GERMANY

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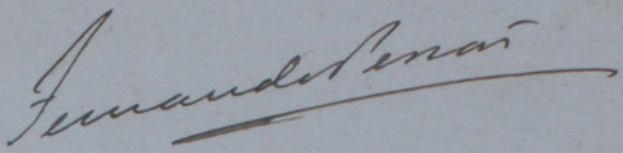
THE·PEOPLE'S·BOOKS



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LONDON: T. C. & E. C. JACK
67 LONG ACRE, W.C., AND EDINBURGH
NEW YORK: DODGE PUBLISHING CO.

PREFATORY NOTE

A BOOK of this size cannot attempt to deal with every aspect of such a subject as Germany. In selecting a few topics for treatment I have tried to keep in view what the public wants to know at present, and my choice has been mainly determined by questions asked me after lectures given to members of the Workers' Educational Association.

W. T. W.

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GERMANY

CHAPTER I

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

GERMANY is the youngest of the Great Powers, yet no other European state is so strongly influenced by its remote past. Her very constitution seems absurd unless viewed in the light of German history. Her policy, both at home and abroad, has its roots in distant centuries. And this influence of the past on the present is due to more than the mechanical sequence of cause and effect. The national memory of Germany is much longer than that of England, or even of France. The German people is very conscious of its history, and it has deliberately allowed its aims and aspirations to be modified by its historical knowledge. Any intelligent account of the policy and institutions of modern Germany must necessarily be prefaced by a sketch, however slight, of her political evolution.

In the fifth century after Christ the Roman Empire succumbed to the barbarian enemies who had long beset its frontiers. Of all its European territories, only the Balkan peninsula was saved. For many centuries that region and the ever-diminishing possessions of Rome in Asia formed a state calling itself the Roman Empire, with its capital at Constantinople. Elsewhere the invaders set up kingdoms of their own.

The conquerors were nearly all of Teutonic blood, kinsmen of the present-day Germans. They had abandoned their homes in northern and central Europe, and

some had spent generations in devious wanderings before they established themselves on Roman soil. They made no systematic or united invasion. Numerous tribes, acting independently, occupied various regions for themselves. Thus the Goths became masters of Italy and Spain, the Burgundians of south-east Gaul, the Vandals of north-west Africa. These kingdoms were short-lived, falling before attacks from Constantinople or invasions by other barbarians. Better fortune, however, attended other settlements, and especially the state established in Gaul by the Franks.

The Franks had for many years inhabited the basin of the middle and lower Rhine. As a rule they had been friendly with the Romans; but in the last quarter of the fifth century they burst into Gaul under their king Clovis, who in a few years made himself master of two-thirds of the country. So vigorous were his immediate successors that by the year 550 the Franks held the whole of Gaul, and, turning eastwards, had conquered from other Teutonic tribes the centre and south of what is now Germany. They had comparatively little trouble in retaining their possessions, for they were exposed to no formidable attacks from without, their subjects were unwarlike, and the conversion to Christianity of Clovis and his followers had done much to promote amicable relations between conquerors and conquered.

Nevertheless, the Frankish realm soon ceased to make progress whether at home or abroad. The land was harassed by a succession of civil wars. The house of Clovis degenerated and became ever more feeble and incompetent. No order was kept; material prosperity declined; the Church was utterly corrupt; art and learning virtually disappeared. It was not until the line of Clovis was forced to make way for a new royal family that the Frankish kingdom became a civilised state.

The first king of the new dynasty was Pepin the Short, who ruled from 751 to 768. Following in the footsteps of his ancestors, who for many years had wielded almost

royal power among the Franks, he brought all parts of the kingdom under a firm rule, encouraged the conversion of Germany to Christianity, and entered into friendly relations with the pope of Rome, who was now becoming recognised in western Europe as the head of the Church. But Pepin's fame is overshadowed by that of his son Charles, one of the world's heroes, whose personality and actions alike justify his title of "the Great."

During his reign, which lasted from 768 to 814, Charles made enormous additions to the Frankish dominions. He led a successful attack on the Lombards, who held north and central Italy, and forced them to accept him as king. His greatest military exploit, however, was the conquest of the hitherto heathen and independent Saxons, who inhabited north Germany from the Rhine to the Elbe. By the year 800 Charles's dominions stretched from the Elbe to the Pyrenees, and from the North Sea to the Adriatic. It was the first time that the Teutonic tribes between the North Sea and the Alps had been brought under a single ruler.

Charles, however, was much more than a warrior: he was a wise administrator, a law-giver, a friend of the Church, an intelligent patron of art and learning. So vast and yet so orderly was his realm, that men regarded the title of king as too humble for him. The outcome of this feeling is not easy for the modern mind to understand. It must be remembered that the Roman Empire had been an object of awe and respect to the very barbarians who had overthrown it. The Teutonic chiefs were eager for Roman titles, and liked to pose as Roman officials. They showed no hatred of Roman institutions, and seldom sought to exterminate the inhabitants of the provinces they occupied. As a rule they tried, though with little success, to imitate the Roman system of government. And so long had the Roman Empire existed, so mighty had it been, that it seemed part of the necessary order of the world. In most parts of western Europe conquerors and conquered

soon began to merge into one race, and the more civilised subjects generally imposed their ideas and language on their rulers. The Church, too, forgetting the early persecutions and remembering the Christian Emperors from Constantine onwards, exalted the Roman Emperor as God's vicegerent on earth, and taught that society was incomplete unless he stood at its head. Thus many of Charles's subjects wished for the restoration of Roman rule in the west, and the king, for his part, listened readily to their suggestion that he should take the imperial title. The claims of Constantinople were for various reasons, plausible and otherwise, set aside; and on Christmas Day, 800, Charles was crowned Emperor at Rome by Pope Leo III.

It was of course idle to think that the Roman Empire could be revived by a mere ceremony. In neither extent, organisation, nor spirit was Charles's empire at all like that of Augustus or Constantine. And his new dignity made little difference to the policy pursued by the practical and shrewd Frank. Yet the name of Emperor increased his prestige among the majority of his subjects, in whose eyes his authority was now invested with a special sanctity.

If Charles himself could not make the imperial title a reality, little could be expected from his descendants, men far inferior in ability and character. Civil wars soon desolated the Empire, and in 843, by the treaty of Verdun, it was divided between three of Charles's grandsons. One of them, Lewis the German, was given the lands east of the Rhine; another, most of what is now France. But to the eldest, Lothair, fell the title of Emperor, the kingdom of Italy, and a long narrow strip of territory stretching from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. Its northern coast ran from the Rhine to the Yssel, its southern from the Rhone to the Alps. From its ruler it was known as Lotharingia, a name which has been modified to Lothringen or Lorraine and limited to a small part of the straggling realm. The treaty of Verdun marks the formation of the separate

kingdoms of Germany and France. The former was peopled by tribes of Teutonic race and speech. In the latter the Teutonic element was small; the Franks had not settled there in large numbers; its population was mainly of mixed Celtic and Latin blood; and its language was a debased Latin, rapidly developing into what we know as French. In Lotharingia the inhabitants were of various stocks; but in the north the Teutonic element predominated; this region had been in fact the very heart of Charles the Great's Empire; and there the Franks had kept their blood comparatively pure and preserved their national characteristics. When, soon afterwards, the line of Lothair became extinct, most of northern Lotharingia fell to the German kingdom, and, save for short intervals, remained part of it throughout the Middle Ages.

The kingdom of Germany very nearly died in infancy. It was exposed to many and great dangers. New swarms of barbarian invaders were threatening all the young states of Europe, and Germany had more than her share of trouble. Scandinavian pirates ravaged the north; Slavonic tribes encroached on the east; the Magyars, a race akin to the Turks, carried their marauding raids into the heart of the country. The kings proved unequal to the crisis. Each tribal division had to take care of itself, and it seemed likely that Germany would split up into several parts, for in general estimation the tribe and its duke counted for more than the nation and its king. The danger was intensified when the line of Charles the Great died out at the beginning of the tenth century. But the situation was saved by a duke of Saxony, Henry the Fowler, who was chosen king in 919. Henry drove back the invaders and checked the tendency towards disintegration. His son Otto carried out his policy with even greater success. So powerful in fact did Otto become that he resolved to revive the Empire of Charles the Great. Though in the recent confusion all pretence of maintaining the Roman Empire had been abandoned, the days of Charles

were remembered as a golden age, and it was believed that with an Emperor at its head western Europe would soon regain peace and prosperity. Otto himself thought that the title would enhance his authority. And so it came to pass that in 962 he made an expedition to Italy, and received from the pope the imperial crown.

Thus was founded the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, which was to endure till the nineteenth century and to prove a most potent influence in the shaping of German history. Every king of Germany had a claim on the imperial title, though in strictness he might not assume it till he had been crowned by the pope. To popular notions, however, the ruler of Germany was Emperor, and indeed the title of king of Germany soon ceased to be used, and prior to coronation by the pope her sovereign styled himself king of the Romans.

Theoretically, the Emperor was lord of the whole world, for no territorial limits were assigned to the authority of Rome. He was God's viceregent on earth, divinely appointed to rule over men's bodies and control their temporal concerns. Their souls and spiritual needs were the care of the pope; and it was the duty of pope and emperor to support each other in the discharge of their proper functions. The pope would lay the curse of the Church on those who resisted the Emperor; the Emperor would draw the sword against those who disobeyed the pope.

These beautiful but visionary doctrines did great harm to Germany. But it cannot be denied that, particularly at first, they were productive of some good. The vain efforts of the Emperors to establish their authority over other lands, especially Italy, brought Germany into touch with the world beyond her borders. Both intellectually and materially she profited by the contact, and for many years after Otto's time she was the best-governed, most prosperous, and most highly-cultured state in Europe. And, foolish and baseless though the imperial theory may have been, it yet put

before the sovereigns of Germany a noble ideal, which some of them strove heroically to realise. It touched their minds to great issues which were beyond the comprehension of contemporary kings in France and England. Some of the most fascinating figures in history are numbered among the Emperors of the early Middle Ages: it would be hard to find a sovereign of more high-souled ambition than Frederick Barbarossa, or a more brilliant and versatile personality than his grandson, Frederick II. And the soaring policy of the great Emperors created a tradition of high endeavour which, even in their deepest humiliation, the German people never wholly forgot.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that on the whole Germany's connection with the Holy Roman Empire was a national calamity. The imperial ambitions of her sovereigns were largely responsible for the fact that whereas in A.D. 1000 Germany was the strongest and most united state in Europe, five hundred years later she was scarcely a state at all, but rather a bundle of virtually independent principalities. The ideals of imperial theory tempted the rulers of Germany to neglect their proper duties. They never approached the realisation of their claims to universal rule, but for a century or two they maintained a precarious hold on Italy, with the result that each reign was marked by one or more Italian expeditions, wherein were wasted men, money, and time that should have been devoted to Germany. The theory of the Empire, and still more the Italian policy springing from it, raised up against the Emperors the power of the papacy—in the Middle Ages the most formidable enemy anyone could have. The ideal of helpful co-operation between pope and Emperor was seldom achieved. They found it impossible to agree as to the frontier between temporal and spiritual things: each accused the other of trespassing beyond his borders. With the growth of the Church's political power they went from words to blows. Three great struggles were waged. European opinion was on the whole with the pope; he could, moreover, rely on the help of dis-

affected subjects of the Emperor in Germany and Italy. In the end, after many vicissitudes, the papacy triumphed; and the death in 1250 of the Emperor Frederick II marked the death of the Holy Roman Empire as a living political organism.

Meanwhile it had gone ill with the Emperor's authority in Germany. In the Middle Ages, with communication slow and political talent rare, the administration of a realm required the most unremitting attention from its head. And with that the realm of Germany was rarely favoured. Feudalism had taken root during the troublous times after Charles the Great; and the growth of feudalism led inevitably to political disintegration. In France and England the first care of the most able kings was to check and as far as possible to suppress the power of the nobility. But in Germany the thoughts of the Emperors were turned in other directions; and the dukes and counts were able to usurp powers when their master's back was turned, and to extort concessions when he needed their help. Indeed, the very greatness of the Emperor's authority in theory made him the more ready to part with it in practice. To the lord of the world, God's vicegerent, what did it matter whether a mere duke had one privilege more or less?

In yet another way, the existence of the Holy Roman Empire helped the rise of the nobility to independence. In Germany, according to ancient Teutonic custom, the crown was regarded as elective. In other states founded by the conquerors of Rome the tendency was for it to become hereditary. That tendency appeared in Germany also, but it was checked by the consideration that the character of the Emperor, being a matter of such moment to the whole world, ought not to depend on the vagaries of heredity. So the nobles retained the right of choosing their sovereign; and though we often find a family holding the crown for two or three generations, and though in the end it did virtually become the property of one house, yet it

frequently happened that a man was elected precisely because his lack of wealth and influence would make it impossible for him to exert much authority over his subjects.

For some years after 1250 it seemed as if the very title of Emperor would disappear. It was, however, revived, but henceforward there were few serious attempts to extend the imperial power beyond Germany. The change unfortunately came too late to save German unity. Many of the nobles were now almost independent princes. The only hope was that one of them might acquire such a territorial pre-eminence as would enable him to keep the crown in his family and bend his fellow-princes to his will. Many Emperors, indeed—though probably from merely selfish motives—used their position with the sole object of adding to their estates. But for many years the German magnates succeeded in preventing the rise of anyone to a position of outstanding strength.

Thus the history of the German kingdom in the Middle Ages is a history of ever increasing weakness and disunion. By the year 1500 the authority of the Emperor, as Emperor, was a mockery. To all intents and purposes, the princes were the sovereign lords of their territories.

It must not be supposed, however, that the whole history of mediæval Germany is contained in a record of the decline of her central government. Progress had been made in many directions. For one thing, there had been a great increase in the amount of territory in German hands. In the days of Otto the Great, few Germans could be found to the east of the Elbe, and what is now the centre of the German Empire was peopled by tribes of Slavonic blood. One of the greatest achievements of the following centuries was the conquest and colonisation of the land between the Elbe and the Oder. Further east, Pomerania was thoroughly Germanised, while the Teutonic Knights, a military order like the more famous Templars and Hospitallers, conquered,

converted, and ruled Prussia. German colonists established themselves in Bohemia, in distant parts of Hungary, and at numerous points far up the Baltic coast. To the south-east, Austria, Styria, and Carinthia were occupied and held. Some of the emperors had encouraged and assisted in this expansion, but the credit for most of it belongs to the princes along the eastern frontier and to enterprising merchants, colonists, and missionaries.

Germany had progressed within as well as without. If she was no longer pre-eminent in culture, it was because other nations had advanced more rapidly than she, not because she had stood still. In art she always held a high place. Romanesque architecture reached its highest development in the churches of Germany, as Gothic afterwards did in the churches of France. The Germans indeed proved themselves no mean workmen in Gothic, modifying it in various distinctive ways, though it never obtained such a hold in Germany as with us. At the end of the Middle Ages there was a flourishing German school of painting. A national literature, too, had arisen; and in the fifteenth century the German invention of printing cleared the way for a great advance of learning and thought throughout Europe.

