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The Unity of Germany

THE sudden rise to the rank of a first-rate power of a country much renowned for its poetry, its learning, and its industry, but seeming still in 1865 to be politically hopelessly divided, is an event of such importance, that every publication contributing to the explanation of this phenomenon is to be welcomed alike by the historian and the politician. Three recent books all so contribute, but each in a different manner. By far the most important is the great work of Dr. von Sybel,¹ who was the first to have access to the modern Prussian archives, and the registry of the Foreign Office of the last fifty years. His book is tinged with a certain partiality for Bismarck, which sometimes leads to erroneous statements, and which is the more curious as the author was that minister's most bitter adversary during the constitutional conflict; but his five volumes nevertheless contain many important revelations, and at the same time correct erroneous current opinions, not only on German but on general European affairs, so that the book claims the attention of foreign readers.

The first book contains a retrospective introduction from the earliest times till 1848. Such bird's-eye reviews, embracing many centuries, offer particular difficulties; the outlines of the development can only be given in decisive outline, and yet every sentence must be unassailable as the result of deep study. Macaulay and Ranke were masters in this art, but we scarcely think that the same can be said of Sybel's first chapter, which, in fact, is the quintes-

¹ *Die Begründung des deutschen Reiches durch Wilhelm I.* Vornehmlich nach den preussischen Staatsakten. Von Heinrich von Sybel. 5 vol. Berlin, 1890.

Lévy-Bruhl, *L'Allemagne depuis Leibnitz.* Essai sur le développement de la conscience nationale en Allemagne, 1700-1848. Paris, 1890.

André Lebon, *Etudes sur l'Allemagne politique.* Paris 1890.

sence of his former pamphlet, 'The German Nation and the Empire.' The author represents the latter as a mere misfortune for the nation (the colonisation of the East excepted), because it led to the dismemberment of Germany. But he has not proved that it was always a misfortune and was from the beginning destined to lead to such a result, this view (according to our opinion) being refuted by Mr. Bryce's excellent book, 'The Holy Roman Empire.' Bryce justly distributes light and shadow in the history of the empire, and shows what, with all its failures, the nation has gained by its intellectual fructification. Ideas which have governed centuries cannot be condemned retrospectively because they have led to a melancholy end; the Crusades also resulted in a victory of Islam over Christianity, yet who would designate the enthusiasm which inspired the European nations for conquering the Holy Land simply as a great folly? It is the same with the empire; under Conrad II and Henry III Germany was much more strongly constituted than either France or England; her decisive misfortune was the fate which brought a foreigner, Charles V, to the throne at the moment of the Reformation. At that time religious thought was paramount, and if the conqueror had placed himself at the head of the movement, it would have become the most powerful instrument of unification. But the bigoted Spaniard had no comprehension of the Lutheran doctrine; nay, he did everything to put it down by force of arms, and thus the reformers were obliged to appeal to the princes and the senates of the free cities of the empire for protection. The emperor was unable to overcome that resistance, and the Diet of Augsburg (1555), leaving the decision of the religious question to the estates of the realm, confirmed the particularism which more and more broke up the empire. The counter-reformation, inaugurated by the Jesuits and the Habsburg emperors, led to the thirty years' war, in which Germany bled to death for the cause of religious liberty, losing two thirds of her inhabitants; and though the emperor did not succeed in re-establishing the paramount dominion of Catholicism, the country emerged from the struggle exhausted and divided, crippled of some of its most valuable territories, to be for centuries the playground of French encroachments and of foreign influence. The imperial dignity had become a nullity, and the idea of a common fatherland had nearly entirely disappeared. There was only a policy of the house of Austria, no German policy; but on the other side Frederic the Great also thought only of Prussian interests, and it was merely the opposition against Austria which led him to found at the end of his life the league of German princes.

Sybel's sketch of the gradual rising of Prussia under her great sovereigns, and the miserable policy of their successors, which led to Jena, is excellent, but we need not enter upon it here. Suffice it

to say that at the beginning of this century the political impotence of Germany was at its height. Austria and Prussia had been deprived by Napoleon of their most valuable provinces; the other states were either simply embodied in the French empire or formed the Confederation of the Rhine under the protectorship of the foreign conqueror, who wanted states too weak for resisting his will, yet strong enough to resist the influence of Prussia or Austria, and therefore inclined to lean upon France. How Prussia, reduced to five millions of inhabitants and crushed by the exactions of Napoleon, who drew from the impoverished country more than a milliard, rose again by the reforms of great statesmen and generals, and, supported by all the living national forces, shook off the foreign yoke, has been well told in Professor Seeley's book, 'The Life and Times of Stein.' But it is melancholy to see how this heroic struggle was deprived of its natural results by Metternich's insidious statecraft, aided by the middle states, to whom he guaranteed, as price of their defection from Napoleon, the maintenance of their actual territories. Thus, at the congress of Vienna, any constitution of real force was hopeless from the beginning, and the German Confederation of 1815 was only an international union of independent states. Neither were the hopes of the patriots for the internal development fulfilled. In Prussia particularly, the narrowness of Frederic William III, who at the moment of danger had solemnly promised to grant a constitution to his people, was frightened by Metternich and his auxiliaries at Berlin, representing every popular legislature as a danger to the crown. As to the foreign policy, Prussia, after unprecedented exertions, wanted certainly a long peace for recovering, but it was not in her interest, as she did, to participate in the reactionary policy of Austria and Russia. An unimpeachable witness, Prince William of Prussia, the late emperor, in 1824 wrote to General von Natzmer :

As regards our external situation, I must with regret completely share your views. If the nation had known that eleven years after having reached a position of splendour, glory, and prestige such as rarely has been seen, only a remembrance and no activity would remain, who would have sacrificed all for such a result? The mere question solemnly obliges us to maintain to a people of fifteen millions the place which it has attained by exertions hitherto unheard of, and which will not be seen again.

The press was entirely fettered by the censorship. The Austrian chancellor succeeded in uniting the delegates of the larger estates, 'in order to exterminate from German heads the infamous idea of German unity once for all,' and the Prussian government allowed itself to be taken completely in tow of this policy by persecuting with particular harshness the somewhat immature, but certainly not dangerous, aspirations of the younger generation.

The internal administration, however, particularly in Prussia, greatly improved; a rational system of taxation was introduced, and the Prussian tariff of 1818 was of such unprecedented liberality that its success was invoked by Huskisson in his financial reforms. No one, however, even at Berlin, thought at that time, that this was the first step towards a great national development; the government acted simply under the pressure of financial necessity, but just for this reason it remained firm, in spite of the contradiction of other German governments and Austria. After re-establishing the equipoise of the budget, the able finance minister Von Motz concluded in 1828 the customs union with Hesse-Darmstadt, which was followed by commercial treaties with Bavaria and Würtemberg, the forerunners of subsequent union. Thus Prussia, compelled by its own interest, rather unconsciously laid the groundwork of the Zollverein, which was gradually to embrace nearly all Germany, and during the long peace greatly helped to increase the wealth of the country and with it the self-confidence of the middle classes.

The reaction of the July revolution of 1830, followed by that of Belgium and the insurrections of Poland and Italy, was powerful in Germany, and showed how deep was the discontent brooding under the leaden cover imposed upon the nation. The king of Prussia, who had helped his son-in-law, the Emperor Nicholas, to extricate himself from a perilous situation in the Turkish war and to obtain the advantageous peace of Adrianople (1829), (for which signal service the emperor rewarded his father-in-law by making a compact with Charles X which abandoned to France the left bank of the Rhine), wisely declined the insidious advice of Nicholas to re-establish Charles X by force of arms, and Europe was obliged to acknowledge the independence of Belgium. But although some sovereigns of Germany were compelled to make concessions to constitutionalism, Metternich succeeded once more in fettering the press and in restraining the king of Prussia from granting the long-promised constitution. Sybel says well: 'If you destroy the conception of fatherland in a rising generation, the consequence is that the intellectual movement becomes unpatriotic.' The national deception drove the people into cosmopolitanism and particularism. The constitutional development in France found eager sympathy, and the portrait of Canning, who had successfully opposed the reactionary league, was found in German houses by the side of that of Blücher.

