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WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WAR?

BY SCRUTATOR

(1) France
(2) Germany
With an Appendix

CONTAINING

*Four Letters, reprinted (by permission)
from "The Times."*



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PREFACE.



THE principal points which the Author has endeavoured to establish in the following pages are as follows :—

1. That the Hohenzollern candidature was a legitimate grievance to France, and was acknowledged to be such by the Neutral Powers.

2. That the French Government, in spite of sundry indiscretions which Count Bismarck dexterously used against it, really desired a pacific solution of the question.

3. That Count Bismarck got up the Hohenzollern intrigue with his eyes wide open to all the consequences that have followed.

4. That Prussia never withdrew, directly or indirectly, the candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, and that the

eventual retirement of the Prince took place in such a way as to leave the grievance of France precisely where it was at the commencement of the quarrel.

5. That, nevertheless, France still sought a pacific solution, and solicited the good offices of England for that purpose.

6. That Count Bismarck rudely rejected the mediation of England, and precipitated the war by the gratuitous invention and publication of a fictitious affront offered by the King of Prussia to the French Ambassador at Ems.

7. That the deliberate intention of Prussia to provoke a war with France is proved by other circumstances, and particularly by Count Bismarck's rejection of repeated offers from France to join in a policy of mutual disarmament.

8. That, at the commencement of the war, both the King of Prussia and Count Bismarck publicly admitted that the French people were "really peaceably disposed and requiring tranquillity:" an admission which is inconsistent with the subsequent demand for French territory on the plea that the

French nation desired and approved the war against Germany.

9. That Count Bismarck requires French territory, not as a security against French aggressiveness, but as a means of keeping up the military system of Prussia and keeping down German Liberalism.

10. That in her determination to seize French territory Germany is not merely declining, as Mr. Edward Freeman has asserted, "to set a new and better example to all future conquerors," but is, on the contrary, taking a long stride backward in civilization, and is really violating a principle which was quietly taking its place in the political ethics of modern Europe.

For all these statements the Author believes that he has produced abundant evidence, and he confidently anticipates the favourable verdict of all who may do him the honour to read his pages.

The Author is tempted to quote the following amusing specimen of some of the "trustworthy" information which German journalists have lately been in the habit of imparting to their readers. The quotation

is part of an article which appeared in a Berlin journal in the latter part of last November :—

“*The Times* publishes in its number of the 15th inst. (Nov.), under the heading ‘Is peace possible?’ an article hostile to Prussia, containing especially the most frivolous charges against the policy of Count Bismarck. We learn from a trustworthy source, that the author of that article, who signs himself ‘Scrutator,’ is no one else than the English Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone. *The Times* has, moreover, already published in its No. of the 17th inst., under the heading ‘Count Bismarck’s detractors,’ a reply which is signed by Dr. Forbes Campbell, one of the most esteemed publicists of England. It is therein proved to ‘Scrutator’ that he has maliciously distorted expressions of the Federal Chancellor. In all probability the English Premier will very soon not find leisure for more articles of the kind.”

In one of his letters to *The Times* the Author had said that Count Bismarck had

declared, years ago, that political questions were not to be decided "by majorities and minorities in Parliament, but by iron and blood." This is what his Berlin censor stigmatizes as "maliciously distorted expressions of the Federal Chancellor." What, then, were Count Bismarck's actual words? They were uttered in a speech which he made, as Premier, in the Prussian House of Representatives on the 29th of September, 1862, and they are thus given by his admiring German biographer, Hesekei :—

"The great questions of the day are not to be decided by speeches and majorities—that was the error of 1848 and 1849—but iron and blood." It is quite true that the phrase "iron and blood" was originally used by the lyrical German poet, Mosem. But when a Statesman embodies a sentiment in a quotation he makes that sentiment his own more thoroughly than if he had uttered it casually in the heat of debate. It is not very evident, therefore, what the Berlin journalist means by the assertion that "'Scrutator' has maliciously distorted ex-

pressions of the Federal Chancellor." The Author would only too gladly be convinced that he had, in this instance or in any other, misunderstood the character and conduct of a Statesman whose unscrupulous policy constitutes a serious danger to the liberties of Europe. Count Bismarck has gone far to revive the traditions of the old bad time, when a diplomatist could be defined as "a man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country."

It will be observed that the Author has modified his opinion on two or three points since he wrote the letters which the Editor of *The Times* was good enough to publish, and which are republished at the end of this volume. He wishes it, however, to be clearly understood that he excepts the Crown Prince of Prussia from all the strictures expressed or implied in the following pages. His is the solitary figure in this war which the universal judgment of England has pronounced *sans peur et sans reproche*.

LONDON, Feb. 22nd, 1871.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WAR?

WHAT judgment ought we to pass on the terms of peace offered to France by Count Bismarck? Are we to pronounce them equitable? or must we denounce them as iniquitous? That depends on the kind of answer we are prepared to give to the further question, Who is mainly responsible for the war? The apologists of Germany have assumed from the very first that France attacked Germany without any provocation whatever. Even then Germany would find it hard to justify in the eyes of Europe, except by the *lex talionis* of savage warfare, the terms on which she offers to sheathe her sword. But was the war utterly "unprovoked"? The generality of people in this country, and indeed throughout Europe, believe that it was. And such was my own opinion during the earlier stages of the campaign. My sympathy and my judgment were on the

side of Germany, and I rejoiced in all the French disasters which culminated in the capitulation of Sedan. I thought the Germans had then an opportunity of making a peace more glorious, and likely to be more lasting, than any which the world has seen for many generations. Still I never doubted that France, or rather the Imperial Government, had been guilty of waging "an unprovoked war." Meanwhile I had the honour of engaging in a friendly controversy with Professor Max Müller on the subject in the columns of *The Times*, and this led me to examine into the facts more carefully than I had previously done. The result is that I no longer think that the war was unprovoked on the part of Prussia. On the contrary, I believe that Count Bismarck is at this moment the most responsible man in Europe for the misery and carnage of the last six months. I am sorry to be obliged to make this confession, for my predilections have always been more German than French. I have always been accustomed to admire the Germans as an earnest, peaceful, truthful people. In the very aberrations of their intellectual pursuits, and even in the destructive criticism with which

they assailed beliefs which Christendom holds dear, I thought I saw the evidence of a sincere, if mistaken, love of truth. Nor can I even now resign myself to the thought that I have been deceived. The Germans, as a nation, believe that they have been repelling an unprovoked war. Small blame to them, seeing that they share that belief with the great majority of Englishmen. And yet I think I can prove that however reckless and criminal the Emperor Napoleon and his ministers were—and I have no wish to palliate their guilt—they were but blind puppets in the cunning hands of Count Bismarck. I see no other conclusion possible from the facts which I now proceed to narrate.

In the beginning of last July England was congratulating herself on the prospect of a long peace. The permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign Office had just told Lord Granville that he could not remember so profound a lull in European politics. It was, however, but the calm which presages the coming storm. On the 4th of July the papers of Paris, and on the following day those of London, contained the following telegrams:—

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MADRID, July 2.

Marshal Prim has returned here to preside this evening at an important Council of Ministers. He will return to Vichy at the end of July. The assertion of the *Epoca*, that negotiations had commenced with a Prince of the reigning family of North Germany, is unfounded.

MADRID, July 3 (Afternoon).

It is stated that General Prim has sent a deputation to Prussia to offer the crown of Spain to a Prince of Hohenzollern, who has accepted the proposal. It is added that the Prince would be proclaimed king without any preliminary sanction of the Cortes.

MADRID, July 3 (Evening).

Several journals confirm the news that the Government is negotiating with a new candidate to the throne. . . . The *Imparcial* states that at the Council of Ministers, which is to be held to-morrow or Tuesday, at La Granja, under the presidency of the Regent, the question of the candidate to the throne will be discussed.

The Paris press sounded the alarm at once, and declared with equal unanimity and urgency that the accession of a Hohenzollern to the throne of Spain implied a serious danger to France. On the 5th of July the Spanish Government formally elected Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen; and on the following day the London press began to discuss the subject. I believe it was unanimous in condemnation of the project. "We are in no way surprised at

this vehement outbreak of French jealousy," said *The Times* of July 7; "but we are astonished that even a Spanish Marshal should have had the blindness or the Quixotism to provoke it. . . . We are interested in the peace of Europe, and, from this point of view, it is difficult to consider this movement of Prim's without a feeling of as much indignation as so unwise a proceeding can excite." After some more observations to the same effect, *The Times* proceeded as follows:—

Ever since the revolution which dispossessed Isabella the French Government has been looking on tranquilly, but not inattentively. Its conduct has been, so far as we know, strictly just and honourable. The Emperor, though on friendly terms with the Queen, with whom he had recently exchanged visits, respected the will of Spain, and for nearly two years the Provisional Government has had its own way. But it is impossible to suppose that Napoleon can be careless of what passes in a country so closely connected with his own. . . . There is generally some personage to whom the popular imagination ascribes superhuman astuteness, and the French have seen the hand of the Machiavellian Bismarck in every unexpected event since Sadowa. Many of them are convinced that Bismarck made the Spanish Revolution, to distract the Emperor's attention and engage his armies. What then will be the effect if it be announced as positive that the Prussian Prince is to reign at Madrid? It will be remembered, too, that the brother of Leopold is that very Charles of Roumania who so very cleverly made his way to a quasi-throne four years ago. Thus it might be

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said that Prussia was attaining to dominion in the East and West, while her Italian alliance enabled her to encircle France with a cordon of subsidiary States.

On the 8th of July *The Times* had a still stronger leader, of which the following is a sample :—

The thought seems to have seized all classes that this is a point by which France must stand or fall. Let her yield in this, and her honour, and even her safety, are compromised. . . . Few Englishmen, even of those who are conversant with foreign society, can understand the depth of French feeling on this subject. It is such that it might be dangerous, if not fatal, for the Government to oppose it, or to profess indifference or non-interference But while maintaining the right of the Spanish nation to choose its own ruler free from foreign dictation, we have no hesitation in declaring that the way in which this negotiation has been conducted has been in the highest degree reprehensible, and that it excuses, if it does not justify, the attitude of France. It appears certain that the business was transacted with profound secrecy. Who the negotiators were we are not yet told. There was General Prim, of course, on the one side, but it is not disclosed who were the parties to the transaction on the other. This much is admitted, that France was kept completely in the dark. M. Mercier, the French minister at Madrid, knew nothing of what was going on; M. Benedetti, at Berlin, was equally ignorant. The French Emperor and his ministers heard of the affair probably not many hours before the general public. There can be but one construction put upon such a proceeding. It is that, for one reason or another, the parties desired that the French Government should be prevented from expressing an opinion until the business was settled, and the election

of the prince, as they thought, irrevocable. We do not know how long the negotiations have been in progress, but not an inkling has been dropped in the hearing of the foreign representatives, and most of the European Governments have heard of the affair for the first time in the newspapers. Now this conduct, we will make bold to say, is grossly discourteous to foreign Powers. The transaction, too, has the air of a vulgar and impudent *coup d'état*, of a kind that is sure not to be successful. The election of a sovereign to such a throne as that of Spain should be a solemn and dignified proceeding, conducted openly in the face of the world, and accompanied by a frank communication with friendly Powers. Now what Power is there which has not shown itself friendly to Spain? From which had her Government such apprehensions that it might legitimately conceal the most important of all national acts? The attitude of the Emperor towards Spain during the last two years has been unexceptionable; and there is no reason to suppose that France has any sinister purpose to serve in dealing with the Peninsula. We may observe also that the friendship and sympathy of England have been strongly manifested, and that it would have been only a polite recognition of these feelings to let us know who was the new choice of the Spanish Government. Secrecy, of course, generates suspicion. If there was nothing hostile to France in this negotiation, why conceal it? Thus will argue millions of Frenchmen, and it will not be easy to dispute the prejudice thus produced. Something also must be allowed for official and national susceptibility. It is not in human nature to avoid feeling some resentment at being tricked, and the present arrangement has, to Frenchmen, a most unpleasant look of trickery.

The other daily papers of the same date wrote with equal strength; and on the evening of the

next day the *Pall Mall Gazette* commented as follows on the situation :—

No disavowal has yet been made by Prussia of having sanctioned the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern. An ominous silence, or an equally ominous affectation of surprise and indifference, are the only expressions of opinion to be discovered in the official press of Berlin. The language of the *North German Gazette* of last evening is discouraging in the extreme. To say that the question "is dependent upon the decision of the Cortes, not upon the wishes or fears of foreign countries," and that as regards the succession to the Spanish throne the German Governments "have not any advice to offer, much less right to interfere," is merely another way of saying that Prussia means to let things take their course, and bide the worst that France can do. Few people will be innocent enough to believe that General Prim would have offered the Crown to the Prince of Hohenzollern without first ascertaining, in however indirect a manner, in what light such a step would be regarded by the Prussian Government; and the Prince himself must possess singular self-reliance if he has consented to become a candidate without a sufficiently clear understanding that his ambition would not be discountenanced by his powerful kinsman. If Prussia has either been genuinely ignorant of what has been going on, or has wisely changed her purpose at the last moment, something more may fairly be expected of her than an intimation that it is her duty "to remain neutral, and neutral she will remain." This profound respect for the independence of the Spanish people is surely pushed to exaggeration when it is made the excuse for not interfering to prevent a Prussian Prince from involving Europe in war. The chief of the family has not always been thus shy of exerting his influence on the subordinate members of his house, and

his present indisposition to do so is as suspicious as sudden exhibitions of virtue usually are. It is, perhaps, additionally significant that the *Vossische Gazette* makes a distinction between permission accorded by the King and permission sanctioned by the Government. According to that journal his Majesty may sanction the election of the Prince simply as a family matter, and not until the royal permission is countersigned by Count Bismarck does it become an act of the State. The distinction may mean a great deal.

Both Houses of Parliament discussed the question, in a quieter tone, of course, but in the same strain: in short, the public opinion of England declared decidedly against the candidature of the Hohenzollern Prince as a legitimate grievance to France, and a danger to the peace of Europe. I thought at the time that the public opinion of England was wrong, but I have changed my mind at the dictation of irresistible facts.

Let us now endeavour to trace the course of the intrigue through the labyrinth of its diplomatic windings.

On the 5th of July Lord Lyons, Her Majesty's ambassador in Paris, wrote a dispatch to Lord Granville, in which occurs the following passage:—

M. de Gramont proceeded to observe to me that nothing could be further from the wishes of the French Government than to interfere in the internal affairs of Spain, but

that the interest and the dignity of France alike forbade them to permit the establishment of a Prussian dynasty in the Peninsula. They could not consent to the existence of a state of things which would oblige them, in case of war with Prussia, to keep a watch upon Spain, which would paralyze a division of their army. The proposal to set the Crown of Spain upon a Prussian head was nothing less than an insult to France. With a full consideration of all that such a declaration implied, the Government of the Emperor declared that France would not endure it.

In a dispatch from Lord Granville to Lord Lyons, dated July 6, the Foreign Secretary relates a conversation which he had just had with the French ambassador in London. "France," the ambassador said, "disclaimed any desire to interfere with Spain; and after stating the arguments which render the possession of the Crown of Spain by a Prussian Prince dangerous to France, he concluded by assuring me that the circumstances were of the gravest character, and that, in his opinion, the Government of the Emperor could not, under the pressure of public opinion, admit a project of such a nature. He added, however, that there was no reason why any preliminary means should not be tried to avert so great an evil as that which might result from it; and he addressed

himself to the Government of the Queen, on the strength of the friendly relations which subsisted between England and France, and the desire of Her Majesty's Government to maintain the peace of Europe, requesting them to exercise all their influence upon Prussia and upon Spain in order to put a stop to the projected installation of the Prince on the Spanish throne."

After relating this conversation, Lord Granville adds—"I told M. de Lavalette that Her Majesty's Government had been surprised by the news; that I perfectly understood the unfavourable effect which such an announcement was calculated to produce in France, although I did not agree with all the arguments that he had used with respect to the importance to so great a nation as France of a German Prince on the Throne of Spain; and that I reserved my opinion on facts, of which I had, as yet, an imperfect knowledge."

On the same day Lord Granville wrote as follows to Lord A. Loftus, our Ambassador at the Court of Prussia :—

Mr. Gladstone and I were taken by surprise yesterday evening by the news that the Government of Spain had offered the Crown of Spain to Prince Leopold of Hohen-

zollern; it appears also that the offer has been accepted by the Prince. Her Majesty's Government have no wish to interfere in any way in the internal affairs of Spain; still less have they the pretension of dictating in such a matter to North Germany: but they certainly hope, and they cannot but believe, that this project, of which they have been hitherto ignorant, has not received any sanction from the King. Some of the greatest calamities to the world have been produced by small causes, and by mistakes trivial in their origin. In the present state of opinion in France, the possession of the Crown of Spain by a Prussian Prince would be sure to lead to great and dangerous irritation. Of this, indeed, we have conclusive evidence in the report just received of what has been stated by the Minister to the French Chamber.

In Prussia it can be an object of no importance that a member of the House of Hohenzollern should be on the Throne of the most Catholic country in Europe. It is not clear that he would receive the allegiance of the Spanish people, divided as they are into parties, many of which would be necessarily opposed to Prince Leopold, and would possibly unite against him.

I venture, therefore, to hope that the King and his advisers will find it consistent with their own views of what is best for Spain effectually to discourage a project fraught with risk to the best interests of that country.

You will not fail to point out that if these sentiments be just, the King of Prussia, whose reign has brought about so signal an aggrandisement of that country, has now an opportunity not less signal of exercising a wise and disinterested magnanimity, with the certain effect of conferring an inestimable service on Europe by the maintenance of its peace.

In a similar spirit Lord Granville addressed himself, on July 7, to the British Minister at Madrid. Disclaiming any desire "to interfere in any way with the choice of the Spanish nation," he nevertheless instructed Mr. Layard "to use every pressure upon the provisional Government, which, in your judgment, may contribute to induce them to abandon the project of conferring the Throne of Spain on Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern." At the same time, and with equal urgency, Lord Granville pressed these considerations on the Spanish Minister in London.

The two dispatches which follow give a clear and concise account of the state of feeling in France, and the motives which influenced the conduct of the Imperial Government.

Lord Lyons to Earl Granville.—(Received July 8.)

PARIS, July 7, 1870.

MY LORD,—In my dispatch of the day before yesterday I reported a conversation which I had had on the evening of that day with the Duc de Gramont on the subject of the offer of the Crown of Spain to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern.

In the evening I went to the ordinary reception of M. Emile Ollivier, who took me on one side and spoke to me at some length, and with considerable emphasis, respecting this affair. His language was in substance the same as that held

by M. de Gramont, but he entered into rather more detail, and spoke with still more precision of the impossibility of permitting the Prince to become King of Spain. Public opinion in France, he said, would never tolerate it. Any Cabinet—any Government—which acquiesced in it would be at once overthrown. For his own part, it was well known he had never been an enemy to Germany, but with all his good-will towards the Germans, he must confess that he felt this proceeding to be an insult, and fully shared the indignation of the public.

M. Emile Ollivier then proceeded to speak of the declaration which was to be made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Chamber on the following day. I urged that it should be moderate; and M. Ollivier assured me that it should be as mild as was compatible with the necessity of satisfying public opinion in France. But, in fact, he said, our language is this:—"We are not uneasy, because we have a firm hope that the thing will not be done; but if it were to be done, we would not tolerate it."

After this conversation, I hardly expected that the declaration would have been so strongly worded as it proved to be. The terms of it were settled on the following morning at a council at St. Cloud, at which the Emperor presided, and it was, as your Lordship is aware, read in the Corps Législatif in the afternoon.

The declaration, however, forcible as it was, did not go at all beyond the feeling of the country. It is only too plain that, without considering how far the real interests of France may be in question, the nation has taken the proposal to place the Prince of Hohenzollern on the Throne of Spain as an insult and a challenge from Prussia. The wound inflicted by Sadowa on French pride had never been completely healed,—nevertheless, time had begun to produce the effect of reconciling men's minds to what was done and could not

be helped, and irritation was subsiding. Now this unhappy affair has revived all the old animosity; the Government and the people have alike made it a point of honour to prevent the accession of the Prince, and they have gone too far to recede.