In material things, moreover, Germany had on the whole prospered. Great cities had arisen, the seats of manufacturing industry and the centres of a vast and widespread commerce. By the end of the fifteenth century many of them paid no allegiance to anyone save the Emperor, and were virtually independent republics. At this time they were perhaps the best governed communities in Europe. For the protection and expansion of their trade, the cities of the north banded together in the famous Hanseatic League, which in the later Middle Ages was one of the great European Powers. All the trade of the Baltic was in its hands, and treaties with foreign states gave it commercial supremacy on all the coasts of the North Sea. In short, given political

unity, Germany would probably have remained the strongest state in Europe.

In the first part of the sixteenth century it seemed possible that unity would soon be restored. For one of the princely families had raised itself far above any of its rivals. When in 1519 Charles V became Emperor, he was the fourth successive member of the House of Habsburg to hold that position. Originally second-rate nobles of south Germany, the Habsburgs had in 1282 acquired the duchy of Austria; to that they added Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola; and by a series of extraordinarily lucky marriages in the fifteenth century their power rose to such heights that Charles was not merely duke of Austria and Emperor, but king of Spain, lord of the Netherlands and the county of Burgundy, king of Naples and Sicily, duke of Milan, and prospective ruler of Bohemia and Hungary, which realms indeed fell to him soon afterwards. Could not such a potentate crush all opposition and unite all Germany under a strong hereditary monarchy?

Charles would have liked to accomplish the task, but it was beyond his powers. In the first place, he had too many irons in the fire. His scattered possessions brought him into conflict with many dangerous enemies, and much of his reign was consumed by wars against the French and the Turks. And whatever hopes regarding Germany he might still have entertained were ruined by the rebellion of Martin Luther against the church of Rome. In a few years most of Germany had ranged itself on the side of the Reformation. The Protestant princes seized ecclesiastical property and put themselves at the head of the reformed churches in their respective territories, thus increasing both their wealth and their power. By placing himself in the front of the new movement, Charles might have become a national king. But the prejudices of his Spanish subjects and the interests of his European policy stood in the way. He attempted the suppression of Protestantism, found that the Protestant leaders, selfish though their

aims might often be, had behind them a considerable mass of religious enthusiasm, and learned too that even the Catholic princes feared an increase of the Emperor's power. The end of Charles's effort was marked by the peace of Augsburg of 1555, which recognised the right of each prince to determine the faith of his subjects, and permanently divided Germany into two religious camps.

The House of Habsburg made one more effort to vindicate the authority of the imperial crown. In 1618 began the Thirty Years' War. Its origins are involved, and in detail not very relevant to the main course of German history. Broadly, it may be said that the war was due to the alarm of the Protestants at the progress made by Catholicism in the movement known as the Counter-Reformation, and to the desire of the Catholics to press home the advantages they had gained. But though the war began as a struggle between two religious parties in Germany, new actors and motives soon appeared. The Catholics were at first victorious, and the Protestant cause for a time seemed ruined. The Emperor Ferdinand II, with the help of his great general Wallenstein, sought to turn the victory to his own profit by building up a new kingdom on the wreckage of the Protestant states. His designs, however, were foiled by the intervention of Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, who wished both to save Protestantism and to establish Swedish supremacy in the Baltic; and when, after a brilliant career, Gustavus was killed in battle, the schemes of Ferdinand were successfully opposed by the French, whose traditional policy it was to thwart the House of Habsburg. Thus Protestantism was saved, though long before the end of the war the religious motive had disappeared from the struggle, which degenerated into a destructive scramble for territorial and other plunder on the part of Frenchmen, Swedes, German princes, and mercenary armies. In 1648, when half Germany was a desert, the peace of Westphalia put an end to the fighting. The right of each prince

to decide the religion of his subjects was confirmed; but it was in purely political matters that the chief importance of the treaty lay.

The boundaries of the Empire were cut short by the recognition of the northern Netherlands and of the Swiss Confederation as independent states. German territory, moreover, was ceded to the foreigner—Southern Alsace, which had for long been a Habsburg possession, went to France; part of Pomerania and land round the mouth of the Elbe, to Sweden. There was much re-arrangement of territory among the German princes, mostly to the advantage of Brandenburg and of Bavaria. But the main significance of the peace consists in its influence on the House of Habsburg. It marks the end of the efforts of that family to establish itself as the head of a united Germany. In effect, too, it marks the end of the Holy Roman Empire. The title, indeed, survived for another century and a half; but in 1648 the princes extorted from the Emperor a formal recognition of their sovereign rights within their territories, and henceforth the Habsburgs, yielding to the force of circumstances, gave their chief attention to the increase of their possessions and influence in southern and eastern Europe. Germany was thus a chaos of some three hundred states, with a nominal sovereign who did not take his position seriously. Even more disastrous was the influence of the war on her economic and social condition. The population had declined; agriculture and trade were ruined. The morale of the nation had suffered grievously. Religion had decayed, and intellectual activity almost disappeared. For the rest of the century Germany lived in an atmosphere of lethargic materialism. Ideas, manners and art she was content to borrow from the French. National feeling seemed extinct.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF PRUSSIA

After the peace of Westphalia the main interest of German history centres round the fortunes of the House of Hohenzollern. That family derived its name from a castle in south Germany, where its original estates were situated. The house had long been split into two branches, the younger of which, after playing an influential part in the politics of central Germany, stepped into the first line of German potentates when in 1415 the Emperor Sigismund bestowed on Frederick of Hohenzollern, burgrave of Nürnberg, the mark of Brandenburg, with the title of elector attached thereto.

Brandenburg lay between the Elbe and the Oder, and certain of its dependencies stretched eastward of the latter river. The region had belonged to various families since, in the twelfth century, it had been finally conquered from the Slavonic Wends. The elector was of course one of the leading men of the Empire, having, as his title implies, a vote at imperial elections. But several other princes, such as the Elector of Saxony, the Duke of Bavaria, and the Count Palatine of the Rhine, were his superiors in territory and wealth. And for some two hundred years the Hohenzollerns produced no man of conspicuous gifts, and pursued a careful and selfish policy, which saved them from any serious losses, but added little to their lands or prestige.

Meanwhile Protestantism had been adopted in Brandenburg, and also, it should be noted, in East Prussia. There remarkable events had occurred. In the fifteenth century, the Teutonic Knights had fallen on evil days. West Prussia had been seized by Poland, and their remaining possessions were thus severed from Germany. In the early days of the Reformation, the Grand Master

of the Knights was Albert of Hohenzollern, a cousin of the then elector of Brandenburg. Albert turned Protestant, suppressed his own order, and made East Prussia into an hereditary duchy, with himself as the first duke. In 1618, owing to the failure of male heirs, East Prussia passed to the elector John Sigismund. Thus was accomplished the union of Brandenburg and Prussia—an event no less important than the beginning of the Thirty Years' War in the same year.

That war, however, almost ruined the Hohenzollerns. The elector George William tried characteristically to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, but succeeded only in exposing his territories to pitiless ravages. When in 1640 he died, his son, Frederick William, found Brandenburg in a worthless state. The new elector's first care was to make peace for himself; then by skilful diplomacy he did much towards bringing the general conflict to an end, and by the treaty of Westphalia gained for Brandenburg three bishoprics in central Germany and the eastern part of Pomerania. The Hohenzollerns were now strongly posted on the left bank of the Elbe, and Brandenburg was given an outlet to the Baltic.

Frederick William ruled the electorate till 1688. Under him, Brandenburg rose from the position of an undistinguished German principality to that of an influential European Power. It is no wonder that he is remembered as the Great Elector. And great he was if political success be the criterion of greatness. He re-organised the army, and made it most formidable and efficient, though its numbers were as yet small. His financial policy was very skilful; he greatly increased his revenue, and yet freed himself from dependence on voluntary grants of his subjects. Agriculture, manufacture, and trade were encouraged and subsidised. The administrative system was reformed and brought under the strict control of the central government. The nobility were kept down with an iron hand: in fact, the elector's authority became practically absolute

Frederick William's foreign policy was cautious and unscrupulous. He several times intervened in wars when it seemed safe to do so, abandoning his allies and changing sides with much adroitness. He secured from the Poles a recognition of the complete independence of East Prussia, and at the battle of Fehrbellin in 1674 completely crushed an invading force of Swedes, an achievement which gave his army a high repute. But adverse circumstances prevented him from gaining any new territory for his house; and though he built a navy and established trading stations in West Africa, his successors found maritime expansion too costly, and abandoned this early attempt to found a Prussian colonial empire.

It is worth while to devote some attention to the Great Elector, for in his career we can trace all the leading features of later Hohenzollern policy. At home, a severe and carefully centralised rule, marked by much concern for the material welfare of the population: abroad, an utterly selfish and unscrupulous diplomacy, backed by a very efficient army—those are the outstanding characteristics of the policy of Frederick William and his descendants. The Great Elector was a very religious man in private life, and (according to himself) was regarded with much favour by the Almighty. In these respects, too, later Hohenzollerns have often taken after him.

It was men like the Great Elector who raised Prussia to the hegemony of Germany, and made possible the modern Empire. Nowadays they are national heroes in the eyes of their countrymen. But to others the triumphs of the cynical materialism of the Hohenzollerns may seem to involve the decline of all that was most gracious and attractive in the German nation. A policy of blood and iron may produce a great state, but the ideals of the Holy Roman Empire are more likely to produce a great nation.

At the death of the Great Elector, his state was an important European Power. As such it was faced with

the problems raised by the threatening ambitions and power of France, then at the height of her strength under Louis XIV. In the long struggle with the Habsburgs, the scale had turned decisively in her favour. With the greatest resources, the most fertile territory, the most skilful diplomatists, the best generals, and the finest army in Europe, she was eager for expansion; and disunited and enfeebled Germany seemed to offer an easy prey. Already in the sixteenth century, the bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun had fallen to France, taken with the permission of German princes who wanted French help against their own Emperor. Southern Alsace, as we have seen, was won in the Thirty Years' War, and later in the century the northern half, including the fortress of Strassburg, was forcibly seized on the most paltry of pretexts and in a time of nominal peace. Frederick William wavered in his attitude towards Louis, sometimes joining coalitions against him, but later making an alliance with him. His successor, Frederick I, was a less able and more consistent politician. He joined the two great confederacies which, led by England, Holland, and Austria, first checked and then ruined French ambitions; and for his assistance in the war of the Spanish Succession the Emperor allowed him, in 1700, to assume the style of king. He took his title, not from Brandenburg, but from Prussia, which lay beyond the limits of the Empire, where there might be no king but Cæsar. But though Frederick gained for the Hohenzollerns a crown and the province of upper Guelderland, his rule was on the whole a period of decline. He was extravagant and careless; the finances fell into confusion, the administration became corrupt, even the army lost some of its discipline and efficiency. It was well for Prussia that the next king, Frederick William I, was of a cautious and parsimonious nature, a harsh and morose man who cared nothing for art or magnificence, his one interest being affairs of state, and his one joy the improvement of his army. Without a spark of genius, he yet, by painstaking and unsparing industry,

drove Prussia far along the road marked out by the Great Elector. His foreign policy was unambitious: his one war was against Sweden, whom he attacked when she was beset and almost beaten by numerous enemies, a wise stroke which won him most of the long-coveted region of Western Pomerania. At home he encouraged agriculture and trade, granting land to many colonists from other parts of Germany; he set the finances in order again, practising the most rigid personal economy; and he re-organised the government, completing the process of centralisation and establishing an array of boards and officials for which Prussia has ever since been notorious. But his greatest care was the army. Five-sevenths of his revenue was spent on it. He raised its numbers to eighty thousand—an enormous force for a state with the population and resources of Prussia. It was subjected to a savage discipline, drilled and drilled again till a regiment moved like a machine, provided with the latest improvements in weapons and equipment, and furnished with a body of officers, drawn from the Prussian nobility, who could be trusted to obey the king's every command and insist on their men doing likewise. It was Frederick William who established the principle that it was the duty of every able-bodied young man among his subjects to serve in the army if required, though in his days the obligation was sparingly enforced. Thus Prussia became essentially a military state in which political liberty was unknown. Everything, it was assumed, must be subordinated to the interest of the state. Material prosperity was a source of political strength; therefore the king tried to make his subjects prosperous. An intelligent population was for the good of the state; therefore schools were built and elementary education was made compulsory. But a famous philosopher was banished from the realm because it was suspected that his teachings were politically dangerous.

Frederick William's work was its own reward; but his son, Frederick, called the Great, who became king

in 1740, was eager to put to some practical use the weapons and resources bequeathed to him by his careful father. Frederick is a source of much perplexity to patriotic German historians. He is traditionally "the Great." He saved Prussia from destruction and raised her to unprecedented heights of power. He was unquestionably a great general. That he was mean, selfish, and treacherous matters little: it is such traits that have made Prussia what she is. But how make a favourite of God and a national hero out of a man whose private morality was notoriously irregular, who openly scoffed at religion, who was the friend of philosophic infidels—French infidels, too—who talked French, wrote in French, and affected French manners, who expressed contempt for German culture and never betrayed the slightest concern for Germany beyond the limits of his dominions? It is only by shutting their eyes to half his character and career that Germans can regard Frederick as a hero, and it is only by looking exclusively at a few years of his reign that anyone can make a great man of him. As king, he cared for nothing but Prussia, and it was only by accident that his exploits proved beneficial to Germany. As a man, he was a gifted scoundrel, and it was largely by his own wickedness that he found himself in a situation which called for the exercise of his few admirable qualities.

Frederick's military exploits began a few months after his accession. The Emperor Charles VI died, leaving as heiress a daughter Maria Theresa. Every state of any importance in Europe, Prussia included, had pledged itself to recognise and support her rights to all the Habsburg dominions. But the spectacle of Austria ruled by a woman overcame the chivalry of several rulers; and the first to rush upon the booty was Frederick. An insolent demand for the Habsburg province of Silesia was speedily followed, without any declaration of war, by the invasion and occupation of that territory. Austrian efforts to recover it were defeated; and attacked by France and Bavaria, Maria

Theresa acquiesced in the loss, and made peace with Frederick in 1742. But Austria, helped by Britain, defended herself valiantly against her other foes, and in 1744 Frederick, on the mere suspicion that she was preparing for an attempt to regain Silesia, made an alliance with France and again declared war. Again he was victorious; and again he was confirmed in his conquest. Thus began the struggle between Prussia and Austria for the leadership of Germany, and first blood was drawn by the ultimate victor.

But Frederick's great ordeal was yet to come. Austrian diplomatists, eager for revenge, wove an alliance with France and Russia. Frederick, ever on the alert, allied himself with Britain, who was already at war with the French in India and America. He resolved to strike first. In a war between Austria and Prussia, the possession of Saxony would be of the utmost value to either of the combatants. Saxony was believed, probably on good grounds, to be contemplating adhesion to the coalition against Prussia. Frederick therefore, not troubling to declare war, led his troops into Saxony, and surrounded and eventually captured the Saxon army. The Austrians hurried to the rescue; and thus began the Seven Years' War.

