



**EMPEROR FREDERICK.**

0

THE FOUNDING  
OF THE  
GERMAN EMPIRE

BY WILLIAM I.

BASED CHIEFLY UPON PRUSSIAN STATE DOCUMENTS

By HEINRICH VON SYBEL

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*"Beneficia obtruduntur."*

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BOOK XIII.

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*STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN  
AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA.*

# FOUNDING OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE SEPTEMBER TREATY WITH ITALY.

WHILE Prussia with the liberation of Schleswig-Holstein attained the first stage in her great career, the Emperor Napoleon also made an important move preparatory to the realization of his favorite old idea, the completion of the national independence of Italy.

. In this matter many things had happened, as we know, contrary to his hopes. He had wished to force the Austrians out of Italy, and then to give to the States of the peninsula a confederate constitution under the headship of the Pope. But Prussia's interference had forced him to leave Venetia to the Emperor Francis Joseph, whereupon the population of Central Italy, and unfortunately also of the Papal Legations and Marches, united, as did finally Sicily and Naples, with Piedmont; so that instead of an Italian Confederation a unified Kingdom of Italy arose.

Napoleon had permitted, in return for the cession of Savoy and Nice, what he could not decently prevent. Only in one place did he confront Italian ambition with

an impassable bulwark. His troops continued to hold possession of Rome and the Patrimony of St. Peter, and secured there the papal sovereignty in spite of the hatred of the inhabitants. In vain had Cavour, by the famous order of the day in the Italian Parliament, on the 27th of March, 1861, declared Rome to be the natural capital of Italy; in vain did he then try to procure the withdrawal of the French garrison from Rome by conciliatory measures, and by the promise that no violent attack should be made upon it. For Napoleon's internal policy the support of the French clergy was of decisive importance, and this could be retained only by the continued maintenance of the French garrison in Rome.

Yet after Cavour's death, when the Minister Durando resumed the negotiations begun by the former, the Emperor did not seem to be so decidedly opposed to the recall of his garrison from Rome, provided Italy would guarantee once for all to respect the boundaries of the Patrimony of St. Peter. But at this moment, as we have seen, the march of Garibaldi's volunteers toward Rome interrupted these negotiations. It is true that the Italian Government overcame them on the spot; but Durando felt himself in duty bound to the Italian people to declare in his note of the 10th of September, 1862, in the face of Europe, that Italy could not dispense with the possession of Rome.

The excitement and bitterness of the Clerical party rose at this to such a high pitch that Napoleon considered it unavoidably necessary to renounce most emphat-

ically any sympathy with these Italian errors. In place of Thouvenel, who sympathized with Italy, he had recalled to the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs the Ultramontane, Drouyn de Lhuys. The latter then removed Thouvenel's associates, Benedetti and Lavalette, from their posts as ambassadors at Turin and Rome, and announced in a threatening tone to the Italian Government the inviolability of the Pope's dominion and the discontinuance of the negotiations concerning the same.

Things remained in this situation during 1863. Napoleon always spoke in a most friendly tone with the Italian ambassador, Chevalier Nigra, but at other times gave expression to his astonishment that Austria so obstinately insisted upon her untenable position in Venetia, and Italy upon the likewise unprofitable possession of Naples. In plainer language Drouyn de Lhuys declared that the only proper arrangement of Italy was its division into three parts: a kingdom in the north, another in the south, and a State of the Church in the centre, protected by the jealousy of the other two. He openly expressed to the ambassadors of Russia and Prussia his regret that the recognition of Italy by the two Powers in 1862 had prevented the Emperor from trying to carry into effect such a desirable system.

This made the sympathy between France and Austria, which arose at that time in consequence of the Polish insurrection, doubly critical for Italy; and yet, after all, for several months there was a possibility

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of a great war between the two Emperors and Russia, in which Napoleon might perhaps take occasion to induce the Vienna Cabinet to give up Venetia in return for the annexation of the Danubian Principalities. For all emergencies Italy kept her army on a war-footing, hard as it was for her in the existing state of her finances.

Visconti-Venosta, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Cabinet of Minghetti, then in power, decided to abandon the standpoint of the 10th of September, 1862, and to attempt again, in the same spirit as Cavour, negotiations in Paris concerning the evacuation of Rome by the French; he gave to Chevalier Nigra on the 9th of July, 1863, the proper instructions. Meanwhile the crisis in Polish affairs had passed without resulting in a European war. No answer was received from Paris to the despatch of the 9th of July. There seemed to be no hope of getting rid of the French garrison in Rome.

On the other hand, Napoleon came forward with his great idea of a congress; and for a moment a sudden ray of hope that Venetia might be granted to her gleamed for Italy, and threw all hearts into a feverish excitement. But now, again, that hope proved illusive. For, in response to hasty inquiries in London and Paris as to whether a war against Austria was advisable, there came from all sides only admonitions to preserve the peace and to disarm.

Then followed the German-Danish quarrel; and for a long time it was believed throughout Italy that there

would be a rupture between France and the German Great Powers. All Italy therefore doubled their armaments, in order to be ready, in that event, to fall upon Austria's back with all their might. But now the heavy clouds that had been rising from the horizon again disappeared in mist, when Napoleon rejected the proposal of England to support Denmark, and expressed his respect for the patriotic emotions of the German people.

The statesmen in Turin were nearly in despair. Neither the Roman nor the Venetian question had advanced a step towards its solution. Austria seemed by her alliance with Prussia to be more secure than ever in her possession of Venetia; and under the protection of French bayonets the Bourbon misrule had extended its brigandage from Rome as a centre over the whole of Southern Italy. And then, too, the useless preparations had caused in Italian finances a deficit of 600 millions: 337 in the regular and 284 in the extra budget.

As always is the case in critical times, particularism, or, as it was called in Italy, "the municipal spirit," produced an abundance of poisonous blossoms. Especially had the line been more sharply drawn between the Piedmontese and the new provinces. The former were happily conscious of having by their excellent army founded Italian Unity: the latter declared, on the contrary, that without the popular uprising, the few Sardinian regiments would have been crushed to the ground in impotence. The former were proud of the stable

order and discipline of the ancient Sardinian State as compared with the irregular, sometimes weak and sometimes wanton, character, so prominent in the traditional administration of the other countries: the latter asserted that in view of the pedantry of the Piedmontese and their inordinate glorification of military system, there was no possibility of a free, constitutional kind of government, so long as they gave the tone in the management of affairs.

“You are ungrateful in your refusal to recognize the sacrifices that we have made,” said the Piedmontese. “Your haughtiness,” replied the other, “is undurable. What you have wished for has not been a united Italy, but a bigger Piedmont.”

The Piedmontese gradually became annoyed at hearing Rome continually held up as the natural capital of Italy, for this seemed to them a slight to their beloved Turin; the others, however, came to the conclusion that if the capital could not be at Rome, it must at any rate be transferred to some more appropriate city than Turin. The vexation of the Piedmontese reached its high-water mark, when they considered the simple fact, that in the Cabinet of Minghetti they scarcely held one portfolio of any importance, and consequently saw themselves kept in the background in all weighty questions concerning the administration. Moreover, they saw themselves threatened with an increase of their burdens by a bill regarding the regulation of the land-tax. They, the former disciples of Cavour, now united in Parliament with the extreme Left in forming a close

Opposition to the Ministry. Thereupon, Minghetti flung at them the reproach of preferring party to country and municipality to nation, and said that, for his part, he had begun to think seriously about the transfer of the capital to some other city.

In short, the situation was as disagreeable as possible. The Ministry felt that to save its existence some decisive and successful move was necessary; and since, in spite of repeated requests of Nigra, Drouyn de Lhuys persisted in his silence, Minghetti in May, 1864, sent Marquis Pepoli to Paris with instructions to approach the Emperor directly with the Roman question again.

As we know, the wretched outcome of his Polish venture had forced Napoleon's policy into a new, or, one may perhaps say, back into the old channel. His revived hatred of Austria played a good turn in Germany to the Prussian, and in Italy to the Turin Cabinet. The more Napoleon wished to avoid conducting another great war himself, the more inviting to him was the idea of urging these two Powers to press upon Austria, so that at the proper moment he himself as umpire might step forth between the combatants. To this end, it was necessary to occasion north of the Alps an irreconcilable rupture of the Austro-Prussian alliance; and therefore he preached to Prussia the annexation of the Duchies: whereas in the south, Italy must not be allowed to stagnate, but be kept strong and ready for action; and therefore, although he had in November urged her not to disturb the peace just then, he had also admonished her to continue her equipments.



Accordingly, Pepoli found the ground prepared for his proposals in a better manner than he had dared to anticipate. He represented to the Emperor, who was then residing at Fontainebleau, the desperate condition of Italy, the restless passions of the Party of Action, and the imminent danger which threatened the existing order, — a danger, as Orsini had demonstrated, that not only in Italy menaced the security of a crowned head. To this Napoleon responded that he was quite right, and that something must be done to better the situation.

Drouyn de Lhuys at last received orders to send a favorable reply to the despatch of July 9, 1863, and to declare the willingness of France to evacuate Rome, provided other satisfactory guaranties for the safety of the Pope could be secured. Visconti-Venosta thereupon, on the 17th of June, instructed Nigra to enter into official negotiations, and to offer as satisfactory guaranties the proposals of Cavour in 1861, and in other respects to comply with the wishes of Napoleon so far as this might be possible without detriment to the rights of the Italian nation.

To the French Minister this whole business was exceedingly distasteful. Meanwhile, he knew that his opponents, Rouher, Thouvenel, and Lavalette, were working very eagerly for his downfall; and, without knowing about the correspondence with Turin, were urging upon the Emperor the evacuation of Rome. Now, he did not belong to that class of positive characters who would sooner lose a high position than re-

nounce a principle; on the contrary, his theory was, that if the abandonment of the principle were inevitable, it was more than ever his duty to remain in office, that in the general evil he might rescue as much as possible from ruin.

At first, then, his diplomatic discussions with the two Italians went on smoothly enough. It was decided that if France would recall her troops, Italy should neither herself attack the States of the Church as then constituted, nor allow any attack to be made from without; she should not oppose the formation of a Papal army composed of Catholic volunteers, provided that this army be confined in its activity to the preservation of peace internally and on the frontiers: and finally, that Italy should assume a share of the Papal State debt proportionate to her possessions (an amount which was reckoned at about fifteen million *scudi*).

“This, then,” said Drouyn de Lhuys, “would be the substance of our treaty. Now, what guaranty can you offer for its being rigidly carried out?” The Italians protested vigorously against such a manifestation of mistrust, and asserted the honor of their Government. Drouyn de Lhuys replied that neither he himself nor his imperial master entertained any doubts of that nature, but that to appease the hearts of the Catholics some material guaranty for the inviolability of the treaty was indispensable.

Several different ways of meeting this requirement were mentioned: the express renunciation by Italy of the desire to make Rome her capital, or the guarantee-

ing of the security of the States of the Church by all the Catholic Powers in common, or the continued occupation of some city in the States of the Church by a small division of French troops. To everything the Italians were obliged to declare that these propositions contained a violation of the fundamental principle of non-interference, and consequently of the rights of the Italian nation. "Then," said Drouyn de Lhuys, "it is for you to find some other suitable guaranty to offer; for, without such a one our troops will never withdraw."

In this dilemma Pepoli turned again to the Emperor personally. An interview with Napoleon resulted in the proposal that the Italian Government should transfer its seat from Turin to some other Italian city. The Catholics, Napoleon thought, would in that case see that Italy had given up the hope of possessing Rome; and Pepoli, for his part, believed that in the event of an open break with the Piedmontese and the Ministry, he could count upon the concurrence of Minghetti. So he went himself to Turin, in order to secure in the first place a favorable judgment from the Ministry. But here it happened as so often in human affairs: Minghetti had long harbored the project in his mind, but now, when it was time to act, all his misgivings awoke with redoubled strength, by reason of the fact that an outside Power had demanded from him its accomplishment.

His colleague, Menabrea, was just now at Vichy, whither also the Emperor Napoleon had recently gone. Here another attempt was made to influence the French

Monarch. Napoleon was at the bottom of his heart still favorably inclined. The commander of the troops in Rome, General Montebello, had been obliged to report again a great number of disagreeable quarrels with the Papal authorities, all of them petty, but for that reason none the less annoying, applications of the famous principle of *non possumus*. Every day the Emperor's Roman protectorate became more and more burdensome to him,—a protectorate which had been thanklessly put upon him by the Faithful as his bounden duty, but which made him cut an almost ridiculous figure in the eyes of the rest of the world. Yet, on the other hand, it was imperative that the French clergy must not be provoked into voting for the Opposition at the next elections; and just for that very reason the treaty was to be signed by Drouyn de Lhuys, whose Ultramontane principles would, in the eyes of the clergy, vouch for its harmlessness.

So Napoleon received General Menabrea most kindly. "Believe me," said he, "the occupation of Rome is quite as annoying to me as to you. If only Cavour had not committed the foolish blunder of the decree of the 27th of March, 1861! This, you see, will force you, so soon as my troops march out of one gate, to have yours march in at the other." When Menabrea observed that this obstacle was not insurmountable, Napoleon told him to go to Paris, and try his fortune with Drouyn de Lhuys, saying further that whatever he might succeed in effecting there would also meet with his, the Emperor's, approval.

Menabrea went; but Drouyn de Lhuys remained immovably fixed in his dictum: No treaty without some material security, nor without a change of the seat of government. The Italian Minister was forced to make up his mind to return with this negative result to Turin, where he was given by his colleagues the not very pleasant mission of acquainting the King with the situation.

For Victor Emmanuel it was a severe blow. Three years before he had paid for his Italian crown with the abandonment of his ancestral inheritance; and now he was expected to submit to the humiliation of his beloved native city, in order to open a very uncertain path towards Rome. He grew violently excited, angrily denounced his Ministers, and demanded time for consideration. But with his straightforward and clear judgment he soon recognized that retreat had become impossible. What would Italy say, if he should hinder the withdrawal of the French for the sake of keeping the seat of government at the hated Turin? After a few days he had collected himself, and gave to his Ministers full powers to go on in the course they had begun.

Yet Nigra had many a hard hour to pass through by reason of the antagonism of the French Minister. To be sure, Drouyn de Lhuys readily granted the Italian demand that the transference of the capital should not be mentioned in the treaty itself, but agreed upon in a secret protocol. In this, however, he insisted that it must be expressly stated that the treaty should not receive binding force until the King had carried out

the contents of the protocol, and had actually removed the capital from Turin.

In further conversations, Drouyn de Lhuys called attention to the fact that the treaty did not consider the possible case that with no attack from without the Papal authority might be overthrown by an internal revolution. He said that proper respect to the Pope prevented the mention of such a possible event in the treaty, but that France reserved for herself full freedom to act, if this should occur. Nigra made no objection, but contented himself with replying that Italy, of course, made the same reservation.

Drouyn then took up again the refusal of the Italians expressly to annul the decree of the 27th of March, 1861; to which Nigra replied very firmly that it was simply impossible for the King to repudiate a decree passed by the Parliament, and received with great enthusiasm by the nation. "And, moreover, what cause is there for anxiety? Italy promises in the treaty neither to use, nor suffer to be used, any forcible means for obtaining possession of Rome. But one cannot forbid her to express her favorable disposition towards the national wishes, and to hope for the fulfilment of the same through an advancement in the *morale* of the cause and in civilization." Drouyn de Lhuys could not find much to object to this, however little he trusted the *morale* of the matter in this case.

But in a final point he was more unrelenting than ever. According to Cavour's outline, the withdrawal of the French troops was to take place two weeks after

the ratification of the treaty. Drouyn de Lhuys now asserted that such a short interval was not enough. The evacuation, he said, could not take place faster than the Pope could organize his new army; and for this he must fairly be allowed two years. However much Nigra tried to move the French Minister, this term of two years remained fixed; and Nigra now sent to Turin to know whether, under these conditions and in this form, the treaty should be signed.

At this last moment, Victor Emmanuel made a final attempt to secure more favorable conditions. The prefect of the Neapolitan provinces at this time was General La Marmora, formerly Cavour's trusty colleague, and according to this school a decided supporter of the French alliance. He had also been a companion-in-arms with the French in the Crimean war. He was a brave soldier, but otherwise of limited powers of insight, and in internal politics through and through a Piedmontese. The Turin Cabinet had formerly at one time thought of giving this man a share in the negotiations, but had finally abandoned the idea. He was now summoned to Turin, informed of the contents of Nigra's reports, and requested to repair to Paris to hold an interview with the Emperor.

The General was indignant over the draft of the treaty, and with great reluctance made up his mind to undertake the journey expected of him, which, moreover, was to be performed with the greatest secrecy. With regard to the results of his mission, La Marmora published later only the short note to the effect that in

his conversations with Napoleon and Drouyn de Lhuys he had put them both in ill-humor by declaring that the fulfilment of the treaty by Italy would be attended with serious difficulties; but, on the other hand, he said he was more convinced than ever of the favor with which the French Government regarded the Italian wishes concerning Venetia.

Moreover, as Count Usedom immediately afterwards learned in Turin, Napoleon promised the Turin Cabinet most faithfully his support in the event of an Austrian attack. This certainly is entirely consistent with what we know in other ways about Napoleon's ambitions at that time. He was anxious to help Italy into the possession of Venetia; and just for that reason, in order not to be disturbed in this by any internal French troubles, he was anxious to withdraw from the Roman question with the certainty that the Pope's safety was secured. And conversely, there was no better way to gain compliance from La Marmora and the Turin Cabinet with regard to Rome, than by holding out to them the prospect of a speedy realization of their wishes in Venetia.

So then, after La Marmora's return, Victor Emmanuel came to a decision. He sent Pepoli again to Paris to sign with Nigra the compact. On the 14th of September, the treaty and the protocol received their final shape, and were signed on the 15th by the two Italians and Drouyn de Lhuys.

So far these negotiations had been kept strictly secret. The Empress Eugénie, who had heard a little of Pepoli's first conversations, had later, fully convinced



of their fruitlessness, gone to the baths at Schwalbach. The Papal Nuncio, Chigi, said to the Prussian ambassador with friendly assurance, on the 18th of September: "Here in Paris such a wicked crime could not be thought of." When, two days later, the Minister announced the treaty to the diplomatic corps, Chigi was beside himself. "That is treason! desertion at short notice!" he cried. And this was the feeling throughout the Clerical party in all countries.

The indignation felt against Drouyn de Lhuys was wide-spread, — indignation at his having so disgracefully belied his principles so often and so ardently professed. When, soon afterwards, his two old adversaries, whom he had superseded two years before, came again upon the scene, Lavalette as a minister and Benedetti as ambassador to Berlin, it was undeniably evident that the Conservative party had lost at all points. "Of what use were the fine promises of the Turin Government?" cried the Clericals. "It has disregarded the treaties of Villafranca and Zürich. After the departure of the French, it will also tread under foot this compact of September. The whole treaty is merely empty words, excepting the one actual fact contained in it, which is the announcement of the withdrawal of the powerful French protection over the oppressed little ark of St. Peter. The Holy See has been abandoned, and will be a prey either to Mazzini's murderous hands, or, which would be more impious, to the sub-alpine monarchy, which is both rapacious and hypocritical."

This time the Liberal world heartily agreed with the Clerical in its understanding of the case. Everywhere it was declared that the only important article in the treaty was the withdrawal of the French from Italy: after which everything would regulate itself. The Italians did their best to strengthen this feeling. Nigra, at the request of his Government, wrote a report of his negotiations, intended for publication, in which he expressly emphasized the fact that the treaty meant no more nor less than it said; namely, that Italy renounced the use of violent means for getting possession of Rome. Even more positively did Pepoli, in a speech delivered at Milan, declare that the national aspirations of Italy with regard to Rome and the decree of the Parliament on the 27th of March, 1861, were in no way either affected or evaded by the treaty.

Accordingly, after the announcement of the treaty unlimited jubilation ran high throughout all Italy, which was further increased in the new provinces by the news of the intended change of the capital. Only in Piedmont, very naturally, this last point awakened bitter resentment, especially when it was learned that the change had been decided upon in response to an express demand of France. The good citizens of Turin groaned over the pecuniary loss they were to suffer; the proud Piedmontese nobility clinched their fists against the new provinces; and the clergy, who were very influential in these circles, urged them on, in the hope that perhaps on this rock the whole treaty might be made to founder. In Turin there were even riots in

the streets for three days under the leadership of young nobles, in which the authorities were at first incredibly imbecile and then equally brutal. Many were killed in the affrays. Hereupon the King took things into his own hands with his peculiar impetuosity and vigor. The Ministry of Minghetti had never found favor in his eyes, and its transference of the capital had completed the measure of his antipathy. He now suddenly dismissed them, and summoned to office the leaders of the Piedmontese party under La Marmora's presidency.

This step produced a favorable effect upon the feelings in Turin. It need hardly be observed that this did not make the least difference with the carrying out of the September treaty. La Marmora advocated it quite as strongly as his predecessor, proposing in the first place to transfer the capital to Florence, although for the time the talk in Paris about the speedy acquirement of Venetia seemed to him still very uncertain. He considered it extremely unlikely that Prussia would ever rouse herself up to making war against Austria, — that same Prussia, who had once so severely taken Cavour to task on account of his annexations, who had so emphatically found fault with the treaty of the 10th of September, and who had just interrupted the negotiations that had been begun with Italy about a commercial treaty, by postponing it indefinitely. This made it the more necessary to take care not to throw away again Napoleon's friendship, and consequently to fulfil unreservedly the conditions of the September treaty.

For, as a matter of fact, whether in the future the

Roman question was to be solved in one way or in another, the treaty certainly brought to Italy now the incalculable gain of having foreign troops removed from the soil of the peninsula within a certain fixed time. It brought also to her the re-establishment of cordial relations with the Emperor Napoleon; and this meant the prospect of the diplomatic support of France in the Venetian question so soon as there might appear in Europe a state of things either favorable to Italy or embarrassing to Austria.

Most keenly was all this felt in the cities most personally concerned, in Rome and Vienna. In the Curia the first news of the treaty called forth a storm of indignation. Just as in 1860, their anger was directed chiefly against Napoleon, and to such a degree that an attempt was even made, not officially it is true, to make advances to Italy. Victor Emmanuel was able soon afterwards to tell the Prussian ambassador confidentially, that he hoped to see the Roman question settled long before the end of the two years, and that he could even now conclude it, were it not for the fact that in the present state of public feeling one of the Papal requirements could not be carried out. He explained this somewhat later by saying that he had received from Rome an offer to acknowledge the monarchy and to give up the provinces that had been annexed, on the condition that he would make certain concessions in ecclesiastical matters and expressly renounce the incorporation of Rome. He said that he was ready with all his heart to fulfil all the ecclesiastical wishes of the Pope. And,

in fact, the king's energy and courage in any contest of arms were equalled by his weakness and hesitation in conflicts on ecclesiastical ground. But at this time a positive promise to think no more of Rome as a possible capital of Italy was for him as for every Italian statesman a political impossibility; and consequently this secret correspondence had no other effect than to increase the feeling of ill-will in the Vatican.

There was no less anger aroused in the Vienna Hofburg than in the Curia by the September treaty. Count Rechberg declared bluntly to the French ambassador, the Duke of Gramont, that the Austrian Cabinet felt itself severely injured by the conduct of France. Gramont replied that if Austria felt injured by the treaty, France certainly felt no less so by the behavior of the three Archdukes, who had spent some time in Paris in the course of the summer without taking the least notice whatever of the Imperial Court. Thereupon the matter was reconsidered in Vienna, and a somewhat conciliatory course adopted.

In view of her doubtful relations with Prussia, Austria could not but regard with great apprehension an open rupture with France. So Count Rechberg sent in the latter part of October a despatch to Paris, in which he expressed the hope that in the execution of the treaty France would look out for the dignity and safety of the Pope, and the sentiment that Austria was ready to discuss the Roman question further with the Cabinet of the Tuileries, by which discussion he hoped the two Powers would be able to arrive at some under-

standing about pursuing a common course in regard to it. Probably to Drouyn de Lhuys these advances from his highly-respected Austria were right welcome; but they made very little impression upon the Emperor Napoleon, and were least of all likely to induce him to try to influence Italy as Austria wished. He continued his covert game, overflowed in assurances of his love of peace, was far from wishing to stir up war, but by professing his friendship to Italy kept her eye fixed upon Venetia, which by his mediation might perhaps be acquired through diplomatic negotiations.

This appealed to La Marmora's most secret wishes. The General was brave in battle, but yet recognized as an experienced soldier the dangers of an Austrian war. The prospect of acquiring Venetia through Napoleon's help and without bloodshed did his heart good. When, in November, the Turin Chamber discussed the change of capital, La Marmora called attention very earnestly, on the 12th, to the advantages which the treaty would also bring to the monarchy in the Venetian question. "If I had been able," said he, "to negotiate about the matter with the Emperor Francis Joseph, I should have been in a position to adduce such arguments of mutual interest as would have disposed him to give up Venetia."

La Marmora had in mind, besides the diplomatic assistance of France, a money payment in exchange for Venetia, and in view of the oppressive financial condition had determined upon a reduction of the army by 85,000 men. When, on the 17th of November, General

Bixio took sides against him, rejecting the acquisition of Venetia by purchase, and declaring that it was necessary for all the provinces of Italy to seal the independence of their common country with their blood, La Marmora answered with ironical friendliness that he could not believe the honest Bixio to be bloodthirsty enough to wish to carry on a war, when the desired end could be attained without the fearful sacrifices of the battlefield.

A confidential communication, which reached him from Paris at this time, only served to strengthen him in such sentiments.

We call to mind Bismarck's prophecy in that letter of his to the King on the 16th October, in which he said that after Rechberg's dismissal Schmerling would very soon by means of his agents in the Paris Press seek to gain some connections with France, then by recognizing the Kingdom of Italy disarm that adversary, and finally with the applause of the Lesser States hinder, if possible, Prussia from reaping any, even the least, benefit from the Danish war. Now, then, Rechberg had been dismissed; and on the 19th of November, Cavaliere Nigra wrote to General La Marmora that, so far as he could glean from a conversation with Drouyn de Lhuys and from other trustworthy sources of information, he believed that Austria was no longer opposed to the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy, and in return would not demand an express renunciation of claims upon Venetia, but only a promise of fidelity as her neighbor; and further the Vienna Cabinet would

then be also ready to conclude commercial treaties, as, indeed, the whole tendency of the Austrian policy at that time seemed to show an inclination to be friendly to France, and through France, to Italy. All these things, he wrote, were, to be sure, so far only personal observations and opinions, and no official proposals had been made; but yet they were, even in this form, of manifest importance.

That Nigra did not invent his representations out of the whole cloth, is certain; but from what source in Vienna all this sprang, and to what extent Drouyn de Lhuys, with the knowledge of his Emperor or behind his back, had been acting on his own account in following his old love for Austria, I will not for the present undertake to decide.

The offer was in more ways than one very alluring for Italy. For the recognition of the Italian monarchy by Austria would have felled at one blow all the hopes of those princes that had formerly ruled in the lands that had been annexed, and would have made it possible for the Kingdom, so heavily burdened in its finances, to disarm its troops, and thus to restore order in the management of its revenues and to undertake certain very pressing reforms in the administration.

Yet after short reflection La Marmora declared that such a proposition could not be accepted. "We have," said he, "by the September treaty, at least apparently, given up our hopes of possessing Rome. An agreement with Austria after the manner indicated would add to that the giving up definitely of Venice; and this



would at once arouse such a storm of indignation against us among all the people, that at the approaching elections to the Chambers the Radical party would receive an overwhelming majority." In reply to his question whether Austria, at the same time that she recognized the Kingdom of Italy, would, perhaps, in consideration of a large money payment, cede Venetia, Drouyn de Lhuys however responded decidedly in the negative.

After that La Marmora let the question drop; and the more so, inasmuch as since the end of November the internal rupture in Germany had been growing every week more serious, and had aroused the hope in Italy that soon, by the embarrassment of Austria in the north, an opportunity might offer itself for making an attack upon Venetia without its being attended with any danger.

## CHAPTER II.

### WITHDRAWAL OF THE CONFEDERATE TROOPS FROM HOLSTEIN.

THE Emperor Francis Joseph had protested that the appointment of Mensdorff in Rechberg's place meant no alteration in policy; whereas Bismarck had seen in this change in the personality of the holder of the portfolio a serious danger threatening the alliance. Both views could very well hold good side by side.

The Emperor loved and honored his brother King in Prussia, and recognized the full value of the Prussian alliance. Gladly would he have done all in his power to fulfil the wishes of his Confederate ally to strengthen the bond; but nobody in Austria would at that time listen to Prussia's annexation of the Duchies without Austria's receiving something to correspond: ministers, officials, generals, representatives of the people, newspapers, all were unanimous in this, and public opinion had again become, since 1859, a power in Austria. Yet to get rid finally and forever of the question of the Duchies, was the most ardent aim of the Austrian policy. With all her internal troubles there was urgent need of quiet without and of settled peace; and she believed that she saw new complications forever growing out of that detestable Schleswig-Holstein broil so

long as she, for the sake of pleasing Prussia, opposed the wishes of the inhabitants and of the Confederate Diet. Hence her watchword was, to hold close to Prussian friendship, but also firmly to a proper decision about Schleswig-Holstein; and her conviction was, that if Prussia saw at once her calm determination and loyalty to the Confederation, Prussia would finally make the best of it, as Frederick William IV. had done. Indeed, we have already seen that this was what Rechberg had in purpose; and so, without any change whatever in aim, Mensdorff was to continue the same policy. The intention was not, following Schmerling, to turn one's back to Prussia, and to make friends again with the Western Powers; but to convert Prussia to the Vienna programme, then to hold her hand the more tightly, and thus to confirm the League of the four legitimate Great Powers against the revolutionary Emperor on the Seine,—this was the goal which the new imperial Minister saw hovering before his eyes.

In view of the universality of these sentiments in Vienna, Bismarck's apprehensions were truly not without foundation. For it was Prussia's fixed determination not to go away empty-handed in the division of the spoils; and it was also certain from Rechberg's latest utterances, that Austria was not willing then to grant so much as Prussia intended to demand. There were serious and perhaps dangerous discussions ahead; and the question was, whether and how and when any compromise could be effected. Now Bismarck, ready on his part to yield any point that he might consistently with

the main object, had, until Rechberg's dismissal, always cherished the hope of inducing him to do likewise, and of thus effecting some agreement. For the Count had, as we have seen, personally brought about the treaty of January 16th, and had personally joined in taking a stand against Augustenburg and the Lesser States; and it would naturally be harder for him than for a hitherto uninterested successor to hold unalterably to an exactly opposite course. Furthermore, Rechberg, even though he may have been no brilliant statesman, had had many years of experience in business affairs, was well acquainted with European relations, and well aware of those dangers in which Austria could find no better support than Prussia's friendship. Moreover, he had never been on good terms with Schmerling, and although he sometimes, after a momentary burst of emotion, changed his standpoint, yet he always remained independent in his opinions and decisions; and while no one in Vienna could claim to exert any definite influence upon him, he preserved always his attachment to the Prussian statesman, which was founded upon the respect he had acquired for him during long years of intercourse.

All this was different with his successor. Count Mensdorff was a knightly officer without fear and without reproach, good-hearted and upright (in spite of a marked streak of Vienna craftiness), in keeping with his military disposition politically conservative, and in diplomacy above all things determined to maintain an honorable fixity of purpose. In the course of the

numerous changes of his quarters in his military service, and recently by his conduct of the state of siege in Galicia, he had, it is true, become acquainted with the internal relations of the empire, and had got an idea of the task of administering the government of a country ; but yet he found the duties of his present position neither to his liking nor consistent with his health, and he had undertaken them much against his will and only at the formal request of the Emperor. On the other hand, it was from the very beginning plainly evident that neither his training nor his powers corresponded to his new duties.

He loved Prussia, he said, and would do everything to satisfy her wishes that the honor of an Austrian general would allow : further than this, nothing whatever, come what might. There was certainly nothing to object to in this. But that was no proof of political talent, nor of a capacity for managing complicated questions with clear insight, for distinguishing in their progress propitious and unpropitious moments, and for choosing a suitable measure and tempo for their treatment.

In the glorious days of 1850, he had been the Austrian Confederate commissioner in Holstein ; and he now noticed on the spot how much things had changed since then. He saw that for Austria the question of the Duchies of the Elbe did not lie very favorably, or, as Schmerling used to say, it had been entirely run into the ground by Rechberg. Often enough did Mensdorff sigh : Would that Rechberg had only remained Minis-

ter long enough to have completely settled this business! He was especially perplexed as he saw that every step ahead in the Schleswig-Holstein matter made the foundations of the German Confederation totter, and that the solution of the first question gave rise to incalculable difficulties and troubles in the other. With all his experience in administering affairs on both sides of the Leitha, the mazes of German Confederate law were still as much of a mystery to him as the precepts of the Koran and the theology of the Mussulmans.

So it happened that from the very first day he fell into complete dependence upon his counsellor, Herr von Biegeleben, and those other diplomats "out of the empire," who lived and breathed in the depths of Confederate treaties, like fish in the water or mice in a corn-loft, and whose political wisdom was comprehended in demanding that in accordance with Confederate law the equality of all German sovereigns should be maintained, and consequently Prussia should be subjected to the will of the Frankfort Majority.

To be sure, the roads to this goal as well had been thoroughly spoiled by Rechberg's former deeds, by his annihilating criticism of the old Confederate laws in the Frankfort Assembly of Princes, and by his contemptuous disregard of the Confederate Diet at the beginning of the Danish war. The Emperor had a feeling of the precariousness of taking up these worn-out routes again, and consequently urged the Minister to finish up the Holstein matter as quickly as possible

by direct dealings with Prussia, and thus to avoid further complications in Germany. Mensdorff was also very ready, with the freedom and candor of a soldier, to dash ahead without delay; and so soon as he had entered upon his duties as Minister, he had Biegeleben prepare a lengthy work, which was then divided into the form of three long despatches signed by the Minister on the 12th of November.

The first of these lauded the close union of the two Powers, which should form the only guaranty in the future for peace and safety. "In his royal ally," said Mensdorff, "the Emperor loves and honors a sympathetic associate with whom he shares the glory of upright government, conservative principles, and devotion to the German cause. The Emperor, therefore, relies firmly upon the King's practising, like himself, the virtue of renunciation, and upon his knowing how to limit his own wishes, so far as necessary, for the sake of higher considerations, namely, the preservation and strengthening of the Austro-Prussian alliance."

After this confident introduction, Mensdorff discussed the various possibilities that seemed to offer a solution of the question.

"In the first place, the annexation of the Duchies to the Prussian monarchy. The Emperor, in consideration of Germany and Europe, as well as the moral and political interests of both Powers, still prefers some unselfish disposition of the Duchies to any territorial combinations in which the Powers would have any share; and he reckons especially upon the personal

high-minded judgment and wise self-control of the King. What would Germany say, if the common interests and rights of the nation were set aside for the advantage of Prussia alone? What compensations would the non-German Great Powers in such a case demand? Besides, there are the legal difficulties. Prussia and Austria have always declared the right and title of Christian IX. to be doubtful. If we were to crush out these doubts in our own house, which is impossible, then the other German Governments would bring them against us. We should be obliged to choose between the maintenance of the Act of Confederation and the Prussian alliance.

“Secondly, the establishment of a semi-sovereign State: an anomaly, which clashes with the interests of the present *régime* even more than does the scheme of annexation. Within the limit of Confederate rights, we gladly would grant to Prussia maritime and military privileges; but Confederate law forbids the withholding of any essential rights of sovereignty from the new State. If, on such an important occasion as this, the principle of the equality of the German Princes were to be violated, that would mean replacing the Schleswig-Holstein question by the German one with all its perplexing difficulties.

“So that the only solution is the establishment of an independent Confederate State of Schleswig-Holstein.”

The second despatch dealt with the question of how it stood with the deciding about the succession by legal means, and with the powers of the Confederate assem-



bly in the matter. The conclusion was arrived at, "that the Confederation possesses no such powers; that even the opinion that the Confederation can, independently of the question of the succession, decide about the admission of the State into the Confederation, is wholly without foundation; that disputes about inheritance can be determined only in the Confederate country in question, and according to the constitutional laws, or the laws of the Sovereign House, which prevail in that State. The Confederation has only to take care that the question be not settled by force, but in the proper course of legal investigation; and in default of any other judicial authority it is to induce the pretendants to submit their claims to a legal decision.

"Yet a legal decision cannot alone be the criterion. The reservation is always made that Schleswig-Holstein shall not be broken up. If it should appear that neither of the parties possessed hereditary claims to the whole, then the best settlement of the matter would be for Austria and Prussia to convey to the claimant having the best title their own rights acquired in the Peace of Vienna."

Lastly, the third despatch discussed the question whether Oldenburg or Augustenburg was the claimant having the best title. At the outset, the claims of Oldenburg were summarily disposed of as simply groundless. Then it was Augustenburg's turn. This was clearly for the present wishes of Austria the most dangerous point, inasmuch as she had so often and so energetically, since November, 1863, declared and acted

upon the utter insufficiency of the Augustenburg hereditary claim. Nevertheless: "Whatever misgivings," thus ran the despatch, "we have felt, and indeed still feel, towards Augustenburg's rights, especially in certain isolated Holstein districts, yet it after all seems to us, so far as an undivided Schleswig-Holstein is concerned, that Augustenburg's claims are the better. Austria and Prussia have, as is well known, already expressed this sentiment in London on the 28th of May; and the accession of the Hereditary Prince would restore peace and harmony in the German Confederation."

It probably would not have been possible to present more forcibly before the eyes of the Prussian Cabinet the virtue of renunciation and the blessings of unselfishness, than was done in these three documents as a whole. Nevertheless, by the side of this a possibility was mentioned of Austria's being willing to descend from that ideal height of moral requirements. The ambassador Count Karolyi, who had shortly before been summoned to Vienna, besides taking with him on his return the three despatches, was commissioned to explain by word of mouth that Austria would allow the Prussian annexation of the Duchies (that is, according to the wording of the first despatch, sacrifice the Act of Confederation to the Prussian alliance), if Prussia would assure her of a proportionate territorial acquisition.

Emphasis was at the same time laid upon the fact that an apportionment of money would not answer the

purpose, because that would not be regarded as consistent with Austria's dignity. Now, since King William did not consider it consistent with duty and honor to purchase a new province by the cession of old and faithful dependencies, it became necessary for the Cabinet of Berlin to make up its mind what stand it would take with reference to the candidacy of Augustenburg, which was now being advocated by Austria. Bismarck had long ago settled that point in his own mind; and even before Biegeleben's production had been laid before him, he had already made a counter-move of far-reaching importance.

The Vienna despatches of the 12th of November had not yet arrived, when on the 14th a Prussian note was sent to the Austrian capital. This, it is true, was founded upon strict German Confederate law, but did not contain the least trace of the virtue of self-sacrifice; nay, it rather offered the strongest imaginable contrast to Biegeleben's sympathy with the Lesser States.

The Federal chastisement, it will be remembered, was executed against Christian IX., who was at that time in possession of Holstein, in order, upon the basis of the treaties of 1852, to secure by compulsion certain changes in the constitution of united Denmark for the benefit of the Duchies. The Duchies were now separated from Denmark, and their sovereignty had been ceded by Christian IX. to the two German Great Powers. Hence, it was clear, the chastisement no longer was directed against anybody; and in pursuance of Article XIII. of the Decree of Chastisement,

and Article XXXIV. of the Vienna Final Act, the troops engaged in the execution were to be withdrawn from the country without delay. Article XIII., after ordering such withdrawal, closed with the sentence: "The Government intrusted with the execution of the Federal chastisement shall, at the same time, give notice thereof (of the withdrawal of the troops) to the Confederate assembly."

Bismarck naturally reasoned that, in view of the notoriety of the situation, there was no doubt about the termination of the chastisement, and consequently that no Confederate decree about it was necessary; that therefore Saxony and Hanover were to be invited to call back their troops at once, and, together with their associates, Austria and Prussia, to give notice to the Confederate Diet of having done so. Rechberg had, for his part, already recognized, on the 17th of October, that the execution of the Federal chastisement no longer afforded an excuse for the presence of Saxon and Hanoverian troops; but from good-will toward the Confederation, he had proposed that about two thousand men of that army be allowed to remain in the country. But it was plainly evident, that, considering the existing sentiments of the Majority in the Confederate Diet and especially of the Saxon Government, the presence of Confederate troops would be a positive hinderance in the way of the establishment of Prussian rule or Prussian influence within the Duchies.

Therefore Bismarck answered Rechberg's proposition by saying that he could not understand any reason for

it. "Austria has always agreed with Prussia that the Confederation has no right to occupy the country, but only to carry out the chastisement. And now, after that has ceased, there is so much less reason for an occupation. So long as the internal peace is not disturbed, the Confederation has no right to take military possession of a Confederate country. Austria and Prussia have by the Peace obtained the title to the country as it was before the beginning of the chastisement, in the condition in which it was recognized by the Confederation to be, by the latter's decree of Federal execution against Christian IX. The fact that an investigation of the rights of inheritance has been reserved, only confirms the acknowledgment of our possessorship. So long as none of the claims of the agnates have obtained legal recognition, Austria and Prussia certainly have an incontrovertible and exclusive right to the possession and control of the Duchies. For the Confederation to have a share in the occupation would be an unconstitutional extension of its rights to the prejudice of the sovereignty of the individual States."

This episode came most inopportunately for good Count Mensdorff, especially as he at the same time learned, through a telegram from Karolyi, that the great work of November 12th had not been very enthusiastically received in Berlin, that the scheme of annexation was gaining ground, and that in any event Oldenberg was preferred to Augustenburg. Mensdorff had been for years a personal friend of Werther, and

mourned to him the widening of the breach, saying that it was very true the claims of all these pretendants were exceedingly faulty, and that some arbitrary authoritative decision would at last have to be made. "For Augustenburg," said he, "I have not the least personal preference; on the contrary, the democratic practices of his party in the Duchies are distasteful to me. But you see it can't be settled in any other way. His coronation alone will restore internal peace in the Confederation. It is absolutely necessary to proceed leniently and amicably with the Lesser States; and for that reason Rechberg promised them that the Confederation should take part in the final settlement of the matter." Mensdorff acknowledged, moreover, that the Prussian messages had been very calm in tone, and had viewed the affair objectively. He said that he should need to examine into the case more closely, since he was not yet fully acquainted with the relations of things.

On the 19th of November, he gave his reply to the ambassador. It began with the acknowledgment that "Bismarck's view of the question of Confederate rights is entirely correct, and the chastisement is certainly at an end. But in the confused and provisional state of things in Holstein, where for the time there is no sovereign at all, the Confederation may still, perhaps, decree an occupation. Yet however that may be, although we are not obligated to admit the Confederate troops, we have a right to do so if we choose. And what reason should we have for removing them? On the contrary,

we ought to be glad of the opportunity for allowing the great national character of the whole affair to be emphasized by their presence. We hope, therefore, to find that Prussia's attitude toward the Confederation is friendly; and we further see in this question a new proof of the necessity for a speedy agreement upon some sovereign."

After reading Mensdorff's reply, Werther expressed to the Minister his personal fear that Prussia would now proceed, even without Austria, to the removal of the Confederate troops from Holstein. In fact, instructions were sent on the very same day to the Prussian ambassadors in Dresden and in Hanover, to request the respective Governments to recall their troops, for the same reasons as given in the note to Vienna; and both ambassadors were empowered to leave no doubt about Prussia's determination to back this demand with all the emphasis necessary.

Inasmuch as the presence of the Confederate troops was clearly a powerful means for the advancement of Augustenburg, the candidate favored by the Confederation, the responses of the two Courts were in keeping with their respective attitude towards his claims. Hanover, who now felt a genuine hatred for the Hereditary Prince, was entirely pleased with Prussia's proposal, and before deciding only wished to know Austria's sentiments. In Dresden, however, where King and Minister were both thoroughly persuaded of Augustenburg's valid rights, the demand was unreservedly refused. Beust had seen that it was coming, but had

expected that Prussia would make the proposition to the Confederation, and he intended to oppose it vigorously at Frankfort. He had already, on the 23d of October, instructed General Hake to quit the country only in consequence of a Confederate decree, and without this to yield to nothing but force, that is, to the fire of the Prussian infantry.

In this warlike spirit, the Minister now explained to the Prussian ambassador that it was foolish to talk about an end to the chastisement. The so-called chastisement, he said, had been from the beginning, in point of fact, not a chastisement but an occupation; and this occupation must continue until the rightful ruler should be established in Schleswig-Holstein. This meant as much as confessing with cynical frankness that Bismarck had had good reason to protest against Saxony's illegal conduct of the Federal execution, inasmuch as she had continually worked in Holstein to advance the cause of Augustenburg, whereas the Confederate decree assumed Christian IX. to be the sovereign of the country.

Beust then declared further that Article XIII. of the Decree of Chastisement was faulty and insufficient, especially in so far as it did not anticipate and provide for just the present event; namely, that during the execution of the decree a change might occur in the person of the ruler. He declared, too, that only the Confederate assembly, and in no case the Government intrusted with carrying out the former's decrees, could decide whether or not the object of the chastisement was already gained. He found, for his part, no



reason for prompting the Confederation to the making of such a decision; on the contrary, he would rather oppose any motion that might be made to that effect by Prussia. "At any rate," said he, "the Saxon troops will, for the present, remain in Holstein."

The question of how to deal with these replies caused not a moment's hesitation in Berlin. The King was indignant at the thought that a country that had passed over into his possession should remain under chastisement without or even against laws of the Confederation. Bismarck felt again that in dealings with other nations it is not a good thing to be considered too long-suffering. After the Peace of Vienna, the return home of the allied troops had everywhere commenced, and they were still returning. Suddenly a royal order was given to the regiments that were still in the Duchies to stop where they were. The Westphalian division, which had just arrived in Minden on its way from Holstein, halted here in a body on the Hanoverian frontier, while a numerous company gathering near Torgau made movements toward the Saxon boundary.

Bismarck declared on all sides that the King of Prussia would not suffer, in the countries under his administration, the presence of foreign troops without his permission; after the close of the chastisement, the Confederation had no business there; against unlawful trespassers, Prussia would make use of her rights as proprietor. In a lengthy explanation on the 26th of November, Bismarck informed the Vienna Cabinet of the military orders that had been given, vindicated once

more the position taken, and called upon Austria to make a vigorous protest against the unlawful and turbulent doings of Saxony, who had been for a whole year continually trying to cross the purposes of the two Great Powers, and to disturb their plans. He said that it was, under the circumstances, a matter of honor for Prussia to engage in no negotiations concerning the future of the Duchies until the Confederate troops had been removed.

In consequence of this threatening attitude on the part of Bismarck, the alarm was sounded throughout all Germany. Beust cried, "I am not afraid," summoned the reserves of the Saxon regiments to the standards, and had the State funds carried away to the Königstein. Evidently he had not yet become fully acquainted with his adversary, and boasted loudly that Prussia would not ultimately give serious meaning to her threats. But the feeling was different in Vienna. Just a little while before, a fresh warning had been sent through Werther to the Berlin Court, not to insist too strictly upon the letter of the Decree of Chastisement. But now, in view of the military movements of Prussia, the Austrians had indeed become anxious. For not only Bismarck, whom they believed capable of any madness, but even King William himself, had announced to Count Karolyi the irrevocableness of his decision.

That Prussia was right in the matter had been repeatedly confessed; and now it could not but be felt, with however much bitterness, that by reason of the perfect equipment of her troops, she also possessed the

power. It was finally decided to advance a step to meet her; and Mensdorff announced to the Prussian ambassador, on the 26th of November, that with the official presentation of the Peace of Vienna to the Confederate Diet Austria would unite the declaration that this treaty removed the basis from the Federal execution, and that consequently the Confederation was expected to withdraw its troops that had been engaged in the chastisement.

Thus while the formal right of making the decision was reserved to the Confederation, Austria held out to Prussia the prospect of seeing her wishes actually fulfilled. Mensdorff also promised to exert his influence as much as he might upon the Lesser States. "You are never willing," he complained to Werther, "in this Holstein matter to yield the smallest point!"

Yet his Berlin friends were not quite so wilful as Mensdorff here implied. Bismarck's policy was as firm as steel, but quite as elastic also. Thoroughly determined to prevent any interference of the Lesser States in Prussian affairs, he still entertained the most ardent wish to remain on good terms with Austria, and was ready, if the right end were gained, to adopt Austria's preference in formalities. To Werther's telegram concerning the above-mentioned utterances of Mensdorff, he replied at once on the 27th of November in a tone of compliance; and when Werther, on the 29th, announced that the imperial representative to the Confederate Diet had received orders to move the withdrawal from Holstein of the troops intrusted with the chastisement,

instructions were immediately sent to the Prussian representative, Herr von Savigny, to act in concert with Austria.

For Savigny's personal information, Bismarck added (to the instructions) that Prussia would wait three days for the decree, but that if it were delayed longer, she would expel the Confederate troops from Holstein with her own forces. Naturally Savigny did not neglect to acquaint his colleagues with this interesting piece of information, and to make good use of it in connection with the approaching vote. The motion was then officially made, on the first day of December, by both of the Great Powers together.

Assent to this turn of things had indeed been given in Vienna; but it was felt keenly, and watched with great vexation. If the motion should be accepted, as was most probable, then the diplomatic campaign in favor of Augustenburg would at the very outset suffer a severe defeat. The pill was made no sweeter for them by the reflection that they had made the concession under compulsion and not voluntarily.

Now, we can easily understand that it might not have been easy for them, but it would have been certainly politic, to have put on a good face in their embarrassment; for, by demonstrating their anger so publicly to the Berlin Cabinet, and by making so much of it, they naturally diminished greatly in the eyes of Prussia the value of the sacrifice they were making. Already, on the 27th of November, Biegeleben had drawn up two despatches for Karolyi, in which, to be sure, the motion

to be made in the Confederate Diet was announced, but in which also attention was called to the great decree of the 12th (involving the speedy installation of Augustenburg), and a sharp warning was given that the alliance of the two Powers was to be established upon the basis of the German Confederate treaties. The Emperor, it was said, could never make up his mind to look upon the Kings of Hanover and of Saxony, members as they were of the Confederation, as enemies; nor to blot out from his idea of conservative principles his respect for Confederate rights and for the prohibition of helping one's self.

In answer to Bismarck's communication of the 26th of November followed further a reply on the 3d of December, in which Biegeleben assumed his didactic tone more than ever. A quotation from the same may be inserted here:—

“By our motion in the Confederation, we have given a new proof of the earnestness of our desire to remain at one with Prussia. At first we planned not to recall the Confederate troops from the Duchies until after the constitution of Schleswig-Holstein had been definitively arranged. We have now made a concession to Prussia that was not consistent with our convictions. It is to be hoped that Prussia will not misinterpret our compliance. Precisely because the state of things is what it is, must we return more determined than ever to our demand that there be now no further procrastination in the matter of definitely constituting Schleswig-Holstein an independent Confederate State. There is no longer

any obstacle in the way. Politically considered, there is no other solution possible. The legal question about the inheritance is, it is true, complicated; probably no one of the pretendants has an indisputable right to all parts of the country. But our proposition of the 12th of November is from a legal point of view incontrovertible. Nothing can prevent the two Courts from surrendering their own claims, acquired through the Vienna Peace, to Augustenburg. The fact that this would actually settle the matter, once for all, can only recommend our proposition. Therefore, Karolyi shall express himself upon this point most decisively and in the manner indicated; he shall also urge the Royal Cabinet to be pleased now to inform us of its opinion of the declarations made by us on the 12th of November."

When Count Goltz afterwards read this and similar productions from the Vienna Government Office he exclaimed, "Great Powers are accustomed to write in such a tone as this only on the eve of a declaration of war!" In reply to the same sort of a remark made by Baron Werther, Mensdorff himself answered that "the Emperor, too, was sorry that Biegeleben often used his pen so sharply." So far as the contents of this note were concerned, this continual warning and urging of a speedy definite constitution of the Duchies of the Elbe betrayed most baldly Austria's fear lest a continuance of the provisional administration should prove to be favorable to the scheme of Prussian annexation; and the consequence was, that the effect produced in Berlin could be only the opposite of that which was desired.

Meanwhile, the vote announced in the Confederate Diet for the 5th of December, upon the motion of the two Great Powers, was soon to be taken. The warnings from Vienna and Berlin had no effect upon the majority of the Lesser States. In München it had cost a good deal of trouble to fill Schrenck's place, since Pfordten, before accepting the portfolio, had made to the King several disagreeable conditions: the affair had just now been settled, at the end of November, and Schrenck returned to his old post in the Confederate Diet, and Pfordten to the head of the government at home. The latter was more energetic and pugnacious than ever, and filled with the hope of being able with Austria's help to set a limit to Prussia's arrogance, to put Augustenburg in possession of his rights, and to maintain the glorious Confederate Constitution. "United with Schmerling and Beust," said he, "we will soon point out to these Prussians the roads they must take!"

Bavaria's vote in the Confederate Diet remained fixed for the continuance of the chastisement. All the Saxonies, Würtemberg, Darmstadt, and Brunswick followed suit, and not only refused to recognize any hereditary right whatever of Christian IX. to Schleswig-Holstein, but even went so far as to assert that he had not held possession of the country, and consequently had not the power to cede it to Austria and Prussia, — a doctrine that was the more dangerous, since it was precisely against Christian as the owner of the provinces that the Confederation had directed its chastisement. Luxemburg-Limburg withheld her vote. As a

result, a majority of nine votes accepted the motion, and in so doing decreed the withdrawal of the Saxons from Holstein.

Prussia had accomplished her purpose, and her demand had been granted. The Confederate Diet had lost every prospect of influencing directly the condition of things in the Duchies in favor of Augustenburg. There was no longer any chance of the appointment of a Confederate commissioner in the highest functions of the administration by the side of the representatives of the two Great Powers. The Austrian and Prussian commissioners, who had hitherto administered the affairs of Schleswig, now assumed also the reins of Government in Holstein.



## CHAPTER III.

## PRUSSIA'S FEBRUARY DEMANDS.

BEFORE we pass from the close of the Frankfort prelude to the development of the main drama, let us once more call to mind the respective positions of the Powers that were concerned in the Schleswig-Holstein matter.

The Majority in the Confederate assembly stood now, as ever, firm in its conviction of the right of the Confederate Diet to settle the whole question, of the irrefutable claim of Augustenburg to the succession, and of the necessity of the existence of a new sovereign Lesser State, Schleswig-Holstein. This Majority was consistent from the first word to the last, and had ready in its portfolio an abundance of legal arguments. So far its position was intrinsically strong enough. But it was utterly in want of external means with which to carry out its desires. Its whole hope lay in the rupture that seemed to be approaching between Prussia and Austria. To the German nation its programme offered no other advantages than the maintenance of the principle of legitimacy, the most permanent bulwark of the thirty individual German States.

Prussia, in complete contrast to this Confederate party, had from the very start neither recognized the

above-mentioned powers of the Confederate Diet nor the claims of Augustenburg, but had always regarded King Christian IX. as the ruling duke of Schleswig-Holstein, and against Christian as such had she proposed the Federal execution, from him had she taken Schleswig as a guaranty, against him had she made war on account of the quarrel over the Constitution, and it was he whom she in the Peace had forced to give up the Duchies. Apart from those solitary remarks made by Bismarck to Bernstorff on the 15th of May, and soon recognized to be erroneous, Prussia had never questioned the claims of Christian to the throne; and consequently she now considered herself and Austria as the no less lawful successors of Christian in the possession of the Duchies. She had always been as consistent in her view as the Majority of the Confederation in the opposite one, and had no greater lack of historical and legal arguments. She furthermore possessed the power with which to enforce her will; and, what was of vastly more importance, her demands, even if not in sympathy with the sentiments of the German nation at that time, were certainly in keeping with its interests and needs.

Lastly, Austria had at the beginning shared Prussia's views, had promised in the treaty of the 16th of January to act in the matter only in concert with Prussia, and had then endeavored to retain for King Christian his possession of the Duchies. When, in May, this seemed to be impracticable, she had begun to take interest in Augustenburg's prospects, and in this connection had promised the Lesser States that she would

not allow the question to be settled without the co-operation of the Confederation. Nevertheless, she could not help receiving, a few months later, from the hand of Christian IX., the Duchies as a possession in common with Prussia, and thus renouncing again every right to dispose of them without Prussia's consent. And so openly had the Vienna Cabinet at this time recognized the sovereignty of Christian IX. and his legal successors, that it had proposed to the Prussian Court the annexation of the Duchies, provided Austria should be assured of a corresponding acquisition of territory in some other locality. Not until the King had refused this did Austria give way to her sympathies for Augustenburg. She could not very well, it is true, after all that had gone before, talk about any legal rights of the Hereditary Prince, but she recommended his elevation to the Prussian Cabinet for various utilitarian reasons. More especially did she take her standpoint upon the basis of the Confederate Constitution: according to the principles of the Confederation, a transference of the Holstein sovereign rights to Prussia would be absolutely unpermissible, and the maintenance of the Confederate rights would be a vital question for Austria.

Thus Prussia saw herself confronted by this alternative: either to give up all gain from the Danish war, and all hope of saving Schleswig-Holstein for the security and power of the nation, or else to burst the fetters of this stifling theory of Confederate rights by one mighty throe. The Schleswig-Holstein question and the German one became one and the same.

Meanwhile, Bismarck was of a mind to let the enemy come on and to await an attack. To start with, Prussia shared in the possession of the Duchies. It seemed, then, as if nothing could take place there to which Prussia did not give her consent. And, moreover, Prussia alone held the military command in the Duchies. Under such circumstances the predominance of the influence of the near neighbor Prussia over that of the distant Austria seemed irresistible; and so from the common ownership a Prussian annexation seemed certain to follow quite naturally. This view appeared less objectionable, inasmuch as it was everywhere entertained by Prussia's opponents: it was just for that reason that a speedy and definitive settlement was urged with so much eager haste in Vienna and in Munich, because everywhere the same conviction prevailed, that the continuance of the joint ownership meant as much as a Prussian annexation.

Yet it was true that in spite of this universal opinion Prussia was soon to find that this joint ownership had its very unpleasant features for her as well. Inasmuch as both owners possessed equal rights, and every administrative act required the assent of both, neither one could compel the other to perform any positive act, but either could prevent his partner from so doing. Now, Austria had nowhere in the Duchies any positive wishes, so that she would never be embarrassed by Prussia's opposition; whereas Prussia, eager for actual progress and new achievements, daily afforded her partner in Vienna opportunities for the use of her right to

make objections. So that, so far as the joint ownership was concerned, Austria without doubt possessed in the legal conditions of that ownership stronger means for preventing the annexation than Prussia for effecting it. We shall now see how, this being the state of things, the course of political events developed.

Until the departure of the Confederate troops from Holstein, Bismarck, as has been observed above, avoided every expression of Prussia's wishes in connection with the question of the Duchies. Then, after the chastisement was over, he sent, on the 13th of December, as a reply to Biegeleben's communications, two despatches to Vienna, the first of which treated of the relation of both Governments to the Confederation and to Confederate rights, and the second explained Prussia's position with reference to Schleswig-Holstein.

The content of the first was as follows:—

“When she entered into alliance with Austria, Prussia believed that both Powers were to grant to each other mutually *more* than the Confederate laws would require of them. It seems that Austria also cherishes the same wish, but seeks to realize it in an extension of the rights of the Confederation. Never can we listen to anything of the kind. We do not understand how Austria can refuse to regard the Lesser States as our common opponents, and recognize that the principle of Confederate rights could form only a most dangerous basis for our mutual relations and interests. Let Austria call to mind how eagerly the leaders of the Confederate Diet sought last year to interfere with our

European policy, to release us from our international obligations, to establish in the place of a lawful chastisement an illegal occupation, to decide without the shadow of authority the critical question of the succession, and finally against the plainest letter of Confederate law to prolong their pretended chastisement. At that time, the Vienna Cabinet, as well as ourselves, was brought face to face with a possible overthrow of the Confederation. A Confederation that outside of the basis of its fundamental treaties has the right to pass majority-decrees is not of the kind which Prussia joined. We are therefore firmly determined to offer unyielding resistance to any decree thus illegally passed; and we take special pains to have this determination of ours exactly understood. Our European interests and our monarchical principles forbid our making our policy dependent upon the majority-vote of petty Governments, who are in their turn dominated by their own petty parliaments."

Concerning Schleswig-Holstein the second despatch stated that "Prussia excludes unconditionally neither Oldenburg nor Augustenburg, but she does not wish to expose herself to the criticism of making a hasty decision without sufficient legal investigation. Austria has repeatedly asserted that neither of the pretendants could support a claim to the whole of the Duchies; and we are quite of the same opinion. Until exact data can be obtained, the legal possession falls to the two Powers and only to them. This forms the *status quo*, concerning which Mensdorff very truly says that

any change in it requires the assent of both of the Governments. Prussia recognizes unreservedly that an annexation of Schleswig-Holstein, much as this has been talked of as desirable, and advantageous as it would be for North Germany, cannot be effected without the approval of Austria. Nor are we, on the other hand, bound to accept any arrangement that would not be consistent with our interests or that would endanger them. The accession of Augustenburg would alienate from us Oldenburg, Hanover, and Russia. Moreover, the Brandenburg claims have not been advanced, which were much talked about so long ago as 1846. More than all, however," continued the despatch, "we must consider on what conditions we could assume the responsibility in the eyes of our own country of giving up all those rights connected with the *status quo*, which have been earned at the cost of such heavy sacrifices.

"Both internally and externally considered, the constitution of the military system in that important country which is our next-door neighbor cannot but be of the very greatest interest for us. It is an imperative duty, to make the means for defence at the disposal of Schleswig-Holstein, especially on the sea, as useful as possible for Germany; and in commerce and trade Prussia and the Duchies must naturally be most closely related to each other. No one can blame us, if we regard these interests as of the first importance. We are only fulfilling a duty to Prussia and to Germany, when we insist, before proceeding to any definitive decision, upon some guaranties for the security of these

interests, and when we declare our unwillingness to be dependent upon the uncertain good-will of a future sovereign and his estates. That the mere connection of the country with the German Confederation does not offer satisfactory guaranty of this nature, has unfortunately been often proved true by experience. In view, then, of our intimate relations with Austria, it would seem to us natural that the Imperial Cabinet should support us in our demand for more binding guaranties."

The despatch closed with the information that the Ministers of the special departments were engaged in formulating these guaranties in detail; and so soon as the King had come to a decision about them, the Vienna Cabinet should be made acquainted with the same.

On the following day, the 14th of December, Bismarck procured an order of the King, that the Minister of Justice should call upon the Royal Counsellors to express their legal opinion concerning the respective claims of all the pretendants. Nor was this exactly an indication that the Prussian Government felt any restless longing for a speedy decision. For, however much had already been printed on the subject from various points of view, the Royal Counsellors were of course obliged to form their own independent judgment, based upon original documents and information drawn from original sources, concerning each one of some thirty or forty distinct points of controversy,—a task requiring at least several months, and which might very well, if one were so disposed, occupy several years.



Therefore these despatches were received in Vienna with great dissatisfaction. "Prussia misjudges us," complained Mensdorff to his friend Werther. "Do not suppose that we should grudge you any aggrandizement; only we must in that case demand an equivalent for ourselves as well. This is indispensable in the present state of public opinion with us. Indeed," he continued, "we are not at all enthusiastic for these Augustenburgs who have broken their princely word given in 1852. But what can be done? Policy forbids our letting them drop. And above all, Austria needs peace, lasting peace; but this dreadful question about the Duchies involves the sources of endless complications. Therefore our imperative duty forces us to strive continually to bring it to an end as speedily as possible."

He had a very lengthy reply to the Prussian despatches prepared at once, which was sent from Vienna on the 21st of December. It was expressed again in Biegeleben's arrogant tone, and contained no new arguments; it referred, however, so much the more pointedly to the approaching rupture of the alliance, if Prussia should not consent to the Austrian programme.

Bismarck had no desire to hasten such a crisis, and hence decided for the present not to continue the correspondence with Vienna. He contented himself with urging on the Ministers of the various departments to a speedy specification of their respective requirements of Schleswig-Holstein, and with supplying the Royal Counsellors with all possible material from archives and public records.

As usual, the Ministry of War worked the fastest; so that on the 5th of January, 1865, Roon had ready his first outline, according to which, briefly, the entire military authority in the Duchies over army and navy, with reference to their organization and supreme command, also the possession of Kiel, Friedrichsort, and Sonderburg-Düppel, and the right of maintaining a garrison at Rendsburg, were to be placed in time of peace or war in the hands of the Prussian Crown.

This, indeed, implied a relation of things not yet known in the German Confederation, and against which opposition was to be expected from more sides than one. Many weeks were therefore consumed in the attempt so far to remodel this outline as to make it correspond by dint of necessity with this or that article of the great Confederate Military Constitution — certainly a very commendable, but in the opinion of every unbiassed person a hopeless, undertaking.

Then came the proposal from the Minister of Commerce, that Prussia should build the canal between the North Sea and the Baltic, that she should control it and fortify its mouths, that Schleswig-Holstein should join the Tariff-Union, and once for all enter the Prussian tariff system (in case the Tariff-Union should be dissolved), and that the mail and telegraph service in the Duchies should become one and the same with the Prussian.

Very decidedly did Bismarck himself finally add the general declaration, that not until the fulfilment of all the above conditions had been guaranteed should the

Duchies be handed over to the future sovereign. The discussion and determination of the details of these articles, and the preparation of the necessary papers and documents, consumed the rest of January and a considerable part of February, 1865.

Meanwhile the impatience increased in all quarters. Herr von Beust held a very active correspondence with Herr von der Pfordten, and urged the latter to take the lead of the Lesser States with a motion in the Confederation. Pfordten was not at all disinclined, but first made inquiries of Austria, and received her answer in the beginning of January, that negotiations with Prussia were still pending, and that by any interference on the part of the Confederate Diet these would be more apt to be disturbed than advanced, and that therefore Bavaria would do well to leave to Austria the determination of the auspicious moment, inasmuch as the two Governments were confessedly at one in their aims. Pfordten complained that these aims had not been distinctly enough stated by Austria: for in all of the remaining German States opinions about them were exceedingly confused and contradictory.

Hanover rejected above all things the elevation of Augustenburg, because he would recognize for Schleswig-Holstein the Democratic Constitution of 1848, and would without doubt submit to a certain amount of domination from Prussia: hence simple Prussian annexation would be far better. Hesse-Cassel had from the very beginning declared such an annexation to be the only sensible solution of the matter. Oldenburg still

formally supported her own candidate, but had very little hope of success, and declared that in the event of failure she should take the same ground as Hanover.

The exact contrary of this was maintained with unyielding perseverance by Saxony, Darmstadt, and a number of the smaller states, who advocated on principle the succession of Augustenburg to full sovereignty, as the only legitimate heir. Before him and his parliament Prussia might then lay her wishes. About the same sentiments were entertained by the greater portion of the population in South Germany, more especially by the Advanced Liberals in Suabia and the Prussia-hating Ultramontanes of Bavaria. So far as the southern Governments were concerned, Varnbüler in Stuttgart inclined personally to Prussia, but could not venture upon any step in this direction, in view of the excitement throughout the country.

Pfordten was bound by his legal conscience to Augustenburg, and by Bavaria's individual interests to the support of the Confederate rights; yet he kept saying to the Prussian ambassador (now the Prince Henry VII. of Reuss), that even on this basis great advantages might accrue to Prussia, and that he should use all his power in working for her interests. He was perfectly honest in this: if Prussia accepted the Augustenburg succession, he did indeed prefer to be her friend rather than her enemy. But in his usual ardent and sanguinary fashion, he did not lay weight enough upon the contrary sentiments of his King and of the popular representatives; so that for a long time

he misled Bismarck into the erroneous belief that in several points at least Bavaria could be won over to the Prussian side.

The sentiments in Baden were, again, different from these. Most of the ministers there would have regarded in their own hearts the Prussian annexation of the Duchies as the best thing to be done. But the people of Baden were enthusiastic for an election by the free vote of Schleswig-Holstein, and hence supported Augustenburg. The Prime Minister, Herr von Roggenbach, who had two years before been the leader of the "restricted Germany" party, had in the present question bound his hands by an over-hasty recognition of Duke Frederick VIII., and promised now to grant to Prussia his consent to everything except an annexation.

The greater the confusion of these different opinions and aims, the greater grew the anxiety to find out at last and definitely what Prussia did really herself desire. "I am very willing," said Pfordten, "to wait for the agreement of the Great Powers, but all patience has its limit. On the 4th of April the Bavarian Parliament convenes; and if I cannot lay before it some action in favor of Schleswig-Holstein, I am a lost man."

But irritation beyond all measure was caused in Vienna by Prussia's long silence. After calling upon her so often and so urgently to express herself, Austria began almost to regard it as an insult that the Prussian Ministers took so very much time for the preparation of their specifications in their respective departments.

In the mean time, too, disagreeable matters of another kind had to be settled; first a Vienna newspaper and then a subsidized Paris journal produced detailed and exact reports of portions of the despatches that had been exchanged between Vienna and Berlin. Bismarck protested very energetically against such indiscretion, and Mensdorff could give no answer to the Prussian ambassador, other than that he himself possessed not the slightest influence over the Press department, which was under the control of Schmerling. He promised for the future to do all that lay in his power; but unfortunately, repeated experiences of the same nature showed very plainly that for him nothing whatever in this line was possible. His final word in every such discussion was simply: "So soon as we get rid of the Schleswig-Holstein affair, there will be no more disagreeable newspaper articles."

"When are your specifications finally coming?" he asked on the 12th of January. "The Emperor is beginning to get impatient." On the 19th, Francis Joseph himself expressed to the ambassador his urgent wish that the affair might be quickly settled, and begged for a speedy reply. This induced Bismarck to send to Vienna on the 26th of January a provisional declaration, in which he again emphasized the assertion that the motion in favor of Augustenburg which had been made on the 28th of May in the London Conference nowhere contained any recognition of Augustenburg's legal claims, but had been merely a political proposal of peace to the Great Powers, which by the

latter's rejection of it had lost all significance. With regard to the annexation he observed that Prussia most assuredly respected the principle of preserving a balance of power with Austria, but that she did not consider that this would be maintained by an anxious reckoning of the statistics of their respective populations inside of the German Confederation, but rather by a determination to hold together and to pursue a uniform and vigorous policy.

At the same time Werther received instructions to call Mensdorff's attention to the fact that Prussia, in this continual urging and these violent warnings in a matter that really did not require such haste, could only see the predominance of a strong anti-Prussian influence in Vienna. Naturally, this did not help the matter much. A few days later the Emperor declared to the ambassador that he had become desperate over the endless procrastination in the affair; and Mensdorff wrote to Berlin that he could no longer restrain the Lesser States from taking sharp measures against Prussia. Karolyi was again summoned to Vienna for a long consultation; and immediately after his return on the 8th of February he called upon Bismarck, announcing his desire to discuss with him thoroughly the whole problem. The Minister said that he was very willing to lay before him his own sincere opinions in the most comprehensive manner.

Count Karolyi began by reading aloud his instructions, in which the expression occurred, that Prussia's object seemed to be to drag along the affair. Bismarck

interrupted him on the spot. "This shows," said Bismarck, "how incorrectly the case is understood in Vienna. Austria reproaches us, while we are making concessions!"

"Concessions?" asked Karolyi. "How is that?" — "It is a concession, to start with," said Bismarck, "that we consent at all to talk about any change of the *status quo*, which for us is better than everything that Austria has hitherto offered us. We might expect that Austria would make us acceptable proposals as to what might take the place of this *status quo*. The plan of annexation would be something acceptable; but it is well known that Austria rejects this."