This was the situation when in 1840 Frederic William III died, mourned by his people notwithstanding all his failures, and with his successor began a new era. Frederic William IV was a highly gifted man, learned himself, a lover of arts and science, and gifted with a charming personality. Unfortunately these talents were not supported by corresponding common-sense and strength of will. 'You cannot reason with the king' was the observation of an

English diplomatist. He would have made a capital professor, but *il ne savait pas le métier de roi*, speaking too much and not knowing to act at the right moment. He roused the highest expectations by his inaugural addresses, but did not fulfil them. He had feudal views opposed to the wants of the time; but, above all, filled with the highest conceptions of his divinely instituted dignity, he objected to any restriction of his power by constitutional limits. Even when at last he convoked in 1846 the United Diet, he insisted that this was an act of grace on his part, and that the Diet should only be allowed to grant new taxes and loans, saying that no leaf of paper should intrude between him and his people. But the power of circumstances was stronger. The Diet, composed of eminently moderate men, demanded the unconditional acknowledgment of the royal constitutional promises of 1815 and 1820, and declared that these were not fulfilled by the way in which it was summoned, and so its deliberations ended in a failure for the crown. In other states also the tide of liberalism was rising. The reforms of Pio Nono, the mission of Lord Minto to Italy, the war of the Sonderbund, which ended by a defeat of Metternich's and Guizot's reactionary policy, the fermentation in Austria itself, proved by the Galician massacres of 1847, contributed to make the whole edifice erected in 1815 and scantily recobbled after 1830 crack in all its joints. Yet who in the autumn of 1847 would have thought of its general cataclysm, when General von Radowitz, sent to Paris by his master, wrote that Louis Philippe's throne was founded on a diamond rock, and Disraeli in 'Coningsby' believed that he had discerned in that king the modern Odysseus?

The effect of the February revolution on Germany was that of a spark on a barrel of powder. Everywhere the frightened sovereigns capitulated before the excited masses, which, however, had little material power to enforce their demands. Stung by an evil conscience, they were ready to condemn their whole former policy. The king of Bavaria alone abdicated, as he would not play the part of a shadow upon the throne. No one thought of invoking the help of the Diet, struck with impotence, and it was in Austria itself that Metternich's formerly much-admired system was shattered to pieces like a house of cards.

Prussia was in a different position with an efficient administration and a strong army, both being perfectly able to put down any insurrectionary movement; and if the king had at once summoned the united Diet, it would probably have proved the best support of his throne. But he could not make up his mind, precious time was lost, and on the other side all revolutionaries discerned that the Prussian monarchy was their most powerful adversary. So, on March 18, an insurrection broke out at Berlin; the garrison was perfectly able to master it, and General

von Prittwitz was on the point of doing so, when the king, in spite of the protests of the prince of Prussia, gave the fatal order of withdrawing the troops, because he could stand no more bloodshedding. The revolution triumphed at Berlin as it had done at Vienna, and persuaded by his new foreign minister, Heinrich von Arnim, the king tried to recover the lost ground, by running on horseback through the streets of Berlin, girded with the German colours, and proclaiming that he would take the lead in the days of danger—a task to which he was utterly unequal.

In the meantime, Frankfort had become the centre of the movement. The helpless Diet had acknowledged the necessity of a German parliament, and had summoned twelve men of confidence charged with drawing up a new imperial constitution. But it was unable to supply what was most wanted—a strong executive. According to the nature of things, this ought to have rested in the hands of the king of Prussia, but he was too unpopular to be thought of, and, moreover, his ideas for the future were perfectly unpractical, for, notwithstanding all that he suffered from Austria, he wanted to transfer to her sovereign the imperial crown, and was satisfied for himself with the part of hereditary imperial commander. His personality made it hopeless to create a monarchical head with a man who did not want to be so; besides, apart from his antiquated views, his disinclination was rooted in the feeling that he had not the necessary strength for coping with the difficulties of the situation. 'I am not a great sovereign; Frederic II would have been your man,' he said somewhat later to Stockmar, who pressed him to act energetically.

In the Frankfort parliament, which was hailed with the highest national expectations, Gagern soon became the leading man. Patriotic and eloquent, he, however, lacked the decisive gift of statesmanship, of discerning the real condition of things and acting accordingly, so that Bismarck, the stern realist, whom he met later on, declared him to be, in his rough manner, 'a perfectly stupid fellow' (*das ist ja ein ganz dummer Kerl*). Instead of establishing before all a strong executive able to control and to realise its resolutions, the Assembly lost months in discussing the fundamental rights of the German people, and thus was overhauled by the events. In June, Prince Windischgraetz crushed the insurrection at Prague; and in November the anarchy which had prevailed during the whole summer at Berlin was put down, when Count Brandenburg became first minister. Sybel seems to believe that this was the effect of Bismarck's advice, but this is an error; Bismarck at that time was a young man not in office, and without influence with the king; he may have spoken in that sense, but the real author of the plan to place Brandenburg at the head of affairs was General von Gerlach, the most influential adviser of the king,

who secretly went to Breslau in order to appeal to the general, hitherto a simple soldier who had never meddled with politics, to undertake the formation of an energetic ministry. In this task, Brandenburg, although no statesman, succeeded, and the anarchical Prussian assembly, which had overthrown one ministry after the other, was dissolved. The struggle for crushing the revolution was more difficult at Vienna, but at last Prince Windischgraetz took the capital by storm, the feeble Emperor Ferdinand abdicated in favour of his nephew Francis Joseph, and the energetic Prince Schwarzenberg became prime minister. The ebb of revolution had set in.

Schwarzenberg declared as soon as he had taken the reins, that his programme was to maintain the unity of the Austrian empire, and demanded that the whole of it should enter into the Germanic confederation. This was incompatible with the federal state as contemplated by the National Assembly, and therefore Gagern, who had become president of the imperial ministry, answered Schwarzenberg's programme by declaring that the entering of the Austrian monarchy with a majority of non-German nationalities into the German federal state was an impossibility. Thus nothing was left but to place the king of Prussia at the head of the German state. But in order to win a majority for this plan Gagern found it necessary to make large concessions to the democratic party, amongst others universal suffrage. This was not calculated to make the offer of the imperial crown acceptable to Frederic William IV, but his principal reason for declining it was, that he would not exercise any pressure on the other German sovereigns, and that, notwithstanding Schwarzenberg's haughty demeanour, he could not make up his mind to exclude Austria from Germany. After the refusal of the crown by the king, the National Assembly was doomed; it had certainly committed great faults, but the decisive reason of its failure was the lack of a clear and resolute will in Prussia. History, however, teaches that great enterprises, such as it was to unify an empire dismembered for centuries, rarely succeed at the first attempt. The capital importance of the events of 1848 was that they had made the German unionist movement an historical fact; it could never be effaced from the annals, that all the German governments had publicly acknowledged that tendency as legitimate, the direction for the future was given, and even at the time of failure it was certain, as Stockmar said, that the necessity of circumstances would bring forward the man who, profiting by the experiences of 1848, would fulfil the national aspirations.

We need not follow here the abortive attempts of Frederic William IV to bring about a union by the free consent of the German governments. This very principle made his task hopeless; for unity could only be achieved by sacrificing parts of the sovereign rights