For the next five years Prussia was fighting for her very life. Frederick had an army of 180,000 men, well equipped and officered. But the majority of these were non-Prussian mercenaries, many of them pressed into service against their wills, and not a few soldiers of hostile armies who had been taken prisoners. The utmost rigours of Prussian discipline could scarcely keep such men in the ranks, and numbers deserted whenever there was a chance, though, fearing their own officers more than the enemy, they commonly fought well enough in action. Frederick, it is true, derived much benefit from his alliance with Britain. The great Pitt sent him lavish subsidies, and maintained in Germany an army which after the first year of the war secured his western flank from attack by the French. But the Austrians

and Russians, each as a rule superior in numbers and each led with ability, made an extreme demand on Frederick's skill, energy, and determination. It is impossible not to admire him during these years as he rushes from Saxony to Silesia, from Silesia to Brandenburg, sometimes to misfortune, more often to victory, not infrequently to cover the mistakes of his generals, and once to drive away the Russians from his plundered capital. In the Seven Years' War he might justly be termed great. Yet, despite his herculean efforts, he was very nearly crushed. In 1761 Pitt fell from power, and no more English gold went to Prussia. Destruction seemed certain, when in 1762 the death of the Czarina Elizabeth suddenly changed the whole situation. Her successor, who had long admired Frederick, at once withdrew from the war, and even sent troops to aid the Prussians. Despairing of victory, the Austrians were now ready to end the exhausting struggle, and in 1763 the peace of Hubertsburg restored to each Power what it had held when the war began. Frederick had saved Prussia, and as against Austria had more than confirmed the verdict of his earlier wars.

For the rest of his reign Frederick was involved in no serious military operations. He carefully maintained friendship with Russia, and though his relations with Austria were often strained, actual fighting between the two states was averted. Frederick's later years were nevertheless marked by a notable accession to Prussian territory. The kingdom of Poland had sunk into a state of political chaos, economic decay, and social misery. Unscrupulous interference by Russia roused the jealousy of Prussia and Austria ; and at Frederick's suggestion it was resolved that each of the three Powers should improve the condition of the Poles by taking away a large slice of their territory. The theft was peaceably accomplished ; Austria got Galicia and other districts ; and to Frederick fell West Prussia and a piece of land to the south of it. Thus was bridged the gap which separated Königsberg from Berlin.

After the Seven Years' War, Frederick was principally occupied with repairing the havoc wrought by that conflict in his dominions. In its main lines, his domestic policy followed that of his father and the Great Elector. But agriculture, industry, and trade had fallen into such decay that unprecedented assistance from the government was needed to revive them. The land gained from Poland, too, was in a poverty-stricken state, though German colonists soon began to improve it. The army of course still swallowed up most of the revenue. Yet by strictly limiting his expenditure to essentials, by careful collection of the customs, and by establishing a government monopoly in certain widely-used commodities, Frederick not only found the money he needed, but left behind him a good round sum in the treasury. Nor was he concerned solely with the material welfare of his people. He reformed the administration of justice, and initiated a revision and codification of the laws. In both letter and spirit he maintained the traditional Hohenzollern policy of religious toleration. He belonged in fact to the class of " enlightened despots " so common in the eighteenth century—men who sincerely desired the good of their subjects, provided always that it was dispensed by themselves and did not conflict with " interests of state."

Even outside Prussia Frederick's exploits had here and there roused some enthusiasm in German breasts. But on the whole German unity seemed as far off as ever. Despite Prussia's progress, she and Austria were still too evenly matched for the younger Power to establish in Germany that undisputed ascendency which alone could counteract the disintegrating ambitions of the lesser princes. Within a few years of Frederick's death, however, the natural development of every part of western Europe was turned violently aside. The cause was the French Revolution.

During the eighteenth century the power of France had been on the decline. She had indeed gained Lorraine at the expense of Germany, but that acquisition,

though prepared for by arms, had been directly due to fortunate diplomacy; and several unsuccessful wars had damaged her military reputation. Thus, after three years of revolution, with her constitution unfixed, her finances in chaos, her army without officers or discipline, and her people at one another's throats, she seemed the helpless prey of anyone who chose to attack her. Prussia and Austria thought that France was even as Poland; in 1792 their attitude drove her into war; and with the ostensible object of restoring the French king to his rightful authority, they confidently sent armies over the frontier. The sequel was astounding. The French nation rose in wrath, swept the invaders out, carried the war into the enemy's country, and speedily conquered all Germany as far as the Rhine. In 1795 Prussia was thankful to make peace. Austria was more obstinate; but driven out of her Italian possessions by the young French general Napoleon Bonaparte, she too abandoned the struggle in 1797.

During the next few years, Bonaparte marched from victory to victory. Britain resisted him with unswerving stubbornness, and Austria, who acquitted herself most valiantly at this time, twice returned to the charge, only to be beaten over and over again and utterly crushed in 1805 at the battle of Austerlitz. Prussia meanwhile kept selfishly aloof. In 1793 she and Russia effected the second partition of Poland, and two years later, when the Poles had the effrontery to rebel, the poor remnants of their kingdom were altogether devoured, Austria this time getting a share. With her territories greatly swollen, Prussia turned her mind to currying favour with France, and to gaining as much as she could out of the redistribution of German territory initiated by Napoleon. Gradually, however, she began to fear that France would in the end ruin her also. Her irresolute king, Frederick William III, hesitated till after the battle of Austerlitz, and then in desperation made war, supported indeed by Russia, but of course without the help which Austria might have

furnished a little earlier. The issue was soon decided. The Prussian generals had Frederick the Great on the brain. The army was organised and drilled as it had been fifty years before. Its leaders imitated Frederick's tactics and strategy, but lacked the genius which had made them successful. And they were faced with a greater than Frederick. At the battles of Jena and Auerstädt the famous Prussian army was easily and utterly defeated. Yet more disgraceful was the collapse which followed. In a few weeks Berlin and nearly all the Prussian fortresses were in the hands of the French.

The Russians fought hard against Napoleon in East Prussia, but in 1807 a defeat at Friedland forced them to come to terms. Prussia was included in the peace. She lost all her territory west of the Elbe and, except West Prussia, all she had gained by the partitions of Poland ; the French exacted a large indemnity, and until it was paid they were to occupy several Prussian fortresses ; the Prussian army was in future to number not more than 42,000 men.

For the next few years Napoleon treated Germany as seemed to him good. A great part of the north-west, including the coast as far east as Lübeck, was annexed to France. Between the French boundary and the frontiers of Prussia and Austria, the few states which Napoleon suffered to remain were organised into the Confederation of the Rhine, the members of which were virtually his vassals. There were continual acts of high-handed interference in the affairs of these states and of Prussia. Remonstrance met with contempt, resistance or criticism with severe punishment. Particularly irksome were the commercial restrictions which Napoleon sought to impose on the whole of the Continent, with a view to crushing the trade of his arch-enemy England.

By his harsh measures Napoleon was sowing trouble for himself and his country. French tyranny aroused a deep feeling of national resentment. The Germans had never quite forgotten that they were a nation : but for

years the thought had aroused no enthusiasm, and had suggested no movement towards political unity. In fact, one of the main causes of Napoleon's success in Germany was that the French were in many states welcomed as deliverers by the people, who were eager to be freed from the rule of autocratic and unsympathetic princes. Had Napoleon shown a little more tact, the reaction might never have come. As it was, in the darkest hour of German humiliation German patriotism awoke from its long sleep. It was in Prussia that the new spirit was most powerful. The Prussian ministers, Stein and Hardenberg, anxious to enlist the people in the work of liberation, began an enlightened policy of domestic reform, abolishing serfdom and introducing a measure of local self-government. The army was reorganised by the distinguished generals Scharnhorst and Gneisenau; the duty of universal service was enforced; the system of hiring foreigners was abandoned; and means were found of evading the limitation in numbers imposed by Napoleon. But the enthusiasm was by no means peculiar to Prussia. Patriotic societies carried on a vigorous campaign throughout Germany. University professors taught patriotism in their lectures; German literature became fiercely national in tone, calling for united action against the French oppressor. Even Austria caught the new spirit; and when in 1809 she once more took up arms, her troops fought with an unprecedented vigour which inflicted on Napoleon, at the battle of Aspern, his first defeat in the open field. The patriotic party in Prussia longed to take part in the conflict. But they found an insurmountable obstacle in Frederick William III, who still quaked before Napoleon. So Austria was left unaided and soon succumbed again to the superior army and genius of her foe. News from Spain kept telling of the success of the Spanish rising against the French; but the German patriots were forced to remain inactive. "Very good as poetry" was the sneer with which Frederick William received a scheme of Gneisenau's for a rising

of the Prussian people. When in 1812, Napoleon undertook his fateful invasion of Russia, the patriots writhed at the sight of 20,000 Prussian troops in the ranks of the French army.

A few months later Napoleon was back in Germany, but with a mere fragment of the magnificent force which he had led to Moscow. The Hohenzollerns have never felt any foolish delicacy about kicking an enemy who is down. Frederick William gradually became a patriot. The Prussian people were called to arms, and the summons was obeyed with enthusiasm. An alliance was made with Russia; and in March 1813 came a formal declaration of war against France. The king issued inspiring appeals to his subjects and soldiers, and established the Order of the Iron Cross as a stimulus to valour and devotion. What with regular troops, militia, and volunteer corps, an army of 300,000 men in a few weeks took the field. What it lacked in training and equipment it supplied by enthusiasm and devotion.

Napoleon, however, though he had to rely on raw troops, often of poor physique, met the crisis with skill and vigour. Under his personal leadership the French won a series of victories in Saxony. These, however, were partly balanced by defeats inflicted on his subordinates elsewhere; and when in August Austria joined the forces against him, his cause became desperate. For some weeks victory still accompanied his presence; but his marshals continued to be unfortunate; and in October their failures enabled the Prussian general Blücher, by a series of rapid and clever movements, to work round to the rear of Napoleon's left flank. Attacked on three sides at Leipzig, the French fought with great courage, and for three days the battle remained doubtful. But some of the German troops in Napoleon's army went over to the enemy; the effect of numbers gradually told; and in the end the French were fortunate in being able to retreat at all. The defeated army fell back hastily over the Rhine, and the allies, now joined by

Bavaria, followed in rapid pursuit. The French frontier was crossed without difficulty. But when nearing Paris Napoleon turned fiercely on his over-confident enemies, and by brilliant strategy inflicted on their divided columns several severe reverses. In the face of their overwhelming forces, however, he could only retard, not prevent their advance. Paris was occupied; Napoleon abdicated and was sent to Elba; and the representatives of the Great Powers met at Vienna to revise the map of Europe. Their labours were disturbed in the next year by Napoleon's return. There followed a campaign in Belgium, in which Blücher, after a defeat at Ligny, arrived at the field of Waterloo in time to convert a French reverse into an irretrievable disaster.

The Congress of Vienna had by now completed its task. The results proved most disappointing to the national party in Germany. They had hoped for the recovery from France of all the lands which she had seized from the old German kingdom: but Alsace and Lorraine were left in French hands. They had hoped, too, that Germany would be made into a strong united state. The very name of the Holy Roman Empire had perished in the recent convulsion of Europe, and from 1806 the Habsburgs contented themselves with the title of Emperor of Austria. Thus the way seemed cleared for the establishment of a new central authority. But the schemes of the patriots were faced with grave difficulties. If a united Germany were established, who was to be its head? Austria would not obey Prussia, nor Prussia Austria. Then the lesser princes looked askance at any plan which would limit their independence. Russia, too, used her influence against the erection of a strong German state on her western frontier. The end of it was the establishment of a German Confederation, under the presidency of Austria. All the states of Germany, thirty-nine in number, belonged to it, though the eastern provinces of Prussia and most of the Austrian Empire, not being peopled by Germans,

were regarded as outside its sphere. On paper the Confederation was very imposing. There was a Diet, or Council, which could pass federal laws and determine federal policy, and a federal army was to be organised for the protection of federal interests. The Diet, however, was no parliamentary assembly, but a board of representatives of the various princes; and the rights of the individual states had been so carefully guarded that in practice it was almost impotent. The Confederation, in fact, was a solemn mockery.

With the establishment of this dummy unity began thirty of the dullest years in German history. The leading spirit in German politics was the Austrian statesman Metternich. His one interest was the maintenance of Habsburg power both abroad and in the ill-compacted Austrian Empire. The growth of national feeling in Germany was a menace to his aims. It might draw away from their allegiance the German subjects of Austria, and it offered a bad example to the Slavs, Hungarians, and Italians who chafed under Habsburg rule.

The spread of liberal opinions seemed to Metternich another danger, especially as they commonly went hand in hand with enthusiasm for the principle of nationality. So he applied himself to capture the Diet of the German Confederation. It was an easy task, for most of the princes shared his dislike of the liberal and patriotic aims of the national party in Germany. That party, moreover, though numerous and noisy, was not so strong as might have been expected. The fervour of 1813 had cooled under the disappointment caused by the Congress of Vienna and under the widespread desire for peace and quiet after the turmoil of the past twenty years. The federal Diet was therefore able to carry out a policy of reaction. Patriotic societies were repressed, a strict censorship over books and newspapers was established, and a kind of inquisition set up for the detection and punishment of revolutionary propaganda. The movement, it is true, was far from being crushed.

It flourished among the young men of Germany, especially in the universities. In the south it was particularly strong, and the leading princes of that region thought it well to grant constitutional liberties to their subjects—an example gradually followed in most other states. But the new parliaments seldom showed much practical grasp of politics, being too much influenced by the abstract theories of the professors and lawyers who were the leaders of liberal thought. Their mistakes strengthened the hands of opponents of progress like Austria and Prussia. As long as neither of these showed sympathy with the aims of the patriots, their cause had little chance of success.

Despite her share in the defeat of Napoleon, Prussia had on the whole cut a sorry figure in the commotion caused by the French Revolution. At the end of the war, she indeed recovered much of the Polish territory that she had lost in 1807, and being given a great part of Westphalia, she became the leading Power in West Germany. But her prestige had fallen, and she had to play second fiddle to Austria in the new Confederation. Nor was Frederick William III the man to retrieve her position. He was outwitted by Metternich, and in German affairs went hand-in-glove with the Habsburgs. At home he set his face against the grant of constitutional liberties, which he had promised in 1815. The creation of advisory provincial assemblies did not satisfy his subjects, and discontent was general and bitter throughout the Prussian dominions. For the rest, he followed the ancestral policy of developing the army, multiplying officials, and promoting the economic welfare of his people. And, as it happened, his efforts to stimulate trade furthered the cause of German unity more than all the speeches and plots of the patriots.

The Free-trade movement, so strong in England, had made itself felt in Germany. In dealing with foreign countries Prussia relaxed her policy of strict protection, and with other states of Germany she opened negotiations with a view to a "Zollverein" or customs-union. For

some time the proposal was regarded as an insidious attempt to increase Prussia's political influence, and only a few insignificant principalities were prepared to agree. But in 1828 the considerable state of Hesse-Darmstadt was won over: in 1833 the customs-union of Bavaria and Württemberg was incorporated with that headed by Prussia: and after 1835 only Austria and a few states in the north-west remained outside. The major part of Germany was now economically united. The produce of the customs was divided among the members of the Zollverein in proportion to their population. The arrangement saved them expense, increased their revenue, and gave an immense impetus to industry and trade. At first, however, no one, not even Metternich, seemed fully to realise its political significance.

It should be noticed that the generation after the downfall of Napoleon was perhaps the golden age of German thought. In philosophy, scholarship, and music Germany stood head and shoulders above the rest of Europe. The period, too, was adorned with some of the greatest names in German literature. It was a time of lofty ideals in art, ethics, and politics. And no small share of this mental vigour was directed towards the attainment of national unity, for most of the great thinkers were also great patriots.

