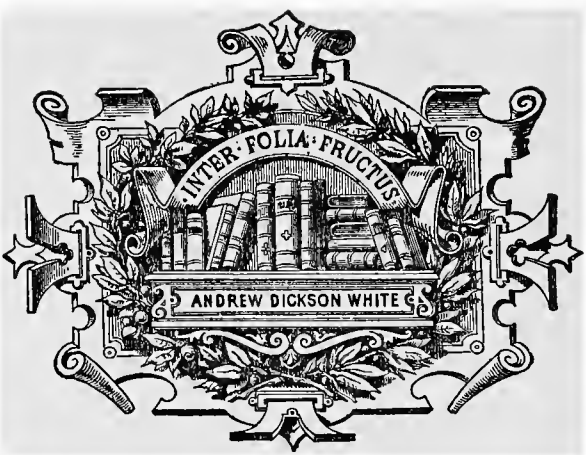

THEODORE MOMMSEN

TO THE PEOPLE OF ITALY.*

I.—THE WAR.

LETTER

INSERTED

IN THE MILANESE PAPER 'LA PERSEVERANZA,'

Of the 10th of August, 1870.

Do you know what it is that people here are afraid of? Some of our Politicians, to whom I do not belong, profess to believe in the existence of a plot of long standing between the Cabinets of Paris and Florence. They think that just as France has been forced into a war against us, so it will be with Italy, unless Italian citizens prove themselves to be stronger and wiser than the French have done.

And do you know what the friends of Italy reply to this?

* Translated from the Italian by I. C.

They say, "As for the Italian Cabinet, anything is possible; but as for the Italian people, they will support the Germans, and offer an invincible obstacle to any such policy."

Still, to say the truth, we are not entirely safe. It is only too easy to deceive a people; and I do not feel convinced that your countrymen recognize the seriousness of this impending danger, or that they are on the alert in looking out for it.

This war is a terrible one, as we well know; its scale is tremendous; but how overwhelmingly would it be magnified, if the material forces of another of the great nations were thrown into it!

But this is not the point that most disturbs us. You are distant from us, and in any case, the Germans are not easily alarmed, and have ample reliance in their own powers.

Within these last few days, in the single city of Berlin alone, 28,000 young volunteers have enrolled themselves; as fresh ones arrive, the authorities smile doubtfully, at a loss what to do with such numbers; still the young champions persevere, and go here and there, determined to get enrolled somewhere.

To-day a friend described to me the case of a father sending forth to the war his four sons; grasping each one by the hand in turn, "Come back," he said, "victorious or never."

The old Hanoverian officers, who have hitherto refused to serve under the King of Prussia, come forward now, ready to fight the French with us.

In Prague and Vienna the German students are applying to their Governments for permission to enter the Prussian army. Even the Duke of Nassau, whom we dispossessed, has rejected with disdain the offer of the French to reinstate him.

No; it is not fear that speaks, when we exhort you to maintain your neutrality,—very different to this are the motives that inspire us.

I do not know if we are making war upon the French nation, or upon that handful of daring adventurers, who, having contrived to possess themselves of the government of France, now hope to subject *le monde au demi-monde.* But take it to be true that the French people wish for war, that a rabid *chauvinisme,* whilst condemning the senseless motives assigned by the reigning Government of France for declaring war upon us, still accepts the consequences, and sees in it the longed-for revenge, whether of Waterloo or of Sadowa; you at least must feel forbidden by honour to take part in a war meditated for years, behind the mask of false professions and falser friendship, and brought forward now, with an impudence and levity offensive to all Europe. It rests with you, that this war, so dreadful already, shall not

develop into something still more dreadful—a war of races—a war between the Latins and the Germans.

Oh! my friends beyond the Alps, I am no blind admirer, either of ancient Rome or of modern Italy. I see the sad inheritance which the slavery of centuries has left to your noble country; and I know that although a Cavour could break your chains, the future alone can efface their traces. But I have faith in this future; and I love the Italy of to-day with all her wounds. We Germans put our trust in you. Italians, every hope of a happier era to come depends upon a solid and loyal alliance between the various nations.

There was a time when Rome was the destruction of every nation about her; and when the holocaust was completed, Romans saw with horror, in the ruin of their foes, their own destruction.

Ah! do not deprive us of this treasured hope—the hope that the world is wide enough to hold yet another free and fortunate nation. Ah! do not engender among the German peoples the miserable thought, that the Roman races wish to subjugate or exterminate them.

Can we not live in peace—you in your fair garden of Europe, we in our less favoured plains?

Does the Prussian Government tout for clerical votes by mounting guard at the Vatican?

And if the Prussian Government has a friendly feel-

ing for certain Protestant popes (protestant followers of the Pope), not a whit less knavish and a good deal more dangerous than yours, do you think, for all this, that the German people will see with any less rejoicing the Infallible precipitated from the heights of the Capitol?

If you desire to consolidate the fetters which hinder the advance of your battalions on Rome, you have only to consolidate the present rule in France; that sacred personage, Napoleon, reigns only by the support of the priests.

Is it Germany that is keeping down Italy? Are our shouts of admiration for the combatants of Novara —our enthusiasm when Lombardy shook off the Austrian yoke already forgotten? Is that happy brotherhood in arms no longer remembered which brought the Prussians to the Maine and the Italians to Venice?

When the question came up of that great undertaking, the pride of our times,—the tunnelling of the Alps,—was it the German nation that proposed the absurd and disgraceful condition that it should be for the advantage of a single nation alone?

Have we given to an ancient and refined people a literature foul as the waters of the Paris Seine, that corrupts the hearts of your youth, and spreads even amongst your respectable classes like an insidious canker?

Oh, Italians! you know that the Germans neither could nor would possess themselves of that which of right is yours; and you know as well, that the cradle of your king is now a French department, and your hero *ex post facto* a Frenchman by birth!

If the old Italian territory, respected in its nationality even in the saddest days of its servitude, is thus infringed as the nation rises with a new birth, and, like the unlucky man freed from brigands, you are compelled to pay a ransom to the semi-brigands who set you free,—is it not the hand of France that you feel in all this?

A second Sadowa on the banks of the Rhine—another such day—will give you a full and lasting freedom.

We ask for no battalions. Our forces by themselves suffice to protect the Continent against the common enemy; but bear in mind the natural alliance between our nations, and do not forget our fidelity at Custozza.

BERLIN, *July* 23*rd*, 1870.

LETTER

TO

THE EDITOR OF THE MILANESE PAPER 'IL SECOLO,'

Inserted in the number for the 20th of August, 1870.

THE 'Perseveranza' was pleased to give place in its columns to some remarks of mine respecting the present political situation, especially the relations between Italy and Germany; and if this paper has thought proper to make its own reservations, by suppressing those passages which appeared incompatible with its profound respect for the Tuileries, this was not so much the fault of the honourable editor, whose *bonhomie* and good faith I am ready to admit, as of myself, the author, who could not distinguish between the 'Perseveranza' of yesterday and the 'Perseveranza' of to-day.

So much the more am I obliged to your journal for reproducing my letter, and accompanying it with such sympathetic words, dictated by the same spirit of fraternal feeling between the two nations which inspired my own.

If I take up my pen for the second time, it is not to repel the act of accusation of Italy against Germany which the 'Perseveranza' chose to place side by side with my letter. Before proceeding to do this, I await

Italy's assent to this accusation, which I think improbable.

If all the wrongs and crimes wrought when the domination of Austria weighed as heavily upon Prussia as upon Italy, are to be laid to the charge of the German people and of their present rulers, there is sound cause to show why the Germans and the Italians can never unite in a loyal friendship; and even further, we might, with a moderately fair face, defend that most ingenious theory, that Italian freedom is to be found in the continuation of French fetters.

It is too true—nor have we forgotten it—Prussia was long a stay to the policy of Schönbrunn; but, beyond this, it is also true that the desires and hopes of the better part of the German people were in direct opposition to that ill-starred policy, and the liberals of the North especially have always fought, both in the press and in Parliament, for Italian independence. It is (thanks also to this liberal policy) that in 1859 we were able to stop our Government on the eve, as the 'Perseveranza' rightly says, of reconquering your splendid city for its secular tyrant.

But are not such petty recriminations unworthy of men whose glory it is to be the contemporaries of a Cavour and a Bismarck?—whose glory it is to belong to two nations that have known how to arise and rehabilitate themselves?

He who makes the Prussia of Königsgrätz and Wörth responsible for the political deeds of the epoch of Manteuffel, might with equal force reproach the Italy of to-day with the policy of the Estes and the Bourbons.

We will not forget those unhappy times, but we will remember them as passed away—passed away through the common efforts of your and our great men, your and our noble aspirations.

But it is not to tell them this that I write to my friends in Italy. There is no need to tell men over again those things which they thoroughly know and feel.

A few days ago I wrote to you, influenced by a well-grounded fear that, in spite of yourselves, you might be dragged into a war, the memory of which would have remained a barrier between us, more insurmountable than the Alps. But this danger, perhaps the most serious that could have befallen us in this great and lamentable struggle, has happily passed away. We may hope now that the great conflagration will not consume the whole secular edifice of European civilization.

This, Italians, we owe in no small measure to you; and I, for one, out of the many that now are feeling this, come forward to say it to you and to grasp by the hand a faithful ally. Truly we must not forget what the German sword has done—

"Il lampo de' manipoli e l'onda del cavallo." *

Our German sword, which knew how to wait and when to strike,—which gave no chance to the betrayers of the nations to consummate the evil things they had meditated.

Our debt to you is a debt to the Italian people solely: without the opposition of the popular voice, matters might have taken a very different turn. A worthy friend of mine, writing to me from Italy, says, "Our Government sides with Napoleon, but in the presence of the unanimous feeling of the nation, which openly threatened insurrection from one end of the peninsula to the other, in case of an alliance with France, the Government was unable to carry out its wishes."

Every one knows how true this is. You have now done for us what we did for you in 1859, but you have done it better and with more success; not that you threw yourselves into the cause with more ardour than we did, but because the weight of public opinion has more effect in Italy than in Germany, our Government being stronger, both for good and for evil. But letting alone the question as to the how, the fact remains that the good sense and good faith of the Italian people frustrated this sinister alliance, and the German nation thank them for it.

* The fire and rush of foot and horse.

Ministers may come and go, and transitory as their fame may be the recollection of their misdeeds, fulfilled or unfulfilled, but peoples remain,—and the faith these plight together augments the common weal, and advances the world one step nearer to that great union of the nations, when each and all will desire nothing better than to live side by side in mutual love and respect.

I will add a few words upon your relations, and our own, with France. When I wrote my first letter, this great war could scarcely be said to have begun, now it is waxing to its close. I wrote my first letter when the French nation was preparing to conquer, when ours was getting ready to resist; now, facts have spoken.

The confidence of our foes has suffered a terrible disenchantment—terrible even to their enemies. A discouragement has fallen upon them, springing as much from their vanished dream of success as from the reality of their present reverses. From bravado to despair is but a leap, and these unfortunates have a perilous facility for both these extremes.

But for us, in spite of our victorious successes, you may be well assured that the thinking portion of our community still see nothing in this war but a deplorable necessity,—and were it possible even now to exchange it for a secure and lasting peace, they would most willingly do so.

If you want a thoughtfully-considered opinion upon the French nation from a German point of view, I can recommend to your notice an admirable publication by one of our leading jurisconsults, Treitschke of Heidelberg, 'On the Present State of France;' you will find it in the second series of his politico-historical essays. There you will see the thesis proved, much better than I could do it, that the ruin of France must be a calamity for Europe.

We do not pass sentence upon the nation of Molière, of Voltaire, of Cuvier, of De Musset, and of the *gamins de Paris;* we did not do so yesterday, nor shall we do so to-day, whether it should present itself before us in the form of an elegant article, signed "Cassagnac, père, fils et Cie.," or whether it should come to us in person, *viâ* Weissemburg, in the garb of the gentle Zouaves.

On the other hand, it is incontrovertible that we have to deal not only with the battalions of Napoleon the last, but with the French nation,—those very men in France who most condemned the frivolous pretext which was made the excuse for a declaration of war against us, and who also foresaw the inevitable issue, yet were wishing themselves for war in the same breath. I hold, and, if I mistake not, Germany holds France in its entirety, responsible for this war. Yet this does not make the French nation any the less a

European necessity,—France is still "La Grande Nation," though she would be greater if she made a more temperate use of the well-merited epithet.

I am not a politician. The future of Europe, within a little, rests in certain hands. I do not pretend to say what they will do with it; but this I can say,—Italians will never be called upon to abandon their French sympathies; amongst ourselves there are many who still cherish and glory in them,—many who will soon resume them.

Could we only hit upon some method of inspiring our neighbours with that quality in which, unhappily, they are so deficient,—I mean the love of peace, and the power of realizing the fact that liberty and equality as principles are not exclusively reserved for the French people, but are the common property of all nations,—could we do this, no one again in Germany would think any longer of a Vosgian frontier.

The constitution of our nation is essentially federal, and as a consequence of this war, the federal principle will assert itself more and more forcibly. It is true that in this war our strength lay in the righteousness of our cause, that right was might. We were constrained to defend ourselves, from this came our union, and from union came victory. But we made ourselves heroes with heavy hearts; nor do we admire the prospect of having to cull similar laurels every five years.

Such considerations as these, I think, will dictate a peace. May God preserve us as much from Scylla as from Charybdis,—from diplomatic cowardice, and from the ambition of conquest.

II.—PEACE.

War seems ended.

And now, how are we to make the peace that will conclude it—and for the sake of which so many brave men have died—as lasting and happy as the war has been brief and disastrous?

To achieve this, our statesmen will have to surmount difficulties as great in their kind as those which our arms have so gloriously overcome.

Heaven grant that the same far-seeing judgment which has blessed our Prussian strategy may attend our policy!