of the single states, and no government would do so voluntarily. The German princes had submitted to the Frankfort parliament, so long as they feared it; but although the insurrectionary movements which followed its dissolution had been put down in Saxony, Baden, and the Palatinate by Prussian arms, the king promising that he would not exercise any pressure upon his brother sovereigns, the final result was that he was left in the cold with the small fry of third-rate states. The decisive factor, however, was Austria; if Frederic William had been a man of resolution, Prince Schwarzenberg, with all his haughtiness, would have been obliged to come to terms, for in 1849 the Austrian army had been decisively beaten by Görgey and Klapka. But the king abhorred profiting by the victories of the revolution, and lost precious time with useless negotiations at Vienna, till Russia intervened and crushed the Magyars. As soon as Schwarzenberg had thus become master in his own house, he turned against Prussia by convoking the old Diet at Frankfort. To this even the king would not submit; but the Emperor Nicholas, elated by his victory in Hungary, threw the whole weight of his dominating position into the scale against his brother-in-law. He pleased himself in playing the part of the great destroyer of revolution; he had sneered at Frederic William's promenade in the streets of Berlin, saying, '*Nous n'avons plus besoin de Legendre* [a famous circus performer]; *je ferai venir monsieur mon beau-frère.*' He had even, what Sybel omits to state, proposed in May through his minister at London to the prince of Prussia, then a fugitive at Carlton Terrace, to place himself at the head of a Russian corps and march upon Berlin in order to re-establish order. When the prince indignantly declined this plan, he repeated it in autumn, 1848, to General Count Dohna, commander at Königsberg, and placed four Russian corps at his disposition. But, above all, he was bent on putting down the insurrection of the duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, which had risen to defend their constitutional rights against Denmark, and had received the assistance of Prussia. Lord Palmerston, in 1848, had taken the very sensible view that this quarrel was, above all, a question of nationality, and had proposed to embody the northern third of Schleswig which was predominantly Danish, in Denmark, whilst the two southern thirds, which were German, should be united to Holstein as a German state. But neither the Danes nor the duchies would accept this proposition. Now the secretary of foreign affairs had brought himself into a difficult position by his overbearing conduct in the Don Pacifico affair. Russia had blamed his proceedings in a despatch of unusual bitterness, the House of Lords had passed a vote of censure on his policy, and in the Commons he had a narrow escape. Above all, the French ambassador had been recalled and the *Moniteur* had declared that his presence was no longer com-

patible with the dignity of the republic. In this awkward position, Baron Brunnow stepped in, offering Russia's mediation, if England would bind herself to maintain the integrity of Denmark. This Palmerston accepted; a compromise was made with France on the Pacifico affair; Louis Napoleon acceded to Russia's demand for Denmark; Austria soon followed; and Prussia, which refused, was isolated.

The final crisis was brought about by the Hessian conflict. The elector, one of the worst of sovereigns, had undertaken to abolish the constitution, and, when he was unable to overcome the resistance of his people, invoked the help of the re-established Diet. The Berlin cabinet declared that it would not tolerate an armed intervention. Schwarzenberg replied that he would meet force by force, and concluded a military league against Prussia with Bavaria and Würtemberg. In this strait the king, who at the bottom of his heart detested the resistance of the Hessians and abhorred war, sent his premier to Warsaw in order to try to come to an understanding with Nicholas. Sybel completely destroys the legend, hitherto generally accredited, that Count Brandenburg was treated rudely at that meeting; he proves from the archives that the Prussian premier was, on the contrary, most courteously received, and in his conversation with the emperor arrived at the conclusion that the questions dividing Austria and Prussia were not worth the stake of war, for which the latter power was ill prepared. At his return, General von Radowitz, minister of foreign affairs, declared that yielding to the Austrian demands would be incompatible with military honour. The mobilisation of the army was decreed, and the Prussian troops entered the north of Hesse, whilst the Bavarians advanced from the south. War seemed imminent; but at the last moment the king yielded again, notwithstanding the protests of the prince of Prussia, before the menaces of the Austrian minister, Baron Prokesch, who asked for his passports, if Prussia would not immediately withdraw her troops from Hesse. Radowitz resigned, and the minister of home affairs—Baron Manteuffel, who had acceded to Brandenburg's views—was sent to Olmütz to make a compact with Prince Schwarzenberg, in which Prussia yielded nearly everything. It was the most signal defeat which she ever suffered without having been beaten in the field. The duchies, to which the king had solemnly promised his assistance for maintaining their rights, were delivered up to Denmark; Bunsen signed the London Protocol of 1852, establishing the integrity of Denmark; the Hessian constitution was abolished; and, after abortive conferences at Dresden for a reform of the confederation, the old Diet was simply re-established. If, fortunately for Prussia, the entering of the whole Austrian monarchy into the confederation was avoided, it was due to the protest of England and France,

Lord Palmerston declaring the plan to be contrary to the act of the congress of Vienna, and dangerous to the European equipoise. The only thing which Prussia saved in the general shipwreck was the maintenance of the Zollverein, which even was enlarged by the accession of Hanover.

During the following years, arbitrary government prevailed throughout Germany, and we have only to mention the episode of the Crimean war, as far as it touched the two great German powers. That conflict showed that the interests of Austria and Prussia in the eastern question entirely differed. For Austria it was indeed of vital importance that Russian influence should not predominate in the Balkan peninsula. Metternich had opposed to the utmost the Russian encroachments of 1828; but, unsupported by England and threatened by Charles X that if Austria should take up arms against Russia a French army would enter Lombardy, he had not dared to act. Now matters stood altogether differently: England and France being at war with Russia, it soon appeared that the help of Austria would be of inestimable value to them, so that the cabinet of Vienna might ask any terms for its alliance, and that at the same time it would be able to cripple thoroughly Russia's dangerous position in the east. Prince Schwarzenberg, who, after Austria's rescue by Russia, had said that she would astonish the world by the might of her ingratitude, probably would have seized that opportunity; but he was dead, and his weak successor could not make up his mind for a clear and decisive policy. Count Buol went just so far with the western powers as to incur Russia's lasting enmity, and yet recoiled every time when France and England expected him to act. The end of this shortsighted policy was that Austria sat between two stools. Prince Gortchakov vowed that he would have his revenge on the infamous government which had suggested the cession of a part of Bessarabia, whilst it was accused by Napoleon of having deceived him.

The position of Prussia in this complication was altogether indifferent. It was not indeed her interest to abandon Constantinople to Russia, for, as Frederic the Great had said, in that case the Russians would be the next morning at Königsberg. But this danger was out of the question, since the western powers protected the Turkish capital, and to go to war for English or Austrian interests without a sufficient compensation would have been an insane policy, the more so since Prussia would have had to bear the principal weight of the contest. Bismarck therefore, who as minister of the Diet of Frankfort had soon been healed of his former Austrian sympathies, advised his government to observe a strict neutrality, and this was certainly the true course for Prussia. But at that moment his influence was not decisive. Russia had powerful

advocates amongst the persons surrounding the king, who on the other hand disapproved of the aggressive policy of Nicholas ; he had leanings towards England as a protestant power, he would not abandon Austria, and suffered himself to be dragged into compacts with her which went far beyond the Prussian interests. The result was a wavering policy which ended in the humiliating position of the Prussian delegates having to wait admittance at the congress of Paris, after all great questions had been virtually settled. Nevertheless the neutrality was maintained. Russia was thankful for it, and the western powers found that Prussia at least had not deceived them by holding out fallacious hopes. This maintenance of good relations with Russia was destined to become afterwards a very important factor in the war for the unification.

In autumn 1857 the king was taken seriously ill, and his brother, the prince of Prussia, became first his representative and a year afterwards regent. Thus unexpectedly called to power in his sixtieth year, he inaugurated a new era for Prussia by dismissing the Manteuffel ministry and surrounding himself with more liberal councillors. Yet it would have been a great mistake to believe that he had turned a liberal ; he was on the contrary a man of strong conservative views, although not blind to the requirements of the time ; his decisive reason for changing the ministry was that Manteuffel was the representative of Prussia's humiliation at Olmütz, and his conviction that she must become the leading power in Germany. His new ministers could only succeed if they were able to raise Prussia's position in Europe, and for this end an excellent opportunity presented itself by the Italian complication, which immediately followed the establishment of the regency. In face of the approaching war there was but one alternative for the Berlin cabinet : either to offer its alliance to Austria on the condition of having fair play for forming a German federal state, or, if this was refused at Vienna, to come to an understanding with Napoleon for observing a strict neutrality as long as the war remained confined to Italy, on condition of reopening the question of the duchies and settling it in a national sense, an eventuality which the French emperor himself offered by sending the Marquis Pepoli, brother-in-law of Prince Hohenzollern, president of the council, to Berlin. But Baron Schleinitz, minister of foreign affairs, could not make up his mind for either course. He indeed refused the haughty demands of the Vienna cabinet, which aimed at nothing less than establishing Henry V on his throne, and he withstood the middle states which asked simply to side with Austria ; but he lost his time by fruitless attempts at mediation, while both contending parties were resolved to go to war. The mobilisation of the army, which finally the regent forced upon him, he called an armed mediation, an unclear expression

for a nebulous policy, and thus was overtaken by the preliminaries of Villafranca.