At last success came within sight of the national party. The year 1848 was one of revolution throughout Europe. Many German states were violently convulsed. In Austria the Emperor Ferdinand was driven to abdicate: he was succeeded by his nephew Francis Joseph, who still wears the crown; and a measure of constitutional liberty was granted to the people. Risings against Austrian rule in Italy and Hungary were put down with difficulty. In Prussia, where there was street fighting in Berlin, Frederick William IV thought it well to promise a constitution, and to summon a national assembly to draft it. Despite strenuous conservative opposition the radical party won the upper hand. The power of the crown seemed in danger of extinction, when

the king had Berlin occupied by troops, and removed the assembly to Brandenburg, where it was soon dissolved. He then promulgated a constitution devised by his ministers. Being much more liberal than anyone had expected, it was adopted after slight revision by another assembly, and under it Prussia has been governed ever since.

Meanwhile another series of events was arousing equal interest in Germany. Alarmed by the prevalent unrest, the Federal Council had declared itself in favour of a reform of the German Confederation, and with its approval an assembly representative of all Germany met at Frankfurt to draw up a scheme. The "Parliament," as it was called, contained a very large number of the most gifted men in Germany: poets, professors, and lawyers took the lead in its debates. It established a provisional government in place of the Federal Council, which broke up. But on attempting the reorganisation of Germany, it soon showed its weakness. After much dispute, it was decided that the Austrian possessions should be excluded from the new confederation, and that its head should be the king of Prussia, with the title of German Emperor. The Emperor's powers, however, were to be small. The central government was to be very democratic, and scant regard was paid to the claims of the princes. The "Parliament," in short, was too academic in its outlook. In its enthusiasm for theories, it forgot facts. Its proposals were disliked, not only in Austria and the lesser states, but in Prussia itself. Frederick William IV refused the proffered title.

Then followed a reaction. The "Parliament" dissolved itself. The radical wing tried to continue their sessions at Stuttgart, but were driven away by armed force. Republican risings in Saxony and the south were suppressed by the Prussian army. When Prussia herself tried to form a league of northern states, Austria summoned the old Federal Council. Prussia and most of her allies refused to recognise its authority, and for a

time there seemed a likelihood of war between the two great Powers of Germany. But as Austria was backed by Russia, Frederick William finally gave way. The Prussian Union was dissolved, the Confederation restored on the old basis, and the federal troops stamped out the last embers of revolution. The German fleet, created by the Frankfurt Parliament in its early enthusiasm, was put up to public auction.

Thus the movement of 1848 ended in nothing. Another decade passed without any marked advance towards unity. Patriotic feeling grew stronger than ever; the customs-union gained one or two new members; in 1859 Austrian power and prestige received heavy blows in a war with France; and in the German Confederation, Prussian influence was raised by the skill of Otto von Bismarck, a rising diplomatist, who for eight years was a member of the Federal Council. But when in 1861 William I ascended the Prussian throne, there was little in the situation of Germany to suggest that the next ten years would see the formation of a German Empire.

William I, who since 1857 had acted as regent for his brother, was a man with no very striking gifts, either of intellect or of character. In 1848 he had been conspicuous as an enemy of reform, and throughout his reign he held fast to his ancestors' views of the Divine Right of the Hohenzollerns. He was, however, of a much more obstinate and persistent nature than Frederick William IV. He had great ambitions for Prussia, and saw that if they were to be attained Prussia must become the undisputed leader of Germany. William could never have carried out his own schemes unaided. But, whether by insight or by luck, he soon surrounded himself with as able a body of counsellors as ever king possessed; and, to do him justice, he supported them loyally and was generally willing to subordinate his judgment to theirs.

An essential preliminary of the king's plans was the reform of the army. While still regent, he had appointed as Minister of War General Albert von Roon,

who at once presented to the Prussian parliament a scheme for increasing both the numbers and the efficiency of the forces. In the Lower House a majority belonged to the Liberal party, who were against additional expenditure on military projects. They refused to vote the sums asked for by Roon, who nevertheless began to carry out his reforms. This action provoked a violent conflict between the king and the parliament. Two dissolutions failed to reduce the Liberal majority. In 1862 the deadlock seemed hopeless. At this crisis, the king turned to Bismarck, and appointed him minister-president.

Bismarck was now forty-seven years of age. By birth and prejudices he belonged to the class of the *Junkers*, or country squires, and he first won a name for himself in 1848 as a bitter foe of constitutional progress. At the same time, he was opposed to the aims of the patriots: his interests in fact were purely Prussian. His diplomatic experience at Frankfurt, Petersburg, and Paris had, however, somewhat enlarged his outlook, besides giving him a thorough knowledge of the intricacies of international politics. But he was still a strong upholder of the rights of the monarchy, and had no small contempt for the Liberal doctrinaires in the Prussian parliament. In Germany at large, his object was to break up the Confederation, humble Austria, and form a new union with Prussia at the head. It was soon after his promotion in 1862 that, in a famous speech, he prescribed for Germany a policy of blood and iron.

For the next year or two there was a fierce struggle between Bismarck and the parliament, which had the sympathy of most of the Prussian people. Roon carried out the reorganisation of the army, notwithstanding the continued refusal of parliament to sanction the necessary expenditure. Severe measures of repression were adopted by the government: the press was strictly muzzled, and public meetings often forbidden. It might have come to a revolution had not events given

Bismarck the chance of proving the value of the new army.

The death of Christian IX of Denmark brought to a head a long-standing dispute between that state and the German Confederation. The subject was the right of succession to the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. The question has been described as "the most complicated that has ever occupied European diplomacy": and here it must suffice to say that each of the many parties concerned could put forward a plausible case. Prussian interests were throughout upheld by Bismarck with much ability. The outcome of the quarrel was that Holstein was seized by troops of the German Confederation, Schleswig by Austria and Prussia acting as independent states. After a brave resistance the Danes had to acquiesce in the loss of both duchies.

The next question was: Who should have the plunder? Bismarck had resolved that Prussia should get all. Of the many solutions possible, none was morally or legally less justifiable than this. And though Bismarck played his game with great skill, he failed to carry German opinion with him; and when, after long-growing tension, Austria and Prussia went to war in 1866, the most important of the lesser states—Bavaria, Württemberg, Saxony, Hanover—ranged themselves on the side of Austria. Outside Germany, however, Prussia had a useful ally in the young kingdom of Italy.

The war was over in a few weeks. The Prussians were superior in organisation and discipline. Their new rifle, the needle-gun, gave them a great advantage over the Austrians, whose small-arms were much less efficient. Above all, the Prussians had at their head a strategist and tactician of the highest order—Helmuth von Moltke, since 1857 the chief of the General Staff and the faithful coadjutor of Roon. The chief seat of war was northern Bohemia, where, after many Prussian successes, the two armies met in a decisive battle at Königgrätz, better known in England—though for no good reason—as Sadowa. After a stubborn struggle, the Austrians and

Saxons were outflanked and put to flight. Meanwhile the Hanoverians had been forced to surrender in the north, and the southern states beaten without much difficulty. Austria, indeed, had the better of the fighting with Italy, but her successes were far from counterbalancing the Prussian victories.

Immediately after Königgrätz, Napoleon III, the French Emperor, offered to mediate. Anxious that France should gain no prestige from the war, Bismarck resolved to make peace as soon as possible and to treat the vanquished mercifully. Accordingly, though Austria had to withdraw from Venetia, she was not required to surrender a foot of land to Prussia. The German Confederation, however, was dissolved, and Austria had to agree to the formation of a new union of north German states, under the presidency of Prussia, whose territories were enlarged by the annexation of Hanover and other principalities, Schleswig-Holstein of course among them.

The new North German Confederation, which included all the states north of the Main, was finally established in 1867. It was a very different body from its predecessor. In the first place, it had a parliamentary constitution, with two houses, the upper consisting of delegates of the princes, the lower being a representative assembly, elected by universal male suffrage. Further, the new Confederation had a powerful executive. The president was the king of Prussia : he represented the League in international affairs ; he had the right of making war, peace, and treaties ; to him belonged the appointment of the Federal Chancellor. He was, moreover, the commander-in-chief of the federal army, which was to be raised and equipped in accordance with the Prussian method. The constitution was mainly the work of Bismarck ; but on being submitted to a parliament of north Germany, it was accepted with only slight amendment. Except in unessential details, it is the constitution of the German Empire to-day. In fact, as far as north Germany is concerned, the Empire was founded in 1867.

There remained the southern states, traditionally hostile to Prussia. They were, however, members of the Zollverein, and their representatives joined the North German Reichstag when customs-duties were under discussion. And even before the new Confederation was formally established, Bismarck was able to make a long step towards the complete unity of Germany. The French Emperor was bitterly chagrined at the result of the war of 1866. For the next few years his diplomacy was directed towards obtaining "compensations" for the danger caused to France by the great advance of Prussia. Bismarck revealed to the southern states proposals made by Napoleon for the annexation to France of territory belonging to them; and in alarm they concluded secret treaties with Prussia, undertaking to reform their armies on Prussian lines and, in the event of war, to place them under the Prussian king.

Thus, apart from Austria, Germany had now a common economic policy, and, for the time being, a common foreign policy. It was Bismarck's aim to make permanent and more comprehensive the treaties with the states of the south—in other words, to bring them into the Confederation. That end might be most easily achieved at a time of strong patriotic feeling, an emotion likely to be aroused by a foreign war, especially a war with France.

The restless ambition of the Emperor would give a plausible pretext whenever Bismarck was ready for the struggle. Conscious that he was losing prestige among the French, Napoleon embraced one desperate scheme after another. He wanted Bismarck to allow France to annex Belgium, or to purchase Luxemburg: but at every turn he was outwitted and humbled. Bismarck was quietly waiting his time. His successes had ended the constitutional struggle in Prussia, where his former enemies were coming to regard him as a German patriot. The new Confederation was gaining stability. The armies of the south were being enlarged and re-

organised. At last, in 1870, he felt that Germany was ready. A dispute over the succession to the vacant Spanish throne, which had been offered to a prince of the house of Hohenzollern, was handled by the French government in an unreasonable, not to say insulting, way. War soon became imminent. It was made inevitable by Bismarck, who published a despatch from King William in a mangled form deliberately calculated to enrage popular opinion. The southern states stood by their treaties, and the German nation marched forth to battle.

What followed was hardly a war, it was rather a suicide. The French organisation was chaos. Several of their army corps never existed anywhere but on paper. They lacked transport. Their intelligence department neither possessed nor provided intelligence. Their fortresses were not properly provisioned. Their generals were skilful only in getting into hopeless positions, and the apparent object of their strategy was to make things easy for the Germans. It is true that the chassepôt rifle of the French was better than the needle-gun ; but this advantage was more than counterbalanced by the inferiority of their artillery. The Germans, on the other hand, were well equipped, well organised, and well led. Their artillery and cavalry were magnificent ; and the stubbornness and endurance of the infantry made up for the comparative ineffectiveness of their rifle. But it must be borne in mind that neither the German troops nor their generals were put to a real test. No decently competent leader could have helped winning the war.

The Germans were mobilised first, and of course took the offensive. An army under the Crown Prince entered Alsace, and despite the valiant resistance of hopelessly inferior French forces, at once gained victories at Weissenburg and Wörth. The defeated troops, under Marshal Macmahon, withdrew across the Vosges to their main base at Chalons.

Meanwhile the main German advance in Lorraine had begun. After an insignificant skirmish at Saar-

brücken had evoked absurd rejoicings in France, the Germans carried the heights of Spicheren—a position of great natural strength—and forced the French to fall back on Metz. There, after much fatal hesitancy, the French generals resolved on a retreat to Verdun. But the Germans attacked the French rearguard and delayed its retirement, while other troops, with great daring, crossed the Moselle above Metz, and threw themselves across the Verdun road. In a desperate struggle round Vionville the Germans established themselves firmly on the French communications. Two days later, the battle of Gravelotte—the most deadly of the war—ended in the withdrawal of the French under the forts of Metz. Thus the main army of France was surrounded, and numerous as it still was, little could be expected from it, for its commander, Marshal Bazaine, had throughout shown a lack of decision and insight.

Leaving a force to besiege Metz, Moltke continued the advance on Paris, and was soon strengthened by the army of the Crown Prince from Alsace. But the march westward was interrupted by an unexpected move on the part of Macmahon, who resolved to make a flanking march to the north, and cut his way through to the relief of Metz. Moltke, it is said, got wind of the French scheme through reports published in the Paris papers. The German army at once wheeled to the right, and by forced marches intercepted Macmahon, who had moved very slowly, penned him up against the Belgian frontier, and at Sedan surrounded his entire army and forced it to surrender. Eighty thousand men, the Emperor among them, were taken prisoners.

This catastrophe decided the issue of the war. Fighting, it is true, went on for several months longer. In Paris a revolution overthrew the Empire, and the republican government which was set up swore to drive the invader from French soil. But the Germans invested Paris ; Metz, with its huge garrison, surrendered ; and the patriotic troops raised by the republican statesman Gambetta proved no match for their experienced

enemies. Sorties and attempts at relief alike failed to rescue Paris, which, after long sufferings from hunger, was forced by the German siege-guns to surrender at the end of January. Soon afterwards negotiations were opened; and the war was ended by the peace of Frankfurt, whereby France had to pay an indemnity of two hundred millions, and to surrender Alsace and half Lorraine.

Before this, however, the German Empire had been founded. The war had done what Bismarck expected. In the wave of enthusiasm, the southern states forgot their old prejudices and asked to become members of the Confederation. In the consequent discussions Bismarck showed great tact and the utmost regard for the wishes of Bavaria and Württemberg, which being monarchies, had more dignity to lose than the grand-duchies of Baden and Hesse. Before the end of 1870, however, treaties had been made with all four, the two kingdoms retaining certain special rights; and each agreement was approved by a representative assembly of the state to which it applied, as well as by the North German Reichstag.

German unity was attained: but public feeling in Germany held that the great achievement should be signalised by something more than the signature of a few treaties. There was a general desire that the king of Prussia, the president of the Confederation, should assume the title of Emperor. When this was requested by the king of Bavaria, with the approval of the other princes, William I needed little urging. On 18th January, 1871, in the palace of Versailles, he was, with solemn ceremonial, hailed as *deutscher Kaiser*, German Emperor.

CHAPTER III

THE GOVERNMENT OF MODERN GERMANY

THE establishment of the German Empire speedily confronted German statesmen with entirely new problems both at home and abroad. To understand how these were treated, it is necessary to have some knowledge of the way in which the Empire is governed.

The essential point to grasp is that the Empire is merely an enlargement of the Confederation of 1867. The states which joined that union were sovereign principalities or republics: and, except for those rights which they surrendered to the federal authority, they kept all their previous powers. The authority abandoned varied in amount. Some of the larger states received special treatment when they entered the Confederation. Bavaria, Saxony, and Württemberg control the administration of their respective armies, and may appoint ambassadors to foreign courts. Bavaria, too, issues its own coinage and postage stamps. Prussia of course is highly privileged, for her king is always Emperor. It is unnecessary to multiply examples of these exceptional rights: but a long list might be given.

