were asked, not merely by those who, proud of the newly acquired fame, believed that they should be more than a match for any opponent, but also by the peace-loving working classes who became aware that, although it was a treaty of peace which had been signed at Prague, it was no peace.

These ideas had been very much brought into the foreground by the debates arising on the question of the military organisation of France. Both the Imperial Government, which could only base its proposals on the ground of present military inefficiency, and the opposition
which found it convenient to reproach the government, with neglecting the country’s defences and, with weakness of action, felt it their interest to declare that Prussia in 1866 was more ready for war than France. And as it gradually grew clearer to the German mind, that the line of the Main had been entirely created by the influence of French diplomacy, the opinion gained ground that, when the Prussian army stood before Vienna, bolder measures should have been taken to give to German unity at any rate its external, if not its internal form, regardless of the risk of a quarrel with France.

At this decisive moment, was Count Bismarck held back by the restraining influence of France from following his own naturally bold inspirations? Such was the question asked by all reflecting minds. The answer given by all that we know of the history of the Peace of Nikolsburg, much of which is necessarily secret, is decidedly in the negative. All impartial testimony on the inner history of this event, points to the conclusion that the Minister had no desire to take bold and decisive steps in advance.

This view, indeed, coincides with what we know of human nature. It is a law of hesitating temperaments that, having once come to a great resolution, they cling to it almost with desperation, and once in movement will not stop, until the result of the struggle answers to the
previous effort. All that is known of the history of the critical moment in the Luxembourg question confirms the idea that Count Bismarck took the side of moderation and pacification; and a story which has since been told of him, strengthens this view of his conduct at Prague. Being interrogated one day by a friend, he said — "You see, our white waistcoat was still quite spotless after Königgrätz. Why run the risk of uselessly soiling it?" This simile is so much in his well known figurative, joking, and perhaps slightly frivolous vein, that we are inclined to believe in the authenticity of the story. And since experience has shown that a study of the Imperial policy was not without its influence on the course of the Prussian Minister, it may reasonably be argued that in concluding the peace of Nikolsburg, the remembrance of the French policy at Villafranca influenced him to some extent. Louis Napoleon, too, had been influenced among other considerations by that of the "white waistcoat"; though the half-settled questions in Italy did not present their dark sides to him so plainly as the provisional state of Germany must have done to the conqueror of Sadowa.

We may add that the critics of the Peace of Prague have this advantage, that the justice of their views can no longer be put to the test of facts. We see distinctly in present events the evils which arose from the moderation
of the victor; but who will venture to guess the calamities which would have been the result of greater daring? Did it not at the time seem incredible, that Count Bismarck should have come to terms with France, without ceding a foot of German ground? Did not everything look as if, in the absence of any express agreement, he had at any rate tacitly bound himself to purchase the neutrality of France with a few sundries? Do not the still resounding echoes in France prove that the Treaty of Prague was regarded by the majority of the French nation as an unspoken defeat? Finally, was not Count Bismarck under a certain obligation, which worldly prudence might alone have dictated, not to run counter to, and provoke, the Court of the Tuileries, which — be the motive what it might — had made the rise and fulfilment of the important undertaking possible by its neutrality. If it be true (and nothing justifies us in contradicting it) that the horrors of a battle, seen then for the first time, made a deep impression on Count Bismarck; and if it be true that he regarded a war between France and Germany as being, quite independently of its issue, a misfortune to be avoided by the most strenuous efforts, we may regard his anxiety about the "white waistcoat" as an evidence of his desire, not hastily to grasp a personal triumph, but to reap a bountiful harvest with wisdom and moderation. Louis Napoleon at Villafranca carried out a
personal policy, fitted to a dynasty the chief aim and end of which must of necessity be to implant in the people a faith in itself and in its race. To return a conqueror from Magenta and Solferino was the highest of all commands to Napoleon; especially as Savoy and Nice had been promised and the unity of Italy was in reality of no very vital consequence to him. Count Bismarck's bitterest opponents have not hitherto been able to reproach him with pursuing a personal policy, with allowing self-love, in its various manifestations to be the main-spring of his actions. Self-sufficiency, boastfulness and dissimulation are foreign to his nature. His impatience of contradiction arises more from irritability of temperament than from a desire to satisfy unbounded ambition, which would be natural to his consciously strong nature. His opponents have attacked him only for the views by which he is guided in action, and for the principles which, as they suppose, he desires to see in the ascendant. We must therefore also take for granted that, if the moderation after victory was due to him, it was dictated by the conviction that the securing of his great aims absolutely required it. He desired, not to drain with impatient hand the full goblet of success, but to practise self-restraint in presence of the many temptations on the path to greater splendours. Perhaps too, having succeeded in the most difficult part of the work, he expected, as so
many people do, that things would progress of their own accord; but the experience of two years has not to any extent justified this expectation.

Little accustomed to take the requirements of the masses into his calculations, he had perhaps studied the Imperial policy too exclusively on its personal side, and had quieted himself with the idea that in its present condition it was not to be feared as an aggressive power; but he had neglected to reflect that the French policy was not entirely independent of the will of the nation. His own experience in the Luxembourg question must have taught him that the German nation would not easily brook anything, which might look like loss of power or humiliation in the eyes of foreign countries, — although the Prussians are far from being as sensitive as the French where their honour is concerned, and the indignation of the masses would not be nearly so serious to a Prussian king as to the French Emperor. It is this sensitiveness of the French in matters of foreign policy, and its reflected action in the Imperial Cabinet, which have for two years retarded the natural development of the German state; and it was perhaps want of sufficient foresight as to the effect of this obstacle, that confirmed Count Bismarck in his idea that the German cause, now that the greatest difficulties had been overcome, would by a natural law continue to develop in the direction it had taken.
For we can now no longer doubt that, from the first, he looked forward to something more than making a larger Prussia out of the North-German Bund, and throwing-over the states south of the Main. Even his greatest enemies have been obliged to acknowledge that Prussia did not hold back from the Southern States for fear of the preponderance of the democratic element in the masses. The elections to the Customs-Parliament showed as strong a conservative majority in the south as in the north*; and the charge, that Prussia wished to divide, not to unite Germany, has been changed for the opposite one, that she craves for territory.

There is something strange about this notion, that "things will go of themselves". It cannot possibly have taken such a hold of men's minds without any practical foundation, and we cannot say of it, as of so many kindred expressions, that it has arisen simply from the need of rest in the human mind, or from philosophical views of doubtful correctness. The belief that a thought which has once been recognised by universal consent as complete and practical, must finally be practically carried out, rests upon a mathematically correct foundation, and is at the bottom nothing more than the reverse of the proverb

* A careful estimate gives, out of 86 members chosen in the south, 38 liberals of all shades, and 48 conservatives.
that the pitcher which goes often to the well at last comes broken home. A time can be fixed with tolerable certainty, beyond which a thing of fragile nature is not likely to exist; while it can be maintained with equal truth, that a life-containing germ will assuredly one day find its way into the light of reality.

And yet nothing is so true as that things will not "go of themselves". No one has experienced and proved this so much as the man who opened a way for German unity on the very side where a way could least have been expected; a way for that German unity which had so long, so loudly, and so vainly been expected to accomplish itself from within. Now, would it not be eminently remarkable if, as there is every appearance of being the case, even this thorough-going realist should have been led away to act upon a pure abstraction, which made him believe that things would develop themselves to a far greater extent than they actually appear to have done?

It is the natural tendency of our time, in political as well as industrial matters, to look with great favour on the collective. Such great things have been done by gathering in towards the centre of thought and practice all the wide developments of extended circles, that the value of individual powers has been greatly overlooked. Yet experience, art, and science are always
leading us back to what is individual. The history of modern industry, whenever written, will have to record a fearful waste of material as a counterbalance to the most admirable results of the principle of association. The true root of strength lies where labour and reward are one; and what the Poet has said of country is true, simply because a country is individual in relation to universal humanity.

These reflections though apparently losing themselves in the domain of philosophy may find a very practical justification for appearing in this place; for our special aim is to throw light upon events by the study of a personality and at the same time to throw light upon that personality by a study of the events.

This makes it very important for us to remember, firstly, how much the secret of life lies in individual power, and secondly, what overwhelming power is put into the hand of the individual by the conjunction of extraordinary circumstances and extraordinary men. Let no democracy repudiate this truth; for if it do, it will incur the danger of being obliged to declare, either nature undemocratic, or democracy unnatural. What, for example, can be freer and more open to all, than the beautiful in art and literature? Yet who would deny the sovereignty of Genius? Shall we assert that Shakespeare, Lessing, and Goethe did immense service to their contemporaries
and to posterity not by their innate superiority but by co-operation? And what is incontestably true in the domain of thought, is still more true in the domain of action, where an achieved position lends additional weight to superior mental powers. The effect of what is said depends, it is well known, upon who says it. Cavour, if for the happiness of Italy he had lived, might often perhaps have given no better advice than Ricasoli or others; but how much more irresistibly would a word from him have conducted into one stream, the whole strength and devotion of Italy, and thus have given the first pledge of success!

The application of what we have just said is plain. The ideas, to which Cavour and Bismarck first gave form, will be carried out. This is no longer a personal question: but the how and the when, so important to us poor mortals, is inseparable from the question of personality. Nothing so much hinders things from moving on of themselves as to imagine that they will do so; and the old saying — "Providence helps those who help themselves" — should be the Alpha and Omega of German aspirations.
II.

Up to this point, we have endeavoured to follow the commentaries on the events, which the events themselves have furnished in the course of the past year. It now only remains for us to answer the third question raised at the beginning of this supplement: namely, what explanations the chief actors in the events have since thought it well to lay before their contemporaries. Now, it happens that a revelation has quite recently been made of incomparable value in the solution of this question. In the August of this year (1868), the note addressed by Prussia to the Italian cabinet in June 1866, relative to the most advantageous manner of conducting the war which was then about to commence, was made public. This note is in itself so remarkable a document, that in any work, devoted to a consideration of the leading ideas of the period, it would claim a place. And it
must be the less neglected here, because it confirms, beyond every expectation, the views which formed the basis of the present work.

The note was addressed by the Prussian ambassador, Count Usedom, some days before the outbreak of the war, to General La Marmora, Minister for Foreign Affairs, President of the Council, and afterwards Commander-in-Chief of the Italian army, and runs as follows:

"To his Excellency General La Marmora, President of the Council, Florence.