With good reason the world already proclaims Moltke a great leader, it will be for another generation to judge how far Bismarck was his equal. Posterity will decide; meantime we must act, and to the best of our ability make such a peace as shall be wisest for the safety of Germany and the quiet of Europe.

But in doing this, let it be understood, we shall do it alone. We shall suffer no intervention from those

governments who have been simple lookers-on during our tremendous struggle. We admit that all the great Powers have a legitimate interest in a peace which affects the immediate future of Europe; and as conquerors, we hold it still to be our duty to respect these interests, and the so-called European equilibrium, any disturbance of which must be as hazardous to our country as to any other.

But, single-handed we have been forced to fight out this war, and to defend this equilibrium, threatened by France armed and prepared to upset it, by the dismemberment of Prussia and the conquest of half Germany. And now, single-handed we intend to provide for our own tranquillity and the tranquillity of Europe. Amicable advice, coming from old friends, will be fairly considered; counsel which comes as a threat will have the answer of Ems.

As regards the Cabinet of Florence, it might have been co-operating with us in this great work. It has not done so, and, at this hour, its interference would meet with a rebuff, in place of the sympathy we lately extended to it.

All the same, we can distinguish between an inimical government and a friendly people, and the demonstrations of the Italian nation in favour of our cause will never be forgotten by us. You have shown that, whilst generously compassionating the misfortunes of

France, you are still alive to the injustice that violated the sacred rights of a nation, and the criminal levity with which war was declared upon us; you are able to discern that this war on the part of France is one of aggression, on our side one of defence; and you admit the culpability of this aggressive attack of an autocracy barely veiled by a rag of Parliamentary form, upon a nation of freemen, who possess, in their national constitution, the elements, at least, of the freedom of the state and the liberty of the person.

In this crisis of affairs, I think we Germans owe a duty to you Italians, since in all human probability we shall dictate the terms of peace; and you ought to be satisfied as to our aspirations, and to have some assurance that the national enthusiasm which has carried us to our supreme position, will not degenerate into a Napoleonic passion for conquest.

No doubt serious mistakes, with frightful consequences, are possible; but we shall not fall into these errors, if the aspirations of our statesmen are regulated by those of our people. Now what these last are I know, and I will justify them to you.

Let us first consider a little the position of Germany in respect of France.

My political memory serves me for a retrospect of at least thirty years. Now I can prove that this entire period has been filled with French intrigues,

having for their object the seizure of the left bank of the Rhine.

During the lapse of a whole generation, threats of the war which has just burst out have not ceased to ring in our ears; and because at last M. de Gramont comes upon the stage, and violates all the rules of the scenic art in having the tragedy of war preceded by his stupid farce of a declaration,—because of this, the whole crime of the tragedy, as well as the folly of the farce, are alike to be saddled upon this poor puppet, and his wire-puller Napoleon the Third!

Ah! indeed! if this were but true! Peace, then, would soon and safely be made!

Napoleon the Third is not guiltless; he has to answer for the gigantic proportions of this terrible war. But for the war itself that is now raging between Germans and Frenchmen he is not answerable,—such a tremendous responsibility could not belong to one man, were he ten times an autocrat.

We are to be excused if our German estimate of the Emperor of the French is not quite so correct as the aim we take at his soldiers with our needle-guns. There are some that call him a Caligula; others, a Nero; others, a fool led by his wife; and again some describe him as a *médiocrité méconnue*, adopting the witty *mot* of that brilliant but luckless Frenchman, who, entangled in the nets of Imperial obliquity, saw,

when too late, the abyss that yawned beneath it, and in a moment of despair made himself its first victim.

Without attempting to refute any of these charges, we are compelled to admit, by the force of facts, that in the remarkable compound which makes up the character of the man who held so long the destinies of Europe, there are qualities which can neither be considered criminal nor contemptible.

It is to the initiative of Napoleon the Third that France owes the revolution of her commercial enterprise. To the same hand Italy is indebted for her revival,—based, too, upon the soundest principles of nationality. The benefit thus conferred was inestimable, although it was hampered by unjustifiable reservations, and though it was forced by the genius and virtue of the loyal and gifted Cavour.

But let us grant that the ostensible responsibility of this miserable war rests with Napoleon the Third, I can still prove that he entered upon it by the desire of the French people. Those who know the French nation best, and particularly the political and military portion of it, know as well as I do that this war has been hatching ever since the final overthrow of the first Empire, and that since the reconstruction of Germany, war has only been a question of time. I entirely agree in the opinion held by many, that the Emperor was averse, not to *War*,—Heaven knows

the Empire never meant Peace,—but to a war which, if not successful, would jeopardize his dynasty. Among us in Germany it was universally believed that a war against us would be the inevitable result of a change in the French government, whensoever that change came. But how it came to pass, after years of his habitual indecision, that Napoleon, with reckless suddenness at last, exchanged these warlike meditations for the horrid reality, remains to be explained by the historians of the future. I may suggest in passing, however, that it is not improbable the prospect of a revolution at his death tempted him to steal a march upon his possible successors, and, that by *re-baptizing his dynasty in Prussian blood,* as he expressed it, he hoped to give it its best chance of stability. Thus he sought to combine the parts of a good Father and a good Frenchman!

It is certain that, unlike his Mexican war, or even his Italian campaign,—both of which were unpopular, —Napoleon, in the present war, had the popular voice with him;—not only with him, but urging him with such a force that, at all hazards, he was induced to venture upon it.

It is certain also that the majority of Frenchmen, of all shades of politics, have held together on one point, viz. the wish to get possession of one of our most fertile provinces, as rich as any in Germany, abounding

in coal-mines, and remarkable for the industry and commercial talent of its inhabitants; two things, however, always conspicuously absent in it,—a native Frenchman and a French party.

Now, then, after we have repulsed these aggressors, after fifty thousand of our bravest hearts have sealed the safety of our frontiers with their blood, we have to settle our account for all this, not with the French Emperor, but with the French nation.

We will not consider now the probable expenses of this war, large enough necessarily, and greatly increased by the indispensable indemnifications due to those unfortunate Germans who, relying on French hospitality, were basely betrayed, though an equal number of Frenchmen remained undisturbed in their safe quarters in Germany; increased also by the claims made by the proprietors of unarmed vessels, as yet the only war trophies of the boasted French navy. And we must not forget also the just compensation that must be made for the unjust attack upon Kehl, an open city, barbarously bombarded by Strasburg balls.

This is a large bill, but it is only a part of our reckoning. We ask something more than money. We claim territory; not French territory, but German.

The German nation, in point of its frontiers, is in an analogous position to the Italian. Our neighbours for centuries have gone on enlarging their boundaries at

our expense. We know it, and feel it, and cannot forget it. At length the tables were turned; like you, we got rid of a number of worse than useless dynasties, and gave, by this means, strength and dignity to the central power.

Some knaves and fools chose to call my native soil, the Baltic duchies, *a Danish province;* but we Holsteiners will not and never did call ourselves Danes; and Germany, at last, has liberated us from our foreign yoke, just as Italy has liberated Lombardy and Venetia.

But we halt there. We might go further, and with justice; but the risk to the national independence would be too great, and the means a disproportionate sacrifice to the end. Millions of Germans people Austria, Russia, France, and Switzerland. Trent is an Italian country; Istria, once Sclavonic, is now virtually Italian; Corsica obeys France; so does Nice, the ransom of Italian freedom. But since these things are so, though Italians and Germans may deplore their ancient losses, yet they should now, as good patriots, resign themselves to the inevitable.

Melancholy indeed is the old story of German disunion. Melancholy, too, is the tale of our neighbours appropriating Lorraine first, then Alsace. As we read, our indignation boils against the weak wretches who could not defend their own, even more than against the treachery and violence of their despoilers. Bitter

indeed it was to listen to the well-loved German tongue in the border-lands of France. Bitter indeed to see a French flag waving over that masterpiece of German work, Strasburg Cathedral. When the German student, in the German University of Strasburg, read the sweet story of Goethe's love,—that exquisite idyl of Sesenheim, the dear Alsatian village,—he shut the volume, and asked his heart what manner of men his forefathers could have been, who abandoned to the foreigner this sacred field of the German muse,—to men who cared neither for its buds nor for its blossom, whose whole aim was to extirpate German manners, German religion, and our German tongue.

I do not praise you Italians for what you are doing in Trent and Trieste at this moment; and I appeal to the history of Germany for the last fifty years as a witness that we, on our part, have not attempted to do the like. Not even the French themselves have been able to bring this charge against us, that we had ever opposed in any way the peculiar proceedings by which they tried to spread their civilization.

We let all this pass; and why? We knew then what we know now, that the risk was greater than the gain, the undertaking not worth the cost.

We cannot see with satisfaction the conduct of Russia in Livonia, but ask the Germans of Riga, of

Dorpat, if we have aided them in resisting the attacks made upon our nationality in those quarters. We have not even given them the empty comfort of idle promises or foolish sympathy. The days of the Crusades are over; honest patriotism repudiates Quixotic folly.

All that we have desired has been to live in peace and quietness with our neighbours. To do this, there must be self-denial and self-control, and mutual consideration. If France also had been of this pacific mind, our admirers of the Strasburg Minster would have sighed, and pilgrims to pretty Sesenheim would have wept; but the armies of Germany would never have followed on their track to take back these consecrated spots, sacred to our art and our literature.

But now these things are changed!

Italians! say, if Austria had claimed Milan once again from you,—if she strove to restore the Bourbons, and to bring back the Este,—and if, in your self-defence, you bore your banners dyed with the blood of your heroes, even to the gates of her Vienna, —if it was for her to sue for peace, and yours to make it,—say, how long, think you, would Trent and Trieste belong to Austria?

And wise as your counsellors *now* are, who say to you, "Confine yourselves within your present limits," do you think *then* that one of them would be coward

enough to affect generosity, and counsel a shameful and derogatory peace?

The feeble policy of our forefathers betrayed our land, our faith, and our language. They left us this burden, and we have borne it as best we could; but now, when the fortune of war, not of our own seeking, has given us back our own, were we in our turn to act the same cowardly part, we should not even have the plea of *non possumus* to excuse us to the generations that are to come after us.

Our nation is unanimous in this—not conquest, but restoration; and Italians who claim justice even for men who are not of the Latin race, will praise, and not blame, a necessary and well-merited act of political justice.

The population of Alsace is purely German, if we except a few valleys in the Vosges, which are French.*

One of our most conscientious political economists calculated, before this war, that but a seventh part of the Alsatians understand French; and again, but a small part of these use this language in domestic life. The country people and peasants universally speak nothing but German.

How significant was the case of the unlucky French

* They amount statistically to 20 communes, with 30,000 inhabitants. The remaining 917 communes, with 1,035,102 inhabitants, SPEAK German to this day.

correspondent after the battle of Woerth, who, limited like a true Frenchman to his mother-tongue, was wandering about in his *belle France,* to find an interpreter who should explain his wants to the peasants of Alsace!

Even those French who migrate from elsewhere into these parts soon assimilate themselves, and become extensively Germanized. French is the enforced medium of instruction in the primary schools now; and the single result of this has been, that the efficiency of these schools is no longer what it was. Formerly, the standard of popular instruction here was higher than in any other part of France; now it has greatly fallen, and it continues to do so every year.

It was well said by a worthy ecclesiastic that the war waged by the French Government upon the German language was a war against the religion, the morality, and the well-being of the country.

Here in these valleys you hear our songs and our legends; and our literature has formed here a nucleus of opposition against Paris, in revenge for which the Parisian makes the fool in his comedy invariably an Alsatian.

Alsace escaped that blow which undermined the strong life of France,—I mean the extirpation of the Huguenots. In this ill-advised persecution we may

see the primary cause of the decline of the French nation, just as a rampant Jesuitism ruined Austria.

A third of Alsace has remained Protestant, providing a backbone of independent thought, and opening an escape from that subjection which we have seen lately leading up by arguments more logical than admirable to that ridiculous monstrosity, the Infallibility of the Pope.

In Protestant Alsace, we see to this day a liberal and flourishing theology, maintaining the most intimate relations with our German theologians, and maintaining these in spite of the obstacles offered by the Government, in insisting that the courses shall be delivered in the French language. It was only very lately that the Strasburg Professors were lamenting to me that they were thus compelled to abandon the use of German in the schools.

I will tell you what a Protestant minister did at the beginning of this war. His charge was a large village near to Strasburg. Going up into the pulpit with the keys of the church in his hands, he said to the people assembled before him, "I cannot with a good conscience pray to God to give France the victory." Then laying down the keys, he gave up his charge, and departed from the place, and crossed the border into Germany. Now he follows a Bavarian regiment in the character of army chaplain.

Such facts as these have a grave significance; in France especially, where whatever any one may think, few have the temerity to dare to express a doubt as to the glories of the great nation, or the advantages of her language, *par excellence* the language of civilization.

Now, what I have said of Alsace is equally true of German Lorraine, that *Allemagne*, as it was called, which until 1751 conducted all its official affairs in German, and still preserves this language in its private life. German Lorraine includes part of the department east of the Meurthe and the Moselle and the cantons of Saar. By the account of the French Minister of Instruction, made out in 1865, in 76 communes of the department of the Meurthe out of 46,508 inhabitants, only 6870 could speak the French language; whilst amongst those who attended the schools, in number 6800, 2400 only could be said to speak it correctly.

This does not say much for progress under a strong government; but nature is also strong!—as those young peasants proved,—soon forgetting their schooling in this precious French, and returning in full force to their native barbarisms! *Tamen usque recurret!*

The city and canton of Thionville—Diedenhofen we call it—are completely German. In this same quarter,

on the confines of Luxemburg, some years ago a whole village, with the priests at their head, went up to the Mairie to protest against the forcible imposition of the French language. The affair came before the Senate in Paris; how it all ended I forget, but, doubtless, for one thing, in the decoration of the Maire.

I do not, by what I have cited, mean to prove that in these subjected provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, France has no friends, and Germany no foes.