Thus the Empire consists of a confederation of states, which have surrendered certain portions of their authority, some more, some less. The imperial government consequently possesses only such powers as have been explicitly renounced by the separate states. It determines German relations with foreign states, commercial as well as political. It therefore fixes the customs-tariff, and controls the army and navy. Emigration and colonial policy also fall within its sphere. The trunk roads, the waterways, and the postal and telegraph service —important matters from the military and diplomatic standpoint—are, with a few exceptions, under its authority, and it exercises supervision over all German rail-

ways. To it belongs the regulation of weights, measures, and the coinage, Bavaria being the only state with its own mint. It controls the press, and may impose limitations on the right of public meeting. There is, too, a uniform code of civil and criminal law, drawn up by the imperial legislature.

The imperial authority is exercised by the Kaiser and a Parliament of two chambers. The office of Kaiser is attached to the crown of Prussia, and the rules of descent observed by the family of Hohenzollern therefore determine the succession to the Empire. The upper chamber—the *Bundesrat* or Federal Council—is neither elective nor hereditary ; it is simply a body of delegates appointed by the governments of the states which make up the Empire. It contains sixty-one members. Seventeen are nominated by Prussia, the next contingent in point of size being that of Bavaria, which numbers six. The delegates vote on each question according to instructions received from their respective governments ; hence the entire vote of a state is always cast on the same side.

The lower house—the *Reichstag*—is the representative assembly of Germany. It contains 397 members. Every male citizen of the Empire who is over twenty-five years of age has the right of voting at a Reichstag election, unless he is actually serving in the army or navy, or has been declared bankrupt, or belongs to certain other exceptional categories. Everyone who has the vote may also become a member. In general, the principle of "one man, one vote," is followed ; but if a subject of one state is resident in another, he may record a vote in both. A member of the Reichstag must, however, be a resident of the state in which his constituency is situated. The votes at an election are recorded by ballot. There is a second ballot if the candidate at the head of the poll has not obtained an absolute majority of the votes cast. As originally defined, the constituencies were approximately equal in population : but after the changes of the past forty years, this is now

far from the case, and a redistribution bill is urgently needed. In the agricultural districts a vote is worth far more than in the centres of industry.

When an Englishman turns to the powers vested in the various branches of the imperial authority, he is apt to be astonished at the apparently scanty prerogatives of the Kaiser. In Prussia he is of course extremely powerful. But as German Emperor he enjoys a most insignificant revenue, he appoints very few civil officials, he has no veto on legislation, he cannot even introduce it. It is true that in foreign and military affairs his authority is great. In dealings with other states he personifies the Empire. He appoints ambassadors, he may conclude treaties, and if German territory is attacked he may declare war on his own initiative. He is, of course, the War-lord, commander-in-chief of the imperial army and navy. The Kaiser also nominates the Imperial Chancellor, the first, and theoretically the only, minister of state.

Nevertheless, this list of powers does not look impressive. If the legal rights of the king of England were set down, they would make a braver show. It is only when we consider the position of the Bundesrat and of the Reichstag, and, above all, the spirit in which the law of the constitution is applied, that we can estimate the real extent of the Emperor's authority. The functions of the Federal Council are similar in part to those of our cabinet and in part to those of our House of Lords. It sits in secret under the presidency of the Imperial Chancellor. The Kaiser is bound to keep it informed of his dealings with foreign states, and in his own interests he will, of course, ascertain the feeling of the council before embarking on any important line of action. The Bundesrat can initiate legislation, and may veto any bills sent up from the Reichstag. Its actions of course correspond to the wishes of the princes, not to those of the people. And of the princes, the king of Prussia, with seventeen votes at his disposal, has by far the most commanding position. Many of the smaller princi-

palities being virtually dependencies of Prussia, it scarcely ever happens that her representatives are outvoted. Thus it comes about that the Kaiser can in practice get his own way on almost any question of policy or legislation.

On this vast influence the Reichstag is a most imperfect check. The Imperial Chancellor and his subordinate ministers are in no sense responsible to it. They may at any time appear in the house and speak: but they are not members. If defeated on a measure, the Imperial Chancellor need not resign, though if the point at issue be vital to his general policy, he will probably dissolve the house and appeal to the electors. But even if the country goes against him, it is still possible for him to retain his post. It follows that the Reichstag can thwart a policy of which it disapproves only by the extreme measure of stopping supplies. Such a course would naturally not be adopted except in most extraordinary circumstances. It is, moreover, not so easy an expedient as it would be in England. Many of the revenue bills are passed for a term of years, and until that has expired cannot be altered without the consent of the Bundesrat. It often happens that when the imperial budget is presented, the Reichstag can do no more than refuse to sanction the expenditure of certain sums on one or two departments of state: it is seldom in a position to prevent the raising of enough revenue to carry out the government's policy. And once the government has the money, it cannot be hindered from spending it, even in defiance of the Reichstag, as Bismarck did when he was carrying out the army reforms in Prussia.

In theory the legislative powers of the Reichstag are equal to those of the Bundesrat, but in practice it is little more than a revising chamber. As it seldom initiates important measures, its influence on legislation is mainly negative. Its lack of motive force largely accounts for the small respect generally felt towards it in Germany. Membership of the Reichstag is not an eagerly-coveted honour like membership of the English

House of Commons. And the Reichstag suffers not only from its lack of power but from its lack of traditions. It is not, like the English parliament, a national institution with its roots far back in the past: it is an invention of the second half of the nineteenth century. It has no record of great deeds, and it has produced none of the great builders of Germany.

Unless some sudden change in the whole position of Germany should occur, there seems little prospect of an improvement in the status of the Reichstag. As the imperial ministers do not belong to the house and are not responsible to it, there is no clearly defined ministerial or opposition party. The Reichstag is divided into a number of parties, mostly small, each disposed to be critical rather than sympathetic towards the government, and each bound together by some special and often narrow interest. From time to time coalitions, either for or against the government, are formed, but they are commonly shortlived, breaking up when their immediate purpose has been achieved. So far the government has found it possible to placate most of the parties by small concessions, and thus to prevent the rise of a solid opposition.

At present the Socialist party, with 110 seats, is the strongest. It is also the best organised, and except in very unusual circumstances may be relied on to oppose the government. Its effective influence, however, is weakened by the differences of opinion among its members, for the "orthodox" Socialists, professing the principles of Marx, maintain an attitude of implacable opposition, while those who belong to the growing section of "Revisionists" are willing to support measures which seem to them a step in the right direction. Moreover, it is well known that of the four million Germans who voted Socialist at the last general election, many are not convinced Socialists at all, and support the party simply because they disapprove of the tendencies of imperial policy, and wish therefore to create a strong body of criticism in the Reichstag.

Next in power is the Catholic party, commonly called the Centre. Its bond of union is religious. On secular matters its views sometimes ally it with the Conservatives, sometimes with the Socialists. By occasional concessions in ecclesiastical affairs, an astute Chancellor can generally secure its support. Its voting strength at present is ninety-nine.

There are fifty-six Conservatives, who stand for the agrarian interests of the "Junkers." They are normally on the side of the Government; but it was their resistance to the Budget of 1909 which brought about the resignation of Prince Bülow. There is in England no organised party corresponding to the German Conservatives. In comparison with them, the English Conservatives are revolutionary firebrands.

Then come the forty-six National Liberals, very much more national than liberal in their views. In general, it may be said, they represent capital as opposed to land and labour. They are the keenest supporters of a "world-policy"—enthusiastic about colonial expansion and a big navy. To judge from recent articles in German newspapers, they are the most bitter enemies of England. At home, they wish to extend the sphere of the central government, and their desire to curtail the powers of the individual states is one of the few relics of Liberalism in their policy. The so-called Radical party lays more stress on the principles of popular government, but its forty-three members represent a declining body of opinion. There are several minor parties, including the Poles, whose one object is to embarrass the government; but on a division in the Reichstag the votes of these small sections approximately cancel one another.

Of late years the Imperial Chancellor has nearly always been able to carry important proposals with the aid of the Conservatives and the National Liberals, backed generally by the Radicals and the Centre. A bone thrown every now and then to each keeps them obediently at heel. So it comes about that the constitution of the Federal Council, the position of the Imperial

Chancellor, and the party divisions in the feeble Reichstag constitute a joint guarantee of the ascendancy in German politics of Prussia and the Kaiser.

The character of the imperial government has been dealt with at some length because it is of the most vital concern to other countries. But one must remember that in everyday life the average German is affected mainly by the government of the state in which he lives. Nearly all the officials with whom he comes in contact are state officials. Taxes, direct and indirect, are collected by the state, which forwards to Berlin such sums as are due to the imperial treasury. The state administers justice, though its judges are bound for the most part by laws enacted by the central authority. Education is another matter under the control of the individual states, which, however, have in practice adopted a nearly uniform system. Each state, too, is free to determine its own attitude towards religion.

There are twenty-six states in the German Empire. Four are kingdoms—Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg; eleven are duchies, seven principalities; Lübeck, Hamburg, and Bremen are city-states with a republican government; Alsace and German Lorraine are regarded as the common property of the whole Empire, and administered by an imperial viceroy. Many of these states are very small, and the territories of some are scattered about in a most bewildering way.

The states are governed under various forms of constitution. All except the two Mecklenburgs have some kind of parliamentary representation. In the larger states the legislature consists of two chambers. The upper house is always constituted in much the same way, containing hereditary "peers," the chief state officials, and other members nominated by the sovereign or elected by privileged bodies. The character of the representative assembly, however, varies greatly. In one or two states—as, for example, Württemberg, it is elected on a very democratic franchise. Saxony represents a less liberal type. The Saxon lower house is chosen

by direct manhood suffrage, but the electors are divided into four classes according to their wealth and education, and those in the highest class are entitled to four votes, those in the next to three, and so on. But the Saxon constitution is democracy itself in comparison with that of Prussia. There the method of election is most complicated. Every male Prussian over twenty-five has a vote; but in each constituency the electors are divided into three classes according to the amount they contribute to the state taxes, and each of these classes elects an equal number of men, who then choose the representatives of the constituency in the "popular House." The first and second classes usually join forces, and it thus comes about that a million well-to-do voters have a firm ascendancy over the six millions who form the lowest class. This system has naturally been the object of furious criticism: but though the Prussian government has promised a reform, none has so far been carried out. It is true that nearly every other German state has a better constitution: but it must not be forgotten that Prussia contains more than half the population of Germany, and, as we have seen, controls the policy of the Empire.

Local administration is too intricate a subject to be dealt with in a book of this size. Its character varies from state to state: but in general, and especially in regard to Prussia, it may be said that while on paper elective assemblies have control of affairs, in fact all real power is in the hands of officials appointed by the state government and responsible to it alone. So it is, in truth, with political life throughout Germany. Government has the form of democracy, but lacks—not indeed the power—but the spirit thereof. All initiative in public affairs comes from above. The machinery of state is driven by an army of ministers and officials appointed by the government. Popular assemblies may apply the brake, and if they are very daring, cut off the petrol: but they cannot decide the route or put on additional power unless the official chauffeur allows it.

CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN POLICY

FROM the first the German Empire of course took a place among the Great Powers. The newcomer was naturally not regarded with much favour, and some foreign statesmen hoped and expected that in a few years the Empire would break up. Germany was thus in a position which made great demands on those who determined her policy towards other states. Their rivals were men with long-standing traditions and aims to guide them, whereas the young Empire must strike out a new path of her own. It was in some respects fortunate for Germany that her constitution enables German diplomatists to go on their way without troubling much about public opinion. And it was of course an exceptional piece of luck that German destinies were in the hands of one of the most able statesmen in history.

A record of the Empire's relations with other Powers falls into two periods. The dividing line is the resignation of Bismarck in March 1890. Up to then German diplomacy was Bismarckian diplomacy. Now Bismarck was an unscrupulous man; he was ready to shed blood and use iron if that seemed the best way of attaining his ends; but he had no love of war for its own sake. He repeatedly said in public that no one ought intentionally to bring about a war, and after sowing his wild oats between 1864 and 1870, he certainly lived up to that principle—a fact, by the way, which causes much perplexity to General Bernhardi. After 1871, in short, the object of his foreign policy was to keep the peace, and let the new Empire find its feet and develop its resources.

The determining influence on Bismarck's diplomacy was the hostility of France, eager for vengeance and the

recovery of her lost territory. The annexation of Alsace and Lorraine was one of Bismarck's few bad mistakes: it seems, indeed, that he doubted the wisdom of the step, but yielded to the military arguments of Moltke and his fellow-strategists. At all events, France recovered from the war and paid off the indemnity in an amazingly short time, and then took a partial revenge for her loss by compelling Bismarck to be on constant guard against her. Single-handed, she could hardly have avoided another disaster; but when, in 1875, Germany seemed disposed to crush her once and for all, Britain and Russia let it be known that they would tolerate no such action. Bismarck therefore had to content himself with preventing France from making an alliance with any other Power.

This at first was easily done. France's most natural allies were Russia and Austria: but between the former and Prussia there was a long-standing friendship, and in Austria the effects of Bismarck's moderation in 1866 soon made themselves felt. As early as 1872, in fact, a friendly meeting between the rulers of the three states led to the formation of the so-called League of the Three Emperors. It was rather an *entente* than an alliance, the understanding being that the existing position in Europe was to be maintained.

From that day to this, Germany and Austria have remained on good terms. With Russia, however, Bismarck's relations soon changed for the worse. In 1875, as we have seen, Russia intervened to save France. Three years later, when the peace of Berlin brought to an end the Russo-Turkish war of 1877, it was thought by the Russian diplomatists that Bismarck's influence had been used against them. For a time Russia's attitude became markedly unfriendly. Bismarck met the danger by forming, in 1879, a defensive alliance with Austria: if either party were attacked by Russia, the other should join in the war; if either were attacked by another Power, the second should observe at least a friendly neutrality. In 1883 Italy joined the league

on similar conditions; and thus was established the famous Triple Alliance of the Powers of Central Europe, which had a long, though not always very robust, life of thirty-one years.

This alliance might of course have hastened the formation of a counter-alliance between Russia and France. For some years, however, its terms were kept secret, and Bismarck strove successfully to revive his friendship with the Czar. The *entente* of the three Emperors was renewed; and as during the eighties conflicting aims in Egypt kept England and France at arm's length, the latter had nowhere to turn for help. When in 1886 France increased her army, Germany countered the move by doing the same. And when in the next year the arrest in Germany of a French spy occasioned a European crisis, Bismarck adroitly pacified the Czar, who at one time seemed inclined to support France, and actually concluded a treaty whereby Germany promised to help Russia if she were attacked by Austria. It was Bismarck's last great stroke in European diplomacy.

Meanwhile Germany had become a colonial Power. For some years after 1871, Germans took little interest in expansion overseas. But the rapid increase of population soon raised the question, how were the Germans of the future to live? Hitherto Germany had been in the main an agricultural country: but it was evident that her people could no longer support themselves on the land. Many emigrated, millions going to the United States; but all these were lost to the Empire. If Germany had colonies, the emigrants might remain German citizens. Moreover, if Germans were to live, and if the Empire was to hold her own in Europe, Germany must develop her industries and commerce. But the home market would not give enough scope to her capital: foreign markets must be secured, and the foundation of German colonies and trading posts was the best means to this end.