I do not, however, believe that either the Emperor or his Ministers either wish for war or expect it. At this moment, they confidently hope that they shall succeed without war in preventing the Prince from wearing the Crown of Spain. They conceive that, if this should be so, they shall gain popularity at home by giving effect energetically to the feeling of the nation; and that they shall raise their credit abroad as well as at home by a diplomatic success. They are, moreover, not sorry to have an opportunity of testing the public feeling with regard to Prussia. Lastly, they are convinced that it would have been impossible, with safety, to put up with what, rightly or wrongly, the nation would regard as a fresh triumph of Prussia over France.

In pursuing this policy, however, they have run the risk of enlisting the pride of Germany as well as of Spain in the cause of the Prince of Hohenzollern, and have left themselves no means of retreat. If they do not succeed in preventing the success of the Prince by peaceful means, they have avowedly no alternative but to go to war.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

LYONS.

Lord Lyons to Earl Granville.—(Received July 8.)

[Extract.]

PARIS, July 7, 1870.

I observed to the Duc de Gramont this afternoon, that I could not but feel uneasy respecting the declaration which he had made the day before in the Corps Législatif. I could not, I said, help thinking that milder language would have

rendered it more easy to treat both with Prussia and with Spain for the withdrawal of the pretensions of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern.

M. de Gramont answered that he was glad I had mentioned this, as he wished to have an opportunity of conveying to your Lordship an explanation of his reasons for making a public declaration in terms so positive. Your Lordship would, he was sure, as Minister in a constitutional country, understand perfectly the impossibility of contending with public opinion. The nation was, he said, so strongly roused upon this question, that its will could not be resisted or trifled with. He had seen me in the Chamber when he had made his declaration. I had, therefore, myself witnessed the extraordinary enthusiasm and unanimity with which the announcement of the determination of the Government to repel the insult offered to the nation had been received. He had kept within bounds, or he might have provoked a still more remarkable explosion of feeling. Now the indignation out of doors was equally violent and equally general. Nothing less than what he had said would have satisfied the public. His speech was, in fact, as regarded the interior of France, absolutely necessary; and diplomatic considerations must yield to public safety at home.

Nor could he admit that it was simply the pride of France which was in question. Her military power was at stake. What had been the result of placing the brother of Prince Leopold at the head of the Government of Roumania? This petty Ruler had immediately begun to collect arms, to form an army, and, obeying in all points the instructions he received from Berlin, to prepare a Prussian arsenal to be used in case of war between Prussia and Austria. What had been done on a small scale in Roumania would be done on a great scale in Spain. The Prince of Hohenzollern would make himself a military Sovereign, and would get ready

the means of paralyzing 200,000 French troops, if France should be engaged in war in Europe. It would be madness to wait until this was accomplished: if there was to be war, it had better come at once. The Duc de Gramont added that his language in the Chamber had been more moderate than that which he felt bound to use in speaking in his own Cabinet. In fact, he said, I am obliged to say to you without reserve, that the accession of the Prince of Hohenzollern to the throne of Spain is war—*son avènement c'est la guerre.*

How, then, M. de Gramont asked, could so great a calamity be avoided? He would confess that he trusted much to the aid of Her Majesty's Government. By exercising their influence at Berlin and at Madrid they might now manifest their friendship for France, and preserve the peace of Europe.

As regarded the Prussians, the essential thing was to make them understand that France could not be put off with an evasive answer. The pretexts which had been alleged to Austria in the case of Prince Charles would not avail. It would be childish to affirm that the Prussian Government were entirely strangers to the whole affair; that the Prince of Hohenzollern was of age and master of his own actions; that Prussia could not prevent his setting off for Spain with his cap in his hand, as his brother had secretly started for Roumania. It was not to be credited that the King of Prussia had not the power to forbid a Prince of his family, and an officer in his army, to accept a foreign throne. It would be of the utmost benefit if these considerations could be pressed upon the Prussian Cabinet by Her Majesty's Government.

The King of Prussia might also be reminded of the miserable position in which a Prince of his House would be placed, who should attempt to occupy the Throne of Spain

in hostility to France. Why, the French Government had nothing to do but to relax the vigilant watch they had kept and were keeping on the frontier, and let loose the hosts of Carlists, Isabellists, and Republicans, whom they now kept out of Spain. Ample occupation would in this way be given to any Government at Madrid, while France concentrated her whole military strength on a war on the Rhine. In fact, there could be no lack of reasons which might be powerfully urged by a friendly power like England, to induce Prussia to abandon this ill-conceived project.

It was, however, in Spain that the assistance of Her Majesty's Government might be most effectually given to France. The Regent might surely be convinced that it was his duty to separate himself from a policy which would plunge Spain into civil war, and put an end to peace in Europe. Could he wish that Spain's re-appearance on the political scene of Europe should be the signal for ruin and bloodshed? Would he wish his name to go down to posterity as the author of all these evils? Let him be strongly urged to prevent the early assembling of the Cortes. In this way the election would be prevented, and all might be well again.

I inquired of M. de Gramont what was the present state of his communications with Prussia and Spain.

From Prussia, he said, he had no answer, and he did not yet know what had been the result of the representations which Baron de Werther had undertaken to make to the King at Ems.

The Spanish Government, on the other hand, had coolly informed him that they were not surprised that the first intelligence of the acceptance of the Crown by the Prince of Hohenzollern had caused some emotion in France; but that they hoped that this would pass off, and that on reflection the French Government would admit that it was the inevitable solution of the Spanish question.

At the same time the Prime Minister of France is reported by Lord Lyons to have "uttered emphatically the following words:—'*Le Gouvernement désire la paix; il la désire avec passion . . . il la désire avec passion, mais avec honneur.*'" M. Ollivier's "passionate desire" for peace was fully shared by the Neutral Powers. Russia, Austria, and Italy showed equal solicitude with the British Government in urging on the Prussian Government the withdrawal of its sanction to the candidature of Prince Leopold.*

* "M. de Gramont here read to me a telegram from General Fleury, who stated that the Emperor Alexander had written to the King of Prussia to beg him to order the Prince of Hohenzollern to withdraw his acceptance of the Crown, and had, moreover, expressed himself in most friendly terms to France, and manifested a most earnest desire to avert a war. The King of Prussia had, M. de Gramont went on to say, refused to comply with this request from his Imperial nephew."—*Dispatch from Lord Lyons to Lord Granville, dated July 13, 1870.*

In a dispatch from Lord Bloomfield to Lord Granville, dated "Vienna, July 11, 1870," the British Ambassador reports a conversation with Count Beust, in which the latter declared that "the delays and apparent irony with which the Prussian newspapers treated the affair had only tended to increase the irritation at Paris, that Prince Metternich seemed apprehensive of the worst, and he could not conceal from me that if the King of Prussia refused to disavow the candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, he saw no possible chance of effecting a compromise between the powers; at this moment all looked dark and hopeless."

At this stage of the controversy, therefore, I hold myself justified by the facts of the case in affirming, first, that France regarded the accession of a Prussian Prince to the Throne of Spain as a very serious danger to the French nation, but that there was a genuine desire to avert the danger by pacific means ; secondly, that the public opinion of England admitted that France had a legitimate grievance ; thirdly, that the English Government, while thinking that the danger to France was not so great as the French Government apprehended, thought, nevertheless, that the grievance was a real one, that the excitement in France was natural, and that the studied secrecy with which the intrigue had been conducted between Prussia and Spain afforded just grounds for suspicion and resentment, not merely to the French Government, but to neutral Powers as well ; fourthly, that the English Government, in common with the other neutral Powers, urged

“ My Italian colleague informs me that he has received instructions from his Government to urge upon the Spanish Ministers to the utmost of his power to avoid bringing on a rupture with France, and to come to some arrangement by which the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern may be withdrawn.”—*Dispatch from Mr. Layard to Lord Granville, dated July 11, 1870.*

the withdrawal of the King of Prussia's sanction to the candidature of the Hohenzollern Prince as the proper and necessary solution of the question.

Let us now see what sort of reception the Prussian Government gave to the remonstrances of France, and to the friendly representations of the other Powers. On the 8th of July Lord Granville wrote to Lord Lyons as follows :—

Count Bernstorff called upon me to-day, and informed me that he had received letters from the King of Prussia, and also from Berlin and from Count Bismarck, from the general tenour of which it appeared that the reply of the North German Government to the request first made to them by France, for explanation respecting the offer of the Crown of Spain to Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, was to the effect that it was not an affair which concerned the Prussian Government. They did not pretend to interfere with the independence of the Spanish nation, but left it to the Spaniards to settle their own affairs; and they were unable to give any information as to the negotiations which had passed between the Provisional Government of Madrid and the Prince of Hohenzollern.

Count Bernstorff said that he was not aware of the date at which the demand for explanation was made by the French Government, or of that of the answer which was returned to it.

His Excellency went on to say that the North German Government did not wish to interfere with the matter, but left it to the French to take what course they liked; and the

Prussian Representative at Paris had been directed to abstain from taking any part in it.

The North German Government had no desire for a war of succession, but if France chooses to make war on them on account of the choice of a King made by Spain, such a proceeding on her part would be an evidence of a disposition to quarrel without any lawful cause. It was premature, however, to discuss the question as long as the Cortes has not decided on accepting Prince Leopold as King of Spain; still, if France chooses to attack North Germany, that country will defend itself.

Count Bernstorff went on to say that the language which he had stated to me as held by the North German Government was also held by the King of Prussia. His Majesty, he added, was a stranger to the negotiations with Prince Leopold, but he will not forbid the Prince to accept the Crown of Spain.

With this may be compared the following dispatch from Lord A. Loftus to Earl Granville :—

BERLIN, *July 6, 1870.*

MY LORD,—Being prevented by illness from leaving the house, I requested Mr. Petre to call on M. de Thile* to inquire if his Excellency could give me any information on the subject of the reported offer of the Crown of Spain to the hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern.

M. de Thile informed Mr. Petre that the French Chargé d'Affaires, M. le Sourd, had called upon him a few days ago, and had stated that the intelligence which had reached the French Government of a deputation having been sent from

* M. de Thile conducted the affairs of the Foreign Office during the absence of Count Bismarck from Berlin.

Madrid to offer the Crown of Spain to the Prince of Hohenzollern, and of the offer having been accepted, had produced an unfavourable impression at Paris, and that the Imperial Government wished to know what course the Prussian Government intended to pursue with reference to this question ("quelle serait l'attitude du Gouvernement Prussien").

M. de Thile told the French Chargé d'Affaires that the selection of a Sovereign to fill the Throne of Spain was a question with which the Prussian Government had no concern whatever ("c'était une question qui n'existait pas pour le Gouvernement Prussien"), and that consequently he was not in a position to give any explanations upon the subject to the French Government. The Prussian Government considered that the statesmen and people of Spain were entitled to offer the Crown to any one whom they might think fit, and that it concerned the person alone to whom the offer was made to accept it or not.

In another dispatch, dated July 7, Lord A. Loftus reports that at an interview with M. Thile that day, the latter had "*stated that the Prussian Government would maintain an attitude of perfect silence and abstention.*" This "*attitude of perfect silence and abstention*" was maintained by the Prussian Government to the last. On the 12th of July, Lord A. Loftus writes from Berlin that he had just had an interview with Baron Thile at the Prussian Foreign Office; but "*His Excellency offered no observation on the question at issue, maintaining (as he has done since the commencement*

of the crisis) a guarded silence, declining any discussion on the merits of the question itself, and professing perfect ignorance of what was going on at Ems." Lord A. Loftus repeats this complaint in a dispatch dated "Berlin, July 16, 1870." "In the absence from Berlin," he says, "of the King and Count Bismarck during this crisis, the attitude of the Government here has been entirely passive and expectative; and Count Launay, like myself and his colleagues, have invariably found that Baron Thile declined any discussion on the question, stating that the Prussian Government rejected all responsibility on the subject of the candidature of Prince Leopold."

The French Government had occasion repeatedly to make the same complaint. On the 15th of July the Duc de Gramont complained to Lord Lyons that "the negotiation had, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, been carried on directly with the King of Prussia. The Prussian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Bismarck, had been in the country, and it had been impossible to approach him. The acting Minister, M. de Thile, professed to know nothing of the subject, and to consider it as a matter con-

cerning not the Prussian Government, but the King personally. Although the distinction was not in principle admissible, still it obliged France to treat with the King directly, and the French Ambassador had been sent to wait upon His Majesty at Ems."

Surely this extraordinary conduct on the part of the Prussian Government requires explanation. But no explanation has ever been offered or attempted. Let us put a parallel case. Let us suppose that Holland instead of Spain is in quest of a King, and that the Duke of Cambridge is suddenly and mysteriously announced as a candidate for the vacant throne. Germany is immediately and profoundly agitated. The Press, through all its organs, declares that the candidature is at once an insult and a menace to Germany. Count Bismarck hastens to make himself the mouth-piece of the national sentiment. He rises in his place in the Parliament of United Germany, and, in the words of the Duc de Gramont, declares as follows :

We have observed the strictest neutrality towards Holland. We shall continue to do so; but we do not consider that this principle obliges us to allow a foreign Power to disturb the

balance of power in Europe to our disadvantage by placing one of its Princes on the Throne of the Netherlands. To prevent this, we trust to the prudence of the English people and to the friendship of the people of Holland. But if it should be otherwise, we shall perform our duty without hesitation and without weakness.

All at once there is a stir in all the Cabinets. All combine in the endeavour to calm the ruffled spirits of Germany; but all agree, at the same time, that the susceptibilities of Germany have been unjustly wounded, that the conduct of England is both suspicious in itself and dangerous to the peace of Europe, and that the only practicable solution is the withdrawal by the British Government of the Duke of Cambridge's candidature. Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone has gone to Hawarden, to speculate on the connection between Phœnicia and Homeric Greece; Lord Granville suddenly discovers that he has been scandalously neglecting his duties as Warden of the Cinque Ports, and accordingly rushes off to Walmer Castle; while Her Most Gracious Majesty, weary of the sombre splendour of Windsor, and debilitated by the relaxing breezes of Osborne, seeks repose and refreshment beneath the shadows of the Grampian Hills. The Foreign Office, in the meantime, is

besieged by the diplomatic representatives of the great Powers. Mr. Otway receives them blandly, tells them that "the English Government know absolutely nothing about the Duke of Cambridge and his candidature, and would maintain an attitude of perfect silence and abstention." Under these embarrassing circumstances Count Bernstorff is instructed by his Government to repair to Balmoral, with the view of seeking an explanation from the Queen personally. Her Majesty, however, declines all responsibility in the matter, and declares her ignorance of the whole transaction. Nevertheless, on being pressed, she admits that she was consulted about the candidature of the Duke of Cambridge, but only as head of the family. She admits, further, that she had talked the matter over with Mr. Gladstone; but she positively declines to withdraw her sanction to the candidature of her cousin.

It is not difficult to imagine the incisive language in which Count Bismarck would have denounced conduct like this on the part of Great Britain. But do political actions, which in their essence are identical, change their character

according to the degree of latitude in which they take place? Does conduct which would have been universally pronounced underhand and dishonest if the theatre were London, and the British Government the actor, merit no opprobrium or blame at all when the scene is transferred from London to Berlin? A Government which was really anxious for the peace of Europe, and which had no clandestine intention of provoking a rupture with France, would, I venture to think, have acted in a manner very different from the Cabinet of Berlin. It seems to me simply impossible to read carefully and dispassionately the series of dispatches, on which I am commenting, without feeling convinced that Count Bismarck had deliberately made up his mind to have a war with France, and was manœuvring with singular dexterity to put his adversary ostensibly in the wrong, and provoke him to strike the first blow. It is evident, I think, that even as late as July 10, the Government of France would gladly have avoided the extremity of war, and have accepted any reasonable concession on the part of Prussia. That, at

all events, is my interpretation of the following dispatch:—

Lord Lyons to Earl Granville.—(Received July 11.)

[Extract.]

PARIS, July 10, 1870.

I have this morning had the honour to receive your Lordship's dispatches, relative to the Hohenzollern question, of the 6th and 8th instant, and of yesterday.

I spoke this afternoon to the Duc de Gramont in the sense of the two first dispatches of yesterday. I thanked his Excellency in your Lordship's name for the frankness of his communications to me, and for the friendly confidence he had shown in Her Majesty's Government. I observed that Her Majesty's Government hardly understood that the selection of a Prince of Hohenzollern for King of Spain was a matter of so much importance to a great nation like France as to warrant extreme measures. Making every allowance for the resentment which the secrecy with which this choice had been matured was calculated to arouse in France, still, I said, Her Majesty's Government trusted that the Government of the Emperor would act with moderation and forbearance in the further conduct of the discussion. They could not but regret the strong language used by the Government and the Press in France. They were still more disquieted by the military preparations which were in progress, and they could not but ask themselves whether in this state of things it would be judicious to persevere in efforts to bring about an amicable settlement. Her Majesty's Government had, M. de Gramont knew, used every endeavour to effect such a settlement, but they could not help fearing that the precipitation of the French Government might render all their exertions nugatory.

M. de Gramont said that in this matter the French

Ministers were following, not leading, the nation. Public opinion would not admit of their doing less than they had done.

As regarded military preparations, common prudence required that they should not be behindhand. In the midst of a profound calm, when the French Cabinet and Chamber were employed in reducing their military budget, Prussia exploded upon them this mine which she had prepared in secret. It was necessary that France should be at least as forward as Prussia in military preparations.

M. de Gramont went on to say that he would tell me exactly how the question now stood. The King of Prussia had told M. Benedetti last evening that he had in fact consented to the Prince of Hohenzollern's accepting the Crown of Spain; and that, having given his consent, it would be difficult for him now to withdraw it. His Majesty had added, however, that he would confer with the Prince, and would give a definitive answer to France when he had done so.

Thus, M. de Gramont observed, two things are clear; first, that the King of Prussia was a consenting party to the acceptance of the Crown by the Prince; and secondly, that the Prince's decision to persist in his acceptance, or to retire, will be made in concert with His Majesty. Thus, then, said M. de Gramont, the affair is now, beyond all controversy, one between France and the King.

The French Government would, M. de Gramont went on to say, defer for a short time longer (for twenty-four hours for instance) those great ostensible preparations for war (such as calling out the reserves) which would inflame public feeling in France. All essential preparations must, however, be carried out unremittingly. The French Ministers would be unwise if they run any risk of allowing Prussia to gain time by dilatory pretexts.

Finally M. de Gramont told me that I might report to your

Lordship that if the Prince of Hohenzollern should now, on the advice of the King of Prussia, withdraw his acceptance of the Crown, the whole affair would be at an end.

M. de Gramont did not, however, conceal from me that if, on the other hand, the Prince, after his conference with the King, persisted in coming forward as a candidate for the throne of Spain, France would forthwith declare war against Prussia.

I send a copy of this dispatch, confidentially, to Her Majesty's Minister at Madrid this evening by the Queen's messenger, Captain Bagge.

At this stage of the proceedings the attitude of the Imperial Government, as represented by the Duc de Gramont, cannot, I think, be considered as otherwise than moderate. Let it be remembered that two days before the date of the dispatch quoted above, M. de Gramont had told Lord Lyons that the French Government "had reason to know (indeed the Spanish Minister did not deny it) that the King of Prussia had been cognizant of the negotiation between Marshal Prim and the Prince of Hohenzollern throughout. It was therefore incumbent upon His Majesty if he desired to show friendship towards France, to prohibit formally the acceptance of the Crown by a Prince of his House. Silence, or an evasive answer, would be equivalent to a refusal." Not-

withstanding, however, his strong feeling on this point, the Duc de Gramont offered, on behalf of his Government, to be satisfied if the Prince of Hohenzollern would voluntarily retire on the *advice* of the King of Prussia. The demand that the King should formally prohibit the candidature, either as King or as head of the family, is abandoned; he is simply asked to "advise" his relative to "abandon his pretensions to the Crown of Spain." And, to do him justice, the King of Prussia appeared to be willing to accept this compromise. But it was not to be. Some occult influence was brought to bear on the intentions of the King, and on the 12th of July the French Foreign Minister told Lord Lyons "that the answer of the King of Prussia was neither courteous nor satisfactory. *His Majesty disclaimed all connection with the offer of the Crown of Spain to the Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, and declined to advise the Prince to withdraw his acceptance.*"

Meanwhile Prince Leopold's father had telegraphed to Marshal Prim the withdrawal of his son's candidature. I shall consider presently the bearings and import of this withdrawal.

