CHAPTER XVII.

THE RENAISSANCE: CHANGE IN THE CHARACTER OF THE EMPIRE.

In Frederick III's reign the Empire sank to its lowest point. It had shot forth a fitful gleam under Sigismund, who in convoking and presiding over the council of Constance had revived one of the highest functions of his predecessors. The precedents of the first great œcuménical councils, and especially of the council of Nicæa, had established the principle that it belonged to the Emperor, even more properly than to the Pope, to convoke ecclesiastical assemblies from the whole Christian world. The tenet commended itself to the reforming party in the church, headed by Gerson, the chancellor of Paris, whose aim it was, while making no changes in matters of faith, to correct the abuses which had grown up in discipline and government, and limit the power of the Popes by exalting the authority of general councils, to whom there was now attributed an immunity from error superior to that, whatever it might be, which resided in the successor of Peter. And although it was only the sacerdotal body, not the whole Christian people, who were thus made the exponents of the universal religious consciousness, the doctrine was nevertheless a foreshadowing of that fuller freedom which was soon to follow. The existence of the Holy Empire and the existence of general councils were, as has been
already remarked, necessary parts of one and the same theory,* and it was therefore more than a coincidence that the last occasion on which the whole of Latin Christendom met to deliberate and act as a single commonwealth,† was also the last on which that commonwealth's lawful temporal head appeared in the exercise of his international functions. Never afterward was he, in the eyes of Europe, anything more than a German monarch.

It might seem doubtful whether he would long remain a monarch at all. When in A.D. 1493 the calamitous reign of Frederick III ended, it was impossible for the princes to see with unconcern the condition into which their selfishness and turbulence had brought the Empire. The time was indeed critical. Hitherto the Germans had been protected rather by the weakness of their enemies than by their own strength. From France there had been little to fear while the English menaced her on one side and the Burgundian dukes on the other; from England still less while she was torn by the strife of York and Lancaster. But now throughout Western Europe the power of the feudal oligarchies was broken; and its chief countries were being, by the establishment of fixed rules of succession and the absorption of the smaller into the larger principalities, rapidly built up into compact and aggressive military monarchies. Thus Spain became a

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*It is not without interest to observe that the council of Basel showed signs of reciprocating imperial care by claiming those very rights over the Empire to which the Popes were accustomed to pretend.

†The councils of Basel and Florence were not recognized from first to last by all Europe, as was the council of Constance. When the assembly of Trent met, the great religious schism had already made a general council, in the true sense of the word, impossible.
great state by the union of Castile and Aragon, and the conquest of the Moors of Granada. Thus in England there arose the popular despotism of the Tudors. Thus France, enlarged and consolidated under Lewis XI and his successors, began to acquire that predominant influence on the politics of Europe which her commanding geographical position, the martial spirit of her people, and, it must be added, the unscrupulous ambition of her rulers, have secured to her in every succeeding century. Meanwhile there had appeared in the far East a foe still more terrible. The capture of Constantinople gave the Turks a firm hold on Europe, and inspired them with the hope of effecting in the fifteenth century what Abderrahman and his Saracens had so nearly effected in the eighth—of establishing the faith of Islam through all the provinces that obeyed the Western as well as the Eastern Caesars. The navies of the Ottoman Sultans swept the Mediterranean; their well-appointed armies pierced Hungary and threatened Vienna.

Nor was it only that formidable enemies had arisen without: the frontiers of Germany herself were exposed by the loss of those adjoining territories which had formerly owned allegiance to the Emperors. Poland, once tributary, had shaken off the yoke at the interregnum, and had recently wrested West Prussia from the Teutonic knights, and compelled their Grand Master to swear allegiance for East Prussia, which they still retained. Bohemia, where German culture had struck deeper roots, remained a member of the Empire; but the privileges she had obtained from Charles IV, and the subsequent acquisition of Silesia and Moravia, made her virtually independent. The restless Hungarians avenged their former vassalage to Germany by frequent inroads on her eastern border.

Imperial power in Italy ended with the life of Henry
VII. Rupert did indeed cross the Alps, but it was as the hireling of Florence; Frederick III received the Lombard crown, but it no longer conveyed the slightest power. In the beginning of the fourteenth century Dante still hopes for the renovation of his country from the action of the Teutonic Emperors. Some fifty years later Matthew Villani sees clearly that they do not and cannot reign to any purpose south of the Alps. Nevertheless the phantom of imperial authority lingers on for a time. It is put forward by the Ghibeline tyrants of the cities to justify their attacks on their Guelfic neighbors: even resolute republicans like the Florentines do not yet venture altogether to reject it, however unwilling to permit its exercise. Before the middle of the fifteenth century, the names of Guelf and Ghibeline had ceased to have any sense or meaning; the Pope was no longer the protector nor the Emperor the assailant of municipal freedom for municipal freedom itself had well-nigh disappeared. But the old war-cries of the Church and the Empire were still repeated as they had been three centuries before, and the rival principles that had once enlisted the noblest spirits of Italy on one or other side had now sunk into a pretext for wars of aggrandizement or of mere unmeaning hate. That which had been remarked long before in Greece was seen to be true here; the spirit of faction outlived the cause of fac-

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*“E pero venendo gl’ imperadori della Magna col supremo titolo, e volendo col senno e colla forza della Magna reggiere gli Italiani, non lo fanno e non lo possono fare.”—M. Villani, iv. 77. Matthew Villani’s etymology of the two great faction names of Italy is worth quoting, as a fair sample of the skill of mediaevals in such matters: “La Italia tutta e divisa mistamente in due parti, l’ una che seguìa ne’ fatti del mondo la santa chiesa—e questi son dinominati Guelfi; cioè, guardatori di fè. E l’ altra parte seguitano lo ‘imperio o fedele o enfedele che sia delle cose del mondo a santa chiesa. E chiamansi Ghibellini, quasi guida belil; cioè, guidatori di battaglie.”*
tion, and became itself the new and prolific source of a useless, endless strife.

After Frederick III no Emperor was crowned in Rome, and almost the only trace of that connection between Germany and Italy, to maintain which so much had been risked and lost, was to be found in the obstinate belief of the Hapsburg Emperors, that their own claims, though often purely dynastic and personal, could be enforced by an appeal to the imperial rights of their predecessors. Because Barbarossa had overrun Lombardy with a Transalpine host they fancied themselves entitled to demand duchies for themselves and their relatives, and to entangle the Empire in wars wherein no interest but their own was involved.

