SUPPLEMENTARY CHAPTER.

THE NEW GERMAN EMPIRE.

In 1806 the Holy Empire died and was buried, and to all appearance soon forgotten. No out-worn shape of the past could have seemed less likely to be ever recalled to life, for the forces which had so long assailed and at last destroyed it were stronger than ever, and threatened with extinction even that feeble shadow which, under the name of the Germanic Confederation, affected in some sort to represent the unity of the German nation. Fifty years passed away; new questions arose; Europe ranged itself into new parties; men's minds began to be swayed by new feelings; time drove fast onward, and the Holy Roman Empire seemed left so far behind among the mists of the past that it was hard to believe that living men had seen it and borne part in its government. Then suddenly there arises from these cold ashes a new, vigorous, self-confident German Empire, a State which, although most different, as well in its inner character as in its form and legal aspect, from its venerable predecessor, is nevertheless in a very real sense that predecessor's representative. An account of this new creation of our own days, perhaps the most striking and fertile epoch in European annals, is therefore a fitting, if not a necessary, pendant to the history of the elder Empire; it is, in fact, the latest act of a long drama, which gives a new and happier meaning to all that has gone before. For not only does the new Empire hold that cen-
which the old Empire once filled: it is, in a moral and intellectual sense, the offspring of the old Empire, and, but for the pre-existence of the other, could never have itself come into being.

It has been shown in the earlier chapters of this treatise, how from the days of the Emperor Henry III, when the Holy Empire reached the maximum of its power, every succeeding change tended to weaken it morally and politically, to loosen its cohesion, diminish its material resources, destroy its hold on the love and faith of its subjects. The first crisis was marked by the death of Frederick II, when Italy was lost beyond hope of recovery; the second by the Reformation, and particularly by the Treaty of 1555; the third by the Peace of Westphalia, when Germany was legally reconstituted as a sort of federation of mutually suspicious and unfriendly states; the fourth, one may perhaps say, by the Seven Years’ War, when one vigorous member successfully resisted the whole force of Austria and the other German powers, backed by the armies of France and Russia. It is easy for us now to see, that as after the first of these crises the Empire had no longer any chance of making good its claim to be a world-monarchy, co-extensive with Christianity, so after the second its prospects as a national State, claiming to unite all Germany under a single effective administration, were practically hopeless. The Germans, however, as was natural, did not see this until in 1648 the admission of the substantial independence of the princes had turned the imperial dignity into a mask under which the harsh features of the Hapsburg sovereigns tried in vain to conceal themselves. Over the sentiment of the people its name still retained some power, for it was associated with all the glories of their earlier history, with heroic memories enshrined in song, with claims of world-supremacy which they could not bring themselves to forget. But it was no
longer a rallying-point for national feeling, a center to which the country looked for inspiration and guidance. There was indeed but little national feeling in the Germany of that age, little political hope or ardor, little interest in the welfare of the State as a whole, for there was nothing to stir men's feelings as Germans or citizens, no struggles for great common objects against foreign powers, no free political life at home, no assemblies, no press, no local self-government. But, even if a national feeling had been awake, it would hardly have attached itself to the old Empire, which was not only cumbersome and antiquated, but seemed strange and un-German, just because it was more than German; and which found the support of Rome now almost as injurious as her enmity had been in times gone by, since the friendship of Rome meant the hatred and jealousy of the Protestants. It can hardly be said that the Empire was so utterly dead but that it might have been vivified by a really great man, just as such an one might perhaps make the English monarchy a power even now. But had this come to pass, it would have been because the genius gave life to the office, not, as of old, because the office inspired its holder. And it was not so to be. The imperial throne found no man of the first order to fill it; and continued to stand rather because nobody appeared to overthrow it, than because any good reason remained for it in the new order of things.

The denationalization of Germany had indeed gone beyond politics. As after the establishment of foreign rule in Italy, Italian art and letters had become frigid and affected, so with that extinction of any free or united state life in Germany which followed the Thirty Years' War, the blossoms of literature which had put themselves forth in the age of the Reformation were nipped and withered away. In Lewis XIV's time, French influence became dominant in Germany, no less in poetry and criticism,
than in matters of dress, furniture and etiquette; and the ambition of German men of letters was to put off what they were hardly ashamed to call their native barbarism, and imitate the sparkling elegance of their Western neighbors and enemies. French was the fashionable language; French ideas and modes of thought were no less supreme than Greek ideas had been at Rome in the last century of the Republic; French men of letters and science were imported, as apostles of enlightenment, by the best of the German princes, just as Germans have in later times been drawn into Russia by the Czars.