"But," interrupted Karolyi, "this provisional state of things cannot last forever! Something definite must finally be introduced." — "Why so?" retorted Bismarck. "Why could not our common ownership be this something definite? But don't be alarmed," he added, as Karolyi started at these words. "We shall keep our promise. We shall present our specifications. But we insist that this is a concession, and we shall not allow ourselves to be reproached, if we do not do it immediately. Look here," he continued in good humor, "we stand before the question of the Duchies like two guests before a delicious dish. One of them, who has no appetite, and will not eat, vigorously forbids the other, whom the delicacy tempts, to help himself and feast. So we shall wait until the time comes. For the present, we feel tolerably comfortable in our present situation, and shall not change it until satisfactory conditions are offered to us."



Karolyi interrupted this exposition right here with the observation that Austria and Prussia were not alone in Germany. Bavaria, he said, would certainly not wait later than the end of February with her proposals, and it would then be imperatively necessary for Austria to speak out plainly, and even to disclose her correspondence with Berlin, in order to show that it was not the Court of Vienna that was to blame for the delay. "We shall be glad," said Bismarck, smiling, "to bear witness that you have been faithful monitors. The disclosure of our correspondence we do not fear. It will show the Prussian people who has tried to hinder us in our defence of Prussian interests. Nor do we stand isolated in Germany. It is very questionable whether a Bavarian motion, even if supported by Austria, would obtain a majority." With increasing emphasis he added, "If you do not restrain Bavaria, then this is what will ensue:—

"In *any* case an *actual* postponement of the settlement; for, apart from the fact that the Confederation can accomplish *nothing* quickly, we should come forward with our Brandenburg hereditary claims, and this would necessarily involve new complications.

"In case Bavaria's proposal should gain a majority, then *there would be a conflict between Prussia and the Confederation*, which we should not fear, but which you so earnestly wish to avoid. We should have behind us our whole people in arms; but may it not be that we are driven to this extremity!"

"Good heavens!" cried Karolyi. "The King of

Bavaria is a sovereign prince. We have no means of restraining Bavaria."

"Very well," said Bismarck; "let it go so. But consider well what position you yourselves will take. Bavaria's conduct does not disturb us; it can only increase our demands. We value in Germany only an alliance with Austria, — with strong, well-equipped, and conservative Austria. Only we must know, whether we are dealing with an Austria of Mensdorff or of Schmerling." He then explained at length that a victory of Schmerling's principles would surely bring on a rupture between the two Powers. "Do you suppose," asked Karolyi at last, "that you can present your conditions by the middle of February?"

"Perhaps so," replied Bismarck; "but we will not be bound by any limitations. It is no easy undertaking. The military question is the most important one for us. The results of the last war have not increased the security of our northern frontier, but have added to our obligations. Formerly, our friendship with Denmark, who always remained neutral, provided for us in European wars an important defence. Now it is we who are to protect the Duchies, which are, through their situation, exposed on all sides. In the event of an attack from the north, we are the ones who first would be obliged to fight.

"To be sure, so long as a general peace reigns in Europe, Denmark, in spite of her bitterness, will not readily venture to make such an attack alone. She would not, however, in any European crisis whatever,

tarry long behind; and in such an event, Austria would be otherwise engaged, and not in a position to support us so effectively as last year. It would then be of the utmost importance for us that Schleswig especially should not be taken in the first assault, and we be forced to recover it, as this time, at the cost of great sacrifices.

“Under an independent and consequently powerless Duke of Augustenburg, however, this would certainly be the case. We can be secured against it only by strong territorial fortifications and military arrangements, which, united in our own hand with our own and organically one with them, would make it possible for us to resist the first attack, and to prevent a general and quick invasion of the country by the enemy, such as took place in 1849 in face of a relatively large and well-disciplined army of Holsteiners. To establish such strong military guaranties and make them consistent with the complicated and unpractical prescriptions of the Confederate Military Constitution is no easy task. If Austria is in such a great hurry, let her propose to us herself something that shall be sufficiently satisfactory to allow us to suffer a change in the *status quo*.”

“We are urgent in the matter,” said Karolyi, “for the simple reason that the general European peace is endangered so long as the question remains open.”

“A great mistake!” cried Bismarck. “So long as we remain united, no one of the Great Powers will move a finger against the *status quo*. It is only the Lesser States that are discontented, and they feel

inclined to interfere, so long as they can hope for Austria's support."

"No, no!" repeated Karolyi; "it is the fact that the question is *still open* that brings danger; and Austria needs the assurance of peace."

"An *over-hasty* decision," responded Bismarck, "involves still greater danger. You should rejoice at the advantages which Austria also derives from our common possessorship."

"That we cannot do," said Karolyi in closing. "Our position with reference to the solution of the question has already been taken, and the continuance of the *status quo* would mean the same as annexation. It is to be hoped that Prussia's specifications will appear before the middle of February. Otherwise Bavaria will go ahead, and Austria will be obliged to speak her mind. We should do it in as friendly a way as possible toward Prussia, but the divergence of sentiments could no longer be concealed. Therefore send your specifications as soon as you possibly can, that this may not occur."

Thus the conversation ended.<sup>1</sup> The rupture between the two Powers had not yet culminated; but friendship cannot be resting on a very firm basis, when two friends specify with such mutual frankness the possibilities of a separation. That this was the case is very clearly indicated by Karolyi's declaration: "If Prussia does not make acceptable proposals before the end of February,

<sup>1</sup> Taken from Bismarck's memorandum written immediately afterwards. This was sent to Werther, who said later that Karolyi's report, which he read, agreed with it entirely.

Austria will go over to the side of the Lesser States and the Confederate Majority," — and by Bismarck's reply: "If Austria gives herself to the support of a Confederate decree that is hostile to us, then the conflict is at hand."

Under these circumstances it was natural that the Lesser States seemed to see their fields in blossom, and that Baron von der Pfordten at their head redoubled his efforts to secure a favorable Confederate vote. The Prussian ambassadors at all the German Courts announced the arrival of a Bavarian circular note, soliciting votes for the motion. It was impossible in Berlin to find out anything definite about the contents of this note; but it was believed<sup>1</sup> to concern a request to be made to the two Great Powers to disclose the state of the question, and to allow the Confederation to share in its discussion.

Bismarck considered that it was time for him to take some steps in Vienna and also in Frankfort. On the 14th of February, he instructed Werther to recall to Mensdorff's memory the treaty of January 16, 1864, in which both Powers bound themselves to determine the future of the Duchies only in concert with each other, and especially to decide the question of the succession only by common consent, — evidently a compact that excluded every possibility of making an agreement with a third party about the matter. When Werther obeyed these instructions, Mensdorff said that of course the requirements of the treaty could be binding only so

<sup>1</sup> According to the reports of Prince Reuss from Munich.

long as mutual harmony was possible. To this Bismarck replied, it was quite as much a matter of course that so long as no harmonious agreement was reached on any new point, the two Powers were obligated by the treaty to maintain the *status quo* without the interference of a third party : which Mensdorff finally could not help acknowledging. He furthermore complained to the Hanover ambassador that Rechberg, in his erratic policy, had always followed the impulse of the moment, so that Austria's hands were no longer free.

Likewise, on the 14th of February, Bismarck sent to Savigny, the representative in the Confederate Diet, in the form of provisional instructions, those views in accordance with which he should govern his actions, if the Bavarian motion should be made. These views were substantially as follows: "No article in the Confederate treaties gives the Confederate Diet the right to decide in the case of a contested succession to a throne. No ambassador from a prince not yet recognized has a right to take part in the deliberations of the Confederate Assembly. No objection is felt to the institution of a legal investigation of the candidates' claims; on the contrary, Prussia regrets that the committees have not at all taken into account those of Oldenburg and Brandenburg. For the present, Prussia's conviction remains, that very certainly no one of the pretendants can lay claim to the whole of Schleswig-Holstein; and furthermore, the doubt is by no means wholly excluded, whether, after the renunciations made by the Gottorp family in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and

after Augustenburg's consent, given in 1852, to the proposed succession, and finally, after the formal publication, without the protest of the Holstein Estates, of the law of succession in 1853, — whether after all this anybody at all can raise any claim whatever, even to a portion of the Duchies, except Christian IX. and his legal successors, Austria and Prussia. Nor is there any political reason why these latter should make over their rights to Augustenburg: least of all can such action be regarded as a consequence of the declaration of the 28th May, 1864.”

Meanwhile, the Ministries had finished the work of drawing up into form the specification of the Prussian demands; and on the 22d of February, the longed-for announcement was sent to Vienna. Unfortunately, it did not prove to harmonize with the sentiments of the “intimate ally.” There were included in it propositions for the admission of the Duchies into the Tariff-Union and the Prussian tariff system, for the transfer of the control of the postal and telegraph service into the hands of Prussia, also the control of the proposed North Sea and Baltic canal, and for the cession of Friedrichs-ort, Sonderborg-Düppel, and the mouths of the canal. Above all, it was proposed that the army and navy of the Duchies should form a portion of the Prussian war armament; Rendsburg should become a Confederate fortress with a Prussian garrison; Prussian military law should be valid in the Duchies; Prussian officials should be intrusted with the levying of recruits and marines; the troops should take the Prussian oath of allegiance

to the King, and, in response to the latter's orders, also help to form, if necessary, a Prussian garrison, and at all times, in war and in peace, be loyal to the King as their Commander-in-chief. These demands were based upon the same grounds as those explained by Bismarck two weeks before to Count Karolyi; and, at the same time, it was also very emphatically declared that before receiving a guaranty for the fulfilment of these conditions, Prussia would transfer to no other ruler her sovereign rights in the Duchies.

These specifications were designated on the part of Prussia as a proof of her conciliatory sentiments, and as a very great mark of compliance, when compared with the most natural solution,—that of changing Schleswig-Holstein into a Prussian province. Rarely, however, does a compliant concession meet with such unanimous rejection! Those Governments that were not enthusiastic for Augustenburg were of one mind; namely, that the annexation would be better than such an abnormal kind of vassalage. Those that favored Augustenburg repelled indignantly the idea of such a semi-sovereignty as was to be offered to the Hereditary Prince; most of them would listen to no limitations whatever to the rights of the sovereign, and the more moderate only to far less restrictive ones. It was the main point itself, the transfer of the military command to Prussia, that met with the most general opposition.

In Vienna, the Emperor, all his Ministers, and public opinion were of one accord: that the Prussian specifications could, under no conditions, be accepted.



This was announced by Count Mensdorff to Baron Werther as early as the 27th of February; and on the 5th of March the official reply of the Imperial Government was sent to Berlin, to the effect that any agreement upon this basis was impossible. Its tone and contents were an indication of the intense excitement under which this document was written.

“We have already, in November,” said the despatch, “stated our objections to the establishment of a semi-sovereign state of Schleswig-Holstein, as being the most unsatisfactory of all solutions of the question; and yet it is just this scheme which Prussia’s programme would carry out to an unexampled extent. It is entirely out of the range of all possibility to admit the manager of such a State as an equal into the number of the German Sovereigns. In vain has the Prussian Government striven to conceal the inconsistency between its proposition and the theory of Confederate rights: between such an actual mediatization and the fundamental principles of the Confederate treaties, there is an absolute contradiction. The demands proposed point exclusively to special advantages for Prussia. Everything that is said about the advancement of Holstein and German interests, we must assert to be unfounded. The present condition is much more favorable than if Denmark extended to the Elbe; and the protection of the Confederation would secure an independent Schleswig-Holstein as well against every danger. We are ready to grant to Prussia all the advantages that are due her in consideration of her sacrifices, her obli-

gations, and her geographical situation, — such as the establishment of Rendsburg as a Confederate fortress, the recognition of Kiel as a harbor for the Prussian navy, the building of a canal between the North Sea and the Baltic, and the admission of Schleswig-Holstein into the Tariff-Union. But when Prussia tries to acquire privileges that can be granted only through a sacrifice of the very character of the Confederation, she is forcing Austria to seek, on her part, some solution of the matter that shall serve Austrian interests as well. To abandon the fundamental principles of Confederate law would be to conjure up the dangerous question of indemnifications. Therefore we are not prepared to regard these proposals as a basis for further negotiations. So long as Prussia allows the question of the sovereign to be undecided, there exists no basis for a discussion of special questions. Hence we consider that, in rejecting the programme that has been offered us, we exclude only one phase of the question at issue, — a phase on which, as a basis, a definite and mutual understanding would in any case be impossible.”

So the matter was left for the time in the provisional condition of a joint ownership, to the great sorrow of Count Mensdorff, and to the great satisfaction of Bismarck, who now hoped by means of this temporary possession to arrive without violent measures at final incorporation. Yet, after all, in view of the categorical and even threatening tone of the Austrian reply, a certain amount of prudence seemed advisable. We have seen, in the case of the Danish struggle, that

Bismarck had the matter of the requisite military forces investigated, as much as a whole year before the actual rupture occurred; and so now, immediately after the receipt of Werther's announcements on the 27th of February, the Minister of War requested General Moltke to furnish him with statistics concerning the strength of Austria's army, that might be available in the event of a war against Prussia.

Meanwhile, the world was otherwise still free from the anxieties of war. The negotiations, which soon after the renewal of the Tariff-Union had been begun with Austria concerning a commercial treaty, came, just at this time, to a favorable conclusion. On that very 27th of February, the plenipotentiaries commissioned on both sides came to a satisfactory agreement about the mutual concessions to be made with reference to the tariff, and forthwith proceeded to draw up the formal instrument of the treaty, as if no misunderstanding had ever been conceivable between Austria and Prussia.

## CHAPTER IV.

## PRUSSIA AND FRANCE.

How Bismarck at this time viewed the situation, the prospects, and the consequent attitude of the Prussian policy, we may fully learn from his correspondence with Count Goltz.

Europe in general, at the beginning of 1865, after the excitement of the Polish and Danish struggles, felt rather weary and exhausted. In the extreme east, in the Principalities of the Danube, there were internal troubles, which attracted in many ways the attention of the Great Powers. In other respects this part of the world enjoyed peace and rest. With regard to the Schleswig-Holstein question, foreign nations were universally hoping for a peaceful solution of the matter: England with a tendency to sympathize with Austria, and Russia with Prussia. Yet both Governments expressly wished it understood, that they would look with favor upon everything without exception that should be agreed upon by the two German Great Powers between themselves.

Napoleon, however, adhered firmly to his secret wishes, as was natural, and watched with inward satisfaction the growing rents in the friendship of these two German Powers. He sometimes let fall a word that might lead Austria and the Lesser States to expect

French favor, yet did what he could to urge Prussia forward without openly advocating the declaration of war. His constant fear was lest Prussia might in return for the Duchies promise to the Court of Vienna military aid in securing Venetia; and consequently in all his communications to Berlin his theme ever was that Prussia should immediately accomplish the annexation by taking a vote of the people of Schleswig-Holstein and by giving back to Denmark the northern part of Schleswig. Gradually he dropped of his own accord the first of these conditions, and promised not to ask any acquisition for France, if Prussia could in any way by the restoration of North Schleswig get possession of the Duchies. He said, nevertheless, that if this should lead to the breaking out of a great war, the results of which could not be foreseen, then, of course, he must reserve to himself the right to act as he saw fit in maintaining the interests of France.

If, indeed, this gave Goltz in general good cause for making favorable reports about the sentiments of the Emperor, there came to light, on the other hand, proofs of the hostility of the Minister, Drouyn de Lhuys, towards Prussia, of the inimical attitude of semi-official Paris newspapers, and of unfriendly utterances of French ambassadors at the German and foreign Courts. Nevertheless, Goltz believed in the reliability of Napoleon. "If we wished," he wrote at this time, "we could very easily gain his alliance against Austria." Soon afterwards, on the 8th of February, he explained: "I do not mean a formal treaty, nor that we should defi-

nity bind ourselves by pledges to Napoleon, but only that we should be in season in recognizing his intentions in some official way."

Bismarck responded to this on the 17th of February by narrating his conversation with the French ambassador, Benedetti, to whom at the latter's request he had expounded Prussia's claims to the Duchies. Benedetti seemed to be astonished at the magnitude of the Prussian demands; that is to say (as he afterwards explained), not because Prussia claimed so much, but because she hoped to have such claims recognized in Vienna. He feared that this expectation was based either upon a counter-concession already granted, or upon her willingness to make such a concession. if necessary.

"I think," said Bismarck, "that I succeeded in setting him fully at rest upon this point. I demonstrated to him that the actual case was just the reverse. *We have made such moderate demands*, in order not to be obligated in any way to Austria. These demands are far below what our own people wish and expect, and what many others in Germany recognize as just. They express the least that we should be justified in requiring, and what Austria cannot without unfairness refuse. If she grants us *only* these demands, we owe her no thanks; on the contrary, there would remain in the country a feeling of resentment against Austria, to whose charge would be laid the fact that we had not obtained *more*. At any rate, we should certainly have brought the affair to such a result that our modest gains

would free us from every national obligation to Austria, and would receive the approval of the liberal portion of the German Governments and of public opinion."

These remarks seem to have satisfied the ambassador, whose chief anxiety was lest Prussia should have undertaken certain obligations concerning Austria's non-German possessions in case of war. "I did not, however," wrote Bismarck further, "conceal from him that in the event of such a war our conduct would depend upon circumstances, and that we should be obliged to consult our own interests alone; but affirmed that we should consider it very foolish to assure to the Vienna Cabinet in advance any guaranty that might induce Austria, through reliance upon our assistance, to assume a war-like and aggressive attitude, nor that might bind us to such a policy, which we do not favor. More intimate relations with Austria, I said, could be forced upon us only by France herself. If France should make any more hostile or even threatening demonstrations against us in the question of the Duchies or in her intercourse with the Lesser States, then we should, it is true, allow the desire for our own security and for a firm position to outweigh every other consideration; and for the sake of keeping Austria on our side and of avoiding all dangers from that quarter, we should be contented with less gains in the Duchies, and thus win Austria's good-will and be able to re-establish easily our friendly relations with the Lesser States. The dissatisfaction over the minimum that we had obtained would be turned against France, whose con-

duct had obliged us to content ourselves with so little and to seek an alliance with Austria, which is so unpopular in Prussia. Such a condition of things, I remarked, is fortunately most improbable during the life of the present Sovereigns of France and Prussia. On the contrary, the friendly attitude of the Emperor Napoleon allows us to make our demands upon Austria correspond to our needs, and in this way the Emperor is assured of the gratitude of Prussia."

Count Benedetti had then vigorously and absolutely denied the existence of any intention on the part of France to manifest a spirit contrary to, or interfering with, Prussia's plans and wishes.

Bismarck's attitude to both Courts, that of Vienna and that of Versailles, was plainly enough expressed in the foregoing words; namely, the intention to avoid the assumption by Prussia of any binding obligations, and to make use, for the time, of the favorable relations with one Government in securing advantageous concessions from the other. Yet in view of the great significance of Napoleon's decisions, and the consequent necessity of preserving a rigid and systematic plan of action, Bismarck was unwilling to leave Count Goltz ignorant of the fact that King William had very little inclination to form an alliance with France, and would only in a case of extreme necessity consent to take such a step. This became eventually Bismarck's feeling also. The only difference between the views of the King and those of the Minister, both of whom were resolutely determined at all events to maintain Prus-



sia's honor and interests, may perhaps be best stated by saying that with the King it was an affair of the heart to wish to preserve so far as possible peace and friendship with Austria, whereas with the Minister it was an affair of the head to understand that the foundation for a genuine friendship with Austria might perhaps be obtainable only after a bout at arms had been tried.

Bismarck accordingly sent on the 20th of February the following despatch to Goltz:—

“Although I quite agree with your Excellency that after a rupture with Austria had already taken place, we could hardly secure the support of France upon other than very onerous conditions, yet it seems to me as difficult as it would be dangerous to take such measures as might induce the Emperor to make a declaration that would in any way offer us certain guaranty. If the views of the Emperor are to be looked upon as a definite factor in our political calculations, they must be formulated and confirmed with due authority. We cannot be satisfied with promises that are simply morally binding; and doubtless the Emperor could be induced to declare in definite form even his possible intentions, only with the understanding that the King also would be willing to do the same. If negotiations were to lead to any result whatever, this would need to be expressed in a very formal compact after the fashion of a treaty.

“I will not dwell upon the fact that such a compact would exert very great influence upon both our own and European history for several decades; but I will

beg your Excellency to follow me in the consideration of the question whether such a treaty, when the time came for its fulfilment, would do for us what it promised, and whether it might not even before then bring upon us disadvantages from which we should otherwise be free. No matter how carefully the instrument be drawn up, it would not protect us from the possibility that France, if, at the critical moment when we require its fulfilment, the general state of things and her own private interests demanded it, might slip away from us and deprive us of the fruits of the secret compact.

“Not so problematical as the future gain does the immediate danger seem to me, if I can rightly understand the situation of the other contracting party. It lies in the nature of things that France cannot consistently with her vital interests let anything be nearer to her heart than to break the alliance between Prussia and Austria. This alone would be reward enough for her in return for important concessions to us in the Duchies of the Elbe. We cannot expose her to the temptation that the existence of such a document involves, which would need only to be shown or even mentioned in order to procure for her this desired result in full measure.

“The lack of honesty towards Austria, of which France would possess the means of convicting us at any moment, would not only cost us the confidence of Austria for a long time to come, but would as well bring upon us the condemnation of the people and the Governments throughout Germany. It would excite

great distrust of us in the mind of England, who would see herself indirectly threatened through us upon *that* side where she is fond of counting upon our help in the event of a great conflict. It would also cool down our relations with Russia. We should be isolated from the other Powers and dependent upon France alone. And furthermore, without being able sufficiently to counteract the expectations of Germany by either threats or offers, we could hardly expect the German national feelings to warm into enthusiasm over a Rhine-Confederation policy imposed upon them by Prussia, nor for a maimed Schleswig-Holstein.

“An alliance with France can be regarded only as a reserve anchor, to be used in case the Vienna Cabinet refuses to accede to a fair arrangement. In that case, after an Austrian alliance has proved itself worthless for us, or after it has been severed by Austria's own doings, we should be able to treat openly with France, and should be justified in the eyes of Germany and of Europe.

“Compared with the state of things that would be brought about by an attempt on our part to make sure of the future movements of France, I consider the present conditions the more auspicious. Each of the two Powers, France as well as Austria, has hitherto kept before her eyes the possibility of our forming closer relations with the other than we have done; and the effect of this anxiety has been more potent than the actual realization of the evil itself would be. In the event of the breaking out of war, it would be, as it

ever has been, very hard for Austria to summon the necessary courage, in face of this fear and anxiety.

“If we are to repose confidence enough in France to lead us to break with Austria, or at least to put into the hands of the Cabinet of the Tuileries the means for occasioning such a rupture, then we must ask ourselves just what degree of honesty and good faith we can expect to find in the advances of this Cabinet. We have no right to presuppose in French politics any devotion to Prussia's interests, any more than our politics involve such sentiments towards any foreign Power. We do not, therefore, feel inclined to mourn over the present situation.

“Herr Drouyn de Lhuys has spoken encouragingly to us in favor of annexation: his colleagues control the newspapers in the opposite way. In St. Petersburg, in Copenhagen, in Munich, and in Dresden, the French diplomats, to our certain knowledge, keep alive a spirit of antagonism against the plan of annexation. We cannot say with certainty that this is not so in other parts of Germany and in London. At any rate, their attitude is everywhere marked by ambiguity.

“We have no right, therefore, to be surprised, nor to feel ourselves injured. France owes us nothing. She would only be following the dictates of a natural egoism, if she should try to profit by her relations to us, and even make a cat's-paw of us, if she should seek to serve the doctrines of nationality at our expense, to reward Denmark for its fidelity (differing from England), and to insure a fresh triumph for universal

suffrage. It is possible that these equivalents might seem to her enough: it is certain that the prospect of obtaining them justifies her, inasmuch as she cannot be sure of our conduct, in keeping open the road to Munich.

“I find neither in the personal character of the Emperor Napoleon, nor in his political methods, anything that might make a different impression from that produced by events themselves. I am unable to share the opinion of your Excellency, that the Emperor would allow a minister to follow his own devices for a long time, and to execute schemes for which he, as minister, had not received the full approval and even orders of his Sovereign. The reports that are sent to the Press can perhaps be orally disavowed, and regret expressed for the effect they have upon public opinion throughout France; but the Emperor is too cautious a man, and has been too well taught by recent experiences, to leave a minister to his own impulses in a question that, like the Polish one, might cost him all the confidence that he has succeeded in inspiring in us. Just as he has pursued his own policy in Poland,—in May, 1862, I heard from his own lips the remark that he thought he must do something for Poland,—and just as he has from time to time made use of the dissenting opinions of Prince Napoleon by adopting them or dropping them as circumstances required: so must this ambiguity in the behavior of France, in connection with the present question, be the result of his own will and design to keep open all possibilities, so that when the right

moment comes he may step over to the one side or the other.

“From his point of view, this policy is very likely the correct one. For, if our hearts tell us that neither can France be an ally *à toute épreuve* for Prussia, nor we for France, this truth must be evident to him as well. Our attitude towards France is determined by the ever-present conviction that the other side allow themselves to consider only their own interests, and by the consciousness that we do the same. Our relations are as free from devotion as they are from resentment. I observe great caution, and say to Monsieur Benedetti nothing that must not be repeated in Vienna, and to Count Karolyi nothing that it would be dangerous to have known in Paris. Although the Parisians have more tact than is practised in Vienna, yet they would hardly be able to resist the very strong temptation to commit such indiscretions, which indeed might be of great political service.

“I do not think that we have got all the good we may out of the Austrian alliance; and I believe that we shall do better to keep Vienna in suspense between the hope of our assistance and fear of our joining Austria's enemies, than if we should unnecessarily force Austria to prepare for an irrevocable rupture with us. It seems to me wiser to continue the union as it is, in spite of slight family quarrels, and then, when divorce becomes necessary, to take things as they then are, rather than to sever the bond at this time under the cloud of unquestionable perfidy, and without

the *certainty* of having better prospects *now* in the way of making a fresh match, than we may have later.

“The policy of His Majesty receives a strong support in the first place, from the fact that, thanks to circumstances, we more truly have possession of the Duchies, in the actual sense of the word, than Austria, and that this possession itself guarantees more and more its own continuance; and in the second place, from our determination not to withdraw from the country unless either our demands are satisfied, or we are driven out by force. An offensive war, for the sake of driving us out, would be undertaken by any Power only after great hesitation. We very well know what we wish: either annexation, whether this be attainable without a war, or whether other causes bring about a war before the final decision; or else, and in any case, some arrangement that shall place in our hands the fortresses and naval stations, as well as the control of the forces, and certain other privileges in the Duchies. The difference between these two solutions does not seem to me great enough to justify engaging in a war with the Great Powers of Europe; but to prevent our claims from being reduced below the second, we would draw the sword, and should be certain of having the full sympathy of the country.”

All this was written before the Prussian specifications of the 22d of February had been sent to Vienna and the reply returned which declared the impossibility of continuing negotiations upon this basis. And yet, however peremptory Austria's refusal was, Bismarck's

standpoint, as indicated in his letter to Count Goltz, was, for the present, in no way altered. Vienna had not yet spoken the final word; and it would still be best to wait and see how Austria would respond to the urging of the Lesser States, and, above all, what favorable results might develop for Prussia from the common possession of the Duchies.



## CHAPTER V.

## CONDITIONS IN SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.

AND so it was left: in default of any final arrangement approved by both Powers, the common administration of the Duchies was for the time to be continued.

The hopes of Bismarck and the fears of Mensdorff, that such a provisional state of things must of itself necessarily result soon in the accomplishment of a Prussian annexation, would doubtless have been well founded, if the cession of the Duchies to the two Powers had taken place, say in 1860, under the universally acknowledged King Frederick VII.

But, as is well remembered, this did not occur until a year after the death of that Prince, and after the Hereditary Prince of Augustenburg had already brought forward his claims as agnate, and had far and wide been received with enthusiasm by the people. When the commissioners of the joint government assumed their office at the end of 1864, it was very soon evident that they had to deal with the Hereditary Prince as a third associate in the matter of possession. Had the two Powers been united, it would have been a very easy affair to put him aside; but since they were, as a matter of fact, not united, the existence of the Prince gave to the Vienna Cabinet the desired opportunity for counter-

acting and checking every advance attempted by its Prussian ally.

That liberated Schleswig-Holstein would lead a wretched existence as a sovereign Confederate state, could be demonstrated only too clearly by figures. By her former regulations, her income amounted in round numbers to six and one-half million thalers.<sup>1</sup> The expense of levying soldiers and of local administration would consume four and a half of this, and the interest upon the old public debt, assumed at the settlement with Denmark, another million. There would remain, then, a balance of one million for the civil list, the army, the navy, fortifications, and central government. If the civil list should be put at half a million, the current expenses of the Confederate contingent at one and a half, and of the central government at one million, there would already be a deficit of two millions.

Then, in addition to this, came the great increase of the public debt by the Prussian expenses of the war, amounting to something over twenty-two millions, and the Austrian of twelve, and by the cost of furnishing the army with necessary supplies amounting to about ten millions, making in all the sum of forty-four millions. This meant an annual interest of more than two millions, which would have raised the deficit to about four millions and a half, and demanded an increase of the

<sup>1</sup> These and the following figures are from official documents. During each of the two years of war, 1848 and 1849, the country had expended from nine to ten millions. For 1850 — before the war broke out again — the budget was reckoned in round numbers at seven millions. Fock: *Schleswig-Holstein'sche Erinnerungen*, p. 230.

revenue from six and one-half to eleven millions. This would make, with a population of not quite a million, an average burden upon the single individual of more than eleven thalers for the whole public revenue, including three thalers for the interest upon the public debt; whereas in Prussia at that time this items amounted to somewhat over seven thalers and to twenty-five *silber-groschen* respectively.<sup>1</sup>

It is at once clear, that in this condition of the finances there could be very little hope of seeing the safety of North Germany or the formation of a German naval power much furthered by the liberation of Schleswig-Holstein. With all this oppressive taxation of the people, not a thaler was yet appropriated for the navy, for the protection of the coasts, or for the building of canals, harbors, and other public works; and nothing was more certain than that the army itself would be no actual gain to the defensive strength of Germany. Things would be left also in this regard, even as Mensdorff, Beust, and Pfordten recommended, on the footing of the old Confederate basis. The creation of a German fleet would have been met with just the same objections as in 1852, with the only difference that the number of votes cast would have been increased by one. For the safety of the German coasts, Schleswig-Holstein would

<sup>1</sup> It is true, that those expenses of local administration in Schleswig-Holstein included many items that in Prussia were reckoned, not as borne by the state, but by the communities. On the other hand, however, the inhabitants of the Duchies were obliged to bear, beside the regular state taxes, the burden of a great number of fees in judicial and administrative matters, which were disproportionately higher there than in Prussia.

have done precisely as much as Hanover and Oldenburg had done hitherto. In the matter of the army, the Confederate contingent of 6,000 men, which had hitherto been apportioned to Holstein, would doubtless then, insufficient as it was, have had to answer for both Duchies, instead of being doubled upon the accession of Schleswig. One advantage would, to be sure, have been won in return for all this: Germany would have had thirty instead of twenty-nine sovereign Courts.

On the other hand, in case of annexation, Prussia would have assumed that additional debt of forty-four millions. The civil-list and a considerable portion of the expense of the central government would have been avoided; and instead of that the Prussian military system would have been introduced, which in 1865 demanded two thalers per head from the population, and which in return for this contributed not 6,000, but in time of peace 10,000, and in time of war 30,000, men, for every million inhabitants, and which was trying every possible means to develop a seaworthy navy.

All these data lay before the Prussian Government, and made it appear in the light of a matter of conscience, alike for the sake of the Duchies, of Prussia, and of Germany, to insist unyieldingly upon the fulfilment of her demands.

Unfortunately, the people in Schleswig-Holstein as well as in other parts of Germany were partly ignorant of these facts, and partly overlooked them in the zeal of partisanship.

In Holstein, and largely also in Schleswig, the year

of war had brought upon the inhabitants only small burdens: indeed, in some places actual financial profit. At one blow, all the former expenses for the royal civil-list, the ministers in Copenhagen, the army, and the navy, had been in December, 1863, done away with; and the revenues from the domains, which had hitherto found their way to Copenhagen, now remained in the country. From March till October, 1864, a large part of the German army had lived in Jutland at the cost of the enemy. Schleswig had, it is true, been obliged to supply the remainder with necessary provisions, but had received in return notes to the extent of 700,000 thalers (in round numbers), about the speedy redemption of which there existed nowhere any doubt.

Thus quite a surplus had collected in the treasuries of the Duchies, out of which, it is true, the expenses of the German troops in the field since October must be paid, but yet more than 700,000 thalers were placed at interest in the Hamburg bank. Consequently, very few people in the Duchies thought, under these circumstances, of an impending financial embarrassment; and whenever such an idea occasionally was expressed, it was quickly silenced by the courageous assertion that Schleswig-Holstein was ready to risk not only her blood, but also her wealth, for freedom.

Now, so far as this willingness to make sacrifices was concerned, the sentiments of the population of Schleswig-Holstein were at that time about the same as is generally the case with all nations. A large mass of the people were politically inactive. When the orders

came from the authorities to levy troops and pay taxes, they did so without offering any resistance; but, nevertheless, their hearts were bound exclusively to the care of their families, their fields, and their flocks. Whenever any political demonstration was to be made, or patriotic resolutions passed, their leaders succeeded in inducing them to appear at the public meetings; but this had been done so many times during the preceding year that in many sections the people wished they might no longer be disturbed by such pother.

Upon people of this temperament the question about an increase in the taxes would have made no small impression; but the fact was, that just these classes in society were politically indolent, and allowed themselves to be driven on by the intellectually and politically active minority, who gave them the requisite impulse. And the members of this minority were at that time, with the exception of a few groups, all anti-Prussian; and by their incessant agitations they drew the largest portion of the population along with them. The debt of gratitude which the country owed to her Prussian liberators was forced into the background by a long and varied list of both worthy and unworthy motives. The demands of an imaginary feeling of duty were in this instance supported by seductive considerations of vanity and selfishness. How could the people be expected to be proof against them?

After the arrival of the Confederate troops, the Hereditary Prince of Augustenburg, who had hitherto been quite unknown in the country, had been welcomed

enthusiastically as the incorporation of the popular cry: "Separation from Denmark." Thousands and thousands had done him homage and saluted him as Duke Frederick VIII., fully convinced that he was the only legitimate sovereign of the country. Was it now possible that after the lapse of a few months honorable and upright Holsteiners should break their pledges, and, bowing to a command of brutal force, should to-day reject what they yesterday had honored? It was just the best and most conscientious among them whose inmost hearts responded to the sentiment: Schleswig-Holstein cannot renounce the prince to whom she has but just now offered her enthusiastic homage. To the execution of any violent measures against Frederick VIII., were opposed not only political considerations, but also the consciences of the people.

This feeling was also strong among the poor peasants, who had no conception either of the hereditary rights of agnates or of reform in the German Confederation. Only seldom did it happen that any one of them entertained any doubts, or asked, as did once an honest miller in Anglia: "The schoolmaster said in the meeting that he did homage to the Duke for us all. I did not tell him to do so; and am I then bound by it?" Most of them did feel themselves bound, if not by any formal act of homage, yet as a consequence of their own doings, of their own honest convictions.

By the side of this highly respectable sentiment of duty and honor, many motives arising from the interests of the country and of the Estates played a part.

The people of the Duchies were, as we have already said, conservative and fixed in their own ideas. The solid prosperity of the country had allowed the majority of the population to keep along in the same old channels and notions that their ancestors had handed down to them. Foreign elements, with the exception of the hated Danes, seldom entered the country; and there was very little opportunity offered for comparing their own customs with those of strangers. Thus there was developed an extremely strong provincial spirit, in the face of which the rest of the people in the world outside seemed rather small compared with the majestic Holstein race.

It is true that this is a common German propensity or infirmity. But here on this peninsula, surrounded by the sea, it was naturally developed by the conditions to a rare degree. The people were conscious of having resisted tenaciously and for a whole generation the superior power of Denmark. Their heads were turned by the popularity of their cause throughout all Germany since 1846. More than one politician in Holstein felt sure that the establishment of an independent state of Holstein would mark a new epoch in the history of European nations. And was this country, being what it was, now to give up her very existence? Was she to become Prussian? The Schleswig-Holstein army, which in 1848 had fought with so much glory, was to be swallowed up in the Prussian troops? Were Holstein veterans expected to be willing to live in foreign garrisons and to be contented with the scanty provisions



dealt out to Prussian recruits? *No! and again, No!* was the unanimous answer to these questions. A firmly rooted and obstinate particularism put an obstacle in the way of Bismarck's plans for Germany.

These sentiments were not, however, maintained everywhere alike in the Duchies. They were stronger in Holstein than in Schleswig, and more vigorously advocated in the towns than among the peasants. This latter circumstance was owing to the simple fact that under the former system the farms bore the burdens, and the cities reaped the benefits: so that the owners of the fields were less fearful of a change than the citizens in the towns. The land-owners contributed in different ways about three-eighths of the whole state-revenue. The noble proprietors enjoyed several not very considerable immunities; but, on the other hand, were in daily fear of being called upon to make large contributions to the funds for paying off the German war-debts, which would be cancelled in the event of a Prussian annexation. And for all proprietors the land-tax was nearly twice as high as in Prussia.

With the towns it was different. The citizens had been hitherto almost free from taxation. Taxes upon industries and a tax upon movable property were unknown. There was only a tax upon buildings, which was very light. The citizens of means scarcely felt either the burdens of taxation or of military service. For the Danish law allowed the system of substitution, and the yearly contingent of recruits was so small that the price of substitutes was not high. So that every-

body in the towns was horrified at the thought of a Prussian system of taxation, and above all of military service. The merchants, who in their old-fashioned methods enjoyed a moderate but certain income, were fearful lest joining the Tariff-Union should bring altogether new conditions, new phases of competition, and new, burdensome regulations. The mechanics of the guilds feared, in the same way, the introduction of the Prussian freedom in the trades.

Nor was it a matter of indifference to the University that a Prussian annexation would do away with the requirements that all officials must pass through a two-years course of study at Kiel. Young lawyers had hitherto passed their examination immediately upon leaving the University, and could spend their time as they pleased until summoned to hold an office. The Prussian annexation threatened them with a long preparatory service as subordinates, and with the hard, third examination, the terror of the Prussian *referendar*. The numerous and influential body of officials received either high salaries or large fees, and were subject to scarcely any controlling authority. There was, for instance, no Upper Chamber of Accounts: under Prussian administration, on the other hand, a smaller number of persons would obtain such a high position, and the few fortunate ones would receive less pay, and be much more sharply supervised than before.

All the classes affected by these considerations were glad to be able to defend their own individual interests under a banner that commanded respect, bearing the

name of Augustenburg, and to have for their own cause the popular war-cry of an independent Schleswig-Holstein. They threw themselves with patriotic zeal into the agitation for Duke Frederick, and into a resistance to Bismarck's so-called *Junker régime*.

The whole Liberal party throughout Germany applauded them, without having any idea of the nature of the efforts they were so enthusiastically encouraging. For the direct consequences of the annexation, which caused the supporters of Augustenburg to protest so vigorously: the introduction of liberty in the trades and more extended competition in commerce, an equal and just division of the burdens of taxation and military service, a more careful training of officials, the reduction of their number and of their fees, together with closer supervision, — all this made up otherwise just the programme of the Liberal party; and the actual state of things, which the friends of Augustenburg wished to preserve in Schleswig-Holstein, was a conglomeration of individual rights, that had been continued through generations at the expense of the common welfare.

It was enough in Germany to learn that the landed proprietors of the Duchies favored the annexation, and the citizens of the towns opposed it, in order to brand Bismarck also in this question as the champion of feudal tendencies. In truth, however, the annexation which he sought meant the replacement of feudal privileges by a liberal State; and it was not Bismarck, but the Holstein towns, that fought for a feudal community.

We have already seen how the Hereditary Prince of

Augustenburg, under the protection of the Federal chastisement, and supported by all those popular sentiments, had, in fact, actually got possession of Holstein. The new Ducal Government and all of its departments were, without exception, made up from supporters of the Prince. The now free Press, though still prudent and cautious, exerted its influence on the same side. Over a hundred societies of the same color drew into their ranks all active persons, maintained a strict party discipline, and threatened every deviation in opinion with social ostracism.

During the war, the Duchy of Schleswig was governed by civil commissioners from the two Great Powers, with all the unlimited authority of a dictatorship in time of war. As a matter of fact, it was the Prussian Zedlitz, who, to the great relief of his Austrian colleagues, at first Revertera, and afterwards Lederer, assumed the burden of this administration. When, then, at the end of the Federal chastisement, Holstein also came under the control of the Great Powers, it was understood at once, as a matter of course, that the two Duchies would have a common government under the direction of a Prussian and an Austrian commissioner, who together should represent the highest civil authority. Prussia kept Zedlitz, who had proved himself so valuable, still in his place. But in Vienna it was declared that Herr von Lederer was not of suitably high rank for this position; and, therefore, he was replaced by Baron Halbhuber, former governor of Lower Austria, and a proud man of imperious manner, who

had already, as civil commissioner in Jutland, manifested a disinclination to conform to the orders of the Prussian military authorities.

Inasmuch as universal peace now existed, it seemed more natural not to transfer to Holstein the system of administration arranged for Schleswig during the war, but rather to do the reverse, and to govern Schleswig in the way that had been adopted in Holstein after peace was declared. The Holstein Government was accordingly enlarged only by the accession of a few members; and this was then declared to be the central authority for both Duchies. Its right to the exercise of an irresponsible self-government was confirmed. The commissioners reserved to themselves certain particular and especially important matters of business, constitutional questions, adoption of regulations, cases of pardon, suspension and appointment of officials, transgression of the limits of the budget, the supreme control of the police, the press, and societies: they interfered in other matters only in case of appeal and of complaint.

No one in Berlin had any idea of what a dangerous concession was thus made to the Augustenburg party; even in personal questions concerning the appointment of officials, Zedlitz seems to have looked on at first with perfect innocence. The result was that five out of the six councillors in the Government were thorough-going partisans of Augustenburg, and that the numerous vacancies now occurring in Schleswig among the local authorities, pastors and school-teachers, were also filled almost without exception by obedient subjects of the Hereditary Prince.

Indeed, there was gradually developed a regular understanding, in matters of business, between the Government of the country and the "Ducal Ministries" in Kiel, in accordance with which the former privately presented to the Pretendant for "sovereign approval" every measure that was of importance to the party. In order that Herr von Zedlitz might only as rarely as possible have occasion to interfere with the doings of the Government, it became a maxim often repeated by the organs of the party, that never, and under no circumstances, should any complaint concerning any regulation passed by the Government be made to the commissioners. The commissioners, it was said, could no longer doubt the excellence of their Government Councillors, when the country was so universally satisfied with their administration.

As an offset to these conditions, so very unfavorable to Prussia, it was by no means an adequate compensation that the supreme military command and the majority of the garrisons in the country had remained in her hands. The Minister of War, Von Roon, had already informed the Austrian Cabinet, in December, 1864, that he had determined upon sixteen thousand men under General Herwarth for the occupation of the country; to which the reply had been received from Vienna, that Austria could contribute for this purpose only Kalik's brigade, consisting of four thousand eight hundred men, and that she consequently regarded it as a matter of course that the supreme command should continue in the hands of Prussia. But, since no person

in the land thought of such a thing as an armed rising, the number of Prussian battalions present in the country could not affect Prussia's attainment of her political wishes; and General Herwarth possessed no actual means of checking the steadily developing plans of the Augustenburg faction.

The "Schleswig-Holstein" and the "Comrades-in-Arms" clubs began to extend their branches further and further into Schleswig. Their success was by no means insignificant, even if not so complete as in Holstein. Then they proceeded to inaugurate their public demonstrations: banquets, resolutions, deputations, local mass-meetings, and great celebrations kept the people in agitation. At the very beginning of the new administration, they had an address of homage to His Highness Duke Frederick circulated in every parish, in order to proclaim to Europe with all solemnity the fixed determination of the country. The result seemed to be a brilliant success. While a petition from seventeen members of the nobility, at the instance of Herr von Scheel-Plessen, begging for the establishment of closer relations between the Duchies and Prussia, gained very slowly only about two hundred signatures, this address to Augustenburg was quickly indorsed by almost fifty thousand names, about four-fifths of which were those of residents of Holstein.

And yet there had been hopes entertained in Kiel of still greater numbers, since almost every one of the officials, clergy, and teachers had co-operated zealously with the clubs, and carried the address everywhere from

house to house, — though they did not after all succeed in winning over more than about one-third of the adult males. It sounded, however, grand enough, when all the newspapers announced in triumph that fifty thousand Schleswig-Holstein men had renewed enthusiastically their pledge of loyalty and self-sacrificing devotion to their beloved Duke. The Press, indeed, now worked quite openly and confessedly for the Prince. Every day the journals spoke about “His Highness Duke Frederick VIII.,” about Holstein’s love for her legitimate Sovereign, about the criminal presumption of Prussia’s arbitrary government, about Bismarck’s multifarious opposition to liberty and freedom, and about the official stifling of every free idea throughout the length and breadth of Prussia. Hints that King William, in spite of his Minister, favored Duke Frederick, alternated with virulent slanders against the person of the King himself.

Instigated by disgust at this conduct, Bismarck made the proposition in Vienna that a fixed limit should be put to the agitation of the societies. He received a polite but decisive answer, which the Viennese very soon allowed to find its way into the newspapers, and which painted in bright colors the democratic and popular sympathies of the Vienna Cabinet by the side of the reactionary tendencies of Prussia. Zedlitz fared the same way, when he called upon his Austrian colleague to assist in prosecuting the Holstein journals for what they published. Halhuber positively refused. In Austria, he said, the Press was free, and conse-



quently he could not suppress it in the Duchies. General Herwarth received the same answer when he made a complaint to the civil authorities about the inflammatory newspaper articles: he was told that no measures could be taken against the Press, since the Austrian commissioner himself did not consider it necessary nor practicable. Soon afterwards Herwarth ordered the troops to permit no public demonstrations made in honor of the Hereditary Prince as sovereign of the country. At this Mensdorff himself came forward, and made a vigorous protest against such encroachments of the military in the sphere of the civil administration.

Thus there was developed a sort of Austro-Augustenburg system. It was, at the same time, very simple and very effectual. For, according to the principle of the joint ownership, every act of the "supreme civil authority" must be accompanied by the co-operation of both commissioners. But Halbhuber refused his co-operation in every case where he could in any way devise an excuse for his negative attitude; so that the supreme civil authority was as good as put out of existence. It was not simply true, as was often said then, that room was left for the co-existence of an Augustenburg Government by the side of the other, but it was a plain fact that the whole government of the country was actually under the direction of the "Ducal Ministries."

Such a prostitution of the rights of joint ownership, as here took place, was considered by the Prussian Minister to be contrary to all conceptions of fairness

and right. Such conduct on the part of the associate ally, with an intention of ousting her colleague out of the common possession by means of a third partner, seemed to him the more contemptible on account of Austria's having always declared Augustenburg's claims to be worthless, and because she even now quite frankly confessed that she cared nothing for Augustenburg except as a means of repressing Prussia.

Nevertheless, in spite of all this, Bismarck did not yet give up hope that the end might finally be attained by peaceful measures. He did not believe it possible that the people of the Duchies could, in the long run, remain blind to the fact that neither the Confederation, nor Austria, nor a sovereign Duke with Confederate privileges, but Prussia alone, could guarantee to the country protection and security, and that therefore Prussia must receive the rights necessary for fulfilling this task.

In fact, such ideas did begin to manifest themselves, at first only isolated here and there, but soon they increased and spread. On the 12th of February, a company of twenty-four men in Flensburg, who controlled three local newspapers, organized into a "national party" having for its platform the union with Prussia in military and diplomatic relations, which should be effected *before* the coronation of a sovereign Duke. Soon afterwards similar ideas were expressed in the midst of even Augustenburg societies themselves; although in these circles it was unanimously agreed that the union was not to be accomplished before the coronation of the Duke, as the national party desired.

Gradually these sentiments came to be expressed in several different societies, and many declared that it should be the first duty of the Duke after his coronation to bring about the union with Prussia; but those of purely individualistic tendencies repelled with horror the thought of such humiliation. A general assembly of delegates from one hundred and forty-nine societies discussed the question on the 26th of February; and even the central committee, who directed the business, expressed themselves in favor of the union. But when the vote was taken, the particularists had a majority of a hundred and twenty against eighty-eight; whereupon the committee resigned, and were replaced by men from the majority.

It was a significant indication of the situation, that these very particularists, when they had a meeting a few weeks later in Berlin with the Frankfort committee of thirty-six and some of the leaders of the Prussian Progressists, found themselves forced, in order not to lose these Confederate allies, to recognize a good share of Prussia's February demands as practically desirable. Of course they still insisted upon the previous coronation of the Duke and assent of their parliament, and consequently remained fundamentally opposed to the Prussian standpoint; yet they had made, however unwillingly, a great concession to the "national" platform.

All this strengthened Bismarck in the conviction that it would be necessary only to explain to the people of the country fully and clearly the true situation, in order

to see a complete revolution in the sentiments of the whole population. Therefore he determined to make the attempt by calling together, himself, a representative assembly of the Duchies, and by obtaining there a recognition of the justice of the Prussian demands. This would be depriving the Opposition largely of their basis of operations.

While everything was thus uncertain in all parts of the Duchies, the work of Beust and Pfordten was proceeding at the German Courts. Gradually it was learned at Berlin that in the proposal of those two States not only was an explanation demanded from the Great Powers, but also in so many words the coronation of Augustenburg was recommended. This rather weakened the significance of Pfordten's friendly talk and cordial assurances.

It was further learned that Pfordten had already, in January, laid the proposal of the motion before the Vienna Cabinet for consideration, and that the latter, after long deliberation, had in March expressed its approval, without deeming itself called upon to utter to its Prussian ally and joint owner a single syllable about the contents and motive of this proposal. It was not until the 19th of March, after the announcement of the intention to bring forward the motion had already been made in Frankfort, that Count Mensdorff, simultaneously with his signing of a circular addressed to the Lesser States, and favoring the motion, made the first mention of the whole matter to the Berlin Cabinet. Nor did he now state the wording, but only a general outline of the motion.

This expressed, it was said, the confident expectation that Austria and Prussia would now establish the Hereditary Prince as the lawful Duke. The Vienna Court, the Count said, had, conformably to the spirit of the Prussian alliance, restrained the Lesser States from demanding at once an authoritative decree of the Confederation, and thus brought it about that the term "expectation" was used.<sup>1</sup> He further said that on the occasion of this motion Austria proposed to lay before the Confederate Diet the whole course of the correspondence between herself and Prussia. So far as the method of proceeding with the motion was concerned, Austria would object to having it referred to a committee, but would prefer to have the vote taken at once, say after a week's time. It was, moreover, urged upon the consideration of the Court of Berlin, whether the two Powers, as the most nearly concerned, had not better refrain from voting, in order to make less noticeable their possible differences of opinion.

In order to reduce still further Prussia's zeal in opposing the motion, it seemed advisable to the Vienna statesmen, in their conversation with Werther, to emphasize its utter insignificance. The Confederate Diet, they said, is not competent to decide the matter of a disputed succession; so that if Prussia should not consent to the motion, then of course it could have no effect whatever except that of allowing Pfordten and Beust once more to announce to their parliaments that

<sup>1</sup> Pfordten very reluctantly declared later that not a word of this was true. The motion, he said, was brought forward exactly as he and Beust had written it in December.

they had been making grand and glorious efforts in the cause of Schleswig-Holstein. Consequently, it was a matter of perfect indifference, said they, to Austria, whether the Confederate Diet passed the motion or not; and certainly, in the fact that Austria supported it there lay, according to them, no violation of the compact of January 16th. "We have only wished to express an opinion, but have no idea of advocating any actual measures without an understanding with Prussia."

This was rather a strange phenomenon, this assertion of the perfect harmlessness of a Confederate decree, coming as it did from the lips of the Great Power that had been continually objecting to the fulfilment of Prussia's wishes on account of the sanctity of the Confederate laws; for a greater degradation of the authority of the Confederation could not be imagined than to allow it to pass decrees that could be rendered void by the opposition of a single member, and about matters that had even been said not to come within the limits of its functions.

All this talk did not, of course, make the least impression in Berlin. It could not alter the fact, that a Confederate decree, advocated and supported by Austria, was not merely the expression of an opinion, but was a very important political act. In spite of the compact of January 16th, Austria had, behind Prussia's back, been making agreements with Prussia's enemies; and, in spite of Austria's participation in the Peace of Vienna, she had taken a stand in favor of the recogni-

tion of the claims of Augustenburg. Even if the wording of the motion did not exactly state this recognition, it was, nevertheless, very evidently presupposed as a fact,—for how else could the proposal express the confident expectation that “Austria and Prussia would *now*” proceed to establish the Prince as Duke?

In view of all the mutual declarations that had been made, there could no longer be any doubt: the support of the motion by Austria was hardly consistent with a continuance of the alliance. The acceptance of the same by the Confederate Diet had already been spoken of by Prussia as the beginning of a conflict; and nothing was more certain than it would give a tremendous impulse to all anti-Prussian agitation in the Duchies.

In Berlin the decision was made at once. This aggression should be answered not only by words in Frankfort, but by deeds in the Duchies. On the 24th of March, King William issued an order to the Minister of the Navy, commanding the transference of the Prussian marine-station from Dantzic to Kiel, as a signal to the whole world that Prussia would not allow herself to be driven out of the Duchies by either Augustenburg or the Confederate Diet.

On the same day, Bismarck sent a note to Werther, in which the above-mentioned position was clearly stated; the demand made, that the motion should be referred to a committee; and the plan of holding aloof from voting rejected, on the ground that whereas for Austria, after her understanding with the proposers of the motion, it would be merely the omission of an

unimportant matter of form, for Prussia it would seem to signify her recognition of the justice of the motion, and of the authority of the Confederation in the matter. Savigny received similar instructions, and was empowered, immediately after the motion should be made, to declare Prussia's rejection of it.

When, a few days later, Count Karolyi announced to the Minister that Austria had already, on the 19th of March, assured the Lesser States of her intention to urge that the vote be taken without any delay, and consequently could not well draw back from this position, Bismarck expressed his regret that Austria had already entered into obligations in another direction. "We have come," he said, "to where the road divides. I trust that we shall not be led too far apart. But as matters stand now, our tickets take us upon diverging routes; nor could we on this trip enter the carriage that you already share with others."



## CHAPTER VI.

## AUSTRIA AND THE CONFEDERATE DIET.

IN the Confederate Diet things took the course that had been anticipated. On the 27th of March, 1865, Bavaria, Saxony, and Hesse-Darmstadt (which had been admitted into the number of the champions at Dalwigk's particular request) brought forward the motion: The Confederation expresses its confident expectation that Austria and Prussia will now transfer the administration of Holstein to the Prince of Augustenburg, and at the same time will inform the Confederation of their decision with reference to Lauenburg. Austria moved that the vote should be taken after a week's time: Prussia wished to have the matter referred to a committee. A majority of nine against six decided in favor of Austria. Then followed Savigny's announcement that Prussia would not fulfil this confident expectation, but, on the other hand, would now assert the ancient hereditary claims of Brandenburg to about one-half of the Duchies.

On the 6th of April, the vote was taken. Austria voted for the motion: her eight associates of March 27th followed suit, and the Confederation began to await the installation of Augustenburg "with confident expectation." But Austria then arose once more to

give a short account of her negotiations up to that time with Prussia, and closed with the declaration that the Imperial Court would be immediately ready to transfer to the Hereditary Prince her rights to Schleswig-Holstein, so soon as Prussia should take the same step.

Inasmuch, however, as Prussia had already signified the opposite of such an intention, Austria's declaration could have only a very depressing effect upon the Lesser States and their followers. "It stands the same as ever," said the *Leipziger Constitutionelle Zeitung*. "Austria has had solely the aim of loading the odium of the affair upon Prussia." Pfordten consoled himself easily. "The motion itself," said he to Prince Reuss, "will, to be sure, be without effect for the present; but I can do now what I will with the Bavarian Parliament."

In Schleswig-Holstein, the Augustenburgs and their patrons paid very little attention to these disagreeable details of the debates at Frankfort. They kept to the main point: it was a fact that the Confederate Diet under Austria's leadership had demanded the recognition and coronation of Duke Frederick VIII. How long, then, was it possible for the Prussian usurpation to continue? The newspapers broke forth in a storm of resentment against Prussia; and in the societies the strict particularists gained a greater preponderance over the friends of the "close union." Prussia's February demands, they said, were quite as audacious as her scheme of complete annexation, and were also, fortunately, quite as harmless; for neither Austria, nor the

Confederate Diet, nor the popular assembly of Schleswig-Holstein would ever allow them to be carried out, even if the Duke himself should wish to submit to them.

In the same spirit Augustenburg's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Herr Samwer, an ambitious man, in whose brain there was far more cunning than wisdom, had, on the 31st of March, received the signature of the Prince to a despatch to be sent to his agent in Berlin, a certain Herr von Ahlefeldt, which began with declarations of the greatest willingness to accept the conditions of the February demands, but then, in taking up the details point by point, made reservations more or less comprehensive, and at the close expressed the hope that after the coronation it would be possible, by negotiations with the sovereign and his parliament, to realize speedily the desired arrangements. In spite of all the fine phrases at the beginning, the despatch meant the definite rejection of Prussia's wish to have the February demands accepted before the coronation of the Duke.

Likewise, Herr von Halbhuber did all that could be done, to confirm Schleswig-Holstein in this attitude. "You may rest assured," he wrote to Count, A. Baudissin, "that nobody but Duke Frederick is going to rule the Duchies. Prussia remembers too well her lesson learned at Olmütz, to risk making any resistance."—"And yet," asked Baudissin, "suppose she should be so rash?"—"Then we'll murder her!" cried Halbhuber. "All Germany is on our side; and

the moment we declare war, a French army will also cross the Rhine."

Now, whether Halbhuber himself actually believed what he said or not, it certainly did have a great effect in encouraging the Augustenburg faction, and in intimidating the friends of Prussia. New proofs, too, of the sentiments of the joint owner in Vienna followed in rapid succession. When Zedlitz informed his colleague of the orders to transfer the Prussian marine station to Kiel, Halbhuber promised to take part in making the preliminary preparations at Kiel; so that Zedlitz, without any misgivings, sent, on the 3d of April, the necessary requests to the Government of the Duchies. Even on the 10th, Halbhuber signed with him an appropriate order to General Herwarth, and in a conference with the Prussian Rear-Admiral Jackmann approved of every one of the latter's suggestions.

In the mean time the Ministry in Berlin had, on the 4th of April, asked the Parliament for an appropriation to cover the expenses of the Navy, and among these the cost of establishing the projected station at Kiel. On the occasion of presenting this request, Roon remarked that Prussia would never give up the possession of the port at Kiel. The news of this speech produced a great excitement at Vienna, especially in military circles. Deep resentment was felt at this arbitrary act of seizure without any consultation with the joint owner.

On the 11th of April, telegraphic instructions were sent to Halbhuber to stop the preparations that were

going on; whereupon the Austrian commissioner, without conferring with Zedlitz, immediately wrote to the Government of the Duchies, prohibiting it from taking any steps in the way of complying with the requests of Zedlitz, and then published reports of his doings in the newspapers. At the same time, Mensdorff, in the name of Austria as joint owner of Holstein and as a Confederate Power, sent to Berlin an official protest against the whole proceedings, and declared that before coming to an agreement with the future sovereign, he would consent to no measure that should advance alone the interests of Prussia.

If Austria's support of the Confederate decree passed at Frankfort had been regarded in Berlin as inconsistent with a continuance of the alliance, this protest appeared to the Prussian Cabinet in the light of a manifestation of open hostility. It was felt the more to be such, since Bismarck had only a few days before told Count Karolyi of his purpose to summon a representative assembly of Schleswig-Holstein.

On the 17th of April, Bismarck sent his answer to Vienna, saying that "each one of the joint possessors has, as such, the right of making use of the bays and harbors in the country, provided it does not interfere at all with the same right on the part of the other associate; and this latter intention is as far as possible from the design of the Prussian Government. If Austria, on account of her geographical position, is not able to make use of the harbor at Kiel for her own fleet, that is no reason why Prussia, who is differently situated,

should let it lie idle. Roon's declaration in the House of Deputies means nothing more than what has long been known to the Vienna Cabinet, namely, that Prussia would, under no circumstances, give her consent to any solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question that should not leave her in possession of the port of Kiel. Moreover, Austria will not undertake to say that the supreme commander in the Duchies is required to get the consent of both Governments for every slight alteration in the garrisons, and for every change in the distribution of the troops. Prussia is ready to withdraw from the land-forces in Holstein exactly as many soldiers, man for man, as she intends to send marines for the equipment of the vessels at Kiel. The King, considering these circumstances, has learned of Austria's protest only with the greatest surprise."

More than one despatch was sent back and forth with ever-increasing irritation. Meanwhile the Prussian works in the bay of Kiel went on their way, and Austria did not consider it advisable to put into effect here any of her warnings. But the mutual relation of the two Powers became from day to day less satisfactory. Whenever Bismarck complained of Halbhuber's increasing rudeness, Mensdorff replied that Herr von Halbhuber was only acting in accordance with his instructions. Then the Prussian complaints were repeated concerning the indiscreet publications of the Vienna Press and the virulent articles in Paris newspapers, which had emanated from the Austrian embassy. To this Mensdorff had no other response to make than

his old one: that the affairs of the Press did not come within his jurisdiction.

“Leave in the mind of Count Mensdorff,” wrote Bismarck to Werther, “no doubt as to our desire to promote an harmonious understanding, but also no doubt as to our intention to govern our steps exactly according to those of the Imperial Cabinet. We shall try every means to bring matters to a peaceful conclusion; but we shall shrink back from no possibilities, if we are refused what we believe to be necessary for the protection of Prussia on the north, and for the development of our navy.”

It was very hard for King William to believe in the existence of hostile feelings on the part of his imperial nephew, and still harder to entertain such in his own heart. Yet he also was ever determined to maintain the great national aims, and was fully alive to the criticalness of the situation. He therefore gave full powers to his Minister to provide for any emergency that might arise in Prussia's relations with the rest of Europe.

On the 20th of April, Bismarck gave a summary of the situation in two despatches to Count Goltz, and requested him to find out certainly whether any mutual advances had been made between the Courts of Paris and of Vienna. He also commissioned him to convince the Emperor Napoleon that, on the one hand, the King's personal feelings, regard for the treaties, and the desire to preserve the peace of Germany, gave to the Prussian policy a conciliatory character; but that,

on the other hand, if these considerations should be annulled by the conduct of others, then, in view of the dangerous exposure of Austria in Hungary and Italy, and of the inadequate military power of the Lesser States, Prussia would have no reason to fear a rupture thus forced upon her.

The observations were communicated on the 21st of April to Count Usedom, the ambassador at Florence, with the question as to what stand, in Usedom's opinion, Italy would take in the event of a rupture: whether she would take sides with Prussia, whether she would first have to ask the consent of France, and whether, in the latter case, she would be likely to secure the same. "We do not," added Bismarck, "by any means regard this condition of things, which we have supposed, as actually imminent. We have not given up the hope of agreeing with Austria upon some solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question; but the possibility of the contrary does exist. It is not our intention, however, at present to provoke any definite declaration from the Italian Government; and we wish to avoid any suspicious interrogations. You, yourself, in your present position, are able to form some opinion about the attitude that could probably be expected from Italy; and I should rather trust your private judgment, and content myself with comparatively inexact data, than throw a match unnecessarily into the deliberations of the Italian statesmen, and thus run the risk of disturbing the peace prematurely. We must take great care, so long as the possibility of preserving friendly relations



with Austria remains open to us, not to be drawn against our will, nor sooner than circumstances absolutely demand it, into the current of French-Italian politics.

Usedom replied at once, on the 26th of April, that he felt perfectly safe in saying, that in the event of a great war between Prussia and Austria, Italy would immediately seize Venetia with a force of two hundred and fifty thousand men. Nor would Napoleon, judging from his whole Italian policy, either be able or wish to hinder her. Goltz also believed it probable that Napoleon would allow the Italians free swing; and he had been able to discover no signs of any advances on his part to Austria.

Meanwhile Bismarck had been trying a new line, which might possibly lead to a peaceable solution.

We have already mentioned above that the Minister, in his firm conviction of the justice of Prussia's wishes, had very seriously considered the plan of summoning a Schleswig-Holstein assembly under the authority of the joint possession. He thought he might obtain, if not the consent to Prussian annexation, at least to the February demands, in view of the pressing needs of the Duchies, of Prussia, and of Germany. At his first mention of this plan to his friends, it encountered opposition on all sides. The ambassador Von Richtenhofen in Hamburg, Baron Scheel-Plessen in Holstein, and Baron von Zedlitz in Schleswig declared with one voice that the scheme was hopeless. Not only, said they, did the political societies entirely control the

elections in Holstein, and for the most part in Schleswig, so that the majority in a representative assembly would certainly favor Augustenburg; but the elections would also, of themselves, arouse the passions afresh throughout the whole country, and the assembly would, in its very first session, proclaim Duke Frederick VIII. to be the only lawful sovereign, and declare itself incompetent to pass any vote until after his coronation. The Grand Duke of Oldenburg, too, whom Bismarck informed of his project, sent word to him that the announcement of his intention was an admirable play against the Lesser States, who had already thought of bringing forward a motion to the same effect in the Confederate Diet; but that the attempt to carry out the plan would certainly lead to Prussia's defeat. Bismarck, however, whose habit was not that of easily giving up an idea that had once taken possession of him, did not allow himself to be turned aside by all this opposition.

Shortly before, Werther had reported, after a conversation with Biegeleben, that there seemed to be in Vienna an inclination to leave the settlement of affairs in Schleswig-Holstein to a direct understanding between Prussia and the future sovereign: Austria would, herself, never positively give her approval to the Prussian demands, but would perhaps remain passive, if the future ruler should accept them.

Referring to this, Bismarck wrote on the 17th of April: "Prussia has no misgivings about carrying out such a proposition, if Austria will be ready to assist us

in establishing upon the throne the candidate with whom we shall have come to an agreement. But such an understanding with Prince Augustenburg would offer to us the desired security only in case the Estates of the Duchies had already beforehand accepted the conditions so indispensable for us. Accordingly, the calling together of a united representative assembly of the Duchies, who may decide upon the details of a close union with Prussia, and upon their internal independence in other respects, seems to be a very judicious measure, concerning which we wish to come to an understanding with Austria. It is clear that a new election would be necessary; and therefore the first question to be decided would be whether it should take place according to the electoral law of 1854, or that of 1848. Prussia would, for her part, prefer the latter, but with the express reservation that no recognition of the whole Constitution of 1848 should be implied, but that its application should have reference to only this special and single case."

The answer of Mensdorff, on the 27th of April, showed clearly that this proposition was to the Vienna Cabinet both surprising and disagreeable. In view of the public sentiment at home and abroad, it could not be bluntly refused; therefore the Austrians, while they gave their consent to it, did their best, by fixing limitations and conditions, to render it fruitless and displeasing even to the Prussian Government. To start with, Werther's mistake was rectified: "Biegeleben has never spoken of any Prussian understanding with the future

Duke, but invariably of the same with the already established sovereign. When this is accomplished, Austria will not, of course, maintain longer her character of joint owner, but will, nevertheless, as a Confederate Power, still guarantee to the Duke that sovereignty due him in accordance with Confederate rights." Then passing to the question in hand, Mensdorff remarked, "It is, strictly speaking, opposed to all theoretical principles to summon the Estates before the coronation of the sovereign; yet, in the interests of peace, we will consent to the proposition upon three conditions. Firstly, in all negotiations with the Estates, the supreme civil authorities must act strictly upon the basis of the joint ownership; neither of the two Governments shall by itself have any separate dealings with the Estates. Secondly, in the summons the object in view shall be distinctly stated and limited; the Estates must be given to understand that they have to express the wishes of the country, but that this expression shall in no way anticipate or interfere with the decisions of the future sovereign, nor, so far as Holstein is concerned, with the decrees of the German Confederation. Thirdly, Austria is willing to have the Estates summoned according to the electoral law of 1848; but yet, since the constitutions of 1854 have never been revoked, it seems advisable, in order to insure the legality of the assembly, to allow the convention of the same to be authorized by the Estates as they now exist."

It will be seen that of these conditions Prussia might be indifferent to the third, but could not possibly accept

the first two. According to the first, Prussia would have been able to bring before the Estates no one of her proposals without Austria's approval; and this approval had already been refused ever since the 5th of March. Or again, if the Estates should proclaim Frederick Duke, Zedlitz would have no power to dissolve them without Halbhuber's assistance. According to the second condition, every vote of the Estates, even if approved by both of the Powers, would have no legal force, and be not at all binding upon the Hereditary Prince of Augustenburg.

From this standpoint, then, Bismarck replied to the Austrian despatch on the 7th of May. Mensdorff's advice about conferring with the Estates as they existed, concerning the convention of a united representative assembly, was commended by Bismarck in the interests of legality; but, at the same time, he threw out the question whether it would not be better to propose to the Estates an election, not according to the laws of 1848, but on the basis of universal suffrage and direct election. That was the agitation again in the mind of this enterprising statesman, of a dangerous idea, — an idea which two years later was to involve, by its realization upon a broader field, most serious consequences. Furthermore, the Prussian Minister, in contrast to Mensdorff, insisted absolutely upon the right of each of the joint owners to hold communication freely with the popular representatives; and he said that the latter, in order to be able to fulfil their task, must receive full information from all sides upon all disputed questions.

Prussia, he said, wished to arrange with Austria some common programme, but could not in any way submit to having limitations put upon her free intercourse with the Estates. Finally, Bismarck emphasized another special point. Immediately after the appearance of the Prince of Augustenburg in Holstein, on the 31st of December, 1863, Austria and Prussia had moved in the Confederate Diet to have the Prince ejected from the country, but, as is well known, had failed to obtain a majority for their motion. Since then, the Prince with his ministers had been residing at Kiel; he had, as we have seen, been holding lively intercourse on matters of business with the political societies, and also with the authorities of the country; and as he had formerly enjoyed the patronage of the Confederate commissioners, so now he rejoiced in the protection of Austria. Bismarck now protested that the presence of that Prince in the country, during the elections and the sessions of the assembly, was inconsistent with the impartiality which both Governments holding possession were bound to observe towards the various pretendants to the crown. "We might expect," said Bismarck, "that even a feeling of political propriety would lead the Prince to withdraw during the elections; but we must, in any case, turn to Austria, and, consistently with the motion of December 31st, demand the removal of the Hereditary Prince and his so-called ministry, before we begin the arrangements for the elections."

It was believed in Vienna that Prussia had only

made the proposition of summoning a representative assembly in the certain expectation that Austria would reject it. It was, therefore, decided to avoid this snare, and to appear as amicable as possible in the matter; and the concession was accordingly made, although with some questioning, that each of the two civil commissioners might negotiate separately with the Estates. Austria was further willing, on account of the loss of time involved, to drop the requisition that the existing Estates should first be consulted with regard to the convention of the new assembly; but she saw no reason for holding the elections on the basis of universal suffrage. With reference to the Hereditary Prince, the motion made on the 31st of December, 1863, seemed to the Vienna Cabinet to have no force now, in view of the utterly different condition of things. There would be no objection made, if the Prince of his own accord should leave the country; but Austria was unwilling to go any further. "For," said Mensdorff, in his despatch of May 11th, "if all pretendants must be removed during the elections, then the commissioners and the troops of the two Powers holding possession would also have to leave the country, which would be manifestly impracticable. We shall await with interest," said the Count in closing, "further information from Prussia."

