

History of Modern Europe 1792-1878

C. A. Fyffe

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OF

MODERN EUROPE

1792-1878

BY

C. A. FYFFE, M.A.

Barrister-at-Law; Fellow of University College, Oxford;
Vice-President of the Royal Historical Society

POPULAR EDITION

With Maps

PREFACE.

In acceding to the Publishers' request for a re-issue of the "History of Modern Europe," in the form of a popular edition, I feel that I am only fulfilling what would have been the wish of the Author himself. A few manuscript corrections and additions found in his own copy of the work have been adopted in the present edition; in general, however, my attention in revising each sheet for the press has been devoted to securing an accurate reproduction of the text and notes as they appeared in the previous editions in three volumes. I trust that in this cheaper and more portable form the work will prove, both to the student and the general reader, even more widely acceptable than heretofore.

HENRIETTA F. A. FYFFE.

London, November, 1895.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The object of this work is to show how the States of Europe have gained the form and character which they possess at the present moment. The outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1792, terminating a period which now appears far removed from us, and setting in motion forces which have in our own day produced a united Germany and a united Italy, forms the natural starting-point of a history of the present century. I have endeavoured to tell a simple story, believing that a narrative in which facts are chosen for their significance, and exhibited in their real connection, may be made to convey as true an impression as a fuller history in which the writer is not forced by the necessity of concentration to exercise the same rigour towards himself and his materials. The second volume of the work will bring the reader down to the year 1848: the third, down to the present time.

London, 1880.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION OF THE FIRST VOLUME. [1]

In revising this volume for the second edition I have occupied myself mainly with two sources of information--the unpublished Records of the English Foreign Office, and the published works which have during recent years resulted from the investigation of the Archives of Vienna. The English Records from 1792 to 1814, for access to which I have to express my thanks to Lord Granville, form a body of firsthand authority of extraordinary richness, compass, and interest. They include the whole correspondence between the representatives of Great Britain at Foreign Courts and the English Foreign Office; a certain number of private communications between Ministers and these representatives; a quantity of reports from consuls, agents, and "informants" of every description; and in addition to these the military reports, often admirably vivid and full of matter, sent by the British officers attached to the head-quarters of our Allies in most of the campaigns from 1792 to 1814. It is impossible that any one person should go through the whole of this material, which it took the Diplomatic Service a quarter of a century to write. I have endeavoured to master the correspondence from each quarter of Europe which, for the time being, had a preponderance in political or military interest, leaving it when its importance became obviously subordinate to that of others; and although I have no doubt left untouched much that would repay investigation, I trust that the narrative has gained in accuracy from a labour which was not a light one, and that the few short extracts which space has permitted me to throw into the notes may serve to bring the reader nearer to events. At some future time I hope to publish a selection from the most important documents of this period. It is strange that our learned Societies, so appreciative of every distant and trivial chronicle of the Middle Ages, should ignore the records of a time of such surpassing interest, and one in which England played so great a part. No just conception can be formed of the difference between English statesmanship and that of the Continental Courts in integrity, truthfulness, and public spirit, until the mass of diplomatic correspondence preserved at London has been studied; nor, until this has been done, can anything like an adequate biography of Pitt be written.

The second and less important group of authorities with which I have busied myself during the work of revision comprises the works of Hueffer, Vivenot, Beer, Helfert, and others, based on Austrian documents, along with the Austrian documents and letters that have been published by Vivenot. The last-named writer is himself a partizan, but the material which he has given to the world is most valuable. The mystery in which the Austrian Government until lately enveloped all its actions caused some of these to be described as worse than they really were; and I believe that in the First Edition I under-estimated the bias of Prussian and North-German writers. Where I have seen reasons to alter any statements, I have done so without reserve, as it appears to me childish for any one who attempts to write history to cling to an opinion after the balance of evidence seems to be against it. The publication of the second volume of this work has been delayed by the revision of the first; but I hope that it will appear before many months more. I must express my obligations to Mr. Oscar Browning, a fellow-labourer in the same field, who not only furnished me with various

corrections, but placed his own lectures at my disposal; and to Mr. Alfred Kingston, whose unfailing kindness and courtesy make so great a difference to those whose work lies in the department of the Record Office which is under his care.

London, 1883.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND VOLUME. [2]

In writing this volume I have not had the advantage of consulting the English Foreign Office Records for a later period than the end of 1815. A rule not found necessary at Berlin and some other foreign capitals still closes to historical inquirers the English documents of the last seventy years. Restrictions are no doubt necessary in the case of transactions of recent date, but the period of seventy years is surely unnecessarily long. Public interests could not be prejudiced, nor could individuals be even remotely affected, by the freest examination of the papers of 1820 or 1830.

The London documents of 1814-1815 are of various degrees of interest and importance. Those relating to the Congress of Vienna are somewhat disappointing. Taken all together, they add less to our knowledge on the one or two points still requiring elucidation than the recently-published correspondence of Talleyrand with Louis XVIII. The despatches from Italy are on the other hand of great value, proving, what I believe was not established before, that the Secret Treaty of 1815, whereby Austria gained a legal right to prevent any departure from absolute Government at Naples, was communicated to the British Ministry and received its sanction. This sanction explains the obscure and embarrassed language of Castlereagh in 1820, which in its turn gave rise to the belief in Italy that England was more deeply committed to Austria than it actually was, and probably occasioned the forgery of the pretended Treaty of July 27, 1813, exposed in vol. i. of this work, p. 538, 2nd edit. [3] The papers from France and Spain are also interesting, though not establishing any new conclusions.

While regretting that I have not been able to use the London archives later than 1815, I believe that it is nevertheless possible, without recourse to unpublished papers, to write the history of the succeeding thirty years with substantial correctness. There exist in a published form, apart from documents printed officially, masses of first-hand material of undoubtedly authentic character, such as the great English collection known by the somewhat misleading name of Wellington Despatches, New Series; or again, the collection printed as an appendix to Prokesch von Osten's History of the Greek Rebellion, or the many volumes of Gentz' Correspondence belonging to the period about 1820, when Gentz was really at the centre of affairs. The Metternich papers, interesting as far as they go, are a mere selection. The omissions are glaring, and scarcely accidental. Many minor collections bearing on particular events might be named, such as those in Guizot's Memoires. Frequent references will show my obligation to the German series of historical works constituting the Leipzig Staatengeschichte, as well as to French authors who, like Viel-Castel, have worked with original sources of information before them. There exist in English literature singularly few works on this period of Continental history.

A greater publicity was introduced into political affairs on the Continent by the establishment of Parliamentary Government in France in 1815, and

even by the attempts made to introduce it in other States. In England we have always had freedom of discussion, but the amount of information made public by the executive in recent times has been enormously greater than it was at the end of the last century. The only documents published at the outbreak of the war of 1793 were, so far as I can ascertain, the well-known letters of Chauvelin and Lord Grenville. During the twenty years' struggle with France next to nothing was known of the diplomatic transactions between England and the Continental Powers. But from the time of the Reform Bill onwards the amount of information given to the public has been constantly increasing, and the reader of Parliamentary Papers in our own day is likely to complain of diffusiveness rather than of reticence. Nevertheless the perusal of published papers can never be quite the same thing as an examination of the originals; and the writer who first has access to the English archives after 1815 will have an advantage over those who have gone before him.

The completion of this volume has been delayed by almost every circumstance adverse to historical study and production, including a severe Parliamentary contest. I trust, however, that no trace of partisanship or unrest appears in the work, which I have valued for the sake of the mental discipline which it demanded. With quieter times the third volume will, I trust, advance more rapidly.

LONDON, October, 1886.

NOTE.--The third volume was published in 1889.

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On the morning of the 19th of April, 1792, after weeks of stormy agitation in Paris, the Ministers of Louis XVI. brought down a letter from the King to the Legislative Assembly of France. The letter was brief but significant. It announced that the King intended to appear in the Hall of Assembly at noon on the following day. Though the letter did not disclose the object of the King's visit, it was known that Louis had given way to the pressure of his Ministry and the national cry for war, and that a declaration of war against Austria was the measure which the King was about to propose in person to the Assembly. On the morrow the public thronged the hall; the Assembly broke off its debate at midday in order to be in readiness for the King. Louis entered the hall in the midst of deep silence, and seated himself beside the President in the chair which was now substituted for the throne of France. At the King's bidding General Dumouriez, Minister of Foreign Affairs, read a report to the Assembly upon the relations of France to foreign Powers. The report contained a long series of charges against Austria, and concluded with the recommendation of war. When Dumouriez ceased reading Louis rose, and in a low voice declared that he himself and the whole of the Ministry accepted the report read to the Assembly; that he had used every effort to maintain peace, and in vain; and that he was now come, in accordance with the terms of the Constitution, to propose that the Assembly declare war against the Austrian Sovereign. It was not three months since Louis himself had supplicated the Courts of Europe for armed aid against his own subjects. The words which he now uttered were put in his mouth by men whom he hated, but could not resist: the very outburst of applause that followed them only proved the fatal antagonism that existed between the nation and the King. After the President of the Assembly had made a short answer, Louis retired from the hall. The Assembly itself broke up, to commence its debate on the King's proposal after an interval of some hours. When the House re-assembled in the evening, those few courageous men who argued on grounds of national interest and justice against the passion of the moment could scarcely obtain a hearing. An appeal for a second day's discussion was rejected; the

debate abruptly closed; and the declaration of war was carried against seven dissentient votes. It was a decision big with consequences for France and for the world. From that day began the struggle between Revolutionary France and the established order of Europe. A period opened in which almost every State on the Continent gained some new character from the aggressions of France, from the laws and political changes introduced by the conqueror, or from the awakening of new forces of national life in the crisis of successful resistance or of humiliation. It is my intention to trace the great lines of European history from that time to the present, briefly sketching the condition of some of the principal States at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, and endeavouring to distinguish, amid scenes of ever-shifting incident, the steps by which the Europe of 1792 has become the Europe of today.

[First threats of foreign Courts against France, 1791.]