Just when this reign of foreign taste was most undisputed, just when the political life and national sentiment of Germany seemed bound in a frozen sleep, a change began; and it began, like so many other great changes, in an unpromising quarter and an unconscious way.

From the time of the Swabian emperors, the Margrave of Brandenburg was one of the most considerable princes of the Empire, and by the reign of Rudolf I he had become definitely recognized as an Elector with the office of Archchamberlain.* His dominions consisted of the Mark proper, or old Mark, to which were added the New and the Middle Mark, a flat, sandy territory of heaths and woods lying along the Elbe and the Havel, which had been conquered from the Wends in the days of Henry the Fowler, and gradually filled by a Teutonic population, together with a more or less vague authority, or claims of authority, over the Slavic tribes to the north and east. In A.D. 1411 this territory was delivered over to Frederick, sixth Burggrave of Nürnberg, by the Emperor

* A sketch of the earlier history of Prussia and the house of Hohenzollern may be found in the first volume of Mr. Carlyle's "History of Friedrich II."
Sigismund, whom he had served faithfully, and to whom he had advanced moneys, which the latter in this way repaid, giving Brandenburg as a sort of pledge which was not likely to be redeemed: and in 1415 Sigismund formally conferred the Mark and the electoral dignity upon Frederick and his heirs, still, however, reserving (but on the occasion of the formal investiture of 1417 omitting this reservation) the right of redeeming his grant by the payment of 400,000 Hungarian gold gulden, and retaining to himself and his male heirs the reversion in the Electorate, expectant on the extinction of Frederick's line, an event which has not yet happened. This Burggrave Frederick was the lineal descendant of a certain Conrad of Hohenzollern (first Burggrave in the days of Frederick Barbarossa), scion of an old Swabian family whose ancestral castle stands in the high limestone plateau of the Rauhe Alp, not very far from Hohenstaufen and from Altorf, the original seat of the Welfs; and this Conrad is the twenty-third lineal ancestor of the present Emperor William. From the time of Elector Frederick the house of Hohenzollern held Brandenburg, adding to it by slow degrees various other scattered territories and claims to territories which for a time could not be made good, and in particular acquiring, in 1605 and 1618, the district known as East Prussia, lying along the Baltic beyond the Vistula, as the heirs of Albert the last Grandmaster of the Teutonic knights.* The Hohenzollerns embraced Protestantism, and after having played (in the person of the

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*The Duchy of East Prussia was established by the treaty of Cracow in 1525, under Polish suzerainty. The Electors of Brandenburg, from the time of Joachim II onward, obtained from Poland the co-investiture of it, but did not get the actual government into their hands till 1605, nor the full legal dominion till 1618; and the supremacy of Poland remained until released at the peace of Wehlau in 1657.
Elector George William) a rather contemptible part in the Thirty Years’ War, produced a really distinguished prince in Frederick the (so-called) Great Elector, who reigned in the latter half of the seventeenth century. He freed East Prussia from the supremacy of Poland, consolidated his straggling dominions into a well-ordered State, and gave to his subjects, by the luster of his military successes, a sort of incipient consciousness of national existence.

In 1700 his son Frederick, having secured or purchased the approval of the Emperor Leopold, but not without a furious protest from Pope Clement XI, whose prophetic spirit dreaded and denounced in Hildebrandine fashion the admission of a heretic to the most sacred of secular offices, called himself King of Prussia, taking his title from the above-named Duchy of East Prussia, and crowning himself at Königsberg, its ancient capital, on January 18, 1701. This region formed no part of the Holy Empire, and its original inhabitants, the old Prussians,* were of course not Germans at all, but a Lithuanian people, who had remained pagans and barbarians till they were half conquered, half exterminated by the Teutonic knights in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and their country Germanized by a constant immigration from the West. It is a curious freak of history, not unlike that which has given the British name to the Teutonic and Gaelic inhabitants of these islands, that has transferred the name of this vanishing race to the greatest of modern German states.