There were evidently many disputed matters to be settled between Vienna and Berlin before the opening of the representative assembly. And, in the mean time, the news of these negotiations had very quickly spread far and wide, and aroused everywhere the great-

est excitement. The French Government paid such a loud tribute of praise to the Prussian proposition, that the Paris newspapers that were under the influence of the Austrian embassy quite openly claimed for Count Mensdorff the credit of suggesting the proposition. In Munich the Minister, Von der Pfordten, gave expression to his admiration for the great qualities of statesmanship that Bismarck had displayed in making the proposition; while in Hanover, on the other hand, there was much anxiety lest Bismarck should agree with the assembly in fixing upon Augustenburg.

But it was in Schleswig-Holstein itself that the effect produced was entirely unfavorable to the fulfilment of Prussia's wishes. After the Confederate decree passed April 6th, and Halbhuber's public protest against the works in the harbor of Kiel, very few persons in the Duchies had any faith whatever in the success of Prussia's efforts. And many things in addition served to occasion doubts about the firmness of the Prussians in their own resolutions.

During the struggles which were going on at this time in the internal politics of Prussia, it was the *Kreuzzeitung* party alone that supported the Ministry unconditionally in the questions of the army and of the budget; and this influential newspaper, which was everywhere regarded as the organ of the Government, declared, day after day, the impossibility of a rupture between Austria and Prussia, and whiningly besought that the Holy Alliance might be preserved at any price. In the Lower House, too, the Progressists made no



effort to conceal their sympathy for Augustenburg; and even among the remaining liberal fractions, which, as well as their constituents, held an annexation to be the best practical solution of the question, considerations connected with the struggle over the Constitution outweighed every other. So long as the Government persisted in its attitude upon this subject, these parties were determined to hinder its success in every other point, and consequently to withdraw all their support from the Government in Schleswig-Holstein affairs, even to the refusal of any appropriation for war-vessels and for a naval station at Kiel.

The Court at Kiel took care, at the same time, that the personal friendship of the Crown Prince for Duke Frederick was particularly spoken of again and again in the newspapers, though without mention of the fact that the continuance of this good-will depended upon the fulfilment of the February demands.

In short, public opinion in the Duchies now regarded the Prussian cause as lost, and saw in Bismarck's proposal to summon a representative assembly nothing but the introduction to a dignified retreat, and an attempt to conceal the defeat by the magnanimous declaration that Prussia would no longer oppose the unanimous will of the Schleswig-Holstein people. So the Augustenburg societies threw themselves with ardent zeal into the work of the electoral agitations. In every place, the platform which they announced was just what Richthofen and Scheel-Plessen had foretold; namely, No man shall be chosen as representative who will not

solemnly promise to vote in the very first session for the proclamation of Duke Frederick VIII. as sovereign, and for the resolution that the assembly is incompetent to act until the Duke is crowned. It was believed that these doctrines would be ratified on all sides, by Austria, by the Confederation, and by all parties in Prussia, and that the illegal scheme of annexation would disappear as smoke before the tempest.

All these circumstances may well have caused Bismarck many a time to cry out in the bitterness of his heart, "I tread the wine-press alone!" Yet not for a moment was the thought of yielding nor a feeling of discouragement entertained by him. The conviction of the soundness and the national importance of his cause was too firmly rooted in his soul to allow of that. "I shall, at some time," said he, "be the most popular man in all Germany."

In several messages to Werther, he once more gathered together, in one whole, on the 12th of May, all the complaints against Austria, and instructed the ambassador to discuss all the separate points with Mensdorff, and to assure him of Prussia's desire for peace, and the maintenance of the alliance; but, at the same time, he was to leave no doubt about the certainty of an armed conflict as the result of a continuance of the conduct displayed hitherto. Werther carried out these instructions on the 18th of May, but could not report much success. To be sure, Mensdorff promised to prevent a proclamation of Augustenburg by the assembly as Duke Frederick VIII., and in several special points

was willing to urge upon Halbhuber a more friendly bearing; but in the main questions he held firmly to his old position.

“Austria cast her vote in the Confederate Diet,” he said, “because Prussia was unwilling to hold aloof from the voting; and she cast it as she did, because Prussia, in her Holstein demands, was acting without any consideration of Austria.” He agreed that Austria and Prussia were called to be the leaders in Germany; but he could not, for this reason, put entirely out of sight all regard for the Lesser States, who were unjustly looked upon as enemies of Prussia. He was exceedingly sorry for the existing coolness of the mutual relations between the two Powers, but laid the blame only upon the unjustifiable Prussian demands. If there were no equivalents offered to Austria, a Prussian annexation was out of the question. The formation of a State tributary to Prussia was excluded by the laws of the Confederation; and whoever might be the Austrian Minister, he would be unable to offer his support to that. “To bring it about, a reform of the Confederate Constitution must first take place; this, however, is utterly improbable, and the maintenance of the present Confederate laws lies wholly in the interests of Austria. So long then as Prussia insists upon those demands, it would be a fruitless undertaking for Austria to make conflicting propositions. Only along the line of mutual concession is an agreement perhaps possible.”

This was of the same sort of haughty language, that had been always heard from the Austrian Chancellor-

ship in its dealings with rivals and dependents; and, as had often formerly been the case, so it was now, that the rise in the tone did not mean a consciousness of superior strength, but a desire to conceal inward embarrassment. For just at this time, there was brewing in the Empire on the Danube, not merely a ministerial crisis, but also, and in closest connection with the same, both a financial and a constitutional crisis. As we have already seen, after the absolutism of 1850 had had a fall, owing to the Italian defeats, Schmerling had assured the Emperor of his power to preserve the unity of the Empire by constitutional and liberal measures, and to strengthen the central authority by a common parliament of all the crown-lands.

But now it was evident, on the one hand, that Ministers and Royal Counsellors together were not strong enough to overcome the increasing resistance of Hungary, and the discontented murmurings of the Croats and the Czechs; and, on the other hand, that the Lower House, instead of supporting the Government with a necessary increase of means, kept reminding it of its constitutional limitations, plied it with petitions and resolutions, and, above all, in money matters always took opposite sides with the Ministry.

The financial situation was very distressing. Every year the expenses were greater than the income; and, at the end of the year, the deficit was larger than had been provided for in the budget. Thus, in 1864, the expenses had exceeded the appropriations by seven million florins, while the revenues fell short of this by

twenty millions. The Government helped itself as best it might; and, without regard for the prescriptions of the budget, paid the most pressing debts, and left the others in arrears. The Imperial Parliament had, therefore, abundant occasion for making sharp criticisms.

The majority declared repeatedly that additional taxes and further loans were out of the question, and that there was no other way open than the strictest economy. Their retrenchments affected all branches of the administration: in the first place, as may be supposed, the military, for which the Government had requested one hundred and seven millions, but the Lower House had been willing to appropriate only seventy-nine millions, in spite of the assertion of the Minister of War, that with the latter amount the organization of the army could not be maintained. The Government tried in every possible way to reduce the cost of the army and navy: all horses that could at all be spared were sold, a great number of the troops were sent home on furloughs, and many projected buildings for military purposes were given up.

The generals were in a rage. The nobility besieged the Emperor with prayers that the Empire might not be allowed to perish at the hands of the constitutional quacks. All the fine promises of Schmerling, they said, had resulted in their opposites; his great Parliament had not been able to bend the will of Hungary, but, on the contrary, had, by its unwarrantable criticisms, weakened the influence and dignity of the Government, and, by its wretched niggardliness, had impaired the defen-

sive power of the Empire. These complaints began to gain the ear of the Emperor. A common feeling of insecurity, of suspense, and of discontent lay over the whole Empire.

Under these circumstances, of which, of course, the Court of Berlin was not ignorant, Mensdorff's haughty words could by no means overawe the Prussian Government. At this moment the former words of the Emperor Francis Joseph were remembered; namely, that in the event of any possible future misunderstanding, he hoped General Manteuffel might again be sent to Vienna. And so, on the 19th of May, instructions were drawn up for the General, which, with a clear precision, described the danger of the situation:—

“Our relations with Austria,” the instructions read, “stand at a turning-point that is decisive for our whole policy. The course hitherto pursued by Austria must unavoidably lead us to a rupture; and, in that case, Prussia must look well to her relations with the other Powers. So far, every interference on the part of foreigners has been prevented by the co-operation of Austria and Prussia. This condition no longer obtains, if Austria places herself in opposition to us. We should be sorry for this, but must prepare for it. Austria has never had any scruples, in European questions, about pursuing, regardless of us, a course that seemed to her the most useful for her own ends, nor, as in 1854 at the time of the Eastern war so also during the Polish rebellion in 1863, about assuming, in spite of her own evident interests, an attitude that was manifestly deter-

mined only by her wish to bring about closer relations with France.

“Should the Vienna Cabinet, in spite of the experiences of this last year, continue this line of conduct, then we should be obliged, for the sake of our own security, to do the same: Prussia would not find this harder than Austria. The chief object of your presence in Vienna is to gain certain and trustworthy information as to whether our alliance is valued enough there to insure its preservation by an acknowledgment of our just demands, or whether the opposite tendencies in Vienna have already become so strong that we must regard a rupture as impending, and accordingly must at once determine upon our policy, in the first place in Schleswig-Holstein, and also with reference to the other European Powers. We desire reconciliation, but shall not hesitate at the prospect of a conflict.”

Of course, it could not be denied that an extraordinary mission, with such instructions as these, might very easily bring matters to a crisis, and possibly make it, under certain circumstances, a matter of honor for Prussia to declare immediately the breaking off of diplomatic relations. Therefore, the King, for the sake of discussing again carefully the affair in all its bearings, called a session of the Ministerial Council, which was held on the 29th of May. The King presided, and both the Crown Prince and General Moltke were present.

The King opened the session with the remark that although the Danish war had been regarded from the

beginning not merely as a Prussian but as a national affair, yet Austria had never been left to doubt that Prussia would demand a recompense for her sacrifices. The question was now whether to this end the annexation of the Duchies or the programme of February 22d were the more advisable. Bismarck then arose, and began by saying that Prussia certainly ought not to be more unfavorably conditioned in the new order of things than she had been before, when her relations with Denmark had been friendly. She would, however, suffer such an injury in the creation of a new Lesser State independent of her; for, in view of the present hostile attitude of Denmark, against whom the Schleswig-Holstein army could afford only an inadequate protection, Prussia would be burdened worse than ever. To secure herself against this, three ways were open to her.

“The first is to limit herself to the demands of February 22d. This plan has the advantage that these minimum requisitions — especially if she gives up the requirement to take the Prussian oath of allegiance, and the complete incorporation of the Schleswig-Holstein troops in the Prussian army — might perhaps be obtained by peaceful means. It is true, that the Duchies would be burdened with a public debt of eighty millions, that public opinion in Prussia would look upon such a result as a retreat, and that the inevitable friction growing out of such a condition of things must eventually lead to an annexation.

“The second way would be for Prussia to obtain the



possession of the Duchies by indemnifying Austria, and by a payment of money to the pretendants. But, inasmuch as Austria demands a territorial compensation, and his Majesty is unwilling to cede any portion of the country, this proposition need not be followed further.

“Finally, a third course offers itself in the shape of a formal demand for annexation. The probable result of this would be a war with Austria. The European situation just now would seem to be propitious, since the neutrality of both Russia and France could be hoped for. Indeed, the Russian Cabinet has even hinted that it would bring forward the claims of Oldenburg if Austria advocated those of Augustenburg. A war with Austria cannot in the long run be avoided, since the policy of suppressing Prussia has again been pursued by the Austrian Government. Nevertheless, we are not in a position to advise his Majesty to undertake a great war with Austria. The decision can be the result only of his free and royal conviction. If such decision be made, the whole Prussian nation will joyfully follow him.”

Prudently as these remarks were worded, yet their warlike tendency could not be mistaken. In no less prudently selected phrases did the Minister of Finance, Bodelschwingh, express his wish for a peaceful conciliation. The Minister of War, Von Roon, not so afraid of war as Bodelschwingh, and yet disinclined to break with Austria, declared that annexation was indeed the goal to be kept always in view, but urged the question

whether it were not better to hold to the February programme as the first station on the way.

The Minister of Education, Von Mühler, of a classical turn of mind, opposed this opinion: it was the system of protection and dependence that led the Athenians into the Peloponnesian War. Simple incorporation seemed to him preferable. Count Lippe, the Minister of Justice, with the same sentiments announced that the legal advisers of the Crown were soon to present their verdict that neither Oldenburg nor Augustenburg could advance any well-founded claims to the succession in the Duchies. The Minister of Agriculture, Selchow, considered it advisable to demand and to effect the annexation without any long hesitation; whereupon Count Eulenburg, the Minister of the Interior, again took up the arguments of Von Roon, and while he affirmed that the possession of Schleswig-Holstein should be kept as the end in view, he believed that it was not best to proclaim the annexation at present.

On the other hand, the Crown Prince spoke of the serious dangers attending the annexation, and of the disastrous effects of a war with Austria, which would tear Germany in pieces and would occasion the interference of foreigners. All these difficulties, he said, would be obviated by the elevation of the Hereditary Prince of Augustenburg; for the latter was thoroughly Prussian in his sentiments and ready to concur with the February demands. In opposition to this magnanimous expression of confidence in Augustenburg, Count Eulen-

burg expressed manifold misgivings in that regard, and cited the declaration of the Hereditary Prince on the 31st of March. Bismarck, too, observed that a war with Austria could not be looked upon as a civil war: Austria has always sought an alliance with France, and would accept it just so soon as France would give her consent.

In the soul of the King these several opinions may well have aroused contradictory feelings. His desire to avoid a rupture with the ancient ally still seemed to have the greatest weight. "We might very well, it is true," said he, "have conquered in the Duchies without Austria's help; but still, her alliance has prevented a European war." Then turning to Moltke, he asked: "What is the sentiment of the army?" "My personal feeling," responded the General, "is that annexation is the only salutary solution of the question for Prussia and for Schleswig-Holstein. The gain is great enough to sanction the cost of a war. Just claims of Austria are to be satisfied; but if that does not meet with success, we must make up our minds resolutely for war. So far as I know, the army favors the annexation. I consider as possible a victorious termination of the war. Numerical superiority, too, at the critical points can be secured, if that portion of the reserves which has been appointed to the fortresses not as yet endangered may also be allowed to enter the field."

The King closed the conference with the announcement that he would still reserve his decision.

So, for the time, the standpoint of the February demands was maintained; and in other respects the negotiations continued in the same course as heretofore. There seemed to be, accordingly, no special reason for sending Manteuffel to Vienna.



BOOK XIV.

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*THE GASTEIN AGREEMENT.*



## CHAPTER I.

### PRUSSIA'S ULTIMATUM.

THE Hohenzollerns of the last century were a race strong in war, but one that by no means thirsted for war. They were ready, if they considered it necessary, to stake their lives for the rights and the honor of their state; but they took no pleasure in the cruel and bloody, though glorious, toil of battle. The feeling had grown to be almost a family tradition, that a struggle which was unavoidable must be entered into with a determination that should carry all before it, but that the sword must not be drawn so long as any means of obtaining a peaceful settlement remained untried. Even though, in adopting this course, an especially favorable moment might be allowed to pass by, though an opportunity might be given to the other side for preparation, and though the danger of the struggle when it did come was often increased: it was nevertheless felt that the delay was the conscientious fulfilment of a moral duty.

In the long run, Prussia had had no reason, in spite of various losses, to complain of this course of conduct on the part of her Kings. In the year 1780 her sovereign reigned over five million subjects; in the year 1880 her ruler controlled the destiny of forty-five



million men. And in the century that beheld this unexampled growth, Prussia had enjoyed nearly ninety years of peace, and had suffered for only six years the presence of hostile soldiers on her soil, a record unparalleled in the annals of Germany.

Feelings of the nature indicated above had no slight influence on King William's mind in regard to the relations with Austria. The bitter memories of Olmütz and the years following it had sunk into the background with the commencement of the Danish struggle. When the two nations began once more to wage war in common, the brotherhood-in-arms of 1813 was again borne in mind, and the long alliance of the period of the restoration. In addition to this there was the near relationship, and the personal friendship, of the two Sovereigns. All these considerations made the thought of an Austrian war very grievous to the King. Above all things, he was unwilling to make an over-hasty decision.

But on the other hand circumstances were pressing him onwards with increasing force. The question whether the conflict could be avoided without loss and disgrace was becoming more urgent for Prussia from day to day. She had made her claims before all the world; she had laid increasing stress upon every repetition of them; and she saw them obstinately rejected by Austria in the most essential points.

And only too soon did the difference between the two assume more considerable proportions. No man and no state can obliterate the past, and as things had

been developing for a hundred years, Austria saw that the growth of her power depended upon the dismemberment of Italy and of Germany, while Prussia, like Italy, had every reason to desire the unity of their respective Fatherlands. Twice had Austria led her northern rival away from this object; under Metternich by flattery and persuasion, under Schwarzenburg by the threat of overwhelming force. Now the question was posed for the third time. Austria forbade her ally to make use of the fruits of victory for her own benefit and that of Germany. She forbade this on the ground of the old Confederate principles. If she persisted, Prussia had only the choice between a repetition of Olmütz and the infringement of those Confederate principles.

One circumstance especially made it difficult for the Prussian Government to yield at all. Year after year the Lower House kept bringing up the reproach that the new organization of the army had failed and was injurious, and that it was a useless waste of the public money. However popular throughout the country was the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein, the creation of a German fleet, and Confederate reform in itself, the representatives of the people nevertheless persisted in refusing any expression of opinion on these questions so long as the constitutional difficulty was still pending. They also resolutely declined to grant any money, even for the fleet and harbor at Kiel, until the Government should have recognized the demands of the majority concerning the army and the budget. The

Government that had taken upon itself such a battle as this in the cause of strengthening its army, was irrecoverably lost, if it ended by repeating with that army the humiliating submission of 1850.

Bismarck began to abandon his faith in that dual supremacy in Germany, which he had so often and so urgently recommended to Count Rechberg, and for a time to the Count's successor. Like Mensdorff, the Prussian Minister valued highly the alliance between the two Powers, but also like Mensdorff, he desired it only on his own conditions and not on those of his ally. The haughty self-confidence with which the Government of Vienna seemed to regard a declaration of war by Prussia as out of the question made Bismarck feel that a collision was coming nearer and nearer; and after being driven thus far, he would have preferred for a hundred reasons to take as speedy methods as possible in doing what could not be avoided. If there should really be no other solution possible, the King's disposition would be the same as his Minister's; but in the King's mind, it was not yet certain that there was indeed no other way.

The correspondence concerning the proposed parliament of the Duchies therefore continued. On May 24th Bismarck had replied to the Austrian communication of the 11th. He had thankfully accepted the concession with reference to the Prussian commissioner's authority to negotiate separately with the Estates, but at the same time had said that he saw no reason for approving the withdrawal of the first Austrian pro-

posal, that for a preliminary consultation of the provincial Estates of 1854. It was his opinion that the legality of the proceedings, which Mensdorff had justly laid stress upon before, was of more importance than the loss of a few weeks in the necessary preparations for the elections.

He had repeated very emphatically his proposition that the Pretendant should be asked to withdraw from the country. "Mensdorff asserts," he wrote, "that since December, 1863, circumstances have essentially changed. That is true enough; but the change is of such a nature as to render the reasons for the expulsion of Prince Augustenburg only the more urgent and the more cogent. At that time Prince Frederick was the only pretendant. Now a Confederate Prince, the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, has also appeared. At that time the Hereditary Prince had been acting in opposition to Christian IX., against whom Germany was on the point of declaring war. Now the Prince is agitating against the two German Powers themselves. This must not be allowed to go on." Werther was therefore instructed to observe to the Austrian Minister that it was not the removal of the Hereditary Prince, but his presence, that required the consent of the two joint owners of the country; that Prussia, however, refused unconditionally to agree to this, and would enforce her prohibition by every means, without regard to consequences.

Mensdorff answered on the 1st of June. He expressed regret at the loss of time which the preliminary convening of the Estates would involve, but said that

he would raise no difficulty on this point and would agree to any decision of Prussia in regard to it. But he said that the Hereditary Prince could not be expelled, and that Austria would be obliged to meet with a decided protest any action that Prussia might undertake on her own account against him.

Bismarck, writing on the 13th of June, passed over this point of dispute very lightly to express his satisfaction at the understanding that had been reached about the Estates. On the same day he instructed Zedlitz to arrange with Halbhuber about holding the necessary supplementary elections. It was soon evident, however, that in this too Halbhuber was going to work with dilatoriness and ill-humor; and it cost Zedlitz, under constant pressure from Bismarck, not a little trouble to determine what forms and what officials were legally prescribed for elections among the old Estates.

Meantime the Cabinet of Berlin had become better enlightened concerning the disfavor with which, in spite of all fine phrases, the plan of a Schleswig-Holstein parliament was regarded in Vienna. Count Karolyi put into Bismarck's hands a communication from the Austrian Government, dated June 5th, which began by saying that that plan was no longer likely to facilitate a satisfactory solution, but rather threatened to produce new complications. "The convening of such a parliament," said this document, "has always seemed to Austria entirely superfluous, if Vienna and Berlin were in harmony, and very dangerous, if the

opposite were the case. Everything depends upon the speedy choice of a sovereign. Austria still persists in giving her vote for Augustenburg, but is nevertheless ready also to consider the Oldenburg claims.

“Another thing quite as pressing is a decision about Prussia’s demands of February 22d. Austria did, indeed, reject those demands on the 5th of March; but Prussia had no reason on that account to declare negotiations broken off. We therefore hope that Prussia will take up again the thread of those negotiations at the point to which they had been brought on the 5th of March, and that she will solve the difficulty with wise moderation. The harbor of Kiel and the garrison of Rendsburg will offer no difficulties. An understanding can easily be reached as to what should be required of the Duchies in regard to the navy. Concerning the military arrangements the Confederation will have the right to say the final word.” The despatch concluded by saying that if the existing provisional arrangement were to continue, Austria would propose that the Prussian army of occupation should be diminished from 16,000 to 10,000 men.

Not a little surprise was felt in Berlin over this communication, considering that on the 5th of March Austria had roundly declared that that phase of the negotiations that had been opened by Prussia’s demands was definitively closed. This desire now expressed for a renewal of those negotiations might be looked upon as an indication of a conciliatory spirit. Bismarck therefore answered on the 16th of June in

the most friendly tone, saying that no reply had been made to the communication of March 5th, simply because, after the absolute rejection of Prussia's proposals, counter-proposals were naturally to be expected from Vienna.

"We are ready," wrote Bismarck, "to come to an agreement about the person of the sovereign. We consider the Grand Duke of Oldenburg the most desirable, but are perfectly willing to discuss the merits of any other candidate, so soon as Austria shall have agreed to the removal of the Hereditary Prince and his Ministers from the country. Should no understanding be arrived at (to Prussia's regret), the government of the country in common must simply continue. This would not be attended with any disadvantages either to the Duchies or to Prussia, provided only that it be an actual government, and that any attempt to carry on another government independently or any agitation for the establishment of another sovereignty be treated as a rebellion against lawful authority. The condition of things being what it is at present, and an agitation of this nature being on foot in the whole country, Prussia cannot agree to diminish her army of occupation."

Every explanation thus returned to the same point of difficulty; and at every repetition, in spite of all desires for peace, the contradiction between the views of the two parties could not but become more and more marked. Prussia regarded herself, in virtue of the Peace of Vienna, as a participant in a legally-

grounded supremacy over the Duchies, and therefore used her own pleasure in making conditions and limitations for the cession of her rights. Austria acted almost like an accidental possessor of some one's else property — somewhat, to use Pfordten's expression, like a policeman who has got hold of stolen goods by driving off the thief — and was anxious to hand over the country as quickly as possible to the lawful owner. This was strange enough for a Power that had for years disputed the right of every pretendant and was ready at any moment to allow the Prussian annexation of the Duchies, on condition of receiving, herself, the district of Glatz.

At this time, however, the internal condition of things in the Austrian Empire was so serious that Mensdorff saw more and more reason for not pushing things to an issue with Prussia. On the 24th of June, therefore, he went a step further in the direction of conciliation. In a confidential communication to Werther he explained that it was difficult for Austria to make positive counter-propositions without calling in the other parties concerned. "All that we can do alone we have already done," he said. "We concede to Prussia a naval port and the occupation of a Confederate fortress, — the latter with the stipulation that Rastadt shall then receive a garrison exclusively Austrian. Further territorial gains for Prussia, in addition to the port of Kiel, would depend upon a corresponding gain for Austria (Hohenzollern or districts on the Silesian frontier). As to the military control, Austria



cannot possibly decide: the changes that would be necessary in order to satisfy the wishes of Prussia, can be determined only by the Confederate Diet. The other points, the marine, the canal, and commercial relations, could be left by Austria to an agreement between Prussia and the future sovereign. The solution of the question, who this sovereign shall be, must therefore precede everything else."

The Cabinet of Vienna thus gave up in great measure its opposition to Bismarck's proposal that Prussia should be left to come to an understanding alone with the future sovereign. On the 3d of July, Bismarck hastened to recognize this and replied to it by a no less important concession on the Prussian side. "Now," he said, "we will declare our readiness to subject the military organization of the Holstein contingent to the consideration of the Confederation, in the hope that in this matter also the practical necessities of the case will make themselves apparent. We are also disposed to take steps towards establishing a ruler in the Duchies, if Austria unites with us in choosing the Grand Duke of Oldenburg for that purpose. Last winter the Imperial Cabinet repeatedly declared that in the choice between the two candidates it was entirely indifferent. Only lately has it shown a decided preference for Augustenburg. We, however, cannot allow him to be forced upon us after he has manifested towards us such persistent hostility."

By these communications the two Powers had drawn nearer to each other, in all that concerned the arrange-

ments to be made in the Duchies, than at any time before. Austria was not, indeed, willing to approve, herself, of the Prussian demands, but she would no longer resist their acceptance by the Confederation, and would offer no opposition to the future sovereign; while Prussia on her side agreed to allow the co-operation of the Confederation, which she had hitherto always rejected. But unfortunately the personal question, the most important one of all, still remained unsettled: Austria continued to favor Augustenburg, and Prussia now no longer expressed a willingness to accept him on certain conditions, but rejected him altogether. Many things had recently concurred to bring about this altered sentiment in Berlin, and to change the former good-will of the King toward the Hereditary Prince into the contrary feeling.

In the Duchies the state of things continued the same as we have seen it to be since the beginning of the year. The newspapers and associations labored with increasing zeal for Augustenburg and a sovereign Schleswig-Holstein. The Government carried on the administration with similar tendencies, and sent, in a regular and business-like way, its weekly reports to Augustenburg's Minister of Finance, the Counsellor of State, Francke.

Those who favored annexation or a closer connection with Prussia were completely overawed. When any one of them ventured to come forward, he was held up as an object of public scorn by the newspapers, was avoided in society, and was annoyed as much as pos-

sible by those who held official positions both temporal and spiritual. The members of this party of annexation were the less inclined to bestir themselves, since Prussia had never as yet definitely announced an intention to annex the Duchies, and since, at the accession of the Prince, no matter whether with or without the February stipulations, every one that favored Prussia would have reason to be anxious about his own personal future.

Neither Zedlitz nor Herwarth could find any means for improving this state of things, inasmuch as every proposition directed toward that object was wrecked on Halbhuber's veto. The Austrian civil commissioner was himself in correspondence with Samwer, and not seldom sent by him or other confidential agents communications to the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Zeitung* in Altona,<sup>1</sup> the most prominent organ of the anti-Prussian party, and which, under the editorship of a Breslau Democrat, Moses May, daily gave vent to the most violent attacks upon everything that was Prussian.

All this was, as we know, eminently satisfactory to the Cabinet of Vienna. When, however, Bismarck kept expressly demanding the removal of the Prince, and the whole difference between the two Powers seemed to be concentrating on this point, it began to be felt at Vienna that the voluntary absence of Frederick from the Duchies would do his cause no harm. Advice to this effect was therefore sent to the Court at Kiel,

<sup>1</sup> These letters were found by the Prussian authorities among May's papers, after his arrest.

accompanied, of course, by a distinct declaration that Austria would offer her protection against any compulsion.

The same idea had also occurred to King William; and he sent a private autograph letter to the Hereditary Prince, urging him, though in a thoroughly courteous tone, to diminish the difficulties of the situation by withdrawing from the Duchies. The question, what arguments and counter-arguments were employed by the counsellors of the Prince on this occasion, need not be discussed. It is enough to say that the result was a negative answer to the King, couched in moderate language, and a statement in the *Kieler Zeitung* that Duke Frederick was determined not to quit the country, even if Prussia and Austria should express a wish to that effect.

The King, who, followed by Bismarck, had gone to Carlsbad on the 21st of June, felt himself personally affronted by this letter, both as a sovereign and as a military commander, since the Hereditary Prince was still a Prussian officer, and, in his capacity of landed proprietor in Silesia, a Prussian subject. Immediately after this, Herwarth sent a report about fresh articles in the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Zeitung* directed against the Prussian troops, with sarcastic allusions to the person of the King himself. The ambassador, Richtlofen, also sent word from Hamburg that the Hereditary Prince had for the time fixed his summer residence at Nienstädten, not far from Hamburg, and that great demonstrations by large numbers of people had been arranged

to take place there on July 6th, the Prince's birthday. He said, moreover, that in all the towns throughout the country public festivities were in preparation for that occasion. The indignation of the King increased with each new report of this kind; and just at this juncture the Minister of Justice presented the decisions of the Crown lawyers about the question of succession, denying that the Prince had any claim whatever to succeed in the Duchies.

This legal opinion had such an important effect on the one hand, and called forth such violent abuse on the other, that it will be well here to go into a little more detail with regard to it.

The legal advisers of the Crown, it is hardly necessary to observe, were not appointed for this occasion only, but had been long before placed permanently in office. Their official duty was not to defend claims of the Crown, but to give impartial legal opinions on such claims. These advisers were two pensioned ministers of justice, six presidents and councillors of the Supreme Court, two presidents of courts of appeal, and four professors of the Universities of Berlin and Bonn (Heffter, Homeyer, Daniels, and Bauerband), who were without question among the highest authorities in their line. In addition to these, there was a high-president, an efficient privy-councillor, and an attorney-general, as well as, finally, the Minister of Justice at that time, Count Lippe, who presided. Of these eighteen members, therefore, fourteen were, in view of their other vocations, quite as independent

with regard to the wishes of the Government as any professor of the sixteen law-faculties which since November, 1863, had given their opinion in favor of Augustenburg's right of succession.

The report concerning Lauenburg had been intrusted to Homeyer, that concerning Schleswig-Holstein to Heffter. The latter alone is of interest to us, since even at that time there was no serious difference of opinion about Lauenburg. By the great peace-treaties of 1815, which had settled the unconditional incorporation of Lauenburg in the Danish monarchy, all claims of earlier date upon that little country had become void.

As to Schleswig-Holstein, Heffter in his report — which filled more than four hundred folio pages — began by examining the question, what rights Austria and Prussia had acquired in that country by the Peace of Vienna, and he arrived at the following conclusions: —

“The Danish Law of Succession was promulgated in 1853. Since the existing Estates of the Duchies were not entitled to be consulted in regard to this, the law was sufficient to make the succession of Christian IX. legal for the whole country. Acting in accordance with this law, King Christian, recognized by the European Powers, took possession in 1863 of the sovereign power in the Duchies as well as in Denmark. After that time, although his claim was disputed, he was the embodiment of all the powers of government in Schleswig-Holstein, and had, as such, authority to acquire or to give up special portions of territory, unconditional

legal validity being attached to his acts. When, by the Peace of Vienna, he transferred his right to Schleswig-Holstein to the two German Powers, he conveyed to them complete sovereignty over the country."

Now it might be asked whether the Powers that were for the time legally in possession were not bound to consider, in making their dispositions for the future, such hereditary claims of different pretendants as were capable of being supported by proof. Heffter, therefore, went into great detail in investigating everything that had been brought forward since 1836 for and against the rights of the various pretendants. According to his conclusions, the Brandenburg claims could become valid only after the extinction of the House of Oldenburg, that is to say, they did not fall within any future period definite enough for consideration. The Gottorp claims were then held to be void through the renunciations of 1727, 1773, 1851, and 1852.

The question with reference to Augustenburg was more complicated. "Certainly," said Heffter, "a great number of the objections made to his right are unfounded. For the right of that House cannot be impugned on the score of failure to render homage, nor on that of unequal marriages, nor on that of old renunciations. The only thing of importance that can be brought forward is the agreement of December 30th, 1852, by which Duke Christian promised, for himself and his family, to recognize the succession that was about to be established and to undertake nothing against it. It is certain that this precludes the Duke himself from

bringing any further claims against King Christian or his successor, and from ceding his dormant right to a third party, to be asserted by that party. It is equally certain that while the Duke, the head of the family, lives, no other Augustenburg can stand forth in his own right against Christian IX.

“But how will it be after the Duke's death? Will the Hereditary Prince be then still bound by his father's promise? Or can he then assert a right of his own, inherent in his race?” Heffter felt obliged to admit, though rather doubtfully, that this was the case. It was his opinion, therefore, that after the death of the Duke, Austria and Prussia would be obliged to consider the claims of the Hereditary Prince.

This was Heffter's view. But he was able to convince the majority of his colleagues of the truth of only a portion of his arguments. The advisers of the Crown at once voted, by seventeen voices to one, to adopt his first proposition: “The Law of Succession settled the succession legally for the three countries.”

Immediately, however, the question arose with respect to Heffter's further arguments: “If the Law of Succession was valid for the Duchies, could there afterwards be consistently any further talk of the conflicting rights of an agnate to Schleswig-Holstein? Could it be asserted that Austria and Prussia were bound to recognize such rights when they were incompatible with that Law?”

These questions were, on the basis of the first vote, decided by the majority in the negative, and in further



support of their decision the following observations were made: "Cessions of territory made by the ruler of that territory, as sovereign, in consequence of the provisions of a peace, are state contracts, whereby objects of inheritance may be diminished in importance or entirely lost. It has never occurred to any one before, on the making of a treaty of peace, to require the assent of all those who had a claim to inherit in the territory ceded by that treaty. According to the letter of the Peace of Vienna, which is the only thing that really affords a standard for decision, the allied Powers have in common acquired unlimited authority, so far as the entire House of Oldenburg is concerned. Their future intentions with regard to the Duchies may be made the subject of political deliberations; but from an international point of view these two Powers are to be regarded as the parties to whom alone and unconditionally the rights of King Christian as Sovereign over country and people have been transferred." Then followed a resolution adopted by eleven against seven: "The Powers are not bound to recognize any hereditary rights of Augustenburg."

This proposition once established, the legal investigation of individual claims had no longer a practical, but only a scientific, significance. The lawyers concurred, for the most part unanimously or with a small minority, in Heffter's views about the invalidity of the Brandenburg and Gottorp claims. They also agreed with his refutation of the objections raised against Augustenburg on technical grounds of ancient

law. And they further declared by a vote of seventeen against one: —

“That the Hereditary Prince Frederick of Augustenburg is not to be regarded, since the decease of King Frederick VII., as the next in order of succession to the crown of the Duchies; also that Duke Christian of Augustenburg has by the agreement of December 30th, 1852, formally given the precedence to King Christian and his male heirs.”

The majority, on the other hand, refused to accept Heffter's opinion as to the claims of the Hereditary Prince after the death of the Duke. Once again was the dispute renewed, whether the father's promise was binding for the son, whether the express consent of the son was necessary for this purpose, and whether the participation of the son in the “additional clause” could be regarded as assent.

The consideration that was regarded as decisive was, that Duke Christian, by taking part in the agitation of 1848, had been in danger of forfeiting all he possessed, by being guilty of high treason. Only by the protecting mediation of Frederick William IV., that is, by resorting to international aid, had he succeeded, with the cognizance of his sons, in obtaining indemnity for the loss that would have thus been incurred. The object of that whole negotiation, as was well known both to him and to his sons, had been to secure by the payment of such an indemnity the new Danish succession in the manner intended by the Powers. The Duke's assent had therefore formed an essential part of the great European settlement of the succession in the united

Danish monarchy. In international negotiations of this sort the concurrence of the heads of families among the various claimants was always regarded as sufficient to settle definitely the succession in sovereign states. The Hereditary Prince was therefore forever bound by the promise of his father.

It was therefore resolved by eleven votes against seven, that the Hereditary Prince, even after the death of his father, would have no right to lay claim to the succession in the Duchies.

In all these resolutions the most interesting element is evidently not the acuteness and learning with which the old feudal questions were once more discussed. The historical importance of the whole thing lies much rather in the fact that the investigation was turned by Heffter's inconsistencies to the consideration of the most momentous principles of a monarchical state. The Crown lawyers were obliged to decide whether higher authority belonged to state and international laws than to the rights of individual princes, whether an order of succession established hundreds of years before gave to every agnate an unassailable personal claim, or whether the legislative power of the state was competent to introduce a new order of succession; in other words, whether the prerogatives of the Crown were to be settled according to the principles of the feudal system or according to the theory that has obtained in England for the last two hundred years. In this dilemma, the majority accepted the modern, the minority the feudal, standpoint. Bismarck, the man

who was supposed to be a *feudaler Junker*, agreed with the majority. On the other hand, it is another sign of the general confusion of notions at that time, that a large number of the adherents of the liberal parties greeted with enthusiasm the feudal arguments of the minority.

However the legal value of the opinion may be judged, the decisive importance of it practically is beyond dispute. For the King, already indignant at the personal behavior of the Hereditary Prince, now found himself freed from the legal scruples he had hitherto entertained. The February programme was henceforth to be regarded by Prussia as a stage already passed.

Corresponding measures were taken without delay. Bismarck wrote to Werther about the popular demonstration intended for the 6th of July, and instructed him to tell Count Mensdorff that Prussia would at once take military steps against any disturbance that might arise on that occasion. He then instructed Zedlitz to be present at every session of the Ducal Government, to keep informed of everything that was discussed there, and to forbid any measures that might seem to him dangerous.

On the 30th of June, the King wrote an autograph letter to the Emperor Francis Joseph, making a direct request to the Emperor himself for the removal of the Hereditary Prince. "I cannot," he said in concluding, "long put up with that lack of respect for my dignity as sovereign and as military commander that is involved

in the attitude adopted toward me by the Prince. I appeal to your friendship and to your own sentiments, begging that you will co-operate with me in remedying this state of things by some method suited to our mutual relations, that is, by some action taken by us in common."

The reply of the Emperor to these friendly expressions was awaited with the more anxiety, since King William felt that it would decide the question whether peace was possible or a breach unavoidable. His patience was giving way, and was not strengthened by the reports that arrived daily from the Duchies. Zedlitz sent word that Halbhuber opposed every measure directed against the festivities of July 6th; and further, that he made a protest against the presence of Zedlitz at the sittings of the Ducal Government. Richthofen received information that the city officials of Altona intended to send a deputation on the 6th, to congratulate the Hereditary Prince as sovereign, and to assure him of their loyalty; also, that the Prince, on his side, though he had forbidden the popular demonstrations, would receive the deputation. Werther wrote from Vienna that Mensdorff had expressed surprise and vexation at the proposed popular demonstrations, but had given it as his opinion, that unless great excesses were committed there would be no reason for interfering.

During the next few days, news arrived about the celebrations of the Prince's birthday. At the instigation of Zedlitz, the Ducal Government had at length,

on the 5th of July, published a proclamation containing a warning against political demonstrations, though couched in mild and ambiguous language. In the country districts there was no disturbance on the 6th whatever; but in the towns there was everywhere a display of flags, and numerous banquets took place with closed doors. The Prince received a swarm of deputations from all parts of the country, and among them also certain officials.

At Kiel the University, by public announcement, invited all the ducal and city authorities, etc., to a celebration of the birthday of the most noble Prince and Lord, his Highness Duke Frederick VIII. In the decorated hall of the University, Professor Forchhammer made the speech, in which the Duke was hailed as sovereign of the country, the people of Schleswig-Holstein were admonished to be loyal and obedient to him, and Prussia's illegal and oppressive attempts were assailed in violent language. Thousands of copies of this speech were immediately circulated through the country, and the speaker was enthusiastically lauded in all the newspapers.

All this made the King the more determined, if he should not receive favorable news from Vienna, to take his own course in Schleswig-Holstein at any risk, even at that of a war with Austria. With the foresight and the rapidity peculiar to his government, the inquiries and orders connected with the necessary preparations were sent in all directions. On the 7th of July, Bismarck wrote to the Inspector-General of Artillery, Von

Hindersin: "Is the condition of the artillery such that we can afford to let it be a question whether negotiations with Austria shall soon be brought to the point at which a breach is probable? I do not say that I now look forward to such a breach with certainty. But things are so situated that we may be obliged within a fortnight to take action on our own account in Schleswig-Holstein, and it will then no longer depend on us whether war shall begin or not. The question is, whether we can act without the feeling that there is any risk, in our present military condition, of bringing on a conflict prematurely."

A similar inquiry was addressed to the Minister of War with regard to the army in general: "Austria is supposed to be able to place a hundred and eighty thousand men on our frontier within four weeks. Can we do the same? We do not desire war at all hazards; but the state of things in Schleswig-Holstein has become intolerable for us. If Austria does not assist us in applying a remedy, we must take things into our own hands; and this Austria will probably not permit."

Instructions were sent to Count Itzenplitz to open negotiations with the Cologne and Minden Railway Company, which could place a sum of perhaps twenty million thalers at the disposal of the Government for the carrying on of the war.

The answers gave uniformly a satisfactory result. Roon telegraphed to Bismarck on the 9th of July: "I can furnish what you may require in case of need." The next day he reported that within four weeks two

hundred and fifty thousand men could advance into Bohemia, forty-six thousand be ready for operations in West Germany, and two hundred thousand men from the reserve and garrisons' troops could occupy the fortresses. So far as the artillery was concerned, he and Hindersin both declared that the exchange of the howitzers for four-pounders, as had been ordered, was not yet completed, but that the founderies were working night and day, and that, if necessary, the army could take the field even with the howitzers. "I therefore shall not lay any restraint upon your policy," wrote Roon. "You know I do not like the idea of a war with Austria, but I know that under certain circumstances it may become a political necessity; and it must then be undertaken, come what may." Equally good news was received from Itzenplitz about the prospects of the financial operation.

Prepared for any event, therefore, the Government awaited with increasing impatience Francis Joseph's reply to the King's letter. Bismarck telegraphed to Werther again and again, asking when it might be expected. The Prussian Minister had at this time a conversation with the French ambassador to Vienna, the Duc de Gramont, who was then at Carlsbad.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck

<sup>1</sup> A story was at that time current in the newspapers, that Bismarck had said to De Gramont that he desired war, that Prussia would beat Austria without difficulty, and that she would then obtain the supremacy in Germany. Without any instigation from the side of Prussia, De Gramont at once announced in several Vienna newspapers that these statements were baseless fabrications. It was characteristic that the Imperial Press Bureau refused to allow De Gramont's denial to appear even in a semi-official paper.



begged De Gramont, on his return, to convince Count Mensdorff of the certainty of these two facts: that Prussia desired good relations with Austria from the bottom of her heart, but that she must appeal to the sword if Austria did not alter the policy she was pursuing in Schleswig-Holstein.

Complete instructions for Werther's guidance, in the event of a negative answer from the Emperor, had meanwhile been prepared. There were three despatches, which discussed the different points in dispute, and concluded with the declaration that the King had announced his determination to endure no longer the public disregard of Prussia and her army, whereby the national and the military feelings of the same were insulted. Herwarth would, therefore, be instructed to demand officially that the supreme civil authorities should seek to remedy the difficulty, and, if this produced no result, to take on his own account suitable steps for protection and satisfaction.

"The King," so ran the communication, "does not conceal from himself the importance of this resolution, nor the weighty consequences which, in spite of all possible recognition of and consideration for the rights of the co-occupant, the carrying-out of such a resolution may have for the relations between the two Powers. But if assistance in seeking a remedy is refused to us, . . . which we trust will not happen, we must take the necessary steps alone, and carry them through at every risk. We should regret any bad effect which such a course might have upon our relations with the Imperial

Government, but we should console ourselves with the thought that we had been driven by necessity to this determination, in taking which we have delayed so long."

Up to July 11th, no news arrived from Vienna; and these communications were then sent to Werther to be delivered to Mensdorff. Immediately afterwards there arrived despatches from Werther with the Emperor's answer to the King's letter of the 9th, and a reply of Mensdorff, dated the 10th, to what Bismarck had written on the 3d. The latter document contained repeated expressions of satisfaction at the understanding that had at length been arrived at concerning the February demands. Both letters, however, pressingly urged that the King should consent to abandon his hostility to Augustenburg, and recognize the Hereditary Prince as sovereign of the Duchies. Mensdorff, at the same time, asked whether the sending of a confidential agent to Carlsbad or Gastein for further discussion concerning Schleswig-Holstein would be acceptable.

Bismarck answered at once that this would be very desirable. He once more, however, on the 14th, dwelt on the fact that, although Mensdorff's concessions in other points were very satisfactory, Prussia's regret at Austria's continued support of Augustenburg was undiminished. "The Prince," he said, "conducts himself as regent; he takes his stand toward the two Governments as a Power against Powers; he seeks to exert compulsion upon them by democratic means, by a pressure from below upwards; and he is undermining

order and authority in the Duchies: his Majesty cannot allow that sort of thing to continue. So long as this condition of things is not made to cease in the Duchies, as has been demanded in our communications of the 11th, negotiations with Austria cannot be advanced toward the desired end."

For the time, therefore, the situation continued threatening and dangerous. When Roon asked whether some heavy guns should be transported from the Rhine fortresses to those in Silesia, and the measure be discussed in the newspapers, Bismarck answered in the affirmative, always with the idea that the best means of preserving peace was to convince Austria of the seriousness of Prussia's resolutions.

The King's stay in Carlsbad was now approaching its end. He thought of going to Gastein for the usual supplementary treatment, and of holding at Ratisbon, on the way thither, a ministerial council, which should adopt a final decision. To this, Werther should be summoned from Vienna and Goltz from Paris. A communication received just at that time from Mensdorff, in answer to the despatches of July 11th, was not calculated to postpone the crisis. It was confined to generalities: "In the promising condition of the negotiations concerning the future of the Duchies, Prussia, it is to be hoped, will not, by acting on her own account, take upon herself the responsibility for extremely serious consequences. The Cabinet of Vienna is quite as unwilling as that of Berlin to sanction an illegal state of things in the Duchies. An investigation shall be made

as to whether the Government in the Duchies has committed errors that might render it necessary to limit its authority. Halbhuber shall be given a hearing in regard to the behavior of the Press and the associations. Nevertheless, expressions of opinion regarding the right of Augustenburg are not punishable, since the question of the sovereignty in the Duchies is still an open one." Such arguments as these naturally did not bring the difficulty one step nearer to a solution.

This communication marked out definitely the course to be taken by the deliberations of the Ministerial Council, which, in accordance with the royal order, took place at Ratisbon on the 21st of July. It was at the outset decided that an ultimatum should be sent to Vienna. If this also were answered evasively or negatively, Prussia should proceed to take military measures in Holstein independently of Austria. In regard to what was to be done in that case, precise instructions, to be sent to General Herwarth, were agreed upon beforehand. Even now, in order to make the actual seriousness of the ultimatum evident to the Cabinet of Vienna, he was to proceed at once to arrest or to banish some Prussian subjects who were at that time in Schleswig-Holstein taking a prominent part in the Augustenburg agitations. He was then to make all necessary preparations, so that, when he received further royal orders, he could arrest the Hereditary Prince, put him on board the Prussian corvette *Vineta*, which was stationed in the harbor of Kiel, and have him conveyed to Pillau in East Prussia.

As soon as these orders should have been sent to Herwarth, the first step in the mobilization, the purchase of the necessary horses, was to be taken. According to the reports of Itzenplitz and Bodelschwingh, the supplies for the war could be relied on to be forthcoming: if, as there was good reason to hope, the negotiations with the Cologne and Minden Railway resulted favorably, the sums disposable would amount to sixty million thalers, sufficient, that is to say, for the mobilization and for one year's campaign, without any increase in the taxes, new loans, or issue of paper currency.

So far as the relations with Foreign Powers were concerned, Bismarck, shortly before he left Berlin, had received from Count Benedetti the positive assurance that, in case of a breach with Austria, France would preserve a neutrality friendly to Prussia, without looking for any compensation whatever. Immediately after this, Benedetti had communicated a telegram received by him from Paris, in which was expressed Napoleon's readiness to enter into an alliance with Prussia, and to listen to whatever propositions she had to make on the subject. Accordingly, instructions were sent to Count Goltz, in case no understanding was reached with Austria, to conclude a compact of neutrality with France, and to make preparations (according to circumstances) for the acceptance of further mutual obligations. Besides this, he was to seek to bring about a favorable disposition on the part of Napoleon for the possible establishment of closer personal relations. The order had already been sent to Count Usedom in Florence,

not to enter, for the present, upon the leave of absence that had shortly before been granted him; he was now instructed to address officially to the Italian Ministry the question, what attitude they intended to take in the event of a war between Prussia and Austria.

The ultimatum to be sent to Austria was to the following effect:—

“All negotiations concerning the future of the Duchies are refused until authority is established there, and all agitation done away with. When this is accomplished, Prussia will be ready to treat with Austria concerning the establishment of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg as sovereign. The candidacy of Augustenburg is entirely out of the question for us, so long as the Hereditary Prince persists in his attitude of usurpation. Should Austria refuse to restore order in the Duchies, Prussia will find herself in a situation necessitating self-defence, and will, on her own account, instruct General Herwarth to take the necessary steps. The further decision, whether or not Herwarth shall receive orders to this effect, depends upon the proposed visit of the Emperor Francis Joseph to Gastein, and the result of the meeting of the two Sovereigns.”

Werther was at the same time to give Count Mensdorff previous notice of the Government's intention to resort to police measures against the Prussian subjects above alluded to in Schleswig-Holstein.

Everything had thus been most carefully looked out for on every side. There was an anxious wish that war might not become necessary; but there was a determi-

nation to be thoroughly prepared for it should it prove to be unavoidable.

From the council at Ratisbon the King, with Bismarck and General Manteuffel, went on to Gastein. On the way, the King had at Salzburg, on the 23d of July, an interview with the President of the Bavarian Ministry which must be briefly referred to here.

Ever since the Confederate decree of April 6, Baron von der Pfordten had been watching with great anxiety and varying emotions the progress of the negotiations between Austria and Prussia. He was in constant private correspondence with Beust, but always showed more disposition than the Saxon Minister to meet Prussia's wishes, provided only Confederate laws were maintained. We have seen that he hailed with joy the communication of Prussia's proposal that a parliament should be summoned in Schleswig-Holstein. "Beust and myself," he said to the Prussian ambassador, "would otherwise have brought forward the matter in the Confederate Diet. Now there can naturally be no more thought of that."

Soon afterwards the negotiations between Berlin and Vienna on this subject had seemed to grow languid. But, on the other hand, Pfordten received news of Prussia's demand for the removal of Augustenburg, and was made extremely indignant by it, especially as the Bavarian Chambers also were again framing resolutions for the recognition of Frederick VIII. He first declared privately to Prince Reuss, and then publicly to the Chambers, that if Confederate laws were not

to be respected in Schleswig-Holstein, Bavaria saw no longer any reason for remaining a member of the German Confederation. His feeling afterwards was changed again to genuine delight, when Bismarck sent him private information of Prussia's readiness to submit the question of the military supremacy in Schleswig-Holstein to the consideration of the Confederate Diet. "This," he said, "removes the main difficulty. Prussia will now see that she has no firmer friend than Bavaria, and that no one will raise her voice more decidedly than she in favor of Prussia's just demands."

On the 10th of July, Prince Reuss reported that Pfordten earnestly requested the Prussian Minister to appoint a place and time for a personal interview. He, Pfordten, was then on the point of going to meet Beust, but would be at Bismarck's disposal after the 17th. Bismarck answered very courteously, and appointed a meeting at Salzburg on the 23d of July, adding, "For I do not know what may become of me after my visit to Gastein."

In his interview with Beust, Pfordten found the Saxon Minister more immovable than ever in his hostility to Prussia; and they agreed upon a fresh proposal to the Confederation concerning the convention of the Estates in the Duchies, the reception of Schleswig into the Confederation, and the assumption of the costs of the chastisement and of the Danish war by the Confederation as a whole.

When Pfordten arrived at Salzburg, he communicated this proposal to Bismarck, and had the satisfac-



tion of not finding any opposition to it, though some doubts were expressed. In fact, the first two points in the proposal were, in the existing state of things, harmless so far as Prussia was concerned, and the third, the assumption of the costs of the war by the Confederation, was certain to make the whole unacceptable to the august assembly at Frankfort. Bismarck then explained to the Bavarian Minister the whole condition of things in the Duchies, and dwelt with great emphasis upon the King's extreme displeasure at the usurping attitude of Augustenburg. Whereupon Pfordten admitted without hesitation that it had now become impossible for Prussia, as things were, to recognize the Hereditary Prince. He thought, however, that though this was the case with Augustenburg the recalcitrant, the recognition of the Prince might perhaps be possible if he became submissive. He offered to make a great effort to influence the Prince in this direction; and Bismarck was far from refusing, on the part of Prussia, to countenance such an attempt at mediation.

In what concerned the Prussian requirements of February, and especially the question of the military supremacy, no definite agreement was arrived at. Both sides contented themselves with the expression of a common conciliatory spirit; and Bismarck hinted that Prussia would perhaps be satisfied with a military arrangement that should be binding for a definite time. All the more energetically, however, did he declare to the Bavarian statesman that the war, which it was to be hoped could be kept in Silesia and Bohemia, would

be unavoidable, if Austria did not conform to the Ratisbon ultimatum; and Pfordten had no scruple about admitting that the contents of that ultimatum were justifiable, since Prussia's honor was indeed concerned in the complaints which might now be made.<sup>1</sup>

After this conversation had taken place, the Bavarian Minister had also an audience with the King, at which the same things were discussed in the same spirit. Pfordten was convinced that the King and his Minister agreed entirely, and that the reports about differences in the Prussian Cabinet were entirely unfounded. When he returned to Munich he expressed himself highly satisfied with the interview, and assured the diplomatic corps there that it depended upon Austria to bring on a breach or to avoid it. He immediately wrote to his *protégé*, Augustenburg, urging him to give the Prussian King honorable satisfaction. At the same time he sent a despatch to Vienna, in which he imparted to Count Mensdorff his firm convictions both as to Prussia's energy and her love of peace, and warmly urged the Austrian Minister to seek to bring about an understanding while the King was still on Austrian soil.

<sup>1</sup> This conversation, too, brought out soon after in the newspapers a detailed account of Bismarck's remarks concerning the war, in case it should break out, and his hope that the Lesser States would remain neutral. Pfordten hastened to announce through the *Bayerische Zeitung* the complete falsehood of this report, both in form and in matter.

## CHAPTER II.

## MINISTERIAL CRISIS IN AUSTRIA.

WHILE Prussia, with a definite purpose before her eyes, was carefully and thoroughly preparing every requisite means for the attainment of the same, in order to be ready, if necessary, to bring all her powers to bear together upon the critical point, in Austria new and strange conditions had arisen.

We have already mentioned that the Ministry of Schmerling had not for a long time been able to count upon the support of any party. In Hungary and Croatia, in Galicia and Venetia, the government could be maintained only by military despotism. In the countries on this side of the Leitha, the Slavonic population was displeased, because they considered that in Schmerling's united state they were placed at a disadvantage through the preponderance of the German element. The upper nobility were angry on account of the political influence of the burghers, who in the Imperial Parliament overshadowed the dignity and importance of the Upper House with that of the Lower House, who tried to get permanent control and power over the finances and the administration, and who thus disagreeably disturbed a host of delightful abuses sanctioned by tradition.

The clergy were indignant over the principles of tolerance and liberty of faith that had again been proclaimed since 1861, and saw with horror that Protestant parishes were to be established in pious Tyrol. They learned with disgust that Schmerling, although not exactly forbidding the proclamation of the Papal Encyclical and Syllabus of 1864, yet alleged as a reason for it, that these were only the expression of the personal opinions of the Pope, and consequently would have no influence upon the administration of public law in Austria. And finally, the prime supporters of Schmerling, the German Liberals, had long ago lost all patience with his bureaucratic and arbitrary conduct. They complained of his zealous deference to the least hint of the Emperor; while *vice versa* Francis Joseph bore his Minister ill-will because the latter was not sufficiently eager nor successful in holding a tight rein upon the parliamentary presumption.

Under these circumstances it did not need very much to bring about a complete change in the system of internal politics. It was a member of the Ministerial Council itself, Count Moritz Esterhazy, that finally gave the decisive thrust.

Count Moritz had a mind that was most admirably fitted for influencing people. He was a keen observer, who formed his estimates cautiously, and passed his judgments coolly. He knew how to wait with inexhaustible patience for the right moment, and then to apply the lever at just the right point. Yet he did not make it his business to burden himself with the activity

and responsibility of holding power: he was an invalid, and was exceedingly disinclined to work. With a distrustful prudence he was very averse to putting any of his thoughts into writing, so that even when he was at one time ambassador at the Vatican, he scarcely brought himself in the course of six months to send a report, and finally for that reason had to be recalled.

Thus, without taking any active part whatever, he had, as minister without a portfolio, watched for four years the development of Schmerling's policy, at heart an opponent of Schmerling in every particular, carefully investigating everything, never participating, and never opposing: until finally in the summer of 1865 he believed the time had come to protect the nobility from the ambition of the burghers, Hungary from the oppression of the German Centralists, and the Church from Schmerling's proposed recognition of both Faiths in legislation.

Inasmuch as at this time the great leader of the Hungarian Opposition, Franz Deák, had founded a sort of semi-alliance with the old Conservative party for the overthrow of Schmerling, the Emperor was induced to make with the Empress a visit to Pesth in the early part of June, where he was received by the people with unlimited enthusiasm; and in a solemn speech he announced his fixed determination to satisfy, so far as he could, the people of the countries that were subject to the Hungarian Crown. The more energetically Schmerling had hitherto striven, not for the satisfaction, but the subjection of Hungary, so much the more

strikingly were these words of the Emperor an indication of an impending change.

The attitude of the Liberal Majority in the Lower House then brought the matter to a crisis. The Constitution of 1861 contained a so-called "Charter" paragraph, which gave to the Government the right in urgent cases, without the co-operation of the Imperial Parliament, to make decrees that should have the force of laws. Considering the increasing bitterness growing out of the situation, the Liberal party were filled with anxiety, lest the Government might take advantage of this paragraph and make a change in the Constitution. Immediately after the Emperor's return from Hungary, a vote, in spite of Schmerling's violent opposition, was passed which characterized such an act as unlawful. Inasmuch as such intentions were very certainly in the minds of the Hungarian and Bohemian nobility, there was occasion enough, as an actual fact, for the passage of this resolution; but as things were, it was unfortunately bound to produce an effect opposite to the wishes of its advocates, by being represented to the Emperor as a fresh act of encroachment on the part of the Parliament and a new violation of the rights of the Crown.

A few days before, the budget for 1865 had been decided upon in the Lower House, with the curtailments with regard to the Army and Navy already known to us, and now preparations were made for taking up the subject of the budget for 1866. The Minister of Finance, Plener, then appeared with the announcement that on

account of unforeseen expenses and arrearages in the revenue, he should be obliged to ask, for the current expenses of the year, a loan of one hundred and seventeen million florins. The surprise and displeasure with which the House received this statement were great. Everybody was unanimously of the opinion that such a demand could not be discussed until after the question of the budget for 1866 had been fully investigated; and on the 21st of June the Minister was granted, instead of one hundred and seventeen, only thirteen millions, and that only because otherwise it would have been impossible to pay the interest due on the first of July upon the public debt.

Such doings appeared even to the Emperor to be insupportable, and directed his anger at once against the whole Cabinet as it had been hitherto constituted. What was the use of a Minister, who, while he estranged from the Monarch the hearts of one-half of the Empire, was unable in the other half to force from a rebellious popular representative assembly the appropriations of money that were indispensable for carrying on the State? It was just then that the proclamation was about to be published concerning the convention of the Hungarian Parliament; and Esterhazy took occasion to observe to the Emperor, that the signature of Count Hermann Zichy, who had been up to this time the Hungarian Court Chancellor, would immediately disturb again the present favorable disposition of the Magyars. The Emperor recognized the truth of this, and on the 26th of June appointed in Zichy's

place a trusted leader of the old Conservative party, Count Georg Mailath. This meant that the crisis was already at hand; and on the 27th all the ministers with the exception of Count Mensdorff and the Minister of war, General Franck, asked for their dismissal. The Emperor granted their request with ungracious words. They continued, however, to discharge the duties of their offices until the appointment of their successors; and as this was delayed for some time, Austria was for almost a whole month without any recognized Government.

It did not long remain doubtful, by whose hand and along what line of policy the fortune of the Empire was to be guided. For the presidency of the Ministerial Council Count Belcredi was chosen, the former governor of Bohemia, a statesman, who in his inmost heart regarded as the highest ideal the condition of Austria before the year 1848, that time when the unity of the Empire was represented not by an arrogant Parliament, but by the Army and the Church, when every crown-land led its own peculiar existence under the firm guidance of the secular and ecclesiastical nobility. This condition of things in its entirety could, of course, no longer be attained; but it seemed to be quite worth the while to try and see how far one might succeed in this direction.

With this in mind, Belcredi had already, during his term of office in Bohemia, flattered the compliant Czechs, hated the Germans, who were without exception liberals, and rendered every manner of assistance



to the high prelates. And now he hoped that the same conduct in his present larger sphere of action would realize some substantial result. For the present he had no intention of assuming the rôle of a despotic oppressor; on the contrary, he wished, as champion of true liberty, to restore to the separate crown-lands their autonomy, to release the Magyars and Croats, the Czechs, Slovaks, and Sloventzi, from the oppression of the Germans, to give back to the Church her independence in accordance with the Concordat, and to protect the nobility from the troublesome mediating offices of the bureaucracy.

It was evident that such a praiseworthy programme could not without giving offence be developed under the eyes of the present majority in the Lower House. Belcredi wished, therefore, not to begin his official activity until after the close of the present Parliamentary session. It seemed, too, for the introduction of the new system advisable to part with the present Parliament not in strife, but in peace; and thus concessions became possible which Schmerling had had to oppose with great pains up to the last moment.

When the Ministerial crisis came, the Upper House was busy with the discussion of the budget for 1865, as definitely determined by the Lower House, and was desirous of granting to the Government for the army and navy seven millions more than the Lower House had fixed upon. This decision had occasioned lengthy negotiations between the two Houses, and would perhaps postpone the close of the session for a long time.

On the 3d of July there accordingly appeared an autograph note from the Emperor ordering that the garrisons in Venetia and Dalmatia that had hitherto been kept upon a war-footing should now be again restored to a peace-footing; whereupon then, on the 6th, Field Marshal Hess declared in the Upper House that with this provision, the army could very well get along with the sum granted by the other House. The Minister of War confirmed the statement that His Majesty had commanded that rigid economy should be exercised where it was in any way possible; and, in fact, the proposed reduction of the army was immediately carried out everywhere in Venetia, and here, also, the erection of numerous buildings for military purposes was abandoned.

Before the 18th of July the remaining slight differences between the budget-estimates of the two Houses were settled, and identical decrees were passed by the Lower House on the 21st and by the Upper House on the 22d. The computations herein contained left upon paper a deficit of seven millions, to cover which a special Act was to make provision. But after considering that the arrearages in the revenue amounted to thirty millions for the year 1864, it was plain that at the end of 1865 an actual deficit of eighty millions was to be expected; and the loan necessary to cover this had not yet, as we have seen, been approved by the Parliament.

These considerations did not, however, deter Count Belcredi: his idea was, indeed, to rule without any

Parliament. The session was accordingly closed on the 27th of July, and the new Ministry was formed on the same day. Belcredi became Minister of State, president of the Ministerial Council, and took charge of administrative affairs and of the police; Count Larisch took Finance; Baron von Komers, Justice; and Minister of War Franck assumed the control of the Navy.

This was the condition of the imperial state, when Mensdorff received the Prussian ultimatum from Regensburg: the overthrow of the Constitution in imminent proximity, the conflict with Hungary not yet settled, the army reduced to its lowest peace-footing, and the finances in a state of utter helplessness. It could not be otherwise than that this situation, although it did not alter the feeling toward Prussia, certainly did not encourage the taking of any very warlike measures.

It was especially Count Esterhazy that was the spokesman of the policy of conciliation. He had from the very start regretted that Mensdorff had allowed himself in German matters to be influenced so unconditionally by Biegeleben; and he had many times declared, as the disputes with the Parliament increased, that in this state of things the best possible ally for Austria would be that strong tamer of the refractory Prussian Lower House. Now his influence became greater than before. He was thoroughly penetrated with the conviction that in the present state of fermentation throughout all the crown-lands a war was simply

impossible. Accordingly he sought some conciliatory means of settling the disagreeable question of the Duchies, and was pleased, when the Austrian ambassador in Munich, Count Blome, offered to him such a plan.

Blome, as we have already said above, was a native of Holstein, possessed of a strong and restless mind confined within a narrow intellectual horizon. He had always been, like almost all Holstein noblemen, an opponent of Augustenburg; he had, however, then been obliged, as Austrian ambassador, to support the cause of the Prince, although he still held to his opinion that the question was of no value for Austria, and that the Vienna Cabinet could not afford in the midst of the present crisis to let it come to a war. Inasmuch as Austria rejected the plan of a Prussian annexation of the Duchies, and since the administration of them by the Powers in common was attended by daily increasing difficulties, Blome consequently hit upon the idea of proposing to Prussia a simple division of the object which seemed to be such a dangerous one for joint ownership, and with this in view, to suggest that the Vienna Cabinet should annex Holstein, and the Berlin Cabinet, Schleswig.

Such a proposition lay, to be sure, by no means along the line hitherto marked out by Biegeleben; but inasmuch as Austria had really no objection to make to the Prussian annexation, and opposed it only in order to gain some fitting equivalent, Count Esterhazy considered it would be a very good idea to continue until

then the provisional government of the Duchies, and for this purpose to make a geographical division, if not actually of the countries, at least so far as the temporary administration of them was concerned.

As the Emperor approved of these ideas for the time, Count Blome received instructions to repair to Gastein, there to work at first with all his might for the recognition of Augustenburg, and if this failed, to sound the feelings of the Prussian Cabinet about a possible plan of division.<sup>1</sup> On the 26th of July, Blome left Vienna to execute these orders.

Mensdorff's hopes for a peaceful outcome were, indeed, immediately very much dampened by the news from the Duchies. As Werther had announced to him, General Herwarth on the 25th of July had the editor May, in Altona, arrested by a military patrol and taken to Prussia for trial; and on the 26th, Zedlitz ordered the Prussian deputy, Freese, under police orders, to leave the Duchies. In Holstein, these events produced a storm of excitement. Halbhuber published immediately a violent protest against both measures.

Mensdorff said to Werther with a smile, that he supposed these doings were only a specimen of the treatment that the Prince would soon receive; and he therefore hastened to bring to Bismarck's attention the protest of Austria, as joint-owner, against such a violation of her rights. Bismarck immediately replied, somewhat sophistically, that in the same way that

<sup>1</sup> From Werther's reports and a somewhat later communication of the civil commissioner, Hofmann, to General Manteuffel.

Prussia in the exercise of discipline among Prussian troops and officials in the Duchies did not need Austria's consent, no more did she need it in the work of punishing offenders that were Prussian subjects living in the Duchies; and then he added, rather maliciously, that Mensdorff, indeed, as civil commissioner in 1851, had had no scruples about suddenly arresting in Holstein several political fugitives from Austria, without even informing his Prussian colleague of the fact.

Thus the political atmosphere was as unpropitious for the execution of Blome's undertaking as were the physical conditions of excessive fog and heavy rains. Blome began by proposing to Bismarck the recognition of Augustenburg, to which he received the answer that no discussion of that point was possible before Prussia's lawful demands were satisfied. He then tried to see whether an expedient could not be found in a secret agreement of the two Powers to regard the Hereditary Prince as the sovereign. But Bismarck declared this also to be impossible before the February demands of Prussia were secured. Blome remarked that he hoped the matter might perhaps appear more practicable, if the Prince should make an apology to the King; which Bismarck did not exactly refuse to consider, although he constantly emphasized the fact that mere words were now no longer sufficient: actual deeds were necessary to prove that the Prince would give up his position as a usurper.

"We have," said Bismarck, "no intention of setting aside Austria's rights and making a simple annexation.

On the contrary, we are ready at once to negotiate about the elevation of Oldenburg to the throne. We cannot recognize any one before receiving a guaranty for the fulfilment of our February demands: this would be more likely to succeed with Oldenburg, who is more reliable and more independent politically than the Hereditary Prince."

Blome called to notice the devotion of the people to the latter; while, to maintain Oldenburg upon the throne of the Duchies, the Prussian bayonets would be constantly necessary, which would cause a disagreeable state of things both for Vienna and for Berlin. This anxiety, too, Bismarck held to be unfounded. "To those who give the tone there, the most important things are ease and the other advantages to be gained from the existence of small states. These they would lose under Prussian rule, but retain under Oldenburg. They would soon be comforted." All the points that were touched upon in this conversation were repeatedly discussed, but it resulted in no agreement. On the 30th of July, Blome had an audience with King William, and at once became convinced, as Von der Pfordten had been the week before, that Bismarck acted solely in the spirit of his Monarch.

"Austria puts so many things in our way," — some such words as these were used by the King, — "because she has, ever since the Seven Years' War, opposed on principle every increase of Prussia's power. This was very evident in the matter of the Duchies, where under any other circumstances a common administration

of them by the two Powers would have been very easy and very simple. Only, in order to prevent any sympathy from being felt there for Prussia, that might have led to an annexation, Austria has caused her to be despised and hated through the conduct of Halbhuber and the favor shown to him who has been dubbed with the title of 'Hereditary.' This has come to such a pass, that I can no longer stand by and look upon it with indifference. I must, upon the basis of the Peace of Vienna, assert my rights on my own account, if Austria will not take hold with me. That would include the expulsion of the Hereditary Prince from the Duchies, the co-operation of the two civil commissioners, the restoration of the laws of the country concerning the Press, the associations, and the State police. Not until all this has been done, am I willing to discuss the future of the Duchies."

In his reply to these remarks of the King, Blome asseverated above all, that in the Vienna Cabinet there did not exist in the slightest degree a desire to act in the spirit of the Seven Years' War. He explained Halbhuber's conduct by saying that it had been in Austria's opinion only the necessary counterpart of those acts of Prussian presumption, as directed by Zedlitz, which aimed at an annexation, and which could not be permitted by Austria. He hinted that after such open conflict between the commissioners, it might improve the situation to replace both of them by persons more peacefully inclined. "And yet," said he at the close, "the elevation of the Hereditary Prince to



the throne would put an end to all these troubles at one blow."

The King responded that order must first and foremost be restored in the Duchies, before any pretendant could be considered; and that then the future sovereign must accept without any limitations the February conditions, and, indeed, before his coronation.