Such were the arguments advanced by the German

Colonial Association, which was formed in 1883. Bismarck regarded its projects very coolly. He was willing, as he had already shown, to assist German trade and industry by a protective tariff: but as for new territories, he feared that they would distract the Empire from its true task of upholding its hard-won position in Europe. At the time, however, all eyes were turned to Africa; and Bismarck allowed himself to be so far influenced by public opinion as to take a hand in the general scramble for African territory. A German trader, Lüderitz by name, had acquired some land on the coast to the north of the Orange River. Fearing the hostility of the British, he asked the imperial government for its protection. It was granted, and German control was soon asserted over what we know as German South-West Africa. Shortly afterwards Germany founded her colonies of Togoland and the Cameroons. She also annexed a part of New Guinea and the adjacent islands now called the Bismarck Archipelago. In 1885 the possessions of a German company in East Central Africa were taken under imperial protection, becoming the nucleus of Germany's most valuable colony; and an international congress defined the spheres of each Power interested in Africa. The new policy of Germany was naturally regarded with suspicion by England and France: but Bismarck succeeded in convincing Gladstone that English interests were not threatened; the English premier publicly blessed German colonial enterprise; and for a time there was much pretty talk of the two states working together in the spread of European culture. France's jealousy was mollified by the success of her own colonial enterprises at this time. Bismarck indeed openly encouraged them, in the vain hope that they would take her mind off Alsace and Lorraine.

Bismarck's original intention was to leave the colonies to develop themselves. As a rule, however, the traders were unable to overcome the hostility of the natives, and it was found necessary to send out

troops and establish a complete system of government. Nevertheless, the German colonial empire made slow progress at first; and English statesmen were inclined to question whether Germany seriously meant to develop it—a doubt that was strengthened when in 1890 she surrendered in exchange for Heligoland certain valuable rights in East Africa. If Englishmen could have foreseen the events of 1914, they would no doubt have sung a different tune.

In 1888, the accession of the present Kaiser completely changed Bismarck's position. The relations of the two soon became strained. The tension finally led to Bismarck's resignation in March 1890.

With this event begins an entirely new phase in German foreign policy. In 1890 Russia, Austria, and Italy were formally allied with Germany; England was friendly; only France was to be feared. A few years later Germany had alienated her two strongest rivals, and the outcome of the change was that the Triple Alliance found itself confronted with the Triple Entente. In his *Imperial Germany* Prince Bülow labours to prove that recent German policy has followed lines which Bismarck would have commended. However that may be, it is certain that Bismarck would never have adopted the methods whereby that policy has been carried out. Since his fall, the Empire's attitude towards foreign states has been marked by a restless impatience, a boastful arrogance, and a cynical trust in force, which has kept Europe in continual unrest. German statesmen are unceasingly protesting that Germany is a Great Power, that she will not be ignored, that she must have a place in the sun, as if anybody could maintain the contrary. Bismarck was unscrupulous enough and at times brutal enough: but there was in his diplomacy a coolness and a restraint which stand in the sharpest contrast to the bluster and swagger of his would-be imitators.

There is no doubt that the change is principally due to the Kaiser. It is significant that he at once allowed

Bismarck's treaty with Russia to lapse. Russia in consequence drew closer to France, and in 1896 a defensive alliance was formally signed between Germany's two strongest neighbours. The fruits of Bismarck's skill were largely lost, and German statesmen could devise no other means of meeting the danger than repeated increases of the army.

With England, relations seemed for a time to have improved as a result of William II's accession. But in 1896 the Kaiser went out of his way to cause bad blood by despatching his famous telegram to President Kruger after the defeat of the Jameson Raid. Whatever one may think of that enterprise, it certainly was no concern of Germany's. War was averted ; but the incident was never forgotten in England, and ever since English feeling towards Germany has been at best suspicious. Matters were not improved by the intense hatred of England which the German nation discovered in the days of the Boer War.

As if her European difficulties were not enough, Germany began about this time to launch great schemes of *Weltpolitik*. She must, her statesmen argued, be a World-Power. Her colonial empire must be taken seriously and enlarged ; her rapidly-growing commerce must be protected and promoted. Unless Germany could make her influence felt all the world over, she would fall behind in Europe. The increase in population made commercial and territorial expansion essential to her welfare.

Now Germany's colonial policy had hitherto not been successful. She had not made the best use of what she had : but were her colonial administration never so wise, the fact would remain that her possessions were unsuited to European settlers. The best parts of the world were already occupied. New colonies must therefore be seized by force or acquired by diplomacy, preferably from some semi-civilised or weak state. Thus in 1897 Germany obtained from China, on a lease of ninety-nine years, the peninsula of Kiauchow, and

from that base worked hard to extend her political and economic influence in the Chinese Empire, which, it was then thought, would soon be partly divided among European Powers. Asia Minor and Mesopotamia seemed another promising field: German diplomacy, therefore, sought to support Austria and thwart Russia in the Near East, and by obtaining commercial concessions from Turkey, to prepare for the establishment of German colonies in Asia in the event of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Longing eyes were also cast at South America; and there are in Brazil numerous German communities, with a newspaper press and schools of their own. But attempts to annex land in any of these regions would inevitably raise up formidable enemies. Germany must be able to bring her power to bear on the vital point: she must have a strong navy. Otherwise she could neither found new colonies nor take old ones from others.

Up to 1897 Germany had troubled little about her fleet, and the Kaiser had tried in vain to rouse enthusiasm for naval expansion. In that year however, Admiral Tirpitz was given an important post at naval headquarters, and a few months later he was made Naval Secretary. His advent was signalised by the passing of an Act authorising the construction of a fleet which would make Germany a Sea Power of the first rank. The Act laid down the building programme for six years: but in 1900 it was superseded by a new measure, which provided for a navy nearly twice as large as the one previously contemplated. Since then the naval programme has repeatedly been revised, always becoming more ambitious. In the number of first-class fighting ships, the German navy is now second only to that of England.

The "big navy policy" has become very popular in Germany. Public opinion has altogether changed since 1897, when the Reichstag rejected the first proposals for the reconstruction of the fleet. The German Navy League, which has an enormous membership, has carried

on a vigorous and successful campaign ; and of late there has been no difficulty in securing a majority for the successive Navy Acts. German statesmen of course protested that the object of the policy was purely defensive. In view of her colonies, mercantile marine, and foreign trade, a strong fleet was essential to the maintenance of Germany's existing interests. Any intention of competing with England was authoritatively denied. Germany, it was said, could not hope to rival England's naval strength. She merely wanted to protect her colonies and commerce, and, as Prince Bülow puts it, to become "so strong at sea that no Sea Power could attack us without grave risk." To such motives no objection can be made. But other Powers may be pardoned for doubting whether they fully explain German naval expansion. It may be mere coincidence that, in January 1896, when tension with England was serious, the Kaiser celebrated the twenty-fifth birthday of the Empire by a speech plainly intended to prepare the public for a new naval policy. It may be mere coincidence that Germany's programme was nearly doubled in 1900, when Great Britain was involved in an expensive war, which might and eventually did divert her attention from continental politics and dispose her towards economising in armaments. When the Kaiser said "The trident must pass into our hands," or "Our future lies upon the water," he may have been merely carried away by his love of the grandiloquent. But if Germany's naval policy was simply defensive, it is hard to see why she should build a battle-fleet far more than adequate for the protection of her short and easily-guarded coast-line, or why she should specialise in cruisers much better fitted to attack than to protect merchant shipping. Neither is it clear why, when Russia's navy was almost destroyed, when France was building very slowly, when England was under a government whose economy was by many thought criminal, Germany should enlarge her schemes, or why she should decisively reject all suggestions for a limita-

tion of naval armaments. And some explanation seems needed of the fact that the German Navy League has had much more to say about the strength of the British fleet than about Germany's colonies, shipping, and trade. Germany's professions, in short, even if sincere, were not likely to prove convincing. One may at all events say that if they represent the whole truth, her policy has led to unexpected results. For when war broke out in 1914, her navy was powerless to defend her shipping and colonies, left the German coast to the protection of floating mines, and was handled as a potential weapon of attack.

It was obviously Germany's interest to avoid a breach with Britain until her naval plans were complete. Prince Bülow in fact admits that it was concern for her infant fleet which kept Germany from attacking England during the Boer War. But Germany's problem became much more complicated when England came to a friendly understanding with France. Her statesmen had no wish to meet an England in alliance with continental armies. How seriously German plans were threatened by the *Entente Cordiale*, and the subsequent *rapprochement* between England and Russia, is illustrated by the German hatred of King Edward VII, whom they believe to have attempted the "hemming-in" of Germany by a number of hostile alliances. To treat Germany as Bismarck had treated France would hardly seem an unfair manœuvre; but as a matter of fact, no diplomatic skill was needed to convince France and Russia of what they knew already—that German policy was likely to do them harm.

It was now Germany's aim to deal separately with the three Powers whom she regarded as hostile. An excellent chance occurred in 1905. Russia was then at war with Japan, and on the point of final defeat. In 1904 England and France had made an agreement regarding their claims in North Africa: England was to have a free hand in Egypt; France, in Morocco. Speaking before the Reichstag, the Imperial Chancellor, Count

Bülow, declared that he saw no reason for objecting to the treaty. Next year, however, when Russia's plight seemed desperate, the Kaiser visited Tangier, and in a melodramatic speech announced his intention of upholding Germany's commercial interests in Morocco, and of negotiating for that purpose with the Sultan himself, and not with any foreign Power. German writers say that his object was to protest against the slight put upon Germany by the conclusion of the Anglo-French agreement without her knowledge. In other quarters, it was generally believed that Germany wished to test the strength of the *Entente Cordiale*, and if it should prove weak, to pick a quarrel with France. The French adopted a conciliatory attitude; their Foreign Minister resigned, apparently at the request of Germany; and an international congress met at Algeciras to determine the rights of the various Powers in Morocco. England gave France diplomatic help; and Russia cast her weight on the same side. The Japanese War being now over, Germany thought it well to declare herself satisfied with the results of the conference.

The next European crisis was caused by Germany's ally, Austria. In 1908 that state, taking advantage of the revolution in Turkey, annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, provinces with a Slavonic population, which, though for some years past under Austrian administration, were technically part of the Turkish Empire. It was an act of naked force. Great indignation was caused in Serbia, for the Serbs are of the same blood as most of the inhabitants of the two provinces. Russia protested, and mobilised part of her army. Then Prince Bülow brusquely declared that war with Austria meant war with Germany too. Neither England nor France being disposed to fight on the point at issue, Russia gave way.

Germany's conduct at this time is partly explained by her ambitions in the Turkish Empire, which would of course be furthered by the advance southwards of her ally. But her satisfaction at the humiliation of

Russia cannot be fully understood unless we bear in mind her attitude towards the Slavs. In her own dominions, the Poles are of that stock; about half the subjects of the Austrian Empire are Slavonic in blood; and they, together with the Serbians, look to their Russian kinsmen as their allies and protectors. Hostility between Teuton and Slav is as old as history. Hitherto success in the strife has nearly always fallen to the Teuton. But now the Slavs, who are remarkably prolific, greatly outnumber their old oppressors. They hope for the establishment of a Slavonic Empire, which shall unite the whole race under one rule. The formation of such a state would not only involve the break-up of the Austrian Empire and the loss of considerable territory to Germany, but would establish on Germany's eastern frontier a Power of overwhelming strength. It is fear of Slavonic ambitions that prompts Prussia's repressive treatment of her Polish subjects. Any blow to Russian prestige among the Slavs consequently gives much joy to the Germans.

In the long run, however, Germany's success probably did her more harm than good. Russia was determined to avoid another humiliation, and went on steadily with the reorganisation of her army. Germany, on the other hand, conceived for Russia an unwarranted contempt, which led her into grievous blunders six years later.

It was soon once more the turn of France to hear the Prussian sword rattle in the scabbard. In 1911 Morocco was in a state of civil war, and a French expedition was sent to Fez at the request of the Sultan. Germany resolved to treat this move as a threat to her interests. Instead of protesting through the ordinary diplomatic channels, she sent a cruiser to the Moroccan port of Agadir. It was a characteristic act—an act calculated to kindle strife. And it almost caused a European war. Negotiations were on the point of breaking down, when Germany gave way. She was threatened with a financial collapse. England, moreover, had made it

clear that she would stand by France, and the German fleet was not ready. Germany therefore recognised Morocco as a protectorate of France; and France in return ceded to Germany part of her possessions in Central Africa.

This episode was a severe check to Germany's aggressive policy. It is significant that in the two succeeding years large additions were made to her army. The second increase was mainly due to the results of the Balkan War of 1912. These had been disastrous to the projects of Germany and Austria: the territories of their friend, Turkey, had been cut short; those of Russia's protégé, Serbia, had been greatly enlarged; and Salonica, long coveted by Austria, had fallen to the Greeks. Though Germany did not feel strong enough for immediate war against this settlement, she and Austria were determined to have it altered. Their precise intentions are not yet known for certain; but it seems likely that the catastrophe of 1914 was caused by a plot, to which Germany was privy, for the overthrow of Serbia by Austria, Turkey, and perhaps another state. This would at once be a blow to the Slavs and remove an obstacle to the policy of Germany and Austria in the east. Russia, it was thought, would not dare to intervene; even if she did, France would never take up arms in such a quarrel; and Great Britain, on the brink of civil war, was in no position to draw the sword. What followed was the natural climax of German policy since the death of Bismarck. Violence, vainglorioussness, and ignorant contempt for opponents have imperilled all the work of the great Chancellor.

CHAPTER V

HOME POLICY

THE character of the domestic history of Germany since 1871 has been largely determined by the fact that the government is not a party government. Whatever the composition of the Reichstag, the Imperial Chancellor always has much the same political outlook. Striking changes in policy there have been, but they have been initiated from above, not by the people. And on the whole, Germany's internal policy has been marked by a deliberation and consistency which can never be attained in England.

The chief concerns of the successive Chancellors have been the maintenance of the imperial constitution, the strengthening of the central authority, the promotion of material welfare by social reform and state assistance to industry and commerce, and the development of the national defences. As in foreign policy, the main principles were laid down by Bismarck, and his successors have tried to apply them, though not always by the same methods.

The first few years of the Empire were characterised by a policy which has long since been abandoned, and therefore can be passed over quickly. In the new Reichstag, the Centre or Catholic party, which from the first was very strong, adopted a critical attitude towards the government, and, in the opinion of Bismarck, threatened to subordinate the interests of Germany to those of the Church of Rome. The recent enunciation of the dogma of papal infallibility seemed to presage ecclesiastical aggressions on the sphere of the state, and many Germans thought that the new Empire, like the old one, was to have its worst enemy in the pope. Bismarck resolved to strike at once, and the Reichstag

adopted proposals for the expulsion of the Jesuits from Germany and the prevention of clerical interference in politics. In Prussia still more severe measures were passed, the education of the Catholic clergy, ecclesiastical appointments, and the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline being placed under state supervision. This drastic policy gave rise to a bitter struggle between Bismarck and the Catholic clergy, many of whom were expelled from their livings for denouncing the new laws. The Centre of course opposed him more bitterly than ever. Even the Conservatives, Lutheran though they were, looked with disfavour at his violence. The Liberal parties, however, approved; and as their assistance enabled him to carry his anti-clerical measures, it was natural that in other directions he should be influenced by Liberal views. In economic affairs, free-trade principles were followed, and a uniform monetary system was introduced throughout the Empire. An imperial code of criminal law was put into force, and judicial procedure made uniform in all states. Such reforms were in accordance with the Liberal desire to decrease the federal element in the constitution and enlarge the powers of the central authority.