The first two years of the Revolution had ended without bringing France into collision with foreign Powers. This was not due to any goodwill that the Courts of Europe bore to the French people, or to want of effort on the part of the French aristocracy to raise the armies of Europe against their own country. The National Assembly, which met in 1789, had cut at the roots of the power of the Crown; it had deprived the nobility of their privileges, and laid its hand upon the revenues of the Church. The brothers of King Louis XVI., with a host of nobles too impatient to pursue a course of steady political opposition at home, quitted France, and wearied foreign Courts with their appeals for armed assistance. The absolute monarchs of the Continent gave them a warm and even ostentatious welcome; but they confined their support to words and tokens of distinction, and until the summer of 1791 the Revolution was not seriously threatened with the interference of the stranger. The flight of King Louis from Paris in June, 1791, followed by his capture and his strict confinement within the Tuileries, gave rise to the first definite project of foreign intervention. [4] Louis had fled from his capital and from the National Assembly; he returned, the hostage of a populace already familiar with outrage and bloodshed. For a moment the exasperation of Paris brought the Royal Family into real jeopardy. The Emperor Leopold, brother of Marie Antoinette, trembled for the safety of his unhappy sister, and addressed a letter to the European Courts from Padua, on the 6th of July, proposing that the Powers should unite to preserve the Royal Family of France from popular violence. Six weeks later the Emperor and King Frederick William II. of Prussia met at Pillnitz, in Saxony. A declaration was published by the two Sovereigns, stating that they considered the position of the King of France to be matter of European concern, and that, in the event of all the other great Powers consenting to a joint action, they were prepared to supply an armed force to operate on the French frontier.

[Declaration of Pillnitz withdrawn.]

Had the National Assembly instantly declared war on Leopold and Frederick William, its action would have been justified by every rule of international law. The Assembly did not, however, declare war, and for a good reason. It was known at Paris that the manifesto was no more than a device of the Emperor's to intimidate the enemies of the Royal Family. Leopold, when he pledged himself to join a coalition of all the Powers, was in fact aware that England would be no party to any such coalition. He was determined to do nothing that would force him into war; and it did not occur to him that French politicians would understand the emptiness of his threats as well as he did himself. Yet this turned out to be the case; and whatever indignation the manifesto of Pillnitz excited in the mass of the

French people, it was received with more derision than alarm by the men who were cognisant of the affairs of Europe. All the politicians of the National Assembly knew that Prussia and Austria had lately been on the verge of war with one another upon the Eastern question; they even underrated the effect of the French revolution in appeasing the existing enmities of the great Powers. No important party in France regarded the Declaration of Pillnitz as a possible reason for hostilities; and the challenge given to France was soon publicly withdrawn. It was withdrawn when Louis XVI., by accepting the Constitution made by the National Assembly, placed himself, in the sight of Europe, in the position of a free agent. On the 14th September, 1791, the King, by a solemn public oath, identified his will with that of the nation. It was known in Paris that he had been urged by the emigrants to refuse his assent, and to plunge the nation into civil war by an open breach with the Assembly. The frankness with which Louis pledged himself to the Constitution, the seeming sincerity of his patriotism, again turned the tide of public opinion in his favour. His flight was forgiven; the restrictions placed upon his personal liberty were relaxed. Louis seemed to be once more reconciled with France, and France was relieved from the ban of Europe. The Emperor announced that the circumstances which had provoked the Declaration of Pillnitz no longer existed, and that the Powers, though prepared to revive the League if future occasion should arise, suspended all joint action in reference to the internal affairs of France.

[Priests and emigrants keep France in agitation.]

The National Assembly, which, in two years, had carried France so far towards the goal of political and social freedom, now declared its work ended. In the mass of the nation there was little desire for further change. The grievances which pressed most heavily upon the common course of men's lives--unfair taxation, exclusion from public employment, monopolies among the townspeople, and the feudal dues which consumed the produce of the peasant--had been swept away. It was less by any general demand for further reform than by the antagonisms already kindled in the Revolution that France was forced into a new series of violent changes. The King himself was not sincerely at one with the nation; in everything that most keenly touched his conscience he had unwillingly accepted the work of the Assembly. The Church and the noblesse were bent on undoing what had already been done. Without interfering with doctrine or ritual, the National Assembly had re-organised the ecclesiastical system of France, and had enforced that supremacy of the State over the priesthood to which, throughout the eighteenth century, the Governments of Catholic Europe had been steadily tending. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which was created by the National Assembly in 1790, transformed the priesthood from a society of landowners into a body of salaried officers of the State, and gave to the laity the election of their bishops and ministers. The change, carried out in this extreme form, threw the whole body of bishops and a great part of the lower clergy into revolt. Their interests were hurt by the sale of the Church lands; their consciences were wounded by the system of popular election, which was condemned by the Pope. In half the pulpits of France the principles of the Revolution were anathematised, and the vengeance of heaven denounced against the purchasers of the secularised Church lands. Beyond the frontier the emigrant nobles, who might have tempered the Revolution by combining with the many liberal men of their order who remained at home, gathered in arms, and sought the help of foreigners against a nation in which they could see nothing but rebellious dependents of their own. The head-quarters of the emigrants were at Coblenz in the dominions of the Elector of Treves. They formed themselves into regiments, numbering in all some few thousands, and occupied

themselves with extravagant schemes of vengeance against all Frenchmen who had taken part in the destruction of the privileges of their caste.

[Legislative Assembly. Oct. 1791.]

[War policy of the Gironde.]

Had the elections which followed the dissolution of the National Assembly sent to the Legislature a body of men bent only on maintaining the advantages already won, it would have been no easy task to preserve the peace of France in the presence of the secret or open hostility of the Court, the Church, and the emigrants. But the trial was not made. The leading spirits among the new representatives were not men of compromise. In the Legislative Body which met in 1791 there were all the passions of the Assembly of 1789, without any of the experience which that Assembly had gained. A decree, memorable among the achievements of political folly, had prohibited members of the late Chamber from seeking re-election. The new Legislature was composed of men whose political creed had been drawn almost wholly from literary sources; the most dangerous theorists of the former Assembly were released from Parliamentary restraints, and installed, like Robespierre, as the orators of the clubs. Within the Chamber itself the defenders of the Monarchy and of the Constitution which had just been given to France were far outmatched by the party of advance. The most conspicuous of the new deputies formed the group named after the district of the Gironde, where several of their leaders had been elected. The orator Vergniaud, pre-eminent among companions of singular eloquence, the philosopher Condorcet, the veteran journalist Brissot, gave to this party an ascendancy in the Chamber and an influence in the country the more dangerous because it appeared to belong to men elevated above the ordinary regions of political strife. Without the fixed design of turning the monarchy into a republic, the orators of the Gironde sought to carry the revolutionary movement over the barrier erected against it in the Constitution of 1791. From the moment of the opening of the Assembly it was clear that the Girondins intended to precipitate the conflict between the Court and the nation by devoting all the wealth of their eloquence to the subjects which divided France the most. To Brissot and the men who furnished the ideas of the party, it would have seemed a calamity that the Constitution of 1791, with its respect for the prerogative of the Crown and its tolerance of mediaeval superstition, should fairly get underway. In spite of Robespierre's prediction that war would give France a strong sovereign in the place of a weak one, the Girondins persuaded themselves that the best means of diminishing or overthrowing monarchical power in France was a war with the sovereigns of Europe; and henceforward they laboured for war with scarcely any disguise. [5]

[Notes of Kaunitz, Dec. 21, Feb. 17.]

Nor were occasions wanting, if war was needful for France. The protection which the Elector of Treves gave to the emigrant army at Coblenz was so flagrant a violation of international law that the Gironde had the support of the whole nation when they called upon the King to demand the dispersal of the emigrants in the most peremptory form. National feeling was keenly excited by debates in which the military preparations of the emigrants and the encouragement given to them by foreign princes were denounced with all the energy of southern eloquence. On the 13th of December Louis declared to the Electors of Treves and Mainz that he would treat them as enemies unless the armaments within their territories were dispersed by January 15th; and at the same time he called upon the Emperor Leopold, as head of the Germanic body, to use his influence in bringing the Electors to reason. The

demands of France were not resisted. On the 16th January, 1792, Louis informed the Assembly that the emigrants had been expelled from the electorates, and acknowledged the good offices of Leopold in effecting this result. The substantial cause of war seemed to have disappeared; but another had arisen in its place. In a note of December 21st the Austrian Minister Kaunitz used expressions which implied that a league of the Powers was still in existence against France. Nothing could have come more opportunely for the war-party in the Assembly. Brissot cried for an immediate declaration of war, and appealed to the French nation to vindicate its honour by an attack both upon the emigrants and upon their imperial protector. The issue depended upon the relative power of the Crown and the Opposition. Leopold saw that war was inevitable unless the Constitutional party, which was still in office, rallied for one last effort, and gained a decisive victory over its antagonists. In the hope of turning public opinion against the Gironde, he permitted Kaunitz to send a despatch to Paris which loaded the leaders of the war-party with abuse, and exhorted the French nation to deliver itself from men who would bring upon it the hostility of Europe. (Feb. 17.) [6] The despatch gave singular proof of the inability of the cleverest sovereign and the most experienced minister of the age to distinguish between the fears of a timid cabinet and the impulses of an excited nation. Leopold's vituperations might have had the intended effect if they had been addressed to the Margrave of Baden or the Doge of Venice; addressed to the French nation and its popular Assembly in the height of civil conflict, they were as oil poured upon the flames. Leopold ruined the party which he meant to reinforce; he threw the nation into the arms of those whom he attacked. His despatch was received in the Assembly with alternate murmurs and bursts of laughter; in the clubs it excited a wild outburst of rage. The exchange of diplomatic notes continued for a few weeks more; but the real answer of France to Austria was the "Marseillaise," composed at Strasburg almost simultaneously with Kaunitz' attack upon the Jacobins. The sudden death of the Emperor on March 1st produced no pause in the controversy. Delessart, the Foreign Minister of Louis, was thrust from office, and replaced by Dumouriez, the representative of the war-party.

[War declared, April 20th, 1792.]

Expostulation took a sharper tone; old subjects of complaint were revived; and the armies on each side were already pressing towards the frontier when the unhappy Louis was brought down to the Assembly by his Ministers, and compelled to propose the declaration of war.

[Pretended grounds of war.]

[Expectation of foreign attack real among the French people; not real among the French politicians.]