"The undersigned, ambassador extraordinary from his Majesty the King of Prussia, has the honour to submit the following considerations to General La Marmora, President of the Council, and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"In a few days, Prussia and Italy will appeal to arms to settle their common dispute with Austria. The government of the King, my royal master, thinks that from this moment there should be complete agreement and energetic co-operation in the military movements of the two powers. United action in the field, which is prevented by distance, must be compensated for by simultaneousness of attack. The resisting power of Austria will thus be divided; she will be unable to turn her whole strength against either one of her opponents. Our blows will in this way make themselves felt at a distance, as well as on the field of battle.

"In the first place, the government of the King is convinced that the opening of hostilities in Germany should be immediately followed by Italy's declaration of war. We know the good faith which animates the government of King Victor Emmanuel too well to doubt that this will be the case. But the Prussian government is of opinion that this solidarity of feeling and simultaneousness of action should equally characterise every stage of the campaign; and that each power should give constant and equal attention to
"the military movements of its ally, to whom it is bound by the "most intimate ties. The Prussian government anticipates that this "sentiment will be approved and shared by Italy. The plan "on which Prussia proposes that the ensuing campaign should be "conducted is that of a war to the death (guerre à fond). Should "the decision of arms be favourable to us in the beginning of the "campaign, we will not be arrested by the obstacles which lie in "the way, but will drive our opponent to his last defences and his "last resources.

"We will not content ourselves after a victory with only "occupying such territory as an advantageous peace may allow us "to retain. On the contrary, we will endeavour to make our victory "complete and decisive, without reference to any future territorial "arrangements A complete defeat of this kind would exercise a "most sensible influence on the enemy's powers of resistance; and "greater even than the physical consequences will be the political "and moral effects of such a defeat. Prussia will therefore dis-"regard all obstacles which nature or art may put in her path "from Linz to Cracow, and will press forward in her victorious "career to the gates of Vienna.

"As regards the analogous operations of the Italian forces, it "would not be advisable that they should lay siege to the fortresses "of the Quadrilateral; they should rather pass between or round "them, in order to defeat the enemy in the open field. There can "scarcely be a doubt, when we take the numerical force of the "opposing parties into consideration, that the Italian army will very "shortly be in possession of the whole of Venetia, with the exception "of Venice, Verona and Mantua, whose garrisons would of course "have to be held in check by strong corps of observation.

"The Italian generals will no doubt be best able to judge of "the operations to be carried out: but Italy, if she is to act in "accord with Prussia, must not limit herself to pushing on to the "northern frontier of Venetia. She must strike out for herself a "road to the Danube, so as to combine forces with Prussia in the "very centre of the Empire; in a word, she must march on Vienna.
"To secure Italy's lasting hold on Venetia, Austria must be struck "at the very heart.

"What would be the consequences if Italy were to confine "her military action to Udine or Belluno, in order to occupy herself "afterwards with the siege of the Quadrilateral? It would ine- "vitably retard the war. For it would enable the Austrian forces "quietly to withdraw northwards, and strengthen the Imperial army "against Prussia. With the assistance possibly of Bavaria, Austria's "united forces might then be able to compel Prussia to give up "the offensive and assume the defensive. Thus deprived of the "advantages of previous success, we should perhaps conclude a "peace, which would answer neither to the original ideas entertained "by Prussia and Italy, nor to the immense sacrifices that the two "countries would have imposed upon themselves. In order to avoid "so unfortunate a result, which would force the allies sooner or "later to begin their work afresh, Prussia believes she cannot in- "sist too strongly on the necessity of maintaining the offensive on "both sides to the utmost, that is, up to the walls of Vienna.

"If we accept for a moment the opposite possibility, and con- "sider specially the position of Prussia, it will be seen that in such "a case the co-operation of Italy would have been more injurious "than its absolute neutrality. Neutrality would, at least, have had "the advantage of keeping a whole Austrian army in the Quadri- "lateral, and paralysing it with regard to Prussia; while victorious, "but ill-organised, and half carried out co-operation would leave this "same army at liberty to turn against Prussia, which would thus "have a fairer chance without than with an Italian alliance.

"But the government of the King, my royal master, cherishes "the most perfect confidence in the loyalty of its ally, and feels "sure that any such possibility will be carefully avoided.

"From a strategic point of view the march upon Vienna may "perhaps appear dangerous; the scale of operations too large, and "the resources too distant. But in proportion as the distance from "the Prussian army diminishes, the danger will diminish, and the "final victory become more and more probable.
"Moreover, there is an infallible means of securing to both armies the most effective cooperation upon a common territory: this territory is Hungary.

"The Prussian government has of late carefully studied the Hungarian question, and has arrived at the conviction that Hungary, supported equally by Italy and Prussia, will on its side be willing to serve them as a rallying point and strategic fulcrum.

"Supposing, for example, that a strong expedition were sent to the eastern coast of the Adriatic, an arrangement which would in no way weaken the main army, since the expeditionary force would be formed chiefly of volunteers to be placed under the command of General Garibaldi. The Prussian government has every reason to believe, from information received, that such a force would find a hearty welcome among the Slave and Hungarian populations. It would cover the main army in its advance upon Vienna, and secure for it the goodwill and the resources of this wide territory. On the other hand, the Croatian and Hungarian regiments would soon refuse to fight against troops, which had been received as friends in their own countries. Again, a body of light troops, composed as much as possible of national elements, might break into Hungary from the north and from the frontiers of Prussian Silesia, and come to the aid of the Italian troops and of the national volunteer forces which would have been rapidly organized. Austria would thus lose in proportion as we gained, and the blows delivered by us would strike, not her circumference but her very centre.

"It is on all these grounds, that the Prussian government attaches so much value to the Hungarian question, and to combined action with its Italian ally in Hungary. It proposes to the Florentine cabinet that the two governments should provide jointly for the expenses necessary in preparing for the reception of the expeditions, and in securing the co-operation of the countries mentioned.

"Such is the outline of the plan of campaign which the undersigned has the honour, in accordance with the instructions of his
government, to submit to the Italian cabinet. Inasmuch as it is qualified to serve the general interests; inasmuch as it ensures the combined action of the allied forces, the Prussian government flatters itself that the proposed plan will be heartily received by the Italian cabinet, and will contribute largely to the success of this great undertaking.

"The undersigned requests General La Marmora to honour him with a reply as soon as possible, and begs him to accept the renewed assurance of his highest consideration.

(signed) Usedom.

Our especial task does not require us to enter into the controversies which have arisen on the subject of the publication of this note, nor to discuss the disputed question, in what degree the Prussian ambassador was personally responsible for the drawing up and communication of this important document. Historical inquiry, untouched by the subordinate motives and transient necessities of daily policy, will reckon this note one of the most valuable contributions to a correct understanding of the leading ideas of the war, and will not trouble itself to consider whether it was hastily concocted in the brain of a subordinate, and handed in by him at a venture. Impartial history, and above all German history, will never require a justification from the originators of these great events, for it will count them to their greatest honour; and in the same proportion as it considers each individual to have taken part in the conception and execution of the whole, it will claim for him credit in the
drawing out of this plan. History will hardly be mistaken if it recognizes in the tone of the document — bold, confident, and prepared for the utmost consequences — the hand of the men who held an overwhelming sway in the cabinet as in the field. This programme requires no great explanation. Its own words give the most energetic expression to the ideas which our preceding study had more doubtfully arrived at. Although some of these heroic measures may be attributed to mere expediency, there remains much in them that is instructive.

It would be folly to assert that Bismarck, Moltke and Roon were inspired in drawing out this programme by enthusiasm for the unity of Italy or the freedom of Hungary; but it would be equally absurd, in presence of such a grand revolutionizing plan, to say that they had no thought but that of carrying out a traditional and stiff-necked *Junker*-policy: that they boldly gave the rein to principles of progress, and sought to stir Europe to its depths — simply to increase the number of lesser royalties. No, those who were at that time the guides of the Prussian monarchy, had at least raised it to the highest point which could be expected by the German people, so long as the people did not feel in themselves the power to put something better in the place of this same monarchy. If the path indicated in this plan had been strictly followed, Germany and Italy would no longer be tormented,
the one with the problem of the line of the Main, the other with the problem of the Papacy. But this was not to be. An important part of the programme was not carried out; the Italian arms not only failed to defeat the common enemy, but even to fulfil the lesser, but very important, duty of keeping him long occupied. The peace of Prague was an act of moderation necessitated by the entire failure of the Italian co-operation, and the line of the Main, accepted in that peace, only a resource which had been kept for an evil day, not the true aim of the original undertaking.

It is necessary to keep this point in view, when we endeavour to balance the merits and demerits of the peace of Prague, and complete what has already been said on this subject. The conclusion of this peace certainly indicates a great yielding to French pressure; but this pressure drew all its force from the weakness shown by Italy. If we imagine the Prusso-Italian programme strictly carried out, south as well as north of the Alps, we shall at once see that such energetic movements would have overborne all opposition. Napoleon would then have found far less support at home, because the open fraternizing with the liberal element in Hungary and Rome, and the calling of Garibaldi to an important part in the campaign, would have stamped the German cause with the impress of universal freedom, instead of with that
of the one-sided military absolutism, of which its enemies have made so much capital.

It would lead us too far from our subject to enter here upon the interesting question, whether political as well as military sins do not lie at the door of the Italian general. Though it is certain that he did not wish to be beaten at Custozza, and probable that, after Custozza, he would rather have repaired his fault, and used his army to some purpose, than have lain in a state of complete helplessness; yet, on the other hand, there are two points of undoubted authenticity which give rise to a suspicion of a want of steady good-will on his part. For in the first place it is proved, that General La Marmora, at that time President of the Council and shortly afterwards Commander-in-Chief, put Count Usedom's project into his pocket, without submitting it to a single one of his colleagues, and that for more than two years (till the end of July, 1868) not a soul in Italy had any idea of its existence. In the second place, it is proved that on the 5th of July, Venice was assured to him without another blow.