Negotiations, accordingly, had not advanced by a single step. The question alone remained, whether there might be found some arrangement of the joint ownership that would be less likely to occasion a war. Blome believed that, theoretically speaking, Austria would favor such a move; and the Count now brought forward his idea of dividing, if not the sovereignty in the Duchies, at least the administration of government in them, since this had hitherto been the source of all contention. He proposed to divide them so that Austria and Prussia should each have one-half of the country under her own administration. Bismarck told him that something of that sort was worth talking about, and only said that there would be certain reservations concerning Prussia's interests, which, if she were in this way to receive Schleswig, she would also have to make in Holstein.

Blome felt, however, that he had better reserve a definite exposition of his plan until a meeting of the two Sovereigns themselves; and Bismarck, too, had less objection to make to such a delay, inasmuch as evidently no very decisive steps would be practicable on the part of Prussia so long as the King remained upon

Austrian soil. He only exacted from Blome strict secrecy during this interval. Accordingly, Blome returned on the 31st of July to Ischl, where the Emperor Francis Joseph was staying at the time, and laid before the Monarch his propositions concerning the continuance of the negotiations. The Emperor then immediately summoned Count Mensdorff to take part in the deliberations over the matter.

It could not be wondered at, if the leaders of the Austrian state did not seize hold of Blome's programme with eager zeal. For, turn it about and formulate it as they might, it was impossible not to see in it a new and radical alteration in the Vienna policy — the fourth change in the course of the Schleswig-Holstein affair. After Austria had already participated in the passing of a Confederate decree on the 6th of April, to the effect that Augustenburg should be crowned as soon as possible, and after she had set in motion all the means available in the Duchies for the accomplishment of this end, a fresh treaty with Prussia about a geographical division or an improved arrangement of the common administration of the government of the Duchies would be a jump from black to white, a turning away from the Confederate Diet, and an insult to the Lesser States. And more than all else, what would the world say to a division of the Duchies, those "*up ewig ungedeelten*" countries, whose inseparableness had been proclaimed so many hundred times before, and during, and since the war?

Much as the Emperor desired a peaceful reconcilia-

tion with Prussia, Mensdorff succeeded in inducing the Monarch to return to Vienna in order to discuss the important question once more with the whole Ministry. Blome put one condition in the matter: namely, that it should be kept secret from the imperial councillors, that is, from Biegeleben and his associates. Mensdorff himself hesitated, being influenced by opposing considerations. On the 4th of August he said to Baron Werther that he hoped to be able to hold fast to the line of compromise that had been proposed by Blome. On the following day he expatiated to the Russian ambassador, in a state of great excitement, about the hopeless condition of the negotiations, and said that Prussia was trying to influence Italy to take part in the war, if it should break out.

Then a session of the Ministerial Council was held, at which the Emperor presided. Blome explained his proposition at length, and expressed with much warmth his conviction that Bismarck would in perfect sincerity prefer a reconciliation with Austria to every other arrangement or result. This assertion, as well as his proposition, was received at first with vigorous opposition from all sides. Some of the ministers said they would not trust Bismarck's peaceful sentiments across the street. They regarded the war as certain, if Austria would not humbly accept the annexation of the Duchies. They said, however, that if war must come, the present moment was propitious for its declaration; that all Germany now stood upon the side of Austria; that satisfactory news came from Paris, to the effect

that Napoleon was not inclined to favor an attack on the part of Italy ; that Prussia's equipment for war was by no means in such an advanced stage as Bismarck was accustomed to depict ; that Austria would have plenty of time to restore her army from its peace-footing to a war-footing ; and that in the event of a Prussian war, the large landed-proprietors, both secular and clerical, would generously pour hundreds of millions into the state treasuries.

Those who talked in this strain knew very well that they had behind them, to a certain extent, the public opinion of their people and of the army ; for the sentiments of the army had radically changed since the brotherhood-in-arms of the Danish war. The officers said : We shall not equip before Prussia does so in earnest ; if it comes to this, it will also come to blows ; Prussia, to start with, expelled the Confederate troops from Schleswig-Holstein, now she will drive out the Prince of Augustenburg, and finally do the same thing to Austria ; to this end she offers her hand to Austria's open enemy, Italy ; but let her know there is still an Austrian army and a black and yellow flag.

The newspapers talked every day about Prussian deeds of violence in Holstein, about Bismarck's tyranny in Prussia, and the disgrace Austria would suffer if she should yield before such an adversary. In Hungary as well, the leading parties desired the continuance of the united monarchy, and saw in Austria's position as a German Power a guaranty for the Magyars against the threatening preponderance of the

Slavs. Consequently, these Ministers could with good right look to the patriotism of the nation in the event of a breach with Prussia.<sup>1</sup>

But the opposite opinion was also represented in the Council, and was especially advocated by Esterhazy. "Just precisely," said he, "because Bismarck's love of peace cannot be trusted, must we avoid offering him the desired occasion for a rupture. It is all very well to affirm that the army can quickly enough be made ready for action, but it remains an actual fact that the army is not in such a condition at present. To begin a war, trusting that empty coffers are going to be filled by generous gifts, is an unpardonable act of presumption. Without question, Blome's proposition is open to serious objections; but, to speak the truth plainly, it is impossible for Austria at the present time to carry on a great war. Therefore, let Blome go to Gastein, and, while making as few concessions as possible, let him at all events prevent an open rupture."<sup>2</sup>

The Emperor, to whom, as to his Prussian opponent, it was a matter of heart and conscience to leave no means for reconciliation untried, decided in favor of such an experiment, in the shape of a provisional division of the administration of the Duchies, with the express understanding that the common sovereignty should still be maintained. He ordered a detailed

<sup>1</sup> From the reports of the Prussian military plenipotentiary in Vienna, Count Gröben.

<sup>2</sup> From Mensdorff's communications to the Hanoverian ambassador, Von dem Knesebeck, in the latter's report of December 7. Cf. also Friesen's *Erinnerungen*, II. 128.

elaboration of this plan to be made; and, after approving the same, with the advice of Mensdorff, he wrote, on the 7th of August, an autograph letter to King William, in which he remarked that, although the proposed plan was not consistent with the original aim of the Danish war, yet he quieted his conscience with the thought of "what a misfortune we should bring upon ourselves, and what a scandal we should offer to the world, if we, the son of Frederick William III., and the grandson of the Emperor Francis, should suddenly become enemies instead of friends and allies;" therefore he wished to offer his hand to the King once more in the hope of a friendly reconciliation. With this letter Blome hastened back to Gastein on the 8th of August.

Meanwhile, active operations on the Prussian side were continued uninterruptedly, so that in the critical moment she might be ready for any issue. Blome's proposition was really no more satisfactory to the King and Bismarck than to the Austrian statesmen; and yet it did offer some advantages, and, above all, once more postponed the necessity of war, which was also here felt to be a gain. Accordingly, the question had to be determined by weighing the separate inducements, which Blome would bring with him, over against the prospects and dangers attending a decision for war.

That Prussia stood upon much firmer ground than Austria with regard to the readiness of the army and the availability of her financial resources, was felt to be quite true; but besides this, of course, the attitude

of the other European Powers was an especially weighty consideration. In the "Third Germany" Beust was as actively hostile as ever, and was just now trying to bring about in Vienna, where he was making a short visit, a new appeal to the Confederate Diet.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Pfordten still remained friendly. Varnbüler in Stuttgart would gladly have declared himself openly on Prussia's side, if his Swabians had only suffered him to do so. In Hanover the single wish was that Prussia would get rid of Augustenburg, although when Bismarck replied to such a request by asking whether, in the event of a war that might result therefrom, Hanover would fight on the side of Prussia, the intimation was repelled with expressions of horror.

So far as the European Powers were concerned, Prussia could expect no assistance from England or Russia, nor, on the other hand, any annoyance. The Emperor Alexander, it is true, had thought that the February demands were somewhat excessive, but preserved his feeling of thankful reverence for King William. Lord John Russell preached peace, as ever, declared that the future of the Duchies was a matter of perfect indifference to his government, regarded Prussia's claims to them as quite natural, but nevertheless warned her not to do any harm to "the old Lady Austria."

Thus, in Prussia's decisions everything depended upon France and Italy; and we have seen that already, on the 21st of June, instructions with this in view had been sent from Regensburg to Goltz and Usedom.

<sup>1</sup> Beust, *Erinnerungen zu Erinnerungen*, p. 48.

To begin with, any opposition of any kind whatever from the Court of Florence seemed inconceivable. This latter had so often and so openly expressed its intentions upon Venetia, and had for so many years, in spite of all financial distress, kept its army for this purpose upon a war-footing, that an attack on the part of Italy could certainly be expected so soon as she should be offered this rarest of all opportunities, — a war between Prussia and Austria.

Such an attack would be doubly important for Prussia; in the first place, because it would employ a part of the Austrian army in the distant south, and secondly, in view of Napoleon's well-known desire to see the freedom of Venetia accomplished, it would insure a friendly disposition of the Emperor towards Prussia's ally, Italy. Accordingly, Bismarck had long since sought to effect more friendly relations with Italy than had obtained in 1860 and 1862. At the beginning of 1864 he had started negotiations with the Court of Turin concerning the conclusion of a commercial treaty, but had suspended these negotiations in August of the same year, at the time of the interview at Schönbrunn, doubtlessly out of consideration for the feelings of Austria.

When, then, in the spring of 1865, relations with the Vienna Cabinet became more disturbed, Bismarck hinted to the Court of Turin, on the 13th of May, that it might like to take up the negotiations again, and this time with a view to consummating a treaty with the whole, now reconstructed, Tariff Union; in that case,

of Austria's



Prussia, upon being informed of a desire in that direction, would demand the recognition of the Kingdom of Italy by all the States of the Tariff Union, basing it upon the needs of German commerce.

For Italy this was a most acceptable offer. She at once expressed her desire to conclude the treaty, and Prussia made the proposal to the Governments of the Tariff Union. Although in this, as in other matters, the Lesser States strove against a separation from Austria, the material interests of their own people were brought to bear strongly in favor of the proposal; and, as could be foreseen, the Governments did not long continue their resistance. Italy was then indebted to the Prussian Cabinet for no inconsiderable advancement of her welfare.

Just when Usedom received the instructions from Regensburg, the Italian ambassador Nigra happened to be present in Florence. He had shortly before conversed with Napoleon in Paris, and with Victor Emanuel in Turin. He assured Count Usedom most positively that Napoleon favored Prussia, and would not put himself in the way of her aggrandizement. "There will never be another French sovereign," said Nigra, "so amicably disposed towards Prussia. Italy has, moreover, never at any time pledged herself to secure Napoleon's consent before making an attack upon Austria, nor would Napoleon by any means, in the event of a serious war between Prussia and Austria, restrain Italy from the liberation of Venetia. If such a great and serious war should occur, there could be only one

resolution taken by Italy herself, — that of making the attack immediately, even without any previous treaty with Prussia. The nation would allow no Minister, whatever his name, to pursue any other course.”

All this seemed as clear and propitious as possible. Therefore Usedom, on the 27th of July, full of assurance, put the question officially to General La Marmora: “If Prussia should go to war with Austria, which is not yet certain, but may perhaps be near at hand, what would Italy do?” The response that he received was in quite another key than the one he had heard in Nigra’s words. We will briefly repeat here what La Marmora himself said about this conversation, in a letter to Nigra.

“As you can imagine,” he wrote to the ambassador, “I listened to the remarks of Count Usedom with the greatest reserve; and, instead of betraying my inward satisfaction at such a favorable turn of affairs, I raised very well-founded doubts and difficulties about the matter, especially with the intention of gaining time. ‘If your Government,’ said I, ‘seriously wishes to undertake a war against Austria, then let it make us a formal proposal. But it is not fitting for us to allow ourselves to be made use of, only for the sake of bringing diplomatic pressure to bear upon Austria, nor for us, after the war has been begun, to find that Prussia has made a separate peace without us.’ Usedom protested: ‘Prussia is quite in earnest with regard to the war; and she will always act conscientiously towards her ally.’ Thereupon I replied, ‘We must, at any rate,

before entering into any binding agreement, be certain of the intentions of the Emperor Napoleon.' Moreover, I took the liberty of remarking, for the sake of spurring on Prussia's ambition, that nobody had yet regarded Prussia's threats as being made in earnest, and Austria least of all; for she was just now disarming."

With respect to this last point, the disarmament of Austria, it occurred to the Minister that perhaps this was the result of a secret understanding between Vienna and Paris, in which Austria might have declared herself willing to cede Venetia voluntarily; and that an Italian war might in that case seem to the Emperor Napoleon to be useless and undesirable. He accordingly urged Nigra pressingly to find out about this from Drouyn de Lhuys.

After all this, he came to the characteristic decision of letting the Prussian negotiations drag along for a while, so that Prussia should not misuse her expectation of securing Italy's assistance, to frighten the Vienna Court into giving up Schleswig-Holstein, and then leave Italy in the lurch. But, on the other hand, he wished to spin away on this thread discreetly, so that he might, perhaps, on his part, by holding up the sinister picture of a Prusso-Italian alliance to the Viennese, force them to give up Venetia, and then might coolly turn his back upon Prussia.

This military diplomatist was a staunch officer of the line, and perfectly capable of establishing an excellent method of discipline, and of rigidly carrying it out. He had done great service in organizing and training

the young Italian troops, chiefly after the model of the Prussian army, and had in this way won great favor in the eyes of his King. Yet, as a general, he lacked a daring, pushing boldness, and as a statesman, Bismarck's rare gift of seeing things as they are. He was in other respects as crafty and tenacious in his nature as any other Piedmontese. Inasmuch, however, as he all too often drew his conclusions from false observations, his sagacity only served to lead him from the straight road into swampy by-paths; and then the untractableness of his mind prevented him from discovering his mistake betimes, and from correcting it so far as possible.

Under Cavour he had learned that Prussia was the satellite of Austria, and that consequently Italy must look for protection to France. In these ideas he now remained spell-bound; and he finally was desirous rather to acquire Venetia with the help of France by diplomatic means, than to consent to enter upon an uncertain war by the side of Prussia. Unfortunately, there was no longer a Cavour at hand to teach him that Prussia had now emancipated herself from Austria, and that therefore Italy should emancipate herself from France.

It could not happen otherwise than that, from such a standpoint as this, he should see everything through distorting glasses. His premises were, without exception, the opposite of the truth. Between France and Austria there existed, at this time, no understanding; France had no objections to Italy's making war; Austria was willing, under no circumstances, to cede

Venetia voluntarily; Prussia proposed an Italian alliance, not as a diplomatic feint, but as a means to important ends in the carrying on of a serious war. When, later, these facts became evident and undeniable, La Marmora, with great indiscretion and moderate regard for truth, wrote a book, in order to prove to the smallest detail that every one of his steps had been taken as the result of correct logical reason and of inexorable circumstances. Why it was that in spite of that every one of his steps had been a mistake, he does not take the trouble to explain.

When Bismarck received Usedom's report about the conversation with La Marmora, he hastened to set the matter again in its right light by a note which was dated August 1st. After he had emphasized the inconsistencies between Nigra's assertions and those of La Marmora, he continued:<sup>1</sup>—

“It is of the highest importance for us to know whether we can count upon decisive and immediate action on the part of Italy, or whether she will hesitate, postpone, and depend upon foreign impulses. If we cannot reckon with certainty upon her co-operation, then the question comes, whether we had not better moderate our demands from Austria, and be satisfied with the really not inconsiderable advantages that we can obtain by peaceful means. We could then seek to avoid the rupture: in the contrary case, we should not provoke an open breach, but should await with greater confidence its results. The presumption, which

<sup>1</sup> An abridged extract.

both Nigra and La Marmora make, that our war, if Italy should take part in it, must be waged in earnest, goes without saying. We should carry it on with all our might, and should be obliged to do so. The result, of course, we cannot foresee. But if La Marmora thinks of waiting to see what it will probably be before he acts, he may, if events follow in rapid succession, forfeit by so doing all his chances of influencing the conditions of peace.

“In saying this, I will not abandon the thought of a previous alliance. Both states might at least promise not to conclude any peace without the guaranty that both shall retain the same possessions that they had before the war. Conquests depend upon the fortune of war, and cannot be guaranteed. We should consider more directly the idea of forming such an alliance, so soon as a war with Austria is seen to be unavoidable. The possibility of Austria's yielding is not yet excluded. We cannot yet take upon ourselves the responsibility of occasioning the rupture and the declaration of war. Our deliberations will be materially influenced by the answer to the question, what we have to expect from Italy, *if it comes to war.*”

Bismarck might well hope that in this note he had given Count Usedom the means of enlightening La Marmora about the actual state of the matter. One very simple sentence said everything: “The more reserved Italy appears, the more inclined will Prussia be to assent to any tolerable agreement with Austria; and the more ready and determined Italy shows herself

to be, the more resolute and warlike will be Prussia's conduct towards the Government at Vienna."

From Paris no definite information could just now be obtained. The Emperor was absent at Plombières, the Empress was at Fontainebleau, and Drouyn de Lhuys was away on leave of absence. Bismarck, nevertheless, on the 4th of August, sent instructions to Goltz, which corresponded with those received by Usedom:—

"We shall not provoke the war," he wrote, "nor shall we be afraid of it. If Blome brings a *modus vivendi* that can be accepted, we shall prefer it to a war, the consequences of which, for the peace of Europe, it would be hard to forecast. His Majesty the King is prepared for any issue, and ready to take up the conflict, if it be rendered unavoidable by a persistent refusal to comply with our demands. With regard to France, we feel no uneasiness. Neither what you say, nor what Benedetti says, leads us to suspect any alteration in her former favorable disposition.

"On the other hand, the communications from Italy give the impression that there is, in Florence, anxiety lest some steps towards a mutual understanding may have been taken by France and Austria, and lest Napoleon may have made promises to Vienna that might check Italy. If we were to remain ignorant in regard to these relations, we should be obliged to act so much the more cautiously in allowing the conflict to develop between ourselves and Austria. We stand upon the very eve of the crisis. When this comes, it will be then necessary to speak plainly and definitely with

France, in order to secure for ourselves, by mutual explanations, a certain knowledge of her attitude, which is sure to exert an important influence upon the South German States. Until then you may try to find out, by confidential conversations, whether Napoleon's sentiments are still the same, and whether we can draw near to a rupture with Austria without being obliged to fear equivocal conduct on the part of France."

These directions, and a reply of Count Goltz to the instructions from Regensburg, crossed. Goltz had not, it is true, spoken recently with any of the influential personages, but summed up all his observations up to this time as follows: "In the event of an Austro-Prussian war about Schleswig-Holstein, two considerations would have determining weight in the mind of the Emperor: on the one hand, the principle that the races should be allowed to decide for themselves; and, on the other hand, the probable endeavor on the part of the Emperor in such a conflict, to profit by his advantageous position, and gain concessions from one party or the other,—or even, as the preserver of the peace of Europe, to dictate the terms of peace to both parties, and then to carry out his congress idea, in order by this means to have that peace sanctioned by all Europe."

If these views were correct, then the conduct of France was as doubtful as the decision of Italy. The question, then, whether Prussia should content herself with moderate and partial advantages, or should let the difficulty be decided by a great war, was still wholly undetermined at the time when Blome returned to Gastein.



## CHAPTER III.

CHANGE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF SCHLESWIG-  
HOLSTEIN.

ON the 10th of August, Count Blome began his second series of negotiations at Gastein. Inasmuch as Prussia still insisted that she could not deliberate about a definite disposition of the Duchies for the future until after the restoration of order in them had been secured, and as Austria, on her part, was equally determined to refuse one of the chief items in Prussia's desired restoration of order, namely, the forcible expulsion of Augustenburg: it was therefore agreed to enter at once upon the discussion of Blome's proposition of re-arranging provisionally the joint government of the Duchies in some way that should be satisfactory to both parties.

Blome brought forward the following outline of a treaty:

"The exercise of those rights that have been obtained by the two Powers in virtue of the Peace of Vienna shall in Holstein be the affair of Austria, and in Schleswig, of Prussia. Prussia shall for this purpose be granted a military road with stations and also a line of telegraph through Holstein; and she shall furthermore receive permission to build a canal connecting the North Sea and the Baltic on conditions similar

to those usually granted in the charter of a railway (consequently, without the right of supreme domain or the right to build fortifications). The Confederation shall be requested to raise Kiel to the rank of a Confederate port, and Rendsburg to that of a Confederate fortress. Until the necessary Confederate decree is passed concerning this matter, the garrison at Rendsburg shall be composed of Austrian and Prussian troops, and the harbor of Kiel shall be used by the men-of-war of both Powers. The intention is, that both of the Duchies shall join the Tariff Union. Finally, Austria shall give up to Prussia her rights in Lauenburg in return for a proper indemnity in money."

Holstein was very much more important than Schleswig, both in population and in financial resources: Prussia in driving out the Danes had spent three times as much money and blood as Austria. Prussia's demand, then, that this disproportion should be made good, could not be disputed. The cession of Lauenburg in return for a large sum of money could hardly be of any moment, nor the permission to build a canal with Prussian means without possessing supreme rights over the same. Everything which Austria offered beyond these was limited to the right to share provisionally in the use of the harbor of Kiel and temporarily in the garrisoning of the fortress of Rendsburg (until the Confederate Diet should decide upon other arrangements), and to the expression of the intention to negotiate at some time in the future about the admission of Schleswig-Holstein into the Tariff-Union.

Consequently, it was very easy to understand that these offers did not satisfy Bismarck, — important though it was to see Austria, in the pith of the proposition, returning again to the basis of the treaties of January 16th and October 30th, 1864. The Prussian Minister had, on his part, also elaborated a scheme in keeping with Blome's original idea about a definitive division of Schleswig-Holstein: according to which Schleswig and Lauenburg should fall to Prussia, who should also hold military possession in Holstein of Kiel and Rendsburg, of two military roads and two telegraph-lines; she should receive the right to build and control the canal and the railway between Kiel and Lübeck, as well as definite promises concerning Holstein's admission into the Tariff-Union; and she should finally pledge her word to Austria to cede the country to no third party that would not on its part bind itself beforehand to fulfil all these agreements.

But now, in view of the uncertainty of the European situation, Bismarck considered it best to abandon the idea of presenting this plan, and rather, perhaps, to take up each one of these points on the basis of the Austrian proposal. With this idea, the general nature of the future relation was more exactly defined by the stipulation that the exercise of the common rights should be divided "without affecting the continuance of these rights, on the part of both Powers, as applied to the Duchies as a whole:" whereby Prussia was secured against a possible future cession of Holstein to some party inconvenient to Prussia. Blome was then

able to grant several of Prussia's special demands: a second military road with stations, Prussian mail-service on the railway, and definite promises concerning the connection of both countries with the Tariff-Union.

Prussia, on her part, accepted Lauenburg, and the indemnity to be paid to Austria was fixed at two and one-half million Danish thalers. On the other hand, Blome was forced to insist upon a common garrisoning of Rendsburg with yearly alternation of the command; and it was only with difficulty that he gained the assent of his Government to Prussia's demands with respect to Kiel, where Bismarck declared that Prussian command and a Prussian garrison of the port were absolutely indispensable conditions, as well as also the Prussian fortification of Friedrichsort. These things were discussed on the 11th and 12th of August, and on the 13th the final details were talked over. Prussia now knew just how far Austria's concessions would reach in each particular. The moment for accepting or rejecting the plan as a whole had arrived.

If it could be hoped that Austria would firmly abide by the consequences of the standpoint now adopted by her, a compact such as had just been discussed certainly offered to Prussia a decided gain. Ever since Prussia had refused to purchase by a cession of territory Austria's consent to an annexation, the latter had constantly denied that the two Courts, by King Christian's cession of his rights in the Peace of Vienna, had acquired any real sovereignty in the Duchies. She had assisted in the government of Schleswig-Holstein

as a temporary, so to speak, accidental, depository of the power, until the future sovereign should be definitely placed upon the throne.

There was no more mention of these scruples in the outline of this treaty. This was again based entirely upon the views supported by Austria in December, 1863, on the 16th of January, 1864, and during the time that Christian IX. was regarded as the legitimate King-Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, when he was requested under the threat of war to alter the Constitution of Schleswig, and when he was at all hazards to be assured of the continued personal union of the Duchies with Denmark.

By so doing, it was again acknowledged that Christian, in the Peace of Vienna, had ceded to the German Powers no ambiguous legal claims, but actual sovereignty. For it must certainly have been a sovereign right that allowed Austria to consider it proper for her to cede further and unconditionally one of the Duchies to the Crown of Prussia, or to give her assent to an entirely new disposition of the other two, which was to continue indefinitely. No one could take such steps, unless he considered himself the legitimate successor of an indisputable and supreme sovereignty, that is, not without returning to that former basis, which characterized those three Acts: the London Protocol, the Danish Law of Succession, and the Peace of Vienna.

The immediate consequence must undoubtedly be the suppression of the Augustenburg agitation. If the two Monarchs were the legitimate holders of the

supreme power in the countries, then they might still discuss among themselves the question of ceding the same voluntarily to a third party; but each of the two joint rulers would be justified in demanding that this third party and his associates should not be suffered to undermine on his own account the existing order of things nor to question its validity.

Yet this had been the condition of things for the whole past year; and finally Prussia had very distinctly declared that its continuance would lead to a declaration of war. Now, in order to avoid this breach, and to satisfy Prussia's demands in the matter, without at the same time incurring the disagreeable necessity of promising with penitence to do better, or of formally repudiating Halbhuber, or of expelling Augustenburg by force, Blome had hit upon the expedient of entering upon entirely new ground by dividing the office of governing the Duchies, and, by practically putting into force the principles of the Peace of Vienna, of insuring to Prussia protection for the future against Augustenburg.

All this meant no insignificant improvement in Prussia's position in the Duchies. And furthermore, such a turn in the Austrian policy must necessarily cause a serious rupture between the Vienna Cabinet and the Lesser States: henceforth it would no longer be Prussia, but the Majority in the Confederate Diet, that would have cause to complain of Austria's unrelia- bleness.

Thus the treaty in its outline showed many bright

points for Prussia. But, assuredly, the shadows also were not wanting. A clear and complete result had not been reached. Even if an actual annexation was effected for Schleswig and Lauenburg, the future of Holstein nevertheless remained uncertain. About the most important questions, the military supremacy and matters concerning the Navy, either nothing whatever had been said, or it was made to depend upon the decision of the Confederation, by which, again, the future of Schleswig was indirectly made insecure.

But above all, though Austria did now acknowledge a principle that would unavoidably involve in its consequences the suppression of the Augustenburg agitation, who would guarantee, after the experiences hitherto, that Austria would always hold firmly to this acknowledgment? Austria had already in the matter changed her tactics four times within a very short period; and even though she did now, in view of her bad prospects for success in the event of a war, incline towards Prussia, this was but a weak security against her making a fifth oscillation back towards the opposite side, whenever in a possible war with Prussia the future seemed to promise her better chances.

Under these circumstances, it was Prussia's foreign policy that turned the balance. Just at this moment announcements came from all sides, which decided the question in favor of the acceptance of the treaty.

In a despatch on the 9th of August, Count Usedom reported that La Marmora had declared to him nothing had been definitely decided about Italy's attitude, nor

the necessary steps discussed. According to La Marmora's own opinion, Italy would not allow a favorable opportunity for the conquest of Venetia to pass by unused. Whether the present one was indeed favorable or not would depend on the contents of a treaty to be made with Prussia. Yet Italy could hardly enter upon such measures without first asking Napoleon; for a Prussian alliance might very easily result in emancipating Italy from France, which would be likely to be in the highest degree unwelcome to the Emperor. "La Marmora," observed Usedom, "cannot rid himself of the suspicion that the Berlin Cabinet would make use of Italy only as a scarecrow to frighten Austria, and then, after securing her ends, would quickly become reconciled with the Court of Vienna. Certain it is, on the other hand, that Italy, so soon as she has acquired Venetia, will cease from action: her co-operation cannot be counted upon further."

Then Count Goltz reported that, in view of the continued absence of Napoleon and Drouyn de Lhuys, he had had an extended conversation with the Empress Eugénie. Her Imperial Highness had spoken with him confidentially, and even sympathetically. Goltz was charmed with her gracious manner; but Bismarck was not satisfied to the same degree with the substance of her remarks. The Emperor, she had said, would not interfere in the quarrel between the two German Powers; on the conditions that the principle of nationality should be followed, and that the people themselves should be allowed to decide the question, he was in



favor of the Prussian annexation of the Duchies; upon the breaking out of the war, he would not hinder Italy from taking part in it at her own risk, although Italy would probably strike no blow until the character of the war and its aims had been clearly manifested; at any rate, it was not possible, at the beginning of a war between Prussia and Austria, to await with any other feeling than anxiety its incalculable consequences. To the question of the Count as to whether Napoleon had pledged himself by a formal treaty to remain neutral, the Empress asserted positively that he had not done so. She said that the aims of the Emperor were well known: he desired for France no aggrandizement, but quiet and peace. But it would be impossible for him under any circumstances to tie his hands.

Lastly, a despatch from Prince Reuss in Munich, on the 11th of August, contained the information that Pfordten was, indeed, very much vexed with the Prince of Augustenburg, who had not deigned to reply to his admonitions, but that he awaited with so much the more anxiety the outcome of the negotiations at Gastein; if these should result in a rupture, it would be impossible for Bavaria to remain neutral, and he could declare with assurance that all the Lesser States would find themselves in the same position.

Such an outlook with regard to the attitude of the Foreign Powers, in the event of an outbreak of war, was not promising: utter indefiniteness as to the French policy, continued hesitation on the part of the Italian Government, and the certainty that all the Lesser

States would side with Austria. The situation was precisely that in which, as Bismarck had written to Count Usedom, "the question arises whether we had not better moderate our demands on Austria, and be satisfied with the really not inconsiderable advantages which we can obtain by peaceful means."

The King was not wholly satisfied with what had been gained, nor fully convinced of the reliableness of the Vienna policy in the future, but he was heartily glad that a breach with Austria had been avoided, and closer relations established with France and Italy. General Manteuffel, who was present, wrote afterwards: "At the Gastein convention the general feeling was, that in three months it would be manifest whether Austria meant to deal honestly with Prussia: if not, war must ensue with the conclusion of otherwise undesirable alliances."

Accordingly, on the 14th of August, Bismarck and Blome executed the treaty, which the King at once on the same day communicated in an autograph letter to the Emperor Francis Joseph. The new arrangement was to go into effect by the 15th of September. The common Government was to be dismissed, and the office of military commander-in-chief done away with; all Prussian troops, with the exception of the garrisons of Rendsburg and the port of Kiel, were to be removed to Schleswig, and all Austrian troops to Holstein.

On the 19th of August the meeting of the two Monarchs took place in Salzburg, and on the 20th the treaty was ratified by them. With warm words the

intention was expressed on both sides to carry out the treaty in harmonious co-operation, in the spirit of mutual accommodation, and with all honesty of purpose. When the conversation turned upon Augustenburg, it was recognized by all that, after the present agreement, he could reside in the Duchies only as a private person, and be regarded absolutely as such. As well the Emperor as Count Moritz Esterhazy joined Bismarck in giving expression to the expectation that henceforth the two Powers should conduct together in undisturbed harmony, and with a conservative policy, the affairs of Germany as a whole.

In confirmation of the restored friendship, the King appointed General von Manteuffel, who was so highly esteemed in Vienna, to be governor of Schleswig. The Emperor set over Holstein Lieutenant Field Marshal Gablenz, Prussia's associate of the previous year, and assigned as his civil commissioner, in place of the offensive Herr von Halbhuber, a ministerial councillor, Von Hofmann.

The King immediately afterwards also visited the Empress in Ischl, and then left Austrian territory with a lighter heart. A few weeks later he showed how much he had desired a peaceful understanding, and consequently how much the conclusion of the treaty had really gladdened him, by raising his Prime Minister, who it cannot be said had put his name to the treaty in an exulting mood, to the rank of count.

Meanwhile the wires and newspapers were carrying the news to all parts of the world; and the effect

which was produced was drastic in the extreme. In countless circles it seemed to be a great victory for the Prussian policy. The Vienna newspapers, except the semi-official ones, overflowed unanimously with indignation and shame: they declared that the humiliation of Austria was the more disgraceful because public opinion had been patriotically urging the Cabinet to show a courageous and dignified determination.

In the Duchies the effect was at the first moment crushing for all the supporters of Augustenburg. "We have become Prussian," was the feeling in Schleswig. "We shall soon be sold like Lauenburg," said the people of Holstein. The Hereditary Prince himself, at Pfordten's recommendation, had been about to go to Berlin, in order to appeal to the magnanimity of the King; but he had abandoned this upon receiving encouraging news from Wydenbrugk, his agent at Vienna, and now saw his last hopes vanish. That a protest against the Gastein treaty, signed by thirty-one members of the Holstein Estates, and by delegates from forty-six towns, and which was sent to the Confederate Diet, would have no result, was evident to everybody from the first.

In non-Prussian Germany a noisy excitement again blazed up. The newspapers grumbled at Austria's weakness, were angry at Bismarck's triumph, and sneered at the impotence of the Confederate Diet. The right of Schleswig-Holstein to decide for herself was set forth in a great variety of ways, — a right which, it was said, the contractors at Gastein had

shamefully trodden under foot. Properly recognizing that the settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein question would immediately involve that of German Confederate reform, the Württemberg "popular party," commissioned by their Hessian and Bavarian associates in doctrine, elaborated a platform for their party with respect to the future German Constitution, in which the following expressions were especially prominent: "No Austrian head nor Prussian head!" "Union of the purely German states under one democratic central authority that shall control the Governments, and a representative assembly of the people!" "No unity other than upon the basis of liberty!"

Within the circle of this angry agitation the committee of thirty-six in Frankfort took another position. They held unshakenly to the hope that they might, through the persistent opposition of the Vienna and Berlin Parliaments, force these Governments to follow the course of South German liberalism. They called together a new assembly of deputies to meet at Frankfort on the 1st of October, to which they especially invited the members from Austria and Prussia, and to which they then presented a list of resolutions to the effect that the Gastein compact annihilated all the order and security of law in Germany, and consequently must be rejected by the nation as a violation of law; that it was, especially for the Duchies, in no way valid nor binding; and that it must be energetically fought against by all German parliaments.

But they were to be bitterly disappointed. For, in

spite of their express solicitation, there were among 272 members present only one Austrian and eight Prussians, six of whom declared that, as Prussians, they could not support the motions, and therefore did not vote. Several distinguished Prussian deputies from the party of the Progressists, Twesten, Th. Mommson, and G. Jung, had explained their non-appearance in Frankfort by saying that the Majority in the popular representation of Prussia would never vote for measures that challenged the power and the future of the Prussian State.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the fifteen absent Austrians announced that they held firmly to the doctrines of the former assemblies of deputies, but for reasons which it was not necessary to explain did not feel themselves called upon to take part in the present one. The majority of the deputies from Hesse-Cassel, and some from Bavaria, had decided to remain away from the assembly, because they thought it would amount to nothing but useless words.

The same feelings and opinions were shared by South German Ultramontanes and the advocates of "an entire Germany," who sided with them. The committee of the German Reform Association sent to its members a circular, in which they condemned the Gastein treaty quite as emphatically as the Democrats and Liberals, denouncing it as a violation of all legal and moral principles; but any general assembly of the Association was postponed for the present, in consideration of the

<sup>1</sup> A French diplomat said somewhat later: "In every Prussian there crops out a bit of the old Fritz." May this be true for all time!

fact, it was said, that the efforts of the Association to bring about a reform of the German Confederation by legal means would be defeated, so long as the rights of princes and people in a German country were so trampled upon by the German Governments themselves.

The chief organ of the Ultramontane party in Bavaria, *Die Historisch-Politischen Blätter*, published in September an editorial written by Jörg, which criticised with fitting sharpness Austria's vacillation in the question of the Duchies: first, the assertion of the validity of the treaties of 1852, and consequent opposition to Augustenburg in common with Prussia, yet without the Prussian desire to dismember Denmark; then, since the 28th of May, 1864, her opposition to Prussia and support of Augustenburg, the Lesser States, and the right of the people to decide for themselves; and now again the old standpoint, in accordance with which she proclaimed the sovereignty of the two Monarchs in Schleswig-Holstein, dropped the Lesser States and Augustenburg, and said nothing more about the right of the people to decide the question at issue.

This instability, it was said, had necessarily caused an increasing preponderance of the influence of the ever-consistent Prussia; and if this latter state was not to become the sole controller of Germany, it would be necessary for all German countries to encourage the Vienna Cabinet, and to show themselves more willing to accede to the wishes of Austria than to those of Prussia. With this idea, it was not exactly proposed to admit the whole of Austria into the German Confed-

eration, but it was pointed out that a guaranty might be granted by the latter for even Austria's non-German possessions.

But at this moment the Governments of the Lesser States were as far as possible from entertaining such thoughts as these. Their feelings were naturally most seriously wounded by the Gastein treaty, and their anger was, quite as naturally, directed less against their open adversary, whom they had resisted for years, than against their faithless associate, who had crossed over again to the side of the enemy. In the first place, their complete impotence was shown again in the Confederate Diet as plainly as in the spring of 1864. Bavaria, Saxony, and Hesse-Darmstadt had brought forward in Frankfort, on the 27th of July, the motion that Pforten had discussed with Bismarck, and the Confederate Diet had immediately referred it to the Holstein committee. "Not a soul," wrote Savigny to Bismarck, "is really very much edified by it."

Then came the Gastein treaty; and the news of this meant the utter powerlessness of any decree of the Confederation against the will of the Great Powers. In the committee itself, Würtemberg expressed the belief that it was better to do nothing than to disgrace themselves by taking ineffectual steps; and, in opposition to Bavaria and Saxony, she supported the opinion of the majority, that it was best to recommend to the Confederate Assembly no measure regarding the motion of July 27th other than the negative one of awaiting further communications from the Great Powers, and



meanwhile to take a vacation until the end of October. All this was approved by the august assembly, on the 31st of August. It was impossible to settle anything more amicably.

But so much the more bitter was the vexation of the individual persons. Roggenbach resigned immediately afterwards, alleging as a reason the internal condition of things in Baden. He also had always before his eyes the defeat of the Schleswig-Holstein policy he had hitherto pursued, and saw the hated Prussian annexation approaching; yet he did not wish to take part personally in an open contest with Prussia. Pfordten was pleased that the Gastein treaty had given expression to the intention of the Powers to establish a German fleet. "To be sure," he added, "Augustenburg's prospects have grown very much worse. However, I have done my part." He, too, saw in the treaty a victory for Prussia; he seemed to feel a sort of malicious satisfaction over Austria's position, and spoke of the Duchies only with disgust.

But most of all did Beust's heart boil with vexation. His semi-official *Leipziger Zeitung* published a series of articles, in which the agreement formed at Gastein was denounced as unjust and ruinous. He, too, recognized the close connection between the Schleswig-Holstein and the German questions: this dismemberment of Schleswig-Holstein presaged the division of Germany by the line of the Main. The only hope of salvation from this danger, he said, was to be found in a firm alliance of the German States against the two Great Powers.

In a conversation with the Austrian *chargé d'affaires*, Beust indignantly resented the former's appeasing words. "Long enough," said Beust, "have we allowed ourselves to be misguided by Austria. It is now time for us to stand upon our own feet. Out of consideration for Austria, we rejected a Prussian proposal of a commercial treaty with Italy, injured thereby our economic interests most seriously, and aroused in all our branches of industry a feeling of ill-will against the Government. Now Austria herself has freed our hands; and we shall not hesitate, as a means of obtaining the commercial treaty, to recognize officially the new Kingdom of Italy."

Indeed, an auspicious star was now shining upon the Italian Nation. The same event that for a time again enveloped in clouds the prospect of her speedily acquiring Venetia, made good this loss by disposing the hitherto hostile German States to further confirm by their vote the existence of the young Kingdom. General La Marmora, it is true, would hardly have needed such consolation for the agreement at Gastein. He had at last received a reply to his question directed to Nigra in Paris, in the latter's report of August 13th concerning an interview which he had had with Drouyn de Lhuys, who had just returned. In this conversation, Drouyn de Lhuys had told the ambassador, that if Italy wished to wage war, Napoleon would allow her to go ahead at her own risk: he would not hinder her nor protect her, but would at the most guard Lombardy.

The French Minister had further observed, that he

approved of La Marmora's reply to Usedom in almost every respect. "Italy's situation," said Drouyn de Lhuys, "is most propitious. Let her only know how to wait. So far as Prussia is concerned, France would, in the event of a war over Schleswig-Holstein, remain passive; yet if the struggle should assume large dimensions, she would look after her own interests. Let Italy, therefore, not be over-hasty in committing herself. It may be that Austria herself has thoughts of coming to an understanding with Italy. At least, Prince Metternich has allowed some talk to be made in Paris about a wish of the Vienna Cabinet to arrange certain commercial relations with Italy. Once thus begun, the matter may perhaps go farther."

After La Marmora had received the above report about Napoleon's permission to engage in war, he declared to Count Usedom, on the 15th of August, with unusual animation, that if Prussia really should begin a "great" war against Austria, Italy would take part in it; for no Italian Government, he said, could possibly do otherwise. This brave decision came, as we know, too late: a few days later, he received the news of the Gastein treaty. His feelings, upon hearing of it, wrote Count Usedom, were divided. He seemed to regret the postponement of the national war, and yet felt a certain satisfaction in being freed from the burden of a heavy responsibility. The idea never occurred to this short-sighted and self-conscious brain, that perhaps it had been just his indecision that had dampened Prussia's ardor for war, and had determined the conclu-

sion of the compact. On the contrary, he was now doubly convinced of the correctness of his non-committal policy, and of the impossibility of a Prussian war with Austria.<sup>1</sup> He congratulated himself on his sagacity and prudence in having foreseen the wise counsel of Drouyn de Lhuys, and in not being over-hasty nor willing to commit himself. "The more necessary was it for me," he says in his book, "to take account of the declaration of the French Minister." The latter's assertion, that Austria might, perhaps, take a step that might possibly lead to something else, took a load from his heart. Inasmuch as the unreliableness of a Prussian alliance seemed now to have been proved to him as clearly as daylight, he resolved, upon the strength of the news from Paris, to make a direct attempt from his side to establish more friendly relations with Vienna.

<sup>1</sup> Soon afterwards Usedom entered upon his leave of absence, which had been already granted to him in July and then postponed. La Marmora gave fresh evidence of his power of insight (after his fashion), by finding in Usedom's absence an indication of embarrassment and shame at Prussia's cowardly conduct. He said that after the news from Gastein had been received, Usedom had not called upon him for two whole months. Usedom did have, however, several conversations with him before his departure.

## CHAPTER IV.

## BISMARCK IN BIARRITZ.

IN Paris, the Gastein agreement had already become public several days before its ratification. Notwithstanding the strict secrecy which both contracting parties had sworn to observe, Mensdorff had informed Prince Metternich, on the 10th of August, of Blome's proposals, and on the 14th, of the signing of the treaty; and Metternich had immediately communicated the news to Drouyn de Lhuys. When Werther complained of this afterward, Mensdorff answered very naïvely that he had done so only in order to moderate Metternich's well-known French sympathies. Yet the latter were, on the contrary, so much aroused by the news, that he announced to the French Minister, as well as to the Italian ambassador, that this might now be considered the definite solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question: covetous Prussia, who had stretched out her hand to seize the whole, had now prudently become content with the half.

But public opinion in France judged differently of the treaty. It saw therein, as did the German Radicals and Democrats, a decided triumph of the Prussian policy, and attacked it the more vehemently, because the French people had for the last two years warmly

espoused the Danish cause, and regarded Bismarck as the true author of Denmark's discomfiture.

Now, it was said, this most disgusting hypocrisy had finally thrown aside the mask. The German Powers had gone to war with Denmark because she wished to divide Schleswig-Holstein, which was indivisible; now they themselves had torn the Duchies asunder by force. They had fought for Germany and against Denmark in the name of loyalty to the German race; but now they were disregarding Germany, the German Confederation, and the voice of the German people, and Prussia was holding the Danes of North Schleswig under her yoke. All liberal principles and the claims of civilization were trodden under foot! and in the middle of the nineteenth century, peoples were treated like herds of cattle! This cry was taken up by all the newspapers, ministerial, legitimist, and radical; the Orleanist *Revue des deux Mondes* agreed on this occasion with the *Revue Contemporaine*, which was supported by the Government.

Drouyn de Lhuys rubbed his hands with delight over this attack, which was chiefly directed against Prussia, and expressed his satisfaction emphatically to several members of the diplomatic circle. He knew for what reasons the occurrence would also displease the Emperor Napoleon, and hoped by this means to cure him entirely of all his schemes that were based upon Prussia's co-operation. Meanwhile, Count Goltz had received instructions from Bismarck with regard to the treaty, and thereupon endeavored, on the 19th of August, to

convince the French Minister that the whole newspaper excitement was unfounded. The treaty, he said, did not concern the final settlement, but a new form of the provisional arrangement, — not a division of sovereignty, but an improvement in the administration. Prussia had not been able to negotiate with the Vienna Cabinet with regard to the future of the Duchies, before the removal of the abuses allowed by Halbhuber: the treaty aimed only at the removal of these, and consequently negotiations concerning the ultimate destiny of the Duchies could not begin until now, when they would again be taken up.

The Minister rejoiced to learn this, but confessed that his Government had been surprised to hear of a treaty between Austria and Prussia without receiving any communication from Prussia on the subject. He spoke, however, in more flattering tones than ever before, promising that France, as Prussia's well-wisher, would not interfere with the latter's annexation of the Duchies, if only she would treat the Danes in North Schleswig with reasonable consideration. He then proceeded to make the following suggestions: "In case the war and the aims of the war become much extended, France naturally cannot renounce all freedom of action without full compensation. It is well known that the Emperor is more favorably disposed to Prussia than to Austria; for the latter has nothing to offer to French interests: a reciprocal arrangement with Prussia in this regard is, on the other hand, quite conceivable. *Frontiers* may be subject to arrangement,

without detriment to either contracting party." Goltz answered: "No Prussian king can give away Prussian territory; other arrangements are conceivable, but not to be spoken of before the proper time." "That is very true," responded the Minister in conclusion.

As we have remarked more than once, Drouyn de Lhuys' sympathies were with Austria rather than with Prussia; he had never shared in his Imperial Master's wishes regarding Italy, and consequently had not rejoiced in the possibility of a Prusso-Italian war against Austria. So we have seen that when he communicated to La Marmora the imperial permission to proceed, the Minister, on his own responsibility, urgently advised him to delay his movements. In any case, in his opinion, Prussia should receive no support until she had guaranteed to the French Cabinet a very substantial share in the profits.

As Goltz now showed so little inclination to discuss the possibility of an acquisition of territory for France, the Minister was confirmed in his intention of using the Gastein treaty as a means of inciting the Emperor against Prussia. Napoleon came on the 23d of August from the camp at Châlons to Fontainebleau, and here the Minister made his report on the 27th. The Emperor was extremely averse to any new strengthening of the Austro-Prussian alliance, and Drouyn de Lhuys, without mentioning in any way the explanations of Count Goltz, laid stress upon the disregard of the popular will and of the principle of nationality in the treaty, which, thus ignoring the fundamental basis of



the French policy, practically held up to contempt the French Government, inasmuch as the latter's friendliness for Germany, as contrasted with the sympathy of the French people for the Danes, was founded upon these very principles.

He thus obtained instructions to draw up a circular letter condemning the treaty; and by this letter the French ambassadors were to regulate their utterances in future conversations. Nevertheless, the Emperor expressly ordered that the ambassadors should not communicate to the foreign Courts the contents of the circular itself: he was very willing that Berlin should know of his displeasure, but wished to avoid any formal incivility, which might draw Prussia even more closely to the Court of Vienna.

On the 28th of August, Napoleon had invited Count Goltz to dine with him in private. He knew that the Count's personal impressions were not without influence upon his political views; and the more severely and didactically he contemplated expressing himself against the Prussian policy, the more gracious and confidential was the manner which he assumed toward him. Immediately after receiving him, he introduced the subject of the agreement at Gastein. "The question of the Duchies," he said, "has always been a difficult one to understand, and now I understand nothing whatever, absolutely nothing of the matter — your last treaty is so utterly contrary to the tenor of Prussia's former policy."

Goltz emphasized the provisional character of the

treaty, which was intended to serve for a short period as a means of improving an administration that had fallen into total confusion; the King, he said, preferred this to a rupture, the consequences of which were incalculable, especially as he — Goltz — had reported to Berlin that the neutrality of France was probably certain during the quarrel over Schleswig-Holstein, but could by no means be relied upon in case of a further extension of the war.

Here the Emperor interrupted him: "You have done your country a great service by clearing up any misunderstandings in this respect. Indeed, how could I pledge myself in advance to sit still under all circumstances and demand nothing, come what might? You are aware of my sentiments towards Prussia: I wish, and indeed I consider it necessary, that she should aggrandize herself and thereby free herself from that foreign influence which she has been obliged to follow, to the disadvantage of France, since 1815. This ought to be enough for Prussia to know in forming her plans. Nor can she, for the present, introduce any other subject for negotiations than Schleswig-Holstein; one cannot sell the bear-skin till one has killed the bear: that I have found from experience." And then Napoleon related how he had made greater promises to the Italians in 1859 than he had been able to fulfil at Villafranca, and accordingly had not been able to hinder Victor Emmanuel's arbitrary annexations in 1860. "Since then," said he, "I do not make any promises, to which I may not be able to adhere under all circumstances."

Count Goltz observed somewhat timidly: "But Drouyn de Lhuys has said to me that even were the war to become more extended, Your Majesty would readily come to an understanding with Prussia, but not with Austria." "That is quite correct," answered the Emperor, "but you can imagine what a painful impression this Gastein occurrence has made upon me. You were going to free the Duchies; you announced their right to be united; the inhabitants were to be consulted as to their future destiny: and now you conclude a treaty that sets you in a bad light, and at least makes it appear as if you were doing just the reverse of all this. You see, also, how public opinion, which I cannot ignore, is turning away from you."

At table, Napoleon again assumed a friendlier tone. He told the ambassador that Austria had believed he would submit the question of the Duchies to a European congress; but that he had upon the spot categorically refused to do so. "What attitude," asked he, "does Russia hold in this affair?" Goltz could give him no information on the subject, but presumed it would be one of friendly neutrality. "England," said Napoleon, "will have nothing whatever more to do with the whole business. But as regards Austria, the treaty does not appear by any means to have removed the bitter memories of previous disputes; there, every one feels humiliated; the people, the Ministers, and the Emperor Joseph himself." Goltz thereupon came to the gratifying conclusion, that it was not the restoration of peaceable relations between Austria and Prussia

that excited Napoleon's vexation in connection with the meeting at Gastein.

After dinner, Napoleon honored the ambassador with another conversation, in which he expressed his admiration for the Prussian army and its officers, and praised the military spirit of the Prussians, which in time of peace was stronger than that of France. Then he invited his guest to walk in the garden, another especial mark of favor, and said to him there: "Write to Count Bismarck that in the event of war between Prussia and Austria, I should have observed a friendly neutrality; but that I am surprised, very much surprised, at what has happened." Goltz ventured to ask: "If the crisis should occur again, might we still rely upon these same friendly sentiments?" "Certainly," answered the Emperor; "but I regret that Prussia should depart more and more from her traditional mission of putting herself at the head of the national movement in Germany. If the King should proclaim a liberal and national programme, for which no war is required, all the liberal elements in Germany would join with him; the miserable parliamentary quarrels, and the wretched question of the Duchies, would be all forgotten."

Goltz thoroughly agreed with this recommendation of a liberal policy, and described to his Minister with evident satisfaction the gracious reception which Napoleon had accorded him. Bismarck was less pleased with the details of the interview. "The King is surprised," he wrote to the ambassador on the 1st of

September, "at the painful impression produced upon Napoleon, which, according to your opinion, was not caused by the re-establishment of an understanding between us and Austria: but what other cause could there be? If he really desired a rupture between the two countries, this must make us doubly distrustful."

The Emperor's invitation to give a liberal turn to Prussian-German politics, Bismarck roundly declined. "The parties," said he, "which Napoleon may have in mind, are strong enough at best to carry their measures through the Chambers; and the Governments of the Lesser States are at variance among themselves, and enfeebled by the wretchedness of their military organizations. This condition of affairs can neither offer us firm support, nor threaten us with serious danger: the true basis of successful and practical national endeavor can only be a powerful Prussia and an independent Prussian policy." Goltz was directed, therefore, in accordance with the instructions of the 4th of August, still to make no definite proposals to Napoleon, but to continue to make the Emperor's sentiments towards Prussia a matter of careful study.

Meanwhile, Drouyn de Lhuys had been doing his part to make still less cordial the relations between France and Prussia.

On the 8th of September, Balan, at that time ambassador in Brussels, forwarded a copy of the *Emancipation Belge* published there, in which appeared word for word the circular letter to the French embassies, dated August 29th. This circular could hardly be excelled

in insulting rudeness. After complaining (on the strength of the newspaper reports) that the Gastein treaty had violated the treaties of 1852, had set aside the heir whose claims were the most justifiable, had torn asunder the indivisible Schleswig-Holstein, had disregarded the right of the people to decide in the matter and the fact that many of them were Danes, and had ignored the German associates of the Great Powers in the Confederation, it came to the conclusion that the treaty had no other basis than might, and no other justification than the convenience of the Powers between whom the Duchies had been divided: a practice to which modern Europe was unaccustomed, and for which precedents were to be found only in the most fateful epochs of history. The document completely ignored Goltz's assurances to the French Minister concerning the provisional character of the treaty, which alone was sufficient to confute all these accusations.

At first, Bismarck considered this alleged circular letter to be a bold fabrication. It appeared, however, in all the newspapers of Europe, without calling forth any contradiction; and soon came the news from Dresden and Hanover, that the French ambassadors at these places had officially brought it to the notice of the Governments to which they were accredited.

To cap the climax, there soon followed the publication of a circular despatch from Lord John Russell, dated the 14th of September, seconding in every particular the opinions expressed in the French circular. This may have been written at the request of Drouyn

de Lhuys, which Napoleon, to be sure, at once emphatically denied, or it may have been due to Lord John's desire not to appear behind his Paris colleague in humane and liberal sentiments. On this occasion he was not hindered by Queen Victoria, since her Royal Majesty was at this time very unfavorably disposed toward Prussia in consequence of the slight to Augustenburg.<sup>1</sup>

In short, it was amazing with what warmth the sin of annexation was all at once preached to us wicked Germans by the conquerors of Algeria and India; the excellence of freedom, by the French autocrat; the inviolability of the hereditary right of sovereigns, by whiggish England; and the right of a population to decide its own fate, by the masters of Nice and of Ireland. Yet it was gratifying to observe that in Germany itself, even in numerous circles otherwise hostile to Prussia, this impudent interference of foreigners in German controversies was repelled with indignation.

In Berlin, great was the astonishment and resentment. Although it was known there that Napoleon was not altogether pleased at the Gastein treaty, it seemed a long way from his ambiguous conversations with Goltz on the 28th of August to the discharge of open insults that followed immediately, on the next day. The French official newspapers, too, continued daily their hostile bluster with undiminished vigor. It appeared almost inconceivable, under such circumstances, that, when Napoleon on the 7th of September

<sup>1</sup> Communication of King Leopold I. of Belgium.

departed with the Empress and his son for a prolonged sojourn at Biarritz, Count Goltz and one of the younger Prussian diplomats, the son of General von Radowitz, should receive a gracious invitation to accompany the Count thither, and be constantly favored while there with the most familiar intercourse.

I do not know whether Bismarck had already entertained the idea, on his part, of likewise seeking refreshment in the health-giving surf on the shores of the Bay of Biscay, as he had done in 1864; at all events, he now expressed to the King his wish to be there, so that he might find out with his own eyes the true condition of our relations. The King was at first doubtful whether this would be fitting after the insults received. Meanwhile, Goltz announced, on the basis of repeated interviews with the Emperor himself, that the latter deeply regretted the circular letter; that he had been much disturbed by the newspaper reports of the Gastein affair, on account of the disregard of all the principles of Napoleonic policy; that therefore he had commissioned Drouyn de Lhuys to send a protest to the ambassadors; that he had not made himself acquainted with the wording of the circular which followed; and that least of all had he wished to have anything said about it to the foreign Courts, or at any rate to the newspapers. Goltz also reported that the Emperor had commanded the Minister, on the 20th of September, to modify somewhat the circular letter, and was now inclined to instruct him to revoke the same by a new despatch, in view of the provisional character of the



treaty. The wind had indeed shifted in the hotel of the *Quai d'Orsay*. On the 23d of September, Drouyn de Lhuys sent a despatch to Berlin, to the effect that he had learned with satisfaction the provisional character of the treaty, and therefore hoped, upon the definite solution of the question, to have reason to approve of Prussia's wishes unreservedly, and thus to unite the two Powers more closely than ever. He also said to the Prussian ambassador, that he was very much astonished at the disagreeable impression his circular had made in Berlin, and urgently desired to efface it. Bismarck, it is true, did not consider these declarations satisfactory; for the insult had been public, and the reparation was made only in private. However, it appeared hazardous to make any further demands: there was no prospect of obtaining Drouyn's dismissal; and in any case, Napoleon had explicitly refused to sustain him in his conduct. Therefore it was decided to waive any further official explanations, and the King assented to Bismarck's journey to Biarritz. He made, however, the reservation that for the present no engagements should be entered into with France, inasmuch as it was necessary first to await the effect of the Gastein treaty upon the situation in Germany and in Schleswig-Holstein. The Minister thereupon, on the 30th of September, went by way of Paris to Biarritz, where he remained in Napoleon's company until the 12th of October, and after the Emperor's departure, tarried for the rest of the month.

After a short telegram about his first interview with

Napoleon on the 4th of October, Bismarck made a comprehensive report on the 11th, the day before the Emperor's departure, concerning all his experiences.

“ In the first place, in Paris, I visited the Minister of State, Rouher, and found him thoroughly well disposed toward our interests, upon which I lay special stress, because Rouher appears to possess the personal confidence of the Emperor in a greater degree than Drouyn de Lhuys, and in any case is more candid than the latter. He had heard that it was doubtful, since I was to be only one day in Paris, whether I should be able to visit the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He advised me very urgently to do so, in order not to render it more difficult to remove the ill-will, which had been caused by the circular of the 29th of August, by personally offending Drouyn de Lhuys. Although already determined to make the visit, I allowed Monsieur Rouher, a personal and political opponent of Drouyn de Lhuys, the credit of having persuaded me to do so. It appeared to me the more necessary to consign the affair of the 29th of August to oblivion, after I learned with certainty from Rouher that the Emperor himself had seen and approved of the wording of the circular before it was sent.

“ The politeness with which Drouyn de Lhuys received me was designed to remove all sensitiveness concerning the circular. The Imperial Minister declared that this hostile manifestation arose from the apprehension that Prussia, without incurring any obligations to France, would seize upon the Duchies, and then,

strengthened by reason of this new acquisition, would pursue again an anti-French policy. He said that while Prussia derived actual pecuniary profit from the friendly attitude of France, the advantages that might accrue to France from her friendly relations with Prussia depended upon an uncertain future. At my request, he indicated more explicitly the advantages which France might hope to acquire, as had already been done by the ambassador Lefebvre, whose remarks were communicated by me to Your Majesty shortly before my departure from Berlin.<sup>1</sup> He stoutly denied all desire for Prussian or German territory. I replied to him, that we could not mark out the course of future history nor invent it at our pleasure, but only await its development, and profit by its opportunities; and that we, on our part, hoped and wished that it might prove to be such as would preserve and further the natural harmonious relations between Prussia and France.

“Notwithstanding the assiduous, and, I might say, exaggerated, friendliness with which the Minister endeavored to obliterate the evil effects of his circular, I failed to become quite convinced of the sincerity of his good-will toward us, but consider his asseverations of the same as only the result of the Emperor’s express commands.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lefebvre had hinted at various districts where French was spoken. The Duc de Gramont subsequently insinuated that Bismarck and not Lefebvre had on this occasion made the above-mentioned suggestions. The further course of events spares us the pains of refuting this idea.

<sup>2</sup> Goltz reported from Paris, on the 23d of October, that Drouyn de Lhuys was spreading by means of trusty agents the story that Bismarck had represented to him the necessity of a great extension of territory for

“On the day after my arrival in Biarritz, I was granted a special audience by the Emperor. . . . It was evident that the Emperor himself would have been glad to blot out of existence the circular letter of August 29th. He seemed not to know that I was aware of his previous sanction of it, for he emphasized the fact that, although he took into his own hands the direction of foreign affairs at critical times, he troubled himself little about the ordinary details, unless their importance was especially brought to his attention. He repeatedly regretted the publication of the document, and the precipitation with which it had been drawn up, without previous consultation with Your Majesty’s representative. In this manner had the influence of the Gastein treaty upon Prussia’s whole policy been overrated in Paris, especially as no one had been able to believe but that a result so favorable for Prussia had been purchased by some secret concessions.

“The Emperor ill concealed the fact, which Drouyn de Lhuys had distinctly intimated to me, that the Austrian communications, which had reached him through trustworthy channels (apparently through her Majesty the Empress), strengthened the supposition of a secret joint understanding between the German Powers, directed against France. His Majesty again appealed to my conscience in asking me with a certain degree of Prussia, and had made offers of compensation to him, but that he, Drouyn, had rejected all his proposals. Goltz was of the opinion that Drouyn de Lhuys had fabricated this report for the benefit of the Austrian embassy, in order to increase its prejudice against Prussia; since to the diplomatists in Paris the Minister spoke more correctly, praised Bismarck’s amiability, and only complained because he had been so reticent.

solemnity the pointed question, whether we had not given Austria any guaranty concerning Venetia. I denied it, with the assurance, that the Emperor might be the more fully convinced of my sincerity, since such an agreement, had it been made, could not remain a secret, and as I needed to preserve his belief in my trustworthiness; moreover, I considered such an agreement impossible in the future, as it would put Austria in a position to bring about a war at will, which Prussia would be forced to take part in without any advantage to herself.

“The Emperor assured me that he contemplated setting on foot no schemes by which the peace of Europe would be disturbed, and that Lefebvre, whose reports concerning our conversations had been received, had gone further in his utterances than his instructions warranted.<sup>1</sup> Almost in the same words in which I had expressed the idea to Drouyn de Lhuys, and which he had meanwhile without doubt reported, the Emperor said: ‘One must not try to create events, but must be content to let them develop and ripen. Events will not be wanting; and they will furnish evidence that Prussia and France are the states in Europe whose interests are most closely connected.’ He said that he would be ready, when the time came, to evince that friendship and that sympathy for Prussia with which he was filled.

“In this connection, the Emperor then inquired in

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon protested especially against the supposition that he cherished any selfish schemes against Belgium, and expressed himself in the same way to Goltz, and also, after the death of King Leopold I., to Lord Cowley. Goltz's report, December 9th.

what way we expected to settle the Holstein question with Austria. I answered frankly that we hoped to acquire and retain Holstein by a payment of money. His Majesty made no objection to this, and expressly declared his appreciation of the arguments with which I had confuted Drouyn de Lhuys' fears of Prussia's aggrandizement without an equivalent gain for France. These arguments were: that the acquisition of the Duchies of the Elbe would not of itself be any increase of Prussia's power, but on the contrary would tax the energies of our Fatherland in more than one direction, especially in the development of our navy and our defences toward the north, and to a degree that would more than counterbalance the accession of a million subjects. The acquisition of the Duchies would be only earnest-money (*arrhes*) for the fulfilment of the task, which history had laid upon the State of Prussia, and for the further prosecution of which we need to maintain friendly relations with France. It seems to me, I said, in the interest of France to encourage Prussia in her ambitious fulfilment of her national task: for such an ambition would always induce her to value highly her friendly relations with France, whereas, if discouraged, she would seek protection in defensive alliances against that Power.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor expressed

<sup>1</sup> A further development of these views was presented to Goltz by Bismarck on the 16th of August, to be turned to account in Paris. A selection of some of the sentences will be read with great interest.

"Continental politics have for a long time been based upon the close union of the three Eastern Powers, which, in the condition of things resulting from the Holy Alliance, took the form of a coalition against France. . . . The German Confederation has been apprehended in the

himself fully in sympathy with this line of reasoning, which he designated as at once clear and convincing.

“This was the substance of the conversation with His Majesty. The same was repeated several times with various modifications during the first audience, and also

same spirit, and has been forced to serve rather the consolidation of that coalition than the vital internal development of Germany. The policy of Prussia had been for many years turned in this direction. . . . However much the internal development and the real interests of Prussia have in many respects tended to connect her more closely with France, the belief that her greatest dangers were to come from the side of France (which perhaps was false) made it seem necessary that she should continue to participate in that alliance. This supposition has more or less determined the policy of Prussia since 1815, and has forced her to follow Austria's South German and ‘entire Germany’ policies, which were also strengthened by the conservative interests of Russia, and which made use of the Confederation (whose protection Prussia thought she needed against France) as an additional means of bringing a pressure to bear upon Prussia.

“Opposed to this traditional theory there is another doctrine, which is likewise founded upon Prussia's most vital needs. It is the doctrine of the free and independent development of Prussian and North German elements into an independent Great Power, which may feel itself secure without foreign support. This is a doctrine that would find its expression in the unconstrained unfolding of Prussia's own vital powers and the concentration of the sympathetic and homogeneous elements in North Germany, as well as in the removal of the obstacles that hinder the consolidation and realization of a national life. The ambitious desire to extend Prussia's power within her natural sphere, prompted by her own instincts and her peculiar position, is strongly felt by a great portion of the nation; and some move in this direction is impatiently demanded and awaited as an imperative necessity. . . .

“Can the Emperor Napoleon consider it his duty to discourage Prussia, when she attempts to take such steps and assume a position that shall take stand as boldly against Austria as formerly against France, and thus avoid the after-results of the Coalition? Can he believe that it lies in the interests of France to force Prussia back into the old defensive attitude of the Coalition? For this would be the case, if he sought to manifest the disposition you have intimated. [The desire to incite Prussia and Austria against each other, in order then to fish in the troubled waters.]

“ . . . This would be a certain proof that that anxiety about the dangers threatening from the West must be looked upon as *more than a fiction*, that the traditional policy, pursued for the last fifty years, was indeed the correct one, and that it must still determine Prussia's conduct in the future.”

at an extended interview which I afterwards had after a breakfast with the Emperor. On the latter occasion he inquired very eagerly about the course that Your Majesty would pursue in view of the confusion in the Danubian Principalities. Taken in connection with certain intimations given me previously by the *chargé d'affaires* Lefebvre, I could discover in the background the hope that perhaps these countries might some day serve as a compensation to Austria for Venetia. I replied to him that our interest in the fate of the Danubian Principalities had hitherto been limited to securing the safety of German commerce and trade in these countries, and that our participation in any reconstruction of them could not be allowed to go so far as to involve us in complications with Russia in a matter that was of comparatively little moment to us. The dependence, I said, that we placed upon our friendly relations with Russia, and the importance of our common concerns as neighbors, made it our duty not to undermine the mutual confidence that has long existed between the two Courts. The Emperor seemed to grant the justice of these remarks.

“He spoke further (as Your Majesty has probably since read in the newspapers) of the interest which Europe must take in closing up that source of contagious diseases which have their origin, as at present the cholera, in the pilgrimages to Mecca, and which are brought to the West by returning pilgrims. His Majesty believed that dangers of this sort could be materially lessened through the combined action of the European



Powers, and he expressed the hope that Prussia would be inclined to join in the movement. Although it cannot be overlooked, that any interference in matters connected with the pilgrimages might excite the fanaticism of the Mohammedans, and, intentionally or unintentionally, arouse a commotion in the East, yet I felt justified in expressing, in a general way, the conviction that Your Majesty would gladly participate in every effort made by the civilized world in that direction, so far as Prussia might be in a position to exert any influence in those remote regions. I think that France will send to the other Governments some official communication upon this subject.

“So far as I have been able to judge from my general observations, I believe that I may designate the present attitude of this Court as one that is in the highest degree favorable to us. Count Goltz and Herr Von Radowitz, who return to Paris to-morrow, enjoy the special favor of the Empress, and are the only foreigners that are invited daily to be present in the more intimate social circles of the Imperial Court. The health of the Emperor and of the Prince Imperial is all that can be desired, saving the well-known difficulty which the Emperor experiences in walking.”

Concerning Bismarck's short stay in Paris at the beginning of November, we have the following information:—

An audience with the Emperor at St. Cloud was very satisfactory. Napoleon repeatedly expressed his approval of Prussia's acquiring the Duchies by a payment

of money to Austria; only he thought it advisable to have the annexation afterwards sanctioned by some official organ of the country; the question of cessions to Denmark might be left to the future, and be determined by circumstances. Napoleon, moreover, begged the Minister to say to the King, that he (the Emperor) quite agreed with Bismarck in believing that, in order to come to an understanding about their mutual political relations, it was not necessary to be over-hasty in anticipating the possibilities of the situation, but that it would be better to await developments and make fitting decisions in due time. (Bismarck remarks in this connection: "This holding back on the part of the Emperor not only harmonized with my wishes, but was indeed occasioned by the tone of my own behavior, which was in accordance with the desire of the King to undertake for the present no binding obligations towards France.")

Napoleon then further requested that the King should confidentially write to him, so soon as circumstances seemed to demand a more intimate and special understanding between the two Governments; it would then be easy to come to some agreement. On the other hand, and without any suggestion from Bismarck, he declared that in the event of a conflict in Germany, an alliance with Austria would be for him an impossibility. He said that he had already declined an offer in this direction from Prince Metternich before the meeting at Gastein.

This last remark, as well as the information imparted

by Napoleon to Goltz on the 28th of August, showed with what reluctance Austria had entered into the Gastein compact, and what irregularities might be conceivable in its execution. With this in mind, Bismarck, in a conversation with Nigra, hinted at the possibility of further complications in Germany, and at the importance of a definite understanding between Italy and Prussia in such an event. He begged the ambassador to urge upon his Government the renewal of the negotiations concerning the German-Italian commercial treaty. "If you grant," said he, "to the Tariff-Union the rights of the most favored nations, you will be doing an act in the highest degree politic, and one that will be advantageous for all time."

On the 7th of November, then, Bismarck returned to Berlin. He had neither made, nor had he intended to make, any definite agreements. It was enough for him to have become persuaded in general of the fact that Napoleon's attitude was favorable to the aggrandizement of Prussia, so that if Austria should again relapse into harboring those hostile purposes which she had entertained in the spring, France would not stand in the way of an energetic resistance to the same.

The Minister's spirits were stimulated and exalted; and in enthusiastic words he expressed his conviction that he should be able to overcome victoriously all obstacles.

## CHAPTER V.

## SEMI-CORDIAL RELATIONS.

THE administration of Schleswig and Holstein, as determined by the Gastein Treaty, was carried out from the first in characteristic fashion.

So soon as the latter part of August, General Manteuffel had arrived in Kiel, in order to inspect the naval station with its Prussian garrison, and the garrison of the city, hitherto also Prussian. At the very outset he was greeted with a good example of the state of things. In Kiel there was still to be a Prussian garrison in the harbor; but the city garrison was to be Austrian. To receive the imperial troops the Augustenburg party was preparing great ovations, as an expression of their joy at the impending withdrawal of the Prussians. The members of the Estates that were thus disposed were intending to hold a public meeting in the University, close by Manteuffel's temporary guard-house. To this end they had secured the consent of their Ducal Government. The General hastened to Schleswig and laid hold upon Herr von Halbhuber with rough hands. He demanded the immediate prohibition of the meeting, since a principle of military propriety was at stake and he should not allow himself to be led around by the nose. Halbhuber, who had already been informed

that his departure was near at hand, did not venture to bequeath to his successor the disentanglement of a misunderstanding that might be exceedingly unwelcome. He put his signature with Zedlitz to the desired prohibition.