But let us first see whether it is possible to account for the sudden change which passed over the mind of the King of Prussia. On the 9th of July he was willing to advise Prince Leopold to abandon his candidature. Two days afterwards he refused to do anything of the kind.

I have already remarked on the mysterious absence of Count Bismarck from the seat of Government during a crisis which had thrown all Europe into violent commotion. On the evening of the 12th, however, the Prussian Chancellor returned to Berlin, and on the following day Lord A. Loftus had an interview with him. The dispatch in which that interview is described is so important that it is necessary to quote *in extenso* the long extract from it which is published among the Parliamentary papers :

Lord A. Loftus to Earl Granville.—(Received July 15.)

BERLIN, July 13, 1870.

[Extract.]

I had an interview with Count Bismarck to-day, and congratulated his Excellency on the apparent solution of the impending crisis by the spontaneous renunciation of the Prince of Hohenzollern.

His Excellency appeared somewhat doubtful as to whether this solution would prove a settlement of the difference with France. He told me that the extreme moderation

evinced by the King of Prussia under the menacing tones of the French Government, and the courteous reception by His Majesty of Count Benedetti at Ems, after the severe language held to Prussia, both officially and in the French Press, was producing throughout Prussia general indignation.

He had that morning, he said, received telegrams from Bremen, Königsberg, and other places, *expressing strong disapprobation of the conciliatory course pursued by the King of Prussia at Ems, and requiring that the honour of the country should not be sacrificed.*

Count Bismarck then expressed a wish that Her Majesty's Government should take some opportunity, possibly by a declaration in Parliament, of expressing their satisfaction at the solution of the Spanish difficulty by the spontaneous act of Prince Leopold, and of bearing public testimony to the calm and wise moderation of the King of Prussia, his Government, and of the public Press.

His Excellency adverted to the declaration made by the Duc de Gramont to the Corps Législatif, "that the Powers of Europe had recognized the just grounds of France in the demand addressed to the Prussian Government;" and he was therefore anxious that some public testimony should be given that the Powers who had used their "bons offices" to urge on the Prussian Government a renunciation by Prince Leopold should likewise express their appreciation of the peaceful and conciliatory disposition manifested by the King of Prussia.

Count Bismarck then observed that intelligence had been received from Paris (though not officially from Baron Werther) that the solution of the Spanish difficulty would not suffice to content the French Government, and that other claims would be advanced. If such be the case, said his Excellency, it was evident that the question of the succession

to the Spanish Throne was but a mere pretext, and that the real object of France was to seek a revenge for Königrätz.

The feeling of the German nation, said his Excellency, was that *they were fully equal to cope with France, and they were equally as confident as the French might be of military success.* The feeling, therefore, in Prussia and in Germany was that they should accept no humiliation or insult from France, and that if unjustly provoked they should accept the combat.

But, said his Excellency, we do not wish for war, and we have proved, and shall continue to prove, our peaceful disposition; at the same time, we cannot allow the French to have the start of us as regards armaments. "I have," said his Excellency, "positive information that military preparations have been made, and are making, in France for war. Large stores of munition are being concentrated, large purchases of hay, and other materials necessary for a campaign, are making, and horses are being collected." If these continued, said his Excellency, *we shall be obliged to ask the French Government for explanations as to their object and meaning.*

After what has now occurred we must require some assurance, some guarantee, that we may not be subjected to a sudden attack; we must know that this Spanish difficulty once removed, there are no other lurking designs which may burst upon us like a thunderstorm.

Count Bismarck further stated that unless some assurance, some declaration, were given by France to the European Powers, or in some official form, that the present solution of the Spanish question was a final and satisfactory settlement of the French demands, and that no further claims were to be raised; and if, further, a withdrawal or a satisfactory explanation of the menacing language held by the Duc de Gramont were not made, the Prussian Government

would be obliged to seek explanations from France. It was impossible, added his Excellency, that Prussia could tamely and quietly sit under the affront offered to the King and to the nation by the menacing language of the French Government. I could not, said his Excellency, hold communication with the French Ambassador after the language held to Prussia by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs in the face of Europe.

From the foregoing observations of Count Bismarck, your Lordship will perceive that unless some timely counsel, some friendly hand, can intervene to appease the irritation between the two Governments, the breach, in lieu of being closed by the solution of the Spanish difficulty, is likely to become wider.

It is evident to me that Count Bismarck and the Prussian Ministry regret the attitude and disposition of the King towards Count Benedetti, and that in the view of the public opinion of Germany they feel the necessity of some decided measures to safeguard the honour of the nation.

The only means which could pacify the wounded pride of the German nation, and restore confidence in the maintenance of peace, would be by a declaration of the French Government that the incident of the Spanish difficulty has been satisfactorily adjusted, and in rendering justice to the moderate and peaceful disposition of the King of Prussia and his Government, that the good relations existing between the two States were not likely to be again exposed to any disturbing influences. I greatly fear that if no mediating influences can be successfully brought to bear on the French Government to appease the irritation against Prussia, and to counsel moderation, war will be inevitable.

Here, then, we have an explanation, and a very sinister one, of the sudden change in the attitude

of the King of Prussia. Count Bismarck was willing that his Royal Master should for a while profess "moderate and peaceful" sentiments. But when the moment came for translating professions into action Count Bismarck took care that no pacific solution should take place. How he managed this we shall see by-and-by. At present we must examine the leading points of his conversation with the British Ambassador.

First, "the conciliatory course pursued by the King of Prussia at Ems," having fulfilled its purpose, must be put an end to. That purpose was to supply Count Bismarck with an argument which might enable him to persuade neutral Governments to "bear public testimony to the calm and wise moderation of the King of Prussia, his Government, and of the public Press." And it must be owned that the argument proved tolerably effective. Such has been the success of Count Bismarck's craft that even the advocates of France have scarcely ever ventured to call in question "the calm and wise moderation" of Prussia during the initial stages of the quarrel. Yet the boasted "moderation" of the Berlin Press was characterized by Count Beust at the

time as an "apparent irony," which "had only tended to increase the irritation at Paris." "The wise moderation of the Prussian Government" consisted in an elaborate system of mystification and duplicity, exceedingly well calculated to irritate France, and which extorted more than one complaint from the Ambassador of England. "The Prussian Government," so Count Bernstorff assured Lord Granville, "were not cognizant" of the candidature of Prince Leopold. And this, after the King had reluctantly admitted to Count Benedetti that he had given his sanction to the candidature, and had been in communication with Count Bismarck on the subject! As for the "moderation" of the King, all that can be said is that it ceased at the very point where it would have secured peace.

Secondly, Count Bismarck knew, and made no secret of his knowledge, that Germany was "fully able to cope with France." He had therefore no misgiving of any kind as to the consequences of a trial of strength with France. He was well aware that he could throw his legions into France before a single French battalion could cross the Rhine. Mr. Disraeli's assertion in the House of

Commons on the 9th of this month (February), that "although the Prussians did not despair of ultimate success in the struggle, they were in a military sense surprised," must have afforded considerable amusement to Counts Bismarck and Moltke when they read it. So much were the Prussians "surprised" that they knew every inch of ground between the Rhine and Paris better than any officer in the armies of France. So much were they "surprised," that they "surprised" the French generals in every action from Weissenburg to Sedan. So much were they "surprised," that their armies sat down around Paris according to a plan of campaign prepared long before in Berlin, each regiment marching without a blunder to the place assigned to it. And the last proof of the Prussian "surprise" is supplied by Dr. Russell from Versailles, in a letter published in *The Times* of Feb. 4. "The German officers," he says, "were provided with plans which enabled us to visit every part of the French forts without a guide."

Thirdly, it is plain from Count Bismarck's conversation with Lord A. Loftus, as related above, that he was "hedging"—if I may use

the expression—so as to secure in any case the certainty of a war with France. What else is the meaning of two of the passages which I have marked by italics? France, it was feared, might yield to the solicitation of England, and declare herself satisfied with the abandonment of Prince Leopold's candidature. In that case Count Bismarck had another string to his bow. France must apologize for her violent language, and must give satisfactory guarantees of good behaviour for the future. "It was impossible that Prussia could tamely and quietly sit under the affront offered to the King and Nation by the menacing language of the French Government;" and Count Bismarck "could not hold communication with the French ambassador" till the "affront" was atoned for. Is this the language of a man anxious for peace? Does it not show rather a settled determination to fasten a quarrel on France at any cost? Count Bismarck, with consummate art, had got his enemy into his toils, and he laid his plans so skilfully that his prey could not possibly escape him. If France had accepted the withdrawal of Prince Leopold as a satisfactory solution of the

question, the wily Chancellor of the North German Confederation had another card to play. He would have appeared on the scene in the character of an injured innocent, and demanded an apology from France for the affront she had put on the Fatherland. One of the most conspicuous features in the diplomatic strategy of Count Bismarck is the adroitness with which he generally manages to throw on his opponent the *onus* of the very plot which he has himself concocted. The Hohenzollern intrigue had been devised in secret, and Europe knew nothing of it till it was ripe for execution. It burst like a thunderbolt in a clear sky. Accordingly, Count Bismarck calmly tells Lord A. Loftus :—

After what has now occurred, we must require some assurance, some guarantee, that we may not be subjected to a sudden attack ; we must know that, this Spanish difficulty once removed, there are no other lurking designs which may burst upon us like a thunderstorm.

Who would have gathered from this that it was Prussia, not France, which had “ burst upon us like a thunderstorm ” in the midst of an unusual political calm ? Yet Prussia, forsooth ! “ must require some assurance, some guarantee,”

against the recurrence of "other lurking designs which may burst upon us like a thunderstorm"!

Count Bismarck knew well that, under the circumstances, France would consider it a direct insult to be "required" to give such a guarantee as he proposed. War would have been the inevitable result of such a demand. But it was not clear that Europe would, in that case, have held Prussia blameless. Yet the moral support of Europe was of the utmost consequence to Prussia, and must not be lightly forfeited. France must be made to fight in any case; but means must be found to put her in the wrong, and thus array the moral sympathy of the world against her. What those means were I shall now proceed to relate.

It was on the morning of the 13th of July that the British ambassador at Berlin "congratulated" Count Bismarck "on the apparent solution of the impending crisis by the spontaneous renunciation of the Prince of Hohenzollern." But "his Excellency appeared somewhat doubtful as to whether this solution would prove a settlement of the difference with France;" and he "expressed strong disapprobation of the

conciliatory course pursued by the King of Prussia at Ems."

On the same day the British Ambassador in Paris had an interview with the Duc de Gramont. The following passage shows the frame of mind in which the French Government was at that date:—

M. de Gramont here read to me a telegram from General Fleury, who stated that the Emperor Alexander had written to the King of Prussia to beg him to order the Prince of Hohenzollern to withdraw his acceptance of the Crown, and had, moreover, expressed himself in most friendly terms to France, and manifested a most earnest desire to avert a war.

The King of Prussia had, M. de Gramont went on to say, refused to comply with this request from his Imperial nephew. The King had not given a word of explanation to France.

His Majesty had, he repeated, done nothing, absolutely nothing. *France would not take offence at this. She would not call upon His Majesty to make her any amends.* The King had authorized the Prince of Hohenzollern to accept the Crown of Spain; all that France now asked was that His Majesty would forbid the Prince to alter at any future time his decision to withdraw that acceptance. Surely it was but reasonable that France should take some precautions against a repetition of what had occurred when Prince Leopold's brother went off to Bucharest. It was not to be supposed that France would run the risk of Prince Leopold suddenly presenting himself in Spain, and appealing to the chivalry of the Spanish people. *Still France did not call upon Prussia to prevent the Prince's going to Spain; all she*

desired was that the King should forbid him to change his present resolution to withdraw his candidature. If His Majesty would do this, the whole affair would be absolutely and entirely at an end.

I asked him whether he authorized me categorically to state to Her Majesty's Government, in the name of the Government of the Emperor, that, in this case, the whole affair would be completely over.

He said, Undoubtedly; and he took a sheet of paper and wrote the following memorandum, which he placed in my hands:—

“Nous demandons au Roi de Prusse de défendre au Prince de Hohenzollern de revenir sur sa résolution. S'il le fait tout l'incident est terminé.”

I observed to M. de Gramont that I could hardly conceive that the French Government could really apprehend that after all that had occurred Prince Leopold would again offer himself as a candidate, or be accepted by the Spanish Government if he did.

M. de Gramont said that he was bound to take precautions against such an occurrence, and that if the King refused to issue the simple prohibition which was proposed, France could only suppose that designs hostile to her were entertained, and must take her measures accordingly.

Finally, M. de Gramont asked me whether France could count upon the good offices of England to help her in obtaining from the King this prohibition.

I said that nothing could exceed the desire of Her Majesty's Government to effect a reconciliation between France and Prussia, but that, of course, I could not take upon myself to answer offhand, without reference to Her Majesty's Government, a specific question of this kind.

I promised to report immediately to your Lordship all he had said.

The matter is the more urgent as M. de Gramont has engaged to give explanations to the Chambers the day after to-morrow.

I have, &c.

(Signed) LYONS.

Now let it be observed that on the very day on which Count Bismarck in Berlin was expressing his conviction that war was inevitable, that the King of Prussia had been too civil to the Ambassador of France, and that France must be made to make amends to Prussia before an open rupture could be avoided, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs was declaring to the British Ambassador in Paris that "France would not take offence" at the conduct of the King of Prussia, and "would not call upon His Majesty to make her any amends." She would not even "call upon Prussia to prevent the Prince's going to Spain." She would be satisfied and would consider the matter at an end if the King of Prussia would "forbid" Prince Leopold to resume his candidature. In a word, all that the French Government wanted at this time was that the King of Prussia should in some way express his disapproval of Prince Leopold's candidature—a thing which he had

never done, and has not done to this day. That slight concession would have prevented the war; but the concession was not made.

On the 13th of July, then, the situation may be described thus: France felt affronted, but declared her willingness to pocket the affront in the interest of peace. Prussia professed peaceful intentions, but thought a pacific settlement impossible, and insisted on the necessity of requiring amends from France. Which of these two attitudes is the more pacific? Moreover, which of the two Powers gave the best practical proof of peaceful intentions? The French Minister for Foreign Affairs committed his Government explicitly and formally to a peaceful issue, provided the King of Prussia could be got to meet him half-way; and he solicited the good offices of the English Government in the cause of conciliation and peace.

So much as to the disposition of the French Government. How did Prussia act? Lord Granville undertook the office of peace-maker with alacrity. He thought, indeed, that France might have been satisfied with the simple withdrawal of the Prince of Hohenzollern's candidature. Still

Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that the King of Prussia might be persuaded, in the interest of peace, to make the concession with which France declared herself willing to be satisfied. The following paragraph from Earl Granville's answer to Lord Lyons' dispatch explains the character of the proposal "urgently recommended to the King of Prussia" by our Government.

This recommendation has been placed before the King, on behalf of her Majesty's Government, in the following terms: namely, that as His Majesty had consented to the acceptance by Prince Leopold of the Spanish Crown, and had thereby in a certain sense become a party to the arrangement, so he might with perfect dignity communicate to the French Government his consent to the withdrawal of the acceptance, if France shall waive her demand for an engagement covering the future. Such a communication, Her Majesty's Government have said, made at the suggestion of a friendly Power, would be a further and the strongest proof of the King's desire for the maintenance of the peace of Europe.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

Unfortunately Lord Granville had reckoned without his host. "This recommendation" had *not* "been placed before the King." The following dispatch explains why:—

Earl Granville to Lord A. Loftus.

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 15, 1870.

MY LORD,—By my telegram of yesterday, dated 3 P.M., your Excellency will have learnt that, in a memorandum which has been placed in the hands of the North German Ambassador, with the view to its being communicated to the King of Prussia, Her Majesty's Government recommended to Prussia, that, as the King had consented to the acceptance by Prince Leopold of the Throne of Spain, and had thereby in a certain sense become a party to the arrangement, His Majesty might, with perfect dignity, communicate to the French Government his consent to the withdrawal of that acceptance, in the event of France waiving her demand for an engagement on the part of Prussia, covering the future.

Count Bernstorff called upon me this morning, and informed me that he had received a telegram from Count Bismarck, in which he expressed his regret that *Her Majesty's Government should have made a proposal which it would be impossible for him to recommend to the King for His Majesty's acceptance.*

Prussia had shown, under a public menace from France, a calmness and moderation which would render any further concession on her part equivalent to a submission to the arbitrary will of France, and would be viewed in the light of a humiliation, which the national feeling throughout Germany would certainly repudiate as a fresh insult.

Public opinion in Germany proves that under the influence of the menaces of France the whole of Germany had arrived at the conclusion that war, even under the most difficult circumstances, would be preferable to the submission of the King to the unjustifiable demands of France.

The Prussian Government, as such, has nothing to do with the acceptance of the candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, and had not even been cognizant of it. They could

not, therefore, balance their assent to such acceptance by their assent to its withdrawal.

A demand for interference on the part of a Sovereign in a matter of purely private character could not, his Excellency considered, be made the subject of public communication between Governments, and that as the original pretext for such a demand was to be found in the candidature itself, it could no longer be necessary now that the candidature had been renounced.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

Is this the conduct of a man who was desirous to keep the peace? Nor was Count Bismarck satisfied with meeting the mediation of the British Government with a rude rebuff. On the evening of the fatal 13th of July the following telegraphic dispatch was published in a special supplement to the Prussian ministerial organ, the *North German Gazette*. I copy the dispatch, title and all, just as it was transmitted by Count Bismarck to the Prussian Ambassador in London:—

*Telegram addressed by the Prussian Government to
Foreign Governments.*

(Translation.)

After the news of the renunciation of the hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially communicated to the Imperial French Government by the Royal Spanish Government, the French Ambassador at Ems further demanded of His Majesty, the King, to authorize him to tele-

graph to Paris that His Majesty the King engages for all future time never again to give his consent if the Hohenzollerns should again return to their candidature. His Majesty the King thereon declined to receive the French Ambassador again, and had him told by the adjutant in attendance that His Majesty had nothing further to communicate to the Ambassador.

The effect produced by this telegram on the population of Berlin, and the version of the incident which oozed out of the office of Count Bismarck, are thus described by the Berlin correspondent of *The Times* :—

Reverting to the indefinite hints dropped by her representatives in the preceding stages of the negotiation, France declared herself to be not content with the mere retirement of Prince Hohenzollern. She now insisted upon a public sanction of his retreat by the King of Prussia. More than that: she asked the King of Prussia to engage at no future time to allow any member of his family to become a candidate for the Throne of Spain. Extravagant in itself, the way in which this demand was preferred rendered it still more offensive. To acquit himself of the ungracious message he had been instructed to deliver, the French Ambassador thought it decent to stop his Majesty as he was walking in the public gardens at Ems. There, in an alley, filled with the pleasure-seekers of a German spa, with fashionable ladies and gentlemen gossiping at a few paces, and the eyes of the whole elegant and curious crowd fixed upon them, the representative of France accosted the King of Prussia. Was he instructed to dispense with the ordinary forms of diplomatic intercourse? Or was the disregard of ceremony, so painfully remarkable in his behaviour, a blunder inad-

vertently committed by Count Benedetti, not an insult designedly planned and ordered by his Government? On an occasion of such vital importance it is difficult to believe that proper respect is waived except by design. However that may be, the King, finding an exorbitant demand put to him in a most unbecoming manner, had to deal with the fact of the offence, not to examine into its cause. He acquitted himself of the duty of the moment in the dignified and gentlemanly style for which he is noted. Quietly turning round to his Adjutant, Lieutenant Colonel Count Lehndorf, who had retired a few steps when he saw the Ambassador approaching, the King said:—"Be kind enough to inform Count Benedetti that there is no reply, and that I cannot receive him again." While Count Lehndorf was doing his bidding, the King walked off. The gay crowd around stood aghast. They had seen enough to know that something serious must have happened; yet they were not prepared for the stunning reports that soon began to fly about.