The Italians attribute the failure on their side entirely to the military incapacity of La Marmora. They appeal for proof to the facts, that after Custozza he, as well as the other leaders of the army, entirely lost their heads; that a fruitless interchange of despatches between
La Marmora and Cialdini filled up the time; that the ministry constantly insisted on renewed action, and Ricasoli, La Marmora’s successor, was several times in the camp; that it is well known the unfortunate battle of Lissa was the result of this desire for action; and finally, they appeal to the acknowledged fact, that Austria (true to its old traditions in preferring to yield to Italy rather than to Prussia) had before the outbreak of hostilities offered Venice to Italy, which had, however, chosen to remain true to its ally and invoke the decision of arms, and that Italy’s consent to the preliminaries of Nikolsburg was given with great repugnance and only at the last moment, the nation being deeply wounded at the manner in which Venice returned to it, as a united present from France Austria and.

So much is certain,—and it is all that now concerns us,—that it was not the fundamental idea of the Prussian campaign to stop short in Germany at the Main, but that the difficulties on the line of the Mincio were the cause of the difficulties on the line of the Main.

This view is confirmed by another important document which must be spoken of here. It is known that the whole revelation on the subject of Count Usedom’s note was brought about by circumstances in the Florentine Chamber. A very minute and interesting account of the campaign of 1866 had been published by the War-his-

Count Bismarck.
tory Division of the Prussian staff. This work dealt chiefly with questions of strategy, but touched on the domain of political thought in a way more attractive than could have been strictly required of a semi-military, semi-official work. It also touched on the conduct of the war south of the Alps; and thus gave rise to interpellations in the Chamber which induced General La Marmora to publish the hitherto secret note.

If the object of the present study were to chronicle the collective events of 1866, we should feel induty bound to follow the official account step by step through its scattered political reflections. Instead of this, we must confine ourselves to a cursory glance at the more prominent points tending to elucidate our subject.

In regard to the Italian question, the official work adopts the view just mentioned, as to the difficulties on the line of the Mincio having caused those on the line of the Main, — expressing itself indeed in the veiled and considerate language due to an allied government and a friendly and noble nation, but yet so clearly that its meaning cannot escape the attentive reader; so much so that the chief offender felt himself wounded to the quick. It throws no new light on the earliest stages of the alliance; but starting from the period shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, it holds to the dogma, set up once for all, by the highest authorities, that Prussia
had not made up her mind to war, and could not, therefore, till within a very few months of the actual outbreak, undertake the responsibility of inducing Italy to arm; and fixes the time, at which both states pledged their word to one another to make every sacrifice in preparation for war, between the 26th and 30th of April, 1866, after Count Mensdorff had offered to disarm with regard to Prussia, but had expressly refused to do so with regard to Italy.

It must remain for later times to bring to light the secret and no doubt interesting revelations of the earlier negotiations between Florence and Berlin. These are said by some to go back as far as the year 1863. At any rate, however, by the month of August or September 1865, they had assumed a tangible form, although it is to the present day a matter of dispute from which side the first proposal came.*

Much more detailed is the Prussian account of the relations with France, though not even here is mention made of the secret conferences before the outbreak of the war. Nevertheless we meet (page 14**) with this impor-

* The information contained in a recent publication: Les préliminaires de Sadowa: Julian Klaczko, Revue des deux Mondes, 15th Sept. 1868, cannot be accepted without certain reservations.

** Der Feldzug von 1866 in Deutschland. Redigirt von der kriegsgeschichtl. Abtheil. des grossen Generalstabs. Berlin. 1867. 8*
tant statement: "From France we might at any rate expect friendly neutrality." If this expectation is founded on the argument, that France had reason to wish for a Prussia strengthened so as to be independent of Russia and Austria, and for a German fleet which might eventually be used in an alliance against England, the Prussian staff would hardly have written this book, if they had thought they should find only readers of such intelligence that they would accept these considerations as sufficient to warrant an exposure of the western frontier of the empire. If, too, Prussian diplomacy had ever thought it well to drop hints to France of this kind, there ought now to be something better to rely upon than such daring arithmetical problems; and this something will one day come to light, not through the archives, which know little on this point, but through personal memoirs, when the time has come to give to the world the secrets of the conferences of Plombières and Biarritz.

A very frank and circumstantial account is given in this work of the vigorous and decisive intervention of France, when officially called in by Austria after the battle of Königgrätz. It shows that France performed the chief part of the work of reconciliation; and that her attitude was so serious that an ambassador of high rank, Prince Reuss, was sent from the Prussian head-quarters at Brünn to Paris with the documents of a previous nego-
tiation which had come to nothing, as a certain justification for the rejection of the Austrian proposals of the 14th of July. The reader must be referred for further details to the work itself; its whole tone distinctly shows that the Prussian government did not act hastily in negotiating at Nikolsburg and Prague; but that it was tolerably well aware of the evils of the peace, and only yielded at last from a desire to avoid war with France, which the turn taken by the negotiations under Napoleon's auspices after the 4th of July, had rendered imminent.

On this point the "Campaign of 1866" expresses itself as follows:

"Thus the first preliminaries were accomplished.
"It was a serious and important decision which rested with "his Majesty the King, — as grave as the decision of the war "itself.

"Should the war be continued in the hope of still greater "results? The army stood before Vienna. Presburg had very nearly "been in the hands of the Prussian forces. The result of a second "battle, if one were needed, might be looked forward to without "anxiety, and Vienna might be entered without any very heavy "sacrifice. The military conditions were, therefore, favourable at the "moment, and from this point of view it was natural to wish to "prosecute the war to the utmost, and to give full scope to the "proved strength of the Prussian army. The enemy's capital — "always the great aim of the first Napoleon — lay in tempting "proximity; its towers were visible to our outposts.

"But there were several weighty considerations on the other "side. Austria herself would not be forced to make peace after the
"loss of Vienna; she might withdraw her forces to Hungary, and "there await the result of the complications of European politics. "Should no peace be founded on the basis proposed by the Emperor "Napoleon, the interests, as well as the dignity, of France would "be compromised. A great result was achieved. Would it be well, "on the chance of gaining a greater result, to impose fresh sacri- "fices and extreme exertions on the Prussian people, and perhaps "endanger what had already been won? A wise policy makes what "is necessary, not what is desirable, the standard of its aims. The "development of German nationality, under the leadership of Prussia, "was secured by the offered peace; and extended projects of con- "quest, such as are often ascribed to Prussia, were no part of the "intentions of her government."

An impartial view would, however, be incomplete without a mention in this place of the fact, that the line of the Main, though not the ultimate aim of Prussia in case of complete success, had very early been viewed by her as a possible eventuality, and had for years frequently appeared on the political horizon. Thus, while the first dispositions for the advance upon Vienna date from the 19th of July, 1866, we find, as early as the 11th, a plain indication that the line of the Main had already become a very steady landmark to the victorious party. On that day, Count Bismarck telegraphed from the head- quarters of the great army of Bohemia to general Vogel von Falckenstein, who at that time still held chief command of the army in South-Western Germany, as follows:

"Strategic occupation of the countries north of the
"Main is now politically important with reference to future "negotiations on the status quo."*

We may, therefore, look upon it as certain that as early as the first stage of the negotiations with France and Austria, Prussian diplomacy had viewed very favourably the idea of stopping short at the Main. On the other hand the question, whether the right of conquest should be thoroughly carried out in the case of all the states north of the Main, which had turned their arms against Prussia, had not at that time been maturely considered. On this question depended whether not only the whole of Hanover but the whole of Saxony should be incorporated in the Prussian monarchy. To judge by all indications, it was the intention of the Prussian Cabinet to incorporate Saxony as well as Hanover, and a great step would undoubtedly have been thereby made towards the entire fusion of Germany into one state. But such an increase of power to Prussia was calculated to excite the most vigorous opposition of France; which accordingly supported Austria on this point with readiness and emphasis.

Although the King of Hanover had not failed in good faith nor in sacrifices for the Austrian cause, yet a number of reasons political, dynastic, and strategic, weighed so strongly with the French and Austrian ne-

* "Campaign of 1866", page 614.
gotiators in favour of Saxony, that Prussia was forced to give up even the proposal to incorporate merely a part of Saxony in exchange for a part of Hanover. North of the Main, therefore, the right of conquest could only be applied to Hanover, Electoral Hesse, and Nassau. (The peculiar case of Frankfort which, strictly speaking, had not joined in the war, is passed over in silence, no doubt on account of inconvenient recollections as to the conduct of General Manteuffel and his officers.) If this was really the ground, on which the resolution to suppress these three sovereignties was based, Germany may congratulate itself that the Duke, the Elector, and the King, rejected the proposals of neutrality made at the last moment by Prussia; and so sealed their fate. It is, of course, not to be expected that a more or less official work like this "History of the Campaign of 1866", should cut away the ground of legal theory, upon which the Prussian Government had taken its stand before the war, and should show that the events owed their origin to national claims and desires. Yet here, as in all great public statements put forward since the war, there was felt to be an imperative necessity to seek for some justification in the eyes of Prussia, of Germany, and of the world, which should be both higher and more decisive than the pedantic and dubious exposition of written and unwritten laws and traditions.
And so, even in this book, the living truth comes to its rights in the appeal to principles, which recognise the claim of the German nation to freedom. It is true that owing to this double attitude of mind towards the spirit of the past, it frequently happens that the sounds do not harmonise, and that the ear is tortured by harsh discords. The very first page opens with a false harmony:

"The whole nation was, indeed, filled with an earnest longing "after unity; but for this unity, neither would the princes sacrifice "their rights, nor would the peoples, with their inborn separatism, "sacrifice their peculiar institutions. Fifty years' experience had "shown that unity would never be achieved merely by moral con-
"quest. Force was needed, and that on the part of a German power."

The Prussian staff have published in a separate volume the "Ordres de bataille" and the disposition of the forces; but they have omitted to give a list of the attempts at "moral conquest". It is quite allowable to entertain the opinion (which we, however, think false), that an attempt to achieve the end in view by means of moral conquest, even if carried on steadily for fifty years, would have failed (what becomes of the offer of the Imperial crown in 1849?); but to appeal to a fifty years' "experience" of such attempts, is an easier mode of conducting an argument in non-military matters, than can be permitted even to Staff Officers; and political history is forced to enter a solemn protest against it.