Thus unfriendly were the breezes which blew in the face of the brave General, as he pursued his way through Holstein. In Schleswig he met still other difficulties. As his colleague in Holstein had to deal with the Augustenburg party, so he was obliged on the other side of the Eider to deal with the differences between the German and Danish population in Schleswig. In elucidation of these affairs, we must glance at the course things had been taking here during the summer.

Among the more important Liberal journals of Germany, the *Kölnische Zeitung* had been, since the outbreak of the Danish war, the only one that had constantly opposed the claims of Augustenburg, and fixed its programme purely upon principles of nationality, that is, in demanding South Schleswig for Germany and North Schleswig for Denmark. Thus it had aroused angry opposition in Germany and warm appreciation in Denmark. In this spirit it published in May a series of communications from North Schleswig, according to which the Ducal Government had been appointing in the Danish districts, without exception, officials that supported Augustenburg, and these officials had been afflicting the Danish inhabitants in many ways with insufferable oppression.

The amount of it was, it was said, the former tyranny

exercised by the Danes over the Germans had not now been replaced by that impartial liberty that was due to both people, but the scale had simply been turned, and German tyranny oppressed the Danes. Incited by these reports, Bismarck, not at all inclined even in those regions to allow scope for Augustenburg's influence, took occasion to send instructions to Zedlitz, requesting him to send into those Danish districts some reliable persons, who might on the spot ascertain the true condition of things and the seriousness of the complaints that had been made.

Accordingly, Zedlitz commissioned the Ducal Councillor, the Prince von Hohenlohe, to start for the North on the 9th of June. Everywhere that he went, he met a host of lamentations from the Danes. They complained that, even in Danish parishes, Danish worship and the use of the Danish language in the schools had been suppressed, and that the newly-appointed German pastors and teachers did not hold aloof from political intrigues; that the officials were tricky, and persecuted all who did not favor Augustenburg; that the police inflicted severe penalties whenever they happened to hear a Dane sing a Danish song; that from the great German powers and their commissioners, mildness and equity had been expected; but that instead of this it seemed as if the local Ducal Government, which itself neither gave help nor answer to the Danish complaints, had not even allowed these to reach the ears of the commissioners.

The news of Von Hohenlohe's doings was quickly

carried over into the city of Schleswig. The Ducal Government was beside itself at such irregular proceedings, sent a protest against the same to Zedlitz, and was kept from resigning *en masse* only by Halbhuber's encouraging sympathy. Thereupon Zedlitz recalled the Prince in a few days.

Yet the mission of the Prince was not without good results. The officials that had been accused were intimidated, and the Danish population received new life. Then there came also news from Copenhagen that the mighty Emperor Napoleon urgently desired the restitution of the northern Danish portion of Schleswig to Denmark, and that the attitude of the Prussian Government gave room for hope in this regard. The people were therefore inclined to show for the time a spirit of loyalty to Prussia, lest they might, by perverseness in small matters, forfeit the present good-will of the King.

Before the war, when the Duchies were all under the Danish Crown, the Danes in Schleswig had never entertained the idea of a separation from Holstein nor of a union with Jutland; but now, all their thoughts and hopes were fixed upon a return to the Danish Fatherland. At the beginning of September an immense pilgrimage to Copenhagen was set on foot to arouse their spirits further. But so much the more violently were the anger and the suspicion of the Germans in Schleswig excited against this new uprising of the Danish element, and they bitterly blamed the Prussian Government for having given it the first impulse.

This added a new cause of contention to all the rest of the troubles.

General Manteuffel, however, kept up his courage, determined to perform, in spite of everything, his difficult task. He enjoyed the full confidence of the King; and although he was subject to the authority of the Prime Minister, yet he knew that Bismarck and himself were agreed in so many important points, that he believed he would receive all desired freedom in developing his plans. "In Schleswig" (thus he had already expressed himself in Gastein) "we cannot follow the ordinary routine in carrying on the administration. The country is occupied, but not won nor subjugated. There we must look the people personally and squarely in the eye, teach them to respect us and so have confidence in us, quickly come to their aid in every difficulty, and put down with a firm hand every attempt at insubordination. When they once have the spirit of obedience in their hearts, love will not be slow to follow. Then we can begin to govern the country in the usual way. Until then, however, I must have my arms quite free; and I especially desire that you will grant me a good sum of money, so that I can make a prosperous beginning by manifesting to the eyes of the people the material blessings of Prussian rule." Bismarck heartily agreed with him. And yet Manteuffel was not of such a clever mind nor of so high rank, but that in the Prussian administrative service he had many a hard lesson to learn.

When he arrived in Schleswig, his first conference



with Zedlitz was about the disposition and occupation of the government offices. In accordance with the experiences that Zedlitz had had with an almost independent college of government officers, it was immediately decided that he himself should conduct the civil administration alone, supported by a sufficient number of councillors in the different departments, who should act as his technical and executive assistants. The district and parish authorities should for the time retain their former, though in many ways unsatisfactory, organization and functions.

There remained still the great difficulty : the choice of proper persons to fill these offices. Zedlitz declared to the General that the dismissal of the present officials, who supported Augustenburg, and the curtailment of the influence of their partisans, he considered a matter of course ; but that the so-called " National " party could also be of no service to them. For, like the Augustenburg faction, they were permeated through and through with wild democratic schemes, and furthermore, hardly one of their number possessed sufficient knowledge of law and finance to fill an office properly. There was no other alternative, he said, than to appoint again to office the most skilful among the former Danish officials : from their number many thoroughly well educated and upright men could be selected, in whom there would be no danger of finding the least trace of sympathy with Augustenburg. Of course this would at first arouse a great hue and cry among the German population ; but considering the violent party-

quarrelling and the mass of office-hunters in the country, one could not expect to avoid this, whatever one might decide to do.

To ignore so completely the noise in the newspapers just suited the spirit of the General. He told Zedlitz to arrange everything in the way proposed, reported his decision to Berlin, and at the same time asked for an appropriation of one hundred thousand thalers from the Prussian state treasury, that he might at once, upon the first day of his administration, announce to the people certain desired improvements.

It came about just as Zedlitz had prophesied. The first appointment of a former Danish official raised a storm, and sounded the alarm from Hadersleben to Altona. The ambassador Richthofen in Hamburg complained to Bismarck of Zedlitz's unfounded prejudice against the National party, said that he considered the Danish party immeasurably more dangerous for Schleswig than the Augustenburg faction, and declared that if these proceedings were not stopped, not one single German voice would be raised for Prussia in all Schleswig-Holstein. Scheel-Plessen and also several Prussian agents that Bismarck in course of the summer had sent to study the situation of affairs in Schleswig, reported in the same tone.

Bismarck decided at once what to do. On the 11th of September he explained to the General that wisdom required that Prussia should show herself a friend to her friends, and that, therefore, it was best to affiliate the National party, which had always stood firmly and

bravely by the Prussian standard, and not to be over-anxious about the personal qualities of its members; that the Danish party, although an opponent of Augustenburg, had not fulfilled our expectations, but had rather announced its open hostility by getting up the great pilgrimages to Copenhagen; that it would be dangerous to rely upon its support, and in this way repel the Germans; that there were very likely to be found among the old Danish officials many men of talent and of honor, but that at present it was far less necessary to be concerned about administrative skill than about winning the good-will of the inhabitants.

In spite of a repeated remonstrance from Manteuffel, the Minister remained fixed in his position and refused to confirm the proposed appointment of several Danes. Manteuffel was sorely annoyed at this, and in a still greater degree astonished when Bismarck, on the 13th of September, wrote to him that the King was quite willing to agree to the advancement of one hundred thousand thalers, but that the consent of the Minister of Finance was still necessary, which he, Bismarck, would do his best to gain as soon as possible. The money, then, came somewhat later, but unfortunately too late to produce the effect that Manteuffel had desired.

On the 15th of September, the day on which King William took solemn possession of the Duchy of Lauenburg, General Manteuffel also entered officially upon the administration of Schleswig. He issued a short manifesto, in which he promised to the people the pro-

motion of justice, of public order, and of the common welfare, and demanded of them obedience to the commands of His Majesty and confidence in himself. So far as he was personally concerned, Bismarck's letter had thoroughly spoiled his good feeling, although he did say that he should undertake this and that, so soon as he was certain of remaining there.

Unhappily, these misunderstandings continued for some time. At Bismarck's request, the Minister of the Interior, Count Eulenburg, went himself to Schleswig in order to regulate the matter of appointing officials; and at his suggestion the King ordered that the appointment of all the high officials should be made, not by the Governor, but by the Minister. Manteuffel thereupon begged the King to release him altogether from the civil administration, and by this means finally received the power of effecting an appointment at least in cases requiring haste.

Then followed unpleasant dealings with the Minister of Finance. Schleswig's finances were, as we know, in no brilliant condition, and were doubly taxed by the maintenance of sixteen thousand Prussian troops, one-half of whom had formerly been stationed in Holstein. Manteuffel demanded, therefore, for the administration of the country, the advancement of more money; at which Bodelschwingh expressed his great astonishment that the Governor should ask for new payments in place of duly returning what had been previously advanced. To this Manteuffel with angry indignation reminded him of the conversations at Gastein, saying that when

he had requested the Minister to advance him some money, he had used this expression only as a form of speech, and declaring that he had never seriously thought of paying it back. If the great political ends were to be attained, he said, he must receive not merely one hundred thousand thalers, but two or three million.

Thus the independent, self-sufficient, and original spirit of this man came on the one hand into opposition with Bismarck's strict adherence to the principle of unity in important administrative matters, and on the other hand with the elaborated formalism of Prussian bureaucracy. He must sometimes have seemed to himself like Pegasus in harness. "I shall put the matter through," he wrote; "but I must be trusted, must have my hands free, and must not be interfered with too much by instructions from Berlin. It is all right to tell me *what* to do, but the *how* must be left to me. The Imperial Military Council at Vienna spoiled every campaign, and we are still in the field."

Things gradually went better, however, after the first exigencies of the new administration had been remedied, after a fixed routine had been marked out for the course of business and the appointment of official authorities accomplished, though these latter were at first, for the most part, only provisionally commissioned. Indeed, in spite of all criticism in matters of detail, Manteuffel enjoyed without interruption the confidence of the Government in the main questions, and Bismarck was far from wishing to subject to strict superintendence such a subordinate.

It was the liveliest wish of the Governor to enter into intimate personal relations with the country and the people. He desired to rule, not merely from the green table of the Government-office, but with the help of his own observation; and by his own energetic personality to manifest before the eyes of the people the existence of a government. He accordingly planned to travel through all of the districts of the Duchy one by one, and began by holding in Flensburg, on the 25th of September, a review of the troops and a reception of the officials. In a somewhat lengthy speech he admonished the latter to be faithful in the fulfilment of their duties, to hold fast to the union of the Duchies, to give up political and party quarrels, and to give their sympathy to the present administration. He spoke then of the Danish agitation concerning the restitution of North Schleswig, and said that although he had wished to appoint Danes to office, he was thoroughly opposed to the cession of any portion of the land. "Let no one," cried he to the officials, "harbor for a moment any such idea. I will cover every single seven feet of earth with my body before it shall be ceded."

These words occasioned right here, on the borderline between the two languages, joyous exultation on the part of the Germans and great depression among the Danes; but the impression made by the sturdy speech was a mighty one. To be sure, Bismarck afterwards politely suggested to the General that the decisiveness of his words did not fully harmonize with the declarations which Prussia had always made to the

Emperor Napoleon concerning the possibilities of future arrangements; and the semi-official newspapers in Berlin then took up this theme and harped upon it. But Manteuffel did not allow himself to be disturbed in his purpose by this communication from his powerful superior, for he knew very well that the King was secretly quite in sympathy with his declaration. "Upon my next journey," he wrote to Berlin, "I shall reply to the newspapers."

Accordingly, when he received a few weeks later the officials in Hadersleben, near by the Jutland frontier, he touched again upon the question of the cession, since it had been used to a great extent as a subject of agitation. He warned them against all Danish demonstrations, which were contrary to the Peace of Vienna — the only basis upon which the administration and peace of the country could be established. "Whoever acts in opposition to this basis," said he, "will have to deal with me! The people are being imposed upon by talk about a third Danish war. Tell the people that all this is false, and that they must not believe it; that it is nothing but agitation, by reason of which the repose and happiness of the country are being deferred. And one thing more! We do not fear war. The soldier prefers it. It is our profession. I am going to-morrow to the Königsau, and shall there have a chance to look at the seven feet of earth that may be destined for me. Don't let yourselves be deceived by the newspapers! Look into my face carefully, and decide for yourselves afterwards whether you can put more confidence in me than in the newspapers."

So openly and unmistakably, so right to the point, no one had ever spoken to them, neither Zedlitz nor Halhuber, nor formerly any one of the Danish ministers. Some of the people were angry, and some commended the speech. Some blamed the Governor for want of good taste, others called him clever. But whether to censure or to praise, his name was on everybody's lips, and all were unanimously agreed that he was truly a man, and more than that, a strong and an honest man. And by arousing this sentiment not a little had been accomplished.

Meanwhile, General von Gablenz had also entered, on the 15th of September, upon his duties as Statthalter of Holstein. His proclamation to the people was flowery and avoided the distasteful word *obedience*, promised the continuation of the autonomic government, which had in this Duchy been so elaborately carried out, and expressed his hope and confidence in the prudent and law-abiding disposition of the people. He established at once a "Ducal" government with the same functions and power to make decrees that the former government, common to both Duchies, had possessed. He nominated its members from the number of those councillors formerly in office, who were, as we have seen, confessed partisans of Augustenburg. Most of the remaining officials he left unchanged. Vacancies he likewise filled by appointing men that wore the colors, not infrequently those whom Zedlitz had dismissed; and they were always definitively called into office. Inasmuch as this party had far more power



and was much more widely extended in Holstein than in Schleswig, this conduct won at once for the Statthalter a very great popularity, which he well knew how to confirm by his personal manners, in which he united genuine politeness with the frankness of a soldier.

In this way he revived the already sinking hopes of the Augustenburg party. He most carefully avoided, however, doing anything whatever that might be interpreted as a direct recognition by Austria of the Pretendant or as an open violation of Prussia's rights as an owner. Thus, for instance, to the great joy of those desiring the independence of the Duchies, he made a visit to the Hereditary Prince; but he afterwards declared that it had been done in order to explain to the Prince that His Highness had no right to continue his residence in the Duchy other than as a private person. He also appropriated to his own use, as representative of the supreme authority in the country, the royal box in the theatre, which the Prince had hitherto occupied.

The control of the associations gave the Statthalter little trouble. Their previous ill-success and then the Gastein treaty had dampened the courage even of the leaders; and the mass of the population as a whole felt a sore need of repose. They were heartily weary of political agitations. To the newspapers Gablenz repeatedly sent warnings, urging them to be moderate and tolerant in their criticism of Prussian politics; and as a means of orally strengthening his advice, he sent a member of the government around to visit all the different publishers. Thus the most crying evils of the

last few months were actually suppressed, and the Prussian Government could find no reason for complaint.

Under these conditions the relations between the two Generals in authority continued to be friendly, even confidential. On the 4th of October Manteuffel and Zedlitz were invited to Kiel to participate in the celebration of the Emperor's birthday. At first, the two Governors had a rather lively discussion over an unimportant difference with regard to the Prussian telegraph line: but after it was decided to refer the question to the investigation of a scientific commission, the conversation assumed a cordial tone.

Gablentz averred that he was helping along no anti-Prussian interests. He said that he was staying there in that unpromising office, which he did not like, only to keep out of the place some stupid Halbhuber, who might bring back all the old troubles. He was convinced that Prussia would and must in the end get possession of the Duchies; but Austria must also come in for her share in the gain of territory. For his own part, he personally thought that the Saxon portion of Upper Lausitz might serve that purpose very well, and that that might be a good lesson to Herr von Beust after his violent speeches about the Gastein treaty. Indeed, he considered that the German Confederation had outlived its time: Prussia ought to take the small states of Saxony, and then come to some agreement with Austria about the North and South.

Herr von Hofmann, although in milder tones and with no plans for the future, agreed in the main with

his superior in office. When Zedlitz remarked to him the numbers of officials wearing the Augustenburg colors, he replied that they didn't care at all about Augustenburg; but that in Holstein they had no choice except between Augustenburgers and annexationists. If they appointed the latter, the country would soon be in favor of annexation, and Austria be left with empty hands to pocket her disappointment. "For," as he explained in a later interview, "Holstein is our pledge for the security of our rights in the Duchies. By putting men into office that favor annexation, we should be lowering the value of our pledge and lessening our chance for a suitable indemnification."

To the question what indemnification Austria demanded, he replied that his official position was not high enough to enable him to answer this question, but he nevertheless hinted at a rectification of the Silesian frontiers, at Ulm and Hohenzollern, also at a guaranty for Venetia, and at a confirmation of the Confederate laws as they then existed, whereby of course a reform of the Confederate Constitution was not to be excluded (involving Prussian supremacy in the north and Austrian in the south). But the Emperor laid the greatest weight, he said, upon Prussia's not overthrowing the German Confederation. Furthermore, Hofmann urgently begged that the final order of things might be introduced into the Duchies as soon as possible. "For the moment," said he, "everything is going well. But the jealousy is too great on both sides, and must in the long run necessarily lead to friction

and provocations, since the Emperor is heartily sick of this interminable affair."

A few days later Manteuffel was again assured by Gablenz that he would keep a strict watch over the newspapers; and Hofmann wrote to Zedlitz that he had no intention of allowing the University at Kiel to make the least demonstration in favor of Augustenburg. A very peculiar circumstance gave both officials occasion to prove by deeds that Austria assented to the Prussian interpretation of the Gastein treaty.

On the 14th of October, the Hereditary Prince of Augustenburg made a visit to his cousin, Prince Carl of Glücksburg, at the Carlsburg, which is situated in Schleswig, not far from Eckernförde. The time of his arrival was known beforehand in Eckernförde. (The Prince asserted afterwards that this was without any act on his part.) The town had hung out its flags, and then sent a deputation, numbering among its members several city officials, to offer the homage of the city to the Prince, while he was tarrying for an hour at an inn just outside the town. The same thing was repeated at the departure of the Prince, in spite of an earnest warning from the police authorities.

Manteuffel made a great ado about the matter, ordered strict investigation to be made, which led to the dismissal of two of the local officials. He also imposed upon the town the burden of quartering two companies of infantry, and informed the Prince by letter that if he set foot again in Schleswig without the permission of the King, he might expect to be arrested. At the same

time Manteuffel sent to Gablenz a request that he should forbid the Prince to accept such demonstrations even in Holstein, since they openly called in question the supreme authority of both Powers; and in the same spirit the Prussian Ministry addressed itself to Count Mensdorff. It was a great satisfaction to learn that in both instances the requests met with the desired fulfilment.

Mensdorff sent instructions to Gablenz to suffer no demonstrations against the existing government, and to call the attention of the Prince to the very serious consequences he might incur, if he allowed his adherents to indulge in such excesses, whether in Schleswig or in Holstein. This Gablenz did, although his message was couched in somewhat more polite language than Manteuffel had used in his letter to the Prince, yet expressed in a way that was sufficiently decided and left no room for ambiguity. At the wish of Prussia a decree was passed in both Duchies on the 31st of October, forbidding the newspapers to speak of the Hereditary Prince as Frederick VIII. or as the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, since the use of these titles was equivalent to denouncing the sovereignty of Their Imperial and Royal Majesties as being unlawful.

This friendly intercourse between the two administrative authorities continued along even until into November. It is true that the two Duchies on either side of the Eider presented with their administrations a totally different aspect. In Holstein everything was of a rosy hue. Gablenz had, as he assured Manteuffel,

no other instructions than to keep for his Government all ways open for the future; and for the present to make the name of Austria popular in Holstein. He was subordinated to no ministerial superintendence in matters of detail, had no account to render, and no interference to endure from superiors.

Many had believed at first that the Vienna Cabinet would organize Holstein quite as an Austrian province, in order to make the price higher at its final cession. But just the contrary took place. Austria treated the country as if it were entirely independent. In spite of her own deficit, she renounced all income from the Duchy in the way of money; so that Gablenz, by reason of his very small military budget, possessed the means of carrying out various projects for the common welfare, such as the building of a harbor at Glückstadt, the improvement of the instruction in the schools, and the enlargement of the University. All officials were appointed for good. The Ducal Government enjoyed a wide range of powers and prerogatives; and even in those cases where the decision was reserved for the Statthalter, Gablenz always announced the previous concurrence of the Government. The Augustenburgers were obliged to keep within certain limits; but proceedings against them were always conducted so mildly, that the fright over the Gastein treaty soon abated. "We now feel safe from annexation," was everywhere the cry; "long live the Emperor Francis Joseph!" Even the large landed proprietors, who had formerly been such staunch friends of Prussia, began to sympa-

thize with the black-and-yellow sentiments and with the desire for an entire and undivided Germany. "The purely conservative party," remarked Richthofen sarcastically, "is always ready to join hands with the existing government, whatever it is."

In Schleswig, on the contrary, nobody was really satisfied. The whole state of things had the appearance of being provisional. Many officials were only temporarily appointed, and liable to be recalled at any time. The activity of their energetic and ingenious governor, with his omnipresent participation in all matters, did not suffer things to pursue a regular and business-like routine. He himself looked with secret envy upon the almost sovereign position of his colleague in Holstein, whereas he, as governor of Schleswig, must always send his reports to Berlin, was not infrequently found fault with, and was forced to be economical and pay back every thaler that was advanced to him. And furthermore, the facts that the military garrison was so very much larger than ordinarily and that the admission of the Duchies into the Tariff Union, as had been determined by the Gastein Treaty, had not taken place, did not serve to awaken in the feelings of the population the conviction that the existing state of things carried with it the weight of authority, or that it was likely to be permanent. The supporters of Augustenburg gnashed their teeth over the severity of Manteuffel, who had had one after another of their associations disbanded by the local officials, and who did not allow the Schleswig newspapers to make the least mention of

their native-born Prince. The Danes stood at one side, grumbling and intimidated. The great majority of the people here were even more decidedly than in Holstein disinclined to engage in political agitation. Against the material results of the administration they had no objections to raise: Manteuffel conducted the administration with strictness, but also with justice and prudence; and he won for himself, if not popularity, at least respect among the people.

As between Schleswig and Kiel, so also between Berlin and Vienna, there existed during these autumn months tolerably friendly, although not wholly undisturbed, relations.

In Gastein and Salzburg, as we remember, the understanding had been arrived at that henceforth the two Powers should conduct in concert the affairs of Germany as a whole with a firm and conservative policy. To the Prussian Minister, then, who had been for years contending bitterly with the popular representation in Prussia, it seemed quite in keeping with such a programme, that on the 20th of September Count Belcredi completely swept away the Austrian Reichsrath, in its existing shape, by means of a royal edict, which suspended the whole constitution of 1861, until the opinions of Hungary and of the parliaments of the other seventeen crown-lands about a new constitutional arrangement should be heard and considered; and that for the present he commissioned the Ministers to provide for all necessary legislation, especially the regulation of financial operations.



When, then, a few days later, the Diet of representatives in Frankfort poured out the already-mentioned storm of vituperation against the Gastein agreement, Bismarck believed that it was a fitting time to make the first trial of the proposed conservative double-rule. Accordingly, he suggested in Vienna the taking of some common measure against the free city, which had allowed within its borders such an attack upon the German Great Powers. Count Mensdorff was just at that time away on a leave of absence, and the remaining Ministers declared their assent to the Prussian proposition. Each of the two Powers accordingly sent a severe note to the Frankfort senate, demanding the prohibition of any such occurrence again in the future ; otherwise, added the Prussian note, the Powers themselves would be forced to interfere.

The senate, probably encouraged, as the sequel indicated, by secret hints from Vienna, stood firm and asserted that nothing had happened in Frankfort contrary to the statutes of the city, and that no federal State had the right to interfere with the sovereignty of any other. Bismarck urged to further steps in Vienna ; but Count Mensdorff, who had meanwhile returned, doubted the legality and the utility of such action, sent to the city a second warning, this time expressed in milder terms, and let it go at that. So soon after the overthrow of the Austrian Constitution, he was especially anxious not to lose entirely in the eyes of the loyal Germans every appearance of free-mindedness.

To Bismarck's importunity, therefore, he made the

counter-move of proposing that the Confederate Diet should itself pass a decree forbidding such assemblies throughout all Germany, well knowing, as he did, that no German Government, unless perhaps Hanover and Hesse-Cassel, would vote for the persecution of the most zealous adherents of its own policy. Bismarck thereupon dropped the whole matter, but nevertheless did not escape the annoyance of seeing the whole correspondence concerning Frankfort, which had been carried on between the two Courts, find its way, as usual, into the newspaper press, and give the Liberal journals of Vienna and Frankfort, Dresden and Stuttgart, an opportunity to vie with each other in denouncing the reactionary Ministry at Berlin. This whole affair was not exactly suited to promise brilliant success for the proposed conservative control of German affairs by the two Powers in concert.

Bismarck got over his discomfiture, however, at least for the moment, when Austria just about this time stood once more firmly and decidedly at Prussia's side in the Confederate Diet, upon the subject of Schleswig-Holstein. The three Governments that had made the motion of July 27, Bavaria, Saxony, and Darmstadt, now complained, on the 4th of November, that their motion (to summon the Estates in the Duchies, and to admit Schleswig into the German Confederation) had lain dead and forgotten in the hands of a committee, and that this delay had frustrated the whole purpose of the motion. Since they possessed no means of forcing the majority in the committee to make a report, they

therefore repeated their motion before the Confederate Diet itself, and requested that the vote be taken upon it immediately. Instead of this, however, and in accordance with the wish of the two Great Powers, it was voted to defer until the end of two weeks the decision of the question as to whether the motion should be brought before the house as a whole, or first be referred to the committee. Saxony declared on the spot that if the motion were referred to the committee, she should consider such action as equivalent to rejection,—an opinion which the Great Powers did not contradict.

On the 18th of November the latter made the common declaration that they intended to summon the parliaments in the Duchies, but that it did not seem to be advisable to do so just then. With regard to the admission of Schleswig into the German Confederation, they said that for very good reasons they were unable at present to enter into any discussion of the subject; and therefore they requested that the motion be referred to the committee. When the question was put to the house, Luxemburg refrained from voting. The three originators of the motion gained four other supporters; but the Great Powers conquered with eight votes. The motion was put into the hands of the committee, and by them, as Count Platen had said in Hanover, effectually buried.

The three Governments who had made the motion then entered a declaration upon the records, to the effect that they had exhausted all the means which, in

accordance with Confederate laws, stood at their disposal; and that, consequently, so long as there seemed to be no prospect offered to the Confederation of reaching any decision resting upon the basis of the law, they considered, in this matter, their action and duties in the Confederate Diet as ended; and they should confine themselves to a solemn protestation against any doings foreign to this legal basis. Neither was any objection raised to this declaration.

This was the last time that Austria and Prussia stood hand in hand in the Confederate Diet upon any important point. Along the horizon, which had been clear since the month of August, there were already rising from various quarters dark and portentous clouds.



BOOK XV.

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*PRUSSO-ITALIAN ALLIANCE.*



## CHAPTER I.

### THE END OF THE AUSTRIAN ALLIANCE.

BISMARCK'S visit to France had produced a most unfavorable impression in Vienna. The times were past in which Drouyn de Lhuys had once called the Prussian diplomat a ludicrous figure: it was now thought impossible that a visit of the great Statesman to Napoleon should not involve very important purposes. When, then, definite news was received from Paris in November, to the effect that nothing of the kind had been manifest, no treaty of alliance, no definitely-formulated agreement, the Austrians did not draw the conclusion that their former fears had been groundless, but made up their minds, with malicious delight, that Bismarck's restless policy had this time ended for once in a brilliant failure. Nor did this render the feeling towards Prussia any more friendly.

While Bismarck was tarrying in French territory, the Vienna Cabinet was surprised by an important move, or *reconnoissance*, on the part of La Marmora. We have already observed above in what connection the Italian Minister had been led to think of such a step. Now, as there had been since 1859 no regular diplomatic



intercourse between Vienna and Florence, La Marmora had selected for this secret mission a certain Count Malaguzzi of Modena, a patriotic Italian, and at the same time member of a family directly subject to the royal house. For his visit to Vienna, La Marmora gave him the following instructions: he was to propose to the Austrian Government the sale of Venetia (with the Isonzo as boundary) for a thousand million lire, or four hundred million Austrian florins. Italy would then, in addition to the payment of the money, conclude an advantageous commercial treaty with Austria, and preserve a conciliatory conduct towards the Pope; but she would also, on her own part, desire a further secret understanding, which might lead her to hope, under certain conditions, for the acquisition of the Italian Tyrol.

Malaguzzi's written instructions do not say what conditions are here meant; but we have reports from other sources<sup>1</sup> which assert that it was the promise that, in the event of a war between Austria and Prussia, Italy would help the Imperial State in the acquisition of Silesia. This idea is the less improbable, since it was quite in keeping with the sentiments of Drouyn de Lhuys; and his wink, as we know, was enough for La Marmora. Moreover, long before these complications, Count Usedom had reported to Berlin that the longing for Venetia was so strong in Italy that Victor Emmanuel would at once strike the bargain, if Austria should promise him that land as a reward

<sup>1</sup> Reuchlin, *Italien*, IV., 427, on Italian authority.

for his help in the field in an attempt to acquire some other territory herself.

Count Malaguzzi remained about two months in Vienna, and made use of his numerous connections there to gain a hearing for his propositions among influential persons of the Ministry, of the Press, and of the commercial world. His proposal met with approval from various sides. Many politicians had long been of the opinion that the possession of Venetia could not in the long-run be maintained, especially in view of Prussia's uncertain behavior, and that therefore some such advantageous arrangement as Malaguzzi offered ought not to be despised. The industrial circles rejoiced at the prospect of free commerce with Italy; and the hostile attitude which had hitherto been assumed against Italy in the Vienna newspapers suddenly gave place to a friendly and sympathetic tone. Above all did the Italian proposition set the Minister of Finance to thinking, inasmuch as the deficit was every month growing larger; the current expenses could be covered only by a great loan; and the negotiation of the same was attended with great difficulties, owing to the ruined credit of the Empire. The thought of a sudden acquisition of four hundred millions aroused, under such circumstances, a highly pleasurable sensation.

Yet opposition was not wanting. The influential clergy repelled the idea of recognizing the anathematized King. The officers of the army liked Italian garrisons. The generals rebelled against throwing the costly province into the lap of the enemy whom they

had so often conquered, and so utterly despised; and the personal feeling of the King was in this matter entirely upon their side. The Government, meanwhile, remained a long time undecided. If the desired loan had not been taken up, who knows to what extremes the financial exigency might have driven them?

Herr von Becke, the agent of Count Larisch, chief of the department in the Ministry of Finance, was at the time in Paris, busy hunting up ready money. But this cost him many a weary way and useless pains. Rothschild, to whom Becke applied with confident expectations, refused him roundly and decidedly. News came to Vienna that Napoleon himself opposed the matter, and that the ever-busy evil-doer, Bismarck, had taken advantage of his presence in Paris to checkmate Austria by frustrating her negotiation of the loan.<sup>1</sup> The excitement and exasperation in Vienna was extreme.

Meanwhile the joyous news soon followed that Becke had succeeded in effecting with other banking-houses a loan of ninety millions in silver, although at a very high rate of interest. Count Goltz at this time reported to his Minister that Napoleon could very easily have prevented the official quotation of the loan on the exchange, but that it seemed as if, on account of his constant desire to see the two German Powers at odds with each other, he wished to keep Austria in such a condition that she could make a resistance. The Count,

<sup>1</sup> Among the Berlin documents, even in the most private, I find no trace of anything to support this suspicion.

however, modified this statement immediately afterwards, by saying that several of Napoleon's confidential friends had shared in taking up the loan, and that the Emperor, after much hesitation, had decided not to deprive them of their anticipated profits. However this might be, the suspicion against Bismarck that had once been aroused and cherished in the hearts of the Viennese remained also on this occasion firmly rooted and fixed in their minds. They were not glad to hear that he had been doing no mischief, but that his wicked plans had been defeated.

This made the Prussian proposition, which Bismarck had already mentioned to the Emperor Napoleon, namely, that the Duchies should be relinquished to Prussia in return for a money payment, appear at a threefold unfavorable moment. Now, it was said, everything was clear! It was for this reason that the Prussian Minister had worked against the Austrian agent in Paris: that he might force Austria, in face of threatened bankruptcy, to accept Prussian money; for certainly, after all the previous refusals, and the storm of indignation that had been raised in all circles in Vienna over the sale of Lauenburg, he might very well know that without resorting to some such odious means he would be unable to achieve his ends!

And finally it was just at this time that Malaguzzi was sent upon his mission to Vienna. Was, then, ancient Austria really so far gone, and the unity of the Empire so utterly knocked to pieces, that its fragments in the north and south were to be had by the first

one that wished to buy them? Could any one believe, without insulting the old Imperial House, that it could be jewed out of the pearls of its crown? The Emperor took his stand at once. His categorical "No!" was sounded forth in every direction. "Schleswig shall be abandoned only in return for an indemnification in land and people! Venetia shall be ceded only after a war that has brought honor to Austrian arms!"

This sounded quite warlike in Italy's ears. Nevertheless, Malaguzzi's reports awoke the feeling among the Florentine statesmen that Austria no longer meditated an overthrow of the young kingdom, that she was ready to undertake an improvement in commercial relations, and that she refused to cede Venetia without a bout at arms only in order to satisfy a point of military honor; so that, as Minister Jacini expressed it, when the decisive moment came, the affair would result rather in a duel after the fashion of cavaliers than in an actual war.

Accordingly, *La Marmora* issued, on the 25th of November, a circular note to all the Italian embassies, which, to begin with, asserted with great pathos Italy's right to Venetia, then drew the conclusion from this that no commercial relations could be entered into with Austria without being regarded as an introduction to the cession of Venetia, and closed with the friendly suggestion that a practical improvement in the trade across the frontiers could after all be brought about without diplomatic formalities. This was very well understood in Vienna; and a few weeks later such im-

provement was actually effected through the efforts of the ever-ready mediator, Drouyn de Lhuys.

In consequence of this, there arose in Vienna a more pacific sentiment towards Italy, and a stronger feeling of alienation from Prussia. Though, hitherto, efforts had been made to obtain Prussia's help against Italy, the opposite idea now sprang up, — that of appeasing Italy, and of renouncing all obligations to Prussia. This made it all the more bitter, that in the same unfortunate November, the Berlin Cabinet succeeded in a new move that brought it into closer friendship with Italy; and the vexation was the greater on account of the indisputable fact that Prussia owed her success to Austria's acceptance of the Gastein treaty.

It will be remembered that during the complications before the meeting at Gastein, Prussia had taken up again the negotiations about a commercial treaty between Italy and Germany; but that, to please Austria, Bavaria and Saxony had coldly refused to have anything to do with it; and that then, after the meeting at Gastein, we saw Beust, angry over Austria's defection, more inclined to favor the proposition. Faithless Austria, he said, should be made to feel that even the weak possess a weapon of defence. The hostile attitude of Austria towards the motion brought forward by the Lesser States in the Diet (on the 4th of November) added the last straw. On the 9th and 10th of November, Bavaria and Saxony intimated in Berlin their willingness to accept the commercial treaty, and therewith also to recognize the kingdom of Italy. A month

later, after the form of the compact with Italy had been settled (it was to be provisional, so long as any single state in the Tariff-Union did not approve of it), Prussia and Bavaria together called upon all the Governments of the Union to announce their acceptance of the treaty.

The result was brilliant. With the single exceptions of Hanover, who could not forget the revolutionary origin of the subalpine kingdom, and Nassau, who adhered unconditionally to Austria, all the Governments declared their approval, and so acknowledged Victor Emmanuel to be King of Italy. By securing this result, Prussia won with one stroke great popularity on the other side of the Alps, and in this way rendered it difficult for La Marmora to make any progress in the direction marked out by Drouyn de Lhuys. But the irritation of the Viennese increased also. They believed they saw Prussia trying to work again upon the old plans of seeking supremacy in Germany to the exclusion of Austria; and the fruits of this sentiment were shown at once in the conduct of the Schleswig-Holstein relations, with reference to which, it was now discovered at Vienna, the Gastein treaty offered many very different interpretations.

November had not yet passed, before Manteuffel and Richthofen perceived the change in the behavior of General Gablenz. The critical point, it is needless to say, was his attitude to the Augustenburg party. It is true that Gablenz most carefully avoided, as before, any open encouragement of them in Halbhüser's fashion. But he allowed them to do as they pleased; and very

soon the associations began to become more active and to spread their propaganda in Schleswig as well, while the Holstein newspapers of the largest circulation attacked with increasing violence the Prussian policy, lauded Austria, and denounced the Gastein treaty as an unlawful act of oppression obtained by force, and consequently null and void. They spoke of the Hereditary Prince daily as "His Highness the Duke," on the plea that the edict of Gablenz had forbidden only the titles "Frederick VIII." and "Duke of Holstein."

Thereupon Manteuffel ordered the disbanding of the associations still existing in Schleswig, and prohibited with a heavy penalty the sale of those newspapers in the Duchy. Gablenz had once told him, that whatever measures he, his colleague in Schleswig, might take against the newspapers in Holstein were to himself a matter of perfect indifference; but when these edicts were published, he did not refrain from remarking, in a speech to the officials at Wilster: "At my departure no one shall say that I have governed unlawfully; I will not rule here in the land like a Turkish Pacha!"

Manteuffel did not allow this to disturb him. On the 6th of December he wrote to Bismarck that it was very true, the condition of things in Holstein was assuming the character which it had before the Gastein treaty; but that not much was to be feared from it, since it would be impossible for Austria after that treaty to keep up this conduct. Yet he was soon forced to see the error of his supposition. Gablenz's discourtesy and the number of disputed points in-



creased; and the polemics of the newspapers became more unbridled. Formerly, whenever Manteuffel had from time to time requested his colleague to restrain the excesses of the Press, he had, to be sure, been met with various excuses, such as, that it was impossible to forbid the Holstein newspapers to defend themselves against the attacks of the Berlin and Cologne journals, or that it would not do to grant to the Holstein Press less freedom than the Vienna Press enjoyed: but now a very different declaration was made, namely, that there were in Holstein no laws at all to regulate the license of the Press, inasmuch as the decrees concerning the same in the Constitution of 1854 had been annulled by the Confederate commissioners in 1864; and that Count Mensdorff had instructed the Statthalter to act accordingly.

The refutation of this declaration was not, indeed, difficult: the Confederate commissioners had received exactly opposite orders, namely, to rule the land in accordance with the existing laws, and they had not repealed these, but had merely made less use of them. Although Mensdorff soon afterwards explained, in reply to this, that he had not intended in his instructions to prohibit all prosecution of offences committed by the Press, yet the expression of anti-Prussian sentiments was still continued in the Duchies, and the Augustenburg party was allowed to do pretty much what it pleased.

In North Schleswig the Augustenburgers made an attempt at this time to gain over the Danish population

by proposing the sending of a common petition to King William, begging him to give back the northern portion of the Duchy to Denmark, or perhaps even to recognize the independence of Schleswig-Holstein under the sovereignty of her Duke. This plan, however, signally failed. The Danes would not have anything to do with the Duke; the Germans among the population resented the cession of the North; and Manteuffel called to mind the prohibition of collective petitions in the Constitution of 1854.

About this time it happened that the Princess Frederick, wife of the Hereditary Prince, made a journey from Altona to Kiel. The adherents of the Augustenburg party received her at every station with the ovations that are customary upon the appearance of a sovereign. In all places the railway stations and houses were decorated with flags. Bands played at the arrival and departure of the train. Maidens dressed in white presented her with bouquets and poems. Turn-vereins, societies of veterans, and other deputations pledged their unswerving loyalty to the Hereditary House. The clergy also did their part. In many places the ministers read public prayers, not for the Emperor of Austria, but for Frederick, Duke of Holstein. And inasmuch as Gablenz allowed all this to be done without any rebuke, there was no more doubt possible, but that the condition of things which had in July driven Prussia to the point of declaring war was now again in full activity.

Manteuffel, who had always been in Berlin one of the

warmest advocates of the Austrian alliance, began now to lose his patience. On the 14th of December he took dinner in Kiel with Gablenz, and then had a long interview with him and Hofmann. They mutually agreed (he reported to Bismarck on the 16th) that they would not quarrel personally nor thus give occasion to a rupture between the two Cabinets. But what Mantuffel learned from the two gentlemen concerning the intentions of their Government hardly sounded gratifying. Prussia, it was said, evidently wished to acquire the Duchies and indemnify Austria simply with money, but did not push the transaction, because she had further plans behind it, and was striving for complete supremacy in Germany at the expense of Austria. Therefore Austria was guarding her position in Holstein, and allowed this loyalty to Augustenburg to flourish, in order to be able to take advantage of it according to circumstances, and to recognize the Hereditary Prince as Duke. The Schleswig-Holstein question, they said, could in no case be peaceably settled, unless Prussia should join Austria in some important line of common policy, and should guarantee to the Vienna Court some development of the German situation that would also result advantageously to Austria. They asserted that in Vienna the feeling against Prussia was more violent than before the treaty of Gastein, and that there was no longer any dread of war, when the position of the Empire in Germany was at stake. The Emperor himself was said not to be so urgent as before for the maintenance of peace at any price.

When, then, Manteuffel, after the journey of the Princess, sent a written protest to Gablenz, declaring that the rights of the King were violated whenever the character of sovereignty was attributed to any third person, — when he called attention to the fact that Gablenz had already acknowledged the truth of this by his repeated warning to the Hereditary Prince, — and when he added to this the question, what Gablenz intended to do about the fresh demonstrations on occasion of the journey of the Princess : he received, instead of the hoped-for explanation, the prompt reply that Gablenz had already sent Herr von Hofmann to Vienna to receive instructions as to whether it would be allowable for him to give information to the Prussian Government with regard to the administrative measures pursued in Holstein. Hereupon Manteuffel reported to Bismarck that it seemed to him, after this behavior, absolutely necessary to demand from the Imperial Cabinet a decisive explanation ; and that the situation offered the best possible opportunity for putting the question to the Vienna Court, whether it wished to break with Prussia or with Augustenburg. “I do not believe,” he added, “that Austria will choose a rupture with Prussia.”

Accordingly, Bismarck instructed Herr von Werther, on the 29th of December, to represent to Count Mensdorff earnestly and decisively how very contradictory it was to the agreements of Salzburg and Gastein to permit such demonstrations, and to suffer them to go unpunished ; that the administration of the Duchies was

divided, but the sovereignty was held in common as before ; that each of the two Powers was, in the Duchy intrusted to her, the depositary of the other's rights ; that therefore Prussia was justified in demanding that Austria should in Holstein prove herself worthy of the confidence placed in her at Salzburg and Gastein, and should now, after two ineffectual warnings, make the Hereditary Prince feel that she, as well as Prussia, was determined to support the common rights.

Before these instructions reached Vienna, Bismarck had already received an answer to their contents. On the 31st of December, Hofmann arrived in Berlin on his way back from Vienna, and was presented by the Austrian *chargé d'affaires*, Count Chotek (Karolyi was absent in Vienna), to the Prussian Minister. What he said agreed perfectly with what he and Gablenz had told Manteuffel ; namely, that the laws of 1854 were no longer valid ; that the Hereditary Prince bore the title of Duke rightfully, as any other prince of his House ; and that if Prussia complained of the Augustenburg newspapers, so Austria might protest against the annexationist journals in Schleswig.

When Bismarck denied these assertions, and with regard to the articles in the Schleswig newspapers about annexation remarked that every desire of Prussia for annexation invariably presupposed Austria's consent, whereas the Augustenburg faction strove to eject Prussia against her will, Hofmann was led to confess openly that Austria had no intention of breaking with Augustenburg ; because, if she did so, she would run the risk

of losing every trace of moral support in Holstein; that for this reason the Vienna Cabinet could not in any way offer to further Prussia's interests in the Duchies more than had been done hitherto; and that only upon the basis of a common policy could there be any free room for a mutual understanding between the two Powers.

Somewhat more friendly than these utterances was a report from Werther on the 3d of January, 1866, concerning his interviews with Mensdorff. "In regard to the validity of the Constitution of 1854, the Minister said that he was not yet clear about this matter. So far as the Hereditary Prince was concerned, he said that he had very distinctly explained to Wydenbrugk, the agent of the Prince, that in the event of the repetition of those demonstrations, the Prince would not be permitted to remain longer in Kiel, since Austria did not wish for his sake to be at enmity with Prussia. Mensdorff wished, however, that we might not be too hasty nor too angry over every such occurrence; for, as he observed, he was not, on his part, in the habit of meddling in the Prussian administration of Schleswig. The only question now is," continued Werther, "whether these good sentiments will be borne out by the behavior of those in authority in the Duchy."

That was, indeed, the question. For the new year brought with it no suppression, but rather the growth, of the anti-Prussian sentiments. What good did it do for Mensdorff incidentally to assure his friend Werther that he would never have the Hereditary Prince crowned, that he was holding so firmly to Holstein only in order

to secure full indemnification for Austria in the event of its cession, and that he thought Prussia could not possibly blame him for that? The Berlin Cabinet was unable to discover in such talk any expression of friendly sympathy; and Manteuffel declared, in a series of reports following quickly upon one another, that Prussia must act more energetically than ever in the question of the Duchies, must abandon every idea of division or of transference to a third party, and must demand the removal of the Hereditary Prince as the indispensable condition of continued peace.

“The three months,” he wrote on the 18th of January, “which we designated in Gastein as the period for testing Austria’s honesty of purpose, have now passed. The last test of her sincerity is now to be tried: the banishment of the Prince. If Austria accomplishes this, the moral effect will be such that Prussia can be at ease. If not, then that degree of certainty is reached which we wished to have before forming disagreeable alliances. And then let these alliances be formed!”

Bismarck had long been of this opinion, and he had for several days been working on the line intimated by Manteuffel.

This was the decisive epoch in his mighty career. We recall here observations which have already been made. After Bismarck, as representative in the Confederate Diet, had recognized the actualities of German and European politics, his resolution was fixed: to free Prussia from the fetters of the existing Confederate laws and Austrian domination, and to establish the in-

dependence and security of his Fatherland upon new and immutable foundations. This goal was ever before his eyes. He saw many roads which might lead to it; and for several years he strove to keep every one of them still open, while at every turn he sought to accommodate the direction of his steps and the extent of his demands to the existing conditions.

A new Prussia was inconceivable without a new Germany: the strengthening of Prussia was closely connected with the solution of the German question. But in this matter a Prussian statesman would find several systems offering themselves: an actual sovereignty over Germany in connection with Austria; a geographical division, at least of the military forces of Germany, between the two Powers; or, finally, the crowding out of Austria from the Confederation and the union of the rest of Germany under Prussian leadership.

Beyond question the last plan was the most brilliant and the most thorough; and therefore the Majority in the Cathedral of St. Paul had once accepted it for their programme. But at that time Prussia had been obliged to recognize immediately the difficulties and dangers in the way, and to perceive the impossibility of attaining success without a mortal struggle with Austria.

More clearly even than his predecessors did Bismarck recognize now the incalculable results for Europe of such an encounter, the universally prevalent distrust of the Prussian peace-disturber, and the possibility of foreign interference from many sides. In his mind were united prudence and boldness, enterprise and moderation.



Thus he was ready, when some good result could be accomplished in peace, to give up the achievement of the very greatest ends by means of war. We have already seen how he recommended in Vienna the reform of the Confederate Military Organization in such a way that the military authority over the German troops should be divided between the two Powers, and later urged the united action of the latter in a strong and vigorous guidance of Germany as a whole. Both of these projects were unsuccessful. Prussia saw herself in the dilemma of being forced either, as in 1850, to creep back repentantly under the wings of the Confederate Diet, or to realize by the victory of her arms the ideas of the imperial party of 1849.

It is, indeed, surprising to see how exactly these attempts to solve the great German question were repeated in a smaller way in the narrower limits of the Schleswig-Holstein difficulty. At first the common supremacy of both Powers had been established, and within six months this had led to the very verge of a declaration of war. Then a division of the administrative authority had been tried, and it had taken even less time to demonstrate its impracticability. Both of these more agreeable roads had led uninterruptedly towards the precipitous abyss. And now, without cowardice, there was no other way to reach the summit above than to climb the third and steepest path: the ejection of Austria by force of arms.

The conclusion was easily drawn: if Holstein was to be obtained, all Germany must likewise be demanded.

Either a second Olmütz, or a war with Austria: there was no longer any alternative. Bismarck had not wished for a war; but now he was forced into a programme that necessarily presupposed a successful punishment of Austria.

Accordingly, on the 13th of January, 1866, he wrote to Usedom in Florence. After he had portrayed Austria's continued support of the Augustenburg agitations, he expressed his opinion that these differences would probably increase. "Such occurrences as these," he said, "release us from the obligations which have been felt by the King since the friendly interview at Gastein, and leave us, as I had already foreseen, free room to renew once more our natural relations with Italy. You will announce the fact that the time of a crisis seems to be near at hand. You will also emphasize the fact that the degree of security and of expectation that we can be made to feel with regard to Italy's conduct will greatly influence our decisions, and determine whether we shall allow the crisis to approach, or shall content ourselves with more unimportant gains."

He then put the ambassador's mind at rest about the attitude of the other Great Powers. "The reports," he wrote, "concerning an Anglo-French agreement, are as groundless as the rumors about such a movement on the part of Russia.<sup>1</sup> Our relations with France are

<sup>1</sup> Emperor Alexander had just a little while before expressed his surprise that Austria still protected Augustenburg in order to prevent the Prussian annexation.

unchanged; and we are not made at all uneasy by the recent ostentatious display of cordiality between France and Austria.<sup>1</sup> It was a trick of the Exchange, in order to cause the last Austrian loan to be taken up more generally, and to assure the prominent French leaders of their profits. So far as there was any political motive whatever at the bottom of it, such seems to have been the desire to induce Prussia to make some definite offers."

Bismarck then continued: "The German question lies for the present undisturbed. In the event of further developments in the relations between Austria and the Lesser States, an aggressive policy against Prussia might easily bring about a turn in affairs that would endanger the continuance of the Confederation. In that case, it would not be out of the question for Prussia to take some vigorous initiative in the German question. If, for instance, the Holstein Estates should be summoned against our will and for anti-Prussian purposes, we should have to consider how we might respond to these movements of particularism by calling upon the national interests as a whole. We should then stand again upon those bases which we once upheld in opposition to the Frankfort Assembly of Princes. We have no reason to believe that in regulating the German matters we should find the attitude of France hostile to *us*. Should it, however, be critical, then that would be still another reason why we should

<sup>1</sup> The young French Prince had received the highest Austrian decoration.

retreat to the more thoroughly national basis and ally with ourselves all the forces loyal to national interests."

These lines contained the announcement of the approaching creation of a new condition of things in Germany.

Meanwhile, affairs in Holstein went their way. Manteuffel's reports came about the increase of the popular movements, about the rumors that a second Augustenburg, Prince Christian, the betrothed of the English Princess Helen, was going to take up his residence in Schleswig, and about the immense popular demonstrations in favor of the convention of the Holstein parliament. Upon this, Bismarck once more applied to the Court of Vienna.

On the 20th of January, 1866, he stated the situation to Werther. "It was to be understood," said he, "as a matter of course after the treaty at Gastein, that each Government was to arrange the administration in the Duchy allotted to it in its own way, but was at the same time to preserve intact the common sovereignty, which remained as before, and of which each Government was to be the depositary for the other, taking care to restrain all claims to authority or supremacy that might be raised in conflict with the rights of the two sovereigns. The pretext that the Danish laws concerning the Press and societies no longer exist, cannot deceive us: if these are not valid, then the whole Constitution of 1854 is no longer valid, and there exists only the law of an autocratic and absolute government, in which case, indeed, Austria might

more easily interfere. Since the Gastein treaty, we have been willing and ready to concede that Austria should, in the question of the Duchies, make her own laws valid, and enforce them ; but we could not expect that she would allow her own and our common rights to be violated. Such a violation is committed in the presence and the conduct of the Hereditary Prince in the Duchy. His Majesty the King is justified in demanding redress in the way of the suppression of the demonstrations and the removal of the Prince, and hereby informs the Ambassador officially of his perfect approval of the contents of this letter."

When Werther read this to Count Mensdorff, he received the answer that there was no cause for the banishment of the Prince, since the latter always conducted himself as a private person. "Then," said Werther, "the Austrian warnings to the Prince were nothing but empty words." Mensdorff answered, somewhat vexed: "My assurance that we do not wish to break with Prussia for the sake of the Prince remains good ; and it lies with Prussia not to carry the matter to a critical point. So far as the Press is concerned, Austria has entirely given up police institutions, and can therefore carry out no police regulations, even in Holstein. Freedom of the Press exists in Holstein as in Austria. Any Prussian control, however, of our administration in Holstein is under no circumstances permissible." The rejection of the Prussian demands was as complete as possible.

Even before Bismarck had received the report of this interview, further events in Holstein had removed from

his mind the last misgivings about his further course of action. The leaders of the Augustenburg party had circulated in both Duchies an invitation to attend a great mass-meeting at Altona on the 23d of January, 1866, in order to secure, by a vigorous expression of sentiments from as many of the inhabitants as possible, the convention of the Estates of the land. Gablenz, thereupon, on the 21st, made an announcement that the Government also shared this desire, and intended to fulfil the same soon, but all the more earnestly expressed a hope that the agitation would be given up for the present, since it would be likely to be unsuccessful and only conjure up new dangers.

Hereupon the police authorities in Altona on the 22d prohibited the holding of the meeting. But secret negotiations followed between the popular leaders and the Government, which led to the result that the police, on the morning of the 23d, repealed its prohibition, on condition that the leaders would promise that no resolutions should be passed. The mass-meeting, attended by fully four thousand persons, was accordingly held. Several Liberal representatives from Frankfort, Hesse, and Bavaria were present, to encourage the free men of Schleswig-Holstein with a brotherly greeting from South Germany. In keeping with the promise, no resolutions were passed; but several speakers energetically declared the necessity of the convention of the Estates, and their demands were vigorously seconded by loud cries from the assembly. The Prussian Government was violently attacked, and a thundering *vivat* thrice shouted for their

“lawful and beloved Prince, Duke Frederick.” Then the people quietly went home.

All these speeches and *vivats* did not help the Hereditary Prince much; but the effect in Berlin was to arouse bitter feeling against Austria. Even Halbhuber had not permitted (on the 6th of July) a public mass-meeting, although he had instructions to support Augustenburg. But now Gablenz had suffered it, in spite of all his asseverations that the Hereditary Prince was to be looked upon in Holstein as a private person. It happened at this time also that Karolyi, who had just returned to Berlin from Vienna, explained the position of Austria by saying that she considered the declaration of the German Powers on the 28th of May, 1864, concerning the legitimate rights of Augustenburg, to be still binding upon her in full force, and that it had suffered no change by reason of the Gastein treaty. This standpoint was soon afterwards confirmed by Mensdorff in conversation with Werther.

There was, then, no longer any doubt possible of Austria's new relapse. The King was deeply moved. “Manteuffel is right,” he said. “We must come to a clear understanding.” At the close of a session of the Ministerial Council, which had been summoned at the time on account of other business, the King arose to speak spontaneously; and, after an explanation of the state of things, he earnestly called attention to the seriousness of the situation, to the fact that matters were again at the same point as before the Gastein treaty, and to his own determination not to endure

passively this aggressive conduct against himself and against his authority as monarch.

The portrayal of these circumstances, with their necessary consequences, was once more to be presented in all its plainness to the Vienna Court; and the question was to be peremptorily put to it concerning the continuance of the Prussian alliance. In a detailed despatch to Werther on the 26th of January, 1866, Bismarck summed up in calm but convincing form all the Prussian complaints. "At Gastein it was agreed to make common cause against all revolutionary tendencies that threaten both Crowns. In accordance with this, both Powers took common measures against the Frankfort senate; but Austria, unfortunately, sank back only too soon into indifference and passivity, and thus broke the point of the whole undertaking. Nor was that enough. The Imperial Government has now passed from this indifference into a state of aggressiveness against Prussia, at the same time favoring openly those very rebellious tendencies. The Altona meeting has been held under the protection of the Austrian double-eagle, and has been permitted to make exactly the same attacks upon Prussia that the Frankfort Confederate Diet had ventured to make, and on account of which the free city had received a rebuke from Austria. Prussia cannot suffer Holstein to become in this way the home of revolutionary sentiments, nor that pledge to deteriorate, which was confidently placed in Austria's hands at the Gastein treaty."

"Such occurrences as these," continued the despatch,



“cannot help weakening and subverting that feeling which His Majesty has long and fondly cherished, the conviction that the two German Powers naturally belong together. It is at the express command of His Majesty that I now order you to announce this openly to Count Mensdorff, and to request him to bring it also to the notice of his Imperial master. The Government of His Majesty begs the Imperial Cabinet, in the name of the interests of both, to put a stop to those injuries to which monarchical principles, the sentiments of public order, and the unity of the two Powers are being now subjected by reason of the system of administration that prevails at present in Holstein. . . .

“A negative or an evasive answer to our request would give us the impression that the Imperial Government is *not* disposed to pursue *common* paths very long with us, but that tendencies unfavorable to Prussia and a traditional antagonism against Prussia, which we hoped had been overcome, are stronger in Austria’s breast than the feeling of natural sympathy as members of the same race having common interests. This conviction would be to the Royal Government, but above all to His Majesty the King, a painful disappointment, from which we wish and hope that we may be spared. But it is an indispensable necessity for us to have a clear understanding about our relations. If the intimate union of the politics of the two Powers with regard to Germany, an end which we have sincerely striven to reach, cannot be attained, then we must win *full freedom* for our own *entire policy*, and make that use of this freedom

which we consider most conducive to the interests of Prussia."

No single point in the contents of this despatch was new to the Vienna Court. More than once had Mensdorff with Werther, or Gablenz with Manteuffel, discussed in confidential conversations the standpoints of both parties. The despatch of the 26th of January contained, however, one thing that was new: namely, the solemn and official request for an answer quite as official and definitive, as to whether Austria would choose to renounce her support of Augustenburg or her friendly alliance with Prussia. The statesmen in Vienna were, as Werther surmised, neither expecting nor ready for such a decisive step.

Mensdorff recognized the seriousness of the situation, expressed great dissatisfaction over the authorization of the Altona meeting, and asserted that he had already sent a reproof to Gablenz concerning the same. He still insisted, however, that Austria could not limit the freedom of the Press in Holstein, and that she, as well as Prussia, had bound herself to recognize Augustenburg by the motion of May 28th, 1864. With regard to the despatch, he said he could make no reply until he should have ascertained the will of the Emperor. In further conversations, his final word always was: "Prussia cannot possibly demand that the Court of Vienna shall take steps that will render unavoidable the Prussian annexation of the Duchies."

This did not sound auspicious for the tone of the official answer; and indeed, the latter, on the 7th of Febru-

ary, 1886, was an extremely cool refusal to comply, framed in the well-known proud style so peculiar to the Chancellorship of the Imperial Court and State. Without adducing any proofs, it was denied that the agitation in Holstein had a revolutionary character—an assertion that could not, indeed, be gainsaid, if Austria seconded the deductions of Beust and Pfordten concerning Augustenburg, which, however, would mean that she cut loose from the basis of the Vienna and the Gastein treaties. “Prussia,” it was said in the reply, “has, in making her complaints about the Altona meeting, evidently forgotten that it was her own Government that once rejected the proposal of Austria to bring forward in the Confederation a motion prohibiting all such meetings throughout Germany. Austria recognizes her duty of preserving uninjured the pledge that has been intrusted to her care, but can understand this duty only as referring to the preservation of its substance undiminished. Moreover, the conduct of the Austrian Government in Holstein depends only upon its own promptings, and it considers every single question that may come up within the range of its administration as a question arising solely between itself and its Statthalter, and in every way removed from the reach of foreign interference. The same independence is also recognized and conceded to the Royal Prussian Government in Schleswig. . . .

“Count Mensdorff has, without doubt, the right to confide to his friend, Baron von Werther, what the Government of the Emperor thinks about the authori-

zation of that Altona meeting, to which, moreover, the Court of Berlin seems to attach altogether too much importance. But the Minister of the Emperor must decidedly refuse to recognize the claim of the Royal Prussian Ambassador to any justification of an act that concerned the administration of Holstein. When I give utterance to these sentiments, I am but following the commands of my Imperial Master."

These phrases drew, indeed, a firm bolt upon further complaints from Prussia. If Austria only did not diminish the substance of the province that had been intrusted to her, that is, did not cede any pieces of the same to a third party, Prussia's joint supremacy might otherwise be undermined and assailed as much as any one chose! Whatever Austria in this respect did or left undone came as much under the head of administrative measures as the appointment of a school-teacher or the construction of a parish road! And in all this, the Gastein treaty did not give Prussia the shadow of a right to speak a word! Even to consent to discuss such a point seemed to be inconsistent with Austria's honor and dignity. It was not without a certain amount of curiosity that the statesmen in Vienna awaited the reply that Prussia would make to such a very concise method of reasoning.

But this curiosity was disappointed! In the first interview that Bismarck had with Count Karolyi after the receipt of the despatch of February 7th, the Minister contented himself with coolly remarking that Prussia's relations to Austria would then have no

longer the intimate character which had characterized them during the last few years, but would return to the same point at which they stood before the Danish War, — no better nor, indeed, any worse, than her relations to every Foreign Power. Further than this no word was given in reply to the Austrian despatch. The discussion over Schleswig-Holstein was at an end, and so was the Austro-Prussian alliance.

## CHAPTER II.

## A THREATENING SKY.

AFTER the receipt of the Austrian despatch, the Prussian Government had but little hope of preserving peace. Austria continued steadfast in her attempt to establish the independence of Schleswig-Holstein on the basis of Confederate laws. This appeared to the King, as well as to his Minister, to be a humiliation of Prussia in violation of the treaties, worse even than the diplomatic defeat suffered formerly at Olmütz. Never ought this to be endured under the present, decidedly more favorable conditions; and in view of the existing sentiments in Vienna, Prussia must make up her mind to seek the solution only by the violent means of war.

When once war was considered unavoidable, all military considerations spoke for the attempt to anticipate the enemy by hasty equipment and a speedy attack. On the other hand, it was certainly very necessary to make sure of the sympathy, or at least the neutrality, of the foreign Great Powers, so that Prussia should not appear in the light of an aggressor and peace-disturber; and it was equally desirable to gain the favor of public opinion in Germany and the good-will of the Governments. And all this might be irrevocably lost by a single over-hasty, premature step.

Thus, strong and unsurmountable arguments demonstrated here the need of prompt action, and there of great caution. In such a state of things nothing was more natural than that there should be a wide variety of opinions concerning the steps to be taken in detail, according to the general character and temperament of the individual, although all were united in the common endeavor to attain the common end. Nor, in fact, were such differences wanting among the leading circles of Prussian statesmen during the next few months.

Bismarck had been for many years accustomed to the thought, and had often expressed his opinion as such, that a reform of the Confederation on the Prussian basis had already gradually become a vital question for his State, and that Austria's resistance against it could be broken only *ferro et igni*. Filled with this conviction, he was influenced by no passion for or against the war, but considered only the means and the end, — and the more so because he believed that after the old unnatural Confederate system had been exploded the real interests of both parties would very soon lead them to establish a mutual and genuine friendship. Accordingly, he was anxious to hasten diplomatic movements and seek for some connection with France and alliance with Italy, so that, if Austria should not yield, an overwhelming blow could be dealt so soon as possible. For the longer Prussia hesitated, the more time she would be giving to her adversary for complete equipment, and the greater would be the dangers and the losses which would fall upon

her own people. The most famous and most influential generals, Roon, Moltke, and Manteuffel, now agreed perfectly with these views.

Yet, however much they might accomplish, the deciding voice belonged, not to them, but to their Monarch. If it was necessary for Prussia's honor, King William was as ready as any man to go to war against Austria; but it was a hard and a painful decision for him to make. Political principles, family associations and memories, and personal bonds drew him towards Austria, and made every connection with Napoleon distasteful to him. He realized with distinctness and certainty that he was standing at a turning-point in Prussian history, and that he was about to break away from the former, in many ways confining, and yet safe foundations, and to step forth into a perhaps glorious, but for the present uncertain and dangerous future. Above all, he had, in his deep and conscientious regard for duty, the definite consciousness of the immeasurable responsibility which was laid upon his royal head in the utterance of the deciding word. He knew the horrors of every war and the incalculable consequences of the approaching conflict; and he was firmly resolved, rather to risk much sacrifice by delay than to lay hold of the sword before the last peaceful means had been tried and exhausted.

So it happened that the questions which came up for deliberation in the Prussian Cabinet at this time were by no means decided unanimously. It is true, that the remaining ministers invariably joined hands with



Bismarck, excepting, perhaps, Bodelschwingh, who felt his inability to perform the duties of his office properly in the event of a great war. But between the King and his first adviser there were often sharp explanations and many trying hours. It is not, however, in keeping with the scope and aims of this book to follow these in detail, nor to refer to certain other influences which were active in the one or the other direction within the royal palace. For it has been the one great and simple feature of this Government, that at last it has always been the material and actual considerations that have preponderated; and to lay these before the reader is our present task.

The first news that came from outside after the arrival of the Vienna refusal, was not unfavorable, but did not help along the decision very much. Bismarck had instructed Prince Reuss to communicate confidentially to Minister Von der Pfordten (whom Bismarck, since the meeting at Salzburg, no longer counted among the decided enemies of Prussia) the Prussian despatches to Vienna of the 20th and 26th of January. "Those are, indeed, quite friendly communications," said Pfordten. "I should immediately side with you, if the foundation of your declarations were in my opinion correct. Yet I must confess that your Government is consistent in its dealings with Austria, whereas the Vienna Cabinet swings back and forth. Moreover, it will probably not be so compliant as it was at Gastein."

When Reuss in a further conversation, on the 27th

of February, brought up the question of Confederate reform, Pfordten expressed it as his opinion that Prussia must gain greater influence within the sphere of her power; but that the German South-West must be left more independent, in order to be able to form a sort of federation with the North and Austria. If this, however, seemed to be going too far, he would have no objection to granting to the Great Powers, as the next move, a greater number of votes in the Confederate Diet. He thought it was in any case a fundamental mistake of the Confederate Constitution, that the apportionment of votes in the Diet was not according to the actual power of the individual states; for the unnaturally great influence which the existing system placed in the hands of the Lesser States was rather a source of danger than of advantage.

Returning to the question of Schleswig-Holstein, Pfordten said that he could not possibly make up his mind until he knew what Austria was striving for. If she opposed the Prussian Court for the sake of Augustenburg, then she was in the right. If she wished only to hinder the Prussian annexation, she ought not to expect others to join her. "For if it be necessary, once for all, to let right bend to convenience, then, I say it in confidence, I should prefer to see the Prussian annexation brought about to any other arrangement; for in that way Germany also would indirectly be strengthened.

The reports, too, of Goltz from Paris concerning the remarks made by Napoleon and Drouyn de Lhuys

showed that they again expressed the oft-repeated sympathy for Prussia, but left, as ever, all paths open to France. The Minister gave assurances of the consent of France to the annexation of the Duchies, and said that if the war should assume greater proportions, it would be easy, by mutual frankness and common taciturnity, to come to an understanding when it might be necessary. Napoleon himself spoke personally to the ambassador as follows:—

“I beg you to say to the King that he may always count upon my friendship. In the event of a war between Prussia and Austria, I shall preserve absolute neutrality. Yet I need not say on which side my sympathies lie. I desire the union of the Duchies with Prussia, because this is in keeping with the tendencies of our age, and because it is always useful to have military operations supported by public spirit. Even if the struggle should assume large dimensions, such as cannot to-day be estimated, I am convinced that I should find it easy to come to an understanding with Prussia, owing to our many common interests. Such do not exist between France and Austria. Do not, therefore, ever attach any weight to newspaper rumors of a mutual sympathy between Vienna and Paris. Even the expression of such sentiments by one of my ministers would not count for anything. I, alone, know what the foreign policy of France is to be.”

The Emperor shrugged his shoulders as Goltz asked him about the idea, which was heard mentioned here and there at this time, of inviting Austria to cede

Venetia in return for the sovereignty over the Danubian Principalities. "For France," he said, "this has no special interest; the Roumanians would hardly care to let their young nation be absorbed in the Austrian Empire, and Russia would have decided objections to make."

Inasmuch as Bismarck, as we have seen, had already contemplated as a part of his programme a reform of the Confederation, and had consequently made up his mind that the war would, indeed, assume large dimensions, therefore the time seemed to have come for attempting to secure that understanding with France which Napoleon had said he should be ready to make under those circumstances. Bismarck had for this purpose summoned the ambassador to Berlin for further oral deliberations.

Lastly, in the despatches of Count Usedom from Florence the ground was entirely unsettled.

However emphatically Austria had refused to sell Venetia, it was equally true now that the fresh indignation felt in Vienna against Prussia outweighed the old hatred towards Italy. Of course it was not possible to think of establishing any intimate connection with Victor Emmanuel, but Count Mensdorff considered it advisable to do something towards soothing the Italian feelings. In the beginning of January, an amnesty appeared for political refugees from Venetia, and soon afterwards an extension of the rights of the municipalities and of the Estates in the province. At the same time Count Mensdorff informed the Duke of

Gramont that Austria was ready to grant to all the existing provinces of Italy those commercial advantages which had been fixed in the former treaty with Sardinia; and he begged the Duke to ask M. Drouyn de Lhuys as mediator kindly to recommend his proposition.

To the French Minister, in view of his well-known sympathies, no commission could have been more acceptable. Mensdorff's request was fulfilled on the spot. La Marmora, too, would gladly have accepted with both hands. But then arose misgivings: this could not be done without the recognition of the Kingdom by the Vienna Cabinet; and Italy could not engage in any diplomatic negotiations with Austria without the liberation of Venetia. More than all, he was thoroughly worried by the question whether Napoleon really desired this move or not. In every syllable of the Paris despatches he seemed to discover some concealed hint *pro* or *con*, and it was not until the end of February, after several weeks of deliberation, that he finally decided to decline the offer.

Usedom had received no direct information concerning these things, but he judged from La Marmora's general conduct that Prussia should place less hope upon Italy. "It is the opinion here," he wrote on the 7th of February, "that Austria will, herself, soon offer Venetia, and Italy will be glad in this way to escape the dangers and costs of the war." In strange contradiction to this, he wrote upon the following page of the despatch: "It is feared that, if Prussia limits her

demands to Schleswig-Holstein, Austria will yield this point, in order to turn her whole force against Italy. Only in case Prussia lays claim to supremacy in all Germany will the feeling here be in favor of fighting, and then only after a firm treaty of alliance has been concluded, that shall exclude the right to make peace separately."

In spite of this, Bismarck considered a mutual approximation between Austria and Italy improbable, especially since Nigra assured Count Goltz of the contrary. Furthermore, Usedom's two telegrams of the 22d and 24th of February sounded more favorable: "The spirits of La Marmora have risen recently. He wishes to receive definite proposals from Prussia. Victor Emmanuel is ready for a war with Austria. It will be necessary, however, to have a clear understanding beforehand about the objects of the war, so that before the attainment of these ends by both of the allies neither one shall have the right to conclude a separate peace."

Thus, in whatever direction one looked from Berlin, the only one certain fact that met the gaze was Austria's hostile opposition to all Prussia's wishes: otherwise nothing could be discovered but shifting tokens of friendly but by no means reliable sentiments. To stand still was impossible: to take a step in any direction was dangerous.