The King immediately caused the affair to be telegraphed to Count Bismarck, who lost no time in publishing it. At nine p.m. newsboys were to be seen in great numbers in the principal thoroughfares, *distributing gratis* a special supplement to the *Norddeutsche Zeitung*. It contained a short paragraph, relating in unpretending language, and without any remark, what had occurred. The effect this bit of printed paper had upon the town was tremendous. It was hailed by old and young. It was welcomed by fathers of families and boys in their teens. It was read and re-read by ladies and young girls, and, in patriotic glow, finally handed over to the servants, who fondly hoped their sweethearts would be on the march by this time. As though a stain had been wiped out from the national escutcheon, as though a burden, too heavy to be borne for a long time past, had been cast off at last, people were thanking God that their honour had been ulti-

mately vindicated against intolerable assumption. There was but one opinion as to the manly and worthy conduct of the King; there was but one determination to follow his example, and take up the gauntlet flung into their face. By ten o'clock the square in front of the Royal Palace was crowded with an excited multitude.—Hurrahs for the King, and cries "To the Rhine!" were heard on all sides. Similar demonstrations were made in other quarters of the town. It was the explosion of a long-pent-up anger.

Note particularly the significant sentence:—
"At nine p.m. newsboys were to be seen in great numbers in the principal thoroughfares, *distributing gratis* a special supplement to the *Norddeutsche Zeitung*," the official organ of the Prussian Government. Who sent those newsboys on their warlike mission? Count Bismarck would probably be able to answer the question.

But Count Bismarck, not content with rousing the warlike feeling of Berlin to fever heat, telegraphed immediately to foreign Governments the inflammatory paragraph which he had published in the *North German Gazette*. The natural result followed. Paris hurled back the defiance of Berlin. But let it not be forgotten that it was Berlin—misled by a *ruse* which, read by the crimson light of the last six months, may be justly characterized as diabolical—that threw

down the gauntlet. In crying "à Berlin!" Paris, after all, was only returning answer to Berlin challenging her "to the Rhine," and shouting "Nach Paris!"

How this deplorable incident affected the French Government is related in the following dispatch:—

Lord Lyons to Earl Granville.—(Received July 16.)

PARIS, July 14, 1870.

MY LORD,—In my dispatch of yesterday I communicated to your Lordship the account given to me by the Duc de Gramont of the state of the question regarding the acceptance of the Crown of Spain by Prince Leopold of Hohenzolern, and the recent withdrawal of that acceptance.

My dispatch was sent off at the usual hour, 7 o'clock in the evening. During the early part of the night which followed, the hope that it might yet be possible to preserve peace gained some strength. It was understood that the renunciation of his pretensions by Prince Leopold himself had come to confirm that made on his behalf by his father, and that the Spanish Government had formally declared to the Government of France that the candidature of the Prince was at an end. The language of influential members of the Cabinet was more pacific, and it was thought possible that some conciliatory intelligence might arrive from Prussia and enable the Government to pronounce the whole question to be at an end.

But in the morning all was changed. A telegram was received from the French Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin stating that an article had appeared in the Prussian Ministerial organ, the *North German Gazette*, to the effect that the

French Ambassador had requested the King to promise never to allow a Hohenzollern to be a candidate for the throne of Spain, and that His Majesty had thereupon refused to receive the Ambassador, and sent him word by an Aide-de-camp that he had nothing more to say to him.

The intelligence of the publication of this article completely changed the view taken by the French Government of the state of the question. The Emperor came into Paris from St. Cloud, and held a council at the Tuileries, and it was considered certain that a declaration hostile to Prussia would be addressed at once by the Government to the Chambers.

I made every possible endeavour to see the Duc de Gramont, but was unable to do so. I sent him, however, a most pressing message by the Chief of his Cabinet, begging him, in the name of Her Majesty's Government, not to rush precipitately into extreme measures, and, at all events, not to commit the Government by a premature declaration to the Chambers. It would, I represented, be more prudent, and at the same time more dignified, to postpone addressing the Chambers at least until the time originally fixed, that is to say, until to-morrow.

In the meantime, although the news of the appearance of the article in the *North German Gazette* had not become generally known, the public excitement was so great, and so much irritation existed in the army, that it became doubtful whether the Government could withstand the cry for war, even if it were able to announce a decided diplomatic success. It was felt that when the Prussian article appeared in the Paris evening papers it would be very difficult to restrain the anger of the people; and it was generally thought that the Government would feel bound to appease the public impatience by formally declaring its intention to resent the conduct of Prussia.

The sittings of the Legislative Body and the Senate have, however, passed over without any communication being made on the subject, and thus no ir retrievable step has yet been taken by the Government.

I cannot, however, venture to give your Lordship any hope that war will now be avoided. I shall continue to do all that is possible, in the name of Her Majesty's Government, to avert this great calamity; but I am bound to say that there is the most serious reason to apprehend that an announcement nearly equivalent to a declaration of war will be made in the Chambers to-morrow.

I have, &c.

(Signed) LYONS.

On the following day (July 15), the French Government put forth the subjoined declaration:—

(Translation.)

GOVERNMENT DECLARATION.—The Keeper of the Seals made the following Declaration in the Legislative Body, which was at the same time read in the Senate by the Duc de Gramont:—

“In the absence of my honourable friend, M. le Duc de Gramont, I am about to communicate to the Chamber the statement which has been drawn up at the Council of Ministers.

“The Minister reminds the Chamber how, as soon as the Government had been informed of Prince Leopold's acceptance of the Spanish Throne, he had demanded explanations from the Prussian Cabinet.

“The Cabinet of Berlin pretended to ignore the affair, and declared that it was not privy to it.

“Thereupon the French Government addressed itself directly to the King of Prussia.

“Orders were given to the Ambassador to proceed to Ems.

"The King of Prussia admitted that he had authorized Prince Leopold to accept the Crown, but only in his capacity as head of the family, and not in that of King.

"Nevertheless His Majesty admitted that he had told Count Bismarck.

"These answers have not appeared satisfactory to the French Government, who could not admit these subtle distinctions.

"The Government insisted that the King of Prussia should impose on Prince Leopold the express condition of renouncing, for the future, the Spanish Crown, should it be again offered to him.

"This moderate demand has been refused, both in substance and in form.

"The King answered that he was neither able nor willing to undertake such an engagement.

"Although this refusal seemed inexplicable, the Government did not break off negotiations, and great was the surprise of the French Government when it learnt yesterday that the King of Prussia had announced to the Ambassador that he would not receive him, and that his Government had communicated the decision to the Cabinets of Europe.

"The Government at the same time learnt that Baron de Werther had been told to demand his passports.

"Under these circumstances, a further attempt at conciliation was impossible—it would have been to forget the dignity of France.

"We have neglected nothing to avoid a war," adds the Minister; "we are about to prepare ourselves for the one that is offered to us. (Loud cheers from the Right.)

"Since yesterday," the Minister went on to say, "we have called in the reserves, and we have reckoned on your concurrence in order to take at once the needful measures for saving the interests and honour of France." (Renewed cheers on the Right.)

On the same day the Duc de Gramont had a conversation with Lord Lyons, from which I select the following :—

He desired me to express to Her Majesty's Government the thanks of the Government of the Emperor for the friendly endeavours which they had made to effect a satisfactory solution of the question with Prussia. The good offices of Her Majesty's Government had, however, been made of no effect by the last acts of the Prussian Government. That Government had deliberately insulted France by declaring to the public that the King had affronted the French Ambassador. It was evidently the intention of the Government of Prussia to take credit with the people of Germany for having acted with haughtiness and discourtesy—in fact, to humiliate France. Not only had the statement so offensive to France been published by the Government in its newspaper, but it had been communicated officially by telegraph to the Prussian Agents throughout Europe.

Until this had been done the negotiation had been particularly private. It had, from the peculiar circumstances of the case, been carried on directly with the King of Prussia. The Prussian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Bismarck, had been in the country, and it had been impossible to approach him. The negotiation had not proceeded satisfactorily. But so long as it remained private there were hopes of bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion. Nor indeed had the King treated M. Benedetti with the rough discourtesy which had been boasted of by the Prussian Government. But that Government had now chosen to declare to Germany and to Europe that France had been affronted, in the person of her Ambassador. It was this boast which was the gravamen of the offence. It constituted the insult which no nation of any spirit could brook, and rendered it, much to

the regret of the French Government, impossible to take into consideration the mode of settling the original matter in dispute, which was recommended by Her Majesty's Government.

Count Bismarck lost no time in giving the Prussian version of the incident at Ems, and of the general situation up to the date of the rupture. This he did in a dispatch to Count Bernstorff, dated *July 18*. The following extracts contain the gist of his argument:—

For a week past it could be no matter of doubt to us that the Emperor Napoleon was resolved, regardless of consequences, to bring us into a position in which we should only have the choice between war and a humiliation which the honourable feelings of no nation can bear. Could we have entertained any doubt, we must have been undeceived by the Report of the Royal Ambassador on his first conference with the Duc de Gramont and M. Ollivier, after his return from Ems, in which the first described the renunciation of the hereditary Prince as a secondary matter, and *both Ministers demanded that His Majesty the King should write an apologetic letter to the Emperor Napoleon, the publication of which might pacify the excited feeling in France*. The scorn of the French Government press anticipated the desired triumph; but the Government seems to have feared that the war might still escape it, and hastened, by its official declarations of the 15th instant, to transfer the matter to a field which no longer admitted of intervention, and to prove to us and all the world that no compliance within the bounds of the national feelings of honour would suffice to maintain peace.

As, however, no one doubted, or could doubt, that we* sincerely desired peace, and a few days before considered no war possible, as every pretext for war was wanting, and even the last artificially and forcibly created pretext, as it was devised without our aid, so it had disappeared again of itself; as, therefore, there was no *cause* at all for war, there was nothing left for the French Ministers, in order to their seeming justification before *their own people, really peaceably disposed and requiring tranquillity, but by means of misrepresentation and invention of facts, the falsity of which was known to them from official documents, to persuade the two representative bodies, and through them the people, that they had been affronted by Prussia, thereby to stir up their passions to an outbreak by which they might represent themselves as carried away.*

It is a sad business to expose the series of untruths; fortunately the French Ministers have shortened the task, as they, by their refusal to produce the note or despatch, as demanded by a part of the Assembly, *have prepared the world for the intelligence that it has no existence whatever.*

This is in fact the case. There exists no note or despatch by which the Prussian Government notified to the Cabinets of Europe a refusal to receive the French Ambassador. There exists nothing but the newspaper telegram known to all the world, which was communicated to the German Governments, and to some of our Representatives with non-German Governments according to the wording of the newspapers, in order to inform them of the nature of the French demands, and the impossibility of complying with them, and which, moreover, contains nothing injurious to France.

The text of it is inclosed herewith. We have addressed no further communications on the incident to any Govern-

* The italics are Count Bismarck's.

ment. In regard to the fact of the refusal to receive the French Ambassador, in order to set that assertion in its proper light, I am authorized by His Majesty to transmit the two inclosed official documents to your Excellency, with the request that you will communicate them to the Government to which you have the honour to be accredited: the first is a literally correct account of what took place at Ems, drawn up at the command, and with the immediate approval of His Majesty the King; the second is the official report of the adjutant in attendance on His Majesty, on the performance of the duty assigned to him.

It may be unnecessary to point out that the firmness in repelling French pretension was attended with all the considerate friendliness both in *matter* and *form* which comports so well with the personal habits of his Majesty the King, as well as with the principles of international courtesy towards the Representatives of friendly sovereigns and nations.

Finally, with regard to the departure of our Ambassador, I only remark, as was officially known to the French Cabinet, that it was no recall, but a leave of absence requested by the Ambassador for personal reasons, and that he had transferred the business to the First Councillor of Legation, who had often represented him before, and had given me notification thereof as usual. The statement is also untrue that His Majesty the King communicated the candidature of Prince Leopold to me, the undersigned Chancellor of the Confederation. *I was casually informed in confidence of the Spanish offer by a private person concerned in the negotiations.*

This document is a good specimen of Count Bismarck's method of controversy. Relying on the inability or disinclination of the multitude to

analyse facts for themselves, he builds an edifice of utterly unfounded allegations on the smallest possible basis of truth. Let us test some of the statements quoted above, and we shall find, I think, a few particles of truth mixed up in a large bundle of falsehoods.

The French Government, we are told, "demanded that His Majesty the King should write an apologetic letter to the Emperor Napoleon." Count Bismarck makes this formal assertion in a dispatch addressed to the North German Ambassador in London; and he had previously made a similar communication to the Berlin journals, which, of course, was adding fuel to the warlike feeling against France. Now surely a Statesman who "sincerely desired peace," would not have published such a statement, even if it were true. But it was not true. The Government of France never "demanded an apologetic letter" from the King of Prussia. Count Bismarck's reckless assertion was energetically denied by the Ministers on whom he fastened it. Not a trace of such a demand is to be found in any of the papers published by Her Majesty's Government. What really took place is thus related by the Duc de Gramont:—

The Ambassador of Prussia, in our interview, dwelt particularly on this consideration, that the King, in authorizing the candidature of Prince de Hohenzollern, had never had any intention of wounding the Emperor, and had never supposed that this combination could give umbrage to France. I observed to my interlocutor that if such was the case a similar assurance given would be of a nature to facilitate the accord we were seeking. But I did not ask that the King should write a letter of apology, as the Berlin journals have pretended in their semi-official commentaries.

And it was on this innocent remark, dropped casually in the course of conversation, that Count Bismarck built his portentous assertion that the Government of France had demanded a letter of apology from the King of Prussia!

Equally tortuous is the account which Count Bismarck gives of the mysterious telegram which was the immediate cause of the war. According to the Berlin Correspondent of *The Times*, it was sent from Ems to Count Bismarck by the King of Prussia; and it is admitted on all hands that Count Bismarck communicated it to the official organ of the Government in Berlin. Count Bismarck, moreover, admits explicitly that he "communicated" the telegram "to the German Governments, and to some of our Representatives with non-German Governments—in order to in-

form them of the nature of the French demands, and the impossibility of complying with them." He even "encloses" "the text of it" to Count Bernstorff in the precise form in which I have already quoted it.*

It happened, however, that the French Government spoke of the telegram as a "note or dispatch;" and Count Bismarck accordingly becomes quite pathetic in his sorrow over the mendacity of French Ministers. "It is a sad business," he says, "to expose the series of untruths;" and foremost in that series is the declaration by the French Government that the Prussian Government had communicated to Foreign Cabinets the refusal of the King of Prussia to receive the Ambassador of France. "Such communication," says Count Bismarck, "has no existence whatever. . . . There exists no note or dispatch by which the Prussian Government notified to the Cabinets of Europe a refusal to receive the French Ambassador." And then follows the cool admission that Count Bismarck himself did the very thing which he has just denounced as one of a "series of untruths"! An

* See page 49.

affront does not cease to be an affront because the telegraphic wire happens to be the medium of its communication, and Count Bismarck is probably the only man in Europe whose cynical audacity is equal to the perpetration of so transparent a sophism. But he knows mankind well. Experience has evidently taught him the value of his countryman's immoral "*Pecca fortiter*"—at least in the domain of politics. Lie boldly, and the generality of men, too indolent or careless to test assertions by facts, will measure the accuracy of your statements by the energy of your asseveration.*

* Here is another example of the manner in which this preacher of truthfulness is wont to practise his own precepts. In a lengthy invective against France, which he despatched on the 9th of last January to the representatives of Germany at Foreign Courts, he accuses the French Government of openly encouraging French prisoners to break their *parole*, and he founds that accusation on a decree which Prince Frederick Charles found in the neighbourhood of Vendome, after the defeat of the Army of the Loire. Count Bismarck evidently had the decree before him when he wrote, for he quotes from it; and this is what he says of it:—

“During the last few days we have obtained proof that the present Minister at War expressly sanctions this faithlessness (in breaking *parole*), encourages it, and promises to reward it by payment in cash. A decree of the Minister at War, dated the 13th of November, which has fallen into the hands of our troops, ‘*desirant encourager les officiers à s’échapper des mains*

The sudden departure of the Prussian Ambassador from Paris at the very climax of the excitement between the two Governments was

de l'ennemi, promises to each individual escaped from Germany, besides the previously promised compensation for losses, a sum of 750f."

Fortunately for the cause of truth, however, *The Times*' Military correspondent with the army of Prince Frederick Charles sent a copy of this identical decree to *The Times*, and prefaced it with the just remark that it "shows, at least, that the French Government does not openly encourage the escape of officers who have given their *parole* to the Prussians." Here is the decree, as published in *The Times* of Dec. 30:—

“MINISTRY OF WAR, TOURS, Nov. 13.

“MESSIEURS,—By a decree of the 10th of November the Government of National Defence, desiring to encourage officers to escape from the hands of the enemy, has resolved that those among them who returned to France after escape shall receive an indemnification of 750f. to clothe and equip themselves anew.

“This measure does not apply to losses of effects suffered under other conditions. Such must be proved under the ordinary form prescribed by the order of the 25th of December 1837 (Articles 2 and 3).

“You are authorised to have the allowance of 750f. paid after having proved the identity of the officers by means of a regular paper, and their real position by a declaration upon honour that they have escaped.”

After reference to payment of higher sums to officers of superior rank, the document proceeds:—

“The preceding dispositions being applicable to all the

certainly an odd way of showing Prussia's "sincere desire for peace." But "it was no recall, but a leave of absence requested by the Ambassador for personal reasons." The Ambassador who made such a request at such a moment ought to have been instantly dismissed from his post. But does anybody believe in the genuineness of this plea? Is it possible to doubt that Baron de Werther's "personal reasons" were invented in the study of Count Bismarck, and were intended to form another link in that chain

escaped officers, without exception, since the opening of the campaign, you may supply to all those who have already received an indemnification less than 750*fr.* the sum necessary to complete the allowance.

"It is to be understood that all officers and functionaries, officers of health, and administrative agents, who may return covering themselves by the Convention of Geneva, are excluded from the present decision. *As regards officers who have made any engagement whatever with Prussia, the regulations given in the circulars of the 27th and 28th of last September refuse them every kind of indemnity for loss of their effects.* There is no alteration in what concerns the loss of horses.

"Receive, &c."

It is plain from the words in italics that officers who gave their *parole* are expressly excluded from the terms of the stipulation; and Count Bismarck knew this when he quoted the decree as encouraging "officers in the French army to break their word of honour."

of clever manœuvres with which Count Bismarck contrived to drag France to her fatal encounter with Germany's armed hosts.

“The statement is also untrue that His Majesty the King communicated the candidature of Prince Leopold to me, the undersigned Chancellor of the Confederation.” But “I was casually informed in confidence of the Spanish offer by a private person concerned in the negotiations.” Observe the casuistry of this distinction. The King of Prussia admitted to Count Benedetti that he had informed Count Bismarck of the Hohenzollern Candidature. But then it was Von Bismarck, not “the undersigned Chancellor of the Confederation,” to whom this royal confidence was imparted; it was the man, not the Minister, who was consulted on the subject of the candidature. Reasoning of this sort would in private life be scouted as disreputable tergiversation. Does a man cease to be amenable to the recognized rules of morality when he dons the garb of a diplomatist?

In the dispatch under examination Count Bismarck refers to “two official documents” explanatory of the Ems incident. They are

substantially the same, and it is sufficient, therefore, to quote the first, which runs as follows:—

Memorandum of what occurred at Ems, drawn up at the command and with the approval of the King of Prussia.

[Translation.]