France strong, powerful, and united, full of arts and industries, has been in a position to look down upon a divided, backward, enfeebled nation such as ours. The French Revolution, the wars of the first Empire, the great industrial movements, all more or less converging and springing from France, all gave a prestige to this position. And it is the truth too, and not much perhaps to our credit, that the German adapts himself readily to foreign influences. The desperate obstinacy of the Italian under the yoke of the stranger is not one of our strong points. And even you Italians have experienced the beguiling effects of French wit and polish upon weak heads and shallow minds.

Beyond this, in Alsace, we meet an enemy common to all the world: I mean Catholicism—not the Catholicism of the Strossmayers and of Wessemberg, but that genuine article redolent of the Vatican, which, I am proud to say, holds Prussia in especial detestation,

—that style of Catholicism which incited the benighted peasants under its control, to hunt down and murder our wounded soldiers at Woerth.

Just and necessary as the restitution now has come to be, yet it will not be consummated without many difficulties, many heart-burnings, and many dangers; for the wounds of centuries cannot be healed in a day. A sacred obligation impels us onward in this matter; but for this we would willingly, even at this moment, forego these fruits of our victories, only too glad to renounce these countries whose possession for many a year to come must give us work to do rather than anything like solid advantage.

And after all this, there still remains the important question of the new frontier lines. Let France keep her French territory intact, whether always hers, or not, we will not ask; we desire no conquests, we want what is our own, neither more nor less.—But what is our own?

You may determine the height of a mountain and the course of a river, but with what precision can you arrange a national boundary?

I have wandered about the slopes of the Mediterranean, Istria, and the Alpine valleys of the Trent; everywhere you find yourself in a debatable land, belonging to both or to neither of the neighbouring countries. To fix a territorial boundary involves so many points,

the interests of commerce, the relations of trade, old district combinations, customs and taxes and dues, and perhaps the most important of all, strategic considerations. In our case now these last will, of course, stand first, though the value of a natural barrier is not what it was, nor are bristling fortresses along the frontiers much impediment to invasion. Great rivers, being great highways, should in all reason be national property, not national boundaries; we have seen the result of the divided dominion of the Rhine,—never ending, and ever renewing, contests and disputes. Day by day the French remind each other, with savage joy, that the town of Kehl lies at the mercy of the cannons of Strasburg. On the side of France, too, there is the great entrenched camp of Metz, to which Germany can offer nothing similar. The sole object for which it was made was to support the meditated invasion of the last thirty years, and it is neither more nor less than a constant menace from France to Germany.

Metz, too, was once German; it is French now, we grant it, though many Germans demand Metz all the same,—not by right of nationality, but to make our frontiers secure. But in possessing ourselves of Metz there will be a difficulty, as every one will see, in taking a French province, however small, ruled by French laws and sentiments, and making it German; and

public opinion when it classes Metz with Alsace and German Lorraine, I think makes a mistake. But as every newspaper reader believes himself to be a general, so everybody thinks himself qualified to have a judgment in these matters. For my part, I think it our duty to leave these grave particulars undiscussed, relying upon those able hands which hold the destinies of the two nations. But I repeat it, the nation is unanimous only for having back the countries which actually belong to us by their language and customs; it does not wish that our reclamation should degenerate into conquest.

And has Europe any just cause for uneasiness because we claim back what was once our own?

Doubtless there are men so timorous that they might as well wear petticoats as pantaloons, and there are easy-going politicians who will counsel us to remember the dangers of the future, and to beware how we exasperate the French.

But of what avail is such a consideration as this? Have the days of Woerth and Metz increased the friendship of the French for us? are not the inevitable consequences of this war sad memories and slumbering hatred, primed to explode at any moment? and does not this tremendous war contain the germs of another, possibly still more gigantic?

But how was this to be avoided on our part? God

knows as long as there was a chance of averting this calamitous breach, I laboured, in my small way, to effect it; and I did this with an honest regard for the great and amiable qualities of the French nation, and out of a true affection towards the many good friends I had found in it.

And now what can we do? can we put things back to the state when Waterloo was beginning to be forgotten, and when Rézonville was not foreseen? Can we heal the wounded pride, the mortified vanity which defeat at all points at our hands has inflicted on our foes? Those who know the meaning of French pride and vanity will understand, as I do, that no conditions of peace can intensify the hatred roused to its height by utter defeat. What a commentary on the pride and vanity of this great nation is its dreamt-for revenge for Sadowa! Even our independent victory over the Austrians was received by France as a mortal insult.

With all this before our eyes, can any one be mad enough to suppose that France can be conciliated by any peace of any kind?

Again, I ask, were we to claim back Alsace and German Lorraine, would Europe and the great Powers have any just cause for uneasiness?

If this were a matter of conquest, the case might reasonably alarm the nations, for every conquest is a

crime against the rights of nations,—to trample upon one nation is to offend all; but I have shown and proved that this is not a question of conquest.

But I fancy another consideration occupies some Italian minds. Europe is settling, we hope, firmly and happily upon the principle of the unification of the great nations, maintained and balanced by the system of political equilibrium. If we infringe upon this system, all its members suffer. Fraternity amongst nations, as well as men, requires a certain equality. Will it then be an infringement upon this equilibrium if these French provinces, with a German nationality, belong again politically to Germany? I think not.

Those who are against us, complain that Prussia is the first military Power in Europe, and as to the 'Perseveranza,' if it could have its way, it would persuade us to restore this equilibrium which it is so alarmed lest we should disturb, by giving to those poor French the whole of the left bank of the Rhine! What a fine thing is disinterested advice! But granting that we *are* the first military Power in Europe, why should that destroy the European equilibrium? Have not France and Russia, both in turns, enjoyed the name of this supremacy? It is a pity we cannot have these times back again! Then, perhaps, the 'Perseveranza' would think it safe to obtain for us Alsace in the shape of a generous gift. Now, alas! it will cost us dear!

When the invincibility of the French army was as much an article of faith at Milan and Vienna as in the Bois de Boulogne (though Berlin scepticism never quite accepted it), where was the equilibrium then? In fact, such an equilibrium as this never has existed, and never can; it is a dream, on a par with the equal division of worldly goods amongst all men. We must admit that the Prussian army is stronger than the Italian; does it follow, then, that if we attempted the conquest of the Peninsula, we should succeed? Morally and materially, a nation's greatest strength is for defence, and not for attack, especially in the long run. Decidedly, we should issue from any such enterprise with loss of honour, and with no advantage. Thank Heaven we are not as yet the dictators of Europe! Nero I. and Napoleon I. sent a mandate, and changed a neighbouring state into a dependent province; but if any such decree were signed by Bismarck, where would it be respected?

Yet more, how could two provinces of the size of Alsace and German Lorraine, taken from France and given back to Germany—let us say to Prussia—upset the balance between the great Powers? The transition for a long time must be anything but remunerative to us. But supposing the time when they shall have settled down as good Germans again, like the rest of the inhabitants of the Rhenish provinces, what

will the figures of the case show? Only 1,200,000 more Prussians, and just so many less Frenchmen. The two departments of Savoy and Nice contain two-thirds of this number. France, therefore, in 1860, besides violating that generosity which forbids you to exact payment for benefits conferred, committed also the serious wrong of upsetting the equilibrium of Europe? Had we not better restore the old equilibrium by taking from her Alsace and Lorraine?

Let me speak seriously again. France, I am the first to own it, is a European necessity. She must not, and cannot, be ruined. But a dismemberment that leaves her safe frontiers and thirty-six millions of people is not ruin.

A sound judge will understand that if the military preponderance of Prussia were much greater than it is (and a great deal at present in its strength is *personal*, for we cannot always reckon upon a Moltke to lead us, or a *Lebœuf* to confront us), it still accords better than any other with the independence of other nations.

Our policy is defensive, not because of chance circumstances, nor from the peaceful character of the people, though that tells powerfully, but from the fundamental constitution of Prussia, so ingrafted in her policy that neither people nor government can change it.

Again, our policy is defensive, because we have no

profit in victory. As Germans, as Liberals, and as Protestants, we reject that Austrian dream of seventy millions of people, no longer united Germans, but a mixture of many peoples, capable only of being ruled by an autocracy, and Catholic more than Protestant. Such acquisitions would be a calamity every way, both to conquerors and conquered. We are even now learning this lesson. However victorious we may be, what must be the fruits of this war? The loss of the flower of our manhood; lasting enmity with France; new perils for the future; as much within as without. Wise and patriotic was the peaceful policy of Bismarck which sacrificed something of our victories in 1866; and allowed Luxemburg to be dismantled, and has, to preserve peace, kept at bay for a few years the Commissioners of the grand scheme for the remodelling of Europe, although our Generals, like their *confrères* in Paris, did not cease to assure him that they were more than ready! and that there was nothing to fear. No—defeat we had *not* to fear,—but peace was worth more than many victories.

Again, our policy is necessarily defensive, because by the working of our military system, we feel the penalties of war more profoundly than other nations. In France the upper classes contribute but a small portion of the officers of the army. With us, war means the whole nation in arms, from the highest to

the lowest. So in proportion we are stronger; but we also suffer more. It is in vain to tell me that one man's life is worth as much as another's. The death of a great merchant; of a rising professor, the idol of his classes; of a promising politician, in whom the future statesman may be predicted,—the loss of such men as these leaves a more irreparable void than the death of a private individual who lived only for his own family. *Testis sum.* Would to God that I were not telling you the truth! Every letter I open brings me the tidings of some valuable life cut short—some friend wounded—some well-known head laid low. I have not the heart to go on.

Many a time, and truly, Prussia has been reproached for her pusillanimous policy. Few have guessed how much of that policy is due to the terrible responsibility of sending such an army as hers into the field. Yes, my friends, the Prussian sword is very powerful; but it is powerful for defence only. The nation must feel that it stands face to face with an unalterable necessity to make it raise its arm with full effect. He who would abuse this sword, would break it.

In the last place, our policy is necessarily pacific, because of the federal system of our political machinery. Our federation is distinct from that of Switzerland or the United States; it is adapted to the requirements of a State that is neither small nor isolated.

The war of 1866 settled the nucleus of the German nation; this war will seal its federation.

There was a doubt in 1866 still, whether in its process of unification the nation would take the line of centralization or federalism. This to many did not seem a vital question in the face of a great war, full of difficulties and laden with risks; but now this doubt is decided. The faithful and patriotic help given to us by the whole population of Germany, and by the most important Governments, such particularly as Baden, Saxony, and Bavaria, proves to us beyond a doubt, and beyond a fear, that the federal system suffices for all our aims. It is probable that our national vigour will gain force; but it is also certain that the existence of the secondary States, their sovereigns, and their representatives, will have a surer guarantee for the future than before this war took place.

I beg outsiders, and especially Signor Mammiani, to weigh well the consequences of this war. Those who see in the unification of the great German nation a perpetual menace to the rest of the world, are called upon to observe that the political co-operation of the secondary States forms the soundest check upon Prussian usurpations. We form a most powerful combination against invasion; but, thank God, we cannot dispose of the Saxons and the Bavarians after the manner of Napoleon the First when he invaded Russia.

I have here set before you the political position which we hold in relation to France and to Europe. Italy is the natural ally of Germany; like us, she has cast off the fetters of internal disunion, and the yoke of the Austrian; we have common interests and common aspirations, and now more than ever, we should live in close alliance.

Perhaps it was but right and honourable that the Italian Government should not avail itself of the present opportunity of taking from France the Italian territory she enjoys, but if it does not make an end of the Roman question now, I shall think it is patient and resigned beyond all allowable limits. Signor Terenzio Mammiani, in the letter he favoured me with,* seemed to think that Germany would oppose this movement. I am happy to say that he will certainly be mistaken, provided no misunderstanding turns up.

I thoroughly disapprove of the policy of our Government in religious matters. Our minister of public instruction—a colleague of Bismarck by the law of contrasts it must be—will no doubt shed a tear when he hears of the failure of the firm of the Infallibilists. But the Florentine Government should know better than to be asking about here and there for permission to take possession of the Pontifical States. Of course,

* I have only seen this letter in our newspaper translations; if they misstate his meaning, the author must excuse me.

if they do this, they will be told to keep quiet. But if they act and don't talk, our Government will say nothing, and our nation will applaud.

Beyond this, I do not see that we can go. Mammiani would like us to join in the solemn declaration that the *last* Council was not Ecumenical. As for me, I must be excused here. I would do it with all my heart, if it was not necessary to become a Catholic first; but this, I own, would not at all suit me.

The attitude of the German Catholics at and after the Council was, to my mind, an improvement upon that of the Italian Catholics; the former certainly made the nearest approach to a serious opposition that was possible in a party professing unanimously to substitute the principle of obedience for that of free will. I believe I express the sentiments of all sensible Germans, whether Protestant or Catholic, when I say that it does not become Italy to declare war against the Papacy. She should rather support this, her greatest political institution; and the Papacy should and could exist without the temporal power, which really degrades it, by making the first Bishop in the world the last of its Kings.

D. F. STRAUSS

TO THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE.

Letter to ERNEST RENAN.*

August 18th, 1870.

Dear Sir,—Your friendly acceptance of my work on Voltaire, conveyed to me in your letter of the 30th ult., was a great comfort to me. The book met with a generally favourable reception in Germany, during the few weeks vouchsafed to it from its first appearance to the breaking out of the war; but I had never concealed from myself the difficulties a foreigner has to cope with in trying to do justice to a man of another nation, especially if that man must be called the very embodiment of the foreign nationality. I awaited, therefore, with some uneasiness the judgments of the leaders of opinion among Voltaire's countrymen. That yours has turned out in favour of my work, makes me right glad; at all events the truthfulness which you concede to it has been my sole endeavour.

* Reprinted from the 'Daily News.'