The kingdom of Arles, if it had never added much strength to the Empire, had been useful as an outwork against France. And thus its loss—Dauphiné passing over, partly in A.D. 1350, finally in 1457, Provence in 1486—proved a serious calamity, for it brought the French nearer to Switzerland, and opened to them a tempting passage into Italy. The Emperors did not for a time expressly renounce their feudal suzerainty over these lands, but if it was hard to enforce a feudal claim over a rebellious landgrave in Germany, how much harder to control a vassal who was also the mightiest king in Europe.

On the north-west frontier, the fall in A.D. 1477 of the great principality which the dukes of French Burgundy were building up, was seen with pleasure by the Rhinelanders whom Charles the last duke had incessantly alarmed. But the only effect of its fall was to leave France and Germany directly confronting each other, and it was soon seen that the balance of strength lay on the side of the less numerous but better organized and more active nation.
Switzerland, too, could no longer be considered a part of the Germanic realm. The revolt of the Forest Cantons, in A.D. 1313, was against the oppressions practiced in the name of Albert count of Hapsburg, rather than against the legitimate authority of Albert the Emperor. But although several subsequent sovereigns, and among them conspicuously Henry VII and Sigismund, favored the Swiss liberties, yet while the antipathy between the Confederates and the territorial nobility gave a peculiar direction to their policy, the accession of new cantons to their body, and their brilliant success against Charles the Bold in A.D. 1477, made them proud of a separate national existence, and not unwilling to cast themselves loose from the stranded hulk of the Empire. Maximilian tried to conquer them, but after a furious struggle, in which the valleys of Western Tyrol were repeatedly laid waste by the peasants of the Engadin, he was forced to give way, and in A.D. 1500 recognized them by treaty as practically independent. Not, however, till the peace of Westphalia, in A.D. 1648, was the Swiss Confederation in the eye of public law a sovereign state, and even after that date some of the towns continued to stamp their coins with the double eagle of the Empire.

If those losses of territory were serious, far more serious was the plight in which Germany herself lay. The country had now become not so much an empire as an aggregate of very many small states, governed by sovereigns who would neither remain at peace with each other nor combine against a foreign enemy, under the nominal presidency of an Emperor who had little lawful authority, and could not exert what he had.*

* "Nam quamvis Imperatorem et regem et dominum vestram esse fateamini, precario tamen ille imperare videtur: nulla ei potestia est; tantum ei paretis quantum vultis, vultis autem minimum."—Æneas Sylvius to the princes of Germany, quoted by Hippolytus a Lapide.
There was another cause, besides those palpable and obvious ones already enumerated, to which this state of things must be ascribed. That cause is to be found in the theory which regarded the Empire as an international power, supreme among Christian states. From the day when Otto the Great was crowned at Rome, the characters of German king and Roman Emperor were united in one person, and it has been shown how that union tended more and more to become a fusion. If the two offices, in their nature and origin so dissimilar, had been held by different persons, the Roman Empire would most probably have soon disappeared, while the German kingdom grew into a robust national monarchy. Their connection gave a longer life to the one and a feebler life to the other, while at the same time it transformed both. So long as Germany was only one of the many countries that bowed beneath their scepter it was possible for the Emperors, though we need not suppose they troubled themselves with speculations on the matter, to distinguish their imperial authority, as international and more than half religious, from their royal, which was, or was meant to be, exclusively local and feudal. But when within the narrowed bounds of Germany these international functions had ceased to have any meaning, when the rulers of England, Spain, France, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Italy, Burgundy, had in succession repudiated their control, and the Lord of the World found himself obeyed by none but his own people, he would not sink from being lord of the world into a simple Teutonic king, but continued to play in the more contracted theater the part which had belonged to him in the wider. Thus did Germany instead of Europe become the sphere of his international jurisdiction; and her electors and princes, originally mere vassals, no greater
than a Count of Champagne in France, or an Earl of Chester in England, stepped into the place which it had been meant that the several monarchs of Christendom should fill. If the power of their head had been what it was in the eleventh century, the additional dignity so assigned to them might have signified very little. But coming in to confirm and justify the liberties already won, this theory of their relation to the sovereign had a great, though at the time scarcely perceptible, influence in changing the German Empire, as we may now begin to call it, from a state into a sort of confederation or body of states, united indeed for some of the purposes of government, but separate and independent for others more important. Thus, and that in its ecclesiastical as well as its civil organization, Germany became a miniature of Christendom.* The Pope, though he retained the wider sway which his rival had lost, was in an especial manner the head of the German clergy, as the Emperor was of the laity: the three Rhenish prelates sat in the supreme college beside the four temporal electors: the nobility of prince-bishops and abbots was as essential a part of the constitution and as influential in the deliberations of the Diet as were the dukes, counts and margraves of the Empire. The world-embracing Christian state was to have been governed by a hierarchy of spiritual pastors, whose graduated ranks of authority should exactly correspond with those of the temporal magistracy, who were to be like them endowed with worldly wealth and power, and to enjoy a jurisdiction co-ordinate although distinct. This system, which it was in vain attempted to establish in Europe during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, was

*See Ægidi, *Der Fürstenthalt nach dem Lunecüller Frieden*; a book which throws more light than any other with which I am acquainted on the inner nature of the Empire.
in its main features that which prevailed in the Germanic Empire from the fourteenth century onward. And con-
formably to the analogy which may be traced between the
position of the archdukes of Austria in Ger-
many and the place which the four Saxon and
the two first Franconian Emperors had held in
Europe, both being recognized as leaders and
presidents in all that concerned the common
interest, in the one case of the Christian, in
the other of the whole German people, while
neither of them had any power of direct gov-
ernment in the territories of local kings and lords; so the
plan by which those who chose Maximilian emperor sought
to strengthen their national monarchy was in substance that
which the Popes had followed when they conferred the
crown of the world on Charles and Otto. The pontiffs
then, like the electors now, finding that they could not
give with the title the power which its functions demanded,
were driven to the expedient of selecting for the office per-
sons whose private resources enabled them to sustain it
with dignity. The first Frankish and the first Saxon Em-
perors were chosen because they were already the mightiest
potentates in Europe; Maximilian because he was the
strongest of the German princes. The parallel may be
carried one step further. Just as under Otto and his suc-
cessors the Roman Empire was Teutonized, so now under
the Hapsburg dynasty, from whose hands the scepter de-
parted only once thenceforth, the Teutonic Empire tends
more and more to lose itself in an Austrian monarchy.