The regent keenly felt that a great chance had been lost, but above all the late events had confirmed his conviction that the first condition of a vigorous policy was a thorough reform of the army, the defects of which had become evident to him by the mobilisation in 1851 and 1859. The population had vastly outgrown the frame on which reposed the constitution of the army of 1815; the number of men liable to service had risen from 40,000 to 65,000, yet the regiments could only receive 40,000, so that 25,000 remained entirely free, whilst the men who had served remained liable till their thirty-second year, which was a manifest injustice. After long deliberation the regent came to the conclusion that the number of recruits should be raised to 63,000, which involved an increase of 32 regiments of infantry and 6 of cavalry of the line. On the other hand the landwehr of the first *arrière-ban* was to be divided into two parts, its three younger annual courses should enter into the reserves of the line regiments, whilst the older ones should form the second *ban*, only to be called out in time of war for the service of the fortresses.

The excellence of this reform is to-day uncontested, and has been proved in the subsequent great wars, but its execution required an additional outlay of about 1,200,000*l.* Prussia's flourishing finances could well afford to bear this expense, but the consent of the Diet was necessary for the new charges. That consent might well have been obtained by adroit management if the government had come to an understanding with the parliamentary leaders, making them understand that an effective army was the condition of success for the more active policy which all desired. But ministers did nothing of the kind; the bill of reform came as a surprise, and the finance-minister Von Patow, in order to soothe the opposition, assured that the cost would be only about 250,000*l.* A still more grievous fault of the government was that, unable to overcome the resistance of the majority, which was ready to accept the increased recruitment, but demanded the reduction of the time of service from three to two years, it proposed a provisional grant of 130,000*l.* for maintaining the efficiency of the army, declaring this would be in no way prejudicial to the final settlement of the question. But shortly afterwards at the advice of General von Manteuffel, chief of the military cabinet, who wanted to overthrow the liberal ministry, the new regiments were definitely formed and their officers appointed. The opposition considered this, of course, as an evasion of the former pledge, and the ministers obtained next year with great difficulty a new provisional grant. In the following session they were decisively beaten, and resigned. Their successors dissolved, but the elections turned completely against them, giving an overwhelm-

ing majority to the progressist party, which, after stormy debates, refused all expenses for the army reform. William I (his brother having died in the meantime) was thus brought into a position of great difficulty; he would on no account abandon the great task upon which he had set his mind, yet, at the moment of the crisis, his two principal ministers, Count Bernstorff and Von der Heydt, resigned, because they dared not defy the vote of the House, and the crown prince sided with them. He thought of abdicating, when Bismarck, then ambassador at Paris and staying on leave in the south of France, appeared at Potsdam, called by a telegram of the minister of war, General von Roon: 'The pear is ripe.' He strongly opposed the idea of abdication, and, the king asking him whether he was ready to govern without a majority, answered affirmatively. He was appointed president of the council, but his endeavours to make his peace with the house remained without a result, as the king would not hear of concessions, nor were the leaders willing to listen to his proposals in which he declared that the unity of Germany could only be brought about by fire and iron. So he undertook to govern without a budget. His position at that time was one of great difficulty, for, apart from the internal struggle, the relations with Austria were strained, those with France at least not intimate, and in England public opinion saw in him a new Strafford or Polignac. Russia alone was friendly, but Prince Gortchakov's aim was an alliance with France, which was precisely the greatest danger for Prussia. Matters, however, soon changed.

In the beginning of 1863 an insurrection broke out in Poland which took the Russian government completely by surprise. Conflicting tendencies neutralised each other at St. Petersburg, and England, France, and Austria intervened in favour of Poland, asking for the re-establishment of the constitution abolished in 1832. Bismarck declined to support these representations, as Russia would never grant them; he moreover interfered in the contrary sense by sending General von Alvensleben to St. Petersburg in order to propose mutual assistance by the commanders of the respective frontiers. The Emperor Alexander eagerly accepted this offer, Prince Gortchakov amused the ministers of the three powers with negotiations, till in August the insurrection was crushed, and the chancellor politely told them that they had not to meddle with Polish affairs.

Thus the policy of Bismarck, which at first seemed to be foolhardy, was completely justified. He had at once discerned that the coalition was hollow; that England would not support her representations by acts; that Austria had joined the two other powers only in order to annoy Russia; and that Napoleon left alone could do nothing. The whole situation, so unfavourable for Bismarck, had within a year changed to his advantage; the coalition was dissolved,

with the sole result that each of the three powers attributed the fault to the other, any chance of a Franco-Russian alliance was destroyed, whilst Prussia had won the lasting gratitude of the Emperor Alexander. The relations between Austria and Russia had anew become very strained, the western powers secretly acknowledged that Bismarck had been right; and when Napoleon in order to cover his retreat proposed a general congress for settling the pending questions, Lord John Russell took it upon himself to decline that invitation in a manner which greatly irritated the emperor.

Austria in the meantime had resolved to make one stroke more in order to restore her credit in Germany. The Emperor Francis Joseph, in August 1863, convoked a meeting of the German princes at Frankfort in order to bring about a reform of the Confederation. It was the most brilliant assembly, but proved totally abortive through the refusal of Prussia to participate in its deliberations. Bismarck had at once discerned that this project aimed only at neutralising Prussia's influence in Germany, but that it would fall to the ground if she remained firm in declining to take part in the deliberations. In vain did the congress send the king of Saxony to Baden, in order to persuade King William to join it. Bismarck put the cabinet question, and King John had to return with empty hands to Frankfort. When the project of reform was presented to the Berlin cabinet, Bismarck declined to entertain it, and in a public declaration said that no reform would be feasible without a representation of the German people based on direct elections. Lord John Russell having expressed his fears that this project might lead to revolution, the Prussian premier answered, 'Our point of view does not repose on a theory, but upon material interests, identical with those of the German people. Prussia needs a counterpoise to the dynastic policy of the other German governments, and can only find it in a national representation.'

Thus the field was clear for action as soon as the occasion should present itself, and it did so earlier than anyone thought at that time, in consequence of the death of the king of Denmark. Sybel has devoted a whole volume to the Schleswig-Holstein question, but he treats it in a rather partial way. The principal facts are the following. The two duchies had in the fifteenth century elected the king of Denmark their duke, while maintaining their independence, but Holstein alone belonged to the German empire. Since 1712 no Diet of the duchies had been summoned. However, the people did not protest, as no new taxes were imposed; on the other hand the people of Denmark, where the absolute power of the sovereign had been established in 1672, were dissatisfied by seeing so many noblemen of the duchies occupying the first position in the state and the army. After the loss of Norway, through siding with Napoleon, the kingdom obtained only a small compensation by the

acquisition of the duchy of Lauenburg, and for it as well as for Holstein became a member of the German Confederation. In 1844 King Christian VIII published a patent to the effect that as his son had no children, and in Denmark the female line would be called to succeed, whilst in the duchies the Salic law prevailed, the latter were to be incorporated, and a general constitution for the kingdom was to be granted. This breach of their constitutional law roused great indignation in the duchies, supported by all Germany, and even the Diet of Frankfort protested against it; but when in 1848 Christian VIII died, and his son Frederic VII, who was completely in the hands of the Copenhagen democrats, incorporated Schleswig, an insurrection broke out in the duchies supported by Prussia. As we have seen, the king finally abandoned them, and the treaty of London of 1852 insured the integrity of Denmark, which only had to promise that it would not incorporate Schleswig. But the government of that province as well as that of Holstein, belonging to the German Confederation, was so arbitrary, that in 1862 even the Diet had resolved upon a federal execution, when suddenly Frederic VII died, and the male line became extinct. His successor, designated by the treaty of London, the present King Christian IX, under the pressure of the Copenhagen democrats, signed the incorporation of Schleswig; on the other hand the Diet confirmed the execution resolved upon. Saxon and Hanoverian troops entered Holstein, the hereditary Prince of Augustenburg, whose father had been compelled to resign his rights, being forced to sell his estates in Schleswig for a paltry sum, invoked the help of the Diet, and was supported by the whole public opinion of Germany and the minor governments. Bismarck long ago had discerned that the knot was only to be cut by war, but he did not want to make it for establishing a new grand-duke, who might vote against Prussia in the Diet. On the other hand he had to contend with great difficulties; the king was in favour of the prince of Augustenburg, whom his brother had sacrificed, England supported Denmark, Napoleon shut himself up in mystery. Bismarck did not dare to undertake the war alone, so he accepted the proffered hand of Austria, who wanted to come out of the isolation into which her policy had placed her, and signed a convention with her in December 1863 for taking the matter into the hands of the two great German powers, because Denmark had violated its promise not to incorporate Schleswig. Whilst the federal troops occupied Holstein, and in their rear the Prince of Augustenburg went to Kiel, hailed by the whole population as their legitimate sovereign, and established there a sort of court, Prussia and Austria declared war against Denmark for having violated her promise, denounced the treaty of London, on 1 Feb. passed the Eider, and after five days stormed the Danevirke, the principal fortification of Schleswig. This made a great impression in