But who can take pleasure in a literary work, and especially a work for international peace, as my 'Life of Voltaire' was intended to be, at a moment when the two nations to whose union it was meant to contribute stand in arms against one another? Rightly do you say that this war must cause the deepest distress to all those who have striven for the intellectual association of France and Germany; rightly do you describe it as a calamity that now again for a long time to come injustice and uncharitable judgment will be the order of the day between the two members of the European family whose sympathy is so indispensable to the work of moral civilization; rightly do you declare it to be the duty of every friend of truth and justice, at the same time that he unreservedly fulfils his national duty, to preserve himself free from that patriotism which is only party spirit—which narrows the heart and perverts the judgment.

You say that you had hoped that the war might still have been stayed. We Germans had the same hope in every case since 1866 when war seemed to threaten; yet in general we have held a war with France as a consequence of the events of that year to be inevitable,—so inevitable, that here and there one heard the question asked with dissatisfaction, "Why did not Prussia declare war sooner, for instance on occasion of the Luxemburg affair, and so

bring things to an issue?" Not that we wished for war; but we knew the French well enough to know that they would wish for war. It is now as it was with the Seven Years' War, the consequence of the Silesian conquests of Frederick the Great. Frederick did not desire that war, but he knew that Maria Theresa desired it, and would not rest till she had found confederates. An established ascendancy is not readily renounced either by a monarch or a people. They will make efforts to preserve it until it is decisively taken from them. So was it with Austria, so is it now with France: both of them against Prussia, by whose side the whole of non-Austrian Germany, better instructed, is this time standing.

Since the epoch of Richelieu and Louis XIV. France has been accustomed to play the first *rôle* among European nations, and in this claim she was strengthened by Napoleon I. The claim was based on her strong politico-military organization, and still more on the classical literature which in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had grown up in France, and made her language and her culture supreme in the world. But the immediate condition of this supremacy of France was the weakness of Germany; over against France united, unanimous, and quick to move, Germany stood divided, discordant, and unwieldy. Yet, every nation has its time, and, if

it is of the right sort, not one time alone. Germany had had its time in the sixteenth century, in the age of the Reformation. It had paid dearly for this pre-eminence in the convulsions of a thirty years' war, which threw it back, not only into political feebleness, but into intellectual stagnation. Yet things were far from having come to an end with it. It saw its time again. It began its work where France had fixed the roots, not indeed of its power, but of its true right to European ascendancy. It fashioned itself in silence; it produced a literature; it gave to the world a succession of poets and thinkers, who took their place by the side of the French classics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as something more than equals. If in finish of cosmopolitan understanding and cultivation, in clearness and elegance, they fell short of the French, in depth of thought as much as in strength of feeling they surpassed them. The idea of humanity, of the harmonious cultivation of human nature in individual as in common life, was developed in German literature in the last twenty-five years of the eighteenth and the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century.

The result of this was that Germany won the intellectual leadership of Europe, while France still maintained its political ascendancy, though latterly in hard struggle with England. But the literary outburst of

Germany was either fruitless bloom, or it was destined to be followed by political regeneration. In the time of Napoleon, France had laid Germany prostrate before her; the yoke was thrown off in the war of liberation of 1813–14. But the ground of our powerlessness, the want of political unity, was not removed; on the contrary, if the German empire had long been nothing but a shadow, now even the shadow had vanished. Germany had become a motley aggregate of greater and smaller independent States. This independence itself may have been a mere show, but it was yet real enough to make all energetic action of the whole body impossible; while, on the other hand, the "Bundestag" which had to represent the unity, made its existence discernible in nothing but the repression of all free movement in the individual States. If France was again taken with the humour to aggrandize itself at our cost, it was not Germany, but Russia and England, that had to restrain it. This was keenly felt in Germany. It was felt by the men who had fought in the Liberation War, who, during the dismal years of reaction, saw quite another seed spring up than that which they were conscious of having sown; it was felt by the young men who had grown up in the thoughts and the songs of these wars. Thus it was that strivings after unity during the succeeding time had something very youthful, immature, and romantic about them.

The German idea haunted them as a familiar—as the Ghost of the Old Emperor. That the Governments of the time attached so great importance to the students' clubs and democratic machinations, as they were called, only showed how bad their conscience was.

The storm of your July Revolution cleared our atmosphere to some degree, without carrying us essentially forward. There was now too much attention paid to a nation differently constituted; for every people first of all must look to its own work, to its own nature and history. In the Chambers of our smaller States there was life enough; many robust forces were aroused, but the narrow range of their activity made their horizon equally narrow. As Prussia and Austria remained closed to constitutional life, and held together in opposing its spread in the smaller States, in these latter hostility to the Bundestag, the pitiful remnant of German unity, passed for patriotism. Indeed, it could not long be concealed that nothing could come of spirited speeches in the small States, so long as their Governments could fall back upon the Bundestag,—that is, upon the two absolute leading States. Thoughts of a representation of the people in the Bund were floating; in Prussia a hopeful, if imperfect step was being taken in the meeting of the united "Landtag," when for the second time an impulse from your country—the February Revolution—struck into the course

of German development. These French influences were dangerous for us only so long as they found us weak. In proportion as we gained internal strength they became more and more desirable; so that this last, which was thought to be most unfortunate for us, is to-day bringing to our view more auspicious consequences than all earlier ones. The impulse of 1848 came upon us at a moment when in each of the German States men had come to be convinced of the fruitlessness of all separate strivings for freedom and popular well-being, and at one stroke it forced the idea of German unity to the surface. In the German Parliament, elected by the general vote, this thought gained for the first time a political organ, before whose moral authority all existing individual powers had for some time to fall into the background. But if, during the twenty years of reaction, the idea of German unity had had its life principally among our students, then the scoffers might say that in 1848 it had passed to the professors,—and so far at least with truth, as in every educated German, according to the common expression, there is something of a professor. Enough; the thing was set going very thoroughly in theory, but also very unpractically. In fencing about principles of right, and debating over paragraphs of the constitution, invaluable time was lost, till, unobserved, the actual Powers had regained their strength, and the

ideal fabric of a new Germany dissolved like a castle in the clouds.

From such airy heights the German imperial throne had been offered to a Prince who, although in other respects a man of the clouds, had yet so much true insight that he could neither believe himself to be the right man for the crown nor the crown itself to be a possibility. The attempts which he then made to appropriate some part of what had been offered to him ended even more pitifully than the attempt of the German people to constitute itself anew. In the course of these struggles the dualism of Austria and Prussia had more and more brought itself before men's eyes as the essential misfortune of Germany. During Metternich's time Prussia had been kept in tow by Austria, and this had been thought the guarantee of all order and security. Its present attempts, each more earnest than the last, to have its own will and to carry out its own proper aims, were not less disagreeable than novel to Austrian policy. Whatever, therefore, from this time onwards was undertaken or promoted in Germany by Prussia, beginning with the Zollverein, was both secretly and openly opposed by Austria. Germany fell into the condition of a waggon with one horse before and another of equal strength pulling behind, with no hope of moving. But the times educate their men,

provided that among the young growth there are characters of the right stuff, and that these find themselves in their right places. Herr von Bismarck was a man of such stuff, and in his position in the Bundestag in Frankfort, he was in the right place for penetrating into the inmost seat of Germany's weakness. It was indeed his Prussian pride which swore revenge upon Austria for the humiliations which she had destined for Prussia; but in this he was not unconscious that with Prussia, Germany also would be helped forward. On occasion of the war in Schleswig-Holstein, the phenomenon was for a moment seen of the two horses pulling side by side, yet the end was hardly attained before the old opposition began again. Now was the time to cut the traces which fastened the hinder horse to the waggon; it would then be an easy task for the other to move it forward. A true Columbus egg, this thought! It would have seemed that every one must have shared it; yet there was but one man—if the thought was not his alone—who conceived the true means to carry it into effect.

In the life of nations, as of individuals, there are times when that which we have long wished and striven for presents itself to us in so strange a shape that we recognize it not, and even turn away from it in displeasure and resentment. So was it with the

Austrian war of 1866 and its consequences. It brought to us Germans what we had so long wished for, but it brought it not in the manner that we had wished, and therefore a great part of the German nation thrust it away from them. We had hoped to work out the unity of Germany from the popular idea, from the popular desire, from the thoughts of its best men. Now it was by the action of the *de facto* Powers, by blood and iron, that we saw the road cut out. We had hoped—so wide and so high had been the range of the idea—to include in one constitution the entire German race. Now as the result of actually present relations, not only the Germans in Austria, but the intermediary South German States, remained excluded. It needed time to reconcile German idealism, and, perhaps, German obstinacy, with the fact which it found before it; but the might, nay, the reasonableness of this fact was so irresistible, that in the shortest time the better view had made a most happy progress.

That which in no small measure contributed to throw a light even upon the most blinded was the attitude which France took up towards these events. France had let it be seen that she hoped to strengthen her pre-eminence by means of the internal conflicts of her neighbour; when she found herself deceived in this hope she could not disguise her vexation.

From this time onwards we Germans could regulate the value we attached to our political relations by the French estimate of them, for their value was exactly the reverse to the one and the other people. The sour looks which France cast on Prussia and the Northern Confederation taught us that in those two lay our safety. Her oglings with the unconfederated South taught us that in the latter lay our greatest weakness. Every movement which Prussia made, not to force the South German States to join it, but merely to keep the door open to them, was suspected by France, and made an occasion of intervention. Even on a question so entirely non-political as the subvention of the Mount St. Gothard Railway, the Gallic cock crowed martially.

Since the fall of Napoleon, France has three times altered its constitution; on none of these occasions did Germany think of interfering. It has always recognized the right of its neighbour to remodel the inside of his house, according to his need or convenience, even according to his caprice. Were our German transactions of 1866, and subsequently, a different matter? Did the panels with which we lined our hitherto notoriously uninhabitable house, the rafters that we strengthened, the walls that we carried up, shake our neighbour's house? Did they threaten to intercept its light or air? Did they expose it to

danger from fire? No such thing! It was simply that our house appeared to him too noble. This neighbour of ours, he wished to possess the finest and highest house in the whole street, and above all, ours should not be too strong. We must not have the means of making it fast; he must never be deprived of the power to do what he had already done several times, of taking possession of a few of our rooms whenever it suited him, and throwing them into his own house. Yet, in remodelling our house we had made no claim whatever to those portions of it which our violent neighbour had appropriated in bygone days, but had left them to him, and given him the right of prescription. But now, indeed, since he has appealed to the sword, these old questions rise up again. France will not give up its European primacy.

Only if it has a right to this, has it a right to interfere with our internal questions? But on what is this pretended right to the primacy based? In cultivation Germany has long placed itself on a level with France. The equal rank of our literature has long been recognized by the representatives of that of France. The just proportion in which, thanks to a well-devised school education, moral and intellectual training have penetrated every class of our people, is envied by the best men among the French. The exclusion of the Reformation from France, greatly as it

contributed to strengthen its political power, had an equally great effect in destroying its intellectual and moral well-being. But even in political capacity we have now fully come up to the French, though slowly. The Revolution of 1789 appeared to give them an immense advantage over us. We have to thank it for loosening us from many chains which would otherwise have weighed upon us far into the future; but what we have seen in France since the Revolution has not been of a character to frighten us out of our competition. Limited Governments appear to have come into being only to be undermined, to sink into anarchy, as this, in its turn, into despotism. Whether Constitutional Monarchy, in which you, no less than myself, recognize the only durable form of Government for Europe (exceptional conditions put aside), can ever strike its roots deep in France, appears to be doubtful to yourself in your admirable essay on the subject; at least it is your wish rather than your hope.

That I am not blind to the many good qualities of the French nation—that I recognize in it an essential and indispensable member of the European national family, a beneficial leaven in their mingling—it is as little necessary that I should assure you, as that you should assure me of the like unperverted estimation of the German people and their merits on your side. But nations, as well as individuals, have, as the

reverse side of their merits, not less conspicuous faults; and in relation to these faults, our two nations have for centuries enjoyed a very different, nay, totally opposite, training. We Germans, in the hard school of calamity and dishonour, in which your countrymen in great measure were our relentless schoolmasters and chasteners, have learnt to recognize our essential and hereditary faults under their true form—our visionariness, our slowness, and, above all, our want of unity, as the hindrances of all national success. We have taken ourselves to task, we have striven against these failings, and sought more and more to rid ourselves of them. On the other hand, the national faults of the French, pampered by a succession of French monarchs, were for a long time intensified by success, and not cured even by misfortune. The craving for glitter and fame; the tendency to grasp at these rather by loud adventurous achievements without than by silent effort within; the pretension to stand at the head of nations, and the thirst to patronize and plunder them; all these faults which lie in the Gallic nature, as those above named do in the German, were fostered to such an extent by Louis XIV., by the first and by, let us hope, the last Napoleon, that the national character has suffered the deepest injury. Glory in particular, which one of your Ministers has recently called the first word in the French language, is rather

its worst and most pernicious; one which the nation would do well to strike out of its dictionary for a long time to come. It is the golden calf round which the nation has for centuries kept up its dance; it is the Moloch at whose altar it has sacrificed and is even now again sacrificing its own sons and the sons of neighbouring nations; it is the *ignis fatuus* which has lured it from fields of prosperous labour into the wilderness, and often to the brink of the precipice. And while those earlier monarchs, Napoleon I. especially, were themselves possessed by this national demon, and therefore went even into their unjust wars with something of sincerity, with the present Napoleon it is the conscious cunning design to lead the nation astray into aims of cool self-seeking; to draw their attention away from their moral and political destitution within, that is, by ever and ever stirring up the national passion for glitter, fame, and depredation. Against Russia in the Crimea, against Austria in Italy, he was successful. In Mexico he met with sensible disaster. Against Prussia he let the right moment slip. At the beginning of this year the world could for a moment believe that he was in good faith, leaving this path and turning to that of internal reform, in the sense of rational freedom and administrative amendment; till his backward spring to the Plebiscite convinced all the world that he was still his old self. From

that time Germany, too, had everything to fear—rather, should I say, everything to hope.