Of that monarchy and of the power of the house of
Hapsburg, Maximilian was, even more than Rudolf his
ancestor, the founder.* Uniting in his person those wide

*The two immediately preceding Emperors, Albert II (1438–1439)
and Frederick III, father of Maximilian (1439–1493), had been Haps-
burgs. It is nevertheless from Maximilian that the ascendancy of
that family must be dated.
domains through Germany which had been dispersed among the collateral branches of his house, and claiming by his marriage with Mary of Burgundy most of the territories of Charles the Bold, he was a prince greater than any who had sat on the Teutonic throne since the death of Frederick II. But it was as archduke of Austria, count of Tyrol, duke of Styria and Carinthia, feudal superior of lands in Swabia, Alsace and Switzerland, that he was great, not as Roman Emperor. For just as from him the Austrian monarchy begins, so with him the Holy Empire in its old meaning ends. That strange system of doctrines, half religious, half political, which had supported it for so many ages, was growing obsolete, and the theory which had wrought such changes on Germany and Europe, passed ere long so completely from remembrance that we can now do no more than call up a faint and waverling image of what it must once have been.

For it is not only in imperial history that the accession of Maximilian is a landmark. That time—a time of change and movement in every part of human life, a time when printing had become common, and books were no longer confined to the clergy, when drilled troops were replacing the feudal militia, when the use of gunpowder was changing the face of war—was especially marked by one event, to which the history of the world offers no parallel before or since, the discovery of America. The cloud which from the beginning of things had hung thick and dark round the borders of civilization was suddenly lifted: the feeling of mysterious awe with which men had regarded the firm plain of earth and her encircling ocean ever since the days of Homer, vanished when astronomers and geographers taught them that she was an insignificant globe, which,
so far from being the center of the universe, was itself swept round in the motion of one of the least of its countless systems. The notions that had hitherto prevailed regarding the life of man and his relations to nature and the supernatural, were rudely shaken by the knowledge that was soon gained of tribes in every stage of culture, and living under every variety of condition, who had developed apart from all the influences of the Eastern hemisphere. In A.D. 1453 the capture of Constantinople and extinction of the Eastern Empire had dealt a fatal blow to the prestige of tradition and an immemorial name: in A.D. 1492 there was disclosed a world whither the eagles of the all-conquering Rome had never winged their flight. No one could now have repeated the arguments of the De Monarchia.

Another movement, too, widely different, but even more momentous, was beginning to spread from Italy beyond the Alps. Since the barbarian tribes settled in the Roman provinces, no change had come to pass in Europe at all comparable to that which followed the diffusion of the new learning in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Enchanted by the beauty of the ancient models of art and poetry, more particularly those of the Greeks, men came to regard with aversion and contempt all that had been done or produced from the days of Trajan to those of Pope Nicholas V. The Latin style of the writers who lived after Tacitus was debased: the architecture of the Middle Ages was barbarous: the scholastic philosophy was an odious and unmeaning jargon. Aristotle himself, Greek though he was, Aristotle who had been for three centuries more than a prophet or an apostle, was hurled from his throne, because his name was associated with the dismal quarrels of Scotists and Thomists. That spirit, whether we call it analytical, or sceptical, or earthly, or simply secular, for it is more or less all of these
—the spirit which was the exact antithesis of mediæval mysticism, had swept in and carried men away, with all the force of a pent-up torrent. People were content to gratify their tastes and their senses, caring little for worship, and still less for doctrine: their hopes and ideas were no longer such as had made their forefathers crusaders or ascetics: their imagination was possessed by associations far different from those which had inspired Dante: they did not revolt against the church, but they had no enthusiasm for her, and they had enthusiasm for whatever was fresh and graceful and intelligible. From all that was old and solemn, or that seemed to savor of feudalism or mockery, they turned away, too indifferent to be hostile. And so, in the midst of the Renaissance, so, under the consciousness that former things were passing from the earth, and a new order opening, so, with the other beliefs and memories of the Middle Age, the shadowy rights of the Roman Empire melted away in the fuller modern light. Here and there a jurist muttered that no neglect could destroy its universal supremacy, or a priest declaimed to listless hearers on its duty to protect the Holy See; but to Germany it had become an ancient device for holding together the discordant members of her body, to its possessors an engine for extending the power of the house of Hapsburg.

Henceforth, therefore, we must look upon the Holy Roman Empire as lost in the German; and after a few faint attempts to resuscitate old-fashioned claims, nothing remains to indicate its origin save a sounding title and a precedence among the states of Europe. It was not that the Renaissance exerted any direct political influence either against the Empire or for it; men were too busy upon statues and coins and manuscripts to care what befell Popes or Emperors. It acted rather by silently withdrawing the whole
system of doctrines upon which the Empire had rested, and thus leaving it, since it had previously no support but that of opinion, without any support at all.

During Maximilian's eventful reign several efforts were made to construct a new constitution, but it is to German rather than to imperial history that they properly belong. Here, indeed, the history of the Holy Empire might close, did not the title unchanged beckon us on, and were it not that the events of these later centuries may in their causes be traced back to times when the name of Roman was not wholly a mockery. It may be enough to remark that while the preservation of peace and the better administration of justice were in some measure attained by the Public Peace and Imperial Chamber, established in A.D. 1495, schemes still more important failed through the bad constitution of the Diet, and the unconquerable jealousy of the Emperor and the Estates. Maximilian refused to have his prerogative, indefinite though weak, restricted by the appointment of an administrative council,* and when the Estates extorted it from him, did his best to ensure its failure. In the Diet, which consisted of three colleges, electors, princes and cities, the lower nobility and knights of the Empire were unrepresented, and resented every decree that affected their position, refusing to pay taxes in voting which they had no voice. The interests of the princes and the cities were often irreconcilable, while the strength of the crown would not have been sufficient to make its adhesion to the latter of any effect. The policy of conciliating the commons, which Sigismund had tried, succeeding Emperors seldom cared to repeat, content to gain their point by raising factions among the territorial magnates, and so to stave off the un-

* Reichsregiment.
welcome demand for reform. After many earnest attempts to establish a representative system, such as might resist the tendency to local independence and cure the evils of separate administration, the hope so often baffled died away. Forces were too nearly balanced: the sovereign could not extend his personal control, nor could the reforming party limit him by a strong council of government, for such a measure would have equally trenches on the independence of the states. So ended the first great effort for German unity, interesting from its bearing on the events and aspirations of our own day: interesting, too, as giving the most convincing proof of the decline of the imperial office. For the projects of reform did not propose to effect their objects by restoring to Maximilian the authority his predecessors had once enjoyed, but by setting up a body which would resemble far more nearly the senate of a federal state than the administrative council which surrounds a monarch. The existing system developed itself farther: relieved from external pressure, the princes became more despotic in their own territories: distinct codes were framed, and new systems of administration introduced: the insurgent peasantry were crushed down with more confident harshness. Already had leagues of princes and cities been formed* (that of Swabia was one of the strongest forces in Germany, and often the monarch's firmest support); now alliances begin to be contracted with foreign powers, and receive a direction of formidable import from the rivalry which the pretensions on Naples and Milan of Charles VIII and Lewis XII of France kindled between their house and the Austrian. It was no slight gain to have friends in the heart of the

* Wenzel had encouraged the leagues of the cities, and incurred thereby the hatred of the nobles.
enemy's country, such as French intrigue found in the Elector Palatine and the count of Württemberg.