Under these circumstances, the King resolved to summon for the 28th of February a full Ministerial Council, at which he himself should preside, and the

whole situation should be thoroughly discussed. In these deliberations, besides all the ministers, the Crown Prince, Count Goltz, and Generals Moltke, Manteuffel, and Alvensleben were invited to take part. An indication of how near the serious point of the crisis was felt to be, is the fact that, in order to be free from any internal disturbance, it was decided to take the precautionary measure of suddenly closing, on the 23d of February, the session of Parliament which had been opened but four weeks before, and which up to this time had accomplished nothing whatever, but had run into an ever-increasing quarrel over the question of the budget.

On the 28th, the King opened the business of the Council with a short speech, in which he emphasized his opinion that the difficulties in Holstein were only one symptom of Austria's endeavor to hold Prussia in subjection, as also of her malice in being willing to join hands even with rebellious organs of the Press for the sake of opposing her supposed ally. "This conduct," said the King, "must finally be put a stop to, even at the risk of a war. Austria and Prussia united control the European situation. This was shown in 1864. Even at the time of the Gastein treaty, we were able to hope for the continuance of this union and for an honorable alliance. This hope was shaken after only a few weeks, and now it is utterly destroyed. The possession of the Duchies is the national desire of all Prussia. To retreat from this would weaken the influence of the Government

at home and abroad, and would serve to increase Austria's encroachments upon us in Germany. We will not provoke a war," said the King in closing; "but we must go forward upon our way, and not shrink back before a war."

Bismarck thereupon gave a *résumé* in historical order of the various attempts of Austria to oppose Prussia, her conduct in the Polish question, at the Frankfort Assembly of Princes, and her repeated endeavors to secure a French alliance against Prussia. "A war with Austria," said he, "must certainly come, sooner or later. It is wiser to undertake it now under these most favorable conditions than to leave it to Austria to choose the most auspicious moment for herself. We have declared to Austria that the continuation of the Augustenburg agitation would dissolve our alliance. On the 7th we received an answer, in which she decidedly refuses to accede to our requests. The rupture has already been effected." The Minister of War closed with an expression of his hope that the necessary means could be obtained.

Itzenplitz, Selchow, and Mühler agreed with what had just been said. The Minister of Finance, Bodelschwingh, acknowledged that Austria's behavior was insulting to Prussia's honor, and detrimental to her interests; but he still clung firmly to the wish that some way of successful mediation might be found. Count Eulenburg added to Bismarck's explanations the remarks, that a war with Austria would make it possible to demand money from the Parliament, and



that if the Parliament refused, a new representative assembly could be summoned. Whereupon Bismarck replied very coolly, that the internal conditions did not make a war necessary, but yet contributed to make it appear in a favorable light.

Then, after Goltz had repeated to the assembly the declarations of Napoleon already known to the reader (fixed neutrality in the event of a war for Schleswig-Holstein, and probable satisfactory understanding about the further objects of the war), Moltke took the floor in order to give a definite statement about the relative strength of the military forces. The amount of what he said was, that the indispensable condition of certain success was the active participation of Italy; Austria would then with the greatest effort be able to station 240,000 men in Bohemia; against which Prussia could bring the same number, without calling the militia into the field and while 50,000 men could also remain stationed against Bavaria and the rest of the South Germans.

Manteuffel spoke even more strongly in favor of war. "As a matter of fact," said he, "we are already in it. Gablenz, with whom I am personally on good terms, attributes it only to his good offices that no act of open hostility has yet taken place. Public sentiment in Schleswig is favorable, but the people do not feel sure that Prussia means business."

In answer to Moltke's statement, Bismarck remarked that he did not believe Bavaria ought already to be regarded as a certain enemy. Heartily agreeing with

Moltke, however, with regard to the importance of action on the part of Italy, he proposed that Moltke himself should be sent to Florence to conclude an alliance, according to the terms of which Italy should promise to attack Austria so soon as Prussia opened hostilities, and neither party should have the right to make any peace separately, until all the proposed ends of the war should have been attained. Austria, he added, would not fail to perceive the seriousness of this step; and fresh negotiations on the German question, such as were interrupted by the death of Frederick VII., would then have a better effect.

In contrast to the tenor of all these speeches, the Crown Prince, being the last to give his vote, kept to his standpoint which he had already indicated in May, 1865. "The war with Austria," he said, "is a war between brothers; and the interference of the Foreign Powers is certain."

After considering the votes, the King made the following decision: "The possession of the Duchies is worth the war; but the declaration of the same must not be made too hastily. A peaceful attainment of the object, if it be possible, would in any case be more desirable. The decision, whether it shall be war or peace, depends, therefore, upon Austria's further conduct. On the part of Prussia, diplomatic negotiations alone can for the present be undertaken, in order to secure for her the most favorable chances in the event of war." The closing words of the King were to the effect that he wished for peace; but that, if it

must be so, he would be ready for war; and that after having prayed to God to lead him in the right path, he should regard the war as a just one.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with these considerations the next thing to do was to conduct into new channels the negotiations with France and Italy. It was well understood that the feeling of the Council had not been in favor of concluding an offensive and defensive alliance with these States, but rather of finding out, as in the previous year at Gastein, just what attitude, in the event of a Prussian war, these Powers intended to preserve.

The King, too, was of the opinion that the acquisition of the Duchies could not be accomplished without a reform of the Confederation; that is to say, that the German and the Schleswig-Holstein questions must stand side by side. (We shall presently learn what solution of them he had in mind.) This would very greatly extend the aims and objects of the war, and in his opinion would bring about that condition of things for which Napoleon had hitherto reserved his right to act freely, and in which, he had told Bismarck, he wished that the King would communicate with himself in personal correspondence.

Having these words of the Emperor in mind, the King sent to him on the 3d of March an autograph letter, in which he said that the time for a special understanding, such as formerly designated by the Emperor, was at hand; that Goltz was commissioned to

<sup>1</sup> Moltke's memoranda.

explain to the Emperor without reserve Prussia's view of the situation, and the position which she considered it necessary to take; and that Napoleon's criticism of these views would be received by the King with that prudence and secrecy which corresponded with the personal character the Emperor had wished to give to this mutual exchange of sentiments.

In other words, it was desirable to know just whether, and under what conditions, Napoleon would bind himself to preserve, in the case of war, an unconditional neutrality.

Immediately after his arrival in Paris, Goltz called upon Drouyn de Lhuys, on the 5th of March, and exchanged with him the usual friendly greetings, but said nothing to him about the royal letter—for which Napoleon afterwards commended him. On the evening of the same day he was received by the Emperor, and gave him the information alluded to in the letter. "The question," said Goltz, "no longer concerns Schleswig-Holstein alone. The whole behavior of Austria and the unbounded attacks of the Press controlled by her, leave no room for doubt about the warlike intentions of the Vienna Cabinet. Consequently, Prussia must be on the look-out for a favorable moment, and seize upon it. But her doing this depends upon two preliminary conditions. On the one hand, Prussia intends to determine with Italy the objects to be attained by both in their common action; and on the other, she wishes to be sure of Napoleon's approval of these objects, and to learn the

possible results that the Emperor may feel it incumbent upon himself to look for in the interests of France.”

Goltz then specified as the object of Prussia's action, besides the acquisition of the Duchies, a closer union of the North German States under Prussian leadership, somewhat like the Imperial Constitution that had been planned in 1849 for all Germany, yet with a greater limitation of parliamentary power and more extended autonomy of the individual States. He mentioned the possibility that one or more of the States, because of having maintained a hostile attitude towards Prussia, might be obliged to submit to a more direct subordination. In the way of setting a limit to this object of the war, it was taken for granted that Bavaria would be willing to join in the work in some way, and would then receive the military leadership in South Germany. At the close of his remarks Goltz begged the Emperor to declare what steps he believed it would be necessary to take, in order to reconcile the national feeling of France with such an extension of the power of Prussia.

Napoleon had listened with evident interest, and at the close expressed his approval of this line of policy. “It is very commendable, that Prussia sets before herself a higher national aim than the mere question of the Duchies. But,” said he, “I am greatly embarrassed in being called upon to designate some special compensation for France. It is proper that something of the kind should be proposed to me, and that the matter be more definitely considered; for I must not omit to

point out to the French nation some reward for having permitted, or even having favored, an extension of Prussia's power, which, indeed, is here looked upon with jealousy. I am free from small prejudices and anxious fears about the balance of power, but I must give an account to an actually existing public opinion: you know how we are situated, from the speeches of Thiers and Favre, and the impression they make in the body legislative. But to fix just now upon some definite object would be very hard for me."

In fact, inasmuch as the eastern frontier of France alone came into consideration, the choice was not great: Belgian, German, or Swiss territory. Napoleon took them up in order. "In Belgium," he observed, "there has been perfect peace since the death of Leopold I. There is no telling when the struggle between the Clericals and the Liberals will have so far ruined the country as to justify us in extending our territory." To this Goltz also remarkd: "Prussian officers are of the opinion that if France should annex the southern part of Belgium, Prussia would have to receive the line of the Maas for her boundary." "And you would be quite right," replied Napoleon.

"Then there is French Switzerland! That is a hard question!" he cried, "and one that would need much careful thought. As for the German frontiers, it seems to me that French sympathies preponderate in the Bavarian Palatinate. But then! If you count upon Bavaria's assistance, it will not be practicable to disturb that province. In Luxemburg, too, there are French

sympathies. I requested Marshal Niel recently to give his opinion about the most desirable frontiers for France from a military point of view: he decided upon the boundaries of 1814 (Landau and Saarbrücken). But the disinclination of the King to give up any Prussian or German territory makes the choice very much more difficult."

Thus the matter rested just as it was before: the Prussian Government could count upon the Emperor's good-will and neutrality, and the King upon his sympathizing friendship. The Emperor was unable to express himself definitely about a compensation, but hoped that he could, when necessary, easily come to an agreement with the King upon the subject. The foregoing sentences made up the contents of the letter which the Emperor sent on the 7th of March in reply to the note of the King.

Goltz reported, in addition to this: "I consider it a gain that the Emperor, by putting off definite negotiations, has saved us from the necessity of hurting his feelings so soon by refusing him a request. For the annexation of the Duchies he will not ask for any compensation, but for any further increase of Prussia's power, he will most probably demand the boundaries of 1814." Bismarck replied at once, that in view of the unchangeable resolve of the King there could never be any thought of the cession of German territory, and that Napoleon must be misinformed, if he believed that French sympathizers were to be found in the Bavarian Palatinate. "How can he," said Bismarck,

“after he has recognized the wisdom of Prussia’s giving prominence to a national programme, suppose that we will render the execution of the same impossible by ceding a portion of the German population.” He instructed the ambassador to avoid mentioning the matter any further himself, and to turn aside French references to it with an observation about the mortal insult to German national feeling.

Although no ground that could be regarded as safe in all cases was thus gained with respect to France, the news was doubly gratifying, which came later from Count Goltz, to the effect that Nigra had communicated to him a commission from Napoleon, instructing him to urge upon King Victor Emmanuel the speedy conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia.

Ever since the great Ministerial Council of the 28th of February, Moltke’s mission to Florence had been occupying the minds of the statesmen in Berlin. There could in this case be no national misgivings about involving foreign countries in purely German troubles. Inasmuch as Austria led into the field for the most part Slavs, Magyars, and Venetians, she could not complain if Prussia called Italian forces to her support. Very significant and decisive was the consideration that although an alliance with France might have brought danger to the interests of Germany as a whole, Italy was surely not in a position to do any harm to non-Austrian Germany.

The latest news from Florence had been more favor-



able, showing more willingness to join with Prussia, yet also a continued mistrust, lest Prussia should wish to make use of the alliance only as a diplomatic pressure upon Austria, and then, after she had extorted Schleswig-Holstein from the latter, should leave Italy in the lurch. There was reason enough for corresponding anxiety in Berlin in exactly the opposite direction; but otherwise the Prussian Court felt itself in a condition to remove La Marmora's fears, and to demand more, much more, than Holstein, after the great national programme had once been decided upon.

But this latter, national, question, although more popular in Germany and more imposing in the eyes of Europe, was much more complicated and far-reaching than the Schleswig-Holstein question. A certain lapse of time was indispensable for its development and the spread of its doctrines, whereas Italy, in the dilemma of her financial distress, was anxious to conclude the treaty, and to strike the blow as speedily as possible — immediately, if it might be. For this reason especially, the Prussian Cabinet wished to retain the reins in its own hand, and still be the one to say whether and when the blow should be struck. This seemed the more necessary, since Prussia would not only be the stronger of the two allies, but would also, in view of the present attitude of France, have by far the more dangerous *rôle* to play in the alliance. Moltke, indeed, doubted very much whether Italy would agree to a treaty of this kind; yet the above-mentioned arguments carried the day, and it was decided not to promise an

immediate attack upon Austria, but to limit the validity of the alliance exclusively to the event of Prussia's declaring war against her.

Moltke's instructions were prepared, then, in keeping with these doctrines. The outline drawn up by the General was first revised in many points by Bismarck, and then by the King in detail; the instructions were finally ready on the 12th of March. On account of the uncertain attitude of Napoleon, and the necessity of not appearing before the eyes of Europe in the light of a peace-breaker, especial stress was laid upon the conditional character of the alliance. The objects to be aimed at in the event of war were: for Prussia, a position in North Germany such as had been planned for the Central Government of all Germany in the Imperial Constitution of 1849; for Italy, the acquisition of Venetia, yet with the distinct understanding that she would take no territory within the limits of the Confederation, Tyrol, nor Trieste. "If Italy approves of these ends as worthy objects of the war," said the instructions, "and France does not oppose them, then we are ready, from the moment that war breaks out, to carry it on on a great scale, and to abandon the thought of making any separate peace until these aims of both allies shall have been attained."

The points to be considered in the matter of military arrangements were left to Moltke's discretion. (The General had already remarked that a special agreement concerning military operations would hardly be necessary. They would be entirely distinct and independent

of each other. Not in their combination, but in their simultaneousness, would lie the great advantage.) That the war was to be waged with the whole force at the disposal of the two nations was understood as a matter of course.

“Accordingly,” repeated the instructions, “a conditional alliance:—to go into effect in case Prussia, in following out her German policy, finds herself obliged to go to war. The promptness and the energy with which we shall carry out this policy depends, so far as we are concerned, mainly upon whether we can count on Italy’s assistance with the full assurance which an actual alliance would guarantee. It is still in our power to choose between war and peace: it lies, therefore, in Italy’s own interest to give us this assurance, and at the same time to allow us time to guide the conflict with Austria over to that part of the field where the Prussian demands will be in harmony with the national needs of Germany.”

The instructions closed with the observation, that if after all these considerations Italy could not be induced to enter into an alliance of this kind, then it would be best to propose a simple *pactum de contrahendo*, a general treaty of friendship, in which it should be mutually agreed to form a war-alliance of the nature mentioned, in case certain conditions came to pass.

Bismarck, who did not place any special confidence in the judgment and tact of Count Usedom, was in great haste to see Moltke depart for Florence. But while the above-mentioned instructions were being

drawn up for the General, the news came from Florence that La Marmora was about to send an Italian general to Berlin for precisely the same purpose; and so it was decided to defer Moltke's journey for a time and to await the proposals which the Italian messenger should bring.

## CHAPTER III.

## CONCLUSION OF THE ITALIAN TREATY.

ON the 24th of February, 1866, Prince Cusa of Roumania was deposed by a bloodless palace-revolution in Bucharest and replaced by a provisional Government. At the first news of this, Chevalier Nigra telegraphed immediately from Paris to Florence his opinion that a brilliant chance offered itself here to hold out the Danubian Principalities to Austria as indemnification for Venetia. In reply, he received full powers to urge this plan upon Napoleon's attention.

The Emperor, who, as we have seen, had scarcely favored such an idea, listened graciously, on the 28th of February, to Nigra's explanations, and then remarked that Austria would not be much pleased with this proposition, and would hardly be willing to accede to it, unless some pressure were brought to bear upon her. He observed, further, that Italy possessed the necessary means at hand in the conclusion of an offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia, and said that if this should go into effect, he himself would advocate in Vienna the proposed exchange.

The prospect of acquiring Venetia without a war did La Marmora's heart good; and when Napoleon

announced the Prussian alliance as a condition, the Minister decided immediately to advance a step to meet the Berlin Cabinet in the matter.<sup>1</sup> He had Count Usedom send a telegram to Bismarck, to the effect that Italy intended, if it was agreeable to the Prussian Government, to send an officer to Berlin to negotiate about political and military matters.

This telegram crossed with one from Bismarck saying that the King approved of an alliance and the sending of a military officer (meaning the sending of Moltke to Florence). Usedom thought the telegram meant to express Prussia's consent to La Marmora's proposal; and upon being thus informed, the Minister summoned General Govone, an energetic and prudent officer, from Perugia to Florence, in order to give him the necessary instructions for his mission to Berlin. It made no difference; for Bismarck, after clearing up the mistake, immediately sent word of his consent to receive Govone, and had this explained by Goltz to Chevalier Nigra.<sup>2</sup>

La Marmora accordingly began the negotiations, not with the intention of carrying on a war in alliance with Prussia, but in order to bring the fear of such an alliance to bear upon Austria, in the hope of inducing her to think better of the Roumanian exchange. We may remark, in passing, that it was certainly very natural

<sup>1</sup> All this is taken from Nigra's reports to the Prince of Carignano in June. This gives the motives and the connection of the whole negotiation, whereas the fragments published by La Marmora, from Nigra's despatches sent in March and April, leave the most decisive point in obscurity.

<sup>2</sup> La Marmora passes over all this in silence in his book, to make it appear as if Bismarck had occasioned the sending of Govone.

for him under these circumstances to believe he heard the same chord sounding in every word that came from Prussia. Therefore, Govone received no instructions to conclude a treaty that should bind Italy in any way whatever. He was to sound Prussia's sentiments; and if she meditated an extended German policy, war with Austria, and an effective, active treaty with Italy, he was to speak freely upon these points, and especially to find out what united military operations Prussia desired.

The Minister informed the General of the prospects concerning Roumania, and warned him not to allow himself to be made use of as a scarecrow by Bismarck, who might perhaps in that way merely try to force the cession of Holstein from the Court of Vienna.<sup>1</sup> If Govone succeeded in gaining from Prussia in this way the offer of an offensive and defensive alliance involving an immediate declaration of war upon Austria, then La Marmora would find himself in the very desirable position of being able, according to circumstances, either to accept Prussia's proposals and engage in the war, or to make use of them in Vienna as an argument in favor of the Roumanian exchange, and then leave Prussia to carry on the war alone.

On the day of his arrival in Berlin, the 14th of March, Govone had his first conversation with Bismarck,

<sup>1</sup> La Marmora, at the beginning of Chapter VII. of his book, regrets that Govone's instructions were lost, and that he can repeat from memory only a few of the chief points. But his orders to Barral, and the course that the negotiations took, leave no doubt about the contents and tenor of those instructions.

at which Count Barral was also present. Govone, in keeping with his instructions, declared that inasmuch as Prussia, according to Usedom's repeated communications, was intent upon making war against Austria, Italy was inclined to join in this enterprise as a means of solving the Venetian question, on condition that the Prussian and Italian programme could be definitely fixed by a formal compact. He said, that if such a political basis were insured, he was authorized to negotiate about the necessary military arrangements.

Bismarck answered him by explaining to him the points already known to us from the instructions given to Moltke, namely, that the Holstein question which was at issue between Prussia and Austria was not sufficient to warrant a declaration of war; and that therefore Prussia intended to lay at the basis of her further action the national question of the reform of the German Confederation; that in the desirable promulgation of these doctrines several months would still necessarily be consumed; and that in order to have a safer basis to work upon, Prussia proposed a treaty to the Italian Government, in which Italy should engage to declare war against Austria so soon as Prussia should take up arms in the cause of Confederate reform.

We have seen how often Italy had declared that she could not trust Prussia, so long as the latter confined the aims of the war to Holstein: the more extended her demands the more faith could be put in the seriousness of her proposals. Now Prussia came forward with the broadest programme that she could possibly under-



take. There could no longer be any thought that she was anxious for the friendship of Italy merely as a means of acquiring Holstein. But so much the more objection had the Italian negotiator to make against the postponement of the declaration of war, even though Bismarck's explanations about the peculiar nature of the German question could not be gainsaid; and especially was Govone alarmed at the fact that Italy was to promise to declare war at Prussia's signal, whereas Prussia was conversely to undertake no such binding obligations.

The old distrust of Prussia's reliability and energetic action awoke again in all its intensity. Count Barral, a suspicious Piedmontese like La Marmora, was, like him, at once convinced that the affair would turn out to be merely a repetition of Gastein; and even Govone, a man of quite different temperament, was for the moment influenced to entertain the same fears. Only if Prussia should decide to strike at once, could Italy depend upon her and join hands with her. Otherwise, the next thing to do was to refrain from assuming any obligations, and to spend the time in Berlin in collecting materials for frightening the Court of Vienna, with a view to acquiring Venetia without bloodshed. But the present proposal of Bismarck answered neither of these ends. Precisely the reverse! Italy was to assume obligations, and Prussia to keep her hands free. Such a state of things could not be turned to account in threatening Austria, even diplomatically. For everybody in Vienna had long known that Italy would

make an attack, *if* Prussia opened a war. In order to produce any new effect, Italy must be able to announce *that* Prussia was getting ready to do so.

Govone declared on the spot that he had no power to reply to a proposal such as had just been made. He said he would report it to his Government, but doubted very much about its being well received. Bismarck explained once more the advantages of the proposition, and then remarked that if Italy persisted in her refusal, the least thing he could wish would be a simple, ordinary treaty of assured friendship and alliance, in which it should be agreed that in the event of the outbreak of a war, a special treaty should be made concerning mutual obligations and common operations.

Govone declined to go further than to make a report about this also. On the following day he wrote to his Minister: "If it were simply a question of whether we should conclude a treaty with Prussia or not, then I should say that negotiations ought to be broken off at once. But inasmuch as in view of certain other negotiations which Your Excellence has spoken to me about (of course, I mean the Roumanian), it may be useful for us to arouse in Vienna the belief in a Prussian-Italian alliance, I am sure that you will approve of my remaining here several days longer as an observer, and perhaps of my signing the treaty of friendly alliance which Bismarck desires; for in this way we may gain the time and means for making other combinations, and the adder will have bitten the snake-charmer."

The brave soldier was soon to see that Bismarck was no charlatan, and that the old proverb was only half right.

For several days the negotiations moved back and forth upon the path marked out upon the 14th. Bismarck, with unreserved frankness, disclosed to the Italians all the dangers and difficulties of his game, the doubtful sentiments of South Germany, the uncertainty of Napoleon's attitude towards Prussia, and the strong aversion of England to the plan of annexation. Usedom had always, to be sure, said that Italy's decisive co-operation was the indispensable condition of Prussia's further action, but had also tried to spur on La Marmora by proclaiming Prussia's great eagerness for war : whereas Bismarck now, and properly, considered the opposite course advisable, and repeatedly explained to Govone and Barral that Prussia still held the choice between peace and war, between a complete and a moderate measure of success, and that if her well-weighed proposals were declined, she should certainly prefer the more modest and safe gain to a struggle of life and death.

To impress upon them the truth of what he said, he told them how he personally was in favor of the war policy, but that he stood alone in this opinion in Berlin; how the King especially approached the thought of a war with Austria only with the greatest reluctance, so much so that if Italy continued to lay obstacles in the way, he himself would have no means of inducing the King to decide for war; and that then,

indeed, by Italy's fault, a second Gastein might occur, at which Italy would be the one to go away empty-handed. As a matter of fact, the King was fully resolved to hold the reins in his own hands, and rather to abandon the idea of an Italian alliance than to allow himself to be dictated to by Italy in regard to the *whether* and the *when* of the war.

Meanwhile, certain events took place which very considerably modified the opinions of the Italian negotiators.

To begin with, the Roumanian project went off in smoke. After France had made it known to the Great Powers, the English Prime Minister expressed his disapproval without delay. The Emperor of Russia wrote on the margin of the despatch: "Must not be permitted, even at the risk of war."<sup>1</sup> More than all, Austria answered with a curt refusal. Consequently, a peaceful acquisition was no longer to be hoped for: Italy must abandon her wish or make war, which meant conforming to Prussia's conditions.

The matter was positively decided, however, by the fact that just at this juncture the chronic trouble between Prussia and Austria became acute.

The perfect silence which Bismarck had preserved since the receipt of the Austrian despatch of the 7th of February, and his short remark about the end of the alliance, aroused more and more every day the alarm of all hearts in Vienna. There was no more doubt but that Bismarck, in accordance with his declaration of

<sup>1</sup> *Inadmissible jusqu'à la guerre.*

January 26th, was seeking to form other alliances, of course against Austria. These anxieties soon found their way first into the semi-official journals, and thence into the Press of entire Europe. The Berlin newspapers replied with counter-complaints, and so the mutual recriminations flew back and forth. Everybody in Vienna was persuaded that Prussia was certainly intending, perhaps in a very short time, to accomplish the incorporation of Holstein by force; and on the other hand, the Austrian Government was fully determined to make no further concessions to Prussian greed. Consequently war seemed certain and every possibility of a peaceful agreement at an end.

The publication by the Austrian Staff on the War of 1866 expresses to the same feeling:<sup>1</sup> "Although Austria wished by all means to avoid standing in the light of an aggressor, yet now (after Bismarck's observation concerning the despatch of February 7th) it became imperative for her to prepare seriously for war, and the more so because her military constitution did not permit such rapid mobilization as in Prussia."

Indeed, the solution of the problem of how to make preparations without seeming to be the challenger was not easy. For it would depend upon her ability to prove to neutral Europe that her adversary had taken steps that threatened war, and which made defensive measures seem necessary for Austria. But that erratic Bismarck, who might be believed capable of any devilry,

<sup>1</sup> *Oesterreichs Kämpfe in Jahre 1866*. Published by the Imperial Staff. (Nominally edited by Vivenot.) I. 19.

did not let himself be caught in taking any such step. That he had said, on the 9th of February, that Prussia would henceforth stand on no better, nor, indeed, on any worse, footing with Austria, than with all other Powers, could not seriously be taken as a declaration of war; and that on the 28th of February a Ministerial Council had been held, at which the King presided, and the result of which nobody knew, was nothing extraordinary, even in the most peaceful times.

Thus the feeling in Vienna became more and more excited. The councillors of the Government, who were in favor of an "entire Germany," were thoroughly permeated with the doctrines of Herr von Beust, and believed that things could not go better in Germany until Prussia had been forced back by the sword into a "proper Confederate position." Nor did the bitter consciousness that Rechberg's policy had conceded great advantages and definite rights to the enemy, serve to soften these sentiments.

Then the news suddenly came of the beginnings of Prussian preparations, of the calling out of the militia. To be sure, it was immediately afterwards ascertained that this had been only the yearly inspection of the Berlin militia, and that after the roll-call they had quietly gone to their homes, the only variation from the usual custom being, that instead of summoning the militia from the different sections of the city successively, all were called out on the same day. But nevertheless, at the very first announcement, the Vienna Ministry of War made up its mind to begin

active preparations, and on the 2d of March sent orders to six cavalry regiments and six batteries to hold themselves in readiness to march.

On the 7th of March the sessions of the so-called "Council of Marshals" were opened by the Emperor in person, to which, besides the proper Ministers, eighteen of the leading generals were invited. In these deliberations, which continued until the 13th, the military situation was discussed, the arguments for mobilization, and the advisability of stationing a northern army in the way of Prussia and a southern army on the Italian frontier.<sup>1</sup> Count Mensdorff spoke decidedly against any armament, as being premature at this time and consequently harmful to Austria's interests; but he failed to obtain much of a hearing from his military audience.<sup>2</sup> The following circumstance, however, reported to Vienna with all speed by Herr von Buest, produced much more of an effect.

At a dinner at the Saxon embassy in Berlin, the wife of the ambassador, Countess Hohenthal, had the *naïveté* to ask the Prussian Prime Minister, who sat next to her, quite bluntly: "Pray tell me, Your Excellency, is it really true that you wish to fight Austria and conquer Saxony?" Bismarck answered with the greatest friendliness: "Certainly it is true, my dear Countess. From the first day of my ministry I have entertained no other thought. Our cannon have been cast already, and you shall soon see how much better they are than

<sup>1</sup> *Oesterreichs Kämpfe*, I. 70.

<sup>2</sup> As repeatedly told by Mensdorff to the Prussian ambassador at the end of April and beginning of May.

those of the Austrian artillery." "Dreadful!" cried the Countess. "Well!" she continued, "if that is so, then you must give me some kind advice, since you are inclined to be so frank. I have two estates; and I should like to know to which I shall fly, to the one in Bohemia or to my castle near Leipzig." "If you will take my advice, do not go to the one in Bohemia; for just there, if I am not mistaken, right in the neighborhood of your estate, we shall whip the Austrians. You might there have to experience some fearful scenes. But you can go to Saxony in peace. Nothing will happen around Leipzig, and you will not even be annoyed by the need of quartering soldiers; for your castle Knauthayn does not lie on any military road."<sup>1</sup>

When Bismarck was afterwards anxiously asked by other diplomats about these remarks, he laughed at any one's taking any notice of his ironical answer to an unfitting question. But Herr von Beust, mindful of his long hostility to Prussia's policy, took the matter very seriously, sent news of the important discovery to Vienna, implored Austria's powerful aid, and declared that, if she now prepared for war, all the Lesser States would hold firmly to her, but would otherwise turn their backs once for all upon her friendship.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rothan, *La Politique française en 1866*, p. 112, giving the narration of Count Hohenthal himself.

<sup>2</sup> King William mentioned this in a letter written on the 4th of May to King John of Saxony. The latter replied that he would very soon explain the whole matter satisfactorily. But so far as is known, the quick succession of events that followed, in the way of preparations for war, prevented him from doing so.

The Prussian ambassador, too, in the Saxon Duchies, heard of the circumstance at Meiningen. *Report of May 23d.*



Now, Mensdorff had based his warnings against measures that might appear offensive upon the indisposition of the Lesser States to engage in war. The despatch from Saxony took the foundation away from his arguments, and the Council passed the vote to send an increase of troops to all the provinces that bordered upon Prussia. Hitherto there had been sixty battalions and thirty-four squadrons standing in Bohemia, Moravia, and West Galicia; and now in the course of March they were joined by ten battalions and thirty squadrons, making altogether on a peace-footing about 11,000 men, of whom nine battalions had themselves been recruited in Bohemia, so that they could within a few days be raised to a war-footing.<sup>1</sup> In the garrisons occupied by these were placed other companies of troops brought from more remote provinces. At the same time an order was sent to the newspapers forbidding the publishing of accounts about the motions of the military forces.

These arrangements made it possible to pour into Silesia from three sides 80,000 men in a very short time, whereas there were at the time in that region only 25,000 Prussian troops not ready for mobilization and scattered about in the ordinary peace garrisons.

We can easily believe that the troops that were seen marching about in all parts of the Empire aroused a general feeling of uneasiness, and caused alarming reports, to a great extent exaggerated, to be carried, not

<sup>1</sup> *Oesterreichs Kämpfe*, I. 75, coinciding exactly with the statements in the work published (earlier) by the Prussian Staff, p. 6.

only to Berlin, but also to Munich, Hanover, etc. It happened also that rumors came from Triest about a hurried equipment of the fleet, and that the Kingdom of Saxony changed the time for finishing its recruiting from the usual date of April 1st to March 18th, and began to purchase horses for its army corps.

To be sure, Mensdorff denied entertaining any thought of a hostile attack upon Prussia, declared that the movements of the troops were merely changes that had been decided upon for other reasons, and said that so far only one single battalion had called out its reserves.<sup>1</sup> Yet he could not help confessing that all these defensive measures did take place in the direction of Prussia. When the Prussian military plenipotentiary, Count Gröben, in an evening company expressed to the Minister his regret that people had already begun to talk about Austria's making preparations against Prussia, Mensdorff replied: "Of course I cannot tell you, when we make preparations. But one must be on one's guard."<sup>2</sup> The news from Berlin is not very satisfactory. It is hard to find out what you Prussians are doing.<sup>3</sup> After all, in such things one always sets the other a-going." "We are protecting ourselves against sudden attacks," added the wife of

<sup>1</sup> Likewise Count Karolyi explained that where furloughed soldiers were called in, it had nothing to do with reserves who had finished their required term of service, but only with soldiers of the regular peace-footing that were absent on furloughs. The number of these so-called extra furloughs was, moreover, at this time very large, from financial reasons, in some battalions rising so high as two hundred; so that their being called in was no matter of indifference.

<sup>2</sup> "We, too," wrote Bismarck, on the margin of such a report.

<sup>3</sup> Very naturally, since Her von Roon was doing nothing whatever.

the Minister. In the same strain he talked a few days later to the Prussian ambassador also. It did not seem, however, as if protection against sudden attacks were a sufficient reason to justify such extensive changes.

Fresh vexation with Prussia had just been caused by a royal order given in Schleswig on the 11th of March, threatening all plotters against Austro-Prussian sovereignty in the Duchies with confinement in the house of correction. The annoyance over this new blow directed against the Augustenburg party was the more bitter, since it was impossible with propriety to object to a measure that was intended to support the sovereignty of the Emperor as much as that of the King. At which end, then, should the matter be taken hold of?

However ominous Bismarck's conversation with the Countess may have been, it was impossible to found upon it any international action! But that the time had come for something of the kind was evident to Count Mensdorff; for news had just come of Govone's arrival in Berlin. Mensdorff therefore determined to put the question seriously to Bismarck, which had been answered so frivolously to the Countess. He accordingly instructed Count Karolyi on the 16th of March to ask Bismarck officially, whether Prussia was intending to break the Gastein convention forcibly and to disturb the fundamental peace of the German Confederation. What reply was expected is clear from the fact that on the same day, the 16th of March, Austria sent a circular note to all the German Governments, portraying at great length beforehand what was to be

done if Bismarck made an unsatisfactory or evasive answer; namely, the Confederate Diet was to be called upon to decide concerning Schleswig-Holstein, and if Prussia opposed its decision, the whole Confederate army was to be mobilized, with the exception of the three army corps furnished by Prussia.

Mensdorff would have done well if he had not sent this circular note until after what he took for granted had been in his hands; namely, Bismarck's reply. For when, on the 16th, Karolyi proposed to the Prussian Minister the momentous question, the latter replied calmly:<sup>1</sup> "If you wish a more detailed answer to such a question, I must ask you, please, to put it to me in writing. In an oral reply, I must content myself with the simple word *No!* which I can pronounce without first receiving the commands of His Majesty. We wish, on the contrary, that Austria, on her part, observed more strictly the treaties of Vienna and Gastein."

When Karolyi then asked about Prussia's preparations for war he received the answer, which was perfectly true, that there was not the least trace of such preparations going on in Prussia. Karolyi thereupon affirmed, that if special equipments were really being made in Austria, of which he himself knew nothing, they had for their object only protection and defence. Austria, he said, had no thought of attacking Prussia. "Such defensive preparations," said Bismarck, "are always a source of danger for Prussia. When Austria already

<sup>1</sup> According to Bismarck's notes made immediately afterwards.

has 150,000 men on the frontier, an occasion for a quarrel is easily found. Prussia learned that in 1850."

After this conversation, it was said in Berlin that Bismarck had added to his simple *No!* the observation: "But, my dear Count, you don't really think I should have answered any differently if I did intend war, do you?" At any rate, a more apt criticism of Austria's putting that question to him could not be given than in this witticism.

Meanwhile, nothing whatever could be said in Vienna against Bismarck's actual answer. The question had been a blow into the air, and Mensdorff hastened to countermand the presentation of his circular note to the Governments, wherever it was still possible. And, furthermore, he was disappointed in learning that most of the Governments that had received the circular drew back with horror from war, quite contrary to Beust's assurances, and that, resting upon the letter of the Confederate Constitution, they urgently advised that no step should be taken that might disturb the peace of the Confederation.

The exact wording of the Austrian circular was not known to the Prussian Cabinet till a long while afterwards; but its contents, and with it the enemy's plan of campaign, was learned very soon. Bismarck did not delay in making his counter-move. In a circular to the German Governments, dated the 24th of March, he gave a detailed and exact account of the Austrian regiments that had been moved to the north, and those that were being made to follow them. He de-

clared that in the face of such threatenings the Royal Government must seek measures for protection; and he asked whether, in case an Austrian attack should prove to be the result, Prussia could depend upon the assistance of her Confederate associates. At the same time he took the occasion of these circumstances to make the first announcement of his plans for a grand Confederate reform, to which we shall refer more in detail below. The contrast between the two Powers was very fully and prominently brought out in the two circulars: on the one side, Austria, trying to suppress all aggrandizement of Prussia under the old laws of Confederate rights; and on the other, Prussia seeking by the overthrow of these laws to get for herself more air and light.

On the 27th of March, a Ministerial Council was held in Berlin at which the King presided. It was decided to arm the Silesian and Elbe fortresses, to purchase horses for half of the Prussian field-artillery, and to increase seventy-five battalions, each from 530 to 685 men (their full war-footing would have been 1002). The increase of the force by this means amounted to 11,000 men, which was almost exactly the same number that the Austrian provinces on the frontier had received by the changes that had been made. The Prussian increase involved at the same time an actual addition to the aggregate strength of the army, whereas the Austrian changes were but a preparation for this and to make it easier.

Again, the new position occupied by the Austrian

troops threatened very directly the Silesian frontier, while all Prussia's preparations maintained most strictly a defensive character. Not a company of troops was wholly mobilized. The battalions, for want of substitutes, could not leave the fortresses, and by the orders that had as yet been given it was impossible to put into the field a single division fully equipped.

The events that we have just narrated could not help making a great and lasting impression upon the two Italian negotiators, Barral and Govone. For each event had increased the probability of war, and lessened their misgivings about a treaty which should place the power to decide between war or peace in the hands of Prussia. It is true that La Marmora, continually tormented by doubts and suspicions, still would not listen to anything but an offensive and defensive alliance, with equal rights and obligations for both parties; but Count Barral, who found that Bismarck's decision was unalterable, and recognized the change in the situation, proposed to his Minister on the 21st of March the conciliatory plan of accepting the Prussian outline, and of limiting its binding force to two (or, as he changed it on the 23d in accordance with Bismarck's wish, three) months. If, then, Prussia should not have declared war within this period of time, Italy's hands should again be free in all directions.

La Marmora at first replied that he could not say anything about it until he had the actual wording of the treaty before his eyes. Moreover, his decision, as

we know, depended also upon something else; and accordingly he immediately instructed the ambassador Nigra, on the 21st, to ascertain the will of the Emperor Napoleon. The latter answered on the spot, that Italy must accept the offer, but must not take the first step in making an attack upon Austria; were a power like Prussia already at war with Austria, then nobody could blame Italy if she seized the incomparable opportunity. Also for Napoleon's position, this would be advantageous.

In a conversation with Nigra the Emperor added that Italy would do well to make her attack, when the time came, upon the Adriatic coast, and offer her hand to Hungary. For Lombardy could without any danger be left without troops, since Austria would not dare to attack this province from fear of France. Then came, indeed, another declaration of the Emperor, that although he was giving this advice from a sincere conviction that it was in the interests of Italy, still he did not wish, under any circumstances, to assume obligations himself; and this filled La Marmora at once with as much anxiety and distrust upon this side as he had hitherto felt with regard to Prussia. But Nigra's next report announced that the Emperor had expressly promised his assistance to Italy in case she should be attacked by Austria or left treacherously in the lurch by Prussia during the war.

Accordingly, the Minister finally made up his mind, and gained the royal sanction for signing the Prussian treaty. In the meantime, Barral and Govone had



abandoned their covetous desire for the Italian Tyrol on account of Bismarck's objections; and on the Prussian side, Bismarck gave up his demand that in the event of war Italy should declare war also against the German allies of Austria. This was done because King William not only wished to keep the whole Confederate territory undiminished in extent, but wished to have non-Austrian Germany guarded from any contact with foreign troops.

Even at the last moment a difference arose, unimportant in itself, but to La Marmora's mind very weighty. When the document was to be signed on the 8th of April, Barral noticed that in the introduction the compact was termed "a treaty of friendship and alliance." He raised objections at once. Instead of that, must stand the words, "an offensive and defensive alliance;" for his powers extended only to signing such a treaty and no other. We know what La Marmora thought about it; and Bismarck considered that in the last analysis it was not the name, but the contents, of a document that determined its legal significance, and therefore he allowed the change. Whereupon the signing of the treaty ensued, and a week later its ratification.

The document was worded as follows:—

"Their Majesties, the King of Prussia and the King of Italy, inspired by the desire to strengthen the guaranties of general peace, and in consideration of the needs and justifiable aspirations of their respective nations, have appointed as their plenipotentiaries, and provided with instructions concerning the

wording of the Articles of an Offensive and Defensive Alliance, the following persons. [The names are given here.]

ART. I. Friendship and alliance are to be maintained between His Majesty the King of Prussia, and His Majesty the King of Italy.

ART. II. If the negotiations His Majesty the King of Prussia has opened with the other German Governments concerning certain reforms of the Confederate Constitution, which are demanded by the needs of the German Nation, shall fail, and in consequence thereof His Majesty be forced to take up arms in order to give effect to his proposals, then His Majesty the King of Italy, after Prussia has taken the initiative, and so soon as he is made aware of that fact, shall, in virtue of this Treaty, immediately declare war against Austria.

ART. III. From that moment the war shall be carried on by both their Majesties with all the powers that Providence has placed at their disposal; and neither Italy nor Prussia shall conclude either peace or armistice without consent of the other.

ART. IV. This consent may not be withheld, when Austria shall have expressed her willingness to cede to Italy the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom and to Prussia Austrian territory that shall be equivalent in population to the above-mentioned kingdom. [Concerning this point, it was orally explained, that, instead of such territorial acquisitions, Prussia intended to require certain corresponding concessions in the German Question.]

ART. V. This treaty loses its validity three months after being signed, unless the conditions mentioned in Article II. shall have been fulfilled, namely, that Prussia shall have declared war upon Austria.

ART. VI. If the Austrian fleet, which is now being equipped, shall have quitted the Adriatic Sea before the declaration of war, then shall His Majesty the King of Italy send a sufficient number of ships to the Baltic Sea, which shall take up their station there in order to be ready to unite with the Prussian fleet at the outbreak of hostilities.

Then followed the signatures, and also a protocol in which both Powers pledged themselves to keep secret both the contents and the existence of this treaty.

Thus had Bismarck's patience reached its goal. For the event that Prussia should decide for war, Italy's assistance was assured, without which Moltke had feared to undertake the struggle against Austria and the Lesser States; and it was made practically impossible for the Emperor Napoleon, as protector of Italy, to engage in any open hostilities against Prussia. For Italy, however, the treaty offered only obligations, and no rights. So long as Prussia did not declare war from her own choice, her hands were perfectly free, whatever might go on south of the Alps. It was only after long hesitation and reluctance that Italy had agreed to such a one-sided compact; and even then took it upon herself only for a limited time. She had been obliged to make up her mind to the fact, that King William would never let go out of his hand the power to decide about beginning a war that might involve for Prussia her very existence.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MOTION FOR CONFEDERATE REFORM.

SIMULTANEOUSLY with his negotiations with Italy, Bismarck was preparing the way for making his propositions concerning Confederate reform, which played such a great part in the Italian alliance. We have already seen how often he had tried to solve the problem in common with Austria, and how he then was forced by Austria's behavior in the Holstein affair to seek the attainment of reform in a struggle with her. The programme which he had Goltz present in Paris did not, indeed, mention a word about Austria; but the division of the military command (Prussia in the North, and Bavaria in the South) was sufficient without plainer phrases to imply the banishment of Austria from the Confederation. For it was very certain that Austria would never consent to such conditions: either nothing would come of the attempts at reform, or Austria would be forced to withdraw. The question was, then, what forces could be collected in Germany to assist in carrying out the reforms, and, necessarily also, in overcoming Austria. In two directions, in spite of all untoward circumstances, there seemed to be reasons for expecting a favorable answer.

In opposing the Prussian policy towards Schleswig-

Holstein, everything that bore the name of Liberal had declared hundreds of times that nothing but the summoning of a German parliament could save the Fatherland. The opinion was expressed, that a complete change in public opinion would take place in favor of Prussia, if her Government, so often and so deeply misunderstood, should now champion this darling project of the nation and bring it to accomplishment.

But so far as the German Governments were concerned, and their common organ, the Confederate Diet, the great majority could be expected to entertain only deeply-rooted aversion to such a plan.

Yet there was one state that seemed an exception, the very one that possessed the most influence next to the two Great Powers, and which in former times had frequently, and in open contrast to Austria, emphasized the necessity of reform and of a popular representation in the Confederation. To this state Prussia was now intending to give a most prominent *rôle* in her present plan; and its Prime Minister had for some time been manifesting personal friendliness towards Bismarck. We have mentioned above, how cordially Baron von der Pfordten received in February the first intimations of Prussia's schemes of reform from Prince Reuss. And at other times, too, he was accustomed to express freely his respect for the great Prussian statesman. "How much they are mistaken," said he, "that suspect him of personal ambition. He is the incarnation of the Prussian State. He is no opponent of Austria on principle; on the contrary, he would be glad to join

hands with her, but always on the condition that she will not forever be placing obstacles in the way of a justifiable Prussian policy. That is a thoroughly German idea; and just for this reason I place confidence in that man who is its chief representative.”<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck did everything to promote this favorable relation between them. It was very easy to see that for the issue of the present struggle hardly anything could be of more importance than that Bismarck should succeed in drawing Bavaria over to the Prussian side, so as to render an Austrian party in Germany almost an impossibility. Therefore Bismarck had let Prince Reuss continue his confidential conversations with Baron von der Pfordten, and the latter still proved a sympathetic listener.

On the 8th of March, Reuss informed the Minister confidentially that Prussia, having in view a revision of the Confederate Constitution, intended to move in Frankfort the summoning of a German parliament, to be composed of members elected directly by the people. To this Pfordten expressed, as his personal feeling, a hearty assent, as being a plan that corresponded with a long-cherished wish of Bavaria. Against the direct election of the members by the people, he made no objection further than that he thought it would be easier to form the parliament of delegates from the several chambers. But then other uncertainties arose. In the first place, it must be known what sort of a new constitution Prussia

<sup>1</sup> Report of Prince Reuss, April 10th.

thought of proposing, and above all it would be necessary for Prussia to come to an understanding with Austria on such an important subject.

Bismarck hoped that he might perhaps very soon overcome this remnant of Austrian sympathies by offering Bavaria military supremacy over the German South, and therefore did not hesitate to follow along on the thread already taken up. The above-mentioned circular note of the 24th of May, about the Austrian mobilizations, he closed with the observation, that a reform of the Confederate Constitution was equally desirable and urgent for Prussia and for Germany, and that if Prussia could not rely upon the support of Germany, her situation was more precarious than that of any other state; and that, moreover, if Prussia's power were once broken, Germany would not be likely to escape the fate of Poland.

The copy of the circular that was destined for Munich was accompanied by a lengthy despatch concerning the parliamentary question, in which Bismarck commented upon Pfordten's reservations and objections. At the outset he declared that a preliminary consideration of the subject with Austria would be, in view of her open hostility, hopeless. A free discussion among the Governments about the propositions that were to be laid before the parliament would, after years of writing back and forth, just as was the case with the Dresden conferences of 1851, do nothing more than furnish a mass of so-called "valuable material;" it would be necessary, therefore, to announce to the Gov-

ernments that the parliament would be summoned on a certain date, and in this way force them to agree before that time upon the propositions to be made. Against the system of taking delegates from the Chambers, Bismarck remarked that such an assembly would not have the requisite authority in the eyes of the nation. For it was certainly not the general conviction that the parliaments of the several states — and he would not except the Prussian — embraced in themselves the whole political talent of the German nation. “Direct elections, however, and universal suffrage,” continued the despatch, “I consider to be greater guaranties of conservative action than any artificial electoral law with the end in view of determining majorities beforehand. So far as our experience goes, the masses are more honestly interested in the maintenance of public order than are the leaders of those classes which the introduction of any qualification aims at including in the privileged number of those possessing the right of suffrage.”

In view of the incalculable importance which the introduction of the system of equal and universal suffrage has won with reference to the future of Germany, I trust the reader will approve of my inserting here some further observations of the Prussian Minister upon this point.<sup>1</sup>

“I may be allowed to express it as my conviction, founded upon long experience, that the artificial system of indirect elections and elections by classes is a

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Count Bernstorff in London, April 19.



much more dangerous one, inasmuch as it prevents the highest authority from coming in contact with those healthy elements that form the kernel and the mass of the people. In a country of monarchical traditions and loyal patriotism, universal suffrage, doing away, as it does, with the influence of the liberal *bourgeoisie* classes, leads to monarchical elections, just as in countries where the masses are inclined to revolutions it leads to anarchical elections. Now, in Prussia, nine-tenths of the people are true to their King, and lose the power to express their sentiments only by the artificial mechanism of the elections. The real propagators of the Revolution are the electoral colleges, who place in the hands of the party of subversion a convenient and easily managed net which they spread over the whole land — just as was the case with the *électeurs* of Paris in 1789. I do not hesitate to declare indirect elections to be one of the most essential assistants of Revolution; and I consider that I have had a certain amount of practical experience in this matter.”<sup>1</sup>

Whatever may be said against such a theory on the basis of the moral principles underlying political rights, or on the ground of its workings as a matter of history, in 1866 Bismarck’s conviction, as the result

<sup>1</sup> When Count Bernstoff, on the 26th of April, reported Lord Clarendon’s horror at the idea of universal suffrage, Bismarck made the following note on the margin of the report: —

“In England it is precisely the upper classes that support the monarchy and the Constitution; for it is *their* privileges and *their* rule over the land that these establish. The masses are crude and ignorant, and their devotion to the Crown is not of the same kind as in Prussia.”

of long years of opposition on the part of the German citizens, remained fixed. He hoped that the despatch of March 24th had removed Pfordten's misgivings, and he begged his Bavarian colleague that the Munich Cabinet might join the Berlin Cabinet in bringing forward the motion in the Confederate Diet to announce the summoning of a German parliament upon a fixed day, the members to be elected directly by the people and by universal suffrage.

But however little sympathy for Austria prevailed at the time in Munich, this request was not destined to be successful.

The Bavarian Government had felt itself at ease in earlier years under the Confederate Constitution of 1815; and Baron von der Pfordten, too, after his popular vagaries of 1848 and his ambitious plans of 1850 had gradually vanished, felt himself quite reconciled to the existing Confederate laws. His vivacious temperament did not allow of his being too constant in his sentiments, but he was always thoroughly filled with the one that happened to be uppermost at the time. Now, inasmuch as the nearest thing to his heart was the complete independence of his Bavarian State, and that his King should stand upon an equal footing with every other German potentate, he therefore especially lauded the Confederate Constitution, because it did not introduce into the council of the German Governments one Great Power, but two of them.

The sum of all Bavaria's policy lay for Pfordten at that time in a sort of vibratory system, oscillating

between the two mighty Powers, by which he thought that, steering now to the right and now to the left, he could gain for Bavaria safety, influence, and profit. In confidential conversations he was fond of telling how, during the stormy years, Bavaria had in this way been the real preserver of the Confederation, and how, with this same object in view, she had striven and would continue to strive for the admission of Austria into the Tariff-Union. Such a system was evidently possible only under a double condition: a continuous rivalry between the two Great Powers, and a likewise continuous avoidance of an open rupture. Consequently, Pfordten was perfectly sincere and honest in his endeavor to maintain peace, his willingness to make concessions to Prussia, and his attempt to mediate between Vienna and Berlin.

But the course of the Schleswig-Holstein controversy shook in every direction these views of this mobile man. At first, he had allowed himself to be carried away by his feeling of justice and by the applause of public opinion into assuming the leadership of the Majority in the Confederate Diet and into taking a stand against the two Great Powers. He suffered thereby a most overwhelming defeat. Then he arose again courageously, as Count Mensdorff approached the Confederate Diet; but the instability of Austria soon filled him with an ever-increasing repugnance to that Power, and more than once did he refuse to join his Saxon colleague in an attempt to form a fixed alliance of the Lesser States against all Prussian schemes.

He declared now, that, aside from considerations of the rights of Augustenburg, the best solution of the problem was the Prussian annexation of the Duchies. He was convinced that Austria objected to this only in order to make something out of it herself, and that because she felt internally weak and unable to carry on a war, she was pouring her flattery upon the Confederation and sought to incite the Lesser States against Prussia. "But we should be great fools," said he, "to yield to that; for Vienna would only too quickly become reconciled with Berlin at our expense, and then leave us in the lurch."

At times, however, other thoughts arose in his mind. As early as February, 1866, he began to think a war probable between the two Powers, and in March he considered it almost unavoidable. In that event the destruction for all time of the old Confederate rights seemed to him certain. "By a rupture between Prussia and Austria," he wrote to Dresden, "the German Confederation would go to pieces, and each state would be forced to consider for itself, how it could best secure its own safety."

In spite of Beust's energetic objection, that unlawful conduct on the part of Prussia would not release the remaining states from their obligations as members of the Confederation, Pfordten persisted in his conviction, and began to sketch out to his Saxon friend the outline of a new federation, which should consist of three groups; namely, Austria, North Germany, under Prussian, and South Germany, under Bavarian, military

command. We see that his program for the future of Austria approximated very nearly that of Bismarck; but there was still no possibility whatever of an agreement between them, since Pfordten would listen only to a reconstruction of the Confederation that should include both Great Powers, and not to one with Prussia alone; and least of all would he consent to a Confederate Constitution having a parliamentary basis without Austria.

Yet of all the Bavarian ministers, Pfordten stood the nearest to entertaining Prussian tendencies; and even the young King was frightened by the sudden recommendation of a democratic Confederate parliament. Accordingly, there was no chance of accepting the proposal to join Prussia in making the motion in the Confederate Diet to announce elections for such a parliament. It was urged that if Prussia should bring forward the motion herself, it might be well received and supported by Bavaria; but even then, it would not be possible to vote for the summoning of a parliament until after Prussia had first presented her outline for a future constitution, and Bavaria had approved of it. The system of direct elections should then be no insurmountable obstacle; which would, however, be the case with an exclusion of Austria from the deliberations. If the temporary estrangement existing between the two Great Powers occasioned difficulties in this regard, Bavaria would be willing to undertake any offices in the way of mediation that might be desired.

Pfordten at once carried the offer into effect, by

sending on the 31st of March an identical note to the two Courts, in which he represented the true cause of the existing misunderstanding to be a dissatisfaction with the present Confederate Constitution, and urged the Great Powers not to meditate its destruction, but rather its improvement. He therefore invited each of the two Powers to express to the Bavarian Government its willingness to abandon the thought of making an armed attack and to enter into negotiations concerning the means of preserving peace in the Confederation.

Bismarck, although not without receiving information about these sentiments, and surprised by a beginning of warlike preparations on the part of Bavaria, kept for the time on the friendly side of Bavarian politics, and accordingly accepted with thanks her offer to mediate between the Great Powers, hoping for Pfordten's support in the discussion over Confederate reform in Frankfort. For, that the motion for the call of a parliament must, now that Bavaria had drawn back, be made by Prussia alone, went as a matter of course. On the 4th of April the representative in the Confederate Diet, Herr von Savigny, received preliminary instructions concerning the matter. On the 8th, immediately after the signing of the Italian treaty, the final orders were sent to Frankfort; and in the session of the 9th of April, Savigny brought forward the motion, supporting it by essentially the same arguments that we have already become acquainted with in the despatches of March 24th.

The first effect of this measure in Germany, as indeed in Europe, was a general stupefaction. What? That hero of the Reaction, the leader of the extreme *Junker* party of 1848, the despiser and oppressor of the Prussian parliament, honestly entertained the idea of establishing the German Confederation upon the broadest possible basis, that of universal suffrage? Impossible! No one could believe it. "Any Government," declared the Frankfort committee of thirty-six, "that, despising the laws of its own country, comes forward with plans for Confederate reform, cannot have the confidence of the German people."

It was not infrequently remarked among the educated circles of the Liberal party, that Bismarck had put himself under the teaching of Louis Napoleon, and had learned of him how first to check the freedom of the Press and the right of forming societies, and then drive the unthinking masses by gendarmes and priests to the ballot-box, in order, by means of their preponderating votes, to suppress every movement of a free spirit. That in the heart of the Prussian Minister no other motive could be alive than an ambition for absolute rule, was deemed especially evident from his conduct in the matter of the Duchies, where he had trampled under foot, not only the hereditary rights of the Augustenburgs, which had been demonstrated a hundred times, but also the sacred right of the Schleswig-Holstein people to decide in the matter for themselves.

Although the Ministry of Belcredi had gone much

farther than Bismarck in opposing parliamentary liberalism, yet millions of German men were ready to forgive and forget all this, because Austria continued to protect Schleswig-Holstein against Prussian violence. A popular assembly in Hanover declared it to be an accursed enterprise to use Confederate reform as a pretext for beginning a fratricidal war. And very energetically, even if not quite prophetically, a union of the Schleswig-Holstein associations in Neumünster declared: "It is certain, that to allow the shameful policy of the Prussian Cabinet to go on would be to abandon Germany irrevocably to the direst ruin."

The popular party of Würtemberg demanded again a democratic constitution for the "Third Germany," and while it expressed the hope that a German parliament would eventually be created, it strenuously objected to leaving such a task in the hands of the Prussian Government. More than all, the organ of the Bavarian clericals, the *Münchener Volksbote*, could not find colors strong enough in which to paint adequately the contemptibleness of Bismarck's "rascally motion." In short, a raging storm of disapprobation was raised throughout all German lands; and an almost unanimous vote of the Lower House in Baden to accept Prussia's motion was lost in the din of the uproar, — the more so, since the Prime Minister of Baden, Baron von Edelsheim, was one of the most ardent zealots of the "Entire Germany" party.

Nor was the reception of the motion by the German



Governments any more satisfactory. A great share of them were ready to believe anything bad of Bismarck's ambition and recklessness. Even the Court of Carlsruhe, otherwise so friendly in its sympathies, could not make up its mind to take the motion in earnest, and tried to discover what ruinous plans might be lurking behind it. In Hanover, where an attempt had just been made quietly to increase considerably the strength of the battalions, Count Platen characterized the motion as being decidedly an unhappy one; and King George said to the Prussian Ambassador that it was simply dreadful to undertake in that way to bring a pressure to bear upon the Princes and the Governments by means of a popular vote.

Not every one spoke so frankly, but the sentiments of the majority were the same. Saxony, Würtemberg, and Baden deliberated with one another as to whether it would not be better, instead of the motion for Confederate reform, to bring one again before the Confederation in favor of Augustenburg. King Louis of Bavaria, too, held back with many misgivings, while Pfordten still clung fast to the very uncertain hope that the discussion about the Constitution might serve to turn aside the thoughts of war. In accordance with this idea, the Bavarian Minister did his best in Vienna to persuade the Austrian Cabinet to consent at least to a consideration of the Prussian motion, stopped the equipments that had recently been begun in Bavaria, and at the same time seconded among the Lesser States Prussia's wishes concerning

the treatment of her motion as a matter of business by the Diet.

Bismarck again thought that this conduct of Pfordten indicated the possibility of forming an alliance with Bavaria; and he allowed intimations about her future supremacy in South Germany to find their way to Munich. Prince Reuss warned him urgently against being deceived in such a way, and insisted that, in the event of war, Bavaria would under all circumstances hold to Austria against Prussia; for even if the Government entertained Prussian sympathies, it would not risk following them, in view of the boundlessness of the bitter feeling among the masses of the people.

In foreign countries, too, the motion called forth various comments. Some considered it equivalent to the declaration of war against Austria. Others saw in it a desperate attempt to acquire hastily a great popularity. They wondered, inasmuch as the motion was sure to be rejected or postponed, for what reason Prussia chose to expose herself to a certain defeat. The English Government, thoroughly averse to the Prussian since 1864, had just offered its services as mediator in Vienna and Berlin; but then, when Bismarck had accepted them with the request that they might also be employed in Vienna, they were hurriedly withdrawn: Lord Clarendon now objected seriously to the universal suffrage element in Prussia's motion. In this he was energetically seconded by the Russian Cabinet, although the Emperor Alexander was other-

wise filled with sincere and thankful good-will toward Prussia, and had just requested the Emperor Francis Joseph most urgently to discontinue Austria's preparations for war.

In Paris, indeed, the Emperor Napoleon, especially on account of this very stipulation concerning universal suffrage, expressed to Count Goltz his great delight, that the two countries should advocate the same political system. But in other respects, Prussia's action aroused also in France nothing but suspicion and distrust. Drouyn de Lhuys acknowledged the fact that the German Confederation had a right to change its Constitution; but lest French interests might suffer some injury thereby, her Cabinet must make certain reservations. On the Paris Exchange Prussia's complaints at Austrian mobilization had caused a tremendous panic and heavy losses; and the consequent anger had been directed, not against Austria, who had ordered the troops to change their stations, but against Prussia, whose policy had occasioned the change. Ministers, financiers, senators, and deputies besieged the Emperor, entreating him to take steps against the revolutionary doings of Prussia, who by her motion for Confederate reform was not only threatening Germany with most serious internal convulsions, but also France with a disadvantageous shift in the European balance of power.

To the man, however, upon whose head all these reproaches and threats were being heaped, it was as if nothing were happening. His enemies rejoiced over

the *fasco*, which his motion for reform had made; but Bismarck remained unshaken in his determination either to suffer utter ruin or to raise his Fatherland to a new grandeur. When Count Goltz, in the excitement of his fright at the noise made by the Paris Exchange and its sympathizers, hinted at a change in the Prussian policy, Bismarck replied: "It is exceedingly dangerous for the reputation of a Great Power to change arbitrarily its system and its aims; but it is especially dangerous to retract decisions, the execution of which is likely to be attended with perils, just at the time when these perils are approaching. It is perfectly natural that the speculators on the Paris Exchange should blame every other rather than their own folly; yet this cannot occasion any change in the well-weighed plans of His Majesty the King."

He accordingly went forward in his course along the line of Confederate reform; and we will follow him in it, although, as we shall soon see, the adversary did not give him time to reach either any positive result or a justifiable occasion for declaring war.

That the Majority of the Confederate Diet did not at the outset throw aside the motion, but decided on the 21st of April to appoint a special committee for its consideration, was due to Pfordten. Even Austria voted in the affirmative; but she declared, in doing so, that Prussia without doubt would not have taken such an important step without being clear in her own mind about the objects to be attained in a revision of the Confederate Constitution; and that the Con-

federate Diet must know the proposals that Prussia intended should follow the convention of a parliament, before it could again enter into an undertaking, which, according as the aims are correct or false, must lead to good results or to ruin.

On the following day, the 22d of April, Baron von der Pfordten, with the Prime Ministers of the other Lesser States, held a meeting in Augsburg to deliberate about pursuing some common policy. In consequence of a Prussian despatch about the universal cessation of preparations, Pfordten was just then filled with hopes for peace, and directed the attention of his colleagues to the only question now to be discussed; namely, the reform of the Confederation. To the great vexation of Herr von Beust, the Bavarian Minister declared that the strengthening of Prussia's position in North Germany was required by the nature of things; but so far as the formal treatment of the matter was concerned, he fully coincided with Austria in the demand that before the Confederate Diet proceeded any further Prussia should present her propositions concerning the future constitution. All assented to this, and agreed during the whole course of the negotiations to hold together and to act in concert.

On the 26th of April the election of the committee took place in Frankfurt. It consisted of nine members, among whom Prussia could scarcely count upon one safe vote.

Meanwhile, fresh military measures on the part of Austria put an end completely to Pfordten's happy

hopes of peace. And in view of the utter uncertainty of the situation Bismarck was less inclined than ever, by premature propositions about a constitution, to bind his hands for the future. Accordingly, he sent, on the 27th of April, a circular to all the German Courts, in which he called attention to the fact that the Prussian motion did not for the present ask for the delineation of the outline of a constitution, but only the convention of a parliament. He further said, that without the self-imposed obligation that was involved in fixing a certain date for the opening of the parliament, a discussion about the constitution itself would drag along without result, as had been already so many times the case; and that therefore Prussia would not communicate her further proposals until after the above-mentioned date had been fixed, and would consider a refusal to appoint such a time as equivalent to a rejection of her whole motion.

By a complete silence the desired pretext for such a rejection was not to be offered to the Lesser States; and so Herr von Savigny was summoned to Berlin in order to participate in the deliberations over the proposals concerning Confederate reform, which he might then communicate confidentially to his colleagues at Frankfort.

In this matter, both the sentiments of the King and wise tactics conspired in causing the proposals to be characterized by the greatest moderation. The King had long been conscious of the dangerous insufficiency of the German Confederate Constitution; but any

ambition to be raised personally above his princely associates in the Confederation was foreign to his soul. Like his deceased brother, he desired nothing but a position for Prussia in the German Confederation that corresponded with her power, equal rights with Austria, and permanent military supremacy, if not over the whole, at least over the northern Confederate army corps. He was annoyed at the fruitlessness of the Confederate Diet, arising from the requirement of unanimity in its votes, and was therefore ready to propose an extension of its competency, under the condition, indeed, that by the side of the Diet, the centre and embodiment of the spirit of the individual states, an organ of the common public sentiment should be established, a popular representative body chosen directly by the people and having equal rights with the Diet in legislation: then the controlling authority might, as before, rest in the hands of the Diet.

The outward situation was also, as we have said, calculated to restrain his wishes within these limits. We shall presently see that during these deliberations the outbreak of the war grew daily more imminent; and therefore it was the more expedient to preserve an attitude consistent with a desire for peace. The importance of these deliberations was increased by the circumstance that France began to urge the convention of a European congress of all the Great Powers, which should pass judgment upon all the pending questions: the Schleswig-Holstein, the Venetian, and the German. Hence the limitation of the Confederate reform

to as modest a scope as possible became an absolute duty, so that no apparent pretext might be offered to foreign Powers for interfering in an internal vital question of the German nation. Accordingly, it was decided to make the following communication to the committee of the Confederate Diet concerning Prussia's plans with respect to Confederate reform:

A national assembly shall be established, to be convened periodically, which shall share in Confederate legislation, and shall replace the requirement of unanimity which has hitherto been necessary in certain cases. The functions of this Confederate body thus organized shall be concerned with such matters of common interest as are designated in the Vienna Final Act; also with the regulation of commercial intercourse, the freedom to move from State to State and hold a common citizenship, legislation respecting customs and trade, protection of German trade in foreign countries as well as of German navigation and German colors, a consular representation of Germany as a whole, the establishment of a navy, revision of the Confederate military organization by providing for the better centralization of the forces with a view to increasing the actual efficiency of the whole army and lightening the burden of the individual. With reference to the system of election to be applied to the convention of the parliament *ad hoc*, universal suffrage shall prevail, one representative being chosen for every one hundred thousand souls, and the eligibility of the candidate being determined as in the electoral law of 1849.

All this kept within the limits of the existing Confederate Constitution. There was nothing said about any Confederate Head that should rule over the sovereign states: it concerned only the extension of the legislative power of the Confederate Diet, in case this was to accept the co-operation of a parliament chosen



by the nation. Questions of this kind could not possibly be made use of by foreign countries as a basis for interference. To be sure, it was highly probable that the Confederate Diet would reject even these moderate proposals; and to prepare for such an event Prussia had already declared to several German Governments, and now allowed the assertion to be published openly by her semi-official journals, that in case of such conduct, so injurious to all concerned, she should feel herself obliged to insist upon reforms that would cut still deeper.

When Savigny returned with this commission to Frankfort, the Lesser States had agreed that the Bavarian representative, the former Minister von Schrenck, should be chosen to offer the report. The draft that he was to lay before the committee had already been sent to him in its exact wording from Munich, and was to the effect that the Confederate assembly should, before taking any further steps, request Prussia to present at once her outline for reform. Schrenck himself considered such a method of proceeding to be defiant and irrelevant; and he willingly promised his Prussian colleague that he would, in the next session of the committee, procure him an opportunity to make his confidential communication.

Thus it happened on the 11th of May. Schrenck was appointed to draw up the report, and read that which he had been ordered to propose. He then begged the committee before taking the vote to allow Herr von Savigny to say a few words of significant purport.

The impression produced by the moderateness of the Prussian proposals was so favorable, that the majority of the committee decided, in spite of violent opposition from Austria and Darmstadt, to omit the vote upon the Bavarian draft, and to ask for further instructions from their Governments.

But before these instructions arrived the stone had been set a-rolling by other forces, and the last sessions of the Confederate Diet had to be spent in discussing other matters than reforms of the Constitution. Bismarck's idea of employing his motion for a parliament as a means of gaining Bavaria's sympathy or of changing the public sentiment was thus for the moment frustrated. Yet so much the greater was its significance, both then and always, for the future of Germany. It was, by the side of the raging scepticism of the parties, the permanent token that Germany's unity should be founded under Prussia's leadership upon the basis of political freedom. It was the drop of "democratic oil" with which Uhland once wished that the brow of the future German Emperor might be anointed.

We must turn now and see how matters had meanwhile been ripening to the climax of war. For this purpose let us carry our thoughts back to the last days of March.



BOOK XVI.

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*RUPTURE BETWEEN AUSTRIA AND  
PRUSSIA.*



## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL PREPARATION FOR WAR.

EVERYBODY in Vienna was thoroughly convinced of Austria's love of peace, her stainless innocence, and the insidious wiles of her wicked rival, Prussia. They were fully resolved to maintain Austria's honor, and in no point to show to the presumptuous adversary a disgraceful readiness to yield.

But as to the way in which it was best to meet the Prussian offensive, opinions differed. The Minister of War, Baron Frank, and the Chief of the Staff, General Henikstein, convinced of Prussia's anxiety to make the attack, considered that immediate preparations alone could save the country, since the mobilization of the army in Austria would consume seven weeks, and in Prussia only four; so that, if hostilities should break out, the Empire would lie for nearly a whole month open to the enemy. On the other hand, Count Mensdorff was urgent in his warning not to take upon one's self by over-hasty preparations the hateful *rôle* of the aggressor, especially at this time when Austria, as well as her opponent, had called upon the other German Governments to show their loyalty to the Confederation, and had ascertained that the

great majority of them in their aversion to war would most surely take sides with the party that was attacked. Therefore, the Count proposed to make a last attempt on the line of good-will, and to take up again the negotiations with Prussia that had been dropped since February 7th.

Finally, it was concluded that both views could be supported by incontestable arguments. Mensdorff was therefore to try negotiations, and Frank to make military arrangements. This seemed the more advisable, inasmuch as Govone's doings were pretty well understood, and the danger of a Prusso-Italian alliance had increased in Vienna more than any other circumstance the feeling of bitterness and distrust.

So Count Mensdorff sent a note on the 31st of March to the Berlin Cabinet, in which he said it was understood that Prussia (in the circular of March 24th) had asked the German Courts whether they would stand by her in the event of an Austrian attack. Austria wished now to declare with all necessary formality that, in view of the loyalty of His Majesty the Emperor to the Confederation and his personal friendship for the King, nothing lay further from his intentions than an offensive attitude towards Prussia; and it was hoped that the Berlin Cabinet would also quite as decidedly and plainly contradict the suspicion of intending to break the peace.