That unity which he desired to frustrate is ours. The unheard-of claim which lay in his demand on the King of Prussia was as comprehensible and intolerable to the poorest peasant in the March as to the kings and dukes south of the Main. The spirit of 1813–14 swept like a storm through every German land; and already the first events of the war have given us a pledge that a nation which fights only for that for which it feels both the right and the power in itself cannot fail of its end. This end for which we struggle is simply the equal recognition of the European peoples,—the security that for the future a restless neighbour shall no more at his pleasure disturb us in the works of peace, and rob us of the fruits of our labour. For this we desire a guarantee, and only when this is given can we speak of a friendly understanding, of a harmonious combination of the two neighbouring peoples in all the labours of civilization and humanity; but not till that time when the French people shall find its false road closed to it will it be able to open its ear to voices like your own, which for long time past have called it to the true road—the road of honest domestic effort, of self-control and morality.

I have written in greater detail than pleases me individually, and indeed than is becoming; but our

German affairs and aspirations easily rise before the foreigner as a mere mist; and to make them a little clear, some minuteness is unavoidable. You will, perhaps, think it even less becoming that these lines come to you in print, not in writing. In ordinary times I would certainly have first asked your consent to their publication; but as things are now, the right moment would have passed before my request could reach you, and your answer come to my hands; and I think that it is not ill done if in this crisis two men of the two nations, each in his own nation independent and far from political party strife, freely, though without passion, address one another on the causes and the meaning of the war; for my utterance will seem to me only then to have its true worth if it gives you occasion to express yourself in the like manner from your own point of view.

ROESCHACH, 12*th August*, 1870.

MAX MÜLLER

TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND.

Five Letters to the EDITOR *of the* 'TIMES.'*

FIRST LETTER, *August 29th*, 1870.

Sir,—I could hardly trust my eyes when I read in the 'Times' of to-day the following paragraph:—

"Neither of the powerful contending countries seem to have regarded as disgraceful or criminal the proposal of the other to dismember and appropriate, in spite of treaties, the whole or portions of independent, peaceful, well-governed nations,—Holland, Belgium, Switzerland; though we well know that an English Minister who could dishonour his country by listening for a moment to such proposals, would be driven from office by an indignant people."

My surprise became still greater when I saw this terrible charge endorsed by a name that is honoured in Germany as much as in England—the name of Sir

* These letters have been revised by the writer, who has also made a few additions.

Harry Verney. In these words, which could not have been penned with a light heart, he arraigns at the bar of public opinion, not simply two ministers, but two nations; and he declares, with the undisguised pride of an Englishman, that a policy which in France and Germany is tolerated and approved by the people would have been branded in England as disgraceful and criminal.

I feel certain you will allow me to take up this challenge as far as Germany and Count Bismarck are concerned. Sir Harry Verney writes with so much confidence that I tremble lest he have some evidence, unknown to me and others, that Count Bismarck was really an accomplice of Count Benedetti, and not simply an unwilling listener; nay, as he so pointedly refers to Holland, the only share of the booty which could possibly have been claimed for Germany, he may possess documents, withheld as yet from the public, proving that Count Bismarck really bargained for Holland as a sop to Germany.

If that is the case, I give up Count Bismarck, but not yet the German people, whom Sir Harry has attacked as enduring a Minister "who in England would have been driven from office by an indignant people." If, on the contrary, there is no further evidence forthcoming for the grave charges brought against this German statesman, I think it is time to

remind his accusers that there ought to be no difference between private and public morality, and that to take away the character of a public man by vague accusations, is as grave a breach of the Ninth Commandment as to repeat idle reports affecting the character of private individuals.

I shall now follow Sir Harry step by step. Let us suppose, first of all, that Count Bismarck was as dark a conspirator as Count Benedetti. Did the people of Germany know the secret diplomacy of these two men before we knew it in England? and do you expect that on the eve of an invasion or in the throes of a deadly war Germany should first have convoked her Parliament, and, by crushing majorities or bloody *émeutes*, have hurled Count Bismarck from power? Is that the way in which England would have dealt with her Prime Minister when the safety of the country was at stake? Ay, even in times of peace, does the moral indignation of the English people always assume the form of annihilating majorities in Parliament? I do not wish to retaliate; but I may refer Sir Harry to the histories of Lord Macaulay and Lord Stanhope, or even to the recollections of his own long Parliamentary career.

I now advance one step. I deny that the acts of a Foreign Minister must be judged according to the same rigid laws that govern the acts of private per-

sons. What an admission! Sir Harry would exclaim. Who but a German could have made it? Bear with me for one moment. A man of high honour may decline to act as counsel in criminal or civil cases; but if he is once engaged for the defence, he is bound in honour to think of the interests of his client, and to leave it to the other side to discover and lay open the weak points of his case. A Foreign Minister is the counsel of his country, and he is bound by the simplest rules of prudence not to disclose many a secret of which, as a private person, he might decline to become the depositary. He has to listen to proposals of compromise, and, for argument's sake, to take into consideration eventualities which, as a private individual, he might indignantly decline to entertain. Do you suppose that Lord Palmerston had never to listen for a moment to suggestions about Turkey and Egypt, about Savoy and Nice, and was he driven from office by an indignant people? If Sir Hamilton Seymour had published to the world the proposals of the Emperor Nicholas about "the Sick Man," he would have brought on the very war which it was his object to prevent. But when the war had broken out, the English Government had no hesitation in publishing the despatches of this able and honourable diplomatist.

I now advance a step further, and unless Sir Harry Verney can produce crushing proof to the contrary,

I maintain against him and against everybody that, during the years which alone concern us, from 1866 to 1870, Count Bismarck's policy has been patriotic and peaceful, *sans reproche*, though, no doubt, also *sans peur*.

You know the political history of Germany from the beginning of this century. You know that ever since Jena one idea has pervaded every German heart, from the least to the greatest,—to re-establish a United Germany, to save the country from its divided and helpless state, to rescue it from its political nullity. You know of the many noble efforts to realize this great national purpose, and of the many failures. You know how, long before Italian unity was dreamt of, German patriots were everywhere at work to undo the mischief so carefully planned by the Congress of Vienna; you know how such men as Jahn, Arndt, Uhland, were hunted down as demagogues because they wanted a United Germany, instead of thirty-eight rags; you know how Gagern succumbed at Frankfort; how Radowitz died of a broken spirit after Olmütz; how Bunsen retired in despair. You know how Austria attempted once more to rally the Sovereigns of Germany round her ancient banner; how she failed because the German leaven was too weak in her, because she had not the moral strength, the military discipline, and the heroic self-denial which were

necessary for achieving the great work which she undertook. You also know how at last Prussia stepped forward, and, staking her very existence for the unity of Germany, succeeded, by dint of hard fighting with a well-trained, intelligent, and determined army, in putting an end to the misery of Germany. The soul of that final effort on the part of Prussia was Bismarck; and if Sir Harry Verney had accused his policy at that time of acts of harshness and violence, he might have made out a strong case against him, and not only against him, but against the German nation, who supported him in his policy. There are in the history of all countries great convulsions which one cannot criticize according to the ordinary rules of right and wrong. We do not criticize thunderstorms that darken heaven and earth, strike down palaces, and carry off the harvest of peaceful villages. We stand in awe while they last, but we know that Nature cannot do without them, and that when they are past, the air will be purer, and we shall breathe again more freely than before. No one would maintain that Parma and Modena, that Nassau or Hesse were wiped out from the map of Europe according to strict law. The friends of these dethroned dynasties will never cease to exclaim against the despoiler. There are Jacobites in England even now, or there were till very lately. At such mighty critical moments the public

weal is paramount. If Germany was to be united, somebody must unite it. It might have been done through Prussia, or through Austria, or through a Republic; but somebody had to do the work, to incur the responsibility, to take all the blame. This is what Prussia has done. She has made Germany; she has become Germany.

After the battle of Sadowa the whole of Germany might have been united but for the interference of France. France alone of all the nations of Europe stepped forward and said, "You shall not have an inch of Austrian soil; you shall not have my old ally, Saxony; you shall not pass the line of the Main; you shall give up part of Schleswig." No other Government in Europe thought that it had a right to interfere in the internal affairs of Germany. France laughed at us for our *naïveté* in supposing that we should be allowed to set our house in order without her leave. "Yield on these points," she said, "if not, *c'est la guerre.*"

What was the policy of Bismarck then and has been ever since? The North of Germany was united. Time was required for welding the various elements of the North more closely together. With every year the local interests would become less troublesome, with every year the army of the North would become more truly a national army. Treaties, defensive, though not

offensive, had been concluded with Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden, and Hesse. It was better to consolidate the North first, and to wait for the South. A union with the South was so inevitable that it would have been folly to precipitate it; on the contrary, the South had to be discouraged. There was work enough to be done in organizing the North, and a certain rivalry between South and North was an element of strength rather than of weakness. What, then, was Count Bismarck's policy? To yield to France as much as possible, to put off the evil day as long as possible. Many things might happen in France, and Germany might become an accomplished fact without passing through the fiery ordeal of a war with France. Sir Harry Verney may say that this was a selfish and purely German policy; but surely there was nothing in it that could be stigmatized as criminal, nothing to dishonour the country which Count Bismarck had tried so faithfully to serve?

What was the policy of the Emperor? He had allowed, he had even helped to unite Italy; but he required his reward, he rectified the frontier of France by annexing Savoy and Nice. He had allowed Germany to become united,—*i. e.*, he had not invaded Prussia while she was at war with Austria; and for this too he claimed blackmail, some slice of Germany to rectify the western frontier of France. This may in itself seem

harmless enough. But was it possible? Could Count Bismarck sacrifice German soil while Prussia claimed to be recognized as the protector of Germany? What, then, was the Prussian Minister to do? He withdrew from Berlin. He had all he wanted. But he could not avoid the French Ambassadors and agents altogether. They would not leave him alone, not even at Varzin.

Now let us look at once at the Benedetti document, and let us apply to it the old legal maxim, *Cui bono?* Whom did it benefit? a question which Roman lawyers were fond of asking whenever the guilt seemed to lie between two parties. Whom does that Treaty benefit? Is there one single point in favour of Prussia? Is the name of Holland as much as mentioned? The one clause apparently favourable to Prussia was that France should guarantee the *status quo* in Germany. Guarantee against whom? The very idea of such a guarantee was so distasteful to Count Bismarck that, even on that piece of French paper on which Benedetti scribbled his draft treaty, he insisted on its being cancelled. You can see it in the *facsimile*. Everything else in the draft embodies simply and solely the desires of France. It would have benefited France and no one else.

If Count Bismarck's policy had been so criminal and disgraceful as Sir H. Verney believes, why what statesman ever had a better opportunity of doing

mischief, of troubling the waters of Europe, of setting all his neighbours against each other, and then doing what he liked? If he had given one word of encouragement to France in her designs on Belgium, there was a war between England and France ready to hand. Or, if he himself had wanted war with France, he need only have waited till France stretched out her hand to seize Belgium, and then declared war against her, having England and Russia for his allies. That would have been disgraceful and criminal. Or if he had simply given utterance to his own feelings, if he had bluntly declared to Count Benedetti that his Government considered a proposal to dismember and appropriate, in spite of treaties, the whole or portions of peaceful and well-governed nations as disgraceful and criminal, what would have been the result? *La guerre,* the very war he wished and tried to avert.

What, then, did Count Bismarck do? He knew his neighbour, and he kept his country prepared against any surprise; but he hoped against hope to avoid a conflict, if possible. He did not by abruptly refusing to listen to any more proposals wish to drive the Emperor to a decided policy. We can well imagine with what bitter scorn in his heart he said smilingly to Benedetti, "If you must have something to quiet the people of France, why there is Belgium, there is England or Spain. Why do you

not take them?" Did he promise to help in these adventures? Did he bind himself to furnish one single soldier? Did he betray Belgium by thought, word, or deed, or act disloyally towards England?

Surely, Sir Harry Verney knows better than I do that life at Courts and Embassies is not like the life of a quiet country parish. You cannot say to an Emperor or his Ambassadors, "Begone!" You must take them as they are, you must humour them, you must try to make them harmless, or, if that is impossible, let them perish in their own snares. Count Bismarck, in his capacity of Minister of Foreign Affairs for Germany, seems to me simply blameless. He has achieved a noble work, the greatest work in the history of the nineteenth century: he has given back Germany to Europe. Germany may still be beaten, she may be conquered and dismembered again, she may share the fate of Poland, for the counsels of God are inscrutable; but the Germans, depend upon it, will now conquer or die together, and, whatever may befall, they will never forget what they owe to Count Bismarck, who has proved himself more than the Cavour of Germany. Cavour did not achieve the unity of Italy without French bayonets, and he had to sell an Italian province. Bismarck succeeded without French bayonets, and he declined to sell one inch of German soil.

I need hardly say that I detest as heartily as Sir

Harry Verney the unconstitutional proceedings that have marked the internal government of Count Bismarck. The Liberal party in Germany has never ceased to oppose him at home, in spite of his dazzling successes abroad. But surely in England one learns to respect even those from whom one differs; one learns to oppose without insulting. Everything for the people, nothing through the people, which seems Count Bismarck's maxim in home politics, is a maxim not very distasteful to a certain class of English statesmen. Count Bismarck in England would be a Tory, a somewhat extreme Tory; but he would not, for all that, be driven from office by an indignant people.