It is seldom that the professed grounds correspond with the real motives of a war; nor was this the case in 1792. The ultimatum of the Austrian Government demanded that compensation should be made to certain German nobles whose feudal rights over their peasantry had been abolished in Alsace; that the Pope should be indemnified for Avignon and the Venaissin, which had been taken from him by France; and that a Government should be established at Paris capable of affording the Powers of Europe security against the spread of democratic agitation. No one supposed the first two grievances to be a serious ground for hostilities. The rights of the German nobles in Alsace over their villagers were no doubt protected by the treaties which ceded those districts to France; but every politician in Europe would have laughed at a Government which allowed the feudal system

to survive in a corner of its dominions out of respect for a settlement a century and a half old: nor had the Assembly refused to these foreign seigneurs a compensation claimed in vain by King Louis for the nobles of France. As to the annexation of Avignon and the Venaissin, a power which, like Austria, had joined in dismembering Poland, and had just made an unsuccessful attempt to dismember Turkey, could not gravely reproach France for incorporating a district which lay actually within it, and whose inhabitants, or a great portion of them, were anxious to become citizens of France. The third demand, the establishment of such a government as Austria should deem satisfactory, was one which no high-spirited people could be expected to entertain. Nor was this, in fact, expected by Austria. Leopold had no desire to attack France, but he had used threats, and would not submit to the humiliation of renouncing them. He would not have begun a war for the purpose of delivering the French Crown; but, when he found that he was himself certain to be attacked, he accepted a war with the Revolution without regret. On the other side, when the Gironde denounced the league of the Kings, they exaggerated a far-off danger for the ends of their domestic policy. The Sovereigns of the Continent had indeed made no secret of their hatred to the Revolution. Catherine of Russia had exhorted every Court in Europe to make war; Gustavus of Sweden was surprised by a violent death in the midst of preparations against France; Spain, Naples, and Sardinia were ready to follow leaders stronger than themselves. But the statesmen of the French Assembly well understood the interval that separates hostile feeling from actual attack; and the unsubstantial nature of the danger to France, whether from the northern or the southern Powers, was proved by the very fact that Austria, the hereditary enemy of France, and the country of the hated Marie Antoinette, was treated as the main enemy. Nevertheless, the Courts had done enough to excite the anger of millions of French people who knew of their menaces, and not of their hesitations and reserves. The man who composed the "Marseillaise" was no maker of cunningly-devised fables; the crowds who first sang it never doubted the reality of the dangers which the orators of the Assembly denounced. The Courts of Europe had heaped up the fuel; the Girondins applied the torch. The mass of the French nation had little means of appreciating what passed in Europe; they took their facts from their leaders, who considered it no very serious thing to plunge a nation into war for the furtherance of internal liberty. Events were soon to pass their own stern and mocking sentence upon the wisdom of the Girondin statesmanship.

[Germany follows Austria into the war.]

[State of Germany.]

After voting the Declaration of War the French Assembly accepted a manifesto, drawn up by Condorcet, renouncing in the name of the French people all intention of conquest. The manifesto expressed what was sincerely felt by men like Condorcet, to whom the Revolution was still too sacred a cause to be stained with the vulgar lust of aggrandisement. But the actual course of the war was determined less by the intentions with which the French began it than by the political condition of the States which bordered upon the French frontier. The war was primarily a war with Austria, but the Sovereign of Austria was also the head of Germany. The German Ecclesiastical Princes who ruled in the Rhenish provinces had been the most zealous protectors of the emigrants; it was impossible that they should now find shelter in neutrality. Prussia had made an alliance with the Emperor against France; other German States followed in the wake of one or other of the great Powers. If France proved stronger than its enemy, there were governments besides that of Austria which would have to take their account with the Revolution. Nor indeed was Austria the power most

exposed to violent change. The mass of its territory lay far from France; at the most, it risked the loss of Lombardy and the Netherlands. Germany at large was the real area threatened by the war, and never was a political community less fitted to resist attack than Germany at the end of the eighteenth century. It was in the divisions of the German people, and in the rivalries of the two leading German governments, that France found its surest support throughout the Revolutionary war, and its keenest stimulus to conquest. It will throw light upon the sudden changes that now began to break over Europe if we pause to make a brief survey of the state of Germany at the outbreak of the war, to note the character and policy of its reigning sovereigns, and to cast a glance over the circumstances which had brought the central district of Europe into its actual condition.

[Since 1648, all the German States independent of the Emperor.]

[Holy Roman Empire.]

Germany at large still preserved the mediaeval name and forms of the Holy Roman Empire. The members of this so-called Empire were, however, a multitude of independent States; and the chief of these States, Austria, combined with its German provinces a large territory which did not even in name form part of the Germanic body. The motley of the Empire was made up by governments of every degree of strength and weakness. Austria and Prussia possessed both political traditions and resources raising them to the rank of great European Powers; but the sovereignties of the second order, such as Saxony and Bavaria, had neither the security of strength nor the free energy often seen in small political communities; whilst in the remaining petty States of Germany, some hundreds in number, all public life had long passed out of mind in a drowsy routine of official benevolence or oppression. In theory there still existed a united Germanic body; in reality Germany was composed of two great monarchies in embittered rivalry with one another, and of a multitude of independent principalities and cities whose membership in the Empire involved little beyond a liability to be dragged into the quarrels of their more powerful neighbours. A German national feeling did not exist, because no combination existed uniting the interests of all Germany. The names and forms of political union had come down from a remote past, and formed a grotesque anachronism amid the realities of the eighteenth century. The head of the Germanic body held office not by hereditary right, but as the elected successor of Charlemagne and the Roman Caesars. Since the fifteenth century the imperial dignity had rested with the Austrian House of Hapsburg; but, with the exception of Charles V., no sovereign of that House had commanded forces adequate to the creation of a united German state, and the opportunity which then offered itself was allowed to pass away. The Reformation severed Northern Germany from the Catholic monarchy of the south. The Thirty Years' War, terminating in the middle of the seventeenth century, secured the existence of Protestantism on the Continent of Europe, but it secured it at the cost of Germany, which was left exhausted and disintegrated. By the Treaty of Westphalia, A.D. 1648, the independence of every member of the Empire was recognised, and the central authority was henceforth a mere shadow. The Diet of the Empire, where the representatives of the Electors, of the Princes, and of the Free Cities, met in the order of the Middle Ages, sank into a Heralds' College, occupied with questions of title and precedence; affairs of real importance were transacted by envoys from Court to Court. For purposes of war the Empire was divided into Circles, each Circle supplying in theory a contingent of troops; but this military organisation existed only in letter. The greater and the intermediate States regulated their armaments, as they did their policy, without regard to the Diet of Ratisbon; the contingents of the smaller sovereignties and free cities were

in every degree of inefficiency, corruption, and disorder; and in spite of the courage of the German soldier, it could make little difference in a European war whether a regiment which had its captain appointed by the city of Gmuend, its lieutenant by the Abbess of Rotenmuenster, and its ensign by the Abbot of Gegenbach, did or did not take the field with numbers fifty per cent. below its statutory contingent. [7] How loose was the connection subsisting between the members of the Empire, how slow and cumbrous its constitutional machinery, was strikingly proved after the first inroads of the French into Germany in 1792, when the Diet deliberated for four weeks before calling out the forces of the Empire, and for five months before declaring war.

[Austria.]

[Catholic policy of the Hapsburgs.]

The defence of Germany rested in fact with the armies of Austria and Prussia. The Austrian House of Hapsburg held the imperial title, and gathered around it the sovereigns of the less progressive German States. While the Protestant communities of Northern Germany identified their interests with those of the rising Prussian Monarchy, religious sympathy and the tradition of ages attached the minor Catholic Courts to the political system of Vienna. Austria gained something by its patronage; it was, however, no real member of the German family. Its interests were not the interests of Germany; its power, great and enduring as it proved, was not based mainly upon German elements, nor used mainly for German ends. The title of the Austrian monarch gave the best idea of the singular variety of races and nationalities which owed their political union only to their submission to a common head. In the shorter form of state the reigning Hapsburg was described as King of Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia, Slavonia, and Galicia; Archduke of Austria; Grand Duke of Transylvania; Duke of Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola; and Princely Count of Hapsburg and Tyrol. At the outbreak of the war of 1792 the dominions of the House of Austria included the Southern Netherlands and the Duchy of Milan, in addition to the great bulk of the territory which it still governs. Eleven distinct languages were spoken in the Austrian monarchy, with countless varieties of dialects. Of the elements of the population the Slavic was far the largest, numbering about ten millions, against five million Germans and three million Magyars; but neither numerical strength nor national objects of desire coloured the policy of a family which looked indifferently upon all its subject races as instruments for its own aggrandisement. Milan and the Netherlands had come into the possession of Austria since the beginning of the eighteenth century, but the destiny of the old dominions of the Hapsburg House had been fixed for many generations in the course of the Thirty Years' War. In that struggle, as it affected Austria, the conflict of the ancient and the reformed faith had become a conflict between the Monarchy, allied with the Church, and every element of national life and independence, allied with the Reformation. Protestantism, then dominant in almost all the Hapsburg territories, was not put down without extinguishing the political liberties of Austrian Germany, the national life of Bohemia, the spirit and ambition of the Hungarian nobles. The detestable desire of the Emperor Ferdinand, "Rather a desert than a country full of heretics," was only too well fulfilled in the subsequent history of his dominions. In the German provinces, except the Tyrol, the old Parliaments, and with them all trace of liberty, disappeared; in Bohemia the national Protestant nobility lost their estates, or retained them only at the price of abandoning the religion, the language, and the feelings of their race, until the country of Huss passed out of the sight of civilised Europe, and Bohemia represented no more than a blank, unnoticed mass of tillers of the soil. In

Hungary, where the nation was not so completely crushed in the Thirty Years' War, and Protestantism survived, the wholesale executions in 1686, ordered by the Tribunal known as the "Slaughter-house of Eperies," illustrated the traditional policy of the Monarchy towards the spirit of national independence. Two powers alone were allowed to subsist in the Austrian dominions, the power of the Crown and the power of the Priesthood; and, inasmuch as no real national unity could exist among the subject races, the unity of a blind devotion to the Catholic Church was enforced over the greater part of the Monarchy by all the authority of the State.

[Reforms of Maria Theresa, 1740-1780.]