In Berlin, these asseverations were received with some doubts, since, according to all accounts, the movement of Austrian troops towards the north continued

uninterruptedly.<sup>1</sup> Yet Bismarck had no misgivings in making the desired declaration in due form, repeating literally the expressions used by Austria. The only cause for anxiety, he remarked, had been the gathering of Austrian forces along the Prussian frontier, in respect to which Austria had made no attempt to prove their defensive character by alleging the presence of any danger whatever against which she was protecting herself; so that Prussia had felt herself, on the 29th of March, forced to take measures for the security of her frontiers.

The simple request in this note to give a reason for Austria's mobilization called forth in Vienna violent excitement. Within twenty-four hours an answer was sent to Karolyi, which left nothing to be wished in the way of passionate phrases, and, consequently, in the weakness of the arguments. It enumerated, as the true cause of the anxieties about a war, all those threatening steps taken by Prussia, the note of January 26th, the Ministerial Council of February 28th, Bismarck's remarks about the unavoidsableness of war, and the negotiations with Italy. It further declared that in Austria no measures had been taken that would be necessary in preparation for a great war, no important concentration of troops, no especial calling in of soldiers, no unusual purchase of horses; and that the actual changes which had taken place had been

<sup>1</sup> According to the reports of the Prussian military plenipotentiary Count Gröben in Vienna, communications from the commander of the corps in Silesia, and the reports of the Prussian ambassador in Munich concerning the news that had reached the Bavarian Government.



openly spoken about to the Prussian ambassador. Moreover, it was said that the question about priority in making preparations for war was settled by the word of the Emperor, that he intended to make no attack; that the corresponding affirmation of the King would be accepted; and that it was to be expected now that the Prussian order of March 29th for mobilization would remain unexecuted.

This was written on the 7th of April. On the 8th, a great military conference decided to make a new levy of 85,000 men, of whom it was intended to form eighty new battalions and thirty-two new *jäger* companies.<sup>1</sup>

The feelings in Vienna grew more boisterous when, on the 9th of April, Prussia came forward with her motion for Confederate reform, which was regarded as the first step towards a hegemony over North Germany. The urgency of the generals became more pressing, and the diplomatic resistance of Count Mensdorff proportionately weaker. As, on the 13th of April, no Prussian reply had been received, the arming of the fortresses in the north was ordered; on the 14th, all reserves and furloughed members of the field-artillery were called in, and the speedy purchase ordered of all the horses necessary to put the army upon a war-footing; and on the 15th were forwarded to the various divisions the plans for the marches, transportation, and mobilization necessary for placing, as intended,

<sup>1</sup> Oesterreichs Kämpfe, I. p. 88. The execution of the order did not take place until three weeks later.

an army in the north and one in the south. Inasmuch as no further step had been taken in Prussia since the 29th of March, these plans gave the Austrian army a very considerable start in the matter of equipment and position.

Meanwhile, the despatch of the 7th of April had made no very favorable impression in Berlin. "In its crude composition," wrote Bismarck to Werther, "and in its distortions and ambiguities, it must be considered, if Austria really means peace, a clumsy botch!" The Russian ambassador, Oubril, said the despatch was written in such a tone as a Roman Emperor might use in addressing the margrave of Brandenburg; and he very pressingly urged his colleague in Vienna to secure its withdrawal. This, Mensdorff refused to do; but asserted again Austria's love of peace. The Prussian answer was delayed a few days, by reason of an attempt of Bavaria to mediate. King William was very anxious that the reply should preserve a calm and earnest tone. After much polishing and trimming, the despatch was sent to Vienna on the 15th, and laid before Count Mensdorff on the 17th.

The tone of the reply was, indeed, very polite, but exceedingly cool. It denied the pretended symptoms of Prussian thirst for war, as being an artificial combination of suppositions, interpretations, and rumors. It complained that the contradiction of the fact of Austria's equipments and movements was too little to the point and not explicit enough; yet it would be sufficient, it was said, to confine the attention to

those changes that were acknowledged, and to say that the revocation of these was absolutely necessary before Prussia could abstain from taking partial measures for her own security.

Although the tide of war was rising in Vienna, it was nevertheless decided to accede to Prussia's wish, in order not to appear to be a disturber of the peace in the eyes of the world. The Prussian despatch spoke only of the repeal of the first commands for mobilization, and it was thought that this could be done without danger, while the last decrees were still to be in force. The battalions that were to withdraw from Bohemia should preserve their unusual strength, and the mobilization of the artillery and the purchase of horses should continue. Besides this, on the 18th of April, the full equipment of the artillery and the organization of the transports were decreed. In this way, in spite of the withdrawal of the troops that had been first mobilized, Austria would remain quite able to fight, whereas in Prussia, by the repeal of the orders of March 29th and 31st, the army would be completely reduced to an unmobilized footing. Therefore the response was sent, on that same 18th of April, to the Prussian Government, that those troops that had been advanced to the frontier in March should on the 25th be withdrawn from there, on condition that Prussia would take upon herself to reduce again to their peace-footing on the 26th those regiments that had been strengthened in the latter part of March.

In Berlin, although of course nothing was yet known

about what had been decided upon in the conferences that were held in Vienna from the 13th to the 18th of April, there was no more confidence in the enemy's sentiments than had been manifested in Vienna. It was considered impossible to refuse before the eyes of Europe to agree to Austria's proposal, but it was also thought wise to be careful in accepting it, since what Austria offered to do would take much longer in its execution than Prussia's corresponding task.

Accordingly, the answer was made on the 21st of April, that Prussia agreed to Austria's proposal: so soon as the Imperial order to withdraw the troops mentioned should be authentically communicated to Berlin, the King would command the reduction of those portions of the army that had been increased on the 29th of March; the execution of this command should take place both in that measure and that time that would be proportional to the diminution of the Austrian equipments for war; and it was also to be taken for granted that Austria would now influence the Lesser States to desist from their military preparations.

Baron von der Pfordten was delighted when he received news of this. Both he and the Russian Emperor had been at work the last few weeks, not only in Vienna, but also in Berlin, urging with special energy a general laying aside of arms, — so much so that the Viennese had already begun to be annoyed at his neutral position. He now regarded every danger of war as averted, and expressed to both Courts his great satisfaction over the reconciliation that had been accom-

plished. In Berlin, although not with like confidence, the Imperial order promised for the 25th of April was awaited with great interest.

But it was to happen otherwise.

Hardly had the Austrian despatch of peace been sent off to Berlin, on the 18th of April, before threatening news reached Vienna about dispositions that were being made in Italy. We know how Prussia's friendship with Italy had always irritated Austria's most sensitive nerves. More than anything else had the feelings of the Cabinet been embittered by the conclusion of the alliance on the 8th of April; and now the whole web of deceit, woven by Bismarck's subtlety, appeared to be unfolding itself to the daylight in its whole extent: Prussia was now talking cordially and pacifically, in order to induce Austria to disarm, while at the same time she was secretly making every possible disposition for war, and also inciting Italy to fall upon defenceless Austria.

On the 20th of April, the Emperor gave to Count Mensdorff for consideration a new memorial from Henikstein urging preparations for war with all speed. The Minister replied that he was too much of a military man not to see the force of the arguments in the memorial, and said that although there was a good deal of risk in the policy which the Imperial Cabinet had been pursuing since the 31st of March, yet the situation that would follow the calling out of the army would also not be unattended with dangers. Everything that had been done so far in the way of diplomacy had been

aimed, he said, at wresting from Prussia's hand the means of striking first; and if this succeeded, it would be the better for Austria, politically and financially. Mensdorff closed with the wish to postpone further decisions until after awaiting the effect of his despatches to Paris and Berlin.

But the alarming news from Italy continued to pour in and seemed to exclude the possibility of any further hesitation.

The English Cabinet, which had not been willing to undertake to mediate in Prussia's favor, had been busy some time with recommending in Vienna the voluntary cession of Venetia in the interests of European peace. In support of this proposition, the English ambassador, Lord Bloomfield, now informed Count Mensdorff that a speedy decision was very desirable, since a warlike movement was already manifest in Italy, and according to the reports of his colleague in Florence, there was a continuous advance of troops from Naples to Bologna.

This agreed only too well with rumors from other directions, to the effect that Italy had recently increased the strength of her regiments very considerably, some said by more than 100,000 men. Austria's cup was at last full, and every doubt was stilled by a report from the military authorities in Venetia,<sup>1</sup> the contents of which spread like a running fire through all Vienna. This announcement was, that a troop of Garibaldi's soldiers had already broken over the frontier and

<sup>1</sup> This is affirmed not only by La Marmora, whose testimony in this matter could not be decisive, but also by the extremely anti-Prussian ambassador from Hanover to Vienna, in a report to his Government.

advanced to Rovigo. It seemed clear, that when such things were happening, it would not do to remain inactive, and that no precious moment should be lost in fruitless negotiations. War, and not only war against Italy, but also against the real sinner, Prussia, was from this hour a settled thing. It might be well to say right here, that all these alarming rumors were unfounded.

La Marmora's distrust of Prussia had been by no means brought to an end by the treaty of April 8th. However little thirst he had for war, he nevertheless desired to gain Venetia, if not by purchase, then by war. He accordingly waited impatiently for Prussia to give the signal; but instead of hearing that, he was forced to see Prussia make not the least move, after the 29th of May, towards arming, but on the contrary declare to the Vienna Court her entire willingness to disarm.

Vexed at this delay, and constantly entertaining fresh doubts as to Prussia's courage, La Marmora was thoroughly determined not to think of mobilizing the army a day earlier than Prussia, nor by doing so to expose himself to the expense and danger of carrying on a war without the assistance of an ally. He was fully confirmed in this intention by the Emperor Napoleon, who, just as he had formerly recommended the conclusion of the Prussian alliance, now very strongly advised Italy to avoid every measure that would bring her nearer to the outbreak. La Marmora sulked at this, but followed the advice with his usual obedience.

Not one of the steps had been taken that had been announced in Vienna. So far as the pretended increase of the army by 100,000 men was concerned, that was nothing more than the regular yearly levying of 80,000 recruits, which the Italian Cabinet, by reason of its constant financial embarrassment, had postponed from the beginning of January, but had executed toward the end of March, on account of the darkening of the political horizon, — thus doing nothing more than to bring the army up to its normal peace-footing of 204,000 men.

The story about the sally of Garibaldi's men was founded wholly on air, as the Austrian Government itself very soon afterwards acknowledged. Finally, the threatening march of troops toward the Venetian frontier consisted of only twelve squadrons of cavalry, which had been sent down to Naples against the brigands two years before; and as they proved unserviceable for this purpose, their return to their former garrisons had already been decided upon some time previous to this. The English ambassador in Florence, who had sent the first alarming news to London, confirmed, a few days later, the correctness of La Marmora's explanation. The Russian and French *Chargés d'affaires* likewise reported to their Governments that there was not in all Italy the least trace of any preparations for war.

Nevertheless, when these explanations reached Vienna, the fateful step had long before been taken, and its consequences had rendered it irrevocable.



On the 21st of April a great council of war decided upon the mobilization of the Army of the South, and of the troops destined for the Tyrol, the coast regions, and Dalmatia, also of the greater portion of the frontier regiments and several of the 4th battalions of the infantry of the line. The chief command of the Army of the South was placed in the hands of the Archduke Albrecht, son of the hero of 1796 and 1799. The Army of the North was given in charge to Master of the Ordnance Benedek.

These decrees, in spite of any disarming in the north, affected materially Austria's relations with Italy and also with Prussia. There were, of course, railways in Austria; so that, if necessary, the ready troops in the Army of the South could quickly be transferred into Bohemia. But the situation of things in the north was even further affected, not only possibly so in the future, but very evidently in the present. For obvious reasons, that the soldiers might not immediately desert to the enemy, all men of Italian nationality that were absent on furloughs were at once summoned to the standards. This brought twenty-eight battalions up to a complete war-footing, of which eleven in the north and ten in Vienna, Linz, and Pressburg were on a line of railway connecting them with Bohemia. Even a number of 4th battalions from the Venetian section were transferred into Bohemian garrisons. Moreover, twenty battalions, which had hitherto been stationed in Venetia, were now replaced by frontier regiments and themselves quar-

tered in towns on the Oldenburg and Semmering railways, whence they could in a few days reach Bohemia or Moravia.

It was not to be supposed that the Prussian Government, with all this before their eyes, would believe in any serious intention to disarm in the north. Nor was there in Vienna any credulity indulged in on this point. Although since the 29th of March perfect quiet had reigned in the Prussian army, and although Bismarck's pacific despatch of the 21st of April now arrived in Vienna, measures were taken, immediately after orders had been given for mobilization against Italy, to make the same dispositions with the Army of the North. On the 27th of April the command was given to raise every 4th battalion and one infantry regiment to the war-footing; on the 28th, there followed a similar order for nineteen battalions of infantry, *jäger*, and pioneers; on the 29th, arrangements were made to form the whole of the cavalry as in time of war, to increase the depot-squadrons, and to put in order the transports; and on the 1st and 2d of May the mobilization of ninety-four battalions of infantry, *jäger*, and pioneers was decreed.

Already were all regions of the wide empire filled with the noise and tumult of preparations for war. Hungarians returned from their furloughs to Venetia, and Italian reserves hastened to Prague. From the Lika and from Ogulin the troops marched to defend Triest and Dalmatia. In the Tyrol there were companies formed of volunteer militia, and the whole

population armed themselves and collected in crowds. Military squads met one another unceasingly, as they passed from north to south on the railways, and from south to north. Recruits were drilled. Heavy pieces of artillery were dragged upon the walls of the fortresses. Traders in horses and furnishers of supplies were having glorious times; and with many sighs the Minister of Finance secured a loan of sixty millions, which was followed by the announcement of a forced loan in return for bank-notes to the amount of one hundred and fifteen millions.

At the same time Austria gave also to her diplomatic course of action a sharper turn. On the 18th of April, as we remember, Mensdorff had promised that the revocation of the changes made in March should take place on the 25th, if Prussia on the following day would repeal her orders given for partial defence; and Bismarck's last despatch had signified Prussia's willingness to comply. In spite of this, the promised order for revocation was not given; but a despatch was sent on the 26th to Karolyi, saying that the agreement should still hold, if Prussia would now disarm, as proposed, after the Army of the South had been mobilized.

But this had to be followed inevitably by another and further move. When the army was once mobilized, the bad condition of the Austrian finances forbade a long and inactive continuation of such an expensive state of things. Consequently, the source of the whole quarrel, the Schleswig-Holstein question, must be got

out of the way as quickly as possible. It was decided to take up now the line of conduct already announced to Austria's German friends on the 16th of March. A second despatch to Karolyi, also sent on the 26th of April, offered again to the Prussian Government the well-known small gains in Schleswig-Holstein, but declared at the same time that if Prussia did not accept the proposal, Austria would be obliged to refer the whole matter to the decision of the Confederate Diet, and also to obtain an expression of opinion from the Schleswig-Holstein Estates.

That the Vienna Cabinet knew perfectly well all that this declaration involved, and foresaw the reception that awaited it in Berlin, is evident from the fact that immediately after the sending of the despatch, and without waiting for Prussia's reply, the above-mentioned orders were given for the mobilization of the Army of the North. The importance of the despatch, unambiguous in itself, stands forth in a clear light, when we consider the fact that Count Mensdorff just at this time had the offer made to the French Government, that if France and Italy would remain neutral in the impending war, Austria would give up Venetia, so soon as her arms had won back Silesia to the Emperor.

Thus Austria was arming against Italy, because, as it were, it was the proper thing to do; whereas her actual purpose was to employ also the Army of the South in the north. And thus the original desire to arm in self-defence had very speedily led to the pursuit of an active war-policy.

Let us now see how Austria's sudden and far-reaching move in the offensive was answered by her enemies.

The first to make up her mind was the weaker and the more impatient, Italy.

La Marmora received the first news of the doings in Vienna by way of Berlin on the 23d of April. A few hours later, the report was confirmed by messages from St. Petersburg and Munich; and then followed in quick succession the announcements of the decampment of the Austrian frontier regiments, of the calling in of the Venetian reserves, of the placing of the railways in Venetia under the control of the military authorities, in short, of everything that is involved in preparations for war on a large scale. Excited in the highest degree, and wavering between his satisfaction at the approach of the longed-for crisis and his fear of a ruinous inroad into his unprotected country, the Minister made haste first to consult the oracle in Paris.

Unfortunately, the response was not exactly according to his wishes. Napoleon still recommended most decidedly calmness and cool blood. "Italy should continue," he said, "to allow the Vienna Court to play the aggressor before the eyes of Europe. Let her show to the world, without a display of passion, her own dignified and unruffled condition of peace. Above all, let her not make any preparations for war, until forced to do so by necessity: then she may be sure of the approval of the civilized world and, if need be, of the support of France."

"I do not conceal the fact," writes La Marmora, "that this telegram of April 24th pained me exceedingly." And, indeed, if Austria fell suddenly upon Italy unprepared, the blame of the civilized world would not prevent the doing of incalculable injury before French help could arrive. And furthermore, La Marmora, after the failure of his most energetic endeavors to acquire Venetia by purchase or exchange, had set his hopes now upon war, and upon a speedy war; for not only financial embarrassment, but also party strife, made a long delay quite as impossible for Italy as for Austria. Either the army must immediately be put upon a war-footing and be led into the field, or its peace-footing must be reduced by something like one-third.

Therefore the Minister had waited with burning impatience for Prussia's action, and believed now that Austria's movements had made this unavoidable; then, of course, it was certain that Italy also could not delay an hour in getting herself ready to engage in the struggle. Accordingly, he telegraphed on the 26th of April to his ambassador in Berlin: "Find out what the Prussian Government thinks of all this and what it intends to do." On the same day he received the answer: "Bismarck says he knows that Austrian preparations have been hastened, not only in Venetia, but in all parts as well; Werther is to announce in Vienna, that Prussia therefore will not reduce her defensive measures, and that she would not look on an attack upon Italy with indifference, since she considers Italy

necessary as a means of maintaining the European balance of power.”

This was not exactly the promise of an immediate declaration of war; but certainly it was the definite assurance of Prussia's assistance in the event of an Austrian attack. As things were, it satisfied La Marmora's impatience.<sup>1</sup> On the same evening a military conference decided upon the mobilization of the entire Italian army, and sent a circular on the morning of the 27th to all the Italian embassies, justifying this course. An indescribable exultation greeted this courageous step, in taking which the soldier in La Marmora's limited nature had at last got the best of the politician. Throughout the nation, as in the Chamber, there was no longer a Majority nor an Opposition. All thoughts and all passions united in the one cry: “War against Austria: Liberation for Venetia.” Recruits, reserves, and volunteers hurried to the standards. The Chambers approved any loan and gave the Government full powers. The King was able to declare that in other respects he held the movement firmly in his hands; but one thing was impossible for him: a return to peace without Venetia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is characteristic of La Marmora's attempt to represent Prussia in his book in as unfavorable a light as possible, that he does not ascribe his decision to mobilize the army to the telegram from Berlin on the 26th of April, but to his own knowledge of the Vienna despatch to Prussia of the same date, — a despatch which was only formulated in Vienna on that day, and not delivered in Berlin until the 28th; so that on the 26th neither he nor Bismarck could have known anything about its contents.

<sup>2</sup> The commands for mobilization, purchase of horses, establishment of depots, and formation of 5th battalions, etc., began with the 28th of

In Berlin, however, in spite of there being no more doubt possible in the matter, it did not seem best to be so hasty as to compromise Prussia's relations with the Great Powers. Baron von Werther did, however, at the first news of the Austrian mobilization on the 25th of April, receive telegraphic instructions to express to Count Mensdorff, as his personal opinion, the probability that Prussia could take no steps in the way of disarming, if Austria sent large forces of troops into the south; and for his further instruction the despatch was sent him which was received in Florence, which had had especial reference to the calling in of Venetian soldiers that were absent from Bohemian regiments on furloughs, and which had closed with the observation, that in view of the existing strained relations with Austria and the latter's hostile support of the Augustenburg party, a defeat of Italy would involve serious damage to Prussia's position in Europe.

Still more decidedly did Bismarck express himself on the same day to the French ambassador, Count Benedetti, in saying that an Austrian attack upon Italy would make it Prussia's duty, from motives of fidelity as well as from those of self-interest, to engage in the war. He spoke so emphatically, and left so little room for ambiguity, that Benedetti began to suspect there must exist between Prussia and Italy other compacts than the well-known treaty of April

April. The work published by the Austrian Staff, II. p. 3, seems to fix the calling in of absentees and reserves in the first part of April; but upon closer examination we see that it only asserts this of such preliminary arrangements as would afterwards render the mobilization easier.



8th, which in his opinion did not hold Prussia to any such obligations.<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck was still determined to take no step in the way of military action before receiving Austria's reply to his despatch of April 21st, and not to send to the Vienna Cabinet any official diplomatic communication. Meanwhile, he wrote on the 27th of April to Dresden and Stuttgart, to make formal protest against the warlike movements already begun in those states, which, he said, were justified by no action of Prussia, and which must be suspended, unless Prussia were to be forced to take on her part corresponding measures on the defensive. It need hardly be said, that Beust and Varnbüler could not cite any valid grounds for complaint against Prussia; but they designated their movements as being entirely harmless, alleging that they were only made in order to be ready to comply in case of necessity with commands that might be issued by the Confederate Diet for the preservation of Confederate peace.

Thus matters stood when Count Karolyi, on the 28th of April, handed to the Prussian Minister the Austrian despatches of the 26th. It was very clear that the despatch concerning Holstein meant the abrogation of the Gastein treaty. For the declaration that Austria intended to bring the question before the Confederate Diet for settlement evidently could be answered only by the subordination of Prussia or a rupture that would mean war.

<sup>1</sup> Benedetti, *Mission en Prusse*, pp. 114, 115.

Bismarck simply decided not to reply to the despatches at all for the present. With regard to the revocation of the Austrian war-preparations, he emphasized in a note of the 30th of April the fact that this did not simply mean the withdrawal of ten battalions from Bohemia, but also of the thirty squadrons that had been advanced into Moravia and West Galicia; that it involved further the return of the regiments that remained there to a peace-footing; and that, moreover, after the assurances that had been exchanged and given by Austria on the 18th and 21st, a complete return to a peace-footing had been expected and was still hoped for, so soon as Austria should see the groundlessness of her anxieties with respect to Italy. For otherwise it would not be practicable, in view of the serious and weighty negotiations that Prussia must undertake with the Imperial Government in the near future, for her to do anything else than hold herself in equal readiness for war; inasmuch as the Royal Government did not consider that negotiations were likely to be very successful that were held between two parties, of which the one was armed and the other wholly defenceless.

The delivery of this despatch in Vienna on the 2d of May had no other effect than that Count Mensdorff in a reply of the 4th declared the negotiations about a mutual disarming to be at an end; and the Ministry of War ordered all absentees and reserves of the regiments that were not upon a war-footing to

be called in before the 7th, and then day after day issued such commands as were necessary to bring the army in every way into readiness to be led into the field.

The Vienna public, in their certainty of victory, greeted all these measures with noisy applause. The general sentiment was expressed in the cry: "No lazy peace! Forward to Berlin!" The newspapers, almost without exception, overflowed with the most vehement abuse of Prussia: "Not an Olmütz, but a Jena, must she suffer!" Baron Werther reported at this time, that there were only three men in Vienna that were not seized with the craze for war: the Emperor, Count Mensdorff, and Count Moritz Esterhazy. And even they were dragged along by the demands of the situation which they themselves had brought about. The members of the Ministry of War and of the Staff had become the real leaders of the State. They hoped to have all preparations for war completed by about the middle of June, and then to be able to read a solemn lecture to that German disturber of the peace, who had also set Italy upon them.

Now, this peace-disturber had not, indeed, moved a finger since giving the orders on the 29th of March. But at length, when the rattling of weapons was filling all Austria, it seemed no longer possible to fold his arms in absolute inaction. Yet it was still exceedingly hard for the King to make up his mind to give orders for war-measures; and, as we shall presently see, the diplomatic situation just at this very time

was very uncertain. It contributed greatly to the consolation of the Italians, who now eagerly pressed ahead and again fell back in mistrust, that orders were given in Prussia on the 3d of May to put into readiness for service the whole of the cavalry and artillery of the army of the line, and to raise to a complete war-footing those battalions that had been strengthened on the 29th of March. These were the troops of the provinces that were most immediately threatened, on the Austrian and Saxon frontiers — five army corps out of nine.

But it was not long believed that a stop could be made here. The Prussian ambassador in Cassel, General von Röder, who had hitherto had only favorable reports to make, in spite of the Austrian sympathies of the Princess of Hanau and the vexation of the Elector at Prussia's motion for Confederate reform, now announced, on the 4th of May, that the Austrian ambassador had proposed that the troops of Hesse-Cassel should be collected at Hanau, with the idea that, if the Austrian brigade under Kalik should be obliged to leave Holstein, it might here unite with the forces of Hesse-Cassel and form the nucleus of a hostile army-corps. This called to mind too vividly the events of 1850; and on the 5th of May, in order to nip such plans in the bud, King William ordered the mobilization of the 8th (Rhine) army-corps.

Immediately afterwards, similar circumstances in Hanover led to further measures of the same nature.

On the 5th of May, the Minister, Count Platen,

in order, as he said, to avoid any misunderstanding, told the Prussian ambassador, Prince Ysenburg, that King George had decided that the great muster, to which the reserves were summoned, and which was usually held in autumn, should this year take place in the month of May. In reply to the remark of the ambassador that this change would cause serious uneasiness in Berlin, the Minister replied: "You see things too black. In these anxious times the King is not sure of being able to secure peace and order in his kingdom; and therefore it is very natural that he wishes to have a few more soldiers at his disposal." These "few more" raised each battalion from 260 to 560 strong,<sup>1</sup> besides 260 more recruits and absentees that could be made serviceable.

There had already been negotiations held between the two states concerning Hanover's neutrality in a possible war with Austria. Prussia had declared herself ready, not only to recognize such neutrality, but also to guarantee to King George his territorial possessions; but this had always been accompanied by the condition that Hanover's neutrality should be unarmed, since Prussia, in the event of war, could not allow any troops independent of her control to stand between her eastern and western provinces. With this the calling out of the reserves just proclaimed was

<sup>1</sup> In the *Geschichte der Kriegsereignisse zwischen Preussen und Hannover*, by Von d. Wengen, p. 132, the author says that every company was increased to 140 men (which would bring a battalion up to 560 men), and then goes on to assert that this measure made the battalions 647 men strong, besides 132 recruits. I do not know how to explain this.

not consistent; and Prince Ysenburg further reported that the King's disquietude at Prussia's motion for a parliament was continually increasing; that he could see in a plan for Confederate reform only a mediatisation of himself and his fellow-princes; and that he was in every possible way adding to the bitter feeling against Prussia, that his officers had imbibed in Holstein.

This ill-will in itself would not have been dangerous for Hanover's mighty neighbor, inasmuch as, in accordance with the praiseworthy custom of the Confederation, the Hanoverian army, although composed of undeniably fine soldiers, was in every material way badly off. But here, too, the thought of the Austrians in Holstein had its effect. There were rumors of the intention to form a Hanoverian camp at Stade. It was learned that this little fortress was being filled all out of proportion to its size with cannon, ammunition, and implements of all kinds. News came, too, of preparations for the equipment of a Holstein contingent in support of Augustenburg. Here also, then, Prussia was obliged to make counter-movements. On the 7th of May orders were given for the mobilization of the 7th (Westphalian) army-corps; and on the 9th, a very earnest despatch was sent to Hanover, calling attention in plain language to the serious consequences of any war-preparations on the part of that state. This resulted, in spite of the great vexation of the King, in Count Platen's being allowed to declare himself ready for negotiations concerning a treaty of neutrality.

Finally, unfavorable news from South Germany, which we shall mention presently, occasioned the completion of the mobilization of the Prussian army. On the 8th of May the mobilization of the 1st and 2d (Prussian and Pomeranian) army-corps was ordered; and on the 10th the calling out of most of the militia. It was to be hoped that all of these commands would be carried into effect by the end of the month, thus allowing Prussia even now to be ready as soon as her antagonist.

In the midst of all this warlike bustle, which betokened for Prussia the approach of a struggle for her life, a Würtemberg Republican, named Cohn, made an attempt to assassinate Bismarck on the 7th of May in the street by firing close upon him several shots from a revolver. Bismarck's escape seemed almost miraculous. The event made no further impression upon his iron nature than that it occasioned him the very same hour to write a letter to the Emperor Alexander concerning the latter's fear lest Bismarck's motion for the convention of a German parliament might serve to strengthen the revolutionary parties. "This attempt to murder me," observed Bismarck, "looks as though those parties did not promise themselves very much support from such a parliament."

At the same time that Prussia began to arm herself, the Lesser States did the same. In such things, Mensdorff once said, one leads on another.

Saxony, hemmed in between the lands of the two Great Powers, made no longer any secret of her prep-

arations, and at once, on the 5th of May, called upon the Confederate Diet to demand from Prussia a satisfactory statement concerning her respect for the peace of the Confederation. When the vote was taken in Frankfurt on the 19th of May, Prussia answered by saying that she had been simply preparing a defence for her frontiers, which had been threatened for weeks; that it was her place to demand satisfactory explanations of the movements made by her enemies; and that if this were refused her, she must henceforth look upon the Confederation, so far as she was concerned, not as a means of defence, but as a source of danger, and must preserve her own liberty of action by withdrawing and resting upon her position as a European Great Power. In spite of this declaration the motion was passed by a vote of ten against five.

On the same day King Louis of Bavaria ordered the mobilization of his army. Pfordten had long resisted this step, and had been obliged in consequence to suffer daily and violent attacks from the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, which was controlled by Austria, and from all the local Bavarian newspapers. When, then, Prussia mobilized her army-corps on the Rhine, all parties in Bavaria believed they saw in this an immediate threatening of their own land, and the cry arose irresistibly for protection against this imaginary danger. It is true, that if Bavaria intended to engage in the war, it was necessary for her to make haste; since, as in Hanover, though her men were most excellent, the appointments of the army were in other respects wretched.



On the 11th of May, Württemberg followed Bavaria's example and issued commands for the mobilization of her entire army.

Three days later another conference of the Ministers of the Lesser States was held at Bamberg. Saxony, the three South German states, Darmstadt, Nassau, and a few of the Thuringian states, were represented. The prevailing sentiments were distinctly anti-Prussian, and to a much greater degree than three weeks before at Augsburg. Even Baron von der Pfordten saw hardly a possibility of preserving peace; and he was won over to the side of Austria by her intention to refer the Schleswig-Holstein question to the decision of the Confederate Diet.

A motion to remain neutral in the event of a war between Prussia and Austria, brought forward reluctantly by Baron Edelsheim in accordance with the express order of his peace-loving Grand Duke, did not receive a single vote, to the inward delight of the mover. Yet the assembly wished to appear impartial in the eyes of outsiders and loyal to the laws of the Confederation, and therefore rejected a proposal, instigated by Austria, to mobilize as a Confederation all the Confederate army-corps that did not belong to either of the Great Powers.

On the other hand, it was decided (the Thuringians alone took no part in the following matters) that every individual state should summon all its powers in making ready for war, and that a mixed commission composed of officers of high rank should meet in Stuttgart

to conduct the common undertaking. It was planned to collect altogether 160,000 men, and with these to protect Saxony, Hanover, and Hesse-Cassel against a Prussian breach of the peace. If war should break out, Nassau was to join the 8th Confederate army-corps (Württemberg, Baden, and Darmstadt) which, to be sure, was not consistent with the estimable Confederate Military Constitution. It was already understood that for the leadership of this corps the Austrian General, Prince Alexander of Hesse, had been selected. Yet all these things were only to serve to secure the laws and the peace of the Confederation: as a witness of this sentiment a motion for a general disarming was to be brought before the Confederate Diet.

Thereupon Darmstadt and Nassau also determined to mobilize their troops — on the very same day that they signed the motion for the general disarming.

Thus, in the middle of May, Germany was converted into one great camp of soldiery. There was no longer any doubt of the outbreak of war. All lines of business were checked. Credit and trade disappeared. Consternation and excitement alternately filled all minds, and the most romantic rumors flew through the air. In South Germany, hatred against Prussia crowded out every other consideration from the hearts of the majority; and this was now rendered most ardent by the fear of a conspiracy between Bismarck and Napoleon.

And now the very certainty of war brought the first symptoms of a revulsion in the public feelings.

However determinedly the moderate Liberals and the followers of the National Association had hitherto set themselves against Bismarck's internal and Holstein policies, it seemed to them clear that now, in the presence of the simple question whether Austria or Prussia should rule in Germany, no National Liberal could be in doubt. In Prussia, Bismarck had disregarded the votes of the Chamber of Deputies in the matter of the constitution of the army; but in Austria, the "Count" Ministry had suspended the Constitution altogether. The one offered to the German nation a great and unified popular representation; the other was repressing in her own Empire German sentiment in favor of the Slavs and Magyars. If there were no other alternative, it would certainly be better to become Prussians than Croats.

Such feelings as these were manifested in Suabia and in Bavaria; they increased in Hanover, preponderated decidedly in Hesse-Cassel, and began to show themselves in Thuringia and Saxony. On the other hand, the population of Prussia played at this time an inglorious part. The great mass of the people were embittered by the long quarrel over the Constitution, were in fear and dismay over the disturbance of their material interests, and were fully convinced that all the enemies of Bismarck objected to nothing else than his absolutism; and so soon as Prussia should stand forth again as a champion of liberal principles, Benedek's sword would fall from his hand, all German races would gather about Prussia, and the road to Unity would be opened by Liberty.

The experiences of 1850 with respect to Austria's attitude towards German Unity and Liberty had been forgotten. So there fell a torrent of speeches and resolutions, of addresses and petitions, against the horrors of war in general, and especially a fratricidal war. Only two agreeable exceptions to this wretched conduct were noticeable: the addresses from the city authorities of Breslau and from the Old Liberals in Halle to the King, which expressed courageous and enthusiastic confidence in Prussia's mighty destiny.

The Government did not allow itself to be turned aside by this hitherto unheard-of fear of war in Prussia, but decided to appeal from the weak emotions of the people to their hard common sense. A report from the Ministry of State to the King declared: "The present Chamber of Deputies, although its Majority in view of the dangers which threaten the Fatherland would certainly be ready to show their loyal devotion, was nevertheless chosen under the influence of other circumstances than those that must to-day decide the action of the voters. Your Majesty will feel the need of becoming acquainted with, and of procuring an expression of, the sentiments with which the Prussian people are to-day inspired in view of the present situation."

In response to this report, the King on the 9th of May dissolved the Chamber and issued orders to make the necessary arrangements for a new election.

## CHAPTER II.

## FINAL ATTEMPT AT RECONCILIATION.

WE have seen how Prussia, in spite of Austria's having such a great start of her, made her preparations for war slowly, step by step, and always in response to new provocations. The reason for this lay partly in the feeling of the King, who was still unwilling to close up the last chance for a peaceable settlement, and partly also in foreign influences which modified Prussia's decisions in various ways.

On the 25th of April, Goltz reported a conversation with Napoleon. In Paris, at this time, the mobilization of the Austrian Army of the South had just been made known; but it was believed that the proposal for a German parliament had materially lessened the danger of a war. Accordingly, the Emperor remarked to the ambassador that the great European congress, which he had proposed in vain in November, 1863, would be able to arrange completely the present confusion. The chief difficulty, however, said he, would be to find some compensation for France in view of the aggrandizement of other Powers. "If you had a Savoy," remarked Napoleon, "the affair would be easy to settle. But you won't listen to anything about the Rhine; and that I can understand. Yet it is not such an easy

thing to treat about the lands of other rulers." Goltz replied that Prussia certainly could not acquire new possessions by ceding German territory; if the King were offered five million new subjects in return for one million old ones, he would be forced to decline; the moral disadvantage would more than counterbalance the material gain. "I must acknowledge," concluded the Emperor, "the honorableness of these sentiments."

Immediately afterwards the Minister, Drouyn de Lhuys, also accosted the ambassador, spoke of the plan for a congress, and gave it as his opinion that a stand taken unitedly by France, Prussia, and Italy would of itself be a great gain. On the 2d of May, Count Benedetti officially asked the question, how Prussia would receive the proposal to open a congress as a means of preventing the war.

Bismarck was not inclined to believe that the congress would be a means of preserving peace, but saw in it only a source of general confusion and dissension in Europe. Yet it seemed unadvisable to oppose straight out this old and favorite scheme of the Emperor, that of appearing before his Parisians in the light of a preserver of peace and umpire of the continent. He therefore declared to the French ambassador that Prussia would gladly join in the proposition of the Emperor, but must emphatically urge a definite understanding with France before the beginning of the congress.

The next reports of Count Goltz made such an understanding further removed from probability than ever.

He announced on the 1st and 2d of May that he had, in a conversation with Drouyn de Lhuys, emphasized the necessity of a Franco-Prussian agreement before the opening of the congress, and had suggested that a great territorial gain was no necessity for France, but, on the contrary, would arouse fear and suspicion throughout entire Europe, and thus lessen the influence of France. To which the Minister replied: "We have influence enough. That no longer counts for much. We shall not fight any more for ideas. If others increase their territory, we must do the same in like degree. Move for move; that is the only way!"

In the evening, at a Court ball, the Emperor had withdrawn with Goltz into the recess of a window, and under the vow of strictest secrecy said that Austria had made suggestions to him, which would soon take the shape of formal offers; but that by reason of his sympathy with the King, he would rather come to an understanding with Prussia than with Austria. Since he should, however, scarcely be able to refuse the Austrian offers very long, he wished the King might, on his part, make him equally acceptable proposals. Goltz gave the natural answer, that this would be easier, if the Emperor would designate the object of his wishes a little more definitely. Napoleon at first declined to comply, but finally said, "The eyes of my whole country are directed to the Rhine."

Goltz added in his reports that the Emperor was said to have made the observation to some members of the Chamber of Deputies: "What should you say, if I

should procure for you the left bank of the Rhine without a blow?" The Prussian ambassador drew the conclusion that Austria had made this offer to the Emperor, and that Prussia would have to consider what love-offering she could bring forward in order to gain the victory in this contest for Napoleon's favor.

Both the King and Bismarck doubted the correctness of this conclusion. They were inclined to believe that Goltz, who with his excitable temperament often saw things in too rosy a light, had this time seen them too gloomily colored, and had attached too much importance to thoughtless remarks. At any rate, Bismarck telegraphed to Goltz at once on May 3d: "If we are expected to make offers of equal value with the Austrian ones, we must know what these are, in order to judge whether we can make such promises. The demand which seems to be implied has not much prospect of being fulfilled. Yet it does not seem best, in view of the congress, to refuse to discuss the matter."

Whether Austria had actually, as Goltz believed, already promised at that time to the French Cabinet in return for any support either the Rhine as a boundary or pieces of Rhenish territory, it is impossible for me to determine from the material that I have at hand. Certain it is, that Austria's advances and Prussia's reserve caused just now a complete change in the French policy.

In the sudden approach of the crisis, the constitution of Italy was more than ever the deciding motive in Napoleon's aims. "If I cannot accomplish this work,"



he said at this time to the English ambassador, "then the throne of my son will stand upon a volcano." This feeling had for years led him under all circumstances to approach every enemy of Austria, and, inasmuch as he himself did not wish to wage a second war against this Power, had induced him to add fuel to every quarrel which arose between her and a third party. We have seen how for this reason he had constantly preserved since 1864 a friendly and encouraging attitude towards Prussia, was angry at the Gastein treaty, greeted with delight the weakening of the same, and pressingly urged Italy to conclude the Prussian alliance.

Nevertheless, he recognized that, however powerfully he ruled France, it would be dangerous for him and for his dynasty to do violence to a strong and unanimous popular sentiment. Now, towards Italy the feeling of the French Liberals was extremely cool, and that of the Clericals was full of bitterness and hatred. Above all, the Prussian name was in all sections of the country and social circles as unpopular as possible. Then, though in the quarrel between the two Courts the violation of the mutual treaties might lie wholly upon Austria's side, for France and French judgment only one circumstance had weight, namely, that Austria desired for herself and Germany nothing more than the preservation of the old conditions, whereas Prussia aimed at an extension of her own territory and at Confederate reform.

Consequently, Prussia was the aggressor, the enemy of order, the disturber of European peace; and the

more just her demands were in the interests of Germany, and the richer the fruits these demands promised to German power and German welfare, the more eagerly did the French people demand of their Government, that it should put a stop to such dangerous doings. For no political principle was more sympathetic to the French national feeling, or was more generally and with greater openness declared to be true and self-evident, than the theory that the balance of power in Europe depended upon the strength of France and the weakness of Germany.

At about this time the legislative body was discussing the annual recruiting-law, and Thiers took this occasion on the 3d of May to deliver one of his great speeches, in which, with the whole force of his masterly clearness and close argumentation, yet with a shameless disregard for the most well-known facts, he condemned the conduct of the Royal Government up to this time in the Danish and German questions. "Never must Germany succeed in reaching political unity. Its dismemberment is an old principle of European international relations and the condition of French supremacy in Europe. Prussia's aim lies manifestly in the line of creating German Unity by means of a victorious war upon Austria. To make this war impossible is then the first duty of every French patriot. As things now are, this does not mean equipment on the part of France, nor even a direct threatening of Prussia. It would be quite sufficient for France, to whom Italy owes all her political existence, to forbid the latter to

take any part in such a cursed war. Then would Prussia not dare to raise a shield; and the balance of power in Europe, as determined by the treaties of 1815, would be secured."

A tremendous storm of applause from all the benches, both of the Ministerial party and of the Opposition, followed the whole course of this speech. Thiers had spoken from the very soul of France. In spite of that, Napoleon was not moved in the main point. He wished, as ever, to liberate Venetia and by this means to purchase Italy's renunciation of Rome. He wished, as ever, not to prevent the outbreak of war, but to insure it. Yet it certainly seemed clear that he could venture to defy the national aversion to such a policy only in case he could hold forth as its result a considerable material advantage for France herself. Such an advantage he had hitherto hoped to agree upon with Prussia, and even just now, when Austria's most recent offers arrived, he had made that already-mentioned attempt to sound the Prussian ambassador. Unfortunately, however, he met on this side, if not a categorical refusal, at least a decided reluctance to pay for French good-will by a material gain for France.

Austria's proposal, on the other hand, agreed well with all his wishes; her willingness to cede Venetia settled the Italian question, and her intention to summon all her forces in carrying on the war against Prussia opened the best prospects for the desires of France with regard to her eastern boundary-line. All the French generals asserted the unquestioned superior-

ity of the Austrian army over the Prussian. Although the Emperor did not feel sure of the correctness of this judgment, the Prussian cause would nevertheless, in his opinion, be very greatly weakened by the withdrawal of Italy. Then, if Prussia after a long struggle should find herself in a tight place, Napoleon might step in to help and rescue her, and thus be in a position to regulate the future condition of the German Confederation in accordance with French interests. Consequently he decided to turn his back upon intractable Prussia.

On the 5th of May he invited the Italian ambassador, Nigra, to an audience and informed him of the following proposal from Austria: "Austria is ready to give up Venetia so soon as she gets possession of Silesia. France and Italy are to promise not to support Prussia, but to remain neutral. Venice is to be delivered to the Emperor Napoleon, who is then without further conditions to hand it over to Italy. Italy is to pay a certain sum of money, which Austria will use in building fortresses upon her new frontier."

Napoleon observed he had replied to this that the cession must in any case be accomplished before the occupation of Silesia, but said he had as yet received no answer. He asked whether it would be possible for Italy to free herself from the Prussian alliance. Nigra replied to this that there was just then pending a controversy between the two Courts with regard to the interpretation of the treaty, and that Prussia asserted she was not bound to assist Italy if Austria attacked

the latter. Napoleon declared that that was a strange idea, and certainly gave ground for the question whether Italy had not the right to deny the validity of the treaty.

What Nigra said about the existence of a controversy was to some extent correct. On the evening of May 1st, Govone had asked the Prussian Minister whether, in case war should break out at the end of May, after Italy's preparations were completed, Prussia would be ready to engage in it, in accordance with the treaty of alliance. Bismarck had answered that so long as he should be Minister, Prussia would leave no ally in the lurch; but that he felt obliged to observe that it was not the treaty that imposed this duty upon her, since the stipulations referred only to the case of Prussia's being attacked by Austria, and then obliged Italy to lend aid.

We know that this conformed exactly to the wording of the treaty. Nevertheless, Govone, on the 2d of May, reported the conversation to Florence in great excitement; and this set General La Marmora into a state of doubled disquietude. A few hours later, however, another telegram followed, to the effect that in response to an official report from Bismarck the King had promised, even in the event of an Austrian attack upon Italy, to engage in the war immediately; and that if Austria offered Prussia terms of peace, Italy should be notified in season. Prussia would never conclude a compact which would leave Italy alone to face the army of Austria.

The episode was thus ended; and, although the distrust which it again awakened in La Marmora's breast was not wholly extinguished, he nevertheless answered immediately Nigra's report concerning Napoleon's communications to him. "My first impression is," he wrote; "that it is a matter of duty, both as regards honor and fidelity, for us not to break loose from Prussia, especially since she is now preparing for war, and has declared to all Powers that she will attack Austria, if Austria attacks us."

He maintained this conviction, even when on the following day Nigra announced that Prince Metternich had received authority to offer to cede Venetia, not after the conquest of Silesia, but at once, in return for a simple promise of neutrality. This, of course, enhanced the attractiveness of the proposal very greatly. Nevertheless, La Marmora said to himself that to accept it would be for any Italian Minister an impossibility.

Throughout the whole nation the long-restrained enthusiasm broke forth again and again. All hearts were intent upon winning Venetia back to the Fatherland by their own efforts. With disgust and contempt they scorned the thought of receiving another gracious favor from the French patron, whose guardianship, by the subjecting of Rome under the Papal yoke, had long since cancelled every debt of gratitude. All hearts beat with the ardent impulse to seal at last the complete independence of Italy with the best blood of her sons. And then the further consequences of such a disgraceful bargain! Austria would be even after

the cession an enemy, and a doubly fearful enemy to Italy after conquering Prussia. Sympathy from Prussia would be postponed to the distant future by the rupture of the treaty; and, meanwhile, Italy would still be left to beg humbly and constantly for the help of France against the superior power of Austria. Had La Marmora accepted the proposal, a storm of indignation from all parties would certainly have swept away his whole Ministry within twenty-four hours.

He therefore represented to the Emperor the embarrassment of his situation, and was pleased to find that Napoleon graciously seemed to appreciate it. La Marmora observed, in a supplementary way, that the Prussian treaty was to last only till July 8th; if the time until then could be filled up with negotiations by the proposed congress, so that Prussia should be prevented from declaring war before that date, then the Italian Government would again be wholly free to make any decision. This suggestion was not exactly in formal contradiction to the treaty of alliance, but yet showed clearly how much La Marmora would have preferred to acquire Venetia in peace rather than by war, and through French protection rather than by Prussian alliance.

It needs hardly to be said that La Marmora took care not to make his Prussian allies acquainted with this secret correspondence. After receiving Italy's negative response, Napoleon turned again his friendly side to Goltz, assured him that he had no thought of territorial acquisition, and declared that he had no

wish further than that the congress might soon be opened, and prevent the war. It is true that this harmonized badly with a speech which he made on the 6th of May in answer to the address of welcome from the Mayor of Auxerre, and which reached its climax in the remark that the people of the Department of the Yonne had always manifested to him their loyal devotion, "for they have understood, like the majority of the French people, that their interests are mine, and that I, like them, detest the treaties of 1815, which some try to-day to make the basis of our foreign policy."

Emile Girardin could well say of this speech, that it echoed like a shot from a cannon throughout all Europe. Beyond a warlike spirit, to be sure, it was impossible to discover any special intention of the Emperor. In fact, every one might find in its phrases just what pleased him,—the liberation of Venetia, the union of Germany, the cession of the left bank of the Rhine: just what one chose, if it only was contrary to the treaties of 1815.

The Prussian Government felt all the more the insecurity of this foundation, since rumors had come from various sides about the plan of ceding Venetia peacefully to Italy. Bismarck concluded from all this that it would not be wise to close the door entirely against negotiations with Austria, especially since the Emperor Alexander was still trying eagerly to establish an understanding again between the three Powers, and since hints had recently come also from Vienna,



which far exceeded in peaceful assurances the official communications of April 26. And, in fact, so it was. In a very peculiar way a light whisper of peaceful sentiments was heard again from Vienna.

A brother of the Austrian Statthalter of Holstein, Baron Anton Gablenz, a resident of Prussia, had had for some time a seat in the Berlin Chamber of Deputies, and there had won by his trustworthy character, and his clever, if not brilliant, talents, the esteem of all who came in contact with him. That the dissension between their respective states was a source of pain to the two brothers was natural; and doubtlessly it was with the knowledge of the Statthalter that Baron Anton appeared in Vienna in April, in order to lay before Count Mensdorff a plan for mediation in the great strife.

Count Mensdorff received him in a friendly manner, but told him first to show his plan to the Prussian Cabinet, and gave him a private letter of introduction to take with him to Berlin. Mensdorff also expressed himself not unfavorably on the subject to Baron Werther. In the beginning of May, just at the time when Goltz reported those threatening intimations of Napoleon, Gablenz presented his scheme to Bismarck, who listened attentively and sympathetically.

The propositions of Gablenz were simple, and consequently pertinent. Austria had desired an independent, Prussia a Prussian, Schleswig-Holstein: therefore Gablenz proposed to place the sovereignty of the Duchies as an independent state in the hands of

a Prussian prince. For an independent Schleswig-Holstein Prussia had imposed the "February conditions," and Austria rejected these as inconsistent with the Confederate military organization: Gablenz now proposed a reform of this organization, equally to Prussia's and to Austria's advantage, by suggesting that in war and in peace Austria should have the supreme command over the South German, and Prussia over the North German, troops. Prussia should then acquire the harbor of Kiel, and pay in return five million thalers to Austria. Further, Austria should receive from the Duchies twenty millions towards the expenses of the war, whereas Prussia should give up her claims to such payment. Rendsburg should become a Confederate fortress with a Prussian garrison; in return for which Austria was to receive the exclusive right to place garrisons in Rastadt and Hohenzollern, and also the command of the Confederate contingent from Hohenzollern. Both governments were to undertake together the reform of the Confederation upon this basis.

In view of the immense preparations made for the war by Austria just at this time, the violent outbursts of anger from all the Vienna newspapers, the disagreeable rumors about a peaceable cession of Venetia, Bismarck was surprised that such an attempt at reconciliation should come from Vienna, or even be countenanced there. He considered a successful result as hardly probable, but was by no means disposed to turn the would-be mediator abruptly away. We know that

for several years he had seized every opportunity for urging upon the attention of the Vienna Cabinet Confederate reform in the shape of a common sovereignty of both Powers over all Germany; and now, what Gablenz suggested was only another form of the same idea. There was no reason for rejecting an attempt to prevent in this way a war that might be followed by incalculable consequences.

Great care and prudence were certainly indispensable. Considering the hostility to Prussia that prevailed in Vienna, it was necessary to realize the possibility that a suggestion of peace coming from Berlin might at once be made use of in Paris and in Florence to arouse suspicion against Prussia. So Bismarck thought it best personally and quietly to give his advice in the matter, but for the present to avoid all official communications, until he was sure of the seriousness and honesty of Austria's desire for peace.

King William was entirely of the same opinion. Accordingly, on the 4th of May, Bismarck informed Baron Werther confidentially that Gablenz would arrive again in Vienna on the 5th; that his proposals, although they might have to be modified in some points, and more exactly specified in others, formed a good basis for negotiations; and that Werther might express himself thus to Count Mensdorff, in connection with the latter's former observations concerning Gablenz.

Bismarck now decided to give an answer to Mensdorff's despatch of April 26th concerning Schleswig-Holstein, by sending, on the 7th of May, a confidential

note to Baron Werther, in which, to begin with, he rejected any reference of the subject to the Confederate Diet as being unlawful and contrary to the treaties, but then declared that he was ready to negotiate with Austria, in case she wished to make any other disposition of her share of the sovereignty in Schleswig-Holstein. He further said that it would be much easier to come to an understanding, if it were possible to unite at the same time upon the plan of Confederate reform already started by Prussia.

“You will readily see,” added Bismarck in a separate letter, “that my purpose in this note has been, not to cut off the path to a true and confidential understanding in the spirit of Gablenz’s outline. If his ideas should be seriously taken up by such thoughtful politicians as Count Mensdorff, it might be possible, at this late day, to effect a reconciliation. But if, on the other hand,” he continued, “the sequel should show that Austria still flatters the covetous ambition of France by offers of German territory, — which the Cabinet of Vienna would venture to do only in the assurance that our national position and the German sentiments of the King would make it impossible for us to enter this disgraceful contest as her rival for French favor, — then it would not be difficult for us in the face of such doings, to arouse against Austria, by every possible means, the boundless ardor of German national feeling.”

In the mean time Gablenz had arrived again in Vienna on the 5th of May. Mensdorff promised to

inform the Emperor, who had hitherto put no real confidence in the sincerity of these proposals for reconciliation, had criticised them as coming too late, and had feared lest they were intended only as a means of separating the Lesser States from Austria. The Minister himself, and also his colleague Esterhazy, manifested an honest willingness to do their best in a conciliatory spirit, but were at the same time doubtful about being able to effect much in the Ministerial Council, in view of the critical situation and the predominating influence of the war-party.

Both statesmen acknowledged that Austria's point of honor, the independence of Schleswig-Holstein, was maintained in the propositions, and considered also the remuneration in money very acceptable; but they doubted whether it would be possible to secure the supreme military command in South Germany. Napoleon's speech in Auxerre served to increase the disposition towards reconciliation; but the mobilization that was now going on in Prussia raised in a still greater degree the prevailing distrust. The Emperor finally consented to the continuation of the negotiations, yet said that the proposals must be formulated more definitely. Therefore Gablenz decided to return to Berlin, on the 10th of May, for further consultation.

All else that was heard in Berlin from Austria offered less and less hope for a peaceful adjustment of things. The raging of the Vienna Press continued in the same attitude of fierce hatred. The Statthalter of Lower Austria called for the formation of companies

of patriotic volunteers. With the imperial approval a certain Colonel Starzenski issued a manifesto to the Poles, in which he enumerated the benefits that Austria had showered upon them, and urged them to take up arms against anti-Polish Prussia. In the leading political circles it was repeatedly said that if, after such mighty and expensive preparations had been made, the decision were not arrived at by force of arms, Austria would be bankrupt and ruined, and her position in Germany and Europe completely lost. Her only salvation was war.

This was the report that Werther sent from Vienna. In the same strain Count Blome in Munich talked with Prince Reuss. Lord Clarendon intimated the same thing to Count Bernstorff in London. Under such circumstances, should Prussia continue the negotiations with Gablenz? On the other hand, the Russian Emperor repeated with increasing warmth his counsels for disarming and for peace, both in Berlin and Vienna; and the news concerning Napoleon's policy was in no way such as to incite Prussia to hasty action in war.

Therefore Bismarck decided not yet to let go from his hand the last chances for peace, but nevertheless to proceed with the greatest caution. From the 13th till the 20th of May he deliberated with Gablenz about a more specified formulation of his proposals. After repeated consultations and revisions, the following was the result: The paragraphs concerning Schleswig-Holstein remained in general unchanged. As future sovereign of the Duchies, Prince Albrecht of Prussia

was now definitely selected ;<sup>1</sup> and to Prussia was given, beside the harbor of Kiel, both Düppel and Sonderborg.

The most important change was made in Article V., about the Confederate military organization, which received more exact specifications. "Both Governments," it read now, "shall bring forward in the Confederate Assembly a motion for Confederate reform. In this matter the most urgent feature is the reform of the Confederate military organization. The rights of sovereignty of the Confederate Princes over their own contingents shall be preserved ; but they shall all maintain the same system of organization, of equipment, and of drilling. The Emperor of Austria is to be, both in peace and war, the Confederate commander in the South, the King of Prussia in the North. These Confederate commanders have the right and duty of providing for this similarity in system and organization. Each of them has the right, in urgent cases, to dispose the army in his charge in readiness for war, with the reservation that this disposition shall later be approved by a decree of the Confederation. Both governments," Bismarck then added, "shall without delay urge the acceptance and execution of these reforms, and shall not disarm before this is accomplished. They shall for this purpose summon a convention of the German Princes and free cities, to be held at Weimar. The Princes are invited to bring their Ministers with them,

<sup>1</sup> The Vienna Cabinet wished to have it fixed that the two crowns should always remain separate. In Berlin it was preferred to appoint to them both a prince remotely related to the Prussian crown.

and to decide upon some definite result before they separate."

The King approved all this, received Gablenz in special audience, requested him to communicate his proposals personally to the Emperor Francis Joseph, and to say to him that he, the King, believed he saw in them a way to arrive at successful official negotiations.

While these consultations were going on, the King received a letter from General von Manteuffel, sent from Gottorp the 18th of May. Manteuffel had taken dinner the day before with General von Gablenz in Rendsburg, and sent a report of their conversation. I take the liberty to insert this letter here, because it is very characteristic of the two military politicians, and because it throws a very sharp light upon the mission of Herr Anton von Gablenz.

Manteuffel writes: "General Gablenz protested that the Emperor wished to maintain peace with Your Majesty. The only trouble was, he said, that the Emperor believed that the Austrian people would not understand it, if, after so many troops had been collected, and so much money had been spent, he should now make peace. General Gablenz says that he wrote to the Emperor 'that it was precisely the collecting of the troops and the expenditure of the money that had been necessary in order to insure a genuine, lasting, and true peace between Prussia and Austria; and that the situation demanded speedy and energetic decisions, which were never made under ordinary circumstances.' He submitted his opinion 'that the King and Emperor



should agree upon the position of Prussia in North, and of Austria in South Germany, and about the corresponding reform in the Confederation; that they should then call together all the German Princes, and announce to them: We have done so and so, and now request you to give your assent. Into that state whose Prince would not do this, an army-corps should march, in the North a Prussian, and in the South an Austrian. The Princes would then all consent. Thereupon, if necessary, a parliament should be summoned, and in the presence of a million soldiers this would also give its consent. Then Germany would have been put in order again, and a lasting bond established between the two states. To foreign nations one could turn and say: Germany is now in order and properly arranged. Since Prussia and Austria would now have a million soldiers in the field, foreigners would take care not to engage in a war, for which they would first have to make great preparations. The only thing necessary would be a change of ministry. Either the Emperor must choose a minister that could work with Bismarck quickly and energetically, or the King must choose one that would know how to consider and deliberate with Mensdorff.' I told the General that, inasmuch as his project demanded speedy decisions and energetic action, it would be better for the Emperor to choose a minister that was equal to it."

The two warriors had then talked over as good comrades their own mutual relations if war should break out. Gablenz thought it might be possible to make the

Duchies neutral ground. But Manteuffel declared that that would be too dangerous for Prussia; the Austrians would have to quit Holstein, and indeed North Germany. Gablenz replied that this was correct from a military point of view. He hoped that, in the event of war, he might be transferred to Italy, and thus be spared fighting against old brothers-in-arms. Manteuffel closed his epistle by saying: "Now, Your Majesty, my opinion of the situation is, that everything depends upon speedy action, and that nothing is more dangerous than to drag along the affair by negotiations. If negotiations are to be undertaken, and another attempt of the kind is to be made, which I do not know about, then let a definite period of twenty-four hours be set, and if nothing has been accomplished at the end of that time, then give the signal '*fanfare!*'"

Bismarck, to whom the King at once showed the letter, found in it his own ideas to some extent expressed. He sent word to the General that the plan that he had developed had good prospects of finding favor in Berlin; that he would do well to continue its discussion with his colleague; and that, according to circumstances, it was possible that he might be given full powers to conclude with him the treaty. Meanwhile, however, Manteuffel was not to say to Gablenz that he had received any commission from the Ministry, but that he had learned directly from the King about the latter's desire for peace.

In the same way, when Anton Gablenz, on the 19th of May, returned to Vienna, Bismarck sent in-

structions to Baron Werther that official negotiations could not be begun until His Majesty the King had become fully convinced of the trustworthy sentiments of the Vienna Cabinet; and that for the present, Gablenz only wished to express to the Emperor Francis Joseph the impressions that he had received in his audience with His Majesty the King.

How would it all result? In spite of all the advantages that would accrue to Austria in following out the outline of Gablenz, it was nevertheless true that it was expecting a good deal of her to agree to their fundamental idea: to turn from an alliance with the Lesser States against Prussia to a reconciliation with Prussia at the expense of the Lesser States. To be sure, we well know that within the last few years Austria had four times made just such a fluctuation. But yet it was evident, in spite of what General Gablenz might say, that such a change had now been rendered much more difficult by all the extensive preparations for war, if indeed it had not been made quite impossible. Thus, too, Manteuffel reported that at his next conversation with his colleague he found him quite different and much more reticent: without doubt he had received an unfavorable answer from Vienna. Likewise also Werther wrote, that upon remarking to Mensdorff that, if the negotiations were to succeed, Austria must let her consideration of the Lesser States retreat somewhat into the background, he had received an adverse and categorical response.

Meanwhile Anton Gablenz, who had been delayed on

his journey by the military transports, arrived in Vienna on the 22d of May, and was cordially received by the Minister. Mensdorff promised to secure for him at once an audience with the Emperor. This took place and lasted an hour and a quarter. After a few remarks about Augustenburg and the priority in the matter of making equipments, Gablenz expressed the hope that, in the endeavor to do away with the distrust which at present existed between the two Cabinets, a trustworthy commissioner might be found in the person of General von Manteuffel, whom the King would doubtlessly authorize with full powers, if the Emperor was willing to intrust with the same authority the Statthalter of Holstein.

The Emperor, however, wished first to learn the separate items in the propositions which Gablenz wished to make. The latter then read them aloud. The Emperor made inquiries, which Gablenz answered and explained. The Emperor then said that it was truly a great pity that these proposals had not been made six or eight weeks sooner, when they would surely have been accepted. Probably there was some deeper reason underneath it, said he, that Count Bismarck did not allow these satisfactory propositions to be made before their acceptance was no longer possible. "In spite of all the dictates of modesty," said Gablenz, "I must assure you that these propositions did not come from Count Bismarck, but from myself." But with this he did not make much impression. "The responsibility for the ideas," reported Gablenz later, "still rested

upon Bismarck; and the Emperor's distrust towards Bismarck was stronger than his confidence in my inventive powers." He was not, however, ungraciously dismissed. "I shall think over the matter," said the Emperor, "and have an answer sent to you. So much is clear — that in this arrangement Prussia would get the lion's share, and that less is offered to Austria."

On the same day Mensdorff observed to Baron Werther that he found in the proposals of Gablenz many satisfactory points, but that he did not see how Gablenz could do much with them at that late day. "Here," said he, "every one regards Prussia as the originator of the apparently unavoidable war with Italy. That is the true cause of the bitter feeling against Prussia that prevails in Austria; and the Emperor cannot afford to neglect the public sentiment of his country."

What the Minister here said about "many satisfactory points" sounded very well, and was doubtless the expression of his sincere opinion. But just as during the negotiations about disarming, the Austrian generals continued without cessation to make further preparations, so Count Mensdorff believed it was best, while the propositions of Gablenz were being discussed, to proceed step by step in the diplomatic attack upon Prussia, and thus to fasten Austria's policy indissolubly secure to that of the Lesser States.

When, on the 19th of May, the members of the Bamberg convention brought forward in Frankfort their motion for a general disarming, the Austrian ambassa-

dor seized the occasion to draw the attention of the Diet to the Prussian negotiations with Hanover, according to which Hanover was to promise to preserve under all circumstances an unarmed neutrality, even though the Confederate Diet should order the mobilization of the Hanoverian troops. Mensdorff at once sent Colonel Wimpffen to Cassel, and Prince Carl Solms to Hanover, to warn these Courts to maintain strict loyalty to the Confederation, and to promise them Austria's mighty guaranty for their territorial possessions against all Prussia's opposition.

Prince Carl Solms aroused the most violent anger against Prussia in the heart of the blind King, by telling him <sup>1</sup> that Prussia had secured the support of France by the promise of the left bank of the Rhine, and held out to him the prospect of being assisted in the event of war by Kalik's brigade, which was stationed in Holstein, and of finally receiving new acquisitions of territory at Prussia's expense.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, the arrangements for the camp at Stade went on, as well as the secret equipment of Augustenburgers in Hamburg. This all meant a semi-mobilization for Hanover, although nothing was done in the way of purchasing horses nor of organizing the supply of provisions and of ambulances. King George approved of these preparations, led by his aversion towards Prussia and her Confederate reform, and by his wish to

<sup>1</sup> Communication of Prince Bernhard Solms to Prince Ysenburg.

<sup>2</sup> Communication of the Counsellor of State Zimmermann to the Prussian Ambassador, Von Richthofen, in Hamburg.

be prepared for all emergencies. Yet, realizing the danger of an anti-Prussian policy, he tried to keep his hands free as long as possible.

Now, the day after the arrival of Prince Solms, the Prussian ambassador presented a new despatch from Bismarck, in which the Prussian demands were clearly and emphatically repeated: the promise of an unarmed neutrality, conformably with the treaties, even in case the Confederate Diet decreed a general mobilization; for Prussia must consider such a decree unlawful and its execution equivalent to a declaration of war, but on the other hand she was ready, if Hanover remained unmobilized, to conclude immediately a compact, which should insure the independence of Hanover in a new federation.

King George, besieged on both sides so zealously, was in a state of great excitement, but soon came to a decision in his own peculiar fashion. He did not wish to make a formal treaty, a special alliance, with Austria against Prussia, because a war between the two Powers was forbidden by Confederate laws. But still less was he willing to do what it was absolutely necessary for Hanover to do to keep the peace. In the new compact offered by Prussia, however distinctly Bismarck now talked about Hanover's independence, he saw, and had seen since the 9th of April, a threatened limitation of the sovereign rights intrusted to him by God, against which his whole sense of honor and duty rebelled. The very demand, which was now raised, of his preserving an unconditional, unarmed neutrality, of his

renouncing the right to arm, when he seemed to be commanded to arm, fell into this same category. "The King," said Count Platen to Prince Ysenburg, "does not see why he should not make preparations when all his fellow-sovereigns are doing so. He will never engage in hostilities against Prussia; but he is in duty bound to equip his troops if the decree of the Confederate Diet demands it." While using the most eloquent language of peace, Hanover did everything that an ally of Austria would be required to do. Exactly in the same way Hesse-Cassel also responded to the Prussian demands.

It cannot be said that Prussia allured both of these Governments into ruin by any deceitful trickery. Nothing could be plainer than her declaration of hostility if they armed, and her promised guaranty for their Governments, if they remained upon a peace-footing. After their refusal to conform to Prussia's requests, Bismarck instructed both ambassadors not to refer further to the matter, but to affirm incidentally that Prussia would henceforth be obliged to count Hanover and Hesse-Cassel among her opponents, and could not consider herself bound by any of the promises which she had previously offered to make.

Of immeasurably more importance was the note that Count Mensdorff sent to Munich on the 22d of May, to the effect that since Prussia, on the 7th, had recommended a discussion of the two questions of the Duchies and Confederate reform together, it appeared



to him consistent to refer the first to the same body by which the second must be decided, namely, the Confederate Diet. The secret negotiations with Prussia, he added, might of course also go on quietly as ever. He may have wished this might be so, but might have known beforehand that it was an impossibility. To refer Schleswig-Holstein matters to the decision of the Confederate Diet meant the same thing as declaring war against Prussia.

Mensdorff's colleagues were not deceived in the matter. They were tired of waiting, and longed to let the break now come as soon as possible. The internal complications and embarrassments in Austria that had the year before caused her to pursue a peace policy were now driving her in the opposite direction. After the Ministry of Schmerling had aroused the struggle among the different nationalities in the Empire, the Ministry of Belcredi nowhere succeeded in effecting any conciliation upon a constitutional basis. The German parliaments had very generally protested against the abrogation of the February Constitution. No understanding whatever had been reached with the Croats, in respect to their relation either to Hungary or to the Government at Vienna. And more than all, the popularity of Franz Deák in the Hungarian parliament was greater than ever, and his demand for the unconditional recognition by the Crown of the Constitution of 1848 was supported by a vast majority of the population. The Ministry, however, with its sentiments of absolutism, would not decide in its favor, and thus the two

parties in Pesth stood as ever opposed to each other in unmitigated antagonism.

Added to all this quarrelling was the daily increasing embarrassment in the finances, a deficit of eighty millions, and a credit that was almost entirely ruined. For this misery there was no cure but the conclusion of these endlessly prolonged strifes over constitutions. Here, then, a great war might be the certain and radical remedy. A victory over the enemy outside would furnish the means for subduing all internal opposition. Unfortunately it had not been possible, in 1865, to employ this thoroughly heroic treatment, instead of signing the Gastein Treaty. At that time the army was not equipped; but now a powerful force stood ready, with regard to whose triumphs it was not permitted to entertain any doubts.

Count Mensdorff struggled in vain against these sentiments of his colleagues. But it has been asserted<sup>1</sup> that he demonstrated to the Emperor the insufficiency of the military forces of Austria, even as they existed at that time, and that he made a certain impression upon Francis Joseph, but that afterwards Biegeleben, supported by Esterhazy, succeeded in effacing this impression. It is enough to know that when the Emperor sent word to Baron Gablenz that he had laid his proposals before the Ministry for decision, Count Mensdorff said to the negotiator that it was too late, there was too

<sup>1</sup> In the *Wiener Neues Tageblatt*, September, 1872. pretending to follow notes made by Mensdorff. Cf. Rogge, *Oesterreich von Vildgys*, etc., II., p. 336.

much distrust on both sides to allow of any direct discussion, without the mediation of a third party. Count Belcredi observed that the internal troubles of the Empire could be settled only by a war. Count Larisch declared that he needed for Austria within three months a Prussian war-contribution of five hundred millions, or a respectable bankruptcy on the basis of the war.

Without doubt these open-hearted gentlemen took the brother of their Holstein Statthalter to be a genuine patriot of black-and-yellow sentiments. Count Esterhazy, without suspecting the prophetic significance of his words, added by way of comfort, that it would be possible to negotiate with better prospects after the first battle had been fought. On the 28th of May Mensdorff wrote the official reply, saying that he sincerely regretted that the present strained relations did not permit any direct negotiations, and that he hoped it might still be possible for both Governments to find some common points of interest.

At the desire of King William, the Grand Duke of Weimar had also made an attempt to mediate by writing a letter to the Emperor Francis Joseph on the 22d of May, in which he insisted that the evils of a war might be averted by a conciliatory treatment of the subject of Confederate reform. He received a few days later the reply, that the Emperor fully shared his sentiments, but that in view of the present rapid succession of events he could devise no other foundation for the preserva-

tion of peace than the continuance of the existing conditions.

A further consideration, which exerted no little influence upon these decisions, will presently claim our attention.

## CHAPTER III.

## AUSTRIA AND FRANCE.

AFTER Italy's rejection of Austria's offer, and in view of Prussia's continued silence concerning a French compensation, the Emperor Napoleon was in no happy humor. Public opinion in France demanded from him the preservation of peace and the restraint of Prussian bloodthirstiness. But if peace were preserved, then Venetia would remain under Austrian dominion; and much as Italy's refusal had annoyed him, he was heavily oppressed by fears of fresh "Orsini-bombs," if he were thoroughly to disappoint Italy's hopes. Now, then, the old plan of a great European congress offered a satisfactory way of escape. In such a congress the combined influence of the Great Powers might perhaps effect what he had hoped to achieve by means of Prussia's sword; and then this European Areopagus might undertake to regulate all pending questions, in a way that might correspond to the interests of the other Powers, and to those of France as well.