The times in which we live are critical times, and he who embitters the feelings of one nation against another incurs fearful responsibilities. The temper of the English people,—I mean the true aristocracy of the English people—has hitherto been most dignified; their action worthy of a great and sorrowing nation. England is neutral; and what else could she have been? The Emperor, whatever he was at home, has been a useful ally to England; and whether it was wise or not to listen to his solicitations, *perfide Albion* is not so perfidious as to turn against an old ally at the time of his sorest need. But to be neutral does not mean to surrender the right of judging and of expressing one's judgment without fear. There is no

Englishman that I know of who would accept neutrality on such terms. England, whether through the press or through some, at least, of her most trusty statesmen, has pronounced her judgment of this war in no uncertain tone. Not even the most determined partisans of the Imperial Court of France have hesitated to call the war *unprovoked*. That may seem a mild epithet, but in a court of law it is enough to change manslaughter into murder; in history it changes war into brigandage. The pretext of the candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen has been blown away like a ring of smoke. If France was really offended, surely Prim, who proposed this candidature, was the real offender, not the King of Prussia; and one word from the Emperor to Prim would have rendered Prince Leopold as impossible as the Duke of Montpensier. That the King of Prussia wanted peace he proved by allowing French diplomacy to have its triumph, and by doing what few Kings would have done, withdrawing, at the dictation of France, the permission which he had previously granted.*

The Emperor had planned this war for four years. We know it from the mouth of his own Minister. The country followed him at first with giddy ambition, but now with heroic patriotism. France may still come out victorious, but the Government that planned this war is judged already by history.

* See M. Benedetti's letter in the 'Standard,' Dec. 8, 1870.

Germany was threatened, insulted, invaded. The people of Germany has risen to repel invasion and to punish the invader. It is cruel to taunt that people, while trembling with fury in this deadly struggle, with moral cowardice at home, with complicity in fraud, with evil designs which cannot be substantiated, and which, I am convinced, never existed, except in the brains of Corsican statesmen.

I have written as a German, but bound, as is known, to England by the strongest bonds of gratitude that can bind a man to his native soil. If I am prejudiced, I believe my prejudices are English rather than German. Anyhow, there are few that have such good reason for loving both England and Germany as I have; few who wish so ardently as I do that these two nations should love each other, and should stand together, shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand, as the guardians of peace, the defenders of right, the champions of all that is good and true, lovely and noble on earth. If Germany conquers, a new era of peace will dawn on Europe; for Germany, if once united, would tolerate no war of conquest. An army in which every second man is the father of a family is the best guarantee for the peace of the world.

There need be no formal alliance between England and Germany. The two nations are one in all that is essential, in morality, in religion, in love of freedom,

in respect for law. They are both hard workers, hard thinkers, and, when it must be, hard hitters too. In the whole history of modern Europe Germany and England have never been at war; I feel convinced they never will be, they never can be. We have both our weak and our strong points, and we know it; but it is neither English nor German to thank God that "we are not like other people."

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

MAX MÜLLER.

SECOND LETTER.

October 22nd, 1870.

Sir,—No one, I think, can have read M. Arlès-Dufour's simple but powerful appeal to the English people without asking himself, what in the world are we to do? How can we help France? How can we stop the horrors of the war? There are some generous and impulsive hearts in England who would gladly rush into the fray and separate the two combatants, at whatever risk to themselves or to the country. This is not what M. Arlès-Dufour desires. He wishes for peace, not for war; and he feels convinced that England possesses sufficient influence with one or both of the

belligerents to induce them to accept terms of peace. I confess I fully share his conviction.

Though I can judge of public opinion in Germany from newspapers only, and from such letters as I receive from time to time, I have no hesitation in saying that the voice of England has not lost its weight with the better portion of the German people. The old love of Germany for England, though less passionate than it was, is not extinct. Germany never expected active help from England in her war against France; she would have been quite satisfied with a passive attitude; but a feigned neutrality, which, in the face of a flagrant outrage, pretended that it was difficult to apportion the guilt, gave rise, no doubt, for a time to sinister rumours. A bold avowal on the part of England that during the war she would place no restrictions on her trade would have given far less offence than the most courteous explanations as to the doubts and difficulties inherent in international law. We shall never have rest till these arbitrary restrictions of the trade of neutrals are swept away with other legal cobwebs, and every nation does what seems right in its own eyes with regard to the export of arms and ammunitions of war. Of course, no effort was spared by those whose interest it was to fan the first sparks of ill-humour between two nations who, if once united by a common policy, would keep the peace of Europe in

the West and in the East. But, in spite of all, no real mischief, I believe, has as yet been done, and an honest understanding and hearty co-operation between England and Germany remain as much as ever the goal of true German statesmanship. If England would but speak the language of a friend, free from lofty airs and magisterial accents, she would herself be surprised at the effect she might produce.

With regard to France it is more difficult to speak with confidence, because it is almost impossible to discover who at present dares to speak the true feelings of that country. But surely if there is a friend to whose advice France might listen without misgivings, it is England. Where has there been truer sympathy for her misfortunes than here? No doubt stern language has been used against those who have brought that beautiful country to the brink of ruin. The crimes of her Imperial ruler, the vices of her Imperial court, the follies of her Imperial society, the corruption of her Imperial administration have been laid bare with an unsparing hand; but France, real France —France freed from her Imperial doom, has lost no friends in England. She has gained in her distress friends whom she had lost in her prosperity.

What, then, can England do as she stands between France and Germany?

If what M. Jules Favre is reported to have said

Ni un pouce de notre territoire, ni une pierre de nos forteresses were the real voice of France, and if what Count Bismarck is reported to have said, "We must have Elsass and Lothringen whether they hate us or not," were the last word of Germany, then, no doubt, the task of the peacemaker would be hopeless.

But did M. Jules Favre speak the deliberate opinion of France? He hardly ventured to say so himself, and other voices have since been heard far less uncompromising. M. Arlès-Dufour does not endorse his sentiments. The horrors of the war, the unbroken succession of misfortunes, and, above all, the utter want of all real government, have told on the brave heart of France. France knows that it is impossible to exempt a people from plenary responsibility for the acts of its Government, and that she cannot shrink from the penalty which the criminal conduct of her rulers has brought upon her. "Take all our money," she says, "but do not add dishonour to our misfortunes."

Now here is surely an opportunity for England to step in and to impress upon France that there is no dishonour in bravely taking a punishment after the guilt has once been admitted. There are offences for which no judge would dare to inflict a mere fine. The actual expenses of the war may be reimbursed, but to suppose that the lives of thousands of soldiers could be valued at so much a head would be to carry us back

into the darkest ages of barbarism. If England would but speak to France as a friend to a friend, and as the defender of those eternal principles of justice which must regulate the conduct of nations as well as of individuals, France would be the first to admit that for the war which M. Jules Favre has boldly denounced as a crime she owes a heavier guerdon than mere money.

Let us now see what Germany demands. I say Germany, because her minister, Count Bismarck, has not yet officially formulated any conditions of peace. He guarded most carefully against the supposition that he had discussed with M. Jules Favre the terms of peace, and if in an animated conversation on the terms of an armistice he said that he could not but hold Elsass and Lothringen, *nous ne pouvons pas ne pas les prendre*, that, after all, was but naming a round sum and there are equivalents by which such a sum might be represented.

It is said that Germany is gloating over conquest, and that she carries on the war which she began in self-defence for the sake of territorial aggrandizement. Nothing could be more unfounded, more unjust. There is in Germany more sorrow than joy, and greater sacrifices would be made for peace than have been made for war. Why, then, it is asked, did Germany not make peace after Sedan? But how? and with whom? Was General Moltke to march his

army back across the Rhine, trusting to the peaceful disposition of a furious, half-beaten French army? Incredible as it sounds, this is what some influential politicians in England have advised General Moltke to do. Whenever in the whole history of the world one single precedent can be pointed out for such tactics, it will be time to answer such taunts. But what I deny *in toto* is, that either now or at any time has Germany been influenced by the greed of conquest. The conquest of territory inhabited by people who are not German in national sentiment is an idea abhorrent to the German mind, and Elsass and Lothringen are the best proof of my assertion. The tradition that these provinces belonged once to Germany, that they were taken from Germany by fraud and violence, and in spite of the remonstrances of the German people and the German princes, has never been forgotten on the right side of the Rhine. At the end of the Napoleonic war, German statesmen pointed out the insecurity of the south-western frontier, and claimed Elsass as the old bulwark of the German empire against France. German poets, like Schenkendorf, who died in 1817, bewailed the "lost patrimony" on the Vosges. But when peace was made, and political intrigues had defrauded Germany of her rightful claim, the people submitted to the inevitable, and an offensive war against France to recover Strasburg would

have been an impossibility, even for Count Bismarck. A war in Germany requires an enormous effort, and it can never be undertaken with a light heart. But if once undertaken, it becomes terrible, and cannot be ended until a real peace has been secured. What Germany wants at present is a real peace, or, what is the same, a secure frontier, and that she is determined to have at any price.

Think only of what has happened! France attacks Germany with the avowed purpose of annexing German soil. The French army is beaten back, and the German army in pursuing the enemy finds itself in actual possession of its old patrimony, Alsace and Lorraine. The sacrifices have been terrible; there is hardly a family from the Vistula to the Rhine that is not in mourning. "My only son," "my husband," "our father," "my four sons," such are the headings that rivet our eyes when reading the notices of deaths in German newspapers. Think how every heart in England quivered when the news arrived that three young Englishmen had been killed by Greek brigands; multiply that feeling by hundreds and thousands, and you may then form an idea of the sorrow and the fury that pervades the country. It is a mercy that there have been no German reverses, and that the atrocities of former French invasions have not been repeated. It is a mercy that the feeling of revenge does not exist in the

German army. But on one point all Germans are agreed, that, as far as in them lies, such a war must not occur again. Can any Power in Europe deny that Germany has acquired not only the power, but the right, not only the right, but the sacred duty to take the most ample guarantees for the safety of her western frontier? Would not England have resented it as an insult if the Greek Government had offered her a pecuniary indemnity and required a free pardon for those who had killed her sons? Yet the guilty there were mere brigands by profession, the guilty man here was the sovereign of a nation.

The new frontier line between Germany and France will have to be drawn by military authorities, not by diplomatists; and those who know Count Moltke know that they may trust his wisdom and moderation. No doubt that line will cut through French territory, and in cutting through French territory, it will also cut through the French population. It is easy to say that to transfer even a few thousands of people from one country to another is repugnant to our feelings. It is repugnant, no doubt, but so is war with all its consequences. I fully grant that it is a proceeding that should not be countenanced except in cases of extreme necessity. But it is a proceeding to which many people, particularly those who inhabit the marches of countries, have had to submit even in the

century in which we live,—people as patriotic as the inhabitants of Alsace, and attached to their country, not only by the mere instinctive love of their soil, but by a loyal devotion to their sovereign. It is easy to say that we are better than our fathers. I cannot read that lesson in the pages of history, least of all in the last twenty years of this much vaunted nineteenth century. Why is it that Alsacian German is spoken in the streets of Philadelphia? It is because the Germans of Elsass, rather than submit to the despotism of their new master, Louis XIV., preferred to leave their homes, and migrated to America, 180 years ago. That remedy is always open to the true patriot, and it is open to the Alsacians; but I doubt whether it will be largely resorted to by the present population of Alsace. Political sentiments have not the same intensity in all classes of society, and the Alsacian peasant has never been a very active politician. The Alsacian was petted by the Government; he was constantly told how proud he ought to be of belonging to France; but on the French stage and in the novel the Alsacian was always more or less of a Bœotian, and he never was considered as quite a Frenchman. France ought to be thankful that she has these outlying provinces, part of which she can cede with a good grace, and without too sharp a pang at parting with her own flesh and blood. To maintain that such an amputa-

tion would be annihilation to France—that if one stone was moved the whole building would crumble to pieces—is mere poetry and wicked metaphor. Is there a republican now in France who one year ago would not gladly have yielded Alsace, if by so doing he could have freed the country of Imperialism?

No, no! France will not cease to be a great nation because she has lost a strip of Alsace and Lorraine. Those who say so know little of the sources of the real and indestructible greatness of that country. If one thinks what France has achieved for herself and for the world at large, in spite of Imperialism, in spite of the constant drain on her physical and intellectual resources produced by the love of military glory, it is not difficult to foresee her triumphs in the future. No one has doubted the bravery of her gallant soldiers, whatever may have been said of the truly Abyssinian generalship of their leaders. How can one doubt that there is civic virtue left among her citizens if one knows how, for nearly twenty years, many of the best families have resisted the temptation of Imperial favours, and sacrificed their own and their children's interests rather than bow before the golden image? It has become the fashion of late to preach on French frivolity and immorality as pervading the whole country; but those who know France best know that it is not so. No doubt the upper classes have paraded their extrava-

gance and their vices before the eyes of the world in France more than they would dare do in other countries; but the middle classes are sound and safe, and there is among the lower classes less drunkenness and brutality than elsewhere. The constantly accumulating wealth of France is the best proof of the industry and frugality of the nation, and but for this fatal war France would soon have been the queen among the nations of Europe. What has been may be again, and in the peaceful but far more honourable contests for superiority in manufactures, in art, in learning, and literature, France will soon prove again a match, and more than a match, for England and Germany. If men of the stamp of M. Arlès-Dufour would but boldly step forward and appeal to the French people, we should soon have peace. Germany desires peace, and though there are parties in Germany who insist on the whole of Alsace and Lorraine, there are others who object to any annexation. Count Bismarck seems to have taken his stand between both extremes. He is too good a statesman to imagine that the annexation of disaffected provinces is any addition to the strength of Germany, but he is too good a patriot to leave the western frontier of the Empire any longer exposed as it has been. Strasburg and the gates of the Vosges may be taken back by force, never by argument. If England could prevail on France to admit the principle of territorial

cession, as far as it is required for the security of the western frontier of Germany, peace could be made, and details could be arranged by a Military Commission. In such a Commission the voice of a victorious general would no doubt have its weight, but the voice of Germany would counsel wisdom, and the voice of the world would throw in its powerful warning, *Ne nimis !*

MAX MÜLLER.

THIRD LETTER.

October 29th, 1870.

Sir,—It is true, as your correspondent "Scrutator" remarks, that the Imperial Government has never in any official document avowed that the Rhine frontier was the object of its attack on Germany. Whether, as your correspondent avers, it disavowed that object in any official document, I cannot tell. But as your correspondent adds,

> "I have little doubt that if France had been victorious, she would have annexed German soil"

he really strengthens my argument so much that I willingly accept his correction.