On the 9th instant, Count Benedetti asked at Ems for an audience by the King, which was at once granted to him. Wherein he required that the King should order the hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern to withdraw his acceptance of the Spanish Crown. The King replied that, as throughout the whole affair he had only been applied to as head of the family, and never as King of Prussia, that as therefore he had given no order for accepting the candidature for the Throne, neither could he give any order for the retractation. On the 11th, the French Ambassador asked for and obtained a *second* audience, wherein he tried to exert a pressure on the King to the end that he should urge the Prince to renounce the Crown. The King replied, that the Prince was entirely free in his resolutions; moreover, that he himself did not even know where the Prince, who wanted to take an Alpine journey, was at that moment. On the Fountain promenade, in the morning of the 13th, the King gave the Ambassador an extra number of the "Cologne Gazette," which had been just delivered to himself, with a private telegram from Sigmaringen, on the renunciation of the Prince, the King remarking that he himself had not yet received any letter from Sigmaringen, but might expect one to-day. Count Benedetti mentioned that he had received news of the renunciation from Paris the evening before; and as the King thereupon looked upon the matter as settled, the Ambassador now quite unexpectedly required of the King that he should pronounce a distinct assurance that he *never again* would

give his consent if the candidature for the Crown in question should be ever revived. The King decidedly refused such a demand, and kept to that decision, as Count Benedetti repeatedly and ever more urgently returned to his proposition. Nevertheless, after some hours, Count Benedetti sought a *third audience*. On inquiry what was the subject to be spoken of, he returned answer that he wished to *recur* to that spoken of in the morning. The King refused a fresh audience *on this ground*, as he had no other answer than the one given; moreover, that from thenceforward all negotiations were to go on through the Ministries. Count Benedetti's wish to take leave of the King on his departure was acceded to, as he saluted him at the station on the 14th, in passing on a journey to Coblenz. According to this, therefore, the Ambassador had *three audiences* of the King, which always bore the character of private conversations, as Count Benedetti never conducted himself as a Commissioner or negotiator.

Here then we have the King of Prussia's own account of the famous scene which Count Bismarck distorted with such fell success in the telegram which he published in Berlin on the evening of the 13th, and which he distributed gratuitously through that fatal night among an inflamed population. And it is with reference to this state of facts that Count Bismarck ventures on the following experiment on the credulity of England :—

As, however, no one doubted, or could doubt, that *we* (the italics are his) sincerely desired peace, and a few days

before considered no war possible, as every pretext for war was wanting, and even the last artificially and forcibly created pretext, as it was devised without our aid, so it had disappeared again of itself; as therefore there was no *cause* at all for war, there was nothing left for the French Ministers, in order to their seeming justification before their own people, *really peaceably disposed and requiring tranquillity*, but by means of representation and invention of facts, the falsity of which was known to them from official documents, to persuade the two Representative Bodies, and through them the people, that they had been affronted by Prussia, thereby to stir up their passions to an outbreak by which they might represent themselves as carried away.

“No one doubted, or could doubt, that *we*”—that is, Count Bismarck—“sincerely desired peace.” So, then, the pacific disposition of Count Bismarck, the man of “blood and iron,” is to be accepted as a kind of axiom in the political creed of Europe—on the principle, I suppose, of *lucus a non lucendo*. Certainly he is much to be pitied, for it has been his strange lot, through the greater part of his political career, to defeat by his acts the peaceful yearnings of his soul. Never, surely, were good intentions more cruelly frustrated by the perverse malice of fortune. “A few days before,” Count Bismarck “considered no war possible.” But, curiously enough, just six days before, Baron Thile, the Under-Secretary

in Count Bismarck's office, "expected" war "from day to day." So Lord A. Loftus reported on the 12th of July. And he added: "From other quarters I am informed that in official circles war is considered as imminent." On that very day the French Government, according to the testimony of Lord Lyons, was congratulating itself on the prospect of peace through the intervention of Her Majesty's Government.

Let us now consider the alleged withdrawal by Prussia of the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern. In his correspondence with me in *The Times*, Professor Max Müller committed himself to the following statement:—" 'Scrutator' knows what a diplomatic triumph France achieved by forcing the King of Prussia to withdraw the Prince of Hohenzollern." Elsewhere he magnifies this fictitious triumph of French diplomacy with even stronger emphasis. "That the King of Prussia wanted peace," he says, "he proved by allowing French diplomacy to have its triumph, and by doing what few kings would have done, withdrawing, at the dictation of France, the permission which he had previously

granted." Mr. Forster said much the same thing in his speech at Bradford last month. "We gave," he said, "our advice to Prussia to remove the cause of the war by removing the Prince of Hohenzollern from the candidature for the Crown of Spain. Prussia followed our advice." This representation of the case has been repeated by writers and speakers innumerable. Mr. Disraeli made a great point of it in his speech on the first evening of the present session, and other Members of Parliament have followed his example. Now the simple truth is that Prussia never withdrew, directly or indirectly, the candidature of Prince Leopold. This is proved to demonstration by the parliamentary papers. But it is not necessary to extend our researches beyond the official memorandum of the King of Prussia, which I have quoted above. The King admits there that he peremptorily declined to put any pressure whatever on Prince Leopold. On the contrary, "*the King replied that the Prince was entirely free in his resolutions.*"

So much as to the "withdrawing, at the dictation of France, the permission which the King had originally granted." Equally unfounded

is the supposition that "Prussia took our advice" when we recommended the King to associate his name with the withdrawal of the candidature. So far was Prussia from taking "our advice," that Count Bismarck sent it back to us with the message that it was too outrageous to be even submitted to the King. It is true, no doubt, that the Prince of Hohenzollern did eventually retire. But how? The following telegram will explain:—

[Telegraphic.]

MADRID, *July* 15, 1870, 2.30 P.M.

The President of the Council of Ministers has received the following telegram from the Prince of Hohenzollern:—

In view of the complications entailed by the candidature of my son Leopold for the Spanish Throne, and the painful situation in which late events have placed the Spanish people, a situation which would leave it no alternative but to assert its own independence, and convinced as I am that under these circumstances its suffrage would neither be as sincere nor as spontaneous as my son had been led to expect when he accepted the said candidature, I beg to withdraw it in his name.

(Signed)

PRINCE OF HOHENZOLLERN.

Now I put it to any fair and candid inquirer whether he considers this renunciation worth anything at all as a satisfaction to France. The Prince of Hohenzollern withdraws his son's candidature—not because it was a grievance to

France, not because it endangered the peace of Europe, not because the Neutral Powers remonstrated against it, but—simply and entirely because all the circumstances of the case rendered it very probable that the election to the Throne of Spain “would neither be as sincere nor as spontaneous as my son had been led to expect when he accepted the said candidature.” The welfare and comfort of the Hohenzollern family constituted the Alpha and Omega of the reasons which caused Prince Leopold’s retirement; and there is absolutely nothing in the telegram to prevent the resumption of the candidature on the morrow, provided a tolerably satisfactory election could be secured. Supposing that Marshal Prim had telegraphed back that the suffrage of the Spanish people would be as sincere and spontaneous as the Prince could desire, I see no guarantee whatever against the immediate retractation of the Prince’s withdrawal from the candidature. France was hardly likely to forget Count Bismarck’s *penchant* for setting up puppet Princes as pawns in a deep political game, of which the ulterior aim was to drive his enemy into a corner and checkmate him with a sudden *coup-de-main*. The apparition of the Prince of

Augustenburg in the Elbe Duchies, and more recently the sudden flight of another Hohenzollern Prince to an Eastern Principality, against the declared wish but with the clandestine connivance of Prussia, were still fresh in the memory of France, and were not particularly well calculated to reassure her. In fact, the Duc de Gramont referred more than once to these instances as a reason why the French Government required some better assurance against a renewal of the intrigue than the ambiguous telegram of Prince Leopold's father. France, be it remembered, disclaimed all idea of asking the King of Prussia to "prevent" his relative from renewing his Spanish candidature, though that was quite within the competence of the King's prerogative; all she asked was that the King would refuse his sanction to such renewal. And His Majesty distinctly declined to do anything of the kind. He reserved to himself, he said, full freedom of action in case Prince Leopold should see fit to change his mind.

But I shall be told, perhaps, that the King of Prussia did actually associate his name with the withdrawal of Prince Leopold. Let us not be deceived by mere expressions. It was the

recommendation to do this, after a very mild fashion, that Count Bismarck so resented that he braved the displeasure of England rather than submit her suggestion to the consideration of his Royal Master. We have it, indeed, on the King's own authority, that "His Majesty approved the renunciation of Prince Leopold in the same sense and to the same extent as His Majesty had previously done with the acceptance of this candidature." What does this carefully guarded acquiescence amount to? Translated into the ordinary language of common life, it comes to this:—

"MY DEAR COUSIN,—You became a candidate for the Throne of Spain with my full consent. I have been strongly urged by France, and indeed by all the Great Powers, to 'prohibit,' or at least 'advise,' you to give up your candidature. But I have told them, one and all, that I would do nothing of the sort, and that I left you 'free in your resolution.' Now, however, I learn from the newspapers that, of your own accord, and without a hint from me, you have withdrawn your candidature because you don't think it would succeed. Far be it from my Royal heart to

advise you to persevere in a course which might end in your ignominious rejection, and consequently in a sore discredit to the House of Hohenzollern; and therefore I have no objection to the decision which the altered aspect of affairs has forced upon you. Be assured, however, that I shall reserve to myself full liberty of action, let France protest and England advise as they may; and that if you should see your way to a renewal of your candidature, you may depend on an immediate renewal of my sanction."

On a calm review of the whole case, this seems to me the natural, and indeed the only possible, explanation of the King of Prussia's conduct. And it is this persistent determination to carry out the Spanish intrigue, if possible, and consult no interest except the aggrandisement of Prussia, that has been vaunted as "the withdrawing, at the dictation of France, the permission which he had previously granted."

There is another important element in the case, which has not received the attention that is due to it. More than a year before the candidature of Prince Leopold was publicly announced, France knew, or had good reason to suspect, that some-

thing of the kind was in process of gestation in Count Bismarck's brain. This is evident from the following dispatch:—

BERLIN, *March 31, 1869.*

M. LE MARQUIS, — Your Excellency requested me by telegraph yesterday to assure myself whether the candidature of the Prince de Hohenzollern to the Throne of Spain had a serious character. I had occasion this morning to see M. de Thile, and I asked him if I was to attach any importance to the rumours in circulation on this subject. I did not conceal from him that I was anxious to be exactly informed, remarking that such an eventuality was of too direct interest to the Emperor's Government for my duty not to compel me to point out the danger if any reason existed to believe that the project might be realized. I made him aware that I intended to communicate our conversation to you.

M. de Thile gave me the most formal assurance that he had not at any moment been aware of any indication whatever which could authorize such a conjecture, and that the Spanish Minister at Vienna, during the stay he made in Berlin, had not even made any allusion to the subject. The Under-Secretary of State, in thus expressing himself, and without anything I said being of a nature to induce such a manifestation, believed himself called upon to pledge his word of honour.

According to him, M. Rancès had confined himself to talking to Count de Bismarck—who perhaps was anxious to take advantage of the passage of this diplomatist to obtain some information on the state of things in Spain—of the manner in which affairs were advancing in what concerned the choice of the future Sovereign.

That, in substance, is what M. de Thile stated to me, several times repeating his first declaration, that there was

not, and could not be, a question of the Prince de Hohenzollern for the Crown of Spain. Accept, &c.

(Signed) BENEDETTI.

This dispatch was published by the French Government in the last week of July, last year, and it receives a remarkable confirmation from the following passage in a speech delivered by Count Bismarck in an extraordinary sitting of the Reichstag on the 16th of the same month :—

From the communications made by the President of the Spanish Council to the Cortes of the 11th June, from the published dispatch of the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs of the 7th instant, and from a declaration made by M. Salazar in Madrid on the 8th, it became known that the Spanish Government had been *for months* carrying on negotiations with Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern regarding the acceptance of the Spanish Crown; that these negotiations were conducted direct by M. Salazar and the Prince and his father, without the participation of any other Government, and that the Prince accepted the candidature. The King of Prussia, when informed of this, did not think necessary to oppose a decision arrived at by a Prince of full age, and with the approval of his father. Both the Foreign Office of the North German Confederation and the Prussian Government were strangers to these proceedings. Their first intimation of the decision of the Spanish Ministry to offer the Crown to the Prince came from Paris, in a telegram of the evening of the 3rd instant.

Can any one doubt, after comparing these two statements, that the whole affair owed both its

inception and its development to Count Bismarck? He had "casually" * mentioned the subject to an agent of Prim's (M. Rancès), in the beginning of 1869. But "the Foreign Office of the North German Confederation and the Prussian Government were strangers to these proceedings." I have already remarked on this futile distinction between Count Bismarck on the one hand, and the Prussian Government and the Foreign Office of the North German Confederation on the other. It is utterly discreditable, and belongs to the lowest kind of political chicanery. The Prussian Government was simply Count Bismarck, and the Foreign Office of the North German Confederation was simply Count Bismarck; and the upshot of the whole matter is that the Hohenzollern intrigue was planned and matured by the Prussian Government in full view of the disastrous consequences which have followed in its train. Yet Baron Thile, the Prussian Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, could give the French Ambassador "the most formal assurance" that there was no truth in the rumours current in Berlin Society in respect

* See page 60.

to the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern. He had no difficulty even in "pledging his word of honour" to that effect.

These being the facts of the case, is it so very surprising that France failed to be completely satisfied with the meagre telegram in which the Prince of Hohenzollern withdrew his son's name from the candidature of the Spanish Throne? In passing judgment on France in this matter, we are bound to choose one of two alternatives. We must either say that France was utterly wrong from beginning to end, and had no grievance to complain of. Or, admitting the reality of the grievance, we are bound, before we have a right to make France responsible for the war, to show that it was removed. It is not necessary to waste any argument on the first alternative, for all the Neutral Powers, and pre-eminently the public opinion of England, admitted that the Prusso-Spanish intrigue constituted a legitimate grievance to France. Was that grievance removed? Never. I do not deny that the energetic action of our own Government had a certain measure of success, or that it really contributed to the abandonment of the Hohenzollern candidature. But

the scene of our diplomatic success was not Berlin but Madrid. The pressure which our Government, in common with that of the other Neutral Powers, brought to bear on the counsels of the Spanish Government induced the latter to discourage the pretensions of Prince Leopold, and hence the renunciation of the candidature.* But France had no safeguard whatever against the revival of the plot whenever it suited the plans of Count Bismarck and Marshal Prim to

* The following dispatch seems to corroborate this view:

Earl Granville to Lord Lyons.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 10, 1870.*

MY LORD, — In an interview which I have had to-day with the French Ambassador, I informed him confidentially that I had heard from Mr. Layard that Marshal Prim, though without committing himself, was in communication with Mr. Layard as to whether means might not be found for settling the question of the Spanish succession without any impeachment to the honour of Spain.

Her Majesty's Government are fully persuaded that the Imperial Government have no desire for war, but only contemplate resorting to that extremity with the view of preventing the realisation of a contingency which they consider would affect the honour and interests of France; and in intimating this conviction to the Marquis de Lavalette, I added that the intelligence from Madrid, which I had just imparted to him, seemed to me to afford strong additional grounds for avoiding any precipitate action in the question in dispute.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

re-open negotiations. Still the attitude of the French Government became more pacific with the renunciation of the Hohenzollern candidature. They solicited the good offices of the English Government, and pledged themselves to consider the matter at an end provided the King of Prussia made a slight concession which our Government undertook to recommend to him. The war-cloud seemed to be passing away, and men began again to breathe freely, when Count Bismarck suddenly, and for the first time in these transactions, appeared upon the scene, and quietly discharging a spark into an atmosphere charged with combustible materials, caused an immediate explosion, which has already deluged some of the fairest portions of Europe with blood, and of which the wisest among us cannot foretell the consequences.

I think I may now venture to affirm that the facts which I have cited in evidence establish beyond a doubt Count Bismarck's responsibility for the Franco-German war. But there is one additional piece of evidence which, in my humble judgment, amounts to something like a

test proof of Prussia's guilt. It is to be found in the following passage, which I quote from one of the State papers published by the French Government. I am not aware that the facts which it records have ever been disputed:—

Far from seeking war, as we have been accused of doing, we besought Lord Clarendon to interpose with the Prussian Cabinet, with a view to a mutual disarmament—an important mission which Lord Clarendon, through friendship towards France, and devotion to the cause of peace, consented confidentially to undertake. It was on these terms that Comte Daru, in a letter of the 1st of February, explained to the Marquis de Lavalette, our Ambassador in London, the intentions of the Government:—

“It is certain that I should not mix myself up with this affair, nor should I ask England to interfere in it if the question was one simply of an ordinary and purely formal nature, intended only to afford M. de Bismarck an opportunity to repeat once again his refusal. It is a real, serious, positive proposition, which it is sought to act upon.

“The principal Secretary of State appears to anticipate that M. de Bismarck will at first manifest dissatisfaction and displeasure. That is possible, but not certain. With that possibility in view, it will be well to prepare the ground in such a manner as to avoid at the outset a negative reply.

“I am convinced that time and reflection will induce the Chancellor to take into his serious consideration the proposition of England. If at first he does not reject all overtures, then the interests of Prussia and of all Germany will speedily speak out sufficiently to lead him to modify his opposition. He would not be willing to raise against himself the opinion

of his entire country. What, indeed, would be his position if we took away the sole pretext upon which he relies, that is, the armament of France?"

Count Bismarck at first replied that he could not take upon himself to submit the suggestions of the British Government to the King, and that he was sufficiently acquainted with the views of his Sovereign to foretell his decision. King William, he said, would certainly see in the proposition of the Cabinet of London a change in the disposition of England towards Prussia. In short, the Prussian Chancellor declared "that it was impossible for Prussia to modify a military system which was so closely connected with the traditions of the country, which formed one of the bases of its constitution, and which was in no way abnormal."

Comte Daru was not checked by this first reply. On the 13th of February he wrote to M. de Lavalette:—

"I hope that Lord Clarendon will not consider himself beaten nor be discouraged. We will shortly give him an opportunity of returning to the charge, if it should be agreeable to him, and to resume the interrupted communication with the Federal Chancellor. Our intention is, in fact, to diminish our contingent. We should largely have reduced it if we had received a favourable reply from the Federal Chancellor. We shall make a smaller reduction, as the reply is in the negative; but we shall reduce. The reduction will, I hope, be 10,000 men; that is the number I should propose.

"We shall affirm by acts, which are of more value than words, our intentions, our policy. Nine contingents, each reduced by 10,000 men, make a total reduction of 90,000 men. That is already something; it is a tenth part of the existing army. The law upon the contingent will be proposed shortly. Lord Clarendon will then judge whether it

will be proper to represent to M. de Bismarck that the Prussian Government, alone in Europe, makes no concession to the spirit of peace, and that it thus places itself in a serious position amid other European societies, because it furnishes arms against itself to all the world, including the populations which are crushed beneath the weight of military charges which it imposes upon them."

Count Bismarck, closely pressed, felt it to be necessary to enter into some further explanations with Lord Clarendon.

These explanations, as far as we are acquainted with them, from a letter from M. de Lavalette, dated the 23rd of February, were full of reticence. The Chancellor of the Prussian Confederation, departing from his first resolution, had informed King William of the proposition recommended by England, but His Majesty had declined it. In vindication of the refusal, the Chancellor pleaded the fear of a possible alliance between Austria and the States of the South, and the ambitious designs that might be entertained by France. But in the foreground he especially placed the anxieties with which the policy of Russia inspired him, and upon that point indulged in particular remarks respecting the Court of St. Petersburg, which I prefer to pass by in silence, not desiring to reproduce injurious insinuations.

Such were the pleas of non-acceptance which Count Bismarck opposed to the loyal and conscientious entreaties several times renewed by Lord Clarendon at the request of the Emperor's Government.

If, then, Europe has remained in arms, if a million of men are about to be hurled against each other upon the battle-field, it cannot be contested that the responsibility for such a state of things attaches to Prussia, for it is she who has repudiated all idea of disarmament, while we not only forwarded the proposition, but also began by setting an example.

Is not this conduct explained by the fact that, at the very time when confiding France was reducing her contingent, the Cabinet of Berlin was arranging in the dark for the provocative nomination of a Prussian Prince?