The attempt at maintaining the two attitudes of
mind at the same time, has a peculiarly unfortunate effect in the discussion of the Schleswig-Holstein question. Whilst, on the one hand, we meet with the bold and dignified admission, that it would have been pure folly, when once this country had fallen to Germany, to have given it back into the hands of a petty independent prince, in order to sanctify the principle of small stateism, and to declare the old husk of legitimacy more precious than the possession and use of the important and long desired German sea-board, by the only German State worthy of the name; yet, on the other hand, pains are taken to prove, that Prussia would not have moved in the matter to the end of time, had it not been for this or that insignificant violation by Austria of the letter of the Treaty of Gastein. We can readily understand that, so long as a game of political hide and seek with Austria and the other powers was going on, Prussian diplomacy should shelter itself behind succession-parchments and the "putting down of demagogues"; but it had only to look back to the time of the conflict and the explanation given to the opposition, to see that it was erring against its true interests in keeping up this tone longer than was actually necessary. The partisanship for the Duke of Augustenburg, on the plea of his divine right, or even on the score of his pledges of a liberal policy, had always been a very extraordinary line of conduct from a radical party. None
but the federalist party, as it called itself, separatist in
tendency, and guiltless of statesmanship, which in 1859
had stupidly sided with Austria against Italy, could
seriously take up arms for the Duke against Germany.
To politicians of every other shade of opinion, the com-
plete incorporation of Schleswig-Holstein with Prussia
seemed, beyond question, the one thing possible.

The official account adopts this opinion; but imme-
diately spoils it by introducing the well known refrain
that the demagogue spirit in Schleswig-Holstein must
be put down; and finally adduces, as proof of the
violation of the Treaty by Austria the fact, that the
position of joint possessors was "deteriorated" by the
convening of the Estates of Holstein (11th of June, 1866).

But the spirit of any wide-spread development
delights in such inconsistencies. To paradoxical prin-
ciples the Reformation owes its origin, England her free-
dom. Thus a vigorous and life-containing germ struggles
up through all the obstacles of the old and worn-
out world, and maintains through all its turnings a vic-
torious and upward direction.

In casting a glance over the men and the events
of recent history, we shall perceive that of the various
obstinate hindrances which modern development in Prus-
sia has to encounter, the military one is not the worst.
Quite independently of the principle of democracy and
citizenship, which to some extent lies at the very root of an army, the spirit of war itself contains an element of civilisation, as well as an element of barbarism, — especially since the discoveries of later times have made of military tactics, partly a technical art, and partly a physical science. An army grows stupid in a long peace, as it grows brutal in a long war; whilst the necessarily short wars of the present day avoid both dangers, and are welcome to intelligence as demanding mechanical ingenuity, and to public opinion as demanding men and money.

Something of this kind is reflected in the "History of the Campaign of 1866". The military spirit has this time done the nation a service (whether the good on the moral side might have been greater is another question); and the more it boasts of it the better; the more hope is there that it will find in it a spur to future ennoblement. But how different is the attitude of the priesthood towards progress! Italies has nothing in common with the culture of the time; no channel, through which it might gain comprehension; no bond, which might give it interest in the preservation of anything that belongs to life. Here all is darkness and death. The deadliest poison which still pervades the life-blood of the Prussian State is priestly Lutheranism. The curse of the power, which it exercises in the higher classes of society, may
almost bear comparison with the curse of the dominion of the Catholic priesthood, which weighs on the lower classes in France.

It is at this point that all community ceases between the great past and the present; and those, who now think themselves in some degree worthy and capable of stepping into the inheritance of Frederick II, would do well to remember that the Prussian monarchy at the highest point of its power, made absolute freedom from Protestant orthodoxy the very foundation-stone of its throne. Here, if anywhere, we may recall the much-used and much-abused maxim of Machiavelli, that principalities and powers are maintained by the same means that first brought them into existence. To accept the military heritage of the great King, and to reject his heritage of free thought, would be to prove ourselves blind both to the past and the future, — would be to cling to the form while we ignore the spirit of that monarchy which was to inspire posterity. He who fights the reign of soldierdom in Prussia may — especially in times like these — often expose a weak side, for we are in no position to defend ourselves with high-sounding maxims against our opponents. But he who fights the reign of Protestant priesthood has everything in his favour — nothing against him. It would not be worth the labour, even if it were practicable, to elevate the nation to unity
and strength, — to a higher form of external life, — at the
cost of taking away from it that aspiration after spiritual
freedom, to which it owes its best strength.

Nothing tends so greatly to divide Prussia and Ger-
many as the spirit of a haughty priesthood, which takes
no part in active life and progress. Were this priesthood
with all its accompaniments once banished from the coun-
cils and from the daily life and work of the community,
fresh streams of progress would come pouring through a
thousand new channels into the heart of the state. Hap-
pily in this case, the remedy and the evil lie close
together. For that which is most opposed to the in-
tellectual development of the age, is also that which
suffers daily the worst defeats at its hands.

The end.
Germany, France, and the Revolution.

Germany shares the fate of Italy in being unable either to consolidate her territory, or to develop her internal resources without violently offending against her French neighbour's conditions of self-preservation — conditions which may be real or fancied, but have at any rate the sanction of tradition. The establishment of the European balance of power was, as we have often lately been reminded, essentially the work of France, and the balance was so adjusted as to give her the preponderance. Every lessening of that preponderance therefore must, of course, seem to the French adherent of the system like a threatened disturbance of the equilibrium.

The idea, moreover, of regulating the progress of the world, — and Europe at that time was the world — as if it were a clock that could be made by means of properly adjusted weights to go on for ever with one even beat, entirely corresponds with the love of order
and symmetry innate in the French. They value reason and intellect so highly, that they imagine everything in the world must be governed and arranged on some fixed method.

In addition to this general habit of mind, we must take into account the respect for established rights peculiar to the French. There is, perhaps, no people in the world, over whom established rights exercise such authority as over this people, famed for their fickle, changeable nature. This is most clearly seen in their theory and practice of civil law. Whoever has grown up with the principle, which we have adopted from the Roman law, that everyone may turn and move as he pleases within the sphere of his own limbs, *qui jure suo utitur neminem laedit*; whoever has once witnessed the struggling and striving of any English or American society full of self-reliance, finds it difficult, if indeed it be possible, to submit to the restraints imposed in France on the movements of the individual for the general protection, — or, what is here equivalent, for the protection of individual established rights.

A comparison between the legislation of England, Germany and France, in the matter of patents, would throw considerable light on the varying degrees of boldness, with which each of the three nations trusts its citizen to the strength of his own muscles in the struggle for
life. But the legislation of no country would have anything to show so calculated to bring back the struggle for life to Anti-Darwinian principles as the French law on unfair rivalry (concurrence déloyale) dating from the time of the July monarchy, and the jurisprudence which has gradually in the course of years grown up on this subject, through the decisions of the law courts. Cases occur which make the hair of a foreigner stand on end.

A Paris baker had a woman in his service who used to carry out the bread to his customers in the mornings. After some years he discharged her, — no matter for what reason, — and she went into the service of another baker. In order to make herself useful and valuable to the latter, she called upon those of the former customers with whom she stood well, and begged them for her sake to give their custom to her new master, which many of them accordingly did. Thereupon, the first baker brought a suit against his rival, on the ground that he had taken away customers who had long dealt with him, and this, not because his bread was less good than formerly, but because the bread carrier had unduly influenced his clients. Observe, it could not be asserted that the woman had left her patrons in the dark about her change of place, otherwise she would have made herself liable to punishment for fraud. Nevertheless, the Court declared that the new baker had
acted unfairly, and forbade him thenceforth to employ his servant to serve the old customers of his rival.

With these views on matters of private as well as public rights, — which however have their good and useful side, — it was of course natural that an actual alteration in the division of power on the continent should be regarded by France as a violation of existing rights and a serious threat to her own established possessions. The strength displayed by Prussia, and yet more the prospect of her future strength, had, in consequence of the merely relative changes in the balance of power, already filled the French with apprehension. How much more exasperating, then, must have been the possibility that the newly developed German monarchy might in the end easily attain an unquestionable superiority. Was not this precisely the moment to accuse Germany of "disloyal competition" for the exercise of the decisive influence on the continent?

And what French tribunal would not have considered itself bound to pass sentence in conformity with the enactment above referred to?

Had not the French Government, interpreting the law of nations in a similar spirit, laid down the principle, and carried it out sword in hand, that the rights of the majority of the French people as Catholics gave them a claim to dispose of the Roman territory?
They were, therefore, not mere pretexts, which the French brought forward, in support of their deeply rooted idea of supremacy, but were honest reasons really believed in, and intimately associated with all their notions of law, even down to the civil law of meum and tuum.

The principle of nationality, which enjoys general favour, ought certainly to have exercised a correcting influence on this claim to interference. But from the above-quoted example of the Roman question, it is plain that the principle of nationality is thrust into the background, wherever it comes into collision with what the French consider their established rights; and this would be done more easily in our case, because of the complication of our home affairs and the not unnatural ignorance of foreign countries respecting them.

It is easy for us to talk contemptuously about the ignorance of the French with regard to German politics; but how many Germans would stand an examination in the parliamentary and municipal government of the France of eighty years ago, or in the departments of the modern empire? Are not the position and importance of many French towns and districts, which in every respect can claim precedence of a German residence or German principality, unknown to the student at our universities? And if, further, we take into consideration that we ourselves have not only long endured the humi-
liating motley of distinctions between German and German, but even still upon occasion willingly flaunt these distinctions, we ought neither to be amused nor astonished, if the great mass of the French people are confounded between Prussians and Germans, and Bavarians and Austrians, and Hanoverians and Saxons, and associate with these different names the idea of different nationalities. When, moreover, these differences advance their own cause, they will of course make the most of them, availing themselves of German materials, of which there are abundance at hand.

Accordingly, in the German question, it was much easier to allay the scruples arising from the principle of nationality, than it was in the Roman question. The dynasties overthrown by Prussia might naturally be regarded as European, and the attempts at union as attempts at conquest. How can it excite surprise, that the government and the great majority in France should be inclined to push this view to its most extreme consequences, when we know that they earnestly strove, as they openly confessed, to get the Confederate States of America recognised as independent belligerent powers; and the Confederates could be far less justly regarded as an independent nation than could the Southern German States. (The French attitude towards the Slave party affords one of the innumerable instances of ana-
logy between the American and German struggle, an analogy which extends even to the confusion of ideas produced by the word "democratic"; and it thus helps to complete the extremely curious freak of Nature, in creating an inner affinity between two such outwardly distinct phenomena as American and German separatism.)