Nevertheless this was also the era of the first conscious feeling of German nationality, as distinct from imperial. Driven in on all hands, with Italy and the Slavic lands and Burgundy hopelessly lost, Teutschland learned to separate itself from Welschland.* The Empire became the representative of a narrower but more practicable national union. It is not a mere coincidence that at this date there appear several notable changes of style. "Natio

tionis Teutonicae" (Teutscher Nation) is added to the simple "sacrum imperium Romanum." The title of "Imperator electus," which Maximilian obtains leave from Pope Julius II to assume,† when the Venetians prevent him from reaching his capital, marks the severance of Germany from Rome. No subsequent Emperor received his crown from the ancient capital (Charles V was indeed crowned by the Pope's hands, but the ceremony took place at Bologna, and was therefore of at least questionable validity); each assumed after his German coronation.§ the title of Emperor Elect,‡ and employed

* The Germans, like our own ancestors, called foreign, i.e. non-Teutonic nations, Welsh; yet apparently not all such nations, but only those which they in some way associated with the Roman Empire, the Cymry of Roman Britain, the Romanized Kelts of Gaul, the Italians, the Roumans or Wallachs of Transylvania and the Principalities. It does not appear that either the Magyars or any Slavonic people were called by any form of the name. In the Icelandic writings of the thirteenth century France (Francia occidentalis) is called "Valland."

† Julius was well pleased to give it, as he had no desire to see Maximilian in Italy.

‡ Erwählter Kaiser. See Appendix, Note C.

§ The German crown was received at Aachen, the ancient Frankish capital, where may still be seen, in the gallery of the basilica, the
this in all documents issued in his name. But the word “elect” being omitted when he was addressed by others, partly from motives of courtesy, partly because the old rules regarding the Roman coronation were forgotten or remembered only by antiquaries, he was never called, even when formality was required, anything but Emperor. The substantial import of another title now first introduced is the same. Before Otto I, the Teutonic king had called himself either “rex” alone, or “Francorum orientalium rex,” or “Francorum atque Saxonum rex”; after A.D. 962, all lesser dignities had been merged in the “Romanorum Imperator.”* To this Maximilian appended “Germaniae rex,” or, adding Frederick II’s bequest, † “König in Germanien und Jerusalem.” It has been thought that from a mixture of the title King of Germany, and that of Emperor, has been formed the phrase “German Emperor,” or less correctly, “Emperor of Germany.”‡ But more probably the terms marble throne on which the Emperors from the days of Charles to those of Ferdinand I were crowned. It was upon this chair that Otto III had found the body of Charles seated, when he opened his tomb in A.D. 1001. After Ferdinand I, the coronation as well as the election took place at Frankfort. An account of the ceremony may be found in Goethe’s Wahrheit und Dichtung. Aachen, though it remained and indeed is still a German town, lay in too remote a corner of the country to be a convenient capital, and was moreover in dangerous proximity to the West Franks, as stubborn old Germans continue to call them. As early as A.D. 1333 we find Bishop Leopold of Bamberg complaining that the French had arrogated to themselves the honors of the Frankish name, and called themselves “reges Franciae” instead of “reges Franciae occidentalis.”—Lupoldus Bebenburgensis, apud Scharium, Sylloge Tractatum.

* Romanorum rex (after Henry II) till the coronation at Rome.
† But the Emperor was only one of many claimants to this kingdom; they multiplied as the prospect of regaining it died away.
‡ This latter does not occur, even in English books, till comparatively recent times. English writers of the seventeenth century
"German Emperor" and "Emperor of Germany" are nothing but convenient corruptions of the technical description of the Germanic sovereign.*

That the Empire was thus sinking into a merely German power cannot be doubted. But it was only natural that those who lived at the time should not discern the tendency of events. Again and again did the restless and sanguine Maximilian propose the recovery of Burgundy and Italy—his last scheme was to adjust the relations of Papacy and Empire by becoming Pope himself; nor were successive Diets less zealous to check private war, still the scandal of Germany, to set right the gear of the imperial chamber, to make the imperial officials permanent, and their administration uniform throughout the country. But while they talked the heavens darkened, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

always call him "The Emperor," pure and simple, just as they invariably say "the French king." But the phrase "Empereur d'Almayne" may be found in very early French writers.

* See Moser, Römische Kayser; Goldast's and other collections of imperial edicts and proclamations.
CHAPTER XVIII.

THE REFORMATION AND ITS EFFECTS UPON THE EMPIRE.

The Reformation falls to be mentioned here, of course, not as a religious movement, but as the cause of political changes, which still further rent the Empire, and struck at the root of the theory by which it had been created and upheld. Luther completed the work of Hildebrand. Hitherto it had seemed not impossible to strengthen the German state into a monarchy, compact if not despotic; the very Diet of Worms, where the monk of Wittenberg proclaimed to an astonished church and Emperor that the day of spiritual tyranny was past, had framed and presented a fresh scheme for the construction of a central council of government. The great religious schism put an end to all such hopes, for it became a source of political disunion far more serious and permanent than any that had existed before, and it taught the two factions, into which Germany was henceforth divided, to regard each other with feelings more bitter than those of hostile nations.