This assumption of royalty, the work of a prince who contributed nothing else to the greatness of his house, was a matter of far greater consequence than might have at first appeared. At that time no other member of the Empire (except the Elector of Saxony, who had in 1697

* So called from their dwelling next to Russia—po Russia.
been chosen king of Poland) wore a crown, and the new dignity was soon felt to have raised its owner into a different European position; it made him the fellow of the sovereigns of France, England, Denmark, Sweden, and brought him into what soon became a rivalry with his titular superior the Emperor. Had Austria been wise, she would have rejected a bribe far larger than that by which her compliance was purchased, would even have dispensed with the good-will of Brandenburg in the struggle of the Spanish Succession, rather than have yielded to this young antagonist a moral advantage of such moment. For the time, however, little change seemed to have been made. Frederick I, was feeble and peaceful: the eccentric Frederick William I, who followed him, had a dutiful reverence for his Emperor, and prized his regiment of giants too highly to care to risk them in war. He was, moreover, thrifty to the verge of parsimony; and his energy, which was considerable, found scope for its exercise in a careful oversight of the revenue and civil service of the country which largely contributed to the successes of his son.

The greatness of the Prussian monarchy begins with Frederick II, certainly the most considerable man who has succeeded to a throne since Charles V. The extraordinary military talents by which Europe knows him best, are a less worthy title to the admiration of posterity, than the ardor he showed for good administration, for the prosperity and happiness of his people. Along with the instinctive desire of a powerful and active mind to have every thing done in the best way, he had a complete superiority to prejudice and tradition, and a genuine sympathy, not indeed for political liberty, but for cultivation and enlightenment. It was at bottom this, fully as much as the glories of his campaigns, that made him, in spite of his cold heart and
scornful manners, a favorite with his own people and an object of interest, even of pride, throughout Germany. Upon that country the moral effect of his reign was great. It stirred the national spirit to see a German prince defend his naturally weak kingdom against the allied might of Austria, France and Russia, and come out of the terrible struggle with undaunted confidence and undiminished territories. While the other states of the Empire were languishing under a wasteful and old-fashioned misgovernment, Prussia gave the example of an administration which, while rigidly economical, strove to develop the resources of the country, of a highly disciplined army, a codified law, a reformed system of procedure, a capital to which literary and scientific celebrities were gathered from all quarters. While Roman Catholicism and feudalism reigned on the Danube, Frederick made Berlin the center of light for North Germany; and in this way effected as much for his kingdom as he had done by the seizure of wealthy Silesia, giving it a representative position, a claim on German interest and sympathy which there had been nothing in its earlier history, or in that of his own house, to awaken. But in all this it would be a mistake to attribute to the great king a conception of what it is now the fashion to call "Prussia's German Mission," the conscious foresight of a German patriot anxious to pave the way for the unity of the nation. There is little in his words or acts to show such a feeling; what he planned and cared for was the strength and well-being of his own Prussian State.* And when at the end of his life he took

* The idea was started during the Seven Years' War of uniting Germany under Prussian supremacy, deposing Francis I, and getting Frederick himself chosen Emperor; and his favorite minister Winterfeldt was, in 1757, sanguine enough to believe this could be effected. (See Schmidt, Preussens Deutsche Politik, p. 22). Frederick is said to have, while Crown Prince, formed the plan of marrying Maria Theresa, whose hatred he afterward so justly incurred.
a lead in the politics of the Empire, by forming the
League of Princes to oppose the ambitious designs of
Joseph II, his purpose was simply to maintain the status
quo—that status quo whose impotence was so terribly
displayed by the events of the next twenty years.* That
League is memorable, not as being in any sense a project
of reform, but as the first instance in which Prussia
appears heading a party among the German States in hos-
tility to Austria: it is the beginning of that Dualism, as
the Germans call it, which at last reached a point where
nothing but a struggle for life and death could decide
between the rival powers.