His whole life long the Emperor had been fond of giving himself up to the arranging of great and far-reaching combinations, each of which should support and further the others; only, it was unfortunately not his way to follow out each single thought clearly

and sharply in all its consequences, and thus judge of its practicability and its consistency with his other plans. Thus by ever increasing his plans he involved his politics in constantly growing complications and contradictions, which it was impossible to disentangle. He was planning a great war for the protection of Turkey, and yet incited the Christian Rajas against the Sultan; he wished to join Russia in gaining glorious victories, and still desired the liberation of Poland; he aroused the national feeling of Italy, and at the same time gave protection to her spiritual mortal enemy.

His conduct was consequently, as a matter of necessity, uncertain and ambiguous in every direction. He followed one road for a little distance, and then, when obstacles rose up in his way, he suddenly surprised the world by having an entirely new idea, which, indeed, was not the result of any creative thought, but of brooding embarrassment. An energetic power to act, he had never possessed; and now, with his increasing years and severe attacks of disease, he sank completely into hesitating indecision. For a long time the public had regarded him as an incomprehensible statesman; but now his servants began to say in secret that it was no longer possible for him to have any real policy.

Napoleon at this time had himself abandoned the thought of making good to France the disadvantages arising from a considerable increase of Prussia's power, by the acquisition of lands along the Rhine. For a small gain, such, for instance, as the extension of

territory to the boundaries of 1814, it did not seem to him worth while to expose himself to the hostile anger of the whole German people. A great prize, such as the incorporation of the whole left bank of the Rhine, threatened to involve European dangers, and certainly could not be proposed to the congress, much less be carried through. Nor had he any of that French complaisance, which quite honestly looks upon every French conquest as a piece of good fortune for the people subdued. "I don't care," said he, "to create a German Venetia."

Instead of that, he had thought out by himself a program for the congress that would bring to France, not acquisition of territory, but a leading influence in Germany. Austria was to be indemnified with Silesia for the loss of Venetia. For Silesia, Prussia should receive Schleswig-Holstein and also perhaps Saxony and two or three Petty States, as well as the military hegemony over North Germany. Strengthened in this way in a high degree, she would entirely leave the German West and withdraw from the vicinity of the French frontiers by the cession of the Province of the Rhine. The Princes that were there deposed could be provided for with small dukedoms, which should belong to the German Confederation, but stand under French protection. The South and Middle German States would form an independent federation which should hold certain fixed relations with Austria and Prussia, but always have a sure defence against the ambition of the Powers in the

patronage of France. It might also be possible perhaps, out of the countries along the left bank of the Rhine from the Alsatian to the Dutch boundaries, to form a neutral state after the pattern of Belgium, in order to avoid the appearance of an immediate contact between Germany and France. All French politicians, he thought, might be satisfied with such a restoration of the Confederation of the Rhine. Most probably, too, the negotiations of the congress would last over the 8th of July (the date of the termination of the Prusso-Italian alliance), and then, as La Marmora intimated, Italy would be free to remain neutral after the acquisition of Venetia. At any rate, he was sure that by summoning the congress he would be manifesting to the French people his honest endeavor to preserve peace.

If, in answer to Benedetti's first inquiries, Bismarck had said that he was ready for a congress, but considered it necessary to have an understanding beforehand with France and Italy, this would have been very agreeable to the Emperor also, — on condition, of course, that this understanding should be upon the basis of the beautiful program outlined above. Drouyn de Lhuys sounded Count Goltz on this point on the 7th of May. He begged the ambassador not to take the rather stale idea of a congress too seriously. In any case, the Emperor was very anxious for an understanding with Prussia and Italy. "Now, then," said the Minister to the Count, "you make out a *menu*." Goltz said that he could tell Prussia's preferences,



but that no one but France herself could specify her own favorite dishes. "This is just what we wish to avoid," said Drouyn de Lhuys. "France doesn't wish for aggrandizement; but if another increases her power, France must demand an equivalent. What it shall be must be determined by the one that is adding to her own strength. The simple satisfaction of self-love would not be enough," he continued; "yet it need not be especially a gain in land and subjects. Some middle course could be arranged that would seem to every Frenchman to be a real advantage, some combination that might involve new grouping, that would put an end to old arrangements inimical to France, that would strengthen France and weaken her enemies. I should be very thankful to you for some such proposition; and I will also speak about it to the Emperor, who is very fertile in inventing such combinations."

Goltz was naïve enough not to think of the Confederation of the Rhine in this connection, but of Poland. He received, however, the following day the assurance from Napoleon himself that he did not for the present intend to disturb the Polish question; that he also did not have in mind acquisition of territory, although there was much talk in France about the boundary of the Rhine; that he himself desired peace, and for that reason he advocated a great congress, which should discuss the three questions at issue, — Venetia, Schleswig-Holstein, and the reform of the German Confederation, — and should solve them

all in keeping with the wishes of Italy and Prussia; and that for all this he asked for France nothing at all in return.

Goltz was very much pleased at his unselfishness, although he had his misgivings about the placing of German reform under European patronage, which, he humbly suggested, might make very bad feeling in Germany. To this Napoleon lightly remarked that the German Confederate Act was, of course, one of the European treaties of 1815, and consequently could not be done away with nor materially altered without the consent of the Powers that signed those treaties. When Goltz asked about the compensation that Austria should receive for the cession of Venetia, the Emperor said that that was a hard matter to decide: Austria declined Roumania and desired Silesia, which of course was out of the question; there would be nothing left, he said, but to offer her Bosnia.

To the report of these conversations Bismarck answered with instructions that Goltz should continue in his endeavor to effect an understanding between Prussia, Italy, and France before the opening of the congress. Goltz did what he could in this regard, but met with no success, because he had no authority to lay before Napoleon definite proposals concerning either compensations or combinations. In every conversation Napoleon broke off at any point with the declaration that he could make no binding promises, since he had also refused to do so to the Austrians.

It was learned, too, in Berlin that the French am-

bassadors to the Confederate Diet and to the Lesser States talked in a tone that was thoroughly hostile to Prussia and to reform, saying that the Emperor, agreeing in this with Austria, took especial interest in the sovereignty of the Lesser States; that the time had come for the Lesser States to show that they were worthy of an existence, — and many such things.

Not less a proof of the marked ebb in Napoleon's oft-asseverated sympathy with Prussia was the circumstance that he was now seeking, not a temporary understanding with Berlin and Florence, but, behind Prussia's back, with London and St. Petersburg, concerning which Bismarck received his first information through a communication from the Emperor Alexander.

While Napoleon continued to be demonstrative in the expression of indefinite wishes for peace, Drouyn de Lhuys, hearing nothing of any offers from Prussia, did not hesitate in confidential conversations to declare quite openly that he did not, like the Emperor, hope for the success of the congress, but for the outbreak of a war between Prussia and Austria; that France was on such good terms with the neutral Powers that if she chose to interfere she would not stand alone; that she did not grudge the Duchies of the Elbe to Prussia under certain conditions; but that, if Bismarck had the idea that he could without let nor hindrance drive to the Capitol in a triumphal chariot, he was much mistaken: he would upset on the way, for France would not suffer the centralization of Germany under Prussian leadership; furthermore, that Bismarck had

better not believe his Italian alliance to be a bulwark strong enough to shelter every sort of foolhardiness; and finally, that the Emperor would take care to hold in continued dependence upon himself that Italy which he had created.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact, Italy had at this moment, no less than Prussia, forfeited Napoleon's favor. For although King Victor Emmanuel repeatedly urged Count Usedom, and the Chevalier Nigra as often suggested to Count Goltz, that it would be well for Prussia to gain the good-will of the French Emperor by offering small strips of Rhenish territory, still, inasmuch as Bismarck could not be induced to make any such proposals, the Italian Government reaped anything but thanks in Paris for these unsuccessful pains. They only served to make the annoyance in Paris still greater at seeing the independent fashion in which Italy responded to the suggestion of holding a congress. Upon receiving the very first announcement of the proposition, La Marmora, in a circular to all the Courts, declared that Italy was ready to enter the congress, but that it would be impossible for her to accede to the wish of the neutral Powers and disarm before the beginning of the negotiations—a declaration in which Prussia a few days later joined her.

When, then, La Marmora received the news from London that a report was being circulated there about a voluntary cession of Venetia to France, he hastened

<sup>1</sup> Goltz learned this from La Guéronnière. Bismarck, however, doubted the reliability of the latter.

on the 14th of May to instruct Nigra to give Napoleon to understand that Venetia was not to fall to Italy as a gift from France, but in consequence of the vote of the Venetian people; that the former way would be humiliating for Italy and produce a deplorable impression upon the nation; and that even he, La Marmora, who had formerly always sought to bring about a peaceful adjustment of things, could not but now prefer most emphatically a war to such a solution as that.

Such a declaration as this implied in French ears an open refusal to render due obedience, a disloyal rebellion on the part of vassals; and it gave to Drouyn de Lhuys the constant supporter of Austria and the Pope, the desired opportunity and material for gaining in the Emperor's favor the ascendancy over all of Italy's friends, the Prince Napoleon, the Minister of State Rouher, and their party associates. Yet Venetia was to be freed from her foreign subjection; and as for the rest, Italy must be brought back to a proper dependence upon her creator.

The old notions, called to remembrance by Thiers on the 3d of May, that it was neither in accordance with the nature nor the history of Italy to be a union, but rather a federation, came up again in the discussions of the Imperial Cabinet. "It would be a mistake," said Napoleon once to Goltz, "to offer now to the Vienna Court the restoration of the Kingdom of Naples for the cession of Venetia. Wait until the Italian Union has been once accomplished by the accession of

Venetia, and then the old feuds will again break out and render the federation possible." On the other hand, the Empress Eugénie considered it dangerous to allow the union of Italy to be effected at all. "For," said she, "if this is once brought to pass, then the King will patch up some sort of a reconciliation with the Pope, and supersede France as patron of the Roman Catholics in the whole Orient."

Thus the thoughts and feelings of the French Government turned more and more into the channel of Vienna politics and policy; and it was considered a matter of course that if she went to war, Austria intended to put an end to Italy's independence as completely as to Prussia's. It is true, too, that with Italy she had very much more reason to be angry than with Prussia. For, however much anxiety Bismarck's far-reaching plans might occasion, Prussia had not as yet violated one letter of the existing treaties, whereas Italy had since 1859, and in spite of all treaties, reached out in several directions, and a hundred times openly announced her intention to attack the small remnant of Austria's possessions south of the Alps. If Austria should now be victorious, she certainly would not limit herself to the defence of Venetia.

The Prussian ambassador to Rome, Count Harry Arnim, soon afterwards announced to his Government that communications were constantly coming to the Papal Secretary of State, Cardinal Antonelli, from Drouyn de Lhuys, concerning the negotiations pending between Paris and Vienna; and that he was likewise

informed of the intention of the Vienna Cabinet to respect the work that France had accomplished in 1859, the union of Lombardy with Piedmont, but in other regards to return to the stipulations of the Peace of Zürich, and in any case to procure again for the Pope the Legations and the Marches, that is to say, restore the old States of the Church, so that Piedmontese Upper Italy should be completely separated from Naples, quite as Drouyn de Lhuys had recommended in 1863.

These prospects, which inspired the Vatican with so many glowing hopes, were reported with a heavy heart by Nigra to Florence immediately before the outbreak of hostilities. "Our outlook is still good," he wrote to Prince Carignano. "Only may God grant victory to the Prussians. For upon their defeat Benedek would break in upon us with more than 100,000 men, to deprive us again of the Legations and the Marches."<sup>1</sup>

In the mean time Napoleon was proceeding with the preparation of the points that were to be laid before the congress. He had sent General Fleury to London on a preliminary mission, and Lord Clarendon had already declared his readiness to take part, so that, as he said to the Prussian ambassador, England should not again be complained of, as in 1863, for having endangered the peace of the world by declining the invitation to a congress. Clarendon was also well

<sup>1</sup> How far the details of these accounts would be confirmed by the archives of Vienna and Paris, I will not attempt to say. But the further course of events leaves no room for doubt about the correctness of their essential points.

pleased with the idea of Venetia's being ceded to Italy. He would agree to Prussia's acquisition of Schleswig-Holstein in the interests of peace. And for the sake of pleasing Napoleon he would not object to the discussion by the congress of German Confederate reform, although he was convinced that Germany had quite as much right as France, Switzerland, or Italy to change her own Constitution as she herself thought best.

Drouyn de Lhuys then laid before the English and Russian ambassadors, Lord Cowley and Baron Budberg, the outline of a circular to be sent to Austria, Prussia, and Italy, containing the invitation to the congress. In the note it was proposed to lay before the congress the cession of Venetia in return for a compensation to be specified by Austria, and then to proceed to discuss and decide about a European guaranty for the temporal possessions of the Pope, about the question of the Duchies, and about a reform of the German Confederation, so far as this concerned the balance of power in Europe.

In Drouyn's opinion the congress would compel the execution of its decrees, if necessary by force of arms; but England and Russia would not hear of this, wishing only to use moral weapons. So also the guaranty for the Papal States was declined by both Powers; and at the suggestion of Russia, instead of the phrase "cession of Venetia," the more indefinite expression, "the subject of the Austro-Italian difference," was preferred. The German Confederation also was asked



to send a representative, and the previous disarmament of the contending Powers was not designated as a condition, but only as the wish of the neutral Powers.

On the 24th of May, the official invitation was sent to Berlin and Frankfort, to Vienna and Florence, and was formally presented to the Courts on the 28th. It was accepted in Berlin at once on the 29th, and on the 1st of June in Frankfort and Florence.

The Austrian Government had been keeping up since the end of April its confidential negotiations with the French Court. Several times in the course of May, Count Goltz in his despatches had expressed his uneasiness over the unintermittent activity of Prince Metternich. As to the attitude of his Court to the proposal of holding a congress, Count Mensdorff at that time carefully avoided making any definite declaration. But in Vienna the purpose had long been fixed, never to allow the cession of Venetia to become the subject of discussion by a congress without a struggle and without asserting the honor of Austria's arms, although it might be agreed to in return for the acquisition of Silesia, in the event of a victorious war. The nearer the equipment of the armies of the North and South approached completion, the more certain became the conviction—not so much that of the generals as of most of the statesmen in the Hofburg—that Prussia would be surely and utterly defeated; so that the only matter of anxiety would be not to let the advantages of the victory be in any way spoiled by France.

How the discussion of this matter was carried on in detail in Vienna and Paris is not known. Certain it is, however, that about the 24th of May the Duke of Gramont arrived in Paris, and was able to repeat the assertion to the Emperor Napoleon, that Austria was ready under certain conditions, even before the war, to place Venetia at the disposal of the French Monarch.<sup>1</sup> This declaration involved in itself the rejection of the congress; for Austria's willingness to sacrifice Venetia before the war, meant not without a war, and consequently not in a congress. Nor can there be any doubt that the zealous Clerical Gramont warmly upheld the Austrian standpoint, that the like-minded Minister eagerly supported him, nor that Prince Metternich without delay informed his Court of these favorable sentiments.

Under such circumstances, on the 28th of May the official invitation to the congress reached the hands of Mensdorff, and the reply occasioned not an hour's hesitation. Austria accepted the invitation, it is true; but on two conditions, of which one, the proposal to invite the Pope to the congress, had already been rejected by the neutral Powers, and the other had the peculiarity of withdrawing from the congress every

<sup>1</sup> Gramont mentions this in a later letter to Drouyn de Lhuys, dated July 17th. Rothan: *La Politique française en 1866*, p. 444. When Rothan, in the same book, pp. 155, *et seqq.*, narrates that Napoleon and Drouyn de Lhuys, after the report of Gramont, so certainly expected Austria's acceptance of the invitation to the congress, that the Minister even on the 4th of June, at an agricultural celebration, brought out a toast to the success of the congress, this is hardly to be believed; since Austria had already given her answer on the 1st of June, and Napoleon on the 3d spoke of it as being equivalent to a refusal.

subject of discussion, since it demanded that nothing should be said about an addition to the territory of either of the contending Powers.

In a circular of the 1st of June, Mensdorff explained this latent rejection by saying that the invitation, in spite of its considerate form, expressed the demand for the cession of Venetia, and that Austria must at this time emphatically refuse the same; that Austria's honor would not allow her to abandon in peace an important and lawful possession; that there had been some talk about an exchange of territory, but where could an adequate compensation be found? that the time for tearing down Turkey had evidently not yet come; that some reference had been made to Silesia, by way of suggestion: but Austria preferred to let each retain his own possessions. Then, however, followed a very pregnant and positive sentence: "If the war should actually break out, if brilliant military successes should raise the power of Austria, then, indeed, it would not be out of the question for us to give up one province in order to insure the possession of another." There was, he said, no objection to make to a discussion of the Italian matters, but Austria would insist upon assuming as a basis of deliberation the treaty of Zürich, the violation of which had been the cause of the trouble that was now engaging the attention of all Europe.

This explanation informed not only the neutral Powers of Europe, but also Prussia, of the real object of the impending war: if war should break out, Venetia would be given up, in order to fall upon Prussia with

the whole army and win back Silesia. That war would break out was declared by Austria on the same day to the Confederate Diet. The assembly had, on the 24th of May, unanimously accepted the motion of the Bamberg Convention for a universal disarmament; Hanover had protested her unswerving loyalty to the Confederation; and Austria and Prussia had thereupon declared that they would in the next session, on the 1st of June, announce the conditions upon which they should be ready to disarm.

Accordingly, Austria now declared that she had been forced to arm on account of Prussia's claims to Schleswig-Holstein, unlawful in themselves and supported by an alliance with Italy and by threats of force: Austria would disarm when a lawful and constitutional state of things was re-established in the Duchies; therefore, she was about to refer the question of the Duchies to the decision of the German Confederation, which should beforehand be assured of Austria's heartiest recognition, and she would at the same time announce that the Statthalter of Holstein had received orders to summon the Estates of the country, whose wishes and judgment in point of law should form an important factor in the final decision.

Thus the deed was done. The last possibility of a reconciliation between the two Great Powers was destroyed, but, on the other hand, the alliance of Austria with the Lesser States accomplished. Nothing was more certain than that the decision of the Confederate Diet would fall against Prussia, and that Prussia would re-

sponsa with the overthrow of the Confederation. War was as good as already existing. Lawyers might argue whether Prussia had violated Confederate law, or whether Austria had violated her Prussian treaties of 1864 and 1865; things had gone so far that it was no longer a question of right but of might. Schleswig-Holstein had been the occasion of the quarrel, but was no longer the subject of it. Austria wished to assert her position of 1815 and 1850 in Germany, in spite of all legal titles that Rechberg's policy had placed in the hands of her rival. Whatever might become of Germany's future, Austria believed that in Germany's past she had a firm foundation for her claims. She had half a million brave fighters in the field. Financial embarrassment urged speedy action. And so far as Europe was concerned, the circular of June 1st specified the basis upon which the Court of Vienna was ready to establish an understanding with France: the acquisition of Silesia with the maintenance of German Confederate laws, and the cession of Venetia in return for the execution of the articles of the Peace of Zürich.

The Vienna Cabinet was not obliged to wait long for the response of France.

Napoleon may have seriously believed in the possibility that the congress might effect a peaceful arrangement, or he may have proposed it only to appease the love of the French people for peace, perhaps, too, in the hope that the outbreak of the war might be thus put off until the Prussian-Italian alliance should be at an end; certainly he manifested no great distress over the ship-

wreck of the congress-idea. After receiving by telegraph the assent of England and Russia, he announced on the 3d of June that, in consequence of the reply from Vienna, the plan had been given up. He said to Count Goltz that Austria must now alone bear the responsibility for the war, and that this assured to Prussia a favorable neutrality on the part of France. Instructions were, however, also sent to the Paris newspapers to refrain from making any hostile attacks upon Austria. On the 4th of June the Emperor conferred with Drouyn de Lhuys and Gramont concerning the instructions with which the ambassador the same evening returned to Vienna.

In Paris, Austria was still held as ever to be the stronger of the two contending Powers. It was thought that Prussia, especially if Italy withdrew from the war after receiving Venetia, would get the worst of it, and soon be forced to beg and to pay for the protection of France; therefore it was desirable to obtain from Austria beforehand, assurances that she would not misuse in any way her victory, and to bring into the foreground as much as could be the influence of France in regulating the future shape of Germany and of Italy.

Accordingly, Gramont was to make to the Austrian Minister a very simple but weighty proposal. France was to bind herself to preserve complete neutrality in the impending war, and to promise to do all in her power to induce Italy to preserve the same attitude. In return for this Austria was to place Venetia at Na-

oleon's disposal, and then, whatever might be the issue of the war, to consent to the further cession of the province to Italy, and there to respect the possessions held before the war. So far as Germany was concerned, Austria should agree not to establish any hegemony that would place the whole of Germany under one and the same authority, nor to entertain, without the consent of France, the intention of extending her own territory in any way that would be likely to disturb the European balance of power.<sup>1</sup> The first of these two clauses excluded the possibility of effecting German Unity under the leadership of Austria, thus setting a certain limit to Prussia's humiliation, in order to preserve the dualism that had hitherto existed in Germany. The second involved by implication the consent of France to the acquisition of Silesia in return for Venetia, secured to France a deciding voice in any rearrangement of German affairs, and granted the Emperor under certain circumstances the assurance of French compensation.

It is easy to understand that Count Mensdorff did not hasten to seize with both hands an offer which involved so many comprehensive requirements in return for nothing more than French neutrality. Nevertheless, Gramont was able, while still maintaining the clauses referring to Germany, to make further conces-

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the negotiations of Gramont, *L'Allemagne nouvelle*, p. 279. Concerning the contents of the treaty of Rohan, *La Politique française*, pp. 169, *et seqq.*; and for further details, Hansen, *Couliasses de la diplomatie*, pp. 106 *et seqq.*

sions with regard to Italy. We know that Italian Unity was hateful to the French Minister, and at least not desired by the Emperor. He himself could not fittingly oppose it any longer, but he was ready with certain provisions to give Austria free swing for fighting against it. So that whereas on the 5th of May Napoleon had held out to the Italian Minister the prospect of receiving Venetia without conditions, Gramont now promised in Vienna that France would make this cession only upon the following conditions: continuance of the temporal sovereignty of the Pope, and inviolability of the territory still subject to him, without prejudice to the reservations made in favor of the rights of the Holy See; guaranty of the new Austrian boundaries; money compensation for the Quadrilateral, and the assumption of a proportionate share of the Austrian public debt. Gramont further promised not to restrain the populations of Italy, if they rose in reactionary opposition to Italian unification. Moreover, the Court of Vienna retained the right of demanding for the deposed Archdukes of Tuscany and Modena indemnification anywhere outside of Italy.

It is clear that these propositions severely threatened the future of the Italians. They showed just what was meant by the above-mentioned preservation of the possessions held before the war, which was nothing else than the maintenance of the work accomplished by France in 1859, Austria's relinquishment of Lombardy, which was now to be completed by Venetia. The reservation of all the rights of the Holy See allowed Austria,



if the war turned out favorably, to win back for the Pope the Legations and the Marches, and thus to separate Naples entirely from the Kingdom of Italy.

And again, if in Tuscany and Modena a party should arise in support of the banished Princes, France would also permit those provinces quietly to break away from Italy, or else help the Archdukes to secure a compensation somewhere else — on German soil? or, perhaps, at the expense of Prince Charles of Hohenzollern in Roumania? It was only a few weeks before, that the latter's election had been effected by the active co-operation of Prussia and France; and now, after Prussia had refused to make any offer of land along the Rhine, Napoleon, to the surprise and pain of Count Goltz, began to talk with severe disapproval about the coronation of the Prince.

Quite otherwise had Austria succeeded in retaining Napoleon's interest in her welfare, if we may trust the words of Baron André, the President of the Cabinet at the time of Drouyn de Lhuys. Three years later, on the 29th of May, 1869, André remarked to Count Solms-Sonnenwalde, counsel of the Prussian legation: "Our compact with Austria assured to us, if she conquered, the acquisition of the Rhine. You knew this, of course, long ago; so I need not make any secret of it to you. To be sure, the Rhine was not definitely named in the treaty; but the Rhine was understood to be one of the compensations that we were to be justified in demanding." In October, 1869, the same observation was made to Count Solms by General Caillé, with the definite

specification of the Rhenish territory as being selected for French annexation.

If this was all so, then the treaty that was drawn up on the 9th of June, and concluded on the 12th, can be summed up in the following: France gave up Italian unity to the Court of Vienna, in return for which Austria sacrificed German independence to the French.

According to the opinion of Drouyn de Lhuys, it would have been wise not only to conclude a treaty with Austria, but also one with Prussia, before the outbreak of the war, about the future rearrangement of German affairs. But Napoleon, in view of all the reports that came to him from Berlin, considered that such an attempt would be partly unnecessary and partly hopeless — that it would even be dangerous.

Count Benedetti had been complaining for several weeks that in Bismarck's intercourse with him a taciturn reserve had taken the place of the Minister's former frank confidence. On the 19th of May, Bismarck said to him that Napoleon, in spite of all his former protestations, avoided every opportunity for effecting an understanding with Prussia, or for expressing his own views. He mentioned also those hostile remarks of the French ambassadors to the Lesser States, and the rumors of a peaceable cession of Venetia to Italy, but at the same time declared his determination, even if Italy should break the alliance, to advise the King to prosecute the war against Austria and the Lesser States, inasmuch as the strength and the skill of the army were such that he did not entertain any doubts about success.

So far as French compensation was concerned, Benedetti repeatedly reported that the King as well as his people would make up their minds to cede German territory only under the bitter pressure of a total defeat. "The doctrine," he said once, "which regards Germany as one united Power, and concedes to her the right to change about her Constitution as she pleases, blinds even the least prejudiced minds here ; so that they repel with indignation every negotiation that might have as its consequence the loss of any part of German territory." "I know of no one," he wrote at another time, "besides Count Bismarck, that has any idea of the possibility that the cession of territory to France might lie in the interests of Prussia ; and even he would consent only to a change that would more or less improve the line of the frontier."

This exceptional praise Bismarck had earned in the following way. It need hardly be said that he was no more willing to give up German land than was the King. The doctrine that seemed so wonderful to Count Benedetti, that the German Nation would be justified in altering its Constitution without foreign permission, had become the very marrow of his whole existence ; and, accordingly, the Parisian idea of demanding for such permission a payment in land and people appeared to him, as in the eyes of every German, a piece of unlawful presumption. What would France have said, if, at the time of her revolutions, in 1830, 1848, and 1851, Germany had interfered in the name of old treaties, or on the plea of a disturbance of the balance

of power, and had demanded a cession of territory? That which Lafayette would have felt in such a case in 1830, or Louis Napoleon in 1851, Bismarck felt now. The fitting answer to any such intimation could be given only with hand on hilt. But this would have been in June, 1866, an act of madness.

Therefore, Bismarck decided to hold back, to avoid giving an answer with a categorical *No!* and to talk of the difficulty, but not of the impossibility, of a compensation. Nothing would, indeed, have been easier than to have retorted, that according to the principle of nationality German land could not be ceded by Germany, and that if France was determined to gain territory she must on the same principle annex districts where French was spoken.

Then, too, as we have mentioned, the Italians, in their anxiety over Napoleon's incomprehensible policy, continued to urge in Berlin the fulfilment of the French desires. "He wishes to eat," said Victor Emmanuel to Count Usedom; "so give him something, but not too much. Then tell him very decidedly that he cannot have any more, and he will be contented."

On the 2nd of June, General Govone made his parting call upon the Prussian Prime Minister. Bismarck received him in the park of the Department of Foreign Affairs, and walked up and down with him for a whole hour in the avenue of lindens. Both men were uncertain about Napoleon's last decisions, and Bismarck asked the General whether the alliance with Italy would allow Prussia to count also upon her assist-

ance against France. Govone answered quickly and emphatically in the negative, and begged the Minister never to put such a question to any other Italian statesman — for instance, to Count Barral; for the latter was a Piedmontese and an avowed Bonapartist. He or La Marmora, said Govone, would have immediately reported the question to Napoleon, and have asked him for instructions what to do.

In this connection, then, Govone on his part asked the question whether it were not possible to fix Prussia's relations to France once for all by appropriating for the purpose a respectable *pourboire*. "I at once thought," said Bismarck afterwards, "of Sheridan's usurer, who explained to his tormented debtor that he would gladly grant him grace and indulgence, were he not himself hard pressed by an inexorable creditor, who made it utterly impossible for him to show any mercy. And so I answered Govone, that if it depended upon myself alone, I should perhaps for the sake of the good end in view do a little at high-treason, and that, inasmuch as I was first Prussian and then German, I might cede to France a piece of the Rhine territory south of the Moselle. But, I told him, this would not do, for the King would not give me permission; and I said that if it were a question of giving up the whole left bank of the Rhine, Mayence, Coblenz, and Cologne, I should myself advise the King rather to come to an agreement with Austria over Schleswig-Holstein and abandon many other things."

Bismarck expressed the same sentiments the next day

in conversation with Benedetti, when the latter called his attention to the fact that the reform of the German Confederation might possibly occasion France to make corresponding demands. "The King," said Bismarck, "considers that if France wishes to extend her territory, she should cast her eyes upon countries of the French rather than the German tongue." The Minister said that he might perhaps persuade the King to give up Treves, to which Napoleon might then unite Luxemburg; but he himself would never give his assent to any offer of Mayence, Bonn, or Cologne.

These uncertain and limited declarations could do the French Government no good; and still less was there an agreement of opinions, when Bismarck on the 6th of June laid before Count Benedetti the plan of Confederate reform in its final shape, in order to convince him that this involved no injury to any French interest. This plan contained the propositions already known to us, only that it now began with the express statement that the German Confederation should consist of all its former members with the exception of Austria and The Netherlands. This stood in irremediable contradiction to Napoleon's proposals to Vienna as well as to his own projects for Germany.

Why then, might Napoleon ask himself, should he still try to carry on negotiations with a Court that was filled with such sentiments and intentions? In the very first exchange of opinions the contrast would necessarily stand out marked and hopeless; and there would be the danger then that Prussia, having a rup-

ture with France before her eyes, would at any price make peace with Austria. There would in that case no longer be any talk about the cession of Rhine territory or of Venetia, but the united armies of Germany and Austria would be likely to pour over the frontiers of France and of Italy.

No! On no account must steps be taken that would diminish Prussia's courage to undertake the war with Austria. That Prussia would suffer defeats, and then, humbly begging for help, would fulfil the demands of France, seemed to be doubted by no one at all in Paris. Count Benedetti had manifested the same sentiment in Berlin. "We had here," said Baron André later, "not the least idea of the extent of Prussia's preparations. Count Clermont-Tonnerre (the French military plenipotentiary in Berlin) had left us completely in ignorance about the Prussian army. The only anxiety that we had, was lest Prussia should be too badly beaten and utterly crushed; and we intended to prevent this by our interference. The Emperor wished to let Prussia lose a few battles, and then to interpose and arrange Germany according to his own fancy."

Thus it stood: Napoleon gave Prussia to understand that he should preserve a well-disposed neutrality, but concealed his further wishes in deep silence. Indeed, he strove to draw away from Prussia the assistance of Italy, in order thus to make Prussia's defeat in the struggle the more certain.

That in the midst of these doings the Florentine Cabinet received only very incomplete information con-

cerning Gramont's negotiations need hardly be said. Immediately after the departure of the Duke from Paris, Nigra was told that Napoleon had pledged himself to the Court of Vienna to preserve complete neutrality, if the latter would promise the cession of Venetia, however the war might turn out; Italy was to retain perfect freedom in the war; the Emperor assumed obligations only for himself. To this were added also warnings that Italy should not herself take the initiative in beginning the war. On the 11th of June Napoleon remarked that by waiting till the proper time came Italy might win everything. But about Gramont's negotiations not a word was learned in Florence.

The day following, Count Karolyi said to Count Barral in Berlin: "We shall not always be enemies. If we conquer Prussia, as we hope to do, we shall come to some friendly understanding with you about giving up Venetia." In Paris, the Emperor told the Italian ambassador that Austria had given assurances that she would under all circumstances respect all possessions as they existed before the war.

Still better calculated to produce a telling effect were two telegrams on the 12th of June: one from Drouyn de Lhuys to La Marmora, and the other from Prince Napoleon to Victor Emmanuel. Both spoke of an announcement of Gramont from Vienna, namely, that in an audience which he had had with the Emperor Francis Joseph, the latter declared that, according to a letter which he had received from the Queen Dowager of Prussia, King William had given his word to his



sister-in-law that he had signed no treaty with Italy, and that he was consequently not obliged to assist the latter if she should attack Austria. The object of this communication was very evident: Italy did not need to feel bound to a treaty the existence of which Prussia denied, but might with a clear conscience accept Venetia in peace from Napoleon's hand.

King Victor Emmanuel, in his upright, soldierly way, being also inwardly annoyed at Napoleon's duplicity in saying nothing about his negotiations in Vienna, laid at once the telegram of the Prince before Count Usedom. In reply to the latter's report, Bismarck then roundly and emphatically declared Gramont's story to be a lie. If that letter from the Queen Dowager, which was mentioned by Gramont, existed at all, it is evident upon the face of it that, in some part of it or other, the words of the King were misunderstood; and also that the King could have asserted with perfect truth that he had never signed any treaty that bound him to assist Italy in case she attacked Austria.

Both telegrams were supplemented the same day in Paris by the remark made by Napoleon to Nigra, that Italy would be making a grave blunder if she first opened the attack; and further, that even during the war it might happen that it would be better for Italy not to prosecute it with too much vigor.

The double and treble dishonesty of these insinuations needs no further comment. In the first place, dishonesty towards King William in the base misuse of a confidential piece of family correspondence; secondly,

towards Prussia in seeking, under cover of promising a favorable neutrality, to alienate from her her most important ally; and lastly towards Italy in trying to incite her against Prussia, after just having purchased from Austria the cession of German territory at the price of Italy's national future.

Suffice it to say, that Napoleon was satisfied with his work and regarded the success of his party, according to all human prospects, as assured; so that immediately after the articles of the treaty with Vienna had been settled, he drew up a manifesto which should put his policy in a proper light before France and Europe. This was brought before the legislative body on the 12th of June in the form of an imperial letter to the Minister Drouyn de Lhuys, dated the 11th.

To begin with, Napoleon declared that France desired no increase of her territory, unless some other Great Power should by extensive aggrandizement disturb the balance of power in Europe, or neighboring provinces should by a free popular vote express their wish to be united with France. Then he went on to say that France in the congress would have demanded for the German Lesser States a more secure organization and a more influential rank; for Prussia, greater homogeneity and power in the North; for Austria, the maintenance of her great position in Germany; and he himself would have desired, in view of the fact that Austria had fought against Denmark in the name of the principle of nationality, that she should now in virtue of the same doctrine give up Venetia in return

for a proper indemnification. But now, since instead of the congress, war was at hand, France had, he said, only two duties: the preservation of the balance of power in Europe, and of her own creation in Italy. To secure these the moral influence of France would be sufficient. She did not need, therefore, to lay hold of the sword, especially since she had the assurance of both of the contending Powers that no question that concerned France should be solved without her assent. Let us accordingly continue, he concluded, in a state of watchful neutrality.

This manifesto produced a great impression throughout all Europe. Everybody saw behind it, in spite of all disguising phrases, the announcement of French annexations. The Italians, although constantly filled with distrust, rejoiced at the repeated acknowledgment of their rights as a nation. In Berlin, however, the manifesto was looked upon as a formal renunciation of friendship, not only from its contradiction to the Prussian idea of Confederate reform, but also from the utterly unfounded assertion that Prussia too had made all her decisions to depend upon the assent of France.

Bismarck had certainly sought, at every step of his dangerous path, to come to an understanding with France; but Napoleon was the one that had evaded every binding agreement. Now, when war with Austria was close at hand, Bismarck avoided making a criticism of the imperial letter. He contented himself with saying to Count Benedetti, that he found in it the old sentiments of the Emperor unchanged. Meanwhile, it

was enough at the beginning of the struggle, to have the renewed declaration of French neutrality. Whether later the Prussian or the French program should be carried out, remained an open question, to be decided solely by the relative strength of the Powers after the war.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR.

EVER since the last days of May the Prussian Government had had no more doubts about the near approach of the war. In Government circles there was, however, one man whose courage and strength failed in view of this certainty. This was the Minister of Finance, Von Bodenschwingh, who had without great anxiety led in the struggle with the Lower House, but who had since 1865 persistently urged his warnings against a war with Austria. And now, at the outbreak of the contest, he suddenly became aware of the limitations to his ability. He felt, too, less moved to share in this great venture on account of a thorough dislike which he had always cherished towards the President of the Ministry. He accordingly resigned, and Bismarck offered the position to Baron von der Heydt. This man had, as we have seen, been unwilling to engage in the quarrel with the Lower House over the Constitution; but, in direct contrast thereto, he now declared himself ready to assume with pleasure this responsibility, and at once manifested to a brilliant degree his inventive and skilful talents.

Further than this there was no longer any doubt or hesitation in the Prussian Ministry. The only ques-

tion still to be decided was the right moment for the outbreak. General Moltke would have preferred to begin operations at once, inasmuch as delay afforded the enemy time to strengthen their forces, which were as yet neither completely equipped nor collected. Although this was very clearly true, yet the mere proposal in the Confederate Diet of a motion, which, though openly hostile in purport, had not yet been decided by a vote, did not seem to the King to offer a sufficient ground for the declaration of war. Moreover, it was necessary first to wait and see how the neutral Powers would take Austria's answer to the invitation to the congress.

Accordingly, Bismarck limited his action at present to sending to Vienna, on the 3d of June, a protest against the reference of the Schleswig-Holstein question to the Confederate Diet, declaring that this was a breach of the Gastein Treaty; so that henceforth, upon the ground of the Peace of Vienna, the common possession of both Duchies by the two Powers was again established, and Prussia had the right to send troops into Holstein, as also Austria to send them into Schleswig, and the convention of the Estates could ensue only upon the common vote of both Governments.

On the 4th of June, the reply of the neutrals was given: that Austria's answer had rendered a congress objectless. Bismarck hastened, on the same day, to call the attention of Germany and of Europe, by a formal circular, to the fact that Austria was deliberately fol-

lowing out the purpose of bringing about a violent rupture and a war. He declared that to Prussia's conciliatory despatch of May 7th no response had been given until finally a reply had been made on the 1st of June in the shape of the motion in the Confederate Diet, which was insulting to Prussia in its form and contrary to the treaties in its contents; that the King, in his desire to preserve the peace as long as possible, had even in May gladly approved of a conciliatory suggestion that came from a third party, but the attempt was frustrated in Vienna; that the King had from authentic sources received information concerning remarks made by Imperial Ministers to the effect that they desired war at any price, partly in the hope of winning successes in the field, and partly in order to settle internal difficulties, and even with the openly avowed intention of redeeming Austrian finances either by Prussian contributions or by an honorable bankruptcy.

On the 5th of June, supplementary to this note, the Prussian official newspaper printed the Article of the Treaty of January 16th, 1864, in which both Powers had agreed to arrange the future of Schleswig-Holstein only by common consent (i. e., without referring it to the Confederate Diet).

Then followed, on the 9th of June, in the Confederate Diet, a detailed reply of Prussia to the Austrian motion of the 1st, to the following effect. It was not to be supposed that the motive leading to the violation of the treaties of Vienna and Gastein lay in the conviction of the Imperial Government that the

German Confederation possessed any inherent right to settle this business alone. With Schleswig the Confederation had nothing whatever to do; and so far as Holstein was concerned, there was still no basis nor well-defined limitation to the competency of the Confederation. Austria and Prussia had demanded such explicitness on the 11th of February, 1864; and Austria herself had in a most emphatic manner expressed her misgivings and doubts concerning the matter to the Bavarian Government before this, on the 10th of January, 1864. Since then there had been no change. Prussia had always regarded the affair as one of national interest, and so recently as the 7th of May had proposed to the Court of Vienna to regulate it in connection with the reform of the Confederation, and she was still awaiting the time when the question could be solved by some Confederate authority in which the co-operation of a national representation might counterbalance the effect of individual interest, and might guarantee that the sacrifices that Prussia had made should redound to the good of the whole Fatherland and not to the satisfaction of the ambition of certain dynasties. Under the present circumstances, however, a protest was to be entered against making any decisions without Prussia's assent about the rights which she had won by bloody battles and international treaties.

In this reply was shown again, by the side of the invincible energy and consistency of the Prussian statesman, his moderation and prudence. So far as Austria was concerned, his blows would have been



much more effective if he had simply placed himself upon the standpoint of that Vienna note of January 10th, and if upon the basis of this Austrian exposition, he had now faced Austria with the denial of any right on the part of the Confederation to interfere in the matter of the Duchies. "I did not go so far," he wrote at this time to Savigny, "because I was anxious not to debar some better Confederate authority in the future from having any right to act in the matter." His declaration had been quite in earnest, that a German Parliament would be a bulwark against individual and dynastic ambition, and for that reason a support to the Prussian policy which he represented. Accordingly, he was contented to demand from the existing Confederate Diet only that it should refrain from making any decisions until it had first proved its legal right to do so and the extent of its competency.

On the same day upon which the Confederate Diet received this protest from Prussia, Count Mensdorff sent a note to Berlin in which he in his turn protested against Bismarck's despatch of the 3d of June, and expounded the Austrian view of the situation. To Bismarck's declaration that Austria had by the motion of June 1st broken the treaties that she had made with Prussia in 1864 and 1865, he replied by laying down the principle that "these compacts could not and ought not to affect the rights of the German Confederation," — where more correctly he might have said that the treaties were made just for the express purpose of restraining the unlawful claims of the Confederation.

“Furthermore,” said Mensdorff, “the Prussian Government has many times, on its part, violated the treaties. Without the consent of Austria, and merely acting upon the opinion of the Crown lawyers, she has declared the question of the sovereignty to be solved, and has decreed penalties upon the supporters of any different doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, without making any reservation concerning Austria’s assent, she has declared herself ready to lay the matter either before a German Parliament<sup>2</sup> or a European congress.”<sup>3</sup> From Prussia’s declaration of January 26th, that she should, if Austria continued to act contrary to the treaties, be obliged to provide for herself freedom to carry out her own policy, Mensdorff drew the conclusion that by saying this she granted also full freedom to Austria and released her from the obligations of those treaties. Finally, the introduction of Prussian troops into Holstein, inasmuch as the Gastein compact was valid until the Confederation gave its decision, was designated as Prussia’s taking things into her own hands, and a violation of the Act of Confederation and of the Vienna Final Act.

This war of words might have gone on for a long while in this way without any other result than what was already clear as day, namely, that by the manifold changes in Austria’s policy during the last three years

<sup>1</sup> The edict of March 11th had no other purpose than to restrain those goings-on in Schleswig that were contrary to the legal basis of the Gastein Treaty.

<sup>2</sup> It was precisely to the Vienna Cabinet that Prussia made this proposition on the 7th of May.

<sup>3</sup> Who should not be able nor desire to decide anything, but only to express an opinion.

she had effectually and in every point placed herself, in her relations with her ambitious rival, formally in the wrong. And this opponent was not inclined to give her another moment for calm consideration. Even before Mensdorff's last despatch had been received, Prussia had sent to all the German Governments on the 10th of June her plan for the future Confederate Constitution, of which the following were the main points: exclusion of Austria; creation of a Confederate marine; division of the supreme military command, Prussia taking the North and Bavaria the South; a parliament to be elected by the people on the basis of universal suffrage, and which should have the functions already specified above and sharply defined; and finally, the regulation of the future relations with German Austria by means of a special treaty. It was also remarked in the circular, that the dilatory course of proceedings in the Frankfort committees scarcely permitted the hope of a timely decision on such a motion: Prussia, therefore, laid it at once before her Confederate associates with the request to consider whether, in case the existing Confederation should be dissolved in consequence of events of war, they would be inclined to join a new Confederation based upon this outline.

Here, then, was the vision of the new Germany set up in opposition to the threatening animosity of the old Confederate Diet. The feelings with which its creators, in the midst of the ever-increasing danger of war, stood forth before the nation in the consciousness of their power and their good cause may be gleaned from the

following selections from a letter written by Bismarck to Duke Ernest of Coburg-Gotha on the 9th of June.

“The propositions contained in the outline are in no case exhaustive, but are the result of the necessary consideration of various influences with which a compromise must be made, *intra muros et extra*. But if we can bring even these to their actual realization, then one portion at least will be accomplished of the task of rendering harmless that net of historical boundaries which runs through Germany; and it is unfair to expect that one generation or one man, even my Most Gracious Sovereign, should in one day make good what generations of our ancestors have in the course of centuries spoiled. If we can attain to what is proposed in the draft, or to something better, then our children and grandchildren may form the block into more convenient shape and give it the requisite polish.

“I have communicated the sketch in the first place to Baron Pfordten. He seems to agree to all the essential points, except to Article I.; to this he objects because he considers that Austria's presence, even in the more limited Confederation, is necessary to the interests of Bavaria. I have answered him by asking whether and how he supposes that the remaining Articles, or anything like them, could possibly be applied to a Confederation that had Austria for one of its members. I do not know whether nor what he will answer me; but I still regard him as one of the most honorable and unprejudiced champions of German interests. We could preserve for Austria the *existing* Confederation; but to

establish anything better, I hold to be more difficult than squaring the circle; for the problem cannot be even approximately solved.

“That this outline will receive the approval of public opinion, I do not believe. For it is enough for the German countryman that any one should express any opinion, to induce him to advocate the contrary with passionate zeal. I console myself with the proverb, ‘*Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint,*’ and with that other, ‘Rome was not built in a day,’ although in its very beginning it brought upon itself, by a deed of violence to the Sabine women, a considerable amount of odium. I believe, too, that the German Rome of the future, if Heaven indeed grants her a future, may not be spared the necessity of committing some violence upon the Sabines, and I would gladly reduce this to a minimum, leaving the rest to the course of time.

“Austria has meanwhile not picked up the glove in Holstein; but perhaps the session of the Confederate Diet that is to be held to-morrow or next day, and in which the chastisement of Prussia is to be decided, is the first sounding of the *glas funèbre* for the existing Confederation, and we shall cry: ‘*Le roi est mort, vive le roi.*’ It is to be hoped that there will then be time enough, so that your Grace’s contingent will not be obliged to keep the wake over the dead king in Rastadt,<sup>1</sup> but may be allowed to seek fresh laurels in company with the living one.”

<sup>1</sup> A decree of the Confederate Diet had just ordered the Coburg troops to march to Rastadt.

When Bismarck penned these courageous words, he saw already before his eyes, how the national idea, always gaining in strength and definiteness, was infusing itself more and more into the hearts of the German people. The Chambers in Darmstadt and Nassau refused to appropriate for their Ministers the money necessary for the mobilization. In Cassel there was, to start with, an overwhelming majority of the Estates opposed to any swerving from absolute neutrality. In Hanover the same sentiment was manifested by the acceptance of the urgent motion of Rudolf von Bennigsen in the Lower Chamber. The citizens of Leipzig and the factory-operatives of Glauchau implored their Governments not to separate from Prussia. And the majority of the deputies in Weimar declared that the Prussian plan of Confederate reform promised the salvation of the Fatherland.

It was only in the South-West that other sentiments still prevailed. Dynastic and radical particularism held in Württemberg the Government and Diet firmly attached to the black-and-yellow banner. In Bavaria, too, the majority in the Parliament and among the people were filled with determined hatred of Prussia. The King and his ministers did not share this passion; but even Pfordten declared to the Chamber that in the impending struggle it would not be allowable to remain neutral; and everybody knew in which camp Bavaria would be found.

On the 10th of June, General von der Tann went across to Benedek at Olmütz in order to discuss the

common plan of war, Pfordten, it is true, declaring to Prince Reuss that this did not by any means signify that Bavaria wished to carry on war against Prussia, but only what would have to be done if the war proved to be unavoidable. He had just received Bismarck's last note, and repeated to the Prince the old saying that Bavaria could not join a federation with only one of the Great Powers, because this would amount to her mediatization; to himself, in fact, in view of the general disagreement of the Governments, the only actually possible kind of reform in the Confederation seemed to be its dissolution; if Prussia wished to withdraw from the Confederation, Bavaria would make no objections, but would do the same; in that event she might very likely form an offensive and defensive alliance with Prussia, but never could enter into any new federal relations with her: on the former basis the two Governments would be able to get along with each other better and more safely than on a federal one.

We shall later see, that Bismarck held these words fixed in his unerring memory.

On the 11th of June, Pfordten himself explained in a confidential letter to Bismarck the impossibility of Bavaria's joining a federation upon a parliamentary basis with only one of the two Great Powers, and then continued, "The decision of the question of peace or war is immediately before us. It is my firm conviction that the decision lies in your hands; for it lies in Prussia's determination with regard to the Duchies. If you are bent upon annexation at any price, even at the cost

of a war, then the war is unavoidable ; but if Prussia decides to abandon the annexation, then war is impossible. Should Austria wish for any other reason to begin a war, she would most certainly stand alone ; but if war is brought on for the sake of the Duchies, then (at least this is my belief), Prussia would stand alone. Heaven is my witness that I am influenced neither by a dislike to Prussia nor sympathy with Austria. As a German, I beg you and adjure you, take once more solemn counsel with your own strong soul before you speak the decisive word that brings with it incalculable consequences."

But on the same day, Austria, sufficiently acquainted with these views, spoke that decisive word, not on account of Confederate reform, but on the ground of the events in the Duchies.

Ever since the commencement of the Austrian war-preparations the Prussian Government had been planning measures for securing the safety of their outposts in Schleswig and in the Confederate cities Mayence, Rastadt, and Frankfort. Prussia was, however, relieved from her anxiety with regard to these cities, in the beginning of June, by a decree of the Confederation (the motion having been made by Bavaria in concert with Prussia), according to which Austria and Prussia should quit those cities and their places be taken by Bavarians, Badeners, and Thuringians.

But the more anxiously was Manteuffel's situation and task considered, with his 16,000 men in Schleswig. The Holstein associations had repeatedly sent resolu-



tions and petitions to General Gablenz, begging for the speedy formation and equipment of the Holstein contingent, and still oftener in their newspapers had they talked of the indignation of the Holstein people and of their readiness to make sacrifices. Bismarck was therefore of the opinion that, although Manteuffel was perhaps strong enough to repress any such movement at once, still it lay in Prussia's interest to prevent the same by imposing demonstrations of power, and therefore to transfer the 15th (Westphalian) Division to Lauenberg, where it could continue to fulfil its duty of watching Hanover as well as at Minden.

General Manteuffel, however, declared that all anxiety of that sort was unfounded. The inhabitants of the Duchies, he said, were discreet and tenacious, but not much inclined to active resistance; and whatever the club orators might say, in the event of a war between the two Great Powers the mass of the people would not move a finger. He was sure that a few battalions, as garrisons in the important towns, would be sufficient to preserve the peace in the whole country. Therefore it was decided to station in Lauenberg four regiments of militia, infantry and cavalry, something over 5000 men, as a support and also a relief for Manteuffel, as well as to send into the Elbe below Hamburg an ironclad and a few gunboats—and then without delay to draw the practical conclusions from Austria's motion of the 1st of June.

After General Gablenz, in conformity with commands from Vienna, had summoned the Holstein Estates to

convene on the 11th of June at Itzehoe, he received, on the 6th, a letter from Manteuffel, saying that, by appealing to the Confederation, Austria had violated the Gastein Treaty; that consequently, the former possession of the Duchies in common was in force; and that Prussia, accordingly, intended peacefully to establish garrisons in Holstein, while Austria also was henceforth at liberty to do the same in Schleswig; that the convention of the Estates now needed the co-operation and the sanction of the King, and therefore it was expected, that until receiving the latter, Gablenz would temporarily withdraw his summons; and that the civil government of the country would remain entirely undisturbed. On the next day, the 7th, Prussian troops, he said, would accordingly march into such Holstein towns as were not already garrisoned with Austrians.

It was impossible to speak in a more friendly way; but nevertheless, Gablenz immediately ordered his 4,800 men, together with the Ducal Government at Kiel, to withdraw with all haste to the southern boundary of the country, to Altona, whither, also, the Hereditary Prince, Frederick von Augustenburg, followed them without delay. To Manteuffel the Statthalter sent a vigorous protest against the deed of violence which he meditated, the occupation of Holstein in spite of the Gastein Treaty. He did not withdraw his summons to the Estates.

Manteuffel deplored this false view of the matter, which made it indispensable for him to take further measures for the preservation of the rights of his king.

"I am compelled," said he, in a public announcement from Rendsburg, on the 10th of June, "to take the reins of government also in Holstein into my hands." He praised the quiet behavior of the people, and expressed his hope that the continuance of the same would relieve him from the necessity of taking exceptional measures. Nevertheless, he ordered the disbanding of the political associations, and suppressed all newspapers that appeared without license.

In the place of the Holstein Ducal Government, Baron Carl Scheel-Plessen was appointed Prussian Provincial President. Itzehoe was already occupied by soldiers. The Austrian Parliamentary Commissioner was not allowed to leave Rendsburg; and the holding of a session by the deputies was not permitted. From all sides the Prussian columns were approaching the city of Altona. Gablenz, surrounded by a force three times the size of his own, and threatened by the Prussian gunboats on the Elbe, quickly made up his mind, led his brigade during the night of the 11th across the river to Harburg, and hastened with it by the Hanoverian, Hessian, and Bavarian railways, to the main army in Bohemia. Manteuffel had been right: Scheel-Plessen governed in the Duchies as quietly as if he had been from his birth the hereditary prince of the land.

In Vienna not much else had been expected, and everybody now rejoiced at having, as they believed, an unimpugnable cause for striking the blow. The plan that had met with failure on the 16th of March was now carried out at once. Austria declared to the

Confederate assembly that Prussia, by the occupation of Holstein, had violated the Gastein Treaty, and by seizing upon the administrative power in that Duchy had broken the Peace of Vienna, inasmuch as she had, in defence of rights which she supposed to be assailed, taken things into her own hands. Here was then, Austria asserted, an instance such as was foreseen in Article XIX. of the Vienna Final Act, and the Confederate assembly was called upon, she said, to put a stop to Prussia's arbitrary doings on her own authority. Therefore, in view of these events and Prussia's threatening preparations, Austria would move the mobilization of the whole Confederate army with the exception of the Prussian contingent, the calling out of the reserves, and the appointment of a Confederate field-marshal, of the commanders of the corps, and of their staffs.

It was not difficult to show that this motion was not founded upon legal grounds.

The Confederation was to arm against Prussia because the latter had violated the treaties of Vienna and Gastein. But these treaties were made by Austria and Prussia as European Great Powers, and not only without the least co-operation on the part of the Confederation, but even in open hostility to its tendencies. A violation of these treaties could never be regarded as an affair of the Confederation; and it was with this conviction that Baron Beust, certainly no friend of Prussia, upon receiving the first news of the intended motion, telegraphed to Vienna his urgent advice

against its being made. The Emperor of Austria had been no more recognized as the Confederate sovereign of Holstein than of Hungary; and any quarrel that might arise for him about Holstein concerned the Confederation in no way, except so far as it might seek to save that Confederate country from the misfortunes of war, and there was no danger of these since Gablenz had retired. The Confederation had consequently no right whatever to interfere in the question that had come up between Prussia and Austria, as to whether the administration of Schleswig-Holstein was to be carried on separately or in common. Nor was this asserted by Prussia alone.

Yet, even if it be granted that here was a case where the Confederation had the right to stop arbitrary proceedings on the part of a member, Austria's motion was nevertheless in sharp contrast with the decrees of the Confederate laws that bore upon these points. It is true that Article XIX. of the Vienna Final Act forbade taking things into one's own hands; but Article XVIII. said very plainly, that in case the internal peace was threatened, the Confederate assembly should decide in accordance with the directions contained in the following Articles: and Article XIX. directed that in such an event the Confederation should, in the first place, take precautionary measures for the maintenance of the status of territorial possessions, and wherever this had become disputed, should institute a legal investigation to fix the most recent conditions with regard to those possessions (Article XX.). The final

decision resulting from this legal investigation should be executed by the Confederation, which, in case of refractoriness, might make use of the means that had been placed, to this end, at its disposal. As such were then mentioned: mediation by a committee of the Confederate Diet, reference to a commission, a compromise under the guaranty of the Confederation, and finally, after all other constitutional means had been exhausted (Article XXXI.), chastisement by the Confederation, with a careful observance of the declarations, warnings, and limits of time prescribed in the rules and regulations pertaining to chastisement, which, as is well known, would consume at least the interval of half a year.

It could not, of course, be Austria's purpose to proceed in such a way against Prussia. What she needed, and what she wished of her Confederate allies, was neither temporary arrangements nor judicial proceedings, but armament, hasty armament, and the speedy overthrow of a member of the Confederation that had grown troublesome — though all this was forbidden by a dozen different paragraphs in the Confederate laws.

Accordingly, after Austria, on the 1st of June, had put into the hands of the Confederate Diet the destruction of the treaty of Gastein, as being foreign to Confederate law, and had inscribed loyalty to the Confederation and its laws as the newest device upon her banners, she called upon the Confederate Diet on the 11th, to defend this treaty, so untenable upon the basis of Confederate law, and to this end to tread under foot all the fundamental ordinances in the laws of

the Confederation. The contradiction between actual facts and the theoretical formal statutes of the Confederation, an anomalous malady under which Germany had been languishing for half a century, was now once more manifested most strikingly to the eyes of the nation in the death-struggle of this Constitution, or *un-Constitution*.

Bismarck was not disposed to object to Austria's plunging herself at every step deeper into the wrong; and consequently he instructed Prussia's representative to the Confederate Diet to hold himself passive and quite indifferent with regard to the motion. Thus the Majority could pursue its way undisturbed; and though this was a question that concerned the life and death of the Confederation, it was quietly decided, in spite of an objection raised by Mecklenburg, not to refer the matter beforehand to a committee, but to take the vote at once, after three days, upon Thursday, the 14th of June. It was consistent with this, that on the 12th of June Austria recalled Count Karolyi from Berlin, and sent passports to Baron Werther, in Vienna, thus breaking off diplomatic relations with Prussia.

Bismarck's response to this was a telegraphic despatch to every Prussian embassy in Germany, containing the declaration that Prussia would be compelled to regard every vote for the acceptance of Austria's motion as a declaration of war. At the same time he sent to Savigny instructions to bring forward as a motion on the 14th, in the name of his Government, the Prussian outline for the reform of the Confedera-

tion, and then, after the Austrian motion had been accepted, to declare the dissolution of the Confederation by reason of this unconstitutional declaration of war against one of its members, to give notice of Prussia's withdrawal, and to propose to the remaining states participation in a new Confederation that was to be established upon the basis of Prussia's plan of reform.

Bismarck likewise, on the 12th, laid before the King and the Ministerial Council, a memorial concerning the measures that it would be now necessary to take.

"The question of war," thus the memorial ran, "is to-day to be looked upon as irrevocably decided. The motions brought before the Confederation, as well as the declarations of Count Mensdorff, leave no more room for doubt. The latter said to Baron Werther that he now regarded war as unavoidable; and the motion for the mobilization of all the Confederate troops except the Prussian, in order to proceed against Prussia for breaking the peace, is an open declaration of war. Its object is the chastisement of Prussia without first going through the necessary forms as prescribed in the Confederate laws.

"The dignity of the Monarchy, and the national feeling of the Prussian People, not only demand that Prussia shall no longer belong to a Confederation in which such conduct is possible, but also that this attempt to chastise her be answered with corresponding measures on her part. The threatened chastisement by the Confederation must be met by an actual chastisement on the part of Prussia; and this must follow immediately



upon the declaration of the violation of Confederate rights, and of the dissolution of the Confederation.

“Two methods of action offer themselves to Prussia.”

(The first of these, Bismarck said, was based upon the supposition that the remaining German States remained neutral. In that case, all the Prussian forces were to be removed to Silesia in order to break into Austria as powerfully as possible. These forces should even include those troops that were then stationed in the West and on the frontiers of the Monarchy: the Division of Manteuffel near Hamburg, containing 14,000 men; the 13th Division at Minden, 14,000 men; the troops withdrawn from the Confederate fortresses, 19,000 men, then at Coblenz and Wetzlar; the 14th, the 15th, and the 16th Divisions, transferred from the Rhine to the Elbe at Torgau, 40,000 men.)

“The other method,” continued the memorial, “takes for granted that the neutrality of the German Governments cannot be counted on, and that it is therefore necessary by decisive steps to paralyze their activity before they are in a condition to do anything. In this case, it is to be regarded as a providential circumstance that the Prussian troops are in the scattered condition mentioned above, at Coblenz and Wetzlar, on the Weser and on the Elbe; because they are strong enough, and are stationed at just the right points, to seize immediately, with overwhelming numbers, upon the states in question, and to bind them fast.

“Should this method be decided upon, then the following course is to be kept before our eyes:

“On the day after the voting in Frankfort, that is, on Friday, the 15th of June, the Governments of Nassau, Hesse-Cassel, Hanover, and Saxony are simultaneously to be requested through our diplomatic representatives, in writing or, if it prove necessary, by seeking a personal audience with the Sovereigns :

To cease at once from further equipments and dismiss their troops already mobilized ; and at the same time to accept the plan for Confederate reform proposed by Prussia, which will have been put in the form of a motion in the session of the Confederate Diet held on the 14th of June. In the event of an affirmative reply their possessions and sovereignty shall be assured. If a negative or evasive answer be given, war is to be declared upon them by Prussia.

“The proper instructions and notes should be sent from here to our diplomatic representatives even now, at once. Word must be sent beforehand to the military authorities, to be ready to march immediately upon receiving from the ambassadors notice by telegraph of a negative answer from the respective Governments.

“In the Duchy of Nassua, which can be seized upon by the troops from Coblentz and Wetzlar, it will be advisable to join with the occupation of the country the immediate appointment of some one, if possible a native of the Duchy, to administer the goverment in the name of Prussia, and also the convention of the Estates to confirm this administration.

“In Hesse-Cassel, the royal ambassador should, in case Prussia’s wishes are complied with, assure the Elector of the preservation of the integrity of his possessions and also hold out to him the definite prospect of the Hesse-Darmstadt territory lying north of the Main: in the event of refusal, on the other hand, he should be threatened with deposition; and at the same time with the entrance of Prussian troops, Prince Frederick William of Hesse should be proclaimed regent.<sup>1</sup>

“Likewise in Hanover, the maintenance of the sovereignty and the integrity of the Kingdom should be made to depend upon the acceptance of the project of reform and the immediate dismissal of the troops: refusal to comply would cause the fate of the country to depend upon the fortunes of war. The instructions given to the military authorities must be so arranged that the attack from Minden shall be combined with the advance of General von Manteuffel from the Elbe. After the occupation of the country, the Hanoverian troops are to be allowed, upon surrendering their arms, to go to their homes, and the administration of the government to be assumed by Prussia.

“The question must be put no less categorically to Saxony; and upon her refusal, the occupation of the country is to be effected by the troops that are already stationed on the frontier.

“An argument in favor of this latter course is offered

<sup>1</sup> This plan was given up after a few days, inasmuch as the Prince, in a conversation with Bismarck on the 14th of June, showed himself to be thoroughly hostile to Prussia and at the end of the interview boasted of being backed by 800,000 Austrians.

by the circumstance that, according to all that is known here, no German state is yet fully armed nor can be for several days, whereas Prussia, in virtue of her equipments and position, — the peaceful occupation of Holstein and the station on the Elbe, won without loss of blood, are great considerations in the matter, — is ready to get ahead of these states and thus to suppress all the dangers behind her back, before beginning her great operations toward the south. Any attack, then, which she would have to encounter from that direction could come only from Bavaria and Austria, aided perhaps by Würtemberg, since the Grand Duchy of Hesse would be neutralized by Hesse-Cassel. Moreover, Würtemberg can hardly be supposed to be ready for immediate or quick action, nor is Bavaria yet fully equipped.”

After the delivery of this memorial, the King decided for the second method of proceeding, since he no longer believed that the Lesser States would remain neutral, while Bismarck till the last moment trusted in Pfordten's good sentiments. The King's only concern was that the action against the states in question should not delay the great offensive attack against Austria.

The instructions for the ambassadors in Hanover, Dresden, and Cassel,<sup>1</sup> as well as those for the different generals, were sent to them on the spot, with express directions to the latter, that, if the refusal to comply were announced at once, on the morning of the 15th, not a moment was to be lost in causing the troops to march forward in the course of the same day.

Action against Nassau was still postponed.

Meanwhile the smaller Courts were filled with restless anxiety. The weightiness of the moment was felt by all. Many believed that the slow-match might be lighted, but still held a step away from the powder-cask. Bavaria, Saxony, and Darmstadt agreed to cross out the clauses directed against Prussia, expressing the motives for the motion, and to limit the order of mobilization to the last four Confederate army-corps; for then the measure could not possibly be termed by Prussia a declaration of war.

Similar considerations and discussions were held between Hanover and Cassel. King George clung to his precept: If all the Princes are arming, why shouldn't I? He would not listen to anything of Confederate reform, and rejoiced that a decree of the Confederate Diet would force him to mobilize his troops. Count Platen assured Prince Ysenburg solemnly and emphatically that Hanover had no thought of hostility to Prussia, but according to Confederate laws would be unable to refuse to render obedience to a Confederate decree. But of what good were these fine phrases to Prussia? Who would guarantee that Hanover, in her loyalty to the Confederation, would not, in obedience to a second Confederate decree, order her troops to march upon Berlin? Yet however urgently Ysenburg repeated the declaration that Prussia would not suffer any armament, with or without a Confederate decree, between her provinces, Hanover stood unmovable. Platen thought also, like Pfordten, that it would be taking the edge off the Austrian motion to strike out the clause about the

motives and also Article IV. (the appointment of a Confederate commander-in-chief); and with this Hesse-Cassel also agreed.

In this latter country the old Elector, angry over the Prussian plan for Confederate reform, had been drawn by his wife and children more and more over to the side of Austria. The Ministry possessed no influence and were not fully agreed. Consequently Platen's proposition was agreed to.

The Grand Duke of Baden was in a state of terrible indecision. He favored Prussia, was a friend of Confederate reform, and above all, anxious for peace; but he was not supported by his Ministry, was threatened by the hostile excitement among his people, and was worried by Edelsheim with reports that if he took sides with Prussia, he would see the old claims of Austria to the Breisgau revived and those of Bavaria to Heidelberg and the Baden Palatinate.

So the 14th of June arrived, and with it the decisive session of the Confederate Diet. Inasmuch as this was at once the close of a melancholy past and the herald of a brighter future, we may well call to mind the details of the event. The presiding deputy, Baron Kübeck, opened the session with certain business announcements, among other things making a short financial report concerning the *Monumenta Germaniæ Historica*, and then put to vote the Austrian motion, which in its way was also to be a monument of German history.

Since Holstein had no voice now, the number of votes was sixteen: necessary for a majority, nine.

Although no one could entertain any doubts as to the result, yet the suspense was tremendous, as the august assembly awaited the vote of each Curia.

Austria began with the simple acceptance of the motion and the statement that the mobilization of the three Confederate corps to be required of her was already accomplished.

Prussia followed with a protest against any consideration whatever of a motion so contrary to Confederate principles, both in form and in subject-matter.

Bavaria voted for the motion so far as this concerned the contingents of the Lesser and Petty States, inasmuch as the Confederation must, in view of the threatening condition of things, make preparations to prevent any possible disturbances of the Confederate peace. The basing of the motion upon the violation of the Gastein Treaty was, however, rejected, since this treaty, so far as the Confederation was concerned, did not exist.

Saxony seconded Bavaria.

Darmstadt did the same.

Hanover voted for the motion, and followed Bavaria in limiting the order to mobilize to the last four Confederate army-corps, and with the understanding that the appointment of the Confederate commander-in-chief should be postponed.

Württemberg followed Austria in her acceptance.

Baden wished to refer the matter to a committee in

[NOTE: For the division of the states into Curias and the arrangement of the Confederate army-corps, cf. Vol. I. pp. 53 and 69. — TRANS.]

the hope of mediation, and meanwhile withheld her vote.

Hesse-Cassel favored the mobilization of seven Confederate army-corps, yet desired the postponement of the appointment of a Confederate commander-in-chief.

Luxemburg opposed the motion, because Prussia had not been heard on the matter, and since, indeed, no investigation of it had taken place; further, because the Articles in the Vienna Final Act bearing upon the subject did not justify a mobilization, and consequently the motion had more the appearance of a hostile measure than of one consistent with the principles of the Confederation.

The Grand Ducal and Ducal Saxon Houses voted against the motion, holding that the Confederation legally knew nothing of the joint rule of Austria and Prussia, and consequently had not to trouble itself with a supposed violation of the same. Meiningen by a dissenting voice agreed with Bavaria.

The 13th Curia (Nassau-Brunswick) was in favor of the motion. Brunswick by a dissenting voice agreed with Weimar and Coburg.

The 14th Curia (both Mecklenburgs) voted in the negative for the same reason as Weimar and Luxemburg, and because the hastening of the time for taking the vote was a violation of the prescribed order of business.

The 15th Curia (Oldenburg, Schwarzburg, Anhalt) was against the motion on the plea that Article XIX. did not apply to the case in hand, and even if it did,



not mobilization, but mediation and judicial proceedings, were in order.

The 16th Curia (Liechtenstein, both Reuss Houses, Lippe, Waldeck, Schaumburg) voted in the affirmative. Inasmuch as two of the Governments opposed the motion, one wished to have it referred to a committee, and the representative was not fully provided with instructions, the separate votes were declared divided, and the deputy was to cast the vote of the Curia with the majority of the Confederate assembly.

The 17th Curia (the free cities) opposed the motion; Frankfort, alone dissenting, held Bavaria's position.

This closed the voting, and Herr von Kübeck stated the result in announcing that the motion, amended by the limitations proposed by Bavaria, was accepted by a vote of nine against six. The Prussian deputy at once arose and made the following declaration: "The bringing forward of this motion, to say nothing of its acceptance, stands in contradiction with the fundamental principles of the Confederation. Confederate law recognizes no such thing as the declaration of war against a member of the Confederation, but only a strictly-prescribed order of Confederate chastisement. But more especially is it true, that the position of Austria in Holstein does not come under the jurisdiction nor within the limits of the Confederate treaties; and the Emperor of Austria cannot be regarded as a member of the Confederation for Holstein. After Prussia has in vain brought to the notice of the Confederation her dangerous position owing to Austria's threatening arma-

ment, she regards now the rupture of the Confederation as an accomplished fact in consequence of the declaration of war against a member, which would be impossible according to Confederate law, and yet has just now been effected by Austria and her associates. His Majesty the King will therefore consider the Confederate treaty as expired and act accordingly. He still holds firmly to the basis of national unity, and with this in view he offers for consideration the outline of a new plan of federation adapted to the demands of the times, and declares himself ready to form upon this foundation a new alliance with the assenting Governments." The deputy then said that he was fulfilling the orders of his Government in announcing that herewith his official functions were at an end.

The presiding deputy hastened to reply to this speech, by referring to the fundamental indissolubility of the Confederation and therefore protesting against Prussia's withdrawal. He asserted and reserved all rights of the august assembly, and threw the responsibility for all disastrous consequences upon Prussia's conduct alone. He then invited the assembly to join him in this protest, which the majority of the deputies did, while the remaining members contented themselves with maintaining the rights of their respective Governments.

In Berlin, where the King until this moment had wished to leave to the Court of Vienna the honor of firing the first cannon, Savigny's telegram put an end to the last trace of hesitation. The order was sent

immediately to the ambassadors in Dresden, Hanover, and Cassel, to act in accordance with their last instructions ; and the signal was given to the commanders of the main army to proceed at once from all sides in making a speedy offensive attack upon Bohemia.