I am no apologist for the Imperial Government of France. It has fallen, never, I trust, to rise again. But I feel bound to express my honest opinion that less than justice has been done to it with respect to the negotiations which preceded the war. That it mismanaged its diplomacy completely, and played helplessly into the hands of Count Bismarck, is true enough; but I do not believe that the French Government either contemplated or desired war when the Hohenzollern plot was disclosed; and I see no reason to doubt the sincerity of their move in favour of disarmament. It was Prussia, not France, which raised the storm; it was Prussia, not France, which contrived that it should not blow over without war. Prussia knew, as Count Bismarck expressed it, that she "was fully able to cope with France." She knew she was ready and that France was not, and Bismarck saw in a successful French war and the seizure of two French fortresses the readiest method of establishing a German

Empire under the military leadership of Prussia. In fact, the King of Prussia incidentally admitted, before the formal declaration of war, that it was he who really gave the signal for hostilities. In a reply to an address from the Commercial Chamber at Hamburg, he uttered these remarkable words :—“ No one knows better than I, *who had to speak the decisive word*, what sacrifices will shortly be required from the whole Fatherland.”

It is certainly a signal proof of Count Bismarck's extraordinary political skill that, with all the facts so palpably against him, he should, nevertheless, have been able so to manipulate them as to drive France from the vantage-ground which she occupied and put her on her defence before the bar of Europe. France was surprised diplomatically as well as in a military sense. Her statesmen were as incompetent as her generals. Count Bismarck had settled his plan of operations “ months before,” as he admitted, and he knew that Prussia was “ fully able to cope with France ” in the art of diplomacy as well as of war. It was a repetition of the same tactics which had overthrown Austria in a fortnight's

campaign. In both cases Count Bismarck relied on a policy of alternate bullying and underhand stratagem. In both cases he succeeded in getting his enemy to commit himself in secret, and then, when the opportune moment arrived, he revealed the secret to the world. Some German writers seem to have an impression that Count Bismarck has placed England under a debt of everlasting gratitude by the publication of the Secret Treaty concocted between himself and M. Benedetti. I fail to perceive the obligation. Each Government has openly accused the other of having been the first to suggest the provisions of that scandalous document, and I do not see that Count Bismarck's antecedents are such as to claim our exclusive confidence. It may be a weakness of mine, but I cannot help making comparisons between some remarkable coincidences in Count Bismarck's political career. I remember a certain secret dispatch which Count Bismarck succeeded in worming out of Count Mensdorff, the Austrian Minister, in the end of 1864, while the quarrel between the two German Powers was brewing. The Austrian Minister had protested against the possession of the Elbe Duchies by Prussia. But

the Prussian statesman is always ready on such occasions with a frank offer to share the spoils. Austria, unfortunately, was not above the temptation of rising to the bait. In a confidential dispatch of December 21, 1864, Count Mensdorff placed himself at the mercy of his adversary by these two unguarded sentences:—“Austria would only assent to the incorporation of the Duchies with Prussia upon an equivalent augmentation of her own German territory being guaranteed to her. Austrian blood had not been shed for the sake of disturbing the balance of power between the two great German States by one-sided aggrandizement.” The game was now in Count Bismarck’s hands. The Austrian dispatch found its way, no one could tell how, into the *Vienna Presse*, and was thence transmitted all over Germany. The suspicion of the Minor States was immediately roused, and some of them demanded from Count Mensdorff a declaration as to the portion of German territory Austria aimed at annexing. The result was that Austria could no longer command the united support of her usual allies in the Confederation. They distrusted her, and began acting independently.

This was precisely what Count Bismarck wanted. He first divided his enemies, and then beat them easily in detail. And this he accomplished by the surreptitious publication of a confidential dispatch.

I say, therefore, that I feel no gratitude whatever to Count Bismarck for his share in the famous Draft Treaty. That he outwitted M. Benedetti and the Emperor Napoleon is unquestionable; but I see no reason to doubt that the following extract from one of the French State papers, published last August, is substantially true, except the last sentence:—

It was at Berlin that M. de Bismarck, originating ideas the first conception of which he now seeks to impute to us, solicited in these terms the French Prince whom, in defiance of all customary rules, he now seeks to draw into the controversy:—

“You desire,” said he, “an impossible thing. You wish to take the Rhenish provinces, which are German. Why do you not annex Belgium, where the people have the same origin, the same religion, and the same language as yourselves? I have already caused that to be mentioned to the Emperor: if he entered into my views, we would assist him to take Belgium. As for myself, if I were the master, and I were not hampered by the obstinacy of the King, it would be already done.”

These words of the Prussian Chancellor have been, so to speak, literally repeated to the Court of France by the

Comte de Goltz. That ambassador was so little reticent upon the subject that there are many witnesses who have heard him thus express himself. I will add that at the period of the Universal Exhibition the overtures of Prussia were known to more than one high personage, who took note of them and still remembered them. Moreover, it was not a mere passing notion with Count Bismarck, but truly a concerted plan with which his ambitious schemes were connected, and he pursued his attempts to carry them out with a perseverance which is amply attested by his repeated excursions to France, to Biarritz, and elsewhere. He failed before the immovable will of the Emperor, who always refused to connect himself with a policy that was unworthy of his loyalty.

I confess I am incredulous about "the immovable will of the Emperor;" but I know nothing in Count Bismarck's character or career which obliges me to disbelieve the rest of the passage. The only thing of which England has any certain knowledge is that two Governments, which were professedly her allies, were plotting in secret against her. That does not seem to me a very strong motive for undying gratitude to either.

I think I may now venture to assume that I have established the following points:—

1. That the Hohenzollern candidature was a

legitimate grievance to France, and was acknowledged to be such by the Neutral Powers.

2. That the French Government, in spite of sundry indiscretions which Count Bismarck dexterously used against it, really desired a pacific solution of the quarrel.

3. That Count Bismarck got up the Hohenzollern intrigue with his eyes wide open to all the consequences that have followed.

4. That Prussia never withdrew, directly or indirectly, the candidature of the Hereditary Prince of Hohenzollern, and that the eventual withdrawal of the Prince's candidature was made in such a way as to leave the grievance of France precisely where it was at the commencement of the quarrel.

5. That, nevertheless, France still sought a pacific solution, and solicited the good offices of England for that purpose.

6. That Count Bismarck rudely rejected the mediation of England, and precipitated the war by the gratuitous invention and publication of a fictitious *fracas* at Ems between the King of Prussia and the French Ambassador.

7. That the deliberate intention of Prussia to

provoke a war with France is proved by other circumstances, and particularly by Count Bismarck's rejection of repeated offers by France to join in a policy of mutual disarmament.

If these positions be admitted—and I think they are capable of proof by documentary evidence—it follows of course that Germany has no right to inflict on France the penalty of “an unprovoked war,” seeing that the war was really provoked by Prussia.

But why should Prussia desire a war with France? We have frequently been told of late, and it is probably true, that Prussia has never forgiven France the humiliation she endured at the hands of the First Napoleon, and never abandoned the hope of ultimate revenge. It is also certain that ever since Sadowa the Prussian army longed for an opportunity of measuring its strength with that of France. That campaign revealed the perfection of the army organisation of Prussia and the splendour of its strategy to itself as well as to the world, and Professor Max Müller admits, in his letters to *The Times*, that “every (Prussian) general was then for war against France.” It is an undoubted fact, moreover, that Germany never

abandoned the hope of some day wrenching from France the two provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

All this is true. Nevertheless, I will do Count Bismarck the justice to express my belief that none of these considerations, nor all of them together, would have induced him to wage war against France. Count Bismarck is, above all things, a practical statesman, and it was not the mere glory of victory in war, still less any sentimental hankering after Alsace and Lorraine, that moved him to provoke a quarrel with France. His motive was a much more mundane and prosaic one. He made war on France because he feared Germany. This may sound a paradox, but it is only the paradoxical expression of an unquestionable truth. A very few words will suffice to explain this.

The gravitation towards the supremacy of the reactionary Monarchy of Prussia, which set in throughout Germany after the Austrian campaign of 1866, has had the effect of making many people forget that no country in Europe is more Liberal than Germany in the aspirations of its middle-class population. Nor is Prussia an exception to this observation. This was shown in the revolu-

tionary movement which shook all the thrones of the Continent in 1848. The whole realm of Junkerdom went down like a bank of reeds before the onset of the German people, and the King of Prussia hastened to save his Crown by a speedy capitulation. On the 18th of March in that year the population of Berlin came to blows with the troops, and the latter were repulsed after a terrible conflict. When the reigning Monarch, the brother of the present King, saw the serious turn affairs had taken, he sought by timely concessions to conciliate his incensed people. He proclaimed through the streets of his capital that "Henceforth Prussia is dissolved in Germany." This appeased the people, and they assembled in crowds to express their joy. But their satisfaction was doomed to be very short-lived. Twenty thousand soldiers were quartered in Berlin under the command of the present King, then Governor of Pomerania; and while the unarmed citizens were giving a somewhat tumultuous, but not disorderly, expression to their joyful feelings, they were suddenly charged by cavalry and fired on by the infantry. A great many were killed, and the Crown Prince, as he then was, fell under the sus-

picion of the multitude. He was the recognized chief of the retrograde party, and this was perhaps the only foundation for the popular suspicion. The result, however, was that he was obliged to leave the country for a season; and he was one of the many refugees who enjoyed at that time the hospitality of England.

The events of that troublous time made a deep impression on Count Bismarck. He was then about thirty-six years of age, and his feelings are thus described by his chattering Boswellian biographer, Herr Hesekei:—"He saw, sinking and destroyed, bulwarks and dykes he had held to be unassailable; he palpitated with patriotic ardour and manly sorrow, but he lost neither courage nor clear insight, like a true dykesman. It had hitherto been his office to protect the Elbe dykes against the floods, and in a similar character it was his duty to act against the floods of revolution. . . . He passed as in a feverish dream through the streets of the capital of his King, filled with threatening forms. He saw flags displayed and colours flying unknown to him: Polish standards, tricolours of black, red and gold, but nowhere the ancient honoured flag of

Prussia." Count Bismarck was at that time a member of the Prussian House of Representatives, and that House passed, in December, 1848, a Liberal constitution, which received the Royal assent in spite of Herr Bismarck's strenuous opposition. Bismarck was also elected in the new Parliament, and he opposed with all his might the vote of the Second Chamber, adopting the Frankfurt Imperial Constitution. The King, however, rejected the offer, which was then made to him, of the Imperial Crown of United Germany, because the offer came from the people and not from the princes and nobles. The following passage from one of the speeches delivered by Deputy Bismarck on that occasion expresses, in tolerably plain language, his opinion of a United Germany founded on Liberal and constitutional principles :

The army has no enthusiasm for the tricolour; in it, as in the rest of the people, *will be found no longing for national regeneration. The name of Prussia is all-sufficient for it.* These hosts follow the banner of black and white and not the tricolour: under the black and white they joyfully die for their country. . . . The accents of the Prussian National Anthem, the strains of the Dessau and Hohenfriedberg March are well known and beloved among them. *But I have never yet heard a Prussian soldier sing, "What is the German Fatherland?"* The nation

whence this army has sprung, and of which the army is the truest representative . . . does not need to see the Prussian monarchy melt away in the filthy ferment of South German immorality. We are Prussians, and Prussians we will remain. I know that in these words I utter the creed of the German army, the creed of the majority of my fellow countrymen, and I hope to God that we shall continue Prussians when this bit of paper* is forgotten like the withered leaves of autumn.

Accordingly, when the present King of Prussia ascended the Throne, and made Count Bismarck his Prime Minister, the latter set himself at once to re-organize the army. And when the Liberal majority in Parliament refused to pass his military budgets, he passed them over their heads, in violation of the Constitution, but with the sanction of the King. This went on till the thralldom of the Prussian House of Representatives was forgotten in the blaze of Prussian victories over Denmark and Austria. German Liberalism, however, was again beginning to lift up its head when the war against France came opportunely to nip its nascent energies.

And now I think I have explained the meaning of my paradox, that Count Bismarck made war on France because he feared Germany. He

* The new Constitution.

knows his countrymen well—their doggedness of purpose and their fanatical devotion to any idea that has once obtained a footing in their imagination. He found that he could not successfully resist the German yearning for a United Fatherland; but he had not forgotten that a Prussian King had proclaimed, twenty years ago, in the streets of his capital, that “henceforth Prussia is dissolved in Germany.” And Herr Von Bismarck is determined to prevent that dissolution if he possibly can. The unity of Germany was certain to come to pass sooner or later. The events of 1848 forced that conviction on Count Bismarck’s mind. He saw that another European commotion might have the effect of placing the Imperial Crown of Germany on the head of a non-Prussian Prince, and he recognized the wisdom of anticipating what could not be prevented. Austria must first be driven out of Germany, and the supremacy of Prussia must be securely established.

But even then the spectre of “Prussia dissolved in Germany” still haunted the imagination of Count Bismarck. Prussia was safe enough from any recurrence of such a revolution as

threatened to dissolve her in 1848. But there was the probability of another revolution which Count Bismarck deemed not less dangerous to that Junkerism of which he had declared himself "proud" to bear the name—the silent revolution going on continually against despotism of every kind by the slow but certain operation of Liberal ideas. If Germany were allowed to achieve her unity by the ordinary process of national development, the fate of Junkerism was sealed. The militarism of Prussia would inevitably perish in the constitutionalism of a Liberal German Empire, and Prussia would thus end, after all, in being "dissolved in Germany." But Count Bismarck's motto is—"We are Prussians, and Prussians we will remain."

How was this to be effected? In the first place, German Unity must be established uncontestedly by the sword of Prussia. In the second place, Prussia must have a *permanent* excuse for maintaining her military supremacy and stifling the Liberal aspirations of the German Empire. The first part of the programme has been accomplished. King William has accepted the Imperial Crown from the hands of his Princes

and nobles as the guerdon of victory. The second part is now in process of fulfilment. When peace has been restored, and the German people have, in cooler mood, begun to compare their gains and losses, there will be an inevitable reaction against the Prussian military system. Even before this war that reaction had begun. The education of the civil population was felt to be seriously interfered with by the compulsory soldiering of the whole male population, and all the industrious occupations of the country suffered in various degrees. When the excitement of the war is over these considerations will reassert their force. Count Bismarck has foreseen the danger, and is resolutely preparing himself to meet it. He is bent on seizing a portion of French territory, not in order to secure a safe frontier against France, but as an irresistible argument against the nascent Liberalism of Germany. The annexation of Alsace and Lorraine will never be forgiven by France; and that is the very reason why Count Bismarck insists on it. He means to hold the menace of French vengeance *in terrorem* over the Liberals of the German Empire. Deprived of her provinces, France will watch her

opportunity to regain them, and as a provision against that danger Junkerism must be maintained. In short, France must be robbed in order that Prussia may not be "dissolved in Germany." Thus the German Horse will find, when too late, that he has made himself the slave of the Man whom he invited on his back to fight the Stag.

It is not yet too late for Germany to ponder these things ; but it may be too late a week hence. Alsace and Lorraine once hers by the Treaty of Peace, her honour is irrevocably committed to defend their possession against the possibility of French attack. Are the German people then prepared to barter their liberties for the sake of a sentimental fancy? Must the inhabitants of Alsace and Lorraine be enslaved or expatriated because they belonged two centuries ago to the defunct German Empire? That would be a singular mode of proving to them how much their brethren in the Fatherland regretted their separation from them. No! no! The sentimental idea will not hold water. It collapses the moment you submit it to examination. The fact that the inhabitants of the coveted districts are of German blood is a very good reason why Germany should

consult their wishes ; but it is an odd reason for treating them like a herd of cattle, or like the slaves on a Cuban plantation. All the professors in Germany cannot persuade the world that anything but the coarsest lust of conquest can dictate a proceeding so inhuman.

But I may be told that the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine is necessary in order to secure Germany against the inveterate pugnacity of her Gallic neighbour. Granting for the sake of argument that France has been so bad a neighbour as German advocates have represented her, it has yet to be proved that nothing short of annexation will supply the safeguard which Germany alleges to be necessary for her safety. The razing of the frontier fortresses would afford all the security which Germany can need. Or if that is not sufficient to calm her unreasonable fears, the districts might be neutralized for military purposes. And if that is not enough to reassure the Fatherland, there is the proposal so moderately argued by the Comte de Gasparin in favour of erecting Alsace into an independent neutral republic.* Germany is bound to show cause why

* *La République Neutre d'Alsace.* Par le Cte. Agenor de Gasparin. Genève et Bâle.

annexation is necessary before she has recourse to the *ultima ratio* of the rights of conquest.

But I dispute the historical accuracy of the plea on which the Germans found their claim to annex Alsace and Lorraine—I mean the plea of security against French aggression. I cannot, of course, expect the Germans to accept my view, that the war was, in reality, provoked by Count Bismarck. But I may fairly ask them to believe that the French nation was innocent of aggressive intentions, since their own Emperor and his trusted Prime Minister, at the commencement of the war, deliberately and publicly acquitted the French people of any hostile designs against Germany. The following passage is from a speech delivered by the King of Prussia, at the opening of the North German Reichstag on the 19th of July, the day on which the French Declaration of War was delivered:—

If Germany in past centuries has silently borne with such outrages upon her rights and honour, she did so because in her disunion she knew not how strong she was. To-day when the bands of intellectual and just unity, which the wars of freedom began to draw together, bind the German races indeed closer, and therefore more intimately—to-day, when the armaments of Germany no longer leave an opening

to the enemy—Germany possesses in herself the will and the power to repulse renewed acts of French violence.

This language is dictated by no boasting spirit; the Confederate Governments and myself act in the full assurance that victory and defeat rest with the Ruler of Battles. We have weighed with a steadfast gaze the responsibility which awaits before the Judgment Seat of God and of man him who forces two great and peace-loving peoples in the heart of Europe into a devastating war. The German, as well as the French people, BOTH of them equally enjoying and desiring the blessings of Christian civilisation and increasing prosperity, should be destined to a more holy contest than the bloody one of arms. Yet the governing power of France have known how to work on the well-balanced but susceptible feelings of our great neighbouring people by calculated misrepresentation for personal interests and passions.

Count Bismarck, in a dispatch already quoted, bore equally strong testimony to the peacefulness of the French people, and like the King, threw all the responsibility of the war on the Imperial Government.* The Crown Prince of Prussia, too, proclaimed to the inhabitants of Nancy, and through them to the whole of France, that “Prussia was making war on the Emperor Napoleon, not on the French nation.” And not till the Emperor Napoleon was a prisoner, and his Government deposed, did the Prussian Govern-

ment hold the French people, as a nation, responsible for the war. If, after the capitulation of Sedan, Count Bismarck had held his hand, and put the distinction, which he and his master had wisely drawn between the French Emperor and the French nation, to a practical test, he might there and then have secured a peace which would have won the gratitude of the French people and commanded the admiration of the world. Jules Favre distinctly offered to pay any war indemnity that Count Bismarck might think fit to impose, though he repudiated at the same time, on behalf of France, all responsibility for the origin of the war. But Count Bismarck made the cession of French territory a *conditio sine quâ non* of peace. He had planned the war for that very purpose, and it was not a durable peace, but a state of chronic enmity, which he wished to establish between France and Germany. The passage which I have quoted above from the speech of King William to the Prussian Reichstag has also the additional value of proving that at the commencement of the war the King of Prussia, at least, contemplated no seizure of French territory. He saw clearly enough that the true

defence of Germany lay in the united front which she was now able, the first time for centuries, to present to any foe who might be rash enough to assail her.