Under the pressure of this soulless despotism the mind of man seemed to lose all its finer powers. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which no decade passed in England and France without the production of some literary masterpiece, some scientific discovery, or some advance in political reasoning, are marked by no single illustrious Austrian name, except that of Haydn the musician. When, after three generations of torpor succeeding the Thirty Years' War, the mind of North Germany awoke again in Winckelmann and Lessing, and a widely-diffused education gave to the middle class some compensation for the absence of all political freedom, no trace of this revival appeared in Austria. The noble hunted and slept; the serf toiled heavily on; where a school existed, the Jesuit taught his schoolboys ecclesiastical Latin, and sent them away unable to read their mother-tongue. To this dull and impenetrable society the beginnings of improvement could only be brought by military disaster. The loss of Silesia in the first years of Maria Theresa disturbed the slumbers of the Government, and reform began. Although the old provincial Assemblies, except in Hungary and the Netherlands, had long lost all real power, the Crown had never attempted to create a uniform system of administration: the collection of taxes, the enlistment of recruits, was still the business of the feudal landowners of each district. How such an antiquated order was likely to fare in the presence of an energetic enemy was clearly enough shown in the first attack made upon Austria by Frederick the Great. As the basis of a better military organisation, and in the hope of arousing a stronger national interest among her subjects, Theresa introduced some of the offices of a centralised monarchy, at the same time that she improved the condition of the serf, and substituted a German education and German schoolmasters for those of the Jesuits. The peasant, hitherto in many parts of the monarchy attached to the soil, was now made free to quit his lord's land, and was secured from ejection so long as he fulfilled his duty of labouring for the lord on a fixed number of days in the year. Beyond this Theresa's reform did not extend. She had no desire to abolish the feudal character of country life; she neither wished to temper the sway of Catholicism, nor to extinguish those provincial forms which gave to the nobles within their own districts a shadow of political independence. Herself conservative in feeling, attached to aristocracy, and personally devout, Theresa consented only to such change as was recommended by her trusted counsellors, and asked no more than she was able to obtain by the charm of her own queenly character.

[Joseph II., 1780-1790.]

With the accession of her son Joseph II. in 1780 a new era began for Austria. The work deferred by Theresa was then taken up by a monarch whose conceptions of social and religious reform left little for the boldest innovators of France ten years later to add. There is no doubt that the creation of a great military force for enterprises of foreign conquest was an end always present in Joseph's mind, and that the thirst for

uncontrolled despotic power never left him; but by the side of these coarser elements there was in Joseph's nature something of the true fire of the man who lives for ideas. Passionately desirous of elevating every class of his subjects at the same time that he ignored all their habits and wishes, Joseph attempted to transform the motley and priest-ridden collection of nations over whom he ruled into a single homogeneous body, organised after the model of France and Prussia, worshipping in the spirit of a tolerant and enlightened Christianity, animated in its relations of class to class by the humane philosophy of the eighteenth century. In the first year of his reign Joseph abolished every jurisdiction that did not directly emanate from the Crown, and scattered an army of officials from Ostend to the Dniester to conduct the entire public business of his dominions under the immediate direction of the central authority at Vienna. In succeeding years edict followed edict, dissolving monasteries, forbidding Church festivals and pilgrimages, securing the protection of the State to every form of Christian worship, abolishing the exemption from land-tax and the monopoly of public offices enjoyed by the nobility, transforming the Universities from dens of monkish ignorance into schools of secular learning, converting the peasant's personal service into a rent-charge, and giving him in the officer of the Crown a protector and an arbiter in all his dealings with his lord. Noble and enlightened in his aims, Joseph, like every other reformer of the eighteenth century, underrated the force which the past exerts over the present; he could see nothing but prejudice and unreason in the attachment to provincial custom or time-honoured opinion; he knew nothing of that moral law which limits the success of revolutions by the conditions which precede them. What was worst united with what was best in resistance to his reforms. The bigots of the University of Louvain, who still held out against the discoveries of Newton, excited the mob to insurrection against Joseph, as the enemy of religion; the Magyar landowners in Hungary resisted a system which extinguished the last vestiges of their national independence at the same time that it destroyed the harsh dominion which they themselves exercised over their peasantry. Joseph alternated between concession and the extreme of autocratic violence. At one moment he resolved to sweep away every local right that fettered the exercise of his power; then, after throwing the Netherlands into successful revolt, and forcing Hungary to the verge of armed resistance, he revoked his unconstitutional ordinances (January 28, 1790), and restored all the institutions of the Hungarian monarchy which existed at the date of his accession.

[Leopold II., 1790-1792.]

A month later, death removed Joseph from his struggle and his sorrows. His successor, Leopold II., found the monarchy involved as Russia's ally in an attack upon Turkey; threatened by the Northern League of Prussia, England, and Holland; exhausted in finance; weakened by the revolt of the Netherlands; and distracted in every province by the conflict of the ancient and the modern system of government, and the assertion of new social rights that seemed to have been created only in order to be extinguished. The recovery of Belgium and the conclusion of peace with Turkey were effected under circumstances that brought the adroit and guarded statesmanship of Leopold into just credit. His settlement of the conflict between the Crown and the Provinces, between the Church and education, between the noble and the serf, marked the line in which, for better or for worse, Austrian policy was to run for sixty years. Provincial rights, the privileges of orders and corporate bodies, Leopold restored; the personal sovereignty of his house he maintained unimpaired. In the more liberal part of Joseph's legislation, the emancipation of learning from clerical control, the suppression of unjust privilege in taxation, the

abolition of the feudal services of the peasant, Leopold was willing to make concessions to the Church and the aristocracy; to the spirit of national independence which his predecessor's aggression had excited in Bohemia as well as in Hungary, he made no concession beyond the restoration of certain cherished forms. An attempt of the Magyar nobles to affix conditions to their acknowledgment of Leopold as King of Hungary was defeated; and, by creating new offices at Vienna for the affairs of Illyria and Transylvania, and making them independent of the Hungarian Diet, Leopold showed that the Crown possessed an instrument against the dominant Magyar race in the Slavic and Romanic elements of the Hungarian Kingdom.

[8] On the other hand, Leopold consented to restore to the Church its control over the higher education, and to throw back the burden of taxation upon land not occupied by noble owners. He gave new rigour to the censorship of the press; but the gain was not to the Church, to which the censorship had formerly belonged, but to the Government, which now employed it as an instrument of State. In the great question of the emancipation of the serf Leopold was confronted by a more resolute and powerful body of nobility in Hungary than existed in any other province. The right of the lord to fetter the peasant to the soil and to control his marriage Leopold refused to restore in any part of his dominions; but, while in parts of Bohemia he succeeded in maintaining the right given by Joseph to the peasant to commute his personal service for a money payment, in Hungary he was compelled to fall back upon the system of Theresa, and to leave the final settlement of the question to the Diet. Twenty years later the statesman who emancipated the peasants of Prussia observed that Hungary was the only part of the Austrian dominions in which the peasant was not in a better condition than his fellows in North Germany; [9] and so torpid was the humanity of the Diet that until the year 1835 the prison and the flogging-board continued to form a part of every Hungarian manor.

[Death of Leopold, March 1, 1792.]

[Francis II., 1792.]

Of the self-sacrificing ardour of Joseph there was no trace in Leopold's character; yet his political aims were not low. During twenty-four years' government of Tuscany he had proved himself almost an ideal ruler in the pursuit of peace, of religious enlightenment, and of the material improvement of his little sovereignty. Raised to the Austrian throne, the compromise which he effected with the Church and the aristocracy resulted more from a supposed political necessity than from his own inclination. So long as Leopold lived, Austria would not have wanted an intelligence capable of surveying the entire field of public business, nor a will capable of imposing unity of action upon the servants of State. To the misfortune of Europe no less than of his own dominions, Leopold was carried off by sickness at the moment when the Revolutionary War broke out. An uneasy reaction against Joseph's reforms and a well-grounded dread of the national movements in Hungary and the Netherlands were already the principal forces in the official world at Vienna; in addition to these came the new terror of the armed proselytism of the Revolution. The successor of Leopold, Francis II., was a sickly prince, in whose homely and unimaginative mind the great enterprises of Joseph, amidst which he had been brought up, excited only aversion. Amongst the men who surrounded him, routine and the dread of change made an end of the higher forms of public life. The Government openly declared that all change should cease so long as the war lasted; even the pressing question of the peasant's relation to his lord was allowed to remain unsettled by the Hungarian Diet, lest the spirit of national independence should find expression in its debates. Over the whole internal administration of Austria the torpor of the days before

Theresa seemed to be returning. Its foreign policy, however, bore no trace of this timorous, conservative spirit. Joseph, as restless abroad as at home, had shared the ambition of the Russian Empress Catherine, and troubled Europe with his designs upon Turkey, Venice, and Bavaria. These and similar schemes of territorial extension continued to fill the minds of Austrian courtiers and ambassadors. Shortly after the outbreak of war with France the aged minister Kaunitz, who had been at the head of the Foreign Office during three reigns, retired from power. In spite of the first partition of Poland, made in combination with Russia and Prussia in 1772, and in spite of subsequent attempts of Joseph against Turkey and Bavaria, the policy of Kaunitz had not been one of mere adventure and shifting attack. He had on the whole remained true to the principle of alliance with France and antagonism to Prussia; and when the revolution brought war within sight, he desired to limit the object of the war to the restoration of monarchical government in France. The conditions under which the young Emperor and the King of Prussia agreed to turn the war to purposes of territorial aggrandisement caused Kaunitz, with a true sense of the fatal import of this policy, to surrender the power which he had held for forty years. It was secretly agreed between the two courts that Prussia should recoup itself for its expenses against France by seizing part of Poland. On behalf of Austria it was demanded that the Emperor should annex Bavaria, giving Belgium to the Elector as compensation. Both these schemes violated what Kaunitz held to be sound policy. He believed that the interests of Austria required the consolidation rather than the destruction of Poland; and he declared the exchange of the Netherlands for Bavaria to be, in the actual state of affairs, impracticable. [10] Had the coalition of 1792 been framed on the principles advocated by Kaunitz, though Austria might not have effected the restoration of monarchical power in France, the alliance would not have disgracefully shattered on the crimes and infamies attending the second partition of Poland.