The breach came at the most unfortunate time possible. After an election, more memorable than any preceding, an election in which Francis I of France and Henry VIII of England had been his competitors, a prince had just ascended the imperial throne who united dominions vaster than any Europe had seen since the days of his great namesake. Spain and Naples, Flanders, and other parts
of the Burgundian lands, as well as large regions in eastern Germany, obeyed Charles: he drew inexhaustible revenues from a new empire beyond the Atlantic. Such a power, directed by a mind more resolute and profound than that of Maximilian his grandfather, might have well been able, despite the stringency of his coronation engagements* and the watchfulness of the electors,† to override their usurped privileges, and make himself practically as well as officially the head of the nation. Charles V, though from the coldness of his manner‡ and his Flemish speech never a favorite among the Germans, was in point a fact far stronger than Maximilian or any other Emperor who had reigned for three centuries. In Italy, he succeeded, after long struggles with the Pope and the French, in rendering himself supreme: England he knew how to lead, by flattering Henry and cajoling Wolsey: from no state but France had he serious opposition to fear. To this strength his imperial dignity was indeed a mere accident: its sources were the infantry of Spain, the looms of Flanders, the sierras of Peru. But the conquest once achieved, might could lose itself in right; and as an earlier Charles had veiled the terror of the Frankish sword under the mask of Roman election, so might his successor sway a hundred provinces with the sole name of Roman Emperor, and transmit to his race a dominion as wide and more enduring.

One is tempted to speculate as to what might have hap-

* The so-called "Wahlcapitulation."

† The electors long refused to elect Charles, dreading his great hereditary power, and were at last induced to do so only by their overmastering fear of the Turks.

‡ Nearly all the Hapsburgs seem to have wanted that sort of genial heartiness which, apt as it is to be stifled by education in the purple, has nevertheless been possessed by several other royal lines, greatly contributing to their vitality; as, for instance, by more than one prince of the houses of Brunswick and Hohenzollern.
pened had Charles espoused the reforming cause. His reverence for the Pope's person is sufficiently seen in the sack of Rome and the captivity of Clement; the traditions of his office might have led him to tread in the steps of the Henrys and the Fredericks, into which even the timid Lewis IV and the unstable Sigismund had sometimes ventured; the awakening zeal of the German people, exasperated by the exactions of the Romish court, would have strengthened his hands, and enabled him, while moderating the excesses of change, to fix his throne on the deep foundations of national love. It may well be doubted—Englishmen at least have reason for the doubt—whether the Reformation would not have lost as much as it could have gained by being entangled in the meshes of royal patronage. But, setting aside Charles' personal leaning to the old faith, and forgetting that he was king of the most bigoted race of Europe, his position as Emperor made him almost perforce the Pope's ally. The Empire had been called into being by Rome, had vaunted the protection of the Apostolic See as its highest earthly privilege, had latterly been wont, especially in Hapsburg hands, to lean on the Papacy for support. Itself founded entirely on prescription and the traditions of immemorial reverence, how could it abandon the cause which the longest prescription and the most solemn authority had combined to consecrate? With the German clergy, despite occasional quarrels, it had been on better terms than with the lay aristocracy; their heads had been the chief ministers of the crown; the advocacies of their abbeys were the last source of imperial revenue to disappear. To turn against them now, when furiously assailed by heretics; to abrogate claims hallowed by antiquity and a hundred laws, would be to pronounce its own sentence, and the fall of the eternal city's spiritual dominion must involve the fall of what still
professed to be her temporal. Charles would have been glad to see some abuses corrected; but a broad line of policy was called for, and he cast in his lot with the Catholics.*

Of many momentous results only a few need be noticed here. The reconstruction of the old imperial system, upon the basis of Hapsburg power, proved in the end impossible. Yet for some years it had seemed actually accomplished. When the Smalkaldic league had been dissolved and its leaders captured, the whole country lay prostrate before Charles. He overawed the Diet at Augsburg by his Spanish soldiery: he forced formulations of doctrine upon the vanquished Protestants: he set up and pulled down whom he would throughout Germany, amid the muttered discontent of his own partisans. Then, as in the beginning of the year 1552, he lay at Innsbruck, fondly dreaming that his work was done, waiting the spring weather to cross to Trent, where the Catholic fathers had again met to settle the world’s faith for it, news was sud-

*See this brought out with great force in the very interesting work of Padre Tosti, Prolegomeni alla Storia Universale della Chiesa, from which I quote one passage, which bears directly on the matter in hand: "Il grido della riforma clericale aveva un eco terribile in tutta la compagnia civile dei popoli: essa percuoteva le cime del laicale potere, e rimbalzava per tutta la gerarchia sociale. Se l’imperatore Sigismondo nel consilio di Costanza non avesse fiutate queste conseguenze nella eresia di Hus e di Girolamo di Praga, forse non avrebbe con tanto zelo mandati alle fiamme que’ novatori. Rotto da Lutero il vincolo di suggezione al Papa ed ai preti in fatti di religione, avvenne che anche quello che sommetteva il vassallo al barone, il barone al imperatore si allentasse. Il popolo con la Bibbia in mano era prete, vescovo, e papa; e se prima contristato della prepotenza di chi gli sopraostava, ricorreva al successore di San Pietro, ora ricorreva a se stesso, avendogli commesse Fra Martino le chiavi dei regno dei Cieli."—vol. ii. pp. 398–9.
denly brought that North Germany was in arms, and that
the revolted Maurice of Saxony had seized Dornauwerth,
and was hurrying through the Bavarian Alps to surprise
his sovereign.* Charles rose and fled south over the snows
of the Brenner, then eastward, under the blood-red cliffs
of dolomite that wall in the Pusterthal, far away into the
silent valleys of Carinthia: the council of Trent broke up in
consternation: Europe saw and the Emperor acknowledged
that in his fancied triumph over the spirit of revolution he
had done no more than block up for the moment an irre-
sistible torrent. When this last effort to produce religi-
ous uniformity by violence had failed as hopelessly as the
previous devices of holding discussions of doctrine and
calling a general council, a sort of armistice was agreed to
in 1555, which lasted in mutual fear and suspicion for
more than sixty years. Four years after this disappointment
of the hopes and projects which had occupied his busy life,
Charles, weighed down by cares and with the shadow of
coming death already upon him, resigned the sovereignty
of Spain and the Indies, of Flanders and Naples, into the
hands of his son Philip II; while the imperial scepter
passed to his brother Ferdinand, who had been
some time before (1531) chosen King of the
Romans. Ferdinand was content to leave things
much as he found them, and the amiable
Maximilian II, who succeeded him, though person-
ally well inclined to the Protestants, found
himself fettered by his position and his allies,
and could do little or nothing to quench the
flame of religious and political hatred. Ger-
many remained divided into two omnipresent factions,
and so further than ever from harmonious action, or a

Ferdinand I,
1558-1564.