It has been asserted, and the assertion has been repeated with increasing emphasis, that France entered into the war on purpose to dismember Germany. Among others Mr. Horsman committed himself to that view of the case in his speech in the House of Commons on the 17th of this month. "France began the war," he said. "France invaded Germany. . . . Who made territorial cession the prize of war? Was it not France?" It is easy to ask a string of questions and then give an off-hand answer. But I venture to say that Mr. Horsman will find it exceedingly hard to prove that "France made territorial cession the prize of war." On the 23rd of July, four days after the declaration of war, the Emperor Napoleon issued a proclamation to the French nation, and in that proclamation he says expressly—"We do not make war on Germany, whose independence we respect. Let us wish that the peoples who compose the great German Nationality may freely dispose of their

own destinies." In the proclamation which he issued to the army on the 28th of the same month he says—"I am about to place myself at your head to defend the honour and the soil of the country." I know not, nor, I imagine, does Mr. Horsman, what may have been the secret intentions of the Emperor Napoleon in going to war with Germany; but nothing can be more certain than the absence of a tittle of evidence in favour of the assumption that the Imperial Government "made territorial cession the prize of war." It is possible enough that such might have been the case if fortune had declared in favour of France; at all events, my acquaintance with the probity of the Emperor is not so strong as to make me utterly disbelieve the possibility of such a thing. But of this I feel certain, that the Emperor of the French would not have annexed an inch of German soil without consulting the feelings of the inhabitants. That was a part of his political creed from which he never deviated. His devotion to the principle of a *plébiscite* may have been a sincere conviction or a hypocritical pretence. But, in either case, it was a valuable testimony to the upward progress of political

morality. When vice finds it necessary to pay the homage of hypocrisy to virtue this much at least—and it is a great deal—is clear, namely, that virtue has become the acknowledged rule of human conduct. Now whatever we may think of Napoleon the Third, it is but simple justice to admit that in the course of his twenty years' reign he did more than any single man of his generation to establish in the code of political morals the precious principle, that populations may rightly claim to be consulted before their allegiance is claimed by an alien Government. He annexed Nice and Savoy, but only after the suffrage of the inhabitants had sanctioned the transfer. And that makes all the difference.

Now my quarrel with Prussia is that in claiming to annex French territory, without consulting the population, she is driving back by many degrees the civilization of the age. It is not that Germany declines to be the first to initiate a better policy than the received one—"to set a new and better example to all future conquerors," as Mr. Edward Freeman puts it.* It is that she openly repudiates

* See his letter in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of Feb. 16.

a principle which had taken its place in the unformulated morality of modern Europe, and sets at naught, in particular, the example set her by the nation she has conquered. The examples which Mr. Freeman has adduced in justification of Count Bismarck's policy are nothing to the purpose. "Normandy or Brittany," for aught I know, may be "unanimous or nearly so in favour of a king, while some other large district, say Aquitaine or Languedoc, is unanimous or nearly so in favour of a republic." The majority would, of course, have a right to claim the submission of the minority. The North American States forced back the Confederate States into the Union, and England does not hold Ireland by the unanimous consent of the Irish people, or India by the unanimous consent of its many tribes.

I admit all this; but I fail to see the point of the analogy in any of the instances to which Mr. Freeman has appealed. I suppose he would admit that nations are capable of an organic existence, and may be contemplated as individual entities, each having one soul, so to speak, diffused through its various members, and building

up the whole on a type which is *sui generis*, and is easily recognized as such. The growth of a nation is as mysterious as the growth of the several individuals who compose it. It proceeds on laws which are as real as those which govern the development of the human frame. It moves among a mass of heterogenous elements, assimilating or rejecting, by an infallible process of selection, what helps or mars the formation of its system. And this capacity of men to grow, by the attraction of invisible affinities, into a corporate existence round a common centre of life is acknowledged in the ordinary usages of human language. Such phrases as "national life," "national literature," "national progress," "national decay," and the like, assume the point on which I am insisting.

This being granted, then, it follows, as a matter of course, that the body politic at large has an inherent right to coerce the obedience or separate the connection of any of its recalcitrant members. But because a nation may thus act within the circumference of its own being it does not follow that a foreigner has a right to dismember it for his own benefit or pleasure. Professor Max

Müller asserts broadly "that it would be subversive of the cardinal principles of public right to allow an unprovoked war to be atoned for by a pecuniary fine." Passing by the assumption that the war in question is "an unprovoked war," I object that this alleged "cardinal principle" has no authority to sanction it beyond Professor Max Müller's *ipse dixit*. I maintain, on the contrary, that to inflict a permanent disfigurement upon your fallen foe is nothing else but the application to national quarrels of the scalping system of savage warfare.

Now let us try Mr. Freeman's illustrations by the tests I have laid down, and the validity of which nobody, I suppose, would contest. America had a right to force back into the Union the seceding States of the South, and France has a right to compel the unwilling submission of Normandy or Aquitaine, on the sufficient plea, in each case, that the private judgment of the separate parts must yield to the collective judgment of the whole. But how does this prove that Germany has a right to tear away from the living body of France two provinces which palpitate through all their nerves with French life?

Nations, however, may have outlying territories which do not breathe the common life of the nation, and which cannot be regarded as constituting, in any true sense, a portion of its integrity. These may be severed from it without violating what I trust will yet be acknowledged as a fundamental principle in political ethics. If Prussia, for example, were to annex Pondicherry or Algeria, whatever we might think of her conduct on political grounds, it would shock our conscience far less than the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. The strip of territory which we took away from Russia at the close of the Crimean War is another instance in point. It illustrates my principle, but does not help Mr. Freeman's argument. It belonged to the Russian Empire, but was no part of the Russian nation. It is no illustration, therefore, of what Germany proposes to do. Neither is Oude—another of Mr. Freeman's examples. Those Eastern principalities are rather aggregations of human atoms than organic national existences, and whether the annexation of any of them is defensible or not on other grounds, it certainly does not belong to the same category as the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. Mr. Freeman, in fact,

mistakes the point of the objection which he has set himself to combat. The question at issue is not the right or wrong of transferring a population from one Government to another without consulting them. Nor is it a question whether the new Government has a right to enforce their submission if they rebel. These are questions which must be judged on their own merits and according to the circumstances of each particular case. The point in debate is really this: whether it is not a retrograde step in civilization for a conqueror to amputate an integral portion of a nation, which the fortune of war has placed at his mercy, against the vehement desire both of the nation at large and of the amputated portion in particular. I believe that it is, and that no civilized power has been guilty of a similar outrage since the flagitious partition of Poland. Mr. Freeman's argument, therefore, evades the real objection to the policy of Prussia, and he can hardly be serious in citing Ireland as one of his illustrations. Is there no difference between making the best of a state of things, which we have inherited by seven centuries of prescription, and creating, of set purpose, an Irish Diffi-

culty in the latter half of the nineteenth century? Even the most ardent Irish repealer would hardly maintain that the complete severance of Ireland from England at this time of day would not carry an untold amount of misery and injustice in its train. It would be a social and political revolution of the first magnitude; and Governments ought to think twice before they open the floodgates of a revolution of that sort. Besides, it is a mere assumption that the majority of the Irish desire complete severance from England. But it is no assumption, but a patent fact, that the majority of the population of Alsace and Lorraine detest the idea of annexation to Germany.

The annexation of Alsace and Lorraine under these circumstances will be a stain on the escutcheon of the new German Empire which no amount of sophistry will suffice to wash out. And it will be a dangerous acquisition too. The mutilation inflicted on her by Germany will induce France to cast about for alliances that may help her to avenge her wrongs. This may suit the policy of Count Bismarck, as I have already indicated. But will it suit the welfare of the great German nation? Is Germany so strong that she

can afford to isolate herself from the goodwill of the rest of Europe? The annexation of the French provinces will certainly consummate that isolation. Russia may possibly ally herself with Germany for awhile. But the alliance cannot be a lasting one, for it will be founded on motives of mutual jealousy or the premeditation of some lawless design; and no alliance of that kind can be relied upon in the hour of danger. No: the Powers which are certain to form an alliance at no distant period are Russia and France, and that alliance will bode no good to Germany. The Fatherland may not always have a Bismarck to outwit the rulers and diplomatists of France, nor a Moltke to conduct the strategy of her armies. In such a contingency the natural ally of Germany would be England, with her victorious fleet and her re-organized forces. But England will never again be found fighting by the side of Germany while the latter holds two millions of human beings in slavery by the Rhine and the Moselle. And in taking this course England will have no selfish aims or sordid ambitions. If, indeed, her policy were dictated by those material considerations which foreign politicians so freely

impute to her, she would welcome with delight the dismemberment of France, knowing that it will secure her an eager ally whenever she may happen to want one. German unity is not yet achieved, and the day may come when Germany will rue the absence of England from her side. The star of France is at this moment below the horizon; but, after all, her case is not so desperate as was that of Germany in general, and Prussia in particular, at the beginning of this century. Then, according to the German historian of the French Revolution, Von Sybel, it was an open question "whether, perhaps after an entire dismemberment of Prussia, the remnant of Germany might become a province of the House of Lorraine." It is now, perhaps, the turn of France to be dismembered. But Germany will do well to remember that there is a Nemesis in every act of injustice, which will, sooner or later, redress the balance. The sins of nations, no less than those of individuals, are "sure to find them out." Hers has found out France, and Germany is the appointed instrument of her chastisement. But Germany's turn will come in its season if she, too, in the pride of her prosperity shall forget

that "righteousness exalteth a nation" and that "sin is a reproach to any people." God's moral laws cannot be broken with impunity, nor is it true that He is always "on the side of the great battalions." He may paralyse their strength, or raise against them battalions still greater, as the French people have learnt to their cost. It may be necessary perhaps that France should drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs; but woe to him who puts the cup to her lips. "They that spoil thee shall be a spoil, and all they that prey upon thee will I give for a prey." The French of to-day are expiating the crimes of the first Empire, and perhaps of the second also. A future generation of Germans may yet have to atone for the perfidy and excesses of Count Bismarck.

A P P E N D I X

*Four Letters to the Editor of "THE TIMES," published
under the heading, "IS PEACE POSSIBLE?"*

"The Times," Thursday, October 27, 1870.

I.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—In the interesting letter of your distinguished correspondent "M. M.," I observe two assertions which seem to me open to criticism. He says that France "attacked Germany with the avowed purpose of annexing German soil." I have little doubt that if France had been victorious, she would have annexed German soil; but certainly that was not the "*avowed purpose*" of the French Government when it entered on the war; on the contrary, it disavowed foreign conquest. Its "*avowed purpose*" was to guard itself against the alleged aggressive intentions of Prussia.

Your correspondent may reply that, if not by

the French Government, certainly by the French Press, the Rhine frontier was claimed as the legitimate fruit of a victorious war on the part of France. But then "M. M." himself admits that "German statesmen and German poets" have for a long time "claimed back" Alsace and Lorraine; and the remarkable letter which you have published in *The Times* of to-day from General Ducrot to General Trochu is one of many proofs that the re-conquest of Alsace and Lorraine has entered as seriously into the plans of the Prussian Government as the conquest of the Rhine frontier has entered into the plans of the Government of France.

Your correspondent's second assertion is, that "neither now nor at any time has Germany been influenced by the greed of conquest." And he adds, that "the conquest of territory inhabited by people who are not German in national sentiment is an idea abhorrent to the German mind."

If "M. M." could convince the English people on this point, he would recover for Germany much of the English sympathy which has been waning since the capitulation of Sedan. But

how does he reconcile his assertion with his previous admission, that the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine has been for long the day-dream of German statesmen and poets? Alsace and Lorraine, whatever they may be in the matter of race and language, are certainly not "German in national sentiment." Professor Treitschke, of Heidelberg, has recently published a pamphlet in favour of annexing Alsace and Lorraine.

In that pamphlet he admits that Metz and Belfort are "almost entirely French" in blood, as well as in language; but he asks scornfully, "Are we to renounce these two strongholds for the sake of an untenable dogma?" In other words, considerations of race and "national sentiment" are all paramount when Germany wants a strong frontier, and they are "an untenable dogma" when France wants a strong frontier.

If "M. M." could persuade his countrymen to accept a peace on some such basis as *The Times* has consistently advocated, he would be a benefactor to Europe; but if Germany will insist on the absorption of Alsace and Lorraine, irrespectively of the wishes of the inhabitants, it will be

a difficult task to convince neutral nations that "neither now nor at any time has Germany been influenced by the greed of conquest." And a peace concluded on such a basis will be nothing better than a truce, of which the effect will be to keep all Europe in a state of armed preparation for the renewal of the conflict.

SCRUTATOR.

"The Times," Tuesday, November 1, 1870.

II.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,— I cordially accept the assurance of "M. M." that "his object in writing to you is not controversy, but peace." No one who recognizes his initials would think of crediting him with any other object. I trust he will believe that my object is as pacific as his own, and I will add that I heartily sympathized with Germany at the commencement of the war, and that I wish to do so still. It was in order that I might do so, without hesitation, that I asked "M. M." to clear up some difficulties which at present impede the free flow of my sympathy for

Germany. I thank him for his kindly answer; but it does not quite satisfy me, and, with your permission, I will give my reasons as briefly as I can.

"M. M." appealed, and still appeals, to Alsace and Lorraine as a capital proof that "the conquest of territory inhabited by people who are not German in sentiment is an idea abhorrent to the German mind." He admits, I think, that the idea of recovering these provinces had never departed from the dreams of German poets, or from the schemes of German statesmen; and he would admit that its poets and statesmen, when they agree, may fairly be assumed to represent the general feelings of a nation.

"M. M.'s" argument, therefore, comes to this: The national sentiment of Germany has always demanded the re-conquest of Alsace and Lorraine; but inasmuch as the Germans have never waged war for the purpose of realizing that sentiment, the proof is clear, that foreign conquest is "an idea abhorrent to the German mind." But surely another conclusion, at least as natural and as obvious, follows from "M. M.'s" premisses—namely, that Germany has now, for the first time

since she lost her two provinces, been in a position to wage a tolerably safe war for their recovery. At all events, the French may fairly claim the benefit of "M. M.'s" argument. It is, unfortunately, true that the extension of her frontier in the direction of the Rhine has entered as much into the dreams of Frenchmen as the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine has entered into the national sentiment of Germany. Still, France has never made war on Germany for the avowed purpose of pushing her frontier to the Rhine, and it is certain that such a war would not have received the sanction of the present generation of Frenchmen fairly represented. Out of 89 departments only 11 approved the war.

The truth is, that the real causes of war are seldom or never its avowed causes, and therefore it is not much to the purpose to prove that the "conquest of foreign territory is abhorrent to the German mind." An astute ruler will never find it difficult to dissemble the real cause under some pretext which will appeal to the passions of the multitude. We all remember the ardour with which Germany rushed to arms in 1863, to rescue the Germans of Schleswig-Holstein from

the tyranny of Denmark, but "M. M." is too sagacious and too well-informed to believe that the rescue of a handful of oppressed Germans was the real motive of those who pulled the strings behind the scenes. When the Duke of Augustenburg had served the purpose of Count Bismarck, he was swept contemptuously out of the way, and the people of Schleswig-Holstein were sternly forbidden to have any opinion of their own on the subject. In the same way, it was not the desire of France for the Rhine provinces, it was not even the nomination of a Prussian prince for the Spanish throne, that induced France, as a nation, to give its sanction to the war against Prussia. What roused France to fever heat was the telegraphic news from Berlin, that an insult had been offered to the honour of France in the person of her ambassador. As it turned out, no insult had been offered; but who originated the report of which the Government of France made such fatal use? The only thing certain is that the report issued from Berlin; and two of the despatches of the British ambassador at Berlin, published in July, have left on my mind an unpleasant impression that

Bismarck was as anxious for the war as Napoleon, though he cleverly contrived, as in the case of Austria in 1866, to throw the *onus* of declaring war on his antagonist.

I had no idea of making "M. M." responsible for what Professor Treitschke had written. I cited Professor Treitschke to show that the idea of foreign conquest was not so "abhorrent to the German mind" as "M. M." thinks, and for that purpose the quotation was to the point.

I will make no further reference to the Treaty of Prague than to say that I have a distinct recollection of the circumstances to which "M. M." refers, and that I retain my opinion.

Is "M. M." correct in saying that "all right-minded people, whatever their national or political bias may be, can honestly agree that it would be subversive of the cardinal principles of public right to allow an unprovoked war to be atoned for by a pecuniary fine"?

To pass by the assumption that the war was altogether "unprovoked;" is it true to say that if peace were made to-morrow on the basis of a war indemnity, a "pecuniary fine" would represent all the punishment inflicted on France?

"M. M." forgets her myriads of desolate homes, her ruined towns, her burnt villages, her extinguished industries, and, above all, her humiliation, unparalleled in the annals of modern war. I do not, however, contend that Germany would be guilty of a great wrong by annexing some of the territory she has conquered; and I think it would be criminal on the part of France to refuse peace now on such a basis. All I can say is that, by annexing Alsace and Lorraine, Germany will have lost a grand opportunity of raising Europe to a higher standard of international morality than has hitherto prevailed, and will have done so without any adequate compensation. It is not too much to say, that, if Germany were magnanimously to set the example of repelling invasion without claiming a slice of the enemy's territory by way of reprisal, we should see the dawn of a new era in civilization. The verdict of 78 French Departments out of 89 against war proves that the development of commerce is a safer guarantee for peace than the ramparts of frontier fortresses. French colonels might vapour for another war to wipe out the humiliation of Sedan and Metz; but their vapouring would

prove of no more avail than the futile threats to avenge Waterloo. The case will be different, however, if, in addition to a great military disaster, and the ruin of the nation, France sees a portion of her population crying to her for help against the oppressor, and for restoration to what they, at least, will consider their country.

SCRUTATOR.

"*The Times*," Monday, November 7, 1870.

III.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—Your correspondent "M. M." is a very skilful as well as a courteous controversialist. I admire the art with which he has fastened on two expressions of mine as if they contained the gist of the controversy, while he passes by, as if they were mere *obiter dicta*, what I put forward as the very marrow of my argument.

I appear to have said (for I have not my letter by me) that "Germany would not be guilty of a great crime by annexing some of the territory she has conquered," and that "it would be criminal

on the part of France to refuse Peace now on such terms."

Now, in the first place, in saying that Germany would not be guilty of a *great* crime, I implied that she would be guilty of *some* crime. In the second place, the sentence which followed the two admissions which "M. M." has quoted with so much satisfaction clearly showed that when I acquitted Germany of "a great crime" I was judging her by what I regarded as a low and faulty standard of public morality, for I added that, in annexing some portion of French territory, Germany would certainly lose a noble opportunity of elevating the standard of international morality. It is not so very long ago since it was considered within the rights of a Christian conqueror to enslave his captives. Grotius does not hesitate to affirm that it is not contrary to the natural rights of war to enslave vanquished, and to kill captive, enemies. But he goes on to explain that "we are often said to have a right to do this or that because we may do it with impunity," which is "different from doing it rightly." What I complain of, therefore, is that Germany seems determined to regulate her conduct by a

low morality—a morality justified by the technical rights of the conqueror, but not justified by that high Christian morality which Germany claimed for herself and denied to France at the commencement of the war. In seeking to dismember France and to annex an unwilling population, Germany is now doing the very thing which she denounced France for doing. Is it surprising that many persons who sympathized with Germany three months ago are sorely disappointed at this discrepancy between preaching and practice? And here let me state the facts in respect to a point which has been the subject of much doubt and mutual recrimination. It has been repeatedly asserted, and as often denied, that the King of Prussia, at the beginning of the campaign, declared that he was making war on the Emperor of the French, not on the French nation. The King certainly did not say so in so many words; and yet I think I can prove that the honour of Prussia is really committed to the line of policy attributed to King William. The King of Prussia's words are as follows:—

We, William, King of Prussia, make known the following to the inhabitants of the French territories occupied by the

German armies: The Emperor Napoleon having made, by land and sea, an attack on the German nation—which desired, and still desires, to live in peace with the French people—I have assumed the command of the German armies to repel this aggression, and I have been led by military circumstances to cross the frontiers of France. I am waging war against French soldiers, not against French citizens. The latter, consequently, will continue to enjoy security for their persons and property so long as they themselves shall not by hostile attempts against the German troops deprive me of the right of according them my protection.

Then follows a reference to special regulations for the payment of such requisitions as the Germans might be obliged to demand for the support of their troops.

Now, when we consider that this Proclamation was addressed especially to the inhabitants of Alsace, I think it is not a violent inference to say that it does seem to contain a promise of recrossing "the frontiers of France" when the aggression had been repelled. The inhabitants of Alsace are expressly addressed as "French people," and it is as an integral portion of "the French people" that Germany, according to King William, "desires to live at peace" with them.