From the moment when Kaunitz retired from office, territorial extension became the great object of the Austrian Court. To prudent statesmen the scattered provinces and varied population of the Austrian State would have suggested that Austria had more to lose than any European Power; to the men of 1792 it appeared that she had more to gain. The Netherlands might be increased with a strip of French Flanders; Bavaria, Poland, and Italy were all weak neighbours, who might be made to enrich Austria in their turn. A sort of magical virtue was attached to the acquisition of territory. If so many square miles and so many head of population were gained, whether of alien or kindred race, mutinous or friendly, the end of all statesmanship was realised, and the heaviest sacrifice of life and industry repaid. Austria affected to act as the centre of a defensive alliance, and to fight for the common purpose of giving a Government to France which would respect the rights of its neighbours. In reality, its own military operations were too often controlled, and an effective common warfare frustrated, at one moment by a design upon French Flanders, at another by the course of Polish or Bavarian intrigue, at another by the hope of conquests in Italy. Of all the interests which centred in the head of the House of Hapsburg, the least befriended at Vienna was the interest of the Empire and of Germany.

[Prussia.]

Nor, if Austria was found wanting, had Germany any permanent safeguard in the rival Protestant State. Prussia, the second great German Power and the ancient enemy of Austria, had been raised to an influence in Europe quite out of proportion to its scanty resources by the genius of Frederick the Great and the earlier Princes of the House of Hohenzollern. Its population was not one-third of that of France or Austria; its wealth was perhaps not

superior to that of the Republic of Venice. That a State so poor in men and money should play the part of one of the great Powers of Europe was possible only so long as an energetic ruler watched every movement of that complicated machinery which formed both army and nation after the prince's own type. Frederick gave his subjects a just administration of the law; he taught them productive industries; he sought to bring education to their doors [11]; but he required that the citizen should account himself before all the servant of the State. Every Prussian either worked in the great official hierarchy or looked up to it as the providence which was to direct all his actions and supply all his judgments. The burden of taxation imposed by the support of an army relatively three times as great as that of any other Power was wonderfully lightened by Frederick's economy: far more serious than the tobacco-monopoly and the forage-requisitions, at which Frederick's subjects grumbled during his life-time, was the danger that a nation which had only attained political greatness by its obedience to a rigorous administration should fall into political helplessness, when the clear purpose and all-controlling care of its ruler no longer animated a system which, without him, was only a pedantic routine. What in England we are accustomed to consider as the very substance of national life,--the mass of political interest and opinion, diffused in some degree amongst all classes, at once the support and the judge of the servants of the State,--had in Prussia no existence. Frederick's subjects obeyed and trusted their Monarch; there were probably not five hundred persons outside the public service who had any political opinions of their own. Prussia did not possess even the form of a national representation; and, although certain provincial assemblies continued to meet, they met only to receive the instructions of the Crown-officers of their district. In the absence of all public criticism, the old age of Frederick must in itself have endangered the efficiency of the military system which had raised Prussia to its sudden eminence. [12] The impulse of Frederick's successor was sufficient to reverse the whole system of Prussian foreign policy, and to plunge the country in alliance with Austria into a speculative and unnecessary war.

[Frederick William II., 1786.]

[Alliance with Austria against France, Feb., 1792.]

On the death of Frederick in 1786, the crown passed to Frederick William II., his nephew. Frederick William was a man of common type, showy and pleasure-loving, interested in public affairs, but incapable of acting on any fixed principle. His mistresses gave the tone to political society. A knot of courtiers intrigued against one another for the management of the King; and the policy of Prussia veered from point to point as one unsteady impulse gave place to another. In countries less dependent than Prussia upon the personal activity of the monarch, Frederick William's faults might have been neutralised by able Ministers; in Prussia the weakness of the King was the decline of the State. The whole fabric of national greatness had been built up by the royal power; the quality of the public service, apart from which the nation was politically non-existent, was the quality of its head. When in the palace profusion and intrigue took the place of Frederick the Great's unflagging labour, the old uprightness, industry, and precision which had been the pride of Prussian administration fell out of fashion everywhere. Yet the frivolity of the Court was a less active cause of military decline than the abandonment of the first principles of Prussian policy. [13] If any political sentiment existed in the nation, it was the sentiment of antagonism to Austria. The patriotism of the army, with all the traditions of the great King, turned wholly in this direction. When, out of sympathy with the Bourbon family and the emigrant French

nobles, Frederick William allied himself with Austria (Feb. 1792), and threw himself into the arms of his ancient enemy in order to attack a nation which had not wronged him, he made an end of all zealous obedience amongst his servants. Brunswick, the Prussian Commander-in-Chief, hated the French emigrants as much as he did the Revolution; and even the generals who did not originally share Brunswick's dislike to the war recovered their old jealousy of Austria after the first defeat, and exerted themselves only to get quit of the war at the first moment that Prussia could retire from it without disgrace. The very enterprise in which Austria had consented that the Court of Berlin should seek its reward--the seizure of a part of Poland--proved fatal to the coalition. The Empress Catherine was already laying her hand for the second time upon this unfortunate country. It was easy for the opponents of the Austrian alliance who surrounded King Frederick William to contrast the barren effort of a war against France with the cheap and certain advantages to be won by annexation, in concert with Russia, of Polish territory. To pursue one of these objects with vigour it was necessary to relinquish the other. Prussia was not rich enough to maintain armies both on the Vistula and the Rhine. Nor, in the opinion of its rulers, was it rich enough to be very tender of its honour or very loyal towards its allies. [14]

[Social system of Prussia.]

In the institutions of Prussia two opposite systems existed side by side, exhibiting in the strongest form a contrast which in a less degree was present in most Continental States. The political independence of the nobility had long been crushed; the King's Government busied itself with every detail of town and village administration; yet along with this rigorous development of the modern doctrine of the unity and the authority of the State there existed a social order more truly archaic than that of the Middle Ages at their better epochs. The inhabitants of Prussia were divided into the three classes of nobles, burghers, and peasants, each confined to its own stated occupations, and not marrying outside its own order. The soil of the country bore the same distinction; peasant's land could not be owned by a burgher; burgher's land could not be owned by a noble. No occupation was lawful for the noble, who was usually no more than a poor gentleman, but the service of the Crown; the peasant, even where free, might not practise the handicraft of a burgher. But the mass of the peasantry in the country east of the Elbe were serfs attached to the soil; and the noble, who was not permitted to exercise the slightest influence upon the government of his country, inherited along with his manor a jurisdiction and police-control over all who were settled within it. Frederick had allowed serfage to continue because it gave him in each manorial lord a task-master whom he could employ in his own service. System and obedience were the sources of his power; and if there existed among his subjects one class trained to command and another trained to obey, it was so much the easier for him to force the country into the habits of industry which he required of it. In the same spirit, Frederick officered his army only with men of the noble caste. They brought with them the habit of command ready-formed; the peasants who ploughed and threshed at their orders were not likely to disobey them in the presence of the enemy. It was possible that such a system should produce great results so long as Frederick was there to guard against its abuses; Frederick gone, the degradation of servitude, the insolence of caste, was what remained. When the army of France, led by men who had worked with their fathers in the fields, hunted a King of Prussia amidst his capitulating grandees from the centre to the verge of his dominions, it was seen what was the permanent value of a system which recognised in the nature of the poor no capacity but one for hereditary subjection. The French peasant, plundered as he was

by the State, and vexed as he was with feudal services, knew no such bondage as that of the Prussian serf, who might not leave the spot where he was born; only in scattered districts in the border-provinces had serfage survived in France. It is significant of the difference in self-respect existing in the peasantry of the two countries that the custom of striking the common soldier, universal in Germany, was in France no more than an abuse, practised by the admirers of Frederick, and condemned by the better officers themselves.

[Minor States of Germany.]

[Ecclesiastical States.]

In all the secondary States of Germany the government was an absolute monarchy; though, here and there, as in Wuertemberg, the shadow of the old Assembly of the Estates survived; and in Hanover the absence of the Elector, King George III., placed power in the hands of a group of nobles who ruled in his name. Society everywhere rested on a sharp division of classes similar in kind to that of Prussia; the condition of the peasant ranging from one of serfage, as it existed in Mecklenburg, [15] to one of comparative freedom and comfort in parts of the southern and western States. The sovereigns differed widely in the enlightenment or selfishness of their rule; but, on the whole, the character of government had changed for the better of late years; and, especially in the Protestant States, efforts to improve the condition of the people were not wanting. Frederick the Great had in fact created a new standard of monarchy in Germany. Forty years earlier, Versailles, with its unfeeling splendours, its glorification of the personal indulgence of the monarch, had been the ideal which, with a due sense of their own inferiority, the German princes had done their best to imitate. To be a sovereign was to cover acres of ground with state apartments, to lavish the revenues of the country upon a troop of mistresses and adventurers, to patronise the arts, to collect with the same complacency the masterpieces of ancient painting that adorn the Dresden Gallery, or an array of valuables scarcely more interesting than the chests of treasure that were paid for them. In the ecclesiastical States, headed by the Electorates of Mainz, Treves, and Colgne, the affectations of a distinctive Christian or spiritual character had long been abandoned. The prince-bishop and canons, who were nobles appointed from some other province, lived after the gay fashion of the time, at the expense of a land in which they had no interest extending beyond their own lifetime. The only feature distinguishing the ecclesiastical residence from that of one of the minor secular princes was that the parade of state was performed by monks in the cathedral instead of by soldiers on the drill-ground, and that even the pretence of married life was wanting among the flaunting harpies who frequented a celibate Court. Yet even on the Rhine and on the Moselle the influence of the great King of Prussia had begun to make itself felt. The intense and penetrating industry of Frederick was not within the reach of every petty sovereign who might envy its results; but the better spirit of the time was seen under some of the ecclesiastical princes in the encouragement of schools, the improvement of the roads, and a retrenchment in courtly expenditure. That deeply-seated moral disease which resulted from centuries of priestly rule was not to be so lightly shaken off. In a district where Nature most bountifully rewards the industry of man, twenty-four out of every hundred of the population were monks, nuns, or beggars. [16]

[Petty States. Free Cities. Knights.]