Maximilian II,
1564-1576.

* Maurice is reported to have been just as well pleased at Charles'
escape. "I have no cage big enough," said he, "for such a bird."
tightening of the long-loosened bond of feudal allegiance. The states of either creed being gathered into a league, there could no longer be a recognized center of authority for judicial or administrative purposes. Least of all could a center be sought in the Emperor, the leader of the papal party, the suspected foe of every Protestant. Too closely watched to do anything of his own authority, too much committed to one party to be accepted as a mediator by the other, he was driven to attain his own objects by falling in with the schemes and furthering the selfish ends of his adherents, by becoming the accomplice or the tool of the Jesuits. The Lutheran princes addressed themselves to reduce a power of which they had still an oversensitive dread, and found, when they exacted from each successive sovereign engagements more stringent than his predecessor’s, that in this, and this alone, their Catholic brethren were not unwilling to join them. Thus obliged to strip himself one by one of the ancient privileges of his crown, the Emperor came to have little influence on the government except that which his intrigues might exercise. Nay, it became almost impossible to maintain a government at all. For when the Reformers found themselves outvoted at the Diet, they declared that in matters of religion a majority ought not to bind a minority. As the measures were few which did not admit of being reduced to this category, for whatever benefited the Emperor or any other Catholic prince injured the Protestants, nothing could be done save by the assent of two bitterly hostile factions. Thus scarce anything was done; and even the courts of justice were stopped by the disputes that attended the appointment of every judge or assessor.

In the foreign politics of Germany another result followed. Inferior in military force and organization, the Protestant princes at first provided for their safety by
forming leagues among themselves. The device was an old one, and had been employed by the monarch himself before now, in despair at the effete and cumbersome forms of the imperial system. Soon they began to look beyond the Vosges, and found that France, burning heretics at home, was only too happy to smile on free opinions elsewhere. The alliance was easily struck; Henry II assumed in 1552 the title of "Protector of the Germanic liberties," and a pretext for interference was never wanting in future.

These were some of the visible political consequences of the great religious schism of the sixteenth century. But beyond and above them there was a change far more momentous than any of its immediate results. There is perhaps no event in history which has been represented in so great a variety of lights as the Reformation. It has been called a revolt of the laity against the clergy, or of the Teutonic races against the Italians, or of the kingdoms of Europe against the universal monarchy of the Popes. Some have seen in it only a burst of long-repressed anger at the luxury of the prelates and the manifold abuses of the ecclesiastical system; others a renewal of the youth of the church by a return to primitive forms of doctrine. All these, indeed, to some extent it was; but it was also something more profound, and fraught with mightier consequences than any of them. It was in its essence the assertion of the principle of individuality—that is to say, of true spiritual freedom. Hitherto the personal consciousness had been a faint and broken reflection of the universal; obedience had been held the first of religious duties; truth had been conceived as a something external and positive, which the priesthood who were its stewards were to communicate to the passive layman, and whose saving virtue lay not in its being felt
and known by him to be truth, but in a purely formal and unreasoning acceptance. The great principles which mediaeval Christianity still cherished were obscured by the limited, rigid, almost sensuous forms which had been forced on them in times of ignorance and barbarism. That which was in its nature abstract, had been able to survive only by taking a concrete expression. The universal consciousness became the Visible Church: the Visible Church hardened into a government and degenerated into a hierarchy. Holiness of heart and life was sought by outward works, by penances and pilgrimages, by gifts to the poor and to the clergy, wherein there dwelt often little enough of a charitable mind. The presence of divine truth among men was symbolized under one aspect by the existence on earth of an infallible Vicar of God, the Pope; under another, by the reception of the present Deity in the sacrifice of the mass; in a third, by the doctrine that the priest's power to remit sins and administer the sacraments depended upon a transmission of miraculous gifts which can hardly be called other than physical. All this system of doctrine, which might, but for the position of the church as a worldly, and therefore obstructive, power, have expanded, renewed and purified itself during the four centuries that had elapsed since its completion,* and thus remained in harmony with the growing intelligence of mankind, was suddenly rent in pieces by the convulsion of the Reformation, and flung away by the more religious and more progressive peoples of Europe. That which was external and concrete, was in all things to be superseded by that which was inward and spiritual. It was proclaimed that the individual spirit, while it continued to mirror itself in the world-spirit, had nevertheless an independent existence as a

*It was not till the end of the eleventh century that transubstantiation was definitely established as a dogma.
center of self-issuing force, and was to be in all things active rather than passive. Truth was no longer to be truth to the soul until it should have been by the soul recognized, and in some measure even created; but when so recognized and felt, it is able under the form of faith to transcend outward works and to transform the dogmas of the understanding; it becomes the living principle within each man's breast, infinite itself, and expressing itself infinitely through his thoughts and acts. He who as a spiritual being was delivered from the priest, and brought into direct relation with the Divinity, needed not, as heretofore, to be enrolled a member of a visible congregation of his fellows, that he might live a pure and useful life among them. Thus by the Reformation the Visible Church, as well as the priesthood, lost that paramount importance which had hitherto belonged to it, and sank from being the depository of all religious tradition, the source and center of religious life, the arbiter of eternal happiness or misery, into a mere association of Christian men, for the expression of mutual sympathy and the better attainment of certain common ends. Like those other doctrines which were now assailed by the Reformation, this mediaeval view of the nature of the Visible Church had been naturally, and so, it may be said, necessarily developed between the third and the twelfth century, and must therefore have represented the thoughts and satisfied the wants of those times. By the Visible Church the flickering lamp of knowledge and literary culture, as well as of religion, had been fed and tended through the long night of Dark Ages. But, like the whole theological fabric of which it formed a part, it was now hard and unfruitful, identified with its own worst abuses, capable apparently of no further development, and unable to satisfy minds which in growing stronger had
grown more conscious of their strength. Before the awakened zeal of the northern nations it stood a cold and lifeless system, whose organization as a hierarchy checked the free activity of thought, whose bestowal of worldly power and wealth on spiritual pastors drew them away from their proper duties, and which by maintaining alongside of the civil magistracy a co-ordinate and rival government, maintained also that separation of the spiritual element in man from the secular, which had been so complete and so pernicious during the Middle Ages, which debases life, and severs religion from morality.