If, therefore, the different names of the German countries denoted different peoples, the Treaty of Prague disturbed international relations, the maintenance of which in their status quo France considered she had a right to claim; and, as we know, the German opponents of Prussia find it quite compatible with their logic to lament to their fellow countrymen over the "Civil War", while at the same time, they strengthen the impression abroad, that Prussia is a foreign conqueror and an intruder in the eye of the European Areopagus.

It is almost hopeless to attempt to combat by means of rational exposition, false doctrines fostering the vanity, and intimately bound up with the real or imaginary interests of the masses; but the attempt was made in the preceding work in the hope of introducing, at any rate into certain cultivated circles in France, a more unprejudiced judgment of the recent events in Germany. To do this, it was necessary to correct the false impression afloat, that the great event of 1866 was unlinked with
any antecedents, and had started up suddenly in the brain of an ambitious statesman.

But this was only one part, and the lesser part of our task. He who would undertake to answer the objections urged on the French side must not overlook a second point of view of quite a different nature to that just mentioned, and in a certain sense more attractive to the lovers of argument. In addition to the reasons, derived from the law of nations, arguments founded on the universal rights of man were vehemently and eloquently put forward, in the name of Freedom and Progress, against the new order of things in Germany. What had just taken place, and, still more, what was confidently expected to take place in the future, was to be regarded not only as a transgression against the recognised system of the States of Europe, but also as a sin against the universal principles which govern the upright and just of all nations, and — what was more than all the rest together — a great danger for the progress of culture throughout Europe.

Now, that the present generation has eagerly applied itself to the science of history, and has gathered thence a stock of illustrative ideas; now that there has sprung up a philosophy and comparative physiology of historical phenomena, which supply inexhaustible food for speculative ingenuity, the theorists are in a position some-
thing like that of medical students, who beginning to be initiated in the terrible secrets of their art, imagine themselves going through in their own persons all the diseases which they hear described from the professional chair. We have our finger continually on the pulse of time, and count the beats with wise, anxious looks to ascertain whether there is not a dangerous fever there. At one time, it is the decomposition of the blood in ancient Greece, at another the congestion of the vital fluids in Rome, at another the disorder of Poland, at another the luxurious excess of the Directory, which is pronounced to be the fatal seed of ruin to this and that people or even to whole groups of races, and to have hurried them irrevocably toward that vast grave in which past civilisations sleep the sleep of centuries.

A time, which is continually tormenting itself with such gloomy thoughts, could not want doctors who would discover, in the stupendous events of 1866, new symptoms of an alarming kind. Had not the French Emperor himself undertaken the task of tracing the resemblance between his own part, and that played by the Cæsars, thereby informing the world of his ominous mission? for the commencement of the decline of the Roman Empire is generally dated from the fall of the Republic. And now a catastrophe had occurred, the secret preparations for which had undeniably a certain connection with the
inner mysteries of the Cabinet of the Emperor, whilst the sudden display of an irresistible military power together with the simultaneous appeal to the necessity of a decisive blow, seemed completely to justify those who saw in Count Bismarck only a plagiarist of Buonapartism.

Prophets threatened us, and indeed still threaten us with danger in its rudest form, in the shape of an inroad on the part of the newly developed military power into its neighbour's territory. The German war was alleged to be, not so much the counter-part of the December coup d'état, the triumph of internal reaction in favour of personal despotism, as the reproduction of the 18th Brumaire, the imposition of a military yoke with the design also of using the soldiery as an instrument to satisfy the insatiable lust of conquest and of new territory. There was no river, country or sea, the occupation of some part of which was not represented as having already entered into the adventurous plans of this newly revealed and boundless ambition. Switzerland, because it was a republic, and Holland, because of its seaboard, Alsace and Lothringen, because they belonged to the ancient kingdom, and Belgium of course, because it lay between the others, had hardly time to make their wills; and to supply the dramatic cravings of the great public, the theory was elaborated, that two colossal states, armed to the teeth as France and Germany were, could not by any
possibility subsist in peace beside one another; that, sooner or later, in virtue of the decrees of an eternal destiny, they must come into collision, and present to the peoples of the earth the fearful spectacle of one of those giant struggles for life or death, which it was for a long time the custom gravely to prophecy as awaiting Prussia and Great Britain on the plains of Asia:

"Now is the moment to unsheathe the sword: Earth is not wide enough to hold us both!"

To would-be politicians, dreadful predictions of this kind are always welcome. In the present instance, they suited the feelings of innumerable Frenchmen all the more, because their jealousy for their martial fame was deeply wounded by Prussian successes, and, thanks to their wonderful self-confidence, they were convinced that the victors of Sadowa would not be able to resist those of the Malakoff and of Solferino. All the essential elements of a duel were here present; and Frenchmen of all classes to this moment pronounce as an axiom, that the world will not obtain rest, until the question has been decided by arms, which of the two nations is the stronger.

Beside and above the strata of society which only seek high-sounding formulas for their commonplace feelings there exist the thinking minds who, though few in number and small in immediate influence yet gradually

Count Bismarck.
and imperceptibly change the current of public opinion. Now, it was a considerable portion of this select cultivated class, which had fallen completely under the dominion of the idea, that it was the duty of everyone to oppose to the utmost the turn things had taken in Germany. Convinced for many years, that the restoration of Napoleonism was leading their own country to destruction; and filled with ideas of ruin by the phenomena passing before their eyes, they were of course fully prepared to see in the occurrences on the other side of the Rhine, the confirmation, extension, and continuation of the deadly disease which had already attacked their own country. They raised a warning voice, telling us to turn away from brute force, — the delusion which had been so fatal to their own people, — and not to let the hitherto peace-loving Germany fall down before the blood-reeking Moloch of war. In a mournful tone, they who, in spite of their sense of superiority, had honestly respected book-writing and music-loving Germany, sent from the Seine across the Rhine their "Et tu Brute".

This they could do with the more ease because they had only to consider German affairs from a general point of view, — only to regard them in their general human relations. They neither knew nor cared to know what particular kind of domestic evil we had to cure. Of the phenomena presented by what was passing in Ger-
many, they heeded only that side which interested them by its likeness to their own ills, and were half-alarmed and half-pleased at seeing us attacked by their own disease, because of the necessity which it would entail of our going onward with them towards a common death or a common recovery.

The attacks from all sides therefore were concentrated on this point; for this was especially neutral ground. Here everyone was equally elevated above national prejudices: the Frenchman could not be suspected of jealousy, nor the German of unpatriotic party feeling, when they stood side by side against the innovators who were shaking the sanctuary of Freedom and Culture to its very foundations. Germany's literary opponents therefore, the straightforward, the equivocal, the fanatical, the discontented, — applied themselves with all the energy which party — spirit could give to the task of spreading simultaneously moral indignation and blind fear. Prophecies of misfortune from the Seine were answered by sounds of woe from the Neckar. Nothing was easier than to produce historical analogies, the indispensable aids to prognostications of ruin. Ever since human recollection the word "Revolution" had been used as a symbol for all spontaneous movements on the Continent of Europe; its use as a creed dates from the time of its most powerful practical expression, that is from the
upheaval at the end of the last century. The theory once started that Prussia had drawn the sword to put down, first in Germany and then in the rest of Europe, the principles and the heritage of the Revolution, it was easy with a little imagination to carry out the idea in all possible details. William the first was Frederick William come to life again, surrounded by the resuscitated ministers and generals of 1792.

It must be admitted that it was Count Bismarck more than any one else who had given colour to this theory. Not indeed because, twenty years before, when in a subordinate position, he had preached a crusade against the revolution, but because even quite recently he had on many occasions not scrupled to adopt the language used by the counter-revolutionary party. For although he had long emancipated himself from this narrow point of view, he had, in his reckless way often chosen to use reactionary phrases when he anticipated they would have a telling effect, or when he wished to inspire confidence, and divert attention from his real aims.

And there is abundant proof, that he was in bitter earnest in these utterances. The long struggle from 1862 to 1866 had been everywhere understood only in this sense; and with opinions already formed to accept it, what could be more easily believed than the assertion
that all had been done with the single object in view of strangling every effort at Freedom, and introducing a system of military absolutism? Parenthetically this also proved that the Prussian government could not regard their work as more than half-done, nor secure, until the last revolutionary forces in France had been extirpated root and branch. It could not, indeed, well be suspected that they regarded the Empire as a chief adversary, as a government favourable to reform and even progress, and therefore as a thorn in their side. But it is well known that the revolutionists in France always feel themselves to be on the eve of a new outbreak. In this certainty, upon which their whole life is based, it could not but seem to them to be the first duty of self-preservation to help betimes in suppressing the power, which they were assured was continuing to arm only in order that she might march in battle-array upon Paris, the moment liberty was declared.

Finally, for those who were too far removed from the influence of these arguments others were forthcoming. They were shown (and the German allies of Revolutionary Chauvinism with their turn for philosophy were specially fitted for doing this) that even in the Empire there is still enough left of the inheritance of the National Convention, still enough of the democratic principle of equality saved from the general bankruptcy of the "good" time
to make out of even imperial France an object of abomina-
tion to the overbearing and fanatical Junkers, into whose hands modern Prussia had fallen. This array of arguments, deduced from philosophy and history, succeeded in drawing a great part of the liberal and influential voices in France to join in the panic cry of, Hannibal ante portas!

Of these voices none is so important and attractive as that of Edgar Quinet who has long been acquainted with the language, literature and life of Germany. A decided liberal he has judged the French Revolution from an entirely independent point of view. In the same way, he has arrived at an independent opinion on German events. Although his opposition views lead him to insist on the dangerous results to France of the German development of power, and at the same time to drag the conservative element in the German movement into the foreground — a course which, in his place, he is quite justified in adopting — yet, as we shall see, he displays for what is real and vital in the movement a largeness, justness, and appreciation such as our German Catos have not an atom to boast of. He published in the "Temps" in January 1867 two long articles entitled "France and Germany" which deserve to be preserved both for their attractiveness and for the masterly way in which they treat the subject. We can only quote here some of the more striking
of the passages, which specially bear on the subject in hand.