But we are not left to inference as to the professed intentions of Prussia at that time. The

King's proclamation is dated the 11th of August, and is published in *The Times* of August 12. Within a week of that time the Crown Prince issued a proclamation in which he said, in so many words, that Germany was at war, not with France, but with the Emperor Napoleon. The proclamation is given in the letter of your Special Correspondent at the Head-Quarters of the Crown Prince, dated "Nancy, August 19," and published in *The Times* of August 30. The first sentence in the proclamation is, "Germany makes war on the Emperor, not on the people of France."

Now, it is this masking of sinister intentions under fair professions until the time for throwing off the mask has arrived that has caused such widespread and profound distrust in the policy of Count Bismarck. Another illustration of the same trait in Prussian diplomacy is afforded by that still unexplained incident at Ems which "M. M." passes over with such dexterity. From Berlin it was telegraphed all over Europe that the ambassador of France had affronted the King of Prussia in a place of public resort, and that the King, instead of answering him, turned round to one of his suite and bade him tell M. Benedetti

*

that the King "could not receive him again." Your own able Correspondent at Berlin told the public of England how the news of this incident made the whole population of Berlin wild with excitement:—

There was but one opinion as to the manly and worthy conduct of the King; there was but one determination to follow his example, and take up the gauntlet flung into their face. By 10 o'clock the square in front of the Royal Palace was crowded with an excited multitude. Hurrahs for the King, and cries of "To the Rhine!" were heard on all sides. Similar demonstrations were made in other quarters of the town. It was the explosion of a long pent up anger.

Now let it be remembered that this momentous piece of news, fraught with such dire consequences, was first published in the *Norddeutsche Zeitung*, Count Bismarck's organ, and that it was thence telegraphed all over the world; and we need not wonder at the excitement which it caused in France, an excitement still more intensified by a subsequent telegram, which announced that the Emperor Napoleon had demanded an apology from the King of Prussia. Let it be remembered, too, that after the withdrawal of Prince Hohenzollern by his father, Lord A. Loftus called on Count Bismarck to congratulate him on the re-establishment of the peace of Europe. And

what was Bismarck's reply? He said, "he did not think there would be peace," that "Prussia was fully able to cope with France," and that the King had offended Germany by being too civil to the French ambassador. Immediately afterwards came the news of the Ems incident, and of the declaration of King William to an address from Hamburg that he had "spoken the decisive word."

All this was previous to the open rupture between France and Prussia; and in the declaration of war by the French Government afterwards it was made a subject of special complaint that a "notification had been made to the Cabinets of the refusal to receive the Emperor's ambassador, and to enter into new explanations with him." To this the Prussian Government immediately replied that "it was but a gratuitous invention. The alleged notification to the Cabinets was never made, and the King never refused to treat with the French ambassador."

But who was the author of the "gratuitous invention"? It first appeared in Count Bismarck's organ, and to it is directly due the present deplorable war.

“M. M.” asks me if I “can bring forward one word from any German statesman or poet of note during the last fifty years in support of a re-conquest of Elsass.” Your correspondent has me at a disadvantage here, for he is familiar with the literature of Germany, while my acquaintance with it is very meagre. Still, I think I can return some answer to his challenge. After the fall of the First French Empire at Waterloo, the statesmen who represented Germany in the negotiations for peace claimed the right of disposing of Alsace and Lorraine, irrespectively of the wishes of the other Allied Powers. It was not a claim that the other Powers should hand the provinces over to Germany as conquered territory and on certain conditions, but that Germany should be left free to deal with them as she listed.

“M. M.” must also be aware that the Press of Germany since 1866 has teemed with publications in favour of the re-conquest of Alsace and Lorraine. Take the following by way of example:—

“After the events of last year (1866) it is easy to foresee, without the gift of prophecy, that Germany will shortly be

united under a strong sceptre—the sceptre of Prussia; but we prophesy not only the Germany of to-day, *but all Germany as far as the German tongue is heard*. Germany is about to be united, not under the enervated Hapsburg, but under the flourishing Hohenzollern. The non-German Austria is conquered; the Southern States will join; *the territory Germany still wants will, in the course of things, be wrested from foreign rule*. A second Phœnix, Germany will rise, a solid confederation, from her ashes: the Emperor Barbarossa will, in the person of Frederick William the Fifth of Prussia, wield the German sceptre, as a Protestant Prince, over a league of States with full freedom of conscience. *But the German Protestant element must previously fight a terrible battle with the French Catholic one for the long-disputed supremacy*. The French Catholic element is rotten to the core, undermined like Austria; while Germany is strong, united, and will represent a power not easy to be resisted. *France will defend herself—her national honour is at stake: she will also have to fight for her faith and for her possession of the German provinces of Alsace and Lorraine*.

This extract is from a Berlin publication of the year 1867. Its title is, "*The Immediate Future of all the European States: Prophecies for the Coming Year*; by F. S. von Hirschfeld." After all, it is not with me, but with his own countrymen, that "M. M." must settle the question as to the long continued cry of Germany for the re-conquest of Alsace and Lorraine. There lies before me at this moment the third edition of a pamphlet published this year at Leipsic, and entitled "*Elsass*

and Lorraine : by Adolf Schmidt." On page 69 I find the following passage, which seems to me about as complete an answer as can well be imagined to " M. M.'s " challenge. After complaining that England prevented Germany from taking Alsace and Lorraine at the peace of Paris, the author proceeds as follows :—

Public opinion in Germany, journals like the *Rhenish Mercury*, newspapers, pamphlets, patriots of every rank, poets and public men, statesmen and soldiers—all gave to the lawful aim (of re-conquering Alsace and Lorraine) a complete satisfaction, a unanimous expression, never before experienced. E. M. Arndt and Görres lent themselves unceasingly to this demand. From every soul resounded the words of Schenkendorf:

" Doch dort an den Vogesen
Liegt ein verlornes Gut;
Da gilt es deutsches Blut
Vom Höllenjoch zu lösen."

The number of those who might have been willing to content themselves with Alsace were gradually vanishing. Almost every one who could find opportunity to speak demanded back, besides Alsace, Lorraine, including the three bishoprics and the Imperial cities of Metz, Toul, &c.

The English of the verse quoted by the author from Schenkendorf is as follows :—

" Over beside the Vosges,
There lies a lost estate,
German blood must redeem it
From the yoke of hell."

Now I submit that this picture of German sentiment is a very different thing from the pensive look of innocent regret which is all that "M. M." will allow us to attribute to his Fatherland. I may add that Adolf Schmidt peremptorily denies the right of England to have any voice in the matter, because, forsooth! it was not England, but Germany, which conquered at Waterloo.

Taking the Hohenzollern intrigue and all the other circumstances of the case into consideration, I cannot think that the war was absolutely "unprovoked" on the part of Prussia.

There are other points in "M. M.'s" letter which I should like to notice, but I cannot trespass at greater length on your valuable space. Let me, however, say one word in reply to "M. M.'s" illustration about the two jewellers. Would the jeweller whose shop was broken into be justified not only in knocking the burglar down and compelling him to pay the damages, but, in addition, in breaking into *his* shop and carrying off some of his jewellery, by way of making him keep the peace in future? Would not such an application of the *lex talionis* be more likely to

breed lawlessness than to stimulate a desire for peace? Yet such is the advice which your able and estimable correspondent "M. M." gives to Germany.

SCRUTATOR.

"The Times," Monday, November 15, 1870.

IV.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TIMES."

SIR,—“M. M.” does me a great deal more, and himself a great deal less, than justice. He is probably the only one of your readers who has discovered in my letters any indication of “the very brand of Excalibur,” and certainly he is the only one who can find in his own any proof that he “can only handle a wooden sword.” If, indeed, he has chosen to use a weapon of such soft material, I, at least, have no doubt that he has done so partly from confidence in his own superior skill, and partly because he is generously more intent upon disarming his adversary than on wounding him. If I have made “a few thrusts which show a love of victory rather than a love of truth,” I am sorry for it, and I shall do

my best to avoid that temptation in the observations which I shall now make on his last letter.

If we can only get rid of all irrelevant considerations I think the controversy between "M. M." and myself may be reduced to very narrow limits, and I shall, therefore, begin by endeavouring to clear the ground of all matter that does not necessarily belong to the essence of the argument.

To that category belongs the *tu quoque* with which "M. M." introduces his last reply. I am not concerned to defend the policy of England on all occasions. I have no doubt that a great deal of it is indefensible. But does "M. M." seriously suppose that the annexation of the Punjab can bear any comparison with the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine? "M. M." may argue that the English have no business at all in India; but if he admits their right to be there, he can hardly deny that a population of 20,000, in the midst of a population of 200,000,000, may be excused for taking securities for peace against an aggressive neighbour, which would be quite inapplicable in the case of European nations. Besides, the population of the annexed territory

have never manifested any great reluctance to their change of masters; on the contrary, they are among the most loyal of our subjects, and have more than once volunteered to fight our battles in India and elsewhere. Is "M. M." sanguine enough to believe that a similar result would follow the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine? There is also a difference between the dismemberment of a nation and the annexation bodily of an aggressive tribe. Prussia will affront the public conscience of Europe far more by the seizure of Alsace and Lorraine than she did by the annexation of Hanover, though in the latter case Prussia was the aggressor.

I have never justified the declaration of war by France; I only maintain that it was not "absolutely unprovoked." I do not, indeed, go so far as Lord Bacon, who asserts that "there is no question but a just fear of an imminent danger, though there be no blow given, is a lawful cause of a war;" but "a just fear of an imminent danger," though not "a lawful cause of a war," may be a valid plea against calling such a war "absolutely unprovoked." Now is it

true that France had no reason whatever to think herself in imminent danger from Prussian aggrandizement? Let us think. She saw Austria driven out of the Germanic Confederation by the sword of Prussia; she saw Prussia annex territory after territory, till the whole of North Germany was absorbed; and, not long after, she discovered that South Germany also was bound by secret treaty to unite its armies with those of Prussia. That there might be no mistake as to the destination of those armies, Prussia declared through her press that a war against France was the natural and necessary sequel to Sadowa. The military supremacy in Europe was to be wrested from France, and that nation was to be permanently weakened by the reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine. The army of Prussia was eager, according to "M. M.'s" own admission, to commence the fray. "Every general then" (1866), he says, "was for war against France." Not a defensive war, be it noted, but "a war against France." And this because "Prussia was coerced into concluding a peace at the dictation of France." What does "M. M." mean? He means that Prussia, not content with con-

quering in a war which Austria did not provoke, not content with Austria's acknowledgment of defeat, not content with a large indemnity, was seriously bent on seizing Austrian territory. And because France used her influence to prevent the dismemberment of Austria, Prussia, as represented by her press and army, "was for war against France."

This is "M. M.'s" admission; and an admission more fatal to his argument I cannot conceive. True, he says, that "Bismarck counselled peace." But Bismarck knew well that a war against France and Austria combined, with Austria's Venetian army released, and with Denmark ready to avenge Düppel, would be a doubtful venture. A war then meant Prussia alone against France, Austria, Denmark, and the conquered members of the extinct Confederation; and therefore "Count Bismarck counselling peace" does not count for much. Count Bismarck has never scrupled to put down freedom of speech with an iron hand when it suited his purpose. Is there any evidence that he did anything to restrain the French crusade preached by the Prussian press? At all events, when France

saw all this, and saw, moreover, Prussian officers taking plans of the fortresses and passes of her frontier, we need not be surprised at her "fearing an imminent danger."

I did not quote the alleged "*fracas* at Ems" as a justification of war on the part of France, but as an indication, together with the ominous conversation with Lord A. Loftus, that Count Bismarck saw his opportunity, and, fearing it might escape him, contrived, by "a gratuitous invention," to rouse the warlike feelings of two susceptible nations to a point which made war almost inevitable. I believe Count Bismarck is far too wise a man to have "written the paragraph" which was the direct cause of the war. But the paragraph appeared in his paper, and was telegraphed all over Europe from Berlin; and a great Minister, anxious for peace, would not have lost an hour before he contradicted the false and mischievous "invention," and punished the "inventor." Count Bismarck did not do so. He waited till France declared war, and then, when the mischief was irreparable, he denounced the immediate cause of it as "a gratuitous invention." That declaration a week earlier

would, humanly speaking, have prevented the war. Why was it not made? The Government of France, most criminally, I admit, fell into the trap so adroitly laid for them. But if France is guilty, is Prussia quite innocent?

I will not again dwell on the proclamations of the King and Crown Prince, except to say that the proclamation of the Crown Prince seems to me the authoritative interpretation of that of the King issued a week before. Has Prussia ever disclaimed that authoritative interpretation?

“M. M.’s” challenge to produce “one word from any German statesman or poet of note during the last fifty years in support of a reconquest of Alsace,” I think I may dismiss very briefly. I did not quote Adolf Schmidt as “a statesman,” but as a witness. He is a learned German, the large and rapid sale of whose pamphlet proves the approbation of his countrymen; and he declares that “public opinion in Germany, expressed by newspapers, pamphlets, patriots of every rank, poets and public men, statesmen, and soldiers, all demanded the reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine ever since the Peace of Paris.” He makes no limitation as to time.

Which am I to trust, then,—Schmidt, who lives and breathes among the public opinion of which he speaks, or “M. M.,” who sees that public opinion through the haze of distance and of other associations? And, after all, the question is not when the songs of Arndt and Schenkendorf and Görres were *written*, but when they were *sung*. “M. M.” will remember Fletcher of Saltoun’s famous saying,—“Give me the making of a people’s songs, and I care not who makes their laws.” The popular poet, “being dead, yet speaketh” in the songs which still move the hearts of his countrymen. Have not songs advocating a war against France and the enlargement of the German Fatherland by seizing on neighbouring territories been among the most popular of German songs? And if this be so, what matters it to my argument when those songs were written?

My conclusion, therefore, is this. France and Germany may cry quits as regards the popular desire for conquests on the Rhine. I believe that neither nation would have made war upon the other for such an object. The verdict of 78 French departments out of 89 is a sufficient

answer on the part of France, and I believe that the verdict of Germany would have been equally emphatic. But, unfortunately, France had a Government of incapables, who were more intent on private ends and dynastic considerations than on the welfare of France. Germany, on the other hand, is ruled by a statesman who declared early in his political career that questions of State policy were to be decided, "not by majorities or minorities in Parliament, but by iron and blood." He has ever chosen war as the agent of his political designs, and I think that an unbiased scrutiny of his career will convince most men that he saw in a French war the surest means of placing Prussia at the head of a great German Empire. I have no doubt that Count Bismarck is a true patriot, but he is a patriot of the old feudal type, trusting much in brute force, despising popular rights and constitutional restraints, and tolerably unscrupulous in his use of means when he has a paramount end in view.

Does it not follow from these considerations that Germany can afford to sheathe her sword without dismembering France? "M. M." asserts that a peace without the seizure of the enemy's

territory "would be subversive of the cardinal principles of public right," and would also "be without a precedent in the annals of history."

I dispute both assertions. With regard to the first assertion, it will be time to meet it when "M. M." produces some other authority than his own—great as I admit that to be—in support of it. To the second I reply, *Solvitur ambulando*: here are some precedents.

The Crimean war was concluded without the seizure of Russian territory by the Allies. It is true that a slight alteration of boundaries was made at the mouth of the Danube, but the population affected was a mere handful; they had not been long under Russian rule, and they had no objection to the transfer—conditions all inapplicable to Alsace and Lorraine. The real security extorted from Russia was the dismantling of Sebastopol and the neutralization of the Black Sea—conditions quite applicable to Alsace and Lorraine.

But the great precedent against "M. M.'s" dictum is the Peace of Paris in 1814, and again in 1815. Here is the remarkable declaration of the Allied Sovereigns when they entered Paris:—

Les armées alliées ont occupé la capitale de la France. Les Souverains alliés accueillent le vœu de la nation Française. Ils déclarent: que si les conditions de la paix devraient renfermer de plus fortes garanties lorsqu'il s'agissait d'enchaîner l'ambition de Bonaparte, elles doivent être plus favorables, lorsque par un retour vers un gouvernement sage la France elle-même offrira l'assurance du repos. Les Souverains proclament en conséquence qu'ils ne traiteront plus avec Napoléon Bonaparte, ni avec aucun membre de sa famille. *Qu'ils respectent l'intégrité de l'ancienne France, telle qu'elle a existé sous ses rois légitimes. Ils peuvent même plus, parce qu'ils professent toujours le principe que pour le bonheur de l'Europe il faut que la France soit grande et forte.* Qu'ils garantissent et reconnaîtront la constitution que la nation Française se donnera. Ils invitent par conséquence le Sénat à désigner sur le champ un Gouvernement provisoire, qui puisse pourvoir aux besoins de l'administration et préparer la constitution qui conviendra au peuple Français. Les intentions que je viens d'exprimer me sont communes avec toutes les Puissances alliées.

Paris, le 31 Mars, 1814, 3½ après midi.—ALEXANDRE.—
NESSELRODE.

But "M. M." will probably reply that the forbearance of the conquerors was abused by the subsequent events of the Hundred Days, and that a dismemberment of France was therefore necessary for the security of Germany. That is one answer; but there is another, and I think a truer one. The allied Sovereigns, as we have seen, engaged to guarantee any constitution

which France might freely choose. But the promise was broken, against the remonstrances of Russia, by Germany. France chose her constitution, but the restored King rejected the constitution at *the instigation of Austria and Prussia*. Talleyrand, Montesque, and others “assured the King in vain that he could never enter Paris as a King by the grace of God; that he must give pledges to the people of the enjoyment of their political rights. During the journey, and even when he had arrived at Compiègne, Louis continued to insist upon entering Paris as if everything which had happened since 1789 was merely a dream. . . . And he was still further encouraged by the conduct of the Emperor Francis, who dryly answered the complimentary address of the Senate on his entry into Paris—‘That for 20 years past he had carried on war not only with Napoleon, *but with those principles which constituted the misfortune of the world.*’ The King of Prussia and his Court were of the same opinion, but they were more prudent than Francis, and did not give public expression to their feelings.”

These are the words of a German historian,

Schlosser, and he adds that "every step which was henceforth taken was hostile to the liberation of the French people." The Treaty of Peace, so fair outwardly, bristled with secret articles inimical to the general welfare and liberty of France. Among other secret articles, "it was determined (again I quote Schlosser) that the sum of more than 140,000,000 francs, paid by the King of Prussia to the Emperor Napoleon, was to be repaid." In short, in addition to the public fine imposed on France, the King bound himself, according to Schlosser, to give up to Germany "exclusively French property" to the amount of 1,500,000,000 francs, "and a special agreement was entered into between Prussia and France, whereby everything which had been agreed between these two nations, either publicly or secretly, should be reckoned null and void." "From that moment began a new period of oppression for the people . . . who were cheated out of the advantages which had been promised as the result of their freedom from this oppression."

In short, the rulers of Germany conspired to impose on France a yoke of tyranny and corrup-

tion which it had cost her so much bloodshed to throw off; and the result was the escape from Elba, and Waterloo. These things ought not to be forgotten, and they were not forgotten at the second Peace of Paris. France, in spite of German diplomacy, was not dismembered, and the result has been a peace of more than half a century between France and Germany.

“M. M.” finds a proof of the pacific intentions of Germany in “the diplomatic triumph France achieved by forcing the King of Prussia to withdraw the Prince of Hohenzollern.” This “diplomatic triumph” is a popular delusion. The King of Prussia remained deaf to all the appeals of France and of the Neutral Powers, and steadily refused to “withdraw the Prince of Hohenzollern.”

But, granting that Germany needs protection against France, is there no other way of securing it than the violent rending of a million and a half of human beings from the country of their birth and their intense affection? Germany must prove the negative of that question before she has a right to annex Alsace and Lorraine on the plea of security. Most people will think that

the dismantling of the frontier fortresses and the neutralization, for war purposes, of the provinces in dispute, will be a better guarantee of peace than the forcible seizure of an unwilling population. Germany has shown Europe the way to many a victory alike in the arts of peace and of war. Would that she would now give it an example of the noblest victory of all—the victory of self-restraint in the hour of her triumph and her pride! And who more competent to give her such advice than “M. M.,” wielding as he does a great and well-deserved influence both in the country of his adoption and in that of his birth?

SCRUTATOR.

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