What glory Prussia had gained under Frederick II she
seemed determined to lose under his two unworthy suc-
cessors. Nothing, except indeed the behavior
of the minor German princes, could have been
weaker, meaner, more unpatriotic than her
conduct in the struggle with France which
began in 1792.† In 1791 she had leagued her-
self with Austria, but their relations, as might
have been expected, soon ceased to be cordial. Frederick
William II began to negotiate with the French Republic,
in the hope of getting something for himself out of the
confusion, and in 1795 concluded with France the separate
peace of Basel, by which a line of demarcation was drawn
between North and South Germany, the former being
declared neutral. When in 1806 the Confederation of the
Rhine had been formed under Napoleon’s protectorate and

* This League, which Frederick modeled to some extent upon the
Smalkaldic of the sixteenth century, answered its purpose by check-
ing Joseph, and preventing any change in the constitution of the
Empire. See upon it Von Ranke’s Die Deutschen Mächte und der
Fürstenbund.

† See for the whole history of this period Von Sybel’s Geschichte
der Revolutionszeit.
the Holy Empire extinguished, Prussia, which by a convention (February 15, 1806) had obtained possession of Hanover, part, it need hardly be said, of the dominions of her late ally, the English King George III, endeavored to unite the Northern States in a league, at whose head should stand her king, with the title and prerogative of Emperor, the Direktorium being composed of him and the sovereigns of Saxony and Hessen-Cassel. Talleyrand, however, found it easy to baffle this scheme, on which he had at first pretended to smile (it is memorable as the first appearance of the conception of a North German Confederation); and soon afterward the defeats of Jena and Auerstadt, followed by that of Friedland, left Prussia at Napoleon's mercy, if mercy he had any. By the Peace of Tilsit she submitted, losing her lands west of the Elbe, and in all more than half of her territories, recognizing the Confederation of the Rhine, and abandoning all claim to interfere in German politics. Meanwhile Saxony, the newly created kingdom of Westphalia, and all the other purely German members of the old Empire joined the Rhenish Confederation, that is to say, enrolled themselves the vassals of the Parisian crown. French domination was offensive everywhere, but nowhere so offensive as in Prussia, the feebleness of whose Court seems to have emboldened Napoleon to treat her with an insolent scorn he never thought of showing to the more consistent, though no more patriotic Hapsburgs. Hence, too, when uprising came, and the swelling wave of popular enthusiasm tossed back the French beyond the Elbe, the Weser, the Rhine itself, it was the much-suffering Prussian people that was foremost in the fight; it was northern heroes of the sword and pen that drew the admiration and gratitude of a liberated Fatherland; while the French, who had been wont to treat the North Germans with a strangely misplaced contempt,
felt for them, after the campaigns of Leipzig and Waterloo, a hatred scarcely less bitter than that they bore to England herself.

This great deliverance was far more the work of the people than of King or Court: but as was natural, it induced a burst of loyalty which strengthened and glorified the Prussian monarchy in the eyes of Germany, and gave it a great opportunity of placing itself at the head of the nation. For the national feeling which had smouldered for two centuries or more, had now risen into a strong and brilliant flame; and it was on Prussia, far more than on any other state, that its light was shed. Austria's merits as well as her vices do not permit her to be popular; Bavaria and Würtemberg had been aggrandized by Napoleon; Saxony had adhered to him throughout; Prussia had endured most and triumphed most signally. Now would have been the time for her to answer to the great cry that went up for freedom and unity, to secure by firm action the rights of the people in a consolidated German state.

But, as often happens, the hour came without the man. Frederick William III was well intentioned indeed, but feeble and narrow-minded; and his Court had not yet recovered from its horrors at the principles of 1789 and the acts of 1793. As the want of representative institutions and the habit of combination for political purposes gave the desire for unity no means of expressing itself practically, it remained an aspiration, a sentiment—nothing more. Thus, when the Congress of Vienna met to reconstitute Europe and Germany, the princes were masters of the situation; and they used their advantage with characteristic selfishness.