Quinet commences with a passage from a former work, written in 1831, "Allemagne et Italie". His prophetic words, pronounced thirty years before the German war, deserve to be also prefixed here. They are as follows:

"In Prussia, it happened that the former spirit of indifference and political cosmopolitanism made way for a sensitive and irascible spirit of nationality. Here the national party first made its peace with the governing powers. The Prussian Government indeed gives the Germans that which at this day they most desire, spontaneity, real life and a policy in which it takes the initiative itself. It satisfies the desire for material power and importance which has all at once laid hold of them.

The Prussian despotism is intelligent, active, enterprising; all it needs is a man who shall clearly see and recognise that its star is in the ascendant. It is upheld as much by knowledge as by ignorance. Between it and the people there exists a tacit agreement to postpone freedom, and unite in the common work of increasing the inheritance of Frederick the Great. Moreover, the Prussian despotism possesses an indisputable advantage which would outweigh a thousand faults in having with its own hands completed the humiliation of France and
paid her back for the many years' disgrace of the Peace of Westphalia; for it was Prussian despotism which at Waterloo clipped the wings of the French eagle.

Unity! That is the one deep pressing thought which pervades this country in every direction. Religion, law, commerce, liberty, despotism, everything that exists on the other side of the Rhine is hurrying towards this solution.

What is the ruling thought that at this moment dwells under every roof? It is the idea of the unity of the German Fatherland; the call for the abolition of the artificial boundaries, which shut in people and produce, without any common bond, without any possible trade.

This unity is not a sentimental feeling which any day may destroy, but a necessary principle of development in the civilisation of the North.

And we French who have such good ground for knowing what power lies in ideas, have allowed ourselves to fall asleep not imagining that these aspirations could ever pass from a state of mere consciousness to volition, and from volition to action, and would demand social and political power. Now, however, these ideas instead of remaining abstractions, rise up before our eyes like the genius of a whole race; and this race subordinates itself to a branch of itself which is not more intelligent, but is more
choleric, covetous, self-asserting and practical. It hands over to this branch its ambition, its desires for reprisals and extension of territory, its desires for skilful diplomacy, for war, for fame and for power. Is it true then that at this moment the North is about to forge itself an implement out of Prussia? Yes, and if it were allowed to have its own way, it would slowly and secretly drive Prussia forward to a murderous attack upon the ancient kingdom of the Franks. The German world now only waits for an opportunity. And, once more, which is the state that is appointed in the name of Germany to keep a watch for this opportunity? It is the State which carries the keys to our territory in its belt, and holds the happiness of France chained in its dungeon”.

Having with this quotation from the past proved himself indisputably to be entitled to form a judgment on present relations, Quinet proceeds:

“Relying on the same ideas, which everything has confirmed, I am tempted to extend my speculations to the present, and I ask first: what will this new power grow to — a power which having sprung up but yesterday already occupies all minds? In the first place, we may consider it as certain that this German unity can no longer be prevented by any power in the world. It has taken its start with the force of a cannon ball. It will not be held back either by newspaper articles or by
diplomatic notes. It had wanted nothing but an opportunity to come into the world. The opportunity has been given. For the future, the only question is as to its growth, and this difficulty is as nothing compared to the first. If any one asks why this tremendous unity, prepared and preached so long in advance, needed so much time to become realised, and what kept Prussia from trying her fortune before, I should answer: that which kept back the Prussian government so long, and took away its inclination for a venture, which might have so desirable an issue, was the apprehension lest it might meet the Revolution somewhere on its path. One would have thought that a weakening of the national conscience could only be a cause of sadness to the philosopher. But, in truth, this moral inanity was calculated, growing as it did day by day, to pave the way for a great ambition. The Prussian government had the clear sense to see that this moral weakness had caused a corresponding mental weakness; that this was a priceless moment not to be lost; that men's minds would belong to him who first took possession of them; that the success of one day would decide everything; that the most hostile would become the most servile as soon as they had felt cold steel. Prussia marched and conquered. The public mind immediately prostrated itself. The unity of Germany, which could not be compassed by law and justice, was
established by a war, which, at first detested, was, as soon as it was successful, received with acclamations. 

. . . . . . . . Be this as it may, the German kingdom is founded. I can easily imagine that in some respects, the result will be exactly opposed to that which its founders had in view. They thought they were serving the interests of a feudal aristocratic party. It will not be a matter of surprise should the contrary prove to be the case. No nationality has ever been developed without a simultaneous development of industry; and the first consequences of the development of industry are to repress and keep in check the aristocracy. Germany will not be an exception to this hitherto universal rule. The scattered parts of the Teutonic whole are approaching and merging into one another; general wealth will increase, the hereditary influence of the great families will diminish.

The Junker party will have wounded itself with its own weapons. Moreover, what can be the character of a Prussian despotism imposed upon the German race? I should be very much astonished if it succeeded in uprooting the intellectual needs of this race, and prevented them from thinking. . . . . The Germans are not however at the moment sacrificing freedom solely to temporal welfare, or to gain, but to the idea of national greatness. Convinced that the leadership of thought in Europe belongs
to them, they consider it as long since proved that everything intellectual emanates from them, science, art, poetry, philosophy; that humanity is their pupil. What was wanting to this intellectual sovereignty which they imagined they possessed? Power. This they have now achieved. In their eyes, it is not merely a question of one kingdom more which has come into the world, but a question of supplanting the Latin Catholic era by a German era, the Latin races being henceforth thrust into the background. ... What changes will the creation of a German Fatherland introduce into the world? It will be difficult for the military spirit to absorb all power to itself in Germany as it so easily does with Latin races. The very suddenness of the victory of Sadowa will prevent the growth of myths and legends in favour of the conqueror. The blow was so like lightning in its rapidity that it did not leave time for the heroes of the war to impress themselves on the imagination of the masses, and thus lay the foundation for their immortality. Moreover, with the Germans, military fame does not degenerate into superstition; for this reason, that it is overshadowed by the fame of their reformers, poets, and artists. Luther, Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, will never rank below Blücher. The brilliance of the uniform which fascinates other people is on the German side of the Rhine not the most alluring of attractions. I can there-
fore well imagine a kingdom, which, although founded by the needle gun, might yet not end in military despotism. More difficult is the calculation as to what the overweening German pride will grow to, if nothing stands in its way, and it comes to look down on the Latin races from the heights of its newly-won victories, as on so many dwarfs at the foot of a giant's castle. I see then the danger of self-sufficiency for this giant. Whither might it not lead him? When he touches the Baltic and the Danube at the same time, what thoughts, what ambition will not awake in him? Nor will he escape delusion. So young and powerful, what a temptation to measure himself against the would, and, stepping forth from the land of dreams, to lay hands upon the kingdoms lying within his reach! With a belt of iron extending from Holstein to the Tyrol, it would be difficult to nourish only modest thoughts, and to renounce all idea of stretching one's arm across the Rhine. Even if moderation were to win the day, who would believe in it? Will not France often and often awake from her sleep, thinking she hears the step of her giant neighbour? Or, supposing she were to fall asleep without taking prudential measures, would not this be the sign of a deadly relaxation? and what a temptation then for Germany to take advantage of it! In all these cases, our danger is equally great. Whether they exist only in the
imagination, or in reality, matters little; the Present seems to have bequeathed inevitable storms to the Future". With these words, Quinet closes what he calls the German point of view. He proceeds to look at the subject from the French point of view. He describes in his striking and yet gracefully flowing language, how France allowed herself to be taken by surprise at the great turn of Fate. He warns the reader against admitting the idea that the new Germanic kingdom has stepped in as a protection to the West against the East. Germany's sympathies, he says, still incline towards Russia by whose side she won at Leipzig; and she has not yet lost her old enmity to France. No safety from the danger with which this newly risen world threatens France is conceivable, unless France recover her lost freedom:

"Do you ask what the question turns on? That is easily answered. The question turns on the advent of a new world which is now revealing itself, and is determined to excel yon in all things. It is true the Prussian liberals assure you to the contrary, and I am quite willing to believe in their sincerity. They aver that these great masses of men along the banks, and on the other side of the Rhine, are set in motion only for your benefit, and that, merely to watch over your slumbers, a million of German soldiers stand ready for combat on your threshold, in a time of
peace. These same liberals say you may sleep securely, they will answer for the consequences — as if even the present belonged to them! I would willingly accept their warrant if they were masters at home. But are they? Have they created the situation? .... Everything has taken place without them, and in spite of them. Who can say, that it will not be the same to-morrow and the day after to-morrow? They have been converted to the party of the strongest, and they promise you the favour of their influence with the destiny to which they themselves submit. But if this same destiny should one day require your fall, nothing would prevent their submitting to it with still more patience and philosophy”.

Any one who knows how firmly and with what strong belief the French mind clings to maxims as soon as they are accounted admirable and praiseworthy, and who knows that this is the case with regard to the sacred traditions of the Great Revolution will at once perceive that it would be a grateful task to raise this cry of “Hannibal ante portas”. In their mode of thought and love of system, the French of the present day show a decided resemblance to their forefathers, whose Parliaments and learned bodies punished with torture and the gallows the smallest heresies, not only in religion but also in science.

At the time when the renaissance was at its height, the learned printer Étienne Dolet was burnt on
the Place Maubert, by order of the Paris parliament, because he had translated five words of one of Plato's Dialogues, — quite literally and correctly, it is true, but not in the sense in which the theological faculty wished them to be understood. And yet this, in itself incredible, ground of condemnation was only a pretext to punish the evil-doer for another crime, that of taking up a position in the philological quarrel about the Ciceronian literature (Scaliger, Erasmus etc.) opposed to the dominant school. At the same time, the philosopher Pierre Ramus was prosecuted on account of his assertion, that Aristotle had not rightly defined logic; and a royal proclamation was cried about the streets of Paris to the sound of a drum, to the effect that said Ramus be declared, for that statement, a daring, presumptuous, shameless, ignorant, wicked and malicious liar. And the only fault which was found with this sentence, was that it was too lenient. A petition was presented to the King, Francis the First begging that "with his approved love of the sciences and his favourable dispositions towards its teachers, he would have the grace to condemn this man to the galleys".