Germany as well as in Europe. German public opinion was entirely in favour of the duke of Augustenburg, and the Prussian Chamber of Deputies had refused the funds for the war, as they had no confidence in Bismarck, but the victory of the allies somewhat changed the situation. On the other hand the European powers were unfavourable to this intervention. Russia, indeed, was soothed by the declaration of Bismarck that it was necessary to crush the revolution in the duchies, but England proposed at Paris a joint intervention in favour of Denmark. The Emperor Napoleon, however, still under the impression of Lord Russell's refusal of his proposed congress, answered, that a war on the Rhine, of which he would have to support the whole burden, against a national cause, would be disastrous to France, and a circular of his minister Drouyn de Lhuys declared that the treaty of London was evidently *une œuvre impuissante*. The allied powers entered Jutland and prepared an attack on Düppel. Lord Russell then invited a European conference to London without any definite programme. Bismarck at that time was still in favour of a personal union of the duchies with Denmark, and entirely against the candidature of Augustenburg; but when at the conference the Danes refused all concessions, and the French ambassador proposed a division of Schleswig according to the nationalities, he acceded to the proposal of the delegates of the Diet, Baron Beust, and of Austria to acknowledge the sovereignty of the duchies under the hereditary prince of Augustenburg, *comme ayant aux yeux de l'Allemagne non seulement le plus de droit sur le trône, de manière que sa reconnaissance par le Diète est assurée, mais qui aussi indubitablement a pour lui les voix de l'immense majorité de la population*. Denmark having refused to discuss that proposition, the conference was closed without any result, and the war began anew. The isle of Alsén was taken by the Prussians, who threatened even Fühnen, and the government of Copenhagen, deceived in its hopes of a European intervention, was compelled to cede the duchies of Holstein, Schleswig, and Lauenburg to the allied powers. But Bismarck, having acceded to the above-quoted proposition, was nevertheless not inclined to hand over the duchies to Augustenburg, although his own sovereign was in favour of the pretender. He invited him to Berlin, and made such demands that the duke, who was imprudently elated by the success of his cause, and counted on the middle states and Austria, declined them. The Prussian premier, therefore, found it necessary to consult the crown lawyers, particularly so, because the grand-duke of Oldenburg had also come forward as a pretender to the duchies, the emperor of Russia having ceded to him his rights. He found it convenient to support a candidate who was not dangerous against Augustenburg, but really had already conceived the idea of annexing the duchies to Prussia. He was seconded in this by the shortsighted policy of Austria, without

which he could not conclude the definitive peace, and if Count Rechberg had refused to sign the treaty with Denmark, without the question of the succession being regulated preliminarily, it is difficult to conceive how Prussia could have denied that demand. But Bismarck knew his antagonist. He went to Vienna, representing to the Emperor Francis Joseph that this question of succession was in fact a secondary one, and that all depended upon the maintenance of the Austro-Prussian alliance as the strongest bulwark against revolution; he held out hopes of a customs union, and on 27 Oct. 1864 the treaty with Denmark was signed, the whole solution of the question remaining unsettled. Scarcely had Bismarck returned to Berlin, when he summoned the federal troops to evacuate Holstein, as that province had been ceded to Austria and Prussia, and enforced his will. In the mean time the Emperor Francis Joseph had discerned that Rechberg was not the man for coping with Bismarck, and appointed Count Mensdorff his successor, who began to side with the middle states. The Prussian minister answered that he could not submit the question to the Diet, and demanded guarantees for his country's military and commercial interests. In a despatch of 20 Feb. 1865 he formulated those demands, which were very far-going and were at once refused at Vienna. The relations of the two powers gradually became very strained, and in a cabinet council of 21 July an ultimatum was sent to Vienna, whilst an alliance with Italy and a treaty of neutrality with France were resolved upon. The internal difficulties of Austria decided the emperor to accede to a compromise, by which Austria ceded Lauenburg for a compensation of 2½ millions of thalers to Prussia, and the government of the two other duchies was preliminarily, and without prejudice to the rights of both powers, divided in this way, that Austria was to administer Holstein and Prussia Schleswig. When the treaty was signed, Bismarck said mockingly to the Austrian delegate, Count Blome: 'Now I should never have thought it possible that an Austrian plenipotentiary should place his name under such a document.'

The treaty of Gastein, however, raised great indignation, not only in Germany, but also at Florence and Paris. The Prussian minister, Count Usedom, had declared to General Lamarmora in this negotiation about an alliance, that war with Russia was certain; and the Italian Government was very cross at this sudden conclusion of peace. The Emperor Napoleon, on his side, had reckoned on a war between the two powers, which would enable him to step in as an arbiter, and to realise his unfulfilled Italian programme, *libre jusqu'à l'Adriatique*. His minister, Drouyn de Lhuys, therefore sent a circular to the other powers, severely criticising the treaty of Gastein as reposing solely upon force, trampling upon

all principles of civilisation, and disposing of the populations as of cattle.

Bismarck keenly resented this despatch, but answered that the treaty was merely provisional; and Drouyn de Lhuys replied that this changed the matter, his master being inclined to come to an understanding with Prussia, as there were neighbouring countries which might effect the object of the proposed combinations without encroaching upon the interests of the two contracting parties. Bismarck, however, felt the pressing necessity to come to an understanding with the emperor himself, and after having obtained with difficulty the king's permission he went to Biarritz. Napoleon received him well, regretted the publication of the circular, and was glad when Bismarck assured him that Prussia had not given a guarantee to Austria for the possession of Venetia. He did not oppose the plan of the Prussian premier to gain Holstein for a large sum, and expressed himself ready for a closer understanding. What Sybel does not say is that the emperor walking on the shore of Biarritz with Bismarck, who exposed to him his plans for the revision of the map of Europe, said in a low voice to Mérimée, on whose arm he was leaning, '*Il est fou*'—and after his visitor had left him, he told Cousin, '*C'est un brave homme, seulement il ne connaît pas l'Allemagne; moi, je la connais, ayant été élevé à Augsbourg.*'² The terrible Prussian realist had discerned that Napoleon underrated Prussia's military strength, and that he believed her to be scarcely a match for Austria with the support of Italy. Bismarck prudently left the imperial dreamer in his error, who did all he could to force the Italians into contracting an alliance with Russia, which they were very loth to do after the experience of Gastein. The secret negotiations of Count Malleguzzi at Vienna for the cession of Venetia having failed, and the misunderstanding between the Austrian government in Holstein and that of Prussia in Schleswig going on increasing, negotiations for an alliance with Italy were opened, which led to the signature of the treaty of April 15. Shortly before (April 10), Bismarck introduced at the Diet a proposition for calling a parliament based on universal suffrage. A last attempt for a congress was made by Napoleon, but rendered abortive by the advice of Count Moritz Esterhazy, who at that time

² A proof of Napoleon's ignorance of German affairs is the following authentic anecdote. When he was occupied with the second volume of the *Life of Caesar*, King William politely sent to Paris Colonel Cohausen, a great connoisseur of Caesar's campaigns on the Moselle, in order to assist him. Talking politics with the colonel at the outbreak of the war in June, the emperor suddenly observed: '*Mais, comment les deux parties viendront-ils aux prises?*' Cohausen looking astonished at this question, Napoleon said, '*But there is the Riesengebirge between them,*' taking a third-rate mountain range with many passes as an impassable barrier. The French military attaché at Berlin, Count Clermont-Tonnerre, was not better informed, and was only afraid that the Prussians might be beaten too much.

exercised a most unfortunate influence on Austria's policy. The cabinet of Vienna had accepted the congress by telegraph, but when its answer was to be confirmed by a despatch, Esterhazy persuaded his sovereign to insert a clause, that the maintenance of the territorial *status quo* would be a condition *sine qua non* for Austria's participation, forgetting that this would deprive the congress of all importance in the eyes of Napoleon, who wanted above all the cession of Venetia. The emperor's invitation had crossed Bismarck's plans terribly, and the first acceptance of Austria did so still more. He could not answer by a refusal, because at that time it was all important for him to be on good terms with the emperor, yet if the congress met, how could he ask for the annexation of the duchies and Prussia's primacy? He would have been outvoted from the beginning. Diplomats who saw him at that time thought that he had completely lost his composure, but Austria's foolish policy saved him once more. The answer of the Vienna cabinet having been received, Drouyn de Lhuys telegraphed to the French ambassador at Berlin what Sybel seems to ignore, '*La réponse de l'Autriche rendant le Congrès sans objet, l'Empereur rend au roi de Prusse saparole.*' So nothing was left but to resort to the armed decision. Austria having convoked the estates of Holstein, Prussia, deeming this a breach of the treaty of Gastein, declared war.