The Reformation, it may be said, was a religious movement: and it is the Empire, not the Church, that we have here to consider. The distinction in only apparent. The Holy Empire is but another name for the Visible Church. It has been shown already how mediæval theory constructed the State on the model of the Church; how the Roman Empire was the shadow of the Popedom—designed to rule men’s bodies as the pontiff ruled their souls. Both alike claimed obedience on the ground that Truth is One, and that where there is one faith there must be One government.* And, therefore, since it was this very principle of Formal Unity that the Reformation overthrew, it became a revolt against despotism of every kind; it erected the standard of civil as well as of religious liberty, since both of them are needed, though needed in a different measure, for the worthy development of the individual spirit. The Empire had never been conspicuously the antagonist of popular freedom, and was, even under Charles V, far less formidable to the commonalty than were the petty princes of Germany. But submission, and submission on the ground of indefeasible transmitted right,

* See the passages quoted in note, p. 95; and note§, p. 107.
upon the ground of Catholic traditions and the duty of
the Christian magistrate to suffer heresy and schism as
little as the parallel sins of treason and rebellion, had been
its constant claim and watchword. Since the days of
Julius Cæsar it had passed through many phases, but in
none of them had it ever been a constitutional monarchy,
pledged to the recognition of popular rights. And hence
the indirect tendency of the Reformation to narrow the
province of government and exalt the privileges of the sub-
ject was as plainly adverse to the Empire as the Protestant
claim of the right of private judgment was to the pre-
tensions of the Papacy and the priesthood.

The remark must not be omitted in passing, how much
less than might have been expected the religious move-
ment did at first actually effect in the way of
promoting either political progress or freedom
of conscience. The habits of centuries were
not to be unlearned in a few years, and it was
natural that ideas struggling into existence
and activity should work erringly and imper-
fectly for a time. By a few inflammable minds
liberty was carried into antinomianism, and produced the
wildest excesses of life and doctrine. Several fantastic
sects arose, refusing to conform to the ordinary rules with-
out which human society could not subsist. But these
commotions neither spread widely nor lasted long. Far
more pervading and more remarkable was the other error,
if that can be called an error which was the almost unavoid-
able result of the circumstances of the time. The prin-
ciples which had led the Protestants to
sever themselves from the Roman-Church,
should have taught them to bear with the
opinions of others, and warned them from the
attempt to connect agreement in doctrine or manner of
worship with the necessary forms of civil government,
Still less ought they to have enforced that agreement by civil penalties; for faith, upon their own showing, had no value save when it was freely given. A church which does not claim to be infallible is bound to allow that some part of the truth may possibly be with its adversaries: a church which permits or encourages human reason to apply itself to revelation has no right first to argue with people and then to punish them if they are not convinced. But whether it was that men only half saw what they had done, or that finding it hard enough to unrivet priestly fetters, they welcomed all the aid a temporal prince could give, the result was that religion, or rather religious creeds, began to be involved with politics more closely than had ever been the case before. Through the greater part of Christendom wars of religion raged for a century or more, and down to our own days feelings of theological antipathy continue to affect the relations of the powers of Europe. In almost every country the form of doctrine which triumphed associated itself with the state, and maintained the despotic system of the Middle Ages, while it forsook the grounds on which that system had been based. It was thus that there arose National Churches, which were to be to the several Protestant countries of Europe that which the Church Catholic had been to the world at large; churches, that is to say, each of which was to be co-extensive with its respective state, was to enjoy landed wealth and exclusive political privilege, and was to be armed with coercive powers against recusants. It was not altogether easy to find a set of theoretical principles on which such churches might be made to rest, for they could not, like the old church, point to the historical transmission of their doctrines; they could not claim to have in any one man or body of men an infallible organ of divine truth; they could not even fall back upon general councils, or the argument, whatever it may be worth, "Securus indicat orbis terræ-
rum." But in practice these difficulties were soon got over, for the dominant party in each state, if it was not infallible, was at any rate quite sure that it was right, and could attribute the resistance of other sects to nothing but moral obliquity. The will of the sovereign, as in England, or the will of the majority, as in Holland, Scandinavia and Scotland, imposed upon each country a peculiar form of worship, and kept up the practices of mediæval intolerance without their justification. Persecution, which might be at least excused in an infallible Catholic and Apostolic Church, was peculiarly odious when practiced by those who were not catholic, who were no more apostolic than their neighbors, and who had just revolted from the most ancient and venerable authority in the name of rights which they now denied to others. If union with the visible church by participation in a material sacrament be necessary to eternal life, persecution may be held a duty, a kindness to perishing souls. But if the kingdom of heaven be in every sense a kingdom of the spirit, if saving faith be possible out of one visible body and under a diversity of external forms, persecution becomes at once a crime and a folly. Therefore the intolerance of Protestants, if the forms it took were less cruel than those practiced by the Roman Catholics, was also far less defensible; for it had seldom anything better to allege on its behalf than motives of political expediency, or, more often, the mere headstrong passion of a ruler or a faction to silence the expressions of any opinions but their own. To enlarge upon this theme, did space permit it, would not be to digress from the proper subject of this narrative. For the Empire, as has been said more than once already, was far less an institution than a theory or doctrine. And hence it is not too much to say, that the ideas which have but recently ceased to prevail regarding the duty of the magistrate to compel uniformity in doctrine and worship by the civil
arm, may all be traced to the relation which that theory established between the Roman Church and the Roman Empire; to the conception, in fact, of an Empire Church itself.