It would seem as if something of the old jealous, inflexible spirit, which in the Middle Ages gradually evolved out of the newly discovered Aristotelian wisdom the only saving scientific principles, especially in France,
had attended the French Revolution in its political results. The intellectual heritage of the great revolution had become national property in France, and thereby sacred; for "property is sacred". Accordingly, every deviation that was introduced under the succeeding forms of government, appeared to the faithful adherents of the revolution like a step backward towards the pre-revolutionary time, and only increased their fidelity and earnestness of belief.

More recently, other causes had arisen to fan this fiery conviction into flame. For years, people had been in the habit of seeing the attacks upon the revolutionary creed coming only from behind, i.e. from the side which was more or less unfavourable to intellectual enlightenment or political progress. Gradually, however, the enemy had worked his way round to the front. A new school had arisen in France, which, in the name of freedom, severely criticised the authors of the reign of Terror and their excesses; and not stopping there, had ventured more or less to impugn the whole of the Revolution. The ground taken by these critics was that, after the lapse of eighty years, France found herself in the most miserable situation, politically speaking, which the modern world has ever witnessed, that therefore the event which formed the turning-point of her recent history, could have possessed no especial remedial power. Those who
least opposed the reigning school of thought contented
themselves in their historical position with espousing
the side of the Girondists; showing in detail that the
unhappy course of the whole later development, from the
Directory to the Empire of to-day, was to be ascribed
solely to the defeat and extermination of the moderate
republicans.

In the ranks of the orthodox republicans who could
not possibly abandon so much of their cherished beliefs
and who — as is usually the way — take a kind of
pride in carrying their cause through thick and thin, such
reservation called forth great indignation. In a short
time, supported chiefly by the sympathies of the youth
of the universities, there grew up a complete literature,
having for its object the glorification of sans-culottism
and its heroes. Thick volumes were written, one after
another, to glorify Kloutz, St. Just, Robespierre, Marat,
and even Hebert; and Edgar Quinet's book against ter-
rorism (La Révolution) roused a storm of opposition.

Whilst the critics were disputing the merits of the
Revolution on its abstract side, the broader question in
dispute was agitation the general public; and the already
inflamed minds became doubly inflamed at the idea that
the heritage of the revolution was threatened by the
resuscitated coalition. The opinions which here came into
play although not shared by those at the helm of the
State are so widely spread, that even the highest authorities cannot help paying at least outward homage to them, and taking the opportunity of coquetting with them, wherever, as in the domain of foreign politics, it can be done without danger.

It was therefore an imperative duty, if the French were to gain a clearer insight into German affairs, to correct and modify the prejudiced, distrustful and hostile conception abroad in France. This duty was doubly and trebly imperative, because we had all more or less contributed to create the impression which we now felt to be offensive and hurtful to us; and because this impression in the first instance had been energetically and eloquently implanted in the French mind by the German opponents of the modern Prussian policy. Where else had the French got their notion of the exclusively anti-revolutionary Junker tendencies of the Bismarck policy, if it was not from Germany? Whether it was the fault of Count Bismarck himself, or the fault of an inevitable fate, that, during a struggle of four years, Germany was unable to see in his proceedings any object but that of helping on the triumph of absolute monarchy and Junkerdom — no matter what is the answer to this question, a question we have endeavoured to solve in this work — so much at any rate is certain: that for years the whole of cultivated Germany had denounced the policy of Count
Bismarck as thoroughly destructive, and had claimed the moral support of the public opinion of Europe in combating it.

The final outbreak of war with Austria, which for Germany immediately became a turning-point for its judgment on things past and present, seemed to the foreign theorist precisely the most striking confirmation of all the ill that had been told him of the Prussian government. Now if ever, he thought, the moment had come to fly to the help of the Germans; and it is well known that invitations to do this were not wanting.

Under these circumstances, was it not a first duty to make known our newly awakened doubts to those countries, which we had misled, not only with our suspicions, but even with our irrevocable sentence of condemnation? Even those who might not love truth enough to feel joy in confessing a long cherished error could not but regard themselves as bound to work against the wild propagation of views which were now exploded. How much more then were they thus bound, when the inflamed hate might become a devouring fire!

The solution of the question, whether the Prussian undertaking was inspired by anything better than the poor and evil desire to stifle freedom in Germany, and in the rest of Europe was of no less importance to the French than to us. For if Prussia was nothing — ab-
solutely nothing — to the Germans, but the spirit of darkness; to the French she was the personal enemy of their revolution, whom to wage war with was a sacred duty.

It was therefore incumbent on us, as soon as we had ourselves arrived at this opinion, to prove to France that the campaign of Prussia against Austria and her allies was, neither in its deeper historical origin, nor in its personal motives, a work of the Reaction — of the Counter-Revolution, but that its visible consequences have proved it to be precisely the reverse. This we could prove to them only by explaining at the same time, how it was that we had led them astray.

With the continual action and re-action going on between French and German public opinion, a clear exposition of the subject is as necessary as it is useful even to German minds. For, although French opinion of Germany's attitude in this special case rests on German authorities, these authorities in their turn obtained the elements for their view from French sources. The antithesis of revolution and counter-revolution had travelled from France all round the world, and nothing of course was so pre-eminently calculated to produce a vivid impression on the French people as that which, having originated with themselves, sounded as intelligible, as it was agreeable to their ears. In like manner, it often
happens that people in naïve ignorance, imagine they are understanding a foreign language, because the foreigner speaks to them in their own language, only with a foreign accent. —

If we look back a couple of generations we cannot help a feeling of pity for the vegetating state of the German Fatherland of that day. And yet, on closer examination, we shall find that half a century ago the active minds of Germany imagined they were standing on the eve of a general revolutionary rising. It is exactly fifty years since Görres wrote his "Germany and the Revolution", which concluded in a warning voice of thunder to the Princes: Discite justitiam moniti, et non temnere Divos! Nothing can be more instructive than a glance at those pages, in which the coming of a merciless hurricane is prophesied with the impetuous energy of a firm conviction.

"The heart of the Nation" he says "has turned "away from the Institution of the Diet which people "used to look upon as only provisional*; nor has it the "least desire for a mock Emperor without a Chamber .. 
" . . . . . . . . What can all the diplomatic art in the "world avail against the force of Nature which discloses "itself in the peoples more and more every day? . . . . . . .

* This was in 1819!
“Every thing is tending towards violence and a general "overthrow. The cry resounds throughout the land: The "sword of reason for all who dare to resist!"*

But this sentence of doom went forth upon a land in a state of complete servitude! Of the four and thirty princes whom this voice of thunder marked out for conversion or sacrifice, not a single one paid any heed; every one of them descended in peace into the grave of his fathers, mourned by his faithful subjects. Their sons all sit tolerably secure still, and but little improved, on their thrones and thronelets, — with the exception of the few who have at last been swept from the face of the German Earth, as some poor compensation for the blood poured out on the fields of Bohemia.

And how often has not the day of vengeance been announced since 1819 and those looked down upon with angry contempt who would not believe in its dawning!

Between the time when the printer Dolet was burnt on the Place Maubert, and the philosopher Ramus was declared infamous — between the time of the St. Bartholomew massacre and the dawn of the Revolution —

* It was the time of the murder of Kotzebue by Sand, and of the attempt on the life of the Nassau minister of state, Ibell, by another student, of the name of Löning. A mass of writings discussed the question of the threatened revolution. There even appeared a pamphlet with the expressive title "Has Germany cause to fear a Revolution" by J. Weitzel. Wiesbaden 1819.
there are not more than two centuries. For the revolution dates from the rising of the American colonies against the mother country — the first time that a great political rebellion was carried out, which, although nominally based on a question of historical right, was really based on a philosophical avowal of universal laws of nature. But between this great turning point and the present time there is another century. Truly, it is not too much to suppose that the development of mankind during this last period has gone on at double the rate of the preceding period. Ought we not then to recognise at last that the problems no longer stand on the same ground, and are therefore no longer to be solved in the same way as three generations back? France has other tasks before her than she had at the time when the notables assembled; and Germany has quite long enough believed that she could rid herself of the middle-ages as France got rid of the Bourbons. A thousand new conditions and claims have since arisen to make the aim of a revolution anything but simple — the first element of success. Progress in Germany now depends upon the rulers ceasing to regard the Revolution as a spectre which threatens continually to rise from its grave, and the ruled ceasing to regard it as a deliverer which any day may give back to them.

As soon as Prussia had made up its mind to a
policy which, be it from whatever motives, forced it to sin against the literal letter of ancient rights and to enter the free current of modern thought, it revealed once more so much internal possibility of devoting itself to higher tasks, that it became a duty to the liberal party, seeing the utter wildness of German as well as French attempts at remedy, to meet it on their side with a corresponding absence of prejudice. And if this attempt was justified for a moment, it is more than ever necessary, now that the most difficult part is accomplished, not to be led astray by those who would willingly bring back everything into the track of their favourite Routine, which pays so well and gives so little trouble.

Even historical science has not remained free from responsibility in the ruinous perpetuation of formulas of strife. Under the pressure of momentary currents of feeling, it threw itself with the injustice of hostile bitterness into criticism of the Revolution. With the philological critical talent for destruction with which our German pundits are gifted, it was not difficult to demolish, stone by stone, the whole temple erected to the Revolution on German ground. The proceeding was all the easier as it was simply necessary to destroy the ideal views in general acceptation, by a resolution of those views into their real elements. Each individual per-

Count Bismarck.
sonage, each individual motive was subjected to a microscopic inspection, was shown up in its poor and narrow finiteness; and thus in the simplest and most perverted way in the world, the meaning of a great event was destroyed.

We have only to look at the criticism of the daily press on the men of the present time and on passing occurrences, to perceive how easy and at the same time how false it is to apply this smallest of all measures to great historical events. What, for example, is easier than to represent the history of the German reformation as the work of the lowest self interest on the part of a Prince? But, in life, the whole is just as real as the parts, the feelings as the intellect, the concrete as the abstract; and no one will succeed in judging correctly and justly of the things of this world, unless he is able to take both sides into equal account.