The proclamation of Kalisch, issued by the sovereigns of Prussia and Russia, when they leagued themselves against Napoleon (March 25, 1813), announced the object of
the two powers to be "to aid the German peoples in recovering freedom and independence, and to afford to them effective protection and defense in re-establishing a venerable Empire." The reconstitution of the country, it was added, was to be effected solely by the united action of the princes and peoples, and was to proceed "from the ancient and native spirit of the German nation; that Germany, the more perfectly this work was executed in its principles and compass, might so much the more appear again among the peoples of Europe in renovated youth, strength and unity." But at the Congress nothing was heard, and indeed nothing would have been listened to, of the kind.* When it opened, Hardenberg, the Prussian minister, presented a scheme which, although it recognized in the princes an independence in some respects considerable, and already conceded to them by the treaties securing their adhesion against France, proposed to treat Germany as being for many purposes a united state, under institutions whose tendency would have been to make her less and less of a mere league. Austria, however, under the chilling influence of Metternich, himself perhaps prompted by the darker spirit of Frederick von Gentz, received these proposals with dull disfavor; the minor potentates, headed by Bavaria and Württemburg, entered energetic protests against anything which could infringe on their sovereignty; protests so sweeping that even Austria was obliged to remind them that under the old Empire certain rights were assured to German subjects, while the envoy of Hanover exclaimed against the "Sultanism" of these members of the late Confederation of the Rhine. At last, after a long period of

*For the Congress of Vienna students may refer to L. Häusser's *Deutsche Geschichte*; for the subsequent history of the Confederation to H. Schulze, *Einleitung in das deutsche Strafrecht*, and K. Klüpfel, *Die deutschen Einheitsbestrebungen seit, 1815.*
confusion and uncertainty, in which projects for the restoration of the "ancient venerable Empire" were frequently put forward, and supported among others by Stein, a counter-scheme, propounded by Metternich, was molded into the Act of Foundation of the Germanic Confederation. The work was hastily done, under the pressure of alarm at Napoleon's return from Elba, and professed to be only an outline, to be subsequently improved and filled in. The diplomatists were exhausted by a long course of bickerings and intrigues upon this and other questions; many were dissatisfied, but every one saw that his opponent's power of hindering was greater than his own power of forcing a proposition through: and as it was clear something must be done, people brought themselves to a sort of acquiescence, which, though it professed to be only temporary, could not easily be recalled, and of course made it harder to reopen the discussion. So this proposed completion, as was natural in the matter of so much delicacy and difficulty, never took place; and the revised draft of the Act of Confederation, adopted on June 10, 1815, a week before Waterloo, was in all its main features the constitution which lasted down till 1866. Prussia yielded with unaccountable readiness—unaccountable except on the hypothesis that her minister, Hardenberg and William von Humboldt, despairing at such a time and among such people of effecting anything satisfactory—the points on which she had at first insisted; and made little further objection to the carrying out of Metternich's views. Her king was a faithful member of the Holy Alliance; her government adhered to the principles associated with that compact, and was content in internal questions to follow humbly in the wake of Austria. While the reaction was triumphing in the rest of Europe, Particularism* triumphed

* Particularismus is the convenient name which the Germans have given to the policy, feeling or system which maintains the inde-
at Vienna, and the interests of the German people were forgotten or ignored.

The Federal Constitution, while recognizing fully the sovereignty of the princes in their own territories, had made only the feeblest provisions for the concession of popular rights and the establishment of representative institutions in the several states. Almost the only expression which it allowed to be given to the idea of national unity was in the creation of a central federal body, the Diet, wherein only the princes and not their subjects were represented, which was empowered to act in foreign affairs, and might be made by the great princes the means of repressing any liberal movements on the part of an individual member. But this did not satisfy Metternich. The excitement produced by the War of Liberation did not at once subside: the ideas of freedom, national unity, national greatness, which it had called forth, had obtained a dominion over the minds of the German youth; and were eloquently preached by some of the noblest spirits among its teachers. These ideas, however, innocent as they would now appear, and well founded as was the jealousy of Russian influence which prompted their expression, were marked with fear and suspicion by the narrow minds of the Prussian king and the minister of Francis of Austria. In 1819, therefore, Metternich brought together, as if by accident, the ministers of ten leading German courts at Karlsbad in Bohemia, and procured their assent to a series of measures extinguishing the freedom of the press, restraining university teaching, forbidding societies and political meetings, and erecting a sort of inquisition at Mentz for the discovery and punishment of democratic agitators. These measures were soon after adopted by the Federal Diet at

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Frankfort, and followed by conferences of ministers at Vienna. These produced the instrument known as the Vienna Final Act (Schlussakt) of 1820, whereby the constitution of the Confederation was further modified in a reactionary and anti-national spirit. Such securities as existed for the rights of the subject in the several states were diminished, while the Diet saw its powers enlarged whenever they could be employed for the suppression of free institutions, and received a frightfully wide police jurisdiction through the territories of the minor princes.