Two of the ways in which the Reformation affected the Empire have been now described: its immediate political results, and its far more profound doctrinal importance, as implanting new ideas regarding the nature of freedom and the province of government. A third, though apparently almost superficial, cannot be omitted. Its name and its traditions, little as they retained of their former magic power, were still such as to excite the antipathy of the German reformers. The form which the doctrine of the supreme importance of one faith and one body of the faithful had taken was the dominion of the ancient capital of the world through her spiritual head, the Roman bishop, and her temporal head, the Emperor. As the names of Roman and Christian had been once convertible, so long afterward were those of Roman and Catholic. The Reformation, separating into its parts what had hitherto been one conception, attacked Romanism but not Catholicity, and formed religious communities which, while continuing to call themselves Christian, repudiated the form with which Christianity had been so long identified in the West. As the Empire was founded upon the assumption that the limits of Church and State are exactly co-extensive, a change which withdrew half of its subjects from the one body while they remained members of the other, transformed it utterly, destroyed the meaning and value of its old arrangements, and forced the Emperor into a strange and incongruous position. To his Protestant subjects he was merely the head of the administration, to the Catholics he was also the Defender and Advocate of their church. Thus from being chief of the whole state
he became the chief of a party within it, the Corpus Catholicorum, as opposed to the Corpus Evangelicorum; he lost what had been hitherto his most holy claim to the obedience of the subject; the awakened feeling of German nationality was driven into hostility to an institution whose title and history bound it to the center of foreign tyranny. After exulting for seven centuries in the heritage of Roman rule, the Teutonic nations cherished again the feeling with which their ancestors had resisted Julius Caesar and Germanicus. Two mutually repugnant systems could not exist side by side without striving to destroy one another. The instincts of theological sympathy overcame the duties of political allegiance, and men who were subjects both of the Emperor and of their local prince, gave all their loyalty to him who espoused their doctrines and protected their worship. For in North Germany princes as well as people were mostly Lutheran: in the southern and especially the south-eastern lands, where the magnates held to the old faith, Protestants were scarcely to be found except in the free cities. The same causes which injured the Emperor's position in Germany swept away the last semblance of his authority through other countries. In the great struggle which followed, the Protestants of England and France, of Holland and Sweden, thought of him only as the ally of Spain, of the Vatican, of the Jesuits; and he of whom it had been believed a century before that by nothing but his existence was the coming of Antichrist on earth delayed, was in the eye of the northern divines either Antichrist himself or Antichrist's foremost champion. The earthquake that opened a chasm in Germany was felt through Europe; its states and peoples marshaled themselves under two hostile banners, and with the Empire's expiring power vanished that united Christendom it had been created to lead.*

* Henry VIII of England when he rebelled against the Pope called
Some of the effects thus sketched began to show themselves as early as that famous Diet of Worms, from Luther's appearance at which, in A.D. 1521, we may date the beginning of the Reformation. But just as the end of the religious conflict in England can hardly be placed earlier than the Revolution in 1688, nor in France than the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, so it was not till after more than a century of doubtful strife that the new order of things was fully and finally established in Germany. The arrangements of Augsburg, like most treaties on the basis of uti possidetis, were no better than a hollow truce, satisfying no one, and consciously made to be broken. The church lands which Protestants had seized, and Jesuit confessors urged the Catholic princes to reclaim, furnished an unceasing ground of quarrel; neither party yet knew the strength of its antagonists sufficiently to abstain from insulting or persecuting their modes of worship, and the smouldering hate of half a century was kindled by the troubles of Bohemia into the Thirty Years' War.

The imperial scepter had now passed from the indolent and vacillating Rudolf II (1576-1612), the corrupt and reckless policy of whose ministers had done much to exasperate the already suspicious minds of the Protestants into the firmer grasp of Ferdinand II.* Jealous, bigoted, implacable, skillful in forming and concealing his plans, resolute to himself King of Ireland (his predecessors had used only the title "Domimus Hiberniae") without asking the Emperor's permission, in order to show that he repudiated the temporal as well as the spiritual dominion of Rome. So the Statute of Appeals is careful to deny and reject the authority of "other foreign potentates," meaning, no doubt, the Emperor as well as the Pope.

* Matthias, brother of Rudolf II, reigned from 1612 till 1619.
obstinacy in carrying them out in action, the house of Hapsburg could have had no abler and no more unpopular leader in their second attempt to turn the German Empire into an Austrian military monarchy. They seemed for a time as near to the accomplishment of the project as Charles V had been. Leagued with Spain, backed by the Catholics of Germany, served by such a leader as Wallenstein, Ferdinand proposed nothing less than the extension of the Empire to its old limits, and the recovery of his crown’s full prerogative over all its vassals. Denmark and Holland were to be attacked by sea and land; Italy to be reconquered with the help of Spain; Maximilian of Bavaria and Wallenstein to be rewarded with principalities in Pomerania and Mecklenburg. The latter-general was all but master of Northern Germany when the successful resistance of Stralsund turned the wavering balance of the war. Soon after (A.D. 1630), Gustavus Adolphus crossed the Baltic, and saved Europe from an impending reign of the Jesuits. Ferdinand’s high-handed proceedings had already alarmed even the Catholic princes. Of his own authority he had put the Elector Palatine and other magnates to the ban of the Empire: he had transferred an electoral vote to Bavaria; had treated the districts overrun by his generals as spoils of war to be portioned out at his pleasure; had unsettled all possession by requiring the restitution of church property occupied since A.D. 1555. The Protestants were helpless; the Catholics, though they complained of the flagrant illegality of such conduct, did not dare to oppose it; the rescue of Germany was the work of the Swedish king. In four campaigns he destroyed the armies and the prestige of the Emperor; devastated his lands, emptied his treasury, and left him at last so enfeebled that no subsequent successes could make
him again formidable. Such, nevertheless, was the selfishness and apathy of the Protestant princes, divided by the mutual jealousy of the Lutheran and the Calvinist party—some, like the Saxon elector, most ignominious, of his ignominious house, bribed by the cunning Austrian; others afraid to stir lest a reverse should expose them unprotected to his vengeance—that the issue of the long protracted contest would have gone against them but for the interference of France. It was the leading principle of Richelieu's policy to depress the house of Hapsburg and keep Germany disunited: hence he fostered Protestantism abroad while trampling it down at home. The triumph he did not live to see was sealed in A.D. 1648, on the utter exhaustion of all the combatants, and the treaties of Münster and Osnabrück were thenceforward the basis of the Germanic constitution.
CHAPTER XIX.

THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA: LAST STAGE IN THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE.

The Peace of Westphalia is the first, and, with the exception perhaps of the Treaties of Vienna in 1815, the most important of those attempts to reconstruct by diplomacy the European states-system which have played so large a part in modern history. It is important, however, not as marking the introduction of new principles, but as winding up the struggle which had convulsed Germany since the revolt of Luther, sealing its results, and closing definitely the period of the Reformation. Although the causes of disunion which the religious movement called into being had now been at work for more than a hundred years, their effects were not fully seen till it became necessary to establish a system which should represent the altered relations of the German states. It may thus be said of this famous peace, as of the other so-called "fundamental law of the Empire," the Golden Bull, that it did no more than legalize a condition of things already in existence, but which by being legalized acquired new importance. To all parties alike the result of the Thirty Years' War was thoroughly unsatisfactory: to the Protestants, who had lost Bohemia, and still were obliged to hold an inferior place in the electoral college and in the Diet; to the Catholics, who were forced to permit the exercise of heretical worship, and leave the church land in the grasp of sacrilegious spoilers; to the princes, who could not throw off the burden of imperial supremacy; to the emperor, who could turn that supremacy to no practical account.