The course taken by our young historical school of renewing on paper the campaign of German legitimacy against the French Republic did not remain without result in France. Like causes produced like effects, and a certain select circle in France, which derives its mental nourishment from Germany, took a pleasure in carrying the rejection of the Revolution even further than had been done in Germany. We meet, for example, with the statement, that, looking at the question from the point
of real progress, even the whole system of civil order with its law of equal inheritance and free-trade is an evil; that legitimate monarchy is the sole rational constitution for a state; in short, that in order to advance to true freedom, we must seek for the union of the future with the past in the time before 1789.*

Just as the blind reactionary party had gone astray with the idea that the whole revolution could and must be destroyed root and branch, and the party of progress with the idea that the whole Revolution must be repeated literally, so the historical critics had allowed themselves to be carried away by the example before them in the field of practical politics. Fascinated by the grandeur of the Titan-like vision, and transferring to the object looked at, the fixity of their own gaze, they forgot that history on which their eyes were dwelling, is not an unchanging rock but an ever-flowing stream. It is therefore necessary we should clearly comprehend that the great reform which was made in human society in the last century is neither to be utterly rejected nor to be repeated, but to be carried on; that it continues to grow daily of itself; that more or less every useful activity helps to advance the Revolution, although in quite a different manner, and

* Vide Rénan's Questions contemporaines and Philosophie de l'histoire contemporaine.
with quite different results to what was expected by the promulgators of the rights of man.

When we have once succeeded in distinguishing between the matter and the manner of the Revolution, we shall have effected a considerable step towards making our course clear. But the tendency of the present training of the world, which science is hardly able to counteract is to convert every conviction into a dogma, from which no iota may be taken away. Even the revolutionary ritual is as firmly held to by the revolutionary priesthood as the substance of their belief itself. Thus, it is reckoned moral degeneracy to count upon reforming a given state in a given position through any other means than the rising of the masses. Woe to him who supposes that he can accomplish his ends to-day by means of anything that he once rejected! This is as thorough dogmatism, and that of the worst kind, as ever any Dominican was guilty of. What would be thought of the opinion of a man, who should make it a subject of moral reproach to a physician, that he now treats with iodine and steel the disease, which twenty years ago he endeavoured to cure by bleeding, — and this too in the face of the fact that not only the knowledge of diseases has advanced, not only the character of the disease has become greatly modified, but also that the patients died under the blood-letting treatment of twenty years ago!
Principles are not invented but are deduced from the needs and experiences of mankind. Nothing is therefore so foolish as the warning not to undermine principles, not to make known to the general mass the doubts which rise in the minds of the few. Especially is it impossible in a time like this, alive with movement, that new views should be held only by an aristocratic few; every new truth that assails an ancient tradition rapidly permeates the whole of society.

Who, for example, will refuse to recognise that the lessons of the year 1866 have had a revolutionizing effect in Germany, on the generally received convictions of the masses? At crises of this importance duty to society consists in forwarding the evolution of principles, and in hastening the transition from a state of dim feeling and uneasy conscience to that of clear knowledge.

This task rests with those who look below the surface for what is vital and eternal, and seek to separate it from what is accidental and perishable. These it is who further progress, not those who pride themselves on discovering what is fatal in events, and in placing morality and the popular conscience in contradiction to each other.

It was with these views, that we undertook the preceding study, bearing specially in mind the French mode
of thought. Circumstances offered extraordinary advantages, both as regards the technical treatment and the practical carrying-out of the subject. Instead of having to depict events in their dry, impersonal character, the author found himself in presence of a single, living, and individual figure, which embodied the substance of the events, and already represented them in the eyes of the world. This figure was doubly alluring to one addressing the French, a nation with a lively dramatic sense, that has long been accustomed in memoir, romance, and play, to take intense interest in psychological problems.

The surest way, then to ensure attention and comprehension was, by combination and arrangement of the personal materials, to succeed in finding the psychological key to an individuality which had exercised such a predominant influence on events, that in the universal judgment, it had stamped them with its personal character. In the present case, public event and personal deed seemed one, and the chief actor was so entirely a representative man in the fullest sense of the word, that the altered world was regarded as entirely the work of the man, while the man was not in any way considered as the product of the altered world.

A critical study was therefore called upon to vindicate the just share of power which circumstances had exercised over the individual.
The psychological problem could only be solved by demonstrating that the individual had strength to move the world, simply because he understood better than others what lever to apply. And while this possibility of personifying events afforded a most favourable opportunity, not on any account to be neglected, and was especially adapted to French views, it happened that the character of the individual seemed created to impress this special nation. If, in history, the French chiefly care for what is personal, in the personal, they care chiefly for the diplomatic, that is, for the skilful, bold, and secret management of state affairs.

Of all the refinements which had been imported into the French court with the Italian culture of the 16th and 17th centuries, none had taken deeper root than the love for the manipulation of home and foreign politics. All the subtle poisons of the diplomatic art, which dominion of priests, commercial spirit, gallantry, and jealousy among the great, had distilled in the laboratories of Rome, Venice, Florence, and Genoa, were re-brewed in the chambers of the Bourbons, and experimented with in all parts of the world, under the influence of a female dominion carried to the furthest extreme.

The character and language of modern European policy may be considered as entirely of French origin.
Talleyrand was in a certain sense a popular figure, for a short time. The fascinating influence which Napoleon III. exercised over the mass of the people till lately was to be ascribed to the respect which they felt for his statesmanship and prudence. A political phenomenon like that of Count Bismarck could not therefore but exercise an ensnaring power over the French. Had he not won the game, card by card, from their Emperor, who had long been considered the cleverest player in the world? Not even Cavour was so much admired in France as Bismarck. Cavour, though surpassed by no living man in the refinements of statesmanship, yet worked with liberal and national tools, which compelled him to a less zigzag course, and gave his policy a less markedly personal stamp. He could of course boast of larger sympathy in France than the Prussian minister, but he never attained the same degree of popularity; popularity, that is, not in the sense of being a universal favourite, but of perpetually rising to the surface in men's minds and speech. The admiration, ironical and given under protest though it be, with which the name of Bismarck is uttered by great and small in France, is all the greater proof of his popularity, because it bears the traces in itself of their violent efforts not to give way to it. With all their evident jealousy of our laurels, we may safely assume that the political superiority of the diplomatist left
a deeper impression on the French than all the victories of the Prussian army.

At any rate, in both arts, that of war and that of diplomacy, to which this people attaches such importance, a master-piece had been accomplished before their eyes, which extorted from them immense respect for their German neighbours; for these were departments in which they had least expected rivalry. The French perceived that they had to make our acquaintance in an entirely new character; and nothing was more natural than that they should feel called upon to point out the weak side of the newly revealed qualities.

Their first discovery was, that in attaining these worldly objects of ambition, we must have sacrificed many of the ideal qualities for which we had once been famous; — a necessary corollary to the assertion that the German war of 1866 had been a large nail driven into the coffin of European freedom and culture.

Especially were we attacked about the loss of our modesty; and those who for a hundred reasons of their own wanted to bring about a war between the two nations used denunciations of the contempt, with which the Germans now looked down on the French, as a sharp spur wherewith to prick their countrymen. To say precisely what esteem German nationality enjoys with the
French is no easy matter. We were too long in their eyes blockheads, têtes carrées, sauerkraut-eaters, the regular butt in the farce, and the clown of the circus, for this idea of us to be altogether swept away yet. The class of Frenchmen who when travelling in Germany feel half estranged, half angry, that every one does not understand their language, and regard this as a sign of the unpractical nature of the Germans, is not yet extinct; but the increasing contact of the two nations on a thousand points, and particularly on the field of science and of literature, has greatly tended to alter this. The number of those who consider us equals is proportionately smaller than that of those who, roused to enthusiasm by German learning and German industry, are ready, in a sort of ill-will to their own nation, to give us the palm of superiority.

Since the French have become better acquainted with us, they have begun to respect us more highly on many points; but at the same time they have begun to doubt those quiet virtues which we had boasted of, and which they had accepted on our word, — particularly our very equivocal modesty.

More than twenty years ago, a book appeared in Paris, which was a good deal noticed at the time, entitled — "Des Allemands, par un Français",* which showed

* Published by Amyot, 1846. M. du Fabry, the author, whose name did not appear on the title-page, is now living, retired from public life, in the country.
a wonderfully exact acquaintance with our circumstances and tendencies at that time, and was written by a Frenchman who had evidently studied in Germany, and had successfully striven to form an impartial opinion. In this work, we meet frequently with the serious complaint that the German looks down upon the Frenchman with contempt; in the course of the last two years this view has become very general with cultivated people. It is clear from Quinet's article, already quoted, that since the time of M. du Fabry's book, it has become quite a matter of course to inveigh against German pride. In talking on political matters with cultivated Frenchmen, a German must be prepared for their revealing by their manner, if not by their words, that they suspect him of looking down upon them with a sort of silent compassion.

We have been so much accustomed to feel the reverse, that the discovery that we are under the suspicion of arrogance and injustice rather tickles our fancy. It seems like compensation for long-endured ill-will, and it gives us the impression, that we must have accomplished a great deal before we could be represented, by those who had despised us, for so many hundred years, as being filled with a pride, not founded on the brilliance of our success, but altogether vain and unwarranted.

The accusation is not wholly groundless; and to give apparent or real cause for it can only do harm to the
German nation, both as regards its relations with its neighbours and as regards itself.

A German writer* has well said:

"We may judge tolerably safely of any man's aesthetic, "political, and, to a certain extent, even moral, cultivation "by the way in which he speaks about France. If his "views are arrogant, unappreciative and contemptuous, "he is at best coarse and ignorant; but if hate lurks in "his speech, we shall do well to be on our guard "against him".

If anything is capable of averting from us the danger of a pernicious over-estimate of our strength and our progress, it is the thought which is aroused by such an attempt as the foregoing work. To give foreign nations a just and clear understanding of the latest change in German destinies, we must first make it evident that this change is to be explained only by our hitherto in-ordinately backward state. A comparison of what has been accomplished with what has still to be accomplished must convince us that many and difficult things still remain to be done. Nor shall we be able to escape the conviction that the end was attained by a road neither known to, nor desired by, the majority and the better part of the nation; so that in most mouths any boast

* Karl Stahr.
about the result would sound like "Priding one's self on the heat of July" (Farsi bello del sole di Luglio) as the Italian proverb says.

It is fortunate that the time has come, as come it surely has, for us to apply to ourselves the warning advice addressed to our princes fifty years ago by old Görres, in closing his book on Germany and the Revolution: "Learn justice, and fear of the Eternal Power, "which chastises the haughty."

Wiesbaden, September 1868.
Leipsic, printed by Hüthel & Legier.