We cannot enter here upon the details of the memorable campaign and its consequences, to which Sybel devotes the whole of his last and most interesting volume, and shall limit ourselves to a few remarks. The Italian alliance soon proved rather worthless, except in keeping 80,000 Austrian troops in the south. General Lamarmora, sure by his news from Paris that Italy would at all events get Venetia, was entirely opposed to a *guerre à fond*, which the Prussian plenipotentiaries advised, and, when he at last took the field, was decisively beaten at Custozza by the Archduke Albert. As to Germany the middle states had entirely neglected their armies. Confiding in the protection of Austria, their governments could not agree about a common plan of campaign, their troops were in a bad state, Saxony and Hesse-Darmstadt excepted, and were beaten everywhere by the Prussians who occupied the whole north-west and middle part of Germany. But the decisive factor was Austria; she had a large and well-trained army, but no generals to lead it. Benedeck himself felt that he was not equal to the task of supreme command, and took it only at the decisive order of his sovereign. The armament was inferior to that of his adversary, and financial distress made itself felt everywhere. It was different with Prussia. Here everything was ready, and the plan of campaign directed by the greatest strategist of our time. Moltke's policy was always the clear and unflinching pursuit of great aims, leaving full liberty to his generals in the execution of his instructions. Beside

him, as Sybel's narrative places beyond dispute, the greatest part of the glorious issue must be ascribed to the crown prince, the late Emperor Frederick. 'Calm by temperament, he was absolutely fearless; he, like his royal father, did not comprehend what other men feel as danger, which neither made him nervous nor intoxicated him into audacity. Trusting in God and himself he always faced danger with equal courage and clear courage. A difficult position only had the effect upon him to make him encounter it with redoubled and accelerated energy.'

It was mainly due to his superhuman efforts that the first army corps arrived after all in time to decide the victory of Sadowa, after which Moltke said to the king, 'Your majesty has not only won the battle, but the campaign.' Shortly after the Prussians were before the gates of Vienna. The impression of this victory was overwhelming at home as abroad, where people had laughed at the Prussian army as a mere militia, which for forty years had not taken the field. *Casca il mondo*, Cardinal Antonelli is said to have exclaimed at receiving the news. But above all it fell as a thunderbolt upon the projects of Napoleon, and excited an indignant sensation at Paris and in the army, Sadowa having entirely thrown into the shade Magenta and Solferino. Austria indeed had ceded to Napoleon Venetia at the beginning of the war, but with the hope of acquiring Silesia as a compensation. She now invoked the emperor's mediation, and Drouyn de Lhuys pressed him to accept it, offering to place 100,000 men on the Rhine and to summon the Corps Législatif for granting a loan of a milliard. But this plan was opposed by his adversary Lavalette, asking whether his master had the means of enforcing such a policy against Prussia and Italy. So Napoleon, being obliged to avow that he had not, decided to offer simply his mediation to both contending parties. Bismarck, although indignant at this intervention, at once discovered that in the present situation it could not be refused offhand, and so the king accepted it under certain conditions. The negotiations with France and Austria which followed will remain a lasting monument of Bismarck's wonderful diplomatic ability. Sybel states (vol. v. p. 42) that, at the beginning of the war, the aim was simply the annexation of the duchies and the primacy in Germany, and that no one at Berlin had thought of dethroning a German dynasty. When, after Sadowa, Moltke uttered the above-quoted words to the king, Bismarck replied, 'So the litigious question is decided; now we have to regain the old friendship of Austria;' but when the consequences of the victory became apparent, the aims widened, and he had to contend with the military party and the king, who, elated by such success, thought nothing impossible. Bismarck opposed such extravagant hopes, writing to his wife that after all Prussia was not alone in Europe. 'We shall do well if we are not extravagant in our

pretensions and do not think that we have conquered the world.' He found his strongest support in the stern common sense of the crown prince, in the adroitness of his ambassador at Paris, Count Goltz, and in the loyalty of the Italian cabinet, which, indignant at Lamarmora's conduct, and still more nettled by the subsequent defeat of Lissa, refused to accept Venetia as a French present, and declared that it clung to the Prussian alliance, and, notwithstanding Drouyn de Lhuys' menaces, marched into Venetia.

We cannot enter into the details of the negotiations, which for the first time have fully been disclosed by Sybel. Suffice it to say that Napoleon's wavering policy fell back step by step under the intelligent pressure of Count Goltz, aided by Prince Napoleon, Rouher, Lavalette, and the Italian minister, Chevalier Nigra; and that Bismarck, who guided the whole by his injunctions, came out victoriously from the campaign with the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, Hesse, Nassau, Frankfort, the exclusion of Austria from Germany, and the establishment of the North German Confederation. At home the opposition was beaten in the elections for the Diet, and Bismarck, prudently availing himself of this favourable situation, carried, notwithstanding the resistance of his colleagues, the resolution that a bill of indemnity should be asked for having governed without a budget during three years. The repeated attempts of the ailing emperor to obtain compensations on the Rhine he proudly rejected, telling Benedetti that, if there was to be war, it would be one *à coup de révolutions*, in which the German dynasties perhaps would prove to stand firmer than the Napoleonic throne. The emperor of Russia and Gortchakov at first were very angry at Prussia's annexations and asked for a congress, as no revision of the map of Germany could be made without the consent of the signatories of the treaty of Vienna of 1815. But here the established friendship of Russia proved its value. The king wrote soothing letters to his imperial nephew and then despatched General Manteuffel to St. Petersburg, who was particularly *persona grata* at the Russian court. At first the general found the emperor not very accessible to his representations, but then, strange to say, Napoleon came to his rescue. It was evidently in the French interest to accept the Russian proposal of a congress, but the emperor, baffled in his efforts to obtain a compensation on German soil, and still bent upon offering something to excite public opinion, proposed at Berlin a secret alliance for the annexation of Belgium. Bismarck treated this plan, as he said later on, in a 'dilatatory way,' in order to avoid a rupture, and induced Benedetti to commit it to writing. The ambassador fell into the trap, and gave a draft of treaty written by his own hand to Bismarck, who, as soon as he had the proof of Napoleon's designs, communicated it to Manteuffel in order to convince the imperial

government that nothing could be done with France; at the same time he promised to treat with all possible regard Würtemberg and Hesse-Darmstadt, the dynasties of which were related to the Czar, and gave a hint that Prussia's friendship might be valuable to Russia in future complications for shaking off the clause of the treaty of Paris stipulating the neutralisation of the Black Sea. The effect of these overtures was decisive. When Baron Oubril, the Russian minister at Berlin, who at first had officially declared that the annexations were considered by his government as *nulles et non-avenues* until a European congress had settled the future condition of Germany, returned to his post, his language had completely changed. Russia acknowledged the accomplished facts, and when, in November, Napoleon, having somewhat recovered from his illness, proposed at St. Petersburg an alliance, he met with a cool reception. *On s'est pourvu ailleurs*, wrote Benedetti despondingly. Bismarck showed the same sagacity by making peace on very moderate terms with the southern states, and, renouncing territorial aggrandisement, induced them to sign secret military treaties which placed their armies in case of war under Prussian command.