Two hundred petty principalities, amongst which Weimar, the home of Goethe,

stood out in the brightest relief from the level of princely routine and self-indulgence; fifty imperial cities, in most of which the once vigorous organism of civic life had shrivelled to the type of the English rotten borough, did not exhaust the divisions of Germany. Several hundred Knights of the Empire, owing no allegiance except to the Emperor, exercised, each over a domain averaging from three to four hundred inhabitants, all the rights of sovereignty, with the exception of the right to make war and treaties. The districts in which this order survived were scattered over the Catholic States of the south-west of Germany, where the knights maintained their prerogatives by federations among themselves and by the support of the Emperor, to whom they granted sums of money. There were instances in which this union of the rights of the sovereign and the landlord was turned to good account; but the knight's land was usually the scene of such poverty and degradation that the traveller needed no guide to inform him when he entered it. Its wretched tracks interrupted the great lines of communication between the Rhine and further Germany; its hovels were the refuge of all the criminals and vagabonds of the surrounding country; for no police existed but the bailiffs of the knight, and the only jurisdiction was that of the lawyer whom the knight brought over from the nearest town. Nor was the disadvantage only on the side of those who were thus governed. The knight himself, even if he cherished some traditional reverence for the shadow of the Empire, was in the position of a man who belongs to no real country. If his sons desired any more active career than that of annuitants upon the family domains, they could obtain it only by seeking employment at one or other of the greater Courts, and by identifying themselves with the interests of a land which they entered as strangers.

Such was in outline the condition of Germany at the moment when it was brought into collision with the new and unknown forces of the French Revolution. A system of small States, which in the past of Greece and Italy had produced the finest types of energy and genius, had in Germany resulted in the extinction of all vigorous life, and in the ascendancy of all that was stagnant, little, and corrupt. If political disorganisation, the decay of public spirit, and the absence of a national idea, are the signs of impending downfall, Germany was ripe for foreign conquest. The obsolete and dilapidated fabric of the Empire had for a century past been sustained only by the European tradition of the Balance of Power, or by the absence of serious attack from without. Austria once overpowered, the Empire was ready to fall to pieces by itself: and where, among the princes or the people of Germany, were the elements that gave hope of its renovation in any better form of national life?

CHAPTER II.

French and Austrian armies on the Flemish frontier--Prussia enters the war--Brunswick invades France--His Proclamation--Insurrection of Aug. 10 at Paris--Massacres of September--Character of the war--Brunswick, checked at Valmy, retreats--The War becomes a Crusade of France--Neighbours of France--Custine enters Mainz--Dumouriez conquers the Austrian Netherlands --Nice and Savoy annexed--Decree of the Convention against all Governments --Execution of Louis XVI.--War with England, followed by war with the Mediterranean States--Condition of England--English Parties, how affected by the Revolution--The Gironde and the Mountain--Austria recovers the Netherlands--The Allies invade France--La Vendee--Revolutionary System of

1793--Errors of the Allies--New French Commanders and Democratic Army--Victories of Jourdan, Hoche, and Pichegru--Prussia withdrawing from the War--Polish Affairs--Austria abandons the Netherlands--Treaties of Basle--France in 1795--Insurrection of 13 Vendemiaire--Constitution of 1795--The Directory--Effect of the Revolution on the spirit of Europe up to 1795.

[Fighting on Flemish frontier, April, 1792.]

[Prussian army invades France, July, 1792. Proclamation.]

The war between France and Austria opened in April, 1792, on the Flemish frontier. The first encounters were discreditable to the French soldiery, who took to flight and murdered one of their generals. The discouragement with which the nation heard of these reverses deepened into sullen indignation against the Court, as weeks and months passed by, and the forces lay idle on the frontier or met the enemy only in trifling skirmishes which left both sides where they were before. If at this crisis of the Revolution, with all the patriotism, all the bravery, all the military genius of France burning for service, the Government conducted the war with results scarcely distinguishable from those of a parade, the suggestion of treason on the part of the Court was only too likely to be entertained. The internal difficulties of the country were increasing. The Assembly had determined to banish from France the priests who rejected the new ecclesiastical system, and the King had placed his veto upon their decree. He had refused to permit the formation of a camp of volunteers in the neighbourhood of Paris. He had dismissed the popular Ministry forced upon him by the Gironde. A tumult on the 20th of June, in which the mob forced their way into the Tuileries, showed the nature of the attack impending upon the monarchy if Louis continued to oppose himself to the demands of the nation; but the lesson was lost upon the King. Louis was as little able to nerve himself for an armed conflict with the populace as to reconcile his conscience to the Ecclesiastical Decrees, and he surrendered himself to a pious inertia at a moment when the alarm of foreign invasion doubled revolutionary passion all over France. Prussia, in pursuance of a treaty made in February, united its forces to those of Austria. Forty thousand Prussian troops, under the Duke of Brunswick, the best of Frederick's surviving generals, advanced along the Moselle. From Belgium and the upper Rhine two Austrian armies converged upon the line of invasion; and the emigrant nobles were given their place among the forces of the Allies.

On the 25th of July the Duke of Brunswick, in the name of the Emperor and the King of Prussia, issued a proclamation to the French people, which, but for the difference between violent words and violent deeds, would have left little to be complained of in the cruelties that henceforward stained the popular cause. In this manifesto, after declaring that the Allies entered France in order to deliver Louis from captivity, and that members of the National Guard fighting against the invaders would be punished as rebels against their king, the Sovereigns addressed themselves to the city of Paris and to the representatives of the French nation:--"The city of Paris and its inhabitants are warned to submit without delay to their King; to set that Prince at entire liberty, and to show to him and to all the Royal Family the inviolability and respect which the law of nature and of nations imposes on subjects towards their Sovereigns. Their Imperial and Royal Majesties will hold all the members of the National Assembly, of the Municipality, and of the National Guard of Paris responsible for all events with their heads, before military tribunals, without hope of pardon. They

further declare that, if the Tuileries be forced or insulted, or the least violence offered to the King, the Queen, or the Royal Family, and if provision be not at once made for their safety and liberty, they will inflict a memorable vengeance, by delivering up the city of Paris to military execution and total overthrow, and the rebels guilty of such crimes to the punishment they have merited." [17]

[Insurrection August 10, 1792.]

This challenge was not necessary to determine the fate of Louis. Since the capture of the Bastille in the first days of the Revolution the National Government had with difficulty supported itself against the populace of the capital; and, even before the foreigner threatened Paris with fire and sword, Paris had learnt to look for the will of France within itself. As the columns of Brunswick advanced across the north-eastern frontier, Danton and the leaders of the city-democracy marshalled their army of the poor and the desperate to overthrow that monarchy whose cause the invader had made his own. The Republic which had floated so long in the thoughts of the Girondins was won in a single day by the populace of Paris, amid the roar of cannons and the flash of bayonets. On the 10th of August Danton let loose the armed mob upon the Tuileries. Louis quitted the Palace without giving orders to the guard either to fight or to retire; but the guard were ignorant that their master desired them to offer no resistance, and one hundred and sixty of the mob were shot down before an order reached the troops to abandon the Palace. The cruelties which followed the victory of the people indicated the fate in store for those whom the invader came to protect. It is doubtful whether the foreign Courts would have made any serious attempt to undo the social changes effected by the Revolution in France; but no one supposed that those thousands of self-exiled nobles who now returned behind the guns of Brunswick had returned in order to take their places peacefully in the new social order. In their own imagination, as much as in that of the people, they returned with fire and sword to repossess themselves of rights of which they had been despoiled, and to take vengeance upon the men who were responsible for the changes made in France since 1789. [18] In the midst of a panic little justified by the real military situation, Danton inflamed the nation with his own passionate courage and resolution; he unhappily also thought it necessary to a successful national defence that the reactionary party at Paris should be paralysed by a terrible example. The prisons were filled with persons suspected of hostility to the national cause, and in the first days of September many hundreds of these unfortunate persons were massacred by gangs of assassins paid by a committee of the Municipality. Danton did not disguise his approval of the act. He had made up his mind that the work of the Revolution could only be saved by striking terror into its enemies, and by preventing the Royalists from co-operating with the invader. But the multitudes who flocked to the standards of 1792 carried with them the patriotism of Danton unstained by his guilt. Right or wrong in its origin, the war was now unquestionably a just one on the part of France, a war against a privileged class attempting to recover by force the unjust advantages that they had not been able to maintain, a war against the foreigner in defence of the right of the nation to deal with its own government. Since the great religious wars there had been no cause so rooted in the hearts, so close to the lives of those who fought for it. Every soldier who joined the armies of France in 1792 joined of his own free will. No conscription dragged the peasant to the frontier. Men left their homes in order that the fruit of the poor man's labour should be his own, in order that the children of France should inherit some better birthright than exaction and want, in order that the late-won sense of human right should not be swept from the earth by the arms of privilege and

caste. It was a time of high-wrought hope, of generous and pathetic self-sacrifice; a time that left a deep and indelible impression upon those who judged it as eye-witnesses. Years afterwards the poet Wordsworth, then alienated from France and cold in the cause of liberty, could not recall without tears the memories of 1792. [19]

[Brunswick checked at Valmy, Sept. 20.]

[Retreat of Brunswick.]

The defence of France rested on General Dumouriez. The fortresses of Longwy and Verdun, covering the passage of the Meuse, had fallen after the briefest resistance; the troops that could be collected before Brunswick's approach were too few to meet the enemy in the open field. Happily for France the slow advance of the Prussian general permitted Dumouriez to occupy the difficult country of the Argonne, where, while waiting for his reinforcements, he was able for some time to hold the invaders in check. At length Brunswick made his way past the defile which Dumouriez had chosen for his first line of defence; but it was only to find the French posted in such strength on his flank that any further advance would imperil his own army. If the advance was to be continued, Dumouriez must be dislodged. Accordingly, on the 20th of September, Brunswick directed his artillery against the hills of Valmy, where the French left was encamped. The cannonade continued for some hours, but it was followed by no general attack. The firmness of the French under Brunswick's fire made it clear that they would not be displaced without an obstinate battle; and, disappointed of victory, the King of Prussia began to listen to proposals of peace sent to him by Dumouriez. [20] A week spent in negotiation served only to strengthen the French and to aggravate the scarcity and sickness within the German camp. Dissensions broke out between the Prussian and Austrian commanders; a retreat was ordered; and to the astonishment of Europe the veteran forces of Brunswick fell back before the mutinous soldiery and unknown generals of the Revolution, powerless to delay for a single month the evacuation of France and the restoration of the fortresses which they had captured.

[The Convention meets, Proclaims Republic, Sept. 21.]

[The war becomes a crusade of democracy.]