This Karlsbad Conference struck the key-note of the policy of the Federal Diet during the three-and-thirty dreary years that lie between 1815 and the brief though bright awakening of 1848.* If the selfishness of rulers were not the commonest moral of history, there would be something extraordinary as well as offensive in the horror of change and reform which was now exhibited by these very princes who had, with Napoleon’s help or connivance, carried out by the mediatization of the weaker neighbors a revolution far more sweeping, and in point of law less defensible, than any which the patriotic reformers now proposed. These potentates, especially those of Northern Germany, were for the most part possessed by the same reactionary feelings as their two great neighbors; their rule was harsh and repressive, conceding little or nothing to the demands of their subjects, and prepared, especially after their alarms had been renewed by the revolution of 1830 in France, to check the most harmless expressions of the aspirations for national unity. Such unity now appeared further off than ever. While the old Empire lasted, princes and peoples owned one common head in the Emperor, and lived under a constitution which had descended, however modified, from the days when the nation formed a single powerful state. Now, by the medi-

* See L. K. Aegidi, Aus dem Jahre, 1819.
atization of the lesser principalities, the extinction of the Reichsritterschaft (knights of the Empire), the absorption of all the free cities save four, the class which had formed a link between the princes and the mass of the nation had been removed; the sovereigns had, in becoming fewer, become more isolated and more independent; they were members rather of the European than of the German commonwealth. Those moral effects of the War of Liberation, from which so much had at first been hoped, now seemed to have been lost utterly and forever.

Meanwhile the German liberals labored under the immense difficulty of having no legitimate and constitutional mode of agitation, no lever, so to speak, by which they could move the mass of their countrymen. They were mere speakers and writers, because there was nothing else for them to do; dreamers and theorists, as unthinking people in more fortunate countries called them, because the field of practical politics was closed to them. In only a few of the states did representative assemblies exist; and these were too small and too limited in their powers to be able to stimulate the political interests of their constituents. Prussia herself had no parliament of the whole monarchy until 1847: up to that year there had been only local "Landes Stände;" estates or diets for the several provinces.

The liberal party had two objects to struggle for—the establishment or extension of free institutions in the several states, and the attainment of national unity. As respects the first of these, it may be remarked that the mere passion for freedom in the abstract has never produced a great popular movement. Englishmen, Swiss, and Americans may, through long habit, think it essential to national happiness; but it is generally desired
rather as a means than as an end: and there must always exist in order to rouse a people to disaffection or insurrection, either such a withdrawal of liberties previously enjoyed as wounds its pride and conservative feeling, or else the infliction by the governing power of positive evils which affect the subject in his daily life, his religion, his social and domestic relations. Now in Germany, and particularly in the Prussian State, such liberties had not been known since primitive times; and there were few serious practical grievances to be complained of. From the time of Frederick the Great the country had been well and honestly administered; conscience was free, trade and industry were growing, taxation was not heavy, the press censorship did not annoy the ordinary citizen, and the other restraints upon personal freedom were only those to which the subjects of all the Continental monarchies had been accustomed. The habit of submission was strong; and there existed in most places a good deal of loyalty, irrational perhaps, but not therefore the less powerful, toward the long-descended reigning houses. In several of the petty states there was indeed serious misgovernment, and an arbitrary behavior on the sovereign's part which might well have provoked revolt. Hessen-Cassel, for instance, was ruled by the unworthy minions of a singularly contemptible prince; and in Hanover King Ernest Augustus on his accession in 1837 abolished by a stroke of the pen the constitution which had been granted by his predecessor William. But these states were too small for a vigorous political life; the nobility depended on the Court and were disposed to side with it; the power of the Confederation hung like a thunder-cloud on the horizon, ready to burst wherever Austria chose to guide it. It was therefore hard for the liberals to excite their countrymen to any energetic and concerted action; and when the governments thought fit to repress their attempts at agita-
tion, this could be harshly done with little fear of the consequences.