Thus in fact, as Sybel says, the German unity was founded in 1866 without sacrificing one inch of territory, for the later events were only the consequences of what was then achieved. It was clear that the isolation of the southern states could not last. 'The line of the Main is the station where we are taking in coals and water,' said Miquel, the present finance-minister, in the North German parliament, and when Benedetti complained at the convocation of the parliament of the Zollverein, as contrary to the stipulated independence of the south, Bismarck answered, *La ligne du Mein est comme une grille dans une rivière; la grille reste, mais cela n'empêche pas l'eau de couler*.

Napoleon indeed tried once more to get his much-desired compensation by acquiring Luxemburg, and he might have succeeded if he had acted in proper time, for Bismarck acknowledged that, after the disruption of the German Diet, Luxemburg had become master of its destinies, and that Prussia had no longer the right to occupy its fortress. On the other hand, the grand-duke, king of Holland, was quite ready to sell his right to France. But the emperor once more lost time, and when, in spring 1867, the matter became divulged, the North German parliament was assembled and under the pressure of public opinion Prussia was obliged to protest. At that moment the military party was for war, as the German army was ready and the French not. Bismarck alone successfully resisted, because the annexed countries had not yet been sufficiently welded with the monarchy, and brought about a compromise by the treaty of London of 11 May, stipulating for the neutrality of the grand duchy under a European guarantee. When at last in 1870 France

blindly forced war upon Germany, the chancellor, after unprecedented victories, showed comparative moderation in the conditions of peace. As France had always been hankering after the conquest of the left bank of the Rhine, it was an imperious necessity for Germany to keep Strassburg, the great gate of invasion of the French since Louis XIV treacherously tore it off from the empire, and to re-establish the natural frontier of the Vosges between the two countries; but Bismarck has repeatedly declared that the cession of Lorraine was forced upon him by the military party. It was indeed a proud moment when King William was proclaimed the first emperor of the German nation, by the consent of its princes and the deputies of the Reichstag, in the same *Galerie des glaces* at Versailles from which Louis XIV had issued so many declarations injurious to German interests; we say expressly the first, for this empire was not the continuation of the Holy Roman, but rather a popular kingship, created by election but hereditary, so that the old bane was broken which had dismembered Germany.

Since the treaty of Frankfort (16 May, 1871) Germany has steadily maintained peace, first by the league of the three emperors, and after the treaty of Berlin of 1878 by the Triple Alliance. Bismarck helped to lay the foundation of a colonial German empire, and yet contrived to maintain a loyal understanding with England, confirmed by his successor in the treaty of 1 July, 1890, which restored the isle of Heligoland to the empire, since it was no longer of use to England, which occupied it only in the Napoleonic wars as a smuggling depôt against the continental blockade. We have here not to deal with the details of Bismarck's internal policy, which was his weak point, and we are ready to acknowledge that he was inaccessible to any scruples in his diplomatic negotiations, as is particularly shown in his policy towards the duchies, but it remains a fact that the German unity, which he before all created, supported by the king and one of the greatest military commanders who, crowned by general enthusiastic popularity, has accomplished his ninetieth year, has proved not a menace but a guarantee to the European peace.

M. Lévy-Bruhl's book widely differs in its aim from that of Sybel. The German historian tells us the facts which led to the unification of his country; the French author, starting from the principle that ideas do precede facts, tries to trace the gradual intellectual development of the unity; his task is to show how it came that the national idea having disappeared entirely in 1700 had become paramount 150 years afterwards. He divides this epoch into three periods; during the first cosmopolitanism is dominant, but by degrees great poets and philosophers emancipate German literature from foreign influence; the second comprises the French

invasion and the wars for repelling it ; in the third the idea begins to develop itself, that Germany ought not only to be a nation but to become a powerful *state*, an idea which takes a practical shape in the Frankfort parliament of 1848, of which Bismarck has become the legatee.

Our space does not allow us to follow M. Bruhl into the details of his narrative ; we only allude to some of its most important statements. At the end of the seventeenth century, the division of Germany had been pushed to its extreme. Formally it was divided into ten circles, but each of them contained a number of independent states, that of Suabia not less than 97. The country was impoverished by continual wars. The supreme council at Wetzlar was nearly powerless, the army miserable, and the revenue of the emperor, as such, was about 1,100*l*. The people seemed ashamed of speaking their language. French was that of the polished society, and Italian music prevailed. The first reaction against this state of things appeared in the great personage of Leibnitz, who was not only a celebrated philosopher, but also a distinguished politician. He tried to divert the ambition of Louis XIV from the Rhine to Egypt ; he was the friend of Queen Dorothea of Prussia, and already in a memorandum of 1667 demonstrated that Prussia ought to oppose Russia's intrigues against Poland, as the first would be a dangerous neighbour for Germany. He corresponded with the English ministers on the succession of the electress Sophia ; he protested against the treaties of Ryswick and Nimwegen, and denounced the treacherous occupation of Strassburg by Louis XIV ; but in the main his patriotic endeavours were barren, and especially at Vienna the opposition of the Jesuits prevented his entering into the imperial service because he was a liberal protestant. He remained the servant of the elector of Hanover, and was preaching in the desert, because the princes would not listen to his exhortations for a reform, most of his countrymen did not even understand him, and he appeared especially to the ignorant clergy as a free-thinker when he pleaded a religious reunion. His philosophic successor, Thomasius, did not occupy himself with politics, but he contributed to reform the barbaric state of justice, attacked the intolerance of the clergy, raised the standard of German universities, introduced the study of German law, and was the first to found a review written in German, which soon had many successors, influenced by their English contemporaries, such as Addison's *Spectator* and the *Guardian*. Wolf, a mediocre philosopher, deprived by Frederic William I, but recalled by Frederic II to his chair at Halle, had nevertheless a great influence on the younger generation by his methodical training ; the foundation of the university of Göttingen by George II created a new centre of learning by the liberty accorded to its professors. The his-

torian Schloezer, for example, became a power by his writings, so that Maria Theresa, in deliberating measures with her ministers, frequently asked, 'But what will Schloezer say of it?'

With Frederic II a new era begins. He was, as we have observed, exclusively a Prussian sovereign; he preferred the French language to his own, was the friend of Voltaire, Bayle, and Argens, and had little regard for German literature. But having scientific interests himself, and writing about several subjects, he encouraged the literary movement, and founded the Berlin Academy.

In politics he professed the *despotisme éclairé*, and, although he had the highest ideas of the duties of a sovereign as the first servant of the state, was not overscrupulous in his dealings. Treaties he regarded simply as the result of wars and negotiations. They were to last only as long as the interests of the respective countries required. So, the army, the finances, and a cleverly directed diplomacy, were the pillars of his government. But his wonderful victories, his administrative reforms, and his powerful personage, making of little Prussia a European state, with which every other government had to reckon, exercised a great influence on the national feeling, as we see it reflected in Lessing's celebrated drama, 'Minna von Barnhelm.' Thus, with all his French leanings, he became without his will the instigator of a new literary movement in Germany. Gellert, Gottsched, Bodmer, and Gleim were its originators. Then rose Lessing—the strong adversary of the French school—equally eminent as a critic and a poet. Klopstock wrote his 'Messiah,' and in his Odes already gives vent to German patriotic sentiments, until at last Goethe and Schiller became the accredited great poets of Germany. Goethe, indeed, was not a German patriot; his attitude towards Napoleon was even humiliating, and he felt no sympathy with the rising of the German people in 1813 in order to shake off the foreign yoke, but his poetry, 'Goetz von Berlichingen,' 'Hermann und Dorothea,' 'Faust,' etc., did much to raise the national feeling; whilst Schiller, in his later dramas, had completely abandoned his former cosmopolitan tendencies, and his last great work, 'Wilhelm Tell,' directly pleaded for patriotism as the great ruling passion.³

The eminent philosophers of that time—Kant, Fichte, Schelling—had equally an indirect influence on the emancipation of German thought. The romantic school went back to the traditions of medieval German poetry and art, but it was the French invasion after the battle of Jena which became decisive for the future development, as it shattered to pieces the ideal Germany which her writers had constructed for themselves. We cannot here enter into the details of the reforms by which Stein, Scharnhorst, Hardenberg,

* *An's Vaterland, an's Theure, schliess dich an;
Hier liegen deine Wurzeln starker Kraft.*

etc., raised their country from the utmost misery under unprecedented difficulties. We will only observe that M. Bruhl has well delineated the characters of the principal actors, and that, according to the leading idea of his book, he devotes especial care to the national literary movement. Stein had not the least philosophic sympathies, he even hated metaphysics, but nevertheless he was influenced by the ideas of his time, which had entered the general current of national thought. Fichte, at the newly founded university of Berlin, made his famous speeches to the German nation under the clash of French bayonets; the songs of Arndt, Körner, and Rückert inflamed the hatred against the foreign yoke; Gentz, the master-pen, was by his pamphlets, memoirs, and manifestoes, a power in himself.