But I think "Scrutator" has been too hard on the rest of my argument. What I maintained was, that with the military system of Germany, a wanton aggression was impossible, and that the conquest of territory

inhabited by people who are not German in national sentiment was an idea abhorrent to the German mind. In proof of this I appealed to Alsace and Lorraine, and I think I was strictly correct in stating that Germany, although not forgetful of what she had lost, would never have sanctioned an attack on France even for the sake of retaking territory that had once been her own. German statesmen, I said, after the victories of 1815 insisted on the necessity of a stronger frontier as a bulwark against French ambition, and events have proved how right they were. German poets, I said, had lamented that their dearly-bought victories had been frustrated by the hostile attitude assumed by the Great Powers against Germany at the Congress of Vienna. But an attack on France for the sake of retaking the stolen patrimony in the West, I maintained, and still maintain, would have been a sheer impossibility; at all events, whether owing to the strong hand of a responsible Government, or to the strong sense of right among the people, it has never occurred. Granted, therefore, even though I did not say so, that it was the day-dream of some German poets and statesmen that the gates of the Vosges should again become the gates of Germany, was it not all the more creditable that the nation at large resisted all temptations to commit a breach of the peace?

It is against the rules of fair argument if "Scru-

tator" tries to make me responsible for what Professor Treitschke has written. I therefore pass over that. But if, because the Countess de Pourtales told General Ducrot, and because General Ducrot told General Trochu, that Prussia would seize the first opportunity to make war on France, it is argued that Prussia stands convicted of greed of conquest, both the premise and the conclusion seem to me extremely weak. After what happened at Nikolsburg and at Prague, German officers were convinced that France, sooner or later, would go to war for the championship of Europe, and anybody might have heard what Countess de Pourtales heard, that "if France wants a fight she may have it, but she shall not escape again as she did in 1816." If Prussia had wished for war with France, why did she yield to French menaces at Nikolsburg? Why did she sacrifice the old German stronghold of Luxemburg,—a sacrifice which for a time made Count Bismarck the most unpopular man in Germany? Why, if Prussia wanted war, was it France that seized the first opportunity to make war on Prussia?

But my object in writing to you was not controversy, but Peace. My object was to show that there were two points, at least, on which all right-minded people, whatever their national or political bias might be, could honestly agree, viz.:—

1. *That it would be subversive of the cardinal prin-*

ciples of public right to allow an unprovoked war to be atoned for by a pecuniary fine.

2. *That Germany, after her dearly-bought victories, has a right to the most ample guarantees for the safety of her south-western frontier.*

The admission of the first point, I thought, would make it possible for England to impress on France the duty of submitting to a harder sentence than a mere payment of damages.

The second point once admitted, England, as soon as her kind offices are asked for, would be justified in proposing a Military Commission to consider what changes were absolutely necessary on the frontier line of Germany to secure the safety of the country. In this way the right of self-defence would have taken the place of the right of conquest, the most difficult questions would have been taken out of the hands of diplomatists, and, once brought within the narrow limits of technical strategy, would have lost much of their irritating character.

"Scrutator" re-opens the question of Schleswig-Holstein, and maintains that the people in Schleswig are not German in national sentiment. Were he a Dane himself, he could only mean the North of Schleswig. But I abstain from plunging into a Schleswig-Holstein controversy. Let those who really wish to form a fair judgment on that point read the Treaty of Prague

and the speeches of Count Bismarck in the Lower House in December, 1866, and they will then perhaps judge less harshly of that much-abused German statesman.

I feel deeply conscious of the great disadvantages under which I tried to plead the cause of Peace, and I wish that abler and more powerful hands would take up a cause which I fear I have only injured. If every man, woman, and child in England who have contributed so generously to the relief of the sick and wounded, without any reference to their nationality, would now give all their energies, all their thoughts, all their prayers to the cause of Peace, England, without shedding a drop of blood, might still win the most glorious laurels. Germany, in spite of her righteous indignation, in spite of her military successes, in spite of the sharpness of her sorrows, is anxious for Peace, but for a durable Peace. Let Count Moltke be satisfied that Germany's frontier is safe for the future, and, depend upon it, Germany will be satisfied with as little purely French soil and with as few purely French subjects as is compatible with her safety. It is in France that England ought to exercise her legitimate influence for peace, and where she might hope to do real good. Reason, after all, is more powerful than rhetoric, and the earnest pleading of a friend like England must convince the people of France that the honour and greatness of their country do not depend on a strip of Alsace or Lorraine. If

Lewis the Great could offer to cede Strasburg for the sake of peace, the present Government of France need not fear to compromise its honour by following his example.

France has many friends and sincere admirers among her enemies,—many who would think life dull and dreary without the quickening light of her genius, without the generous impulses of her noble heart. Surely, in the face of such sufferings as we have lately witnessed, nationality disappears and humanity takes her rightful place, and appeals to friend and foe in language that is intelligible to all,—imploring them to forget all differences, all strife, all angry feeling, and to merge every thought in the one thought of Peace—Peace at any price, Peace at any sacrifice, but an honourable and a durable Peace.

MAX MÜLLER.

FOURTH LETTER.

November 2nd, 1870.

Sir,—I felt convinced throughout that in "Scrutator" I had to deal not with an enemy, but with a friend, and if I reply once more to his scrutiny, it is more for the purpose of thanking him for his important admissions than of carrying on a warfare about words.

I maintained,—

1. *That it would be subversive of the cardinal principles of public right to allow an unprovoked war to be atoned for by a pecuniary fine.*

"Scrutator" finds fault with the epithet "*unprovoked.*" I thought I might safely use it, for it had been used by the most reticent of English statesmen. It was less offensive than "criminal," the word used by M. Jules Favre, and yet more telling than the shower of damning epithets poured on the war by M. Guizot.

"Scrutator" says it is not true that, if peace were made to-morrow on the basis of a war indemnity, a pecuniary fine would represent all the punishment inflicted on France. He charges me with being forgetful of the myriads of desolate homes, the ruined towns, the burnt villages, the extinguished industry, and the humiliation of France, unparalleled in the annals of modern war. I can assure him they are before my mind day and night. But does not "Scrutator," in order to give strength to this argument, use "punishment" in two different senses? Suffering such as France has brought on herself is punishment, no doubt; but when I spoke of a punishment that should not by its lightness prove subversive of the cardinal principles of public right, I clearly meant punishment in a legal sense.

My second position was,—

2. *That Germany, after her dearly bought victories, has a right to the most ample guarantees for the safety of her south-western frontier.*

It is to this statement that "Scrutator" seems most determined to demur. So strong is his ingrained suspicion of the astuteness of Count Bismarck, that in spite of the absence of any incriminating evidence,—nay, in spite of the strongest evidence to the contrary (Treaty of Prague, surrender of Luxemburg, withdrawal of the Prince of Hohenzollern) he cannot bring himself to accept the only true and only natural explanation of things, viz. that Count Bismarck was bent on peace, and the Emperor was bent on war. Because I mentioned that German statesmen and poets had never ceased to regret the loss of Elsass, "Scrutator" argues—

"That the national sentiment of Germany has always demanded the reconquest of Alsace and Lorraine."

Now, surely with honest people there is a difference, and a very wide difference, between regretting a loss and wishing to take back what is no longer our own? Can "Scrutator" bring forward one single word from any German statesman or poet of note during the last fifty years in support of a reconquest of Elsass? Will he return the same challenge to me with regard to French statesmen and poets and the Rhine frontier? And if

not, how could he force his unwilling pen to write such a sentence ?—

"It is unfortunately true that the extension of her frontier in the direction of the Rhine has entered as much into the dreams of Frenchmen as the recovery of Alsace and Lorraine has entered into the national sentiment of Germany."

There should really be no misunderstanding on such essential principles of public morality, and in order to avoid every possible ambiguity I may be pardoned if I have recourse to a practical illustration. Suppose two jewellers' shops on opposite sides of a street. In the show window of the one there is a splendid tiara of diamonds; only one stone is broken out, and that very stone, having come into the possession of the other jeweller—we will not inquire by what means—is exhibited in the brilliant window opposite. Now, we can well imagine that one jeweller, whenever he passed the window of his rival, would cast a glance at the missing diamond, and we can equally understand that the other, on seeing the tiara, might find it hard to suppress a furtive wish for some of the remaining stones. Every moralist would admit that, under those circumstances, both were in danger of breaking the Tenth Commandment. But as long as the one simply looks at his lost diamond, and sighs, and passes on, surely he deserves praise rather than blame for resisting temptation; while if the other actually thrusts his arms through the

plate-glass, and tries to carry off another stone of the Imperial tiara, he cannot plead, as an "attenuating circumstance," that his rival, in his secret heart, wished to have back his diamond. And if in breaking the plate-glass he wounded his hand, and was brought bleeding before the judge, would his suffering go towards a mitigation of punishment?

In spite of the repeated temptation, I must decline to be drawn by "Scrutator" into a Schleswig-Holstein controversy, though I hold as strongly as ever that, whether on the ground of technical law or on the ground of national will, the cause of Schleswig-Holstein was a just and righteous cause; nay, though I might appeal to an authority which "Scrutator" would certainly respect, in stigmatizing the Protocol of London as a piece of diplomatic iniquity, and a revival of the evil spirit of the Treaty of Vienna.

But, as I said in the beginning, the points on which "Scrutator" agrees with me are infinitely more important than the points on which we differ, and I, therefore, gladly take note of them. He now admits,—

1. *That Germany would not be guilty of a great crime by annexing some of the territory she has conquered.*

2. *That it would be criminal on the part of France to refuse peace now on such a basis.*

I am less German here than "Scrutator." I object to Germany taking any territory by way of reprisal. I think her only justification in annexing territory is a rigid regard for the safety of her frontier. If she is once satisfied on that point, I have that confidence in her King and in her statesmen and spokesmen that I fully expect the grand opportunity of raising Europe to a higher standard of international morality than has hitherto prevailed will not be lost, and the mediæval idea of paying for defeat in living souls will be struck out for ever from the code of international law. To trust implicitly in the peaceful dispositions of France without taking the best security against a recurrence of the theatrical bombardment of Saarbrück would be on the part of the King a dereliction of the most sacred duty; to take one inch of territory beyond what is absolutely necessary for a strong defensive position would be a folly of which the greatest statesman of our time is not likely to become guilty. If "Scrutator" says that the verdict of 78 French Departments out of 89 against war proves that the development of commerce is a safer guarantee for peace than the ramparts of frontier fortresses, how does he dispose of the fact that, in spite of the 78 French *Maires*, war was declared! If an insult which, as "Scrutator" says, was never offered could rouse France to fever heat, how can he call on German statesmen not to mind "the vapouring of French colonels"?

"Scrutator" proves himself a true friend of France when he openly declares that it would be criminal on her part to refuse peace on the basis of a cession of territory. France will find out some day who have been her true friends and who have been her worst enemies on this side of the Channel. France can afford to give up part of Elsass, and be France again for all that. What is painful and almost intolerable for her is that at the same time she should have to part with any of her sons. It is a rude shock to our ideas of the dignity of human nature if even one single person is coerced into giving up his nationality, *i. e.* into giving up himself. With the great mass of the people in Elsass, I believe the difficulty will be much smaller than we suppose. They are all German by blood, many by language, and, what is most important, they are still German by the simplicity and honesty of their religion. We are told by English travellers that many of the peasants even now, if allowed to vote by ballot, would vote for Germany. For the true patriot there always exists the option of emigration,—a cruel option I grant, yet an option which formerly was denied to conquered provinces. But is there no other remedy? Would it be quite impossible that those who are really French in heart should remain French citizens, although living in a German province? The world is no longer what it was.

Thousands of Frenchmen are now living in Germany, thousands of Germans live in France or England, thousands of Englishmen are domiciled all over the world. In Hamburg, out of a population of 220,000, 70,000 are aliens. I look upon this as a sign of progress, as the result of free trade and free intercourse among civilized nations; and it seems to me possible that the same principle on a larger scale might be applied to Elsass. No doubt there are difficulties, and they stare us in the face; but why should we not attempt to face them? Why should not every Alsacian who wants to remain French (and I doubt whether their number will be very formidable) be allowed to do so, if he only conforms to the laws of the country where he takes up his abode, and contributes his share to its taxes? There would be the difficulty of military service, which is really a kind of tax from which no one in Germany is exempt. But this might be met by an equivalent, by a tax, and a heavy tax, to be paid by those inhabitants of Elsass who wish to remain French. This would act as a very fair test of patriotism, as a true *plebiscite*, and would in a short time lead to a natural solution of all difficulties. Some people would object to the additional tax, and would become German; others would object to it, and would migrate to France. Anyhow, no violence would thus be done to those convictions which form the inmost sanctuary of

a man's soul. I am afraid the rough and ready answer of the practical statesman will be that such a remedy is impracticable. It may be so. But if it is, I say again, as I said before, that all this misery is but a warning against the crime of war, and that when the flower of a nation has been mowed down by death, those who are spared to find new resting-places for themselves, whether in France or in more distant lands, may well be thankful for their fate.

MAX MÜLLER.

FIFTH LETTER.

November 7th, 1870.

Sir,—When I ventured to accept the first challenge of "Scrutator," it was not from any presumptuous confidence that I should be able to withstand in argument one of the most powerful athletes of our time, but simply and solely because I had such perfect confidence in his love of truth and his passion for justice that I felt convinced he would rather break his sword than use it against an adversary whom he thought in the right. Nor have I been mistaken in my expectation; and, though in his last letter there are a few thrusts which show a love of victory rather than a love of truth, I feel it right to thank him thus publicly for

the tender way in which he has dealt with one who, after all, can only handle a wooden sword, while he wields the very brand Excalibur.