In the meantime the Legislative Assembly had decreed its own dissolution in consequence of the overthrow of the monarchy on August both, and had ordered the election of representatives to frame a constitution for France. The elections were held in the crisis of invasion, in the height of national indignation against the alliance of the aristocracy with the foreigner, and, in some districts, under the influence of men who had not shrunk from ordering the massacres in the prisons. At such a moment a Constitutional Royalist had scarcely more chance of election than a detected spy from the enemy's camp. The Girondins, who had been the party of extremes in the Legislative Assembly, were the party of moderation and order in the Convention. By their side there were returned men whose whole being seemed to be compounded out of the forces of conflict, men who, sometimes without conscious depravity, carried into political and social struggles that direct, unquestioning employment of force which has ordinarily been reserved for war or for the diffusion of religious doctrines. The moral differences that separated this party from the Gironde were at once conspicuous: the political creed of the two parties appeared at first to be much the same. Monarchy was abolished, and France declared a Republic (Sept. 21). Office continued in the hands of the Gironde; but the

vehement, uncompromising spirit of their rivals, the so-called party of the Mountain, quickly made itself felt in all the relations of France to foreign Powers. The intention of conquest might still be disavowed, as it had been five months before; but were the converts to liberty to be denied the right of uniting themselves to the French people by their own free will? When the armies of the Republic had swept its assailants from the border-provinces that gave them entrance into France, were those provinces to be handed back to a government of priests and nobles? The scruples which had condemned all annexation of territory vanished in that orgy of patriotism which followed the expulsion of the invader and the discovery that the Revolution was already a power in other lands than France. The nation that had to fight the battle of European freedom must appeal to the spirit of freedom wherever it would answer the call: the conflict with sovereigns must be maintained by arming their subjects against them in every land. In this conception of the universal alliance of the nations, the Governments with which France was not yet at war were scarcely distinguished from those which had pronounced against her. The frontier-lines traced by an obsolete diplomacy, the artificial guarantees of treaties, were of little account against the living and inalienable sovereignty of the people. To men inflamed with the passions of 1792 an argument of international law scarcely conveyed more meaning than to Peter the Hermit. Among the statesmen of other lands, who had no intention of abandoning all the principles recognised as the public right of Europe, the language now used by France could only be understood as the avowal of indiscriminate aggression.

[The neighbors of France.]

The Revolution had displayed itself in France as a force of union as well as of division. It had driven the nobles across the frontier; it had torn the clergy from their altars; but it had reconciled sullen Corsica; and by abolishing feudal rights it had made France the real fatherland of the Teutonic peasant in Alsace and Lorraine. It was now about to prove its attractive power in foreign lands. At the close of the last century the nationalities of Europe were far less consolidated than they are at present; only on the Spanish and the Swiss frontier had France a neighbour that could be called a nation. On the north, what is now the kingdom of Belgium was in 1792 a collection of provinces subject to the House of Austria. The German population both of the districts west of the Rhine and of those opposite to Alsace was parcelled out among a number of petty principalities. Savoy, though west of the chain of the Alps and French in speech, formed part of the kingdom of Piedmont, which was itself severed by history and by national character from the other States of Northern Italy. Along the entire frontier, from Dunkirk to the Maritime Alps, France nowhere touched a strong, united, and independent people; and along this entire frontier, except in the country opposite Alsace, the armed proselytism of the French Revolution proved a greater force than the influences on which the existing order of things depended. In the Low Countries, in the Principalities of the Rhine, in Switzerland, in Savoy, in Piedmont itself, the doctrines of the Revolution were welcomed by a more or less numerous class, and the armies of France appeared, though but for a moment, as the missionaries of liberty and right rather than as an invading enemy.

[Custine enters Mainz, Oct. 20.]

No sooner had Brunswick been brought to a stand by Dumouriez at Valmy than a French division under Custine crossed the Alsatian frontier and advanced upon Spire, where Brunswick had left large stores of war. The garrison was

defeated in an encounter outside the town; Spires and Worms surrendered to Custine. In the neighbouring fortress of Mainz, the key to Western Germany, Custine's advance was watched by a republican party among the inhabitants, from whom the French general learnt that he had only to appear before the city to become its master. Brunswick had indeed apprehended the failure of his invasion of France, but he had never given a thought to the defence of Germany; and, although the King of Prussia had been warned of the defenceless state of Mainz, no steps had been taken beyond the payment of a sum of money for the repair of the fortifications, which money the Archbishop expended in the purchase of a wood belonging to himself and the erection of a timber patchwork. On news arriving of the capture of Spires, the Archbishop fled, leaving the administration to the Dean, the Chancellor, and the Commandant. The Chancellor made a speech, calling upon his "beloved brethren" the citizens to defend themselves to the last extremity, and daily announced the overthrow of Dumouriez and the approaching entry of the Allies into Paris, until Custine's soldiers actually came into sight. [21] Then a council of war declared the city to be untenable; and before Custine had brought up a single siege-gun the garrison capitulated, and the French were welcomed into Mainz by the partisans of the Republic (Oct. 20). With the French arms came the French organisation of liberty. A club was formed on the model of the Jacobin Club of Paris; existing officers and distinctions of rank were abolished; and although the mass of the inhabitants held aloof, a Republic was finally proclaimed, and incorporated with the Republic of France.

[Dumouriez invades the Netherlands.]

[Battle of Jemappes, Nov. 6.]

The success of Custine's raid into Germany did not divert the Convention from the design of attacking Austria in the Netherlands, which Dumouriez had from the first pressed upon the Government. It was not three years since the Netherlands had been in revolt against the Emperor Joseph. In its origin the revolt was a reactionary movement of the clerical party against Joseph's reforms; but there soon sprang up ambitions and hopes at variance with the first impulses of the insurrection; and by the side of monks and monopolists a national party came into existence, proclaiming the sovereignty of the people, and imitating all the movements of the French Revolution. During the brief suspension of Austrian rule the popular and the reactionary parties attacked one another; and on the restoration of Leopold's authority in 1791 the democratic leaders, with a large body of their followers, took refuge beyond the frontier, looking forward to the outbreak of war between Austria and France. Their partisans formed a French connection in the interior of the country; and by some strange illusion, the priests themselves and the close corporations which had been attacked by Joseph supposed that their interests would be respected by Revolutionary France. [22] Thus the ground was everywhere prepared for a French invasion. Dumouriez crossed the frontier. The border fortresses no longer existed; and after a single battle won by the French at Jemappes on the 6th of November, [23] the Austrians, finding the population universally hostile, abandoned the Netherlands without a struggle.

[Nice and Savoy annexed.]

[Decree of Dec. 15.]

The victory of Jemappes, the first pitched battle won by the Republic, excited an outburst of revolutionary fervour in the Convention which deeply affected the relations of France to Great Britain, hitherto a neutral

spectator of the war. A manifesto was published declaring that the French nation offered its alliance to all peoples who wished to recover their freedom, and charging the generals of the Republic to give their protection to all persons who might suffer in the cause of liberty (Nov. 19). A week later Savoy and Nice were annexed to France, the population of Savoy having declared in favour of France and Sardinia. On the 15th of December the Convention proclaimed that social and political revolution was henceforth to accompany every movement of its armies on foreign soil. "In every country that shall be occupied by the armies of the French Republic"--such was the substance of the Decree of December 15th--"the generals shall announce the abolition of all existing authorities; of nobility, of serfage, of every feudal right and every monopoly; they shall proclaim the sovereignty of the people, and convoke the inhabitants in assemblies to form a provisional Government, to which no officer of a former Government, no noble, nor any member of the former privileged corporations shall be eligible. They shall place under the charge of the French Republic all property belonging to the Sovereign or his adherents, and the property of every civil or religious corporation. The French nation will treat as enemies any people which, refusing liberty and equality, desires to preserve its prince and privileged castes, or to make any accommodation with them."

[England arms.]

[The Schelde.]

[Execution of Louis XVI., Jan. 21, 1793.]

This singular announcement of a new crusade caused the Government of Great Britain to arm. Although the decree of the Convention related only to States with which France was at war, the Convention had in fact formed connections with the English revolutionary societies; and the French Minister of Marine informed his sailors that they were about to carry fifty thousand caps of liberty to their English brethren. No prudent statesman would treat a mere series of threats against all existing authorities as ground for war; but the acts of the French Government showed that it intended to carry into effect the violent interference in the affairs of other nations announced in its manifestoes. Its agents were stirring up dissatisfaction in every State; and although the annexation of Savoy and the occupation of the Netherlands might be treated as incidental to the conflict with Austria and Sardinia, in which Great Britain had pledged itself to neutrality, other acts of the Convention were certainly infringements of the rights of allies of England. A series of European treaties, oppressive according to our own ideas, but in keeping with the ideas of that age, prohibited the navigation of the River Schelde, on which Antwerp is situated, in order that the commerce of the North Sea might flow exclusively into Dutch ports. On the conquest of Belgium the French Government gave orders to Dumouriez to send a flotilla down the river, and to declare Antwerp an open port in right of the law of nature, which treaties cannot abrogate. Whatever the folly of commercial restraints, the navigation of the Schelde was a question between the Antwerpers and the Dutch, and one in which France had no direct concern. The incident, though trivial, was viewed in England as one among many proofs of the intention of the French to interfere with the affairs of neighbouring States at their pleasure. In ordinary times it would not have been easy to excite much interest in England on behalf of a Dutch monopoly; but the feeling of this country towards the French Revolution had been converted into a passionate hatred by the massacres of September, and by the open alliance between the Convention and the Revolutionary societies in England itself. Pitt indeed,

whom the Parisians imagined to be their most malignant enemy, laboured against the swelling national passion, and hoped against all hope for peace. Not only was Pitt guiltless of the desire to add this country to the enemies of France, but he earnestly desired to reconcile France with Austria, in order that the Western States, whose embroilment left Eastern Europe at the mercy of Catherine of Russia, might unite to save both Poland and Turkey from falling into the hands of a Power whose steady aggression threatened Europe more seriously than all the noisy and outspoken excitement of the French Convention. Pitt, moreover, viewed with deep disapproval the secret designs of Austria and Prussia. [24] If the French executive would have given any assurance that the Netherlands should not be annexed, or if the French ambassador, Chauvelin, who was connected with English plotters, had been superseded by a trustworthy negotiator, it is probable that peace might have been preserved. But when, on the execution of King Louis (Jan. 21, 1793), Chauvelin was expelled from England as a suspected alien, war became a question of days. [25]

[Holland and Mediterranean States enter the war.]