The year 1878, however, marks the end of Bismarck's Liberalism. The death of Pope Pius IX and the accession of Leo XIV opened the way to an amicable settlement of the religious conflict, most of the anti-clerical laws being gradually withdrawn. Financial and economic considerations had alike caused Bismarck to doubt the wisdom of a free-trade policy. And two attempts on the Emperor's life led him to inaugurate a vigorous attack on the growing party of the Social Democrats.

There was need for an increase in the imperial revenue, and it might be most conveniently raised by customs-duties. German agriculture, moreover, had suffered by the importation of foreign corn; and manufacturing industry, though it had made good progress, was handicapped by the competition of big and long-established firms in other countries, who could afford to

sell their goods in Germany at very low prices. Partly therefore to raise money, and partly to protect home industries, a new German tariff was drawn up, and in 1879 passed in the Reichstag by a majority composed of Conservatives, the Centre, and some of the National Liberals. A duty—at first low—was placed on foreign corn, and manufactures were also protected, though in their case the duties were not high enough to exclude foreign goods altogether, and the imperial treasury consequently benefited.

The attack on Socialism had already begun. A law was carried suppressing the organisation and newspapers of the Social Democrats, and forbidding them to hold meetings. It remained in force till 1890.

Bismarck's change of front caused a split among the National Liberals. Those who supported him retained the name, and since then have generally been friendly with the government. The others united with the Radicals, and for long were consistently in opposition. Bismarck, however, could count on the Conservatives, and his changed attitude towards catholicism secured the steady support of the Centre for the momentous series of measures he was about to introduce.

While adopting a most repressive policy towards the Social Democrats, the imperial government wisely recognised that their agitation was based on many genuine grievances. Germany was experiencing an industrial revolution, and unbridled individualism was producing its characteristic evils. In 1881 the Emperor, in a solemn speech to the Reichstag, declared it the duty of a Christian state to promote by positive measures the well-being of its subjects. Two years later the new policy was inaugurated by the first of a series of Insurance Acts, the principle of which has been made familiar to Englishmen by Mr. Lloyd George. Bismarck began with the introduction of the compulsory insurance of employés and servants against sickness, two-thirds of the contribution being paid by the person insured, one-third by the employer. Next year followed an act for

insurance against accident during work, the employer in this case having to contribute the whole premium. In 1889 the fabric was completed by the adoption of a scheme providing against disability and old age, the employer, the insured, and the state sharing the burden of contribution, which varies in proportion to the wage earned. In 1911 the different measures, somewhat widened in scope, were brought together into one act. From 1885 to 1911 over four hundred million pounds were paid to persons insured under these schemes. In view of the comprehensive nature of the German Insurance Acts, and the success that has attended them, it may seem strange that the imperial authorities have hitherto refused to bring unemployment within their scope. They have, however, supplemented them with a drastic Workmen's Protection Act, which imposes severe restrictions on Sunday labour, and makes rules concerning the employment of women and children, lighting, drainage, sanitation, the fencing of machinery, and so forth. Germans proudly claim that the aged, the sick, and the disabled are better cared for in Germany than anywhere else, and that nowhere do the workers enjoy better conditions of labour. Yet the reforms begun by Bismarck were as unsuccessful in conciliating the Social Democratic party as his repressive measures were in crushing it. The government provides for the exceptionally unfortunate, and very sensibly, from its own point of view, enforces rules to make misfortune exceptional. But, outside the workshop, the lot of the active and healthy artisan or labourer remains capable of much improvement. He works long hours, and wages are on the whole much lower than in England. The standard of comfort is naturally lower too, though one must beware of nonsense about rye bread, horse sausages, and mall beer, which the German likes, and which are just as wholesome as the staple diet of the working-class in England. Slums, indeed, are seldom found in a large German town ; but while the big blocks of flats look better than the squalid

cottages of industrial England, the congestion inside them is often appalling. In 1905, for instance, 41 per cent. of the population of Berlin lived in "dwellings" of one room. On the average, moreover, a German workman pays a higher rent than an Englishman of the same class. It is thus no wonder that, despite Bismarck's policy, the numbers of the Socialists have steadily increased. So dangerous, in fact, did their secret propaganda seem that soon after his accession the present Kaiser used his influence to secure the abandonment of Bismarck's repressive measures, rightly preferring their agitation to be carried on in the open. The government, however, has never concealed its hostility towards them. "It is the duty of every German ministry," writes Prince Bülow, "to combat this movement until it is defeated or materially changed." Notwithstanding this attitude, the power of the Socialists has grown consistently. At one or two general elections the Liberals and the Conservatives have combined against them with successful results. Nevertheless, as was said before, they are the most numerous party in the present Reichstag.

It was also mentioned above that the Socialist party is not quite so strong as it appears. But even if it were perfectly united and could count on the wholehearted support of all who vote Socialist at elections, it would still be doubtful whether the government's fear of it was not unnecessary. The truth is that for all its wonderful organisation, its magnificently-arranged demonstrations, and its fiery speeches, the Social Democratic party has achieved next to nothing. Its attitude has generally been one of mere negation. And despite their professions, the Social Democrats are not the stuff of which revolutionaries are made; they possess the characteristic German instinct of obedience to authority. Prince Bülow hints that a "great and comprehensive national policy" might turn the minds of Germans from Socialism, just as Bismarck's successful wars ruined the predominant Liberalism of fifty years ago.

The attitude of the Socialists in the summer of 1914 certainly lends colour to Prince Bülow's opinion.

Of the other domestic problems which since 1878 have occupied the attention of the imperial government, the most important are the manipulation of the tariff and what is officially termed national defence. Considering the extraordinary growth of her industry and trade, it is no wonder that Germany has maintained the protective policy inaugurated by Bismarck in 1878. In the nineties, however, that policy was modified. Instead of giving manufactures and agriculture an equal chance as Bismarck had tried to do, the government sought, by lowering the duty on foreign corn, to benefit the artisan class and to facilitate the negotiation of commercial treaties favourable to German manufacturers. The change caused an appreciable decline in agriculture, and alienated the landed interest from the government.

It became clear that if the new policy were long continued Germany would soon be almost entirely a manufacturing and commercial country, dependent on foreign sources for her food. This prospect gave her statesmen pause. The Empire, it must be remembered, has been increasingly obsessed with the idea of war. That an occasional war is not only inevitable but even desirable has been impressed on the minds of the ruling classes by statesmen, generals, and professors. A very great army must therefore be maintained. But unless agriculture prospers, the rural districts will become depopulated. In the towns the birth-rate is not only much lower than in the country, but continually on the decline; and the physique of the urban population is poor. If for no other reason, agriculture must be protected that the state may have sound soldiers. For some years before 1914, two out of every three recruits who passed the test for the German army came from villages with 2000 inhabitants or less.

Furthermore, it is argued, Germany must be self-supporting in time of war. If all her frontiers, both by land and sea, were beset by enemies, Germany would

starve unless she were able to subsist on her own crops. Moreover, at such a crisis agriculture would provide a market for manufacturing industry, which otherwise would come to a standstill. German reasoning on this subject is often confused. It is not clear, for instance, how the rural population is at once to fight the enemy, till the ground, and buy manufactured goods. Moreover, why should the government still give protection to manufactures, and thus encourage the migration from the country to the towns ? Because, Prince Bülow says, only manufacturing industry can create enough wealth to pay for the huge armaments needed by Germany. So German industry is necessary to provide her with an army and navy, and the army and navy, we have continually been told, are necessary for the development of German industry. One is driven to the conclusion that, in her home as in her foreign policy, Germany has been trying to do too many things at once.

However that may be, Prince Bülow, in 1902, revised the tariff with a view to reviving agriculture. He adopted what he calls a " middle policy," striving to be impartial as between agricultural and manufacturing interests. He was attacked by the agrarian party for not going far enough, by the Liberal capitalists for spoiling the chances of concluding favourable commercial treaties, by the Socialists for increasing the price of food. Nevertheless, the government has adhered to his policy ; and for the past twelve years German agriculture has made much progress. Germany, however, is still compelled to import considerable quantities of food ; and though it is claimed that improved methods of tillage and the cultivation of waste land would soon produce enough to feed the Germans of to-day, it seems impossible for agriculture to keep pace with the increase of the population. Notwithstanding the prosperity of the farmers, only 28 per cent. of the population in 1912 made their living from agriculture, whereas in 1899 the proportion was 32. The ideal of Germany as a fortifi-

cation with an immense garrison and inexhaustible supplies seems doomed to failure.

There is no need to dwell here on the extraordinary development of Germany's manufacturing industry and foreign trade. Except in details, Bismarck's tariff for manufactures has been maintained, and apart from this protection, and such additional help as government subsidies to steamship companies, German producers and merchants owe their success to their own energy and thoroughness.

Prince Bülow says that, while never ceasing to fight Socialism, every German government must concern itself equally with "national questions." And, to judge from what follows, the most important national question is to him the increase of armaments. This is of course vitally connected with Germany's foreign and colonial policy; and her naval ambitions have already been considered under that head. But the supposed need of big armaments affects every side of Germany's internal affairs. As we have seen, it has largely determined her economic policy, and it greatly influences the relations between the government and the parties in the Reichstag. The army bill of 1893 was thrown out by a combination of the Centre, Radicals, and Social Democrats, and after a general election was carried by only a small majority. Till 1898 the Reichstag refused all suggestions for large increases of the navy. It was only with great difficulty that the army proposals of 1899 were passed. Prince Bülow's main object was to conciliate the parties representative of the middle-classes, so as to secure their support for a "national" policy. And since 1907 that end has been attained. The Radicals came into line; the Centre has been much more amenable; and in 1913 even the Socialist opposition was largely overcome.

Germany's naval policy has been explained and defended on lines already discussed. Her increases in the army have been justified till lately on the ground that they correspond to the increase of population. Of course, if the army is meant purely for defence, this

argument is no justification at all. It holds good only on the assumption that it is right that big nations should be able to bully small ones. And the Army Act of 1913 openly casts aside the alleged principle of its predecessors; there is to be universal service, not merely universal liability to serve. Hitherto, as General Bernhardi bitterly complains, little more than 50 per cent. of the men of military age have been accepted for the army each year. The new Act was designed with the view of utilising every able-bodied young man. Whereas in 1911 the peace strength of the army was about 600,000, in 1914 it had already reached over 800,000, and was to be raised still higher.

Every German accepted for military service has to undergo training for two years, or, if he serves in the cavalry or horse-artillery, for three. An exception, however, is made in the case of the so-called "one-year volunteers." These are men who have passed a difficult school-leaving examination, the severe character of which practically limits the privilege to the upper classes. Successful candidates serve for one year only: they provide their own board, lodging, and equipment, and after four months' training are required to pass a second examination in military subjects. When their year is up, they are eligible for commissions in any branch of the service, and thus furnish a supply of officers for the swollen ranks of the army in time of war. There is, of course, a class of professional officers, who have been trained at military schools.

The ordinary recruit, when his two or three years are over, passes into the first reserve. There the infantryman remains five years; the cavalryman, four. The reservists are at intervals called up for training with the first-line troops; as a rule they have two periods of service of about a month each. Next comes a term of five years in the first division of the Landwehr, or second reserve; after which the soldier passes into the second division of this force. There he remains up to the age of thirty-nine, liable to any kind of military service in

time of war, and to an occasional summons for training in time of peace. Last of all, he belongs to the Landsturm—a force for home defence. When he is forty-five, however, all his military obligations cease.

The navy is also recruited by conscription, mainly of course from the inhabitants of the seaboard. The term of service is three years, followed by four in the first reserve and five in the second. The German fleet is provided with officers in much the same way as our own.

The army estimates for 1913 amounted to £45,000,000; the new Act of that year will necessitate an annual expenditure of over ten millions more. The same measure provided for extraordinary expenditure to the amount of fifty millions. On the navy some £25,000,000 are spent annually. Big armaments are indeed a heavy burden and grievous to be borne, for they not only rifle the pockets of the tax-payer, but interrupt the careers of the young men. German statesmen say they are necessary for the defence of the Empire, which has always been surrounded by powerful and jealous neighbours. One would therefore suppose that if there is any nation anxious for a general limitation of armaments, surely it must be the Germans. But it is, of course, notorious that Germany has contemptuously rejected any pacific schemes put forward by other states. The Hague Conference has had no more unconciliatory members than the representatives of Germany, and attempts to promote arbitration in international disputes have nowhere evoked such sneers as among German politicians. It is no doubt true that the attitude of the ruling class in Germany is not necessarily an indication of popular opinion. But it is also true that Germans in general have a congenital confidence in the powers that be, and that they have become intoxicated with the military triumphs of half-a-century ago, and with their diplomatic and commercial victories since.

CHAPTER VI

GERMAN CULTURE

THE present-day German has two words on the brain. One is Power, the other Culture. By Power he means a big army and navy; and in that sense no one will deny that Germany possesses it. This power, it is further held, must be used, among other purposes, for the spread of German culture. For German culture is the highest culture: in fact, no other nation can in comparison be said to have any real culture at all. Statesmen, generals, theologians, philosophers, historians, clergymen, and schoolmasters unite in impressing this view on Germans of every age and class. Till recently it even obtained some credence in other countries.

What does a German mean when he talks about the superiority of German culture? He seldom descends to particulars: but apparently he means that German institutions are better than all other institutions; that German ideals are better than all other ideals; that the German intellect so far transcends that of any other nation that Germany leads the way in religion, art, letters, science, and commerce; and that it would therefore be for the good of mankind if German institutions, ideals, opinions, and methods were universally adopted.

Now no reasonable man will try to belittle the great services rendered by Germany to European civilisation. In a brutal and sordid age, she put before the minds of princes the splendid theory of the Holy Roman Empire. Her mediæval builders developed a national architecture of peculiar charm. Towards the end of the Middle Ages her great cities set all Europe an example of orderly and systematic government. She produced some of the greatest of the Renaissance

scholars, and armed that movement with the printing-press. It was under the leadership of a German that the Protestant Reformation won its first decisive victories. And if there followed a period of lethargy, it was more than atoned for when, in the eighteenth century, Germany once more awoke. In Leibnitz she had the greatest mind in contemporary Europe. With Johann Sebastian Bach began the magnificent dynasty of German composers. And about the time of Napoleon, when she reached the lowest depths of political degradation, Germany might justly claim to have attained the leadership of the world of culture. Schiller and Goethe are among the great poets of all time. Beethoven raised music to heights that have never since been scaled. Kant and Hegel showed that if German imagination was fertile and eloquent, German reasoning was subtle and profound. In the realm of learning, too, Germany was sovereign. During the first half of the nineteenth century she revolutionised the study of theology, of history, of language, and of law. In the natural sciences, though she asserted no supremacy, she became renowned for painstaking and thorough research. It is not astonishing that Germans sometimes argued that whereas other nations had their own special endowments, the German mind possessed every faculty in equal degree.