M. Bruhl equally follows up the intellectual movement during the time of the reaction, when, after the defeat of the attempts of ardent patriots—men called demagogues—the young generation was absorbed again by the poetry of the romantic school and by the philosophy of Hegel, who, formerly an enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon, became a pillar of absolutism, when he was called to the University of Berlin, and defended all the arbitrary measures by which German governments endeavoured to suppress political liberty. But from his dialectical method issued another school, which at first, under the leadership of Strauss, attacked Christianity; then, throwing themselves upon politics, formed the group of radicals, called 'Young Germany,' who attacked the existing system and openly admired French constitutionalism. Other more moderate men—such as Dahlmann, the great admirer of the English constitution; Gervinus, Droysen, by their historical lectures and writings—tried to stir up the rising generation for political action. The brutal dismissal by the king of Hanover of the seven professors of Goettingen, who protested against his overthrow of the constitution in 1837, called forth general indignation in Germany, and the doctrines of more advanced liberals in southern countries—such as Rotteck, Welcker, Uhland—found eager sympathisers; so when at last the governments in 1848 were obliged to give way, these men became the leaders of the Frankfort parliament.

At this point the narrative of M. Bruhl stops, because he considers the unity accomplished twenty years after only as the realisation of the programme of Frankfort, although he might usefully have shown that, even during the reaction which followed the failure of 1848, the literary endeavours of men like Droysen, Duncker, Matky, Freytag, and others, did much to pave the way for Bismarck's action.

M. André Lebon's '*Études sur l'Allemagne politique*' again differ from the book of his French colleague, as well as from Sybel's

work. He also gives an historical sketch of the unitarian movement, but it is so meagre that we need not discuss it. His principal aim is to state what is the present constitution of the empire. It is certainly unique of its kind, and, as a French diplomatist observed, *une constitution faite pour un seul homme*. Bismarck, as we now know, might have obtained much more in the negotiations of Versailles with the southern states, but then he would not have remained the omnipotent chancellor. The present constitution is federal as it formerly was, but it contains new and important bonds of unity, a popular legislature, the Reichstag, the hereditary imperial power vested in the sovereign of Prussia, and the constitutional enumeration of the questions to be decided by the central power. The Reichstag is composed of 397 deputies of the whole nation elected by universal and secret suffrage, but they do not receive any pecuniary allowance, as is the case in France and the United States. It can be dissolved by the Federal Council at the demand of the emperor, its legal duration now being five years, and it decides itself on the validity of the election of its members. The questions which belong to the imperial legislative competence are carefully enumerated in the constitution; the Reichstag can take the initiative for introducing bills, but they do not become law without the consent of the Federal Council; its greatest power is the absolute right of voting the budget. The imperial revenue is derived from the customs, the excise, the stamp duties, the post and telegraph (though Bavaria and Würtemberg have kept theirs), and the deficit is filled up by the matricular contributions of the federal states levied according to their population.

Prince Bismarck preferred universal suffrage to any census, such as it exists in Prussia, because he thought that the masses are most easily led by the great proprietors and the government, and he openly declared that he would take his majority where he could find it. He therefore neglected no means to obtain a majority, working upon the imagination of the electors, but he also made disagreeable experiences with universal suffrage. Having inconsiderately begun the ecclesiastical conflict, he had to see that the power of the priests over the catholic electors was paramount, and notwithstanding all his exertions the proposed bills for the monopoly of tobacco and spirits were thrown out. In the main, however, he succeeded in playing off one party against the other and in carrying his will, although certainly often not for the common weal. The Federal Council, being more an executive and administrative than a real legislative body, its members voting according to the instruction of their government, is one of the strongest creations of federal law. In the American senate every state is represented by two delegates, but this was impossible in an empire where Prussia alone comprises two-thirds of the population (in 1880, twenty-seven

millions upon a total of forty-five); so she has seventeen voices, Bavaria seven, Saxony and Würtemberg seven, Baden and Hesse three, etc. It is therefore easy for the chancellor to gain a majority in obtaining the voices of the smaller states or of the other kingdoms, by making to them some concessions, and rarely a bill presented by him has been thrown out by the council. Every one of its members has the right to speak in the Reichstag, but hitherto they have scarcely dared to oppose the opinion of the chancellor. In the only case where the Bavarian delegate, Rudhardt, ventured to maintain an independent opinion, he was attacked by Bismarck in his own palace before a large assembly and had to retire in dismay. The council prepares the bills to be submitted to the Reichstag and examines those passed by the latter, thus deciding whether they are to be approved. It renders the administrative decrees necessary for their execution, nominates the consuls, the members of the supreme court, and has in some respects itself judicial functions; in order to accelerate its work it is divided into several committees, according to the subjects which belong to its competence. The constitution cannot be altered if fourteen voices of the council pronounce against the change.

The emperor is not the sovereign of Germany; her sovereignty resides in the totality of the princes and free cities as represented in the Federal Council. If the latter approves of a bill, with the consent of the Reichstag, the emperor must publish it as law formally. He is therefore simply the hereditary president of the empire, but he has certain special rights established by the constitution. He opens and closes the session of the Reichstag, he appoints the diplomatic representatives, has the command of the federal army, and in case of need can proclaim martial law; but his principal power lies in the number of voices of which he disposes in the Federal Council as king of Prussia. The chancellor is the only responsible functionary of the empire (Bismarck would never have ministerial colleagues), he countersigns all laws and decrees, but the Reichstag has no means to enforce this responsibility. At the same time he is Prussian president of the council, and as its plenipotentiary disposes of the seventeen votes which Prussia has in the Federal Council. In this capacity, assisted by his great success and an indomitable will, Bismarck exercised the most extraordinary power ever wielded by a minister, the more so as he knew that William I would finally always yield to the will of a man whom he considered as indispensable for the prestige of Germany. We do not enter upon the chapter which M. Lebon devotes to the Prussian institutions, as it is rather superficial, and only mention that, as a true Frenchman, he concludes by denouncing the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine as the greatest fault committed by Germany; nay, he considers it as Bismarck's capital fault, of whom he tells that in his younger days

he said, 'You will see that I shall become a great man, and that I shall finish by a great fault.' But M. Lebon will himself admit that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine certainly was not the cause of Bismarck's fall. It is not to be denied that, in the administration of that province, great faults have been committed; but the French author's views are too much tainted with partiality to be seriously discussed, and we refer to what we have said above regarding the annexation.

The fall of Bismarck was an event of the greatest importance for Germany. The choice of his successor was one of great difficulty, because Bismarck had suppressed all rising men or made them tools of his absolute will, and so there was no independent civilian who had sufficient authority for this post. The emperor therefore showed great sagacity by appointing chancellor a general, who was not only a distinguished commander but, as secretary of the navy, had shown eminent administrative capacity, and his choice has been justified by events. General von Caprivi has contrived by a firm and conciliatory attitude to get on very well with the new Reichstag, which after the elections was pronounced by Bismarck's followers to be unmanageable. Important reforms are in preparation; the exceptional law, which outlawed German socialists, has been suffered to fall into abeyance, and the corruption of the press, by which Bismarck successfully tried to produce a spurious public opinion, has ceased. The aspect of the international relations of Germany is equally satisfactory. It had been formerly prophesied that Bismarck's death (for no one thought of a resignation) would break up the Triple Alliance and jeopardise Germany's position in Europe. These predictions have been falsified by events; the Triple Alliance stands as firm as ever, the relations of Germany with all powers, and particularly with England, are on the most friendly footing, and even those with France are as good as possible, the emperor at the conference in the spring of 1890 being especially polite to M. Jules Simon. It is evident that William II does not wish for war, but on the contrary to maintain peace, and is above all occupied with internal reforms. So the outlook for Germany's future seems to be promising, and we can only hope that it will remain so.

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