[War with England, Feb. 1st, 1793.]

Points of technical right figured in the complaints of both sides; but the real ground of war was perfectly understood. France considered itself entitled to advance the Revolution and the Rights of Man wherever its own arms or popular insurrection gave it the command. England denied the right of any Power to annul the political system of Europe at its pleasure. No more serious, no more sufficient, ground of war ever existed between two nations; yet the event proved that, with the highest justification for war, the highest wisdom would yet have chosen peace. England's entry into the war converted it from an affair of two or three campaigns into a struggle of twenty years, resulting in more violent convulsions, more widespread misery, and more atrocious crimes, than in all probability would have resulted even from the temporary triumph of the revolutionary cause in 1793. But in both nations political passion welcomed impending calamity; and the declaration of war by the Convention on February 1st only anticipated the desire of the English people. Great Britain once committed to the struggle, Pitt spared neither money nor intimidation in his efforts to unite all Europe against France. Holland was included with England in the French declaration of war. the Mediterranean States felt that the navy of England was nearer to them than the armies of Austria and Prussia; and before the end of the summer of 1793, Spain, Portugal, Naples, Tuscany, and the Papal States had joined the Coalition.

[French wrongly think England inclined to revolution.]

The Jacobins of Paris had formed a wrong estimate of the political condition of England. At the outbreak of the war they believed that England itself was on the verge of revolution. They mistook the undoubted discontent of a portion of the middle and lower classes, which showed itself in the cry for parliamentary reform, for a general sentiment of hatred towards existing institutions, like that which in France had swept away the old order at a single blow. The Convention received the addresses of English Radical societies, and imagined that the abuses of the parliamentary system under George III. had alienated the whole nation. What they had found in Belgium and in Savoy--a people thankful to receive the Rights of Man from the soldiers of the Revolution--they expected to find among the dissenting congregations of London and the factory-hands of Sheffield. The singular attraction exercised by each class in England upon the one below it, as well as the indifference of the nation generally to

all ideals, was little understood in France, although the Revolutions of the two countries bore this contrast on their face. A month after the fall of the Bastille, the whole system of class-privilege and monopoly had vanished from French law; fifteen years of the English Commonwealth had left the structure of English society what it had been at the beginning. But political observation vanished in the delirium of 1793; and the French only discovered, when it was too late, that in Great Britain the Revolution had fallen upon an enemy of unparalleled stubbornness and inexhaustible strength.

[The Whigs not democratic.]

[Political condition of England.]

In the first Assembly of the Revolution it was usual to speak of the English as free men whom the French ought to imitate; in the Convention it was usual to speak of them as slaves whom the French ought to deliver. The institutions of England bore in fact a very different aspect when compared with the absolute monarchy of the Bourbons and when compared with the democracy of 1793. Frenchmen who had lived under the government of a Court which made laws by edict and possessed the right to imprison by letters-patent looked with respect upon the Parliament of England, its trial by jury, and its freedom of the press. The men who had sent a king to prison and confiscated the estates of a great part of the aristocracy could only feel compassion for a land where three-fourths of the national representatives were nominees of the Crown or of wealthy peers. Nor, in spite of the personal sympathy of Fox with the French revolutionary movement, was there any real affinity between the English Whig party and that which now ruled in the Convention. The event which fixed the character of English liberty during the eighteenth century, the Revolution of 1688, had nothing democratic in its nature. That revolution was directed against a system of Roman Catholic despotism; it gave political power not to the mass of the nation, which had no desire and no capacity to exercise it, but to a group of noble families and their retainers, who, during the reigns of the first two Georges, added all the patronage and influence of the Crown to their social and constitutional weight in the country. The domestic history of England since the accession of George III. had turned chiefly upon the obstinate struggle of this monarch to deliver himself from all dependence upon party. The divisions of the Whigs, their jealousies, but, above all, their real alienation from the mass of the people whose rights they professed to defend, ultimately gave the King the victory, when, after twenty years of errors, he found in the younger Pitt a Minister capable of uniting the interests of the Crown with the ablest and most patriotic liberal statesmanship. Bribes, threats, and every species of base influence had been employed by King George to break up the great Coalition of 1783, which united all sections of the Whigs against him under the Ministry of Fox and North; but the real support of Pitt, whom the King placed in office with a minority in the House of Commons, was the temper of the nation itself, wearied with the exclusiveness, the corruption, and the party-spirit of the Whigs, and willing to believe that a popular Minister, even if he had entered upon power unconstitutionally, might do more for the country than the constitutional proprietors of the rotten boroughs.

[Pitt Minister, 1783.]

[Effect of French Revolution on English Parties.]

From 1783 down to the outbreak of the French Revolution, Pitt, as a Tory Minister confronted by a Whig Opposition, governed England on more liberal

principles than any statesman who had held power during the eighteenth century. These years were the last of the party-system of England in its original form. The French Revolution made an end of that old distinction in which the Tory was known as the upholder of Crown-prerogative and the Whig as the supporter of a constitutional oligarchy of great families. It created that new political antagonism in which, whether under the names of Whig and Tory, or of Liberal and Conservative, two great parties have contended, one for a series of beneficial changes, the other for the preservation of the existing order. The convulsions of France and the dread of revolutionary agitation in England transformed both Pitt and the Whigs by whom he was opposed. Pitt sacrificed his schemes of peaceful progress to foreign war and domestic repression, and set his face against the reform of Parliament which he had once himself proposed. The Whigs broke up into two sections, led respectively by Burke and by Fox, the one denouncing the violence of the Revolution, and ultimately uniting itself with Pitt; the other friendly to the Revolution, in spite of its excesses, as the cause of civil and religious liberty, and identifying itself, under the healthy influence of parliamentary defeat and disappointment, with the defence of popular rights in England and the advocacy of enlightened reform.

[Burke's "Reflections," Oct. 1790.]

[Most of the Whigs support Pitt against France.]

The obliteration of the old dividing-line in English politics may be said to date from the day when the ancient friendship of Burke and Fox was bitterly severed by the former in the House of Commons (May 6, 1791). The charter of the modern Conservative party was that appeal to the nation which Burke had already published, in the autumn of 1790, under the title of "Reflections on the French Revolution." In this survey of the political forces which he saw in action around him, the great Whig writer, who in past times had so passionately defended the liberties of America and the constitutional tradition of the English Parliament against the aggression of George III., attacked the Revolution as a system of violence and caprice more formidable to freedom than the tyranny of any Crown. He proved that the politicians and societies of England who had given it their sympathy had given their sympathy to measures and to theories opposed to every principle of 1688. Above all, he laid bare that agency of riot and destructiveness which, even within the first few months of the Revolution, filled him with presentiment of the calamities about to fall upon France. Burke's treatise was no dispassionate inquiry into the condition of a neighbouring state: it was a denunciation of Jacobinism as fierce and as little qualified by political charity as were the maledictions of the Hebrew prophets upon their idolatrous neighbours; and it was intended, like these, to excite his own countrymen against innovations among themselves. It completely succeeded. It expressed, and it heightened, the alarm arising among the Liberal section of the propertied class, at first well inclined to the Revolution; and, although the Whigs of the House of Commons pronounced in favour of Fox upon his first rupture with Burke, the tide of public feeling, rising higher with every new outrage of the Revolution, soon invaded the legislature, and carried the bulk of the Whig party to the side of the Minister, leaving to Fox and his few faithful adherents the task of maintaining an unheeded protest against the blind passions of war, and the increasing rigour with which Pitt repressed every symptom of popular disaffection.

[The Gironde and the Mountain in the Convention.]

[The Gironde and the Commune of Paris.]

The character of violence which Burke traced and condemned in the earliest acts of the Revolution displayed itself in a much stronger light after the overthrow of the Monarchy by the insurrection of August 10th. That event was the work of men who commanded the Parisian democracy, not the work of orators and party-leaders in the Assembly. The Girondins had not hesitated to treat the victory as their own, by placing the great offices of State, with one exception, in the hands of their leaders; they instantly found that the real sovereignty lay elsewhere. The Council of the Commune, or Municipality, of Paris, whose members had seized their post at the moment of the insurrection, was the only administrative body that possessed the power to enforce its commands; in the Ministries of State one will alone made itself felt, that of Danton, whom the Girondins had unwillingly admitted to office along with themselves. The massacres of September threw into full light the powerlessness of the expiring Assembly. For five successive days it was unable to check the massacres; it was unable to bring to justice the men who had planned them, and who called upon the rest of France to follow their example. With the meeting of the Convention, however, the Girondins, who now regarded themselves as the legitimate government, and forgot that they owed office to an insurrection, expected to reduce the capital to submission. They commanded an overwhelming majority in the new chamber; they were supported by the middle class in all the great cities of France. The party of the Mountain embraced at first only the deputies of Paris, and a group of determined men who admitted no criticism on the measures which the democracy of Paris had thought necessary for the Revolution. In the Convention they were the assailed, not the assailants. Without waiting to secure themselves by an armed force, the orators of the Gironde attempted to crush both the Municipality and the deputies who ruled at the Clubs. They reproached the Municipality with the murders of September; they accused Robespierre of aiming at the Dictatorship. It was under the pressure of these attacks that the party of the Mountain gathered its strength within the Convention, and that the populace of Paris transferred to the Gironde the passionate hatred which it had hitherto borne to the King and the aristocracy. The gulf that lay between the people and those who had imagined themselves to be its leaders burst into view. The Girondins saw with dismay that the thousands of hungry workmen whose victory had placed them in power had fought for something more tangible than Republican phrases from Tacitus and Plutarch. On one side was a handful of orators and writers, steeped in the rhetoric and the commonplace of ancient Rome, and totally strange to the real duties of government; on the other side the populace of Paris, such as centuries of despotism, privilege, and priestcraft had made it: sanguinary, unjust, vindictive; convulsed since the outbreak of the Revolution with every passion that sways men in the mass; taught no conception of progress but the overthrow of authority, and acquainted with no title to power but that which was bestowed by itself. If the Girondins were to remain in power, they could do so only by drawing an army from the departments, or by identifying themselves with the multitude. They declined to take either course. Their audience was in the Assembly alone; their support in the distant provinces. Paris, daily more violent, listened to men of another stamp. The Municipality defied the Government; the Mountain answered the threats and

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