These splendid achievements of German culture were based on a solid foundation. For generations the Germans were, with the possible exception of the Scots, the best educated nation in the world. Prussia was the first important state of Europe to introduce compulsory attendance at school. By the end of the eighteenth century she had assumed control over all branches of education. Other states gradually followed this example: one or two were in some respects even more progressive. The result was that, in the early part of the nineteenth century, Germany had a system of elementary and secondary schools far superior to that of any other country, while advanced instruction was supplied by a score of universities.

For a long time German education was discredited by the political failures of Germany. The Germans, it was argued, make erudite scholars and profound philosophers, but they are a nation of doctrinaires and dreamers, with no gift whatever for politics and trade. This conviction was confirmed by the very unpractical attitude of the liberal and nationalist party at such times as the crisis of 1848. But with the unification of Germany, the German triumph over France, and the subsequent development of German industry and commerce, opinion in other lands swung to the opposite extreme. Since 1871 German method, thoroughness, and enterprise have been objects of general admiration. Especially in England and America has there been a tendency to accept any theory, to copy any system of education, to adopt any method of conducting business, if only it had its origin in Germany. English and American students have flocked to the German universities; and General Bernhardi is able to point out with pride how enormously, in the German book trade, the exports exceed the imports.

Unfortunately, ever since the world began to admire Germany, she has become less and less admirable. Not long ago the writer was reading an essay on the literary and intellectual history of Germany in the nineteenth century. The author—a worshipper of Germany—mentions many illustrious names and many epoch-making works. But nearly all the great men flourished before 1870, and scarcely one of the great books was written since that date. There is the whole matter in a nutshell. The old Germany—the Germany of uncompromising idealists, transcendental philosophers, and single-minded pursuers of unremunerative knowledge—has vanished. We have instead a Germany brought up on a congenial diet of blood and iron.

We must beware of exaggeration. Germany still has her distinguished philosophers, scholars, and artists. Among the first, Wundt and Eucken have a world-wide fame; though they can be rivalled in other countries.

German professors still set the fashion in theology, though of late their work has been marked by the impatient dogmatism which characterises the whole nation. In other spheres, however, Germany can claim no ascendancy. In science, while she produces an enormous amount of useful work, her great discoveries are few. She no longer leads the way in historical research. In literature her influence is eclipsed by that of several nations—" barbarous Russia " and despised Belgium among them. Even in music, where for over a century she was undisputed queen, her supremacy has not been maintained. The most enthusiastic about her culture admit that she falls behind in the plastic arts. There are numerous theatres and opera-houses supported by state or municipal governments. No state capital is regarded as complete without a good picture gallery. Schools of music and of the other arts abound. Yet in most branches of art, German artists look for inspiration abroad.

German intellectual activity is still great, but it is no longer unique. In the commerce of thought, several nations have more valuable goods to offer Germany than she has to offer them. The truth is, her present contribution to civilisation belongs mainly to the material sphere. For what, then, does modern Germany stand?

She stands for order, system, and thoroughness in government, business, and education. If she decides to build a navy, she builds the best navy that money and science can furnish. If she decides to have a big army, she makes sure that it is so disciplined, organised, and equipped that it can, in the shortest possible time, be placed in the field with every material accessory to victory. If she makes up her mind to a policy of social reform, she settles just what she wants to do, and carefully and methodically does it. The same traits appear in the German manufacturer and merchant. He must have the latest scientific discoveries at his service; his processes and machines must be of the newest type. He carefully studies the needs of foreign markets, and then

sets about supplying them, at the lowest possible prices, with exactly the things they want. There is nothing supernatural, or even mysterious, about the commercial progress of Germany. It is simply due to thoroughness and the determination to turn to account anything that may promote success.

As German education was at the root of her intellectual triumphs, so is it one of the ultimate causes of her material prosperity. It has already been pointed out that, though education is under the control of the individual states, it is organised on an almost uniform system throughout the Empire.

Elementary education is compulsory for all children between six and fourteen. The curriculum is similar to that of English primary schools, except that more attention is perhaps paid to science, and that, in the agricultural districts of Prussia, instruction of a semi-technical character is given. Germany, however, boasts an admirable system of continuation schools, and in several states, though not in Prussia, attendance at these is compulsory up to the age of eighteen. The course of study is generally limited to six hours a week, and often includes subjects with a direct bearing on commerce or agriculture.

A few states have what are called middle schools, where, for a small fee, parents can obtain for their children rather more advanced and comprehensive instruction than is given in the elementary schools. But the most admirable feature of the system is the provision made for secondary education. In this department Germany for long stood head and shoulders above all other countries, and, despite rapid progress elsewhere, she still holds the lead. Secondary schools are of three types—(1) the *Gymnasium*—a word for which we have no precise equivalent—in which the curriculum is similar to that of the classical side of an English public school; (2) the *Real-Gymnasium*, or "modern" *Gymnasium*, where Latin is taught, but no Greek, and where more time is given to "modern" subjects; and (3) the *Real-*

Schule, or Modern School, where modern languages, mathematics, and science take the foremost place. In each of these classes there are schools of two kinds—in one a nine years' course of study is followed, the other providing a shorter course of six years. There are in Germany about 600 *Gymnasia*, 200 Modern *Gymnasia*, and 600 Modern Schools. The fees are low, averaging £7, 10*s*. a year in a Gymnasium, and from £5 to £6 in a Modern School. To provide this magnificent system of secondary education, the German states spend altogether more than five millions a year. All that has just been said, however, applies only to the education of boys. Secondary education for girls is by no means so well organised, though of late it has been taken in hand and much improved.

All the schools mentioned, it must be understood, follow a cut-and-dried curriculum laid down by the educational authorities. There are none of the makeshifts, none of the sudden changes of plan, that characterise so many secondary schools in England. Even the few schools in private hands are under state supervision, and must follow the prescribed courses of study. The teachers must all have passed through a specified course of training, and hold a state certificate of competence.

There can be no doubt that German education makes for the acquisition of much knowledge. This is, however, due not merely to the carefully-devised courses of study or the excellence of the teaching, but also to the influence of a boy's career at school on his subsequent life. Unless he can pass a difficult school-leaving examination, he goes into the world under a heavy handicap. He cannot obtain the privilege of serving in the army as a "one-year volunteer," with the chance afterwards of a commission in the reserve—a social asset of the greatest value. He cannot enter a University, and therefore cannot become a clergyman, schoolmaster, doctor, or lawyer, or obtain a good post in the civil service. He cannot study in a Technical

High School, and so is not likely to get a good position in business. It is no wonder that the German boy takes his work very seriously; that there are many cases of over-strain; that nervous collapse and even suicide are not infrequent in German schools. In Germany little is heard of the boy who was a fool at school and became a millionaire afterwards. It is not that school-hours are long, or that the work prescribed is unduly severe; it is the great issues depending on their success or failure that make many German schoolboys old men before they are out of their teens.

An even more serious criticism often passed on German education is that it concerns itself too little with the formation of character. Elementary teachers are indeed commanded to give moral instruction to their pupils; but the virtues emphasized are passive rather than active, the greatest value being attached to loyalty and obedience to the state. In the secondary schools, it is said, the development of character is neglected. To impart knowledge is the school's first, and frequently only, object. In this respect, of course, the ideals of a German school differ altogether from those of the public schools in England. Moreover, the German schoolboy is made to feel that he is part of a machine. Games, though of late they have met with more favour, are not regarded as an essential part of a boy's life at school; exercise and physical training are derived from drill and gymnastics, in which, again, everything must be done according to rule. It must be remembered, too, that boarding-schools are rare; and, whatever may be urged against boarding-schools, they tend to develop certain good qualities which over-systematisation is apt to crush. In short, it is said, while German education produces very learned boys and very docile citizens, it fails to bestow a manly independence of character. It certainly does not endow its products with good manners, tact, or chivalry—matters of prime importance to an English schoolmaster.

Much the same criticism may be levelled against higher education in Germany. A man does not attend a German University to make himself a well-informed and cultured gentleman: he does so primarily to acquire the special knowledge necessary for the career he has chosen. There are, of course, many undergraduates in England, especially at the newer Universities, who do the same. But in Germany, nearly all University students are specialists from the outset. A German University is a training college for clergymen, schoolmasters, lawyers, doctors, and the higher officers of the civil service, just as the Technical and the Commercial High Schools are training colleges for manufacturers and merchants. The Technical Schools are one of the chief glories of German education. They are very numerous; many of them have been established for sixty or seventy years; they are splendidly organised and equipped; and the teaching in them is highly efficient. The Schools of Commerce are of recent origin, and as yet few in numbers. They are doing for German trade what the Technical Schools are doing for German industry.

It is a natural result of the educational system of Germany that her professional and business men begin their active careers thoroughly well provided with whatever theoretical knowledge pertains to their calling. They are experts from the start, and the expert, often scorned in England, is honoured in Germany. Young Englishmen, on the other hand, are commonly sent straight from school into a workshop or office, and told to learn their work by doing it. We flatter ourselves that the process sharpens their wits and makes them capable of acting in unforeseen circumstances. But the German takes care that no circumstances shall be unforeseen. That is half the secret of his success. It is not that the German manufacturer or merchant is naturally more enterprising than his British competitor; but the knowledge at his service enables him to think of inven-

tions and schemes which cannot enter the other's head. There has been much talk of late about the capture of German trade. We may seize their markets in time of war; but when peace is restored, they will be lost again unless Englishmen can beat the Germans with their own weapons.

Modern Germany, it has been said, is "unrivalled in her command of matter." Therein lies her greatness. But "command of matter" does not constitute what we naturally understand by "culture." It is rather "power." Germany, without doubt, has a giant's strength: but before we can estimate its value to civilisation, we have to ask in what spirit that strength is used. And the answer is: In the spirit which for two centuries and more has inspired the policy of the house of Hohenzollern.

The truth is that while Germany was conquering France, Prussia was conquering Germany. The imperial constitution gives Prussia the control of German policy, which since 1871 has simply been the traditional policy of Prussia. There is the old tendency towards the centralisation of authority, the old omnipotence of officials, the old concern for the material welfare of the nation, the old maintenance of big armaments, the old worship of brute force, the old lack of scruple in international dealings, and the old claim to the especial favour of the Almighty. Whereas these characteristics used to mark Prussia only, they now belong to the whole German Empire.

The Germans have little gift for politics. Not that politics do not interest them: they have produced their share of political philosophers and theories of the state. But as a nation they lack the ability to use their political opportunities, to make a compromise between theories and facts. Every German recognises the blunders of his ancestors in the Middle Ages; and patriots like Prince Bülow and General Bernhardi, while extolling German genius, insist strongly on the

political incapacity of their countrymen to-day. The weakness of the Reichstag is a striking illustration of this defect. It is indeed fenced in on every side by the terms of the German constitution: but with a few statesmanlike leaders it might in forty years have made itself a real power in the state. The failure of parliamentary institutions in Germany has brought them into discredit with the people, a fact which would by itself go far to explain their ready acceptance of Prussian methods of rule.

Furthermore, it was Prussia who realised the dream of a united Germany. The man who made that triumph possible was Bismarck. We cannot wonder that German patriots, even outside Prussia, regarded the hero as almost infallible. Good Germans to-day speak of him with a kind of awe. To depart from his policy is almost sinful. Prince Bülow devotes many pages to proving that while he went much further than Bismarck in many directions, he always acted in the true Bismarckian spirit. Even Bernhardi, when he finds himself maintaining an opinion which Bismarck denounced, dares not say that he thinks the oracle wrong, but labours to show that it cannot have meant what it said. And after Bismarck's fall, the rising generation forgot the cautious peaceful policy of his later years, forgot the moderation and tact which he showed when forming the Empire, and remembered him only as the man under whose leadership little Denmark was dismembered, reactionary Austria humiliated, decadent France crushed, and Germany raised to mighty military power. German patriots became drunk with power. To blood and iron all things seemed possible.

The dominant ideas found an eloquent exponent in Treitschke, who reduced the policy of Prussia to a philosophy. This is not the place to discuss Treitschke's teaching; another volume in this series will deal with it at length. But when Treitschke asserted that the state is Power; that the state, having nothing higher

than itself on earth, is bound by none of the moral laws that apply to individuals; that the state ought to regard no interests save its own; that treaties are binding only as long as the state chooses to regard them as such; that war is sacred, God's medicine for mankind, the means of securing the survival of the fittest nations; that small states are necessarily lacking in culture, and therefore lawful prey for their stronger neighbours—he was simply giving expression to thoughts that were already floating in the minds of those who heard his lectures. It is impossible to account otherwise for the remarkable influence of his political teachings. For to an English reader his lectures on politics are most disappointing. The reasoning is loose, the illustrations superficial, and the most startling opinions are frequently laid down without any attempt at proof. Treitschke was successful because he said "what oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed." In his favour too was the growing vogue of Nietzsche. It is, of course, true that Nietzsche was an extreme individualist, that he hated Prussia as the foe of culture, and that he looked with abhorrence on Treitschke and his political doctrines. Nevertheless he familiarised his numerous readers with admiration for force and a contempt for the peculiarly Christian virtues; and followers of Nietzsche have only to apply to the state what he teaches about the individual, and they will find themselves at once in complete agreement with Treitschke. How the two reinforce each other in practice is strikingly shown by General Bernhardi's *Germany and the Next War*, in which the writer appeals impartially to both.

Thus the mind, as well as the government, of Germany has been captured by Prussia. In the concert of Europe she stands for Rob Roy's good old rule—"that they should take who have the power, and they should keep who can." Belief in this principle is rendered the more dangerous by the patriotic frenzy which commonly accompanies it, and which creates fantastic inter-

pretations of the past and grandiose ambitions for the future. At the beginning of the Middle Ages, it is argued, Germany was the most powerful state of Europe: but, absorbed in the pursuit of truth and beauty, she let her political strength slip away, while states with more sordid souls, such as England, took advantage of her preoccupations to amass wealth and acquire colonies. Throughout, however, Germany has been supreme in culture. It is grudgingly admitted that here and there other nations may have given birth to great men; but the more thorough-going patriots maintain that these must have derived their inspiration from Germany, if they were not really Germans themselves. And there is a feeling that Germany, having given so much to the world, has been cheated of her due reward. In relation to other states, she ought to be as strong as she was in the best days of the Holy Roman Empire. Some would like to recover every inch that belonged to the kingdom of Germany in the Middle Ages. The Pan-German party aim at bringing into the Empire all communities of German blood—the Dutch, the Swiss, the Austrians, the long-established colonies in Russia—and some zealots would not be content until all the Teutonic peoples of Europe, including the English, had been gathered into the fold of the Hohenzollerns. German statesmen do not trouble about mediæval history or ethnological divisions; but they are willing to take anything that may be useful.

It is doubtless true that the wild and extravagant talk of fanatical patriots is despised by millions of their fellow-countrymen. Yet there are numbers of Germans who in everyday life are as kindly, honourable folk as one could wish to meet, but who talk pure Treitschke as soon as conversation turns on international politics. And, taken as a whole, the nation undoubtedly believes that ethics and politics have nothing to do with each other, and that Germany's greatness is unique.

Germany, in fact, is suffering from national megalomania. There is method in her madness, and she has still much to teach us. But her tainted mind corrupts all her activities, and, so far from being the leader of culture, she is its greatest foe. It may be that adversity will exorcise the evil spirit, and restore to Europe the Germany she admired of old.

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