In laboring for the creation of one united German state out of the multitude of petty principalities, the party of progress found themselves in a still greater disadvantage. There was indeed a sentimental wish for it, but only a sentiment; an idea which worked powerfully upon imaginative minds, but had little hold on the world of fact and reality, little charm for the steady-going burgher and the peasant whose vision was bounded by his own valley. Some considerable practical benefits might no doubt have been expected from its realization, such as the establishment of a common code of laws, the better execution of great public works, the protection of the nation from the aggressions of France and Russia; but these were objects whose importance it was hard to bring home to the average citizen in peaceful times. And where was the movement toward unity to begin? Not in the Federal Diet, of all places, for it consisted of the envoys of princes who would have been the first to suffer. Not in the local legislatures, for they had no power to deal practically with such questions, and would speedily have been silenced had they attempted by discussing them to influence the policy of their masters. It was therefore only through the carefully guarded press, and occasionally in social or literary gatherings, that appeals to the nation could be made, or the semblance of an agitation kept up. There was no point to start from: it was all aspiration and nothing more; and so this movement, to which so many of the noblest hearts and intellects of Germany devoted themselves (though the two greatest stood aloof), made during many years little apparent progress. The Zollverein was indeed created, and thereby a bond of union established whose advantages were soon felt, but this was done by the
individual action of Prussia and the several States which one after another entered into her views, not by the Diet as a national work. Meanwhile the strictness of the repressive system was still maintained: Prussia, though now ruled by the more liberal Frederick William IV, was still silent: the influence of Metternich was still supreme.

Then came the revolution of 1848. The monarchy of Louis Philippe fell with a crash that sounded over Europe, and every German and Italian throne rocked to its foundation. In Vienna, Berlin, Dresden and Munich, not to speak of smaller capitals, there came, sooner or later, risings more or less formidable; constitutions were promised or granted by the terrified princes: the Federal Diet, after a hasty declara-
tion in favor of the liberties it had so long withheld, abdicated to make way for a national Parliament, which was duly summoned, and met at Frankfort on the 18th of May, 1848. This assembly appointed as Administrator of the Empire (Reichsverweser) the Archduke John of Austria, and began to frame a constitution for United Germany. According to the draught, completed early in 1849, Germany was to be a federal state, under a hereditary emperor, irresponsible, but advised by responsible minis-
ters; and with a parliament of two houses, one represent-
ing the states, members of the Empire: the other the people. On the 28th of March the assembly offered the imperial dignity to the King of Prussia.* He hesitated

*In 1847, when things seemed quiet enough, Frederick William IV had opened negotiations with Austria with a view to improving the constitution of the Confederation, and making better provision for common defense and for internal communication. In the Berlin revolution of March, 1848, he had behaved with irresolution, no doubt, but had shown some real sympathy for the people. And this he had: he heartily desired both the well-being, and, to a certain extent, the freedom of his own people and the greatness of Germany; but he was unhappily entangled with notions of divine right and various other mediaeval whimsies and sentiments.
to accept it without the consent of the other sovereigns; and exactly a month afterward definitely refused it, fearing the jealousy of some of the princes, although twenty-nine of them had already expressed their approval of the scheme; disliking several parts of the new constitution, and feeling himself too weak and irresolute to take the helm of the German state at a moment of such difficulty and confusion. His refusal was a great, and as it proved, a fatal discouragement to the liberals, for it disunited them, and it destroyed their hopes of a powerful material support. Nevertheless the Frankfort assembly sat for some months longer, till, having migrated to Stuttgart, it dwindled down at last into a sort of rump parliament, and was suppressed by force, while Prussia, at first in conjunction with Hanover and Saxony, started other and narrower plans for national organization, schemes modeled after those of 1785 and 1806, but of which nothing ever came.*

Meantime the governments had recovered from their first alarm. Austria had reconquered North Italy, and had by Russia's help overpowered the Magyars; France had restored the Pope; everywhere over Europe the tide of reaction was rising fast. In 1850 Austria and Prussia took from the Archduke John such shadow of power as still remained to him as Reichsverweser, and at the conferences of Olmütz Prussia resumed her attitude of submissive adherence to Austria's policy. By the middle of 1851 the Confederation was re-established on its old footing, with its old powerlessness for good, its old capacities for mischief, and, it may be added, its old willingness to use those capacities for the suppression of free institutions in the more progressive states.

The effects, however, of the great uprising of 1848 were

* They were debated at great length by an assembly convoked at Gotha.