If I write once more, it is not in order to carry on a controversy, but because I feel it my duty to make amends, as far as I can, for some omissions in my former replies, complained of by "Scrutator." I know now which are the points that seem vital to "Scrutator," and not one of them, I can promise him, shall be passed over in silence.

No one, I think, could have read "Scrutator's" last letter attentively without thinking, as I did, that its marrow consisted in the two weighty sentences which I quoted:—

1. "*That Germany would not be guilty of a great crime by annexing some of the territory she has conquered.*"

2. "*That it would be criminal on the part of France to refuse peace now on such terms.*"

"Scrutator," however, explains that when he acquitted Germany of a "great crime," he was judging her by what he himself regarded as a low and faulty standard of public morality; "for I added," he says, "that in annexing some portion of French territory Germany would certainly lose a noble opportunity of raising the standard of international morality."

I fully share "Scrutator's" sentiments, and I have

maintained throughout that the annexation of territory for the mere pleasure of annexation seems to me totally unjustifiable. I cannot conceive of any excuse for territorial annexation, except so far as it is demanded by a strict regard for the safety of a frontier that has been pronounced unsafe by the highest military authorities, and has proved to be so by long and sad experience. But, though I hold this opinion as strongly, nay, as we shall see, more strongly even than "Scrutator," I should consider it the height of injustice to say to Germany, "Because you do not inaugurate a new era of international morality; because you do not what I am bound to confess is without a precedent in the annals of history; because you do not what neither England nor any other country in the world has ever done; because after having driven the invader back across the frontier, you do not simply present your bill of blood and march home,—therefore your morality is low; therefore your morality is unchristian; therefore you are not worthy of the title of a civilized nation; therefore you are *almost brutal*." What would England have said if Germany had preached in that tone at the time when the Sikhs had recrossed the Sutlej, and the Mahârâja had surrendered himself a prisoner to Lord Hardinge?

"Scrutator" next enters on the circumstances that preceded and followed the famous *fracas* at Ems.

Though I am prepared to question the accuracy of several of his statements, for the sake of argument I am willing to accept them all in a lump. But what then? Are we to believe that "Scrutator" means to defend the Duc de Gramont for having declared war in the French Chambers because of a paragraph that appeared in a newspaper giving a true or an imaginary account of a true or imaginary insult offered by the King of Prussia to M. Benedetti? When a real insult had been offered by America to England by the capture of Messrs. Mason and Slidell, England sent her message and stood calmly by her guns, and waited for an answer; and if any English statesman had dared to declare war before that answer was received, woe to him, and woe, I add, to those who venture to defend such proceedings! The business of statesmen is of too grave a character to be transacted in newspapers, and granting even that Count Bismarck had written that paragraph which is supposed to have given such offence to M. Ollivier—a statement for which there is not one atom of evidence,—a declaration of war in answer to an article in a newspaper, or in a review, would still, according to all laws, human and divine, remain absolutely unprovoked, absolutely indefensible, absolutely criminal and diabolical.

I see I have passed over another indictment which Scrutator" brings, not against the people of Germany

and Count Bismarck, but against the King and the Crown Prince of Prussia.

"It has been repeatedly asserted, and as often denied," he writes, "that the King of Prussia, on the beginning of the war, declared that he was making war on the Emperor of the French, not on the French nation. The king certainly did not say so in so many words, and yet I think I can prove that the honour of Prussia is really committed to the line of policy attributed to King William. The King of Prussia's words are as follows:— 'I am waging war against French soldiers, not against French citizens. The latter, consequently, will continue to enjoy security for their persons and property so long as they themselves shall not by hostile attempts against the German troops deprive me of the right of according them any protection.'"

"Scrutator" maintains that the proclamation contained a distinct promise that the King would recross the frontiers of France when the aggression had been repelled. I maintain that it would upset all rules of grammar and logic if we attributed to it such a meaning. The proclamation is neither more nor less than an assurance—and, after the lying rumours that had been spread among the peasants of Alsace, a very necessary assurance—that the lives and property of private persons would be safe during the war, provided that the war was carried on according to the recognized rules of war—by soldiers, and not by civilians. How could the King promise to accord protection to French citizens after he had recrossed the frontiers of France?

The next person arraigned is the Crown Prince. He, too, published a proclamation, in which the sentence

occurs, "Germany makes war on the Emperor, not on the people of France." This again, we are told, could only mean that as soon as the German army had taken Napoleon prisoner, they would march home. If it were so, this proclamation would really carry us back to the times when wars were decided by single combat. But what would become then of that plenary responsibility for the acts of its Government from which, as the writer in the 'Edinburgh Review' told us, no people is exempt? What of the penalty which the criminal conduct of her rulers had brought on France, and from which France was told she ought not to shrink?

But now comes the worst. Because the King of Prussia did not fulfil a promise which he never made, because the Crown Prince of Prussia fought not only against the Emperor or the Imperial Guard, but against the French army wherever he could find it, therefore,

"This masking of sinister intentions under fair professions until the time for throwing off the mask has arrived has caused a widespread and profound distrust in the policy of Count Bismarck."

I have frequently been bewildered of late, but never so much as at such premises followed by such a conclusion. I can assure "Scrutator" on my honour that by no effort of casuistry can I discover in the proclamations of the King and the Crown Prince the meaning which he so confidently ascribes to them.

I now proceed to the next point. "Scrutator" says that, in challenging him to bring forward one word from any German statesman or poet of note during the last fifty years in support of a reconquest of Elsass, I had him at a disadvantage, because I was familiar with the literature of Germany, while his acquaintance with it was very meagre. A challenge given in the 'Times' is not a challenge given in a corner; it is a challenge given to the whole world, and it is clear from the letter of "W. S." that "Scrutator" would not have been left without allies if I had made a reckless challenge. At all events "Scrutator" has returned an answer to my challenge;—but is it a fair answer? While I was writing 'fifty years' in round numbers, I was thinking to myself, is it necessary to say from 1816 to 1866? That the question of Alsace was discussed in 1816 surely every English statesman knows full well; that it was mooted again after 1866, when France had threatened war unless Prussia complied with her conditions of peace at Prague, is known to every reader of newspapers. But between 1816 and 1866, or, to speak more distinctly—for there is no charm about these dates—between the generation of statesmen and poets that witnessed the war of liberation and the generation of statesmen and poets that witnessed the battle of Sadowa, I challenge not only "Scrutator," but anybody to bring forward one word from any

German statesman or poet of note in support of the reconquest of Elsass. What does "Scrutator" answer? He says,—

"After the fall of the first French Empire at Waterloo, the statesmen who represented Germany in the negotiations for peace claimed the right of disposing of Alsace and Lorraine, irrespectively of the wishes of the other allied Powers."

But in what year was that? In 1816. And allow me to add that it was not from German statesmen only that these claims proceeded. I quote from a letter of a well-known English publicist:—

"In vain," he says, "the German military writers demonstrated to the Congress of Vienna how indispensable was the possession of the fortresses of Metz, Strasburg, and Luxemburg, and of the line of the Moselle and the Vosges, for the safety of Southern Germany. Prince Talleyrand succeeded in wheedling the Emperor Alexander and one of the Plenipotentiaries of England into the belief that the maintenance of their *protégé*, Louis XVIII., on the throne of France depended on the preservation for that country of its frontiers in 1790; and thus, in order to reconcile the French people to a sovereign reinstated by the aid of foreign bayonets, the 'integrity' of France found support, while the territorial pretensions of Germany, though admitted to be just, were shelved by the Congress."

In a letter from Lord Castlereagh to the Duke of Wellington, dated Vienna, October 2, 1814, we see that, in his opinion, Prussia was the natural and only safe guardian of the south-western frontier of Germany, and that the hankering of France after what

she falsely styled her "natural frontier" was incurable, and, though it might slumber in the day of dire reverses, would infallibly awaken whenever circumstances should favour its gratification. Lord Castlereagh adds:—

"In examining the larger principles, I am always led to revert with considerable favour to that policy which Mr. Pitt, in the year 1805, had strongly at heart, which was to tempt Prussia to put herself forward on the left bank of the Rhine, more in military contact with France . . . . for our first object is to provide effectually against the systematic views of France to possess herself of the Low Countries and the territories on the left bank of the Rhine—a plan which, however discountenanced by the present French Government, will infallibly revive whenever circumstances favour its execution."

The Duke of Wellington replied under date of 17th of October, 1814:—

"I agree so far in principle with you that I think it would be desirable that, if possible, all the territories on the left bank of the Rhine should belong to one Power only, and that that Power should be Prussia."

On the 28th of July, 1815, Lord Liverpool wrote to Lord Castlereagh:—

"It is quite natural that the Powers bordering on France should look to their own security in some permanent reduction of the territory of that country. It is quite intelligible, likewise, that the Emperor of Russia should be desirous of being considered as a protector of the French nation; but this disposition on the part of his Imperial Majesty should be kept within reasonable bounds. He should recollect that those who are near to France, and consequently in the post of danger, have the deepest interest in the contest; and, though it may be very pro-

per that he should so far act the part of a mediator as to keep down extravagant and unreasonable pretensions, he ought not to sacrifice what may be necessary for the security of his allies, to the pretensions of the French nation, particularly as that nation has never acted upon the principle of permanent territorial integrity with respect to other countries when the fortune of war has placed the power in its own hands."

So much for 1816.

Now, who is the next statesman or poet of note whom "Scrutator" quotes in reply to my challenge? A Mr. F. S. von Hirschfeld, who wrote the 'The Immediate Future of the European States, or Prophecies for the Coming Year.' I should never have recognized the author of these Prophecies as a statesman of note, even if he had written between 1816 and 1866. But in what year was his book published? In 1867, *i.e.* just fifty years after 1816.

"Scrutator" then proceeds and quotes another book by Adolf Schmidt. But even if he mistook the distinguished historian Adolf Schmidt for a statesman or poet of note, his book was published in 1870.

"W. S." is more skilful in his reply to my challenge. He quotes a poem of old Father Arndt, the famous poet of 'Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?' I fully expected that Arndt would be thrown in my teeth, but the answer to his name seemed to me so self-evident that I did not think it necessary to exempt him and his contemporaries from my general challenge. Arndt was born in 1769; he was not a young man in

1816, and he is the very representative of the generation that shook off the yoke of Napoleon. That he and his friends claimed Elsass, and more than Elsass, for Germany, is known to everybody who knows his songs. He is the very type of the veterans of 1816. And if he lived on to a good old age, and remained true through his life to his watchword, *So weit die deutsche Zunge klingt*, is it fair to argue that he represents the generation of statesmen or poets that came after Waterloo?

Lastly, the poem which has lately been revived in Germany, and which is also quoted as an answer to my challenge,—

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

—was written by Max von Schenkendorf, who died in 1817. So far, therefore, my challenge still holds good, and ought to convince "Scrutator" that his suspicions against Germany are totally unfounded.

I have now answered, I believe, every point in "Scrutator's" letter, and, if it did not seem very presumptuous, I should like to ask "Scrutator" to look again at one or two of the arguments which I have advanced in support of my own position, that Count Bismarck's policy—or, I should rather say, Count Bismarck's interest—since 1866, was peace. "Scrutator" has simply ignored them, and yet I feel

certain that, if he would but once make an effort to look on Count Bismarck as being neither a fool nor a rogue, but simply a statesman like other statesmen, he would see that there is not only reasonableness but naturalness in his policy of peace. "Scrutator" knows better than most people what happened at Nikolsburg and Prague in 1866. Prussia was coerced into concluding a peace at the dictation of France. Every general then was for war against France; Count Bismarck counselled peace. "Scrutator" knows what a sacrifice Germany made in surrendering the ancient German fortress of Luxemburg. Prussia was ready for war, Count Bismarck counselled peace. "Scrutator" knows what a diplomatic triumph France achieved by forcing the King of Prussia to withdraw the Prince of Hohenzollern. During all that time every German officer felt convinced that, as soon as her new military organization was perfect, France would go to war, and everybody might have heard what the charming Countess Pourtales confided to General Ducrot as an important State secret, viz. that Germany was arming tooth and nail against an attack from France. The measure of national wrath was nearly full, yet Count Bismarck still held the vial in his strong and steady hand, so that not one drop ran over till the Duc de Gramont dealt it his wanton blow, and the vial broke, and the furies of war broke loose.

I am sorry for it, but I must utter one word of complaint against "Scrutator." He takes advantage of my illustration of the two jewellers, which, like every illustration, fails if it is drawn beyond its legitimate limits. He says,—

"Would the jeweller whose shop was broken into be justified not only in knocking the burglar down and compelling him to pay the damages, but, in addition, in breaking into his shop and carrying off some of his jewellery, by way of making him keep the peace in future? Would not such an application of the *lex talionis* be more likely to breed lawlessness than to stimulate a desire for peace? Yet such is the advice which 'M. M.' gives to Germany."

This little artifice would be quite fair in a young barrister; it is not so, I think, in one who takes the proud name of "Scrutator." And when "Scrutator" brings himself to say that I advise Germany to apply the *lex talionis*, and to carry off some of the jewellery of France, I must protest, for I said the very contrary. After having quoted the words of "Scrutator,"—

1. "*That Germany would not be guilty of a great crime by annexing some of the territory she has conquered;*" and,

"2. *That it would be criminal on the part of France to refuse peace now on such terms,*" I said,—

"I am less German here than 'Scrutator.' I object to Germany taking any territory by way of reprisal, *i. e.* by the *lex talionis*. I think her only justification in annexing territory is a rigid regard for the safety of her frontier."

Were I not what I am, I could almost bring my-

self to wish that France were strong enough to force the German army to recross the French frontier. It would facilitate peace, and yet France would not easily forget the lessons which this war has taught her. Besides, as a man is all the better for powerful rivals, a country is best kept up to the mark by powerful neighbours. It is quite fair, therefore, that "Scrutator" should wish success to France, and that he should urge his friends to fight as long as there is a spark of hope. But when the last spark of hope is gone, would it not be the duty of a true friend to tell France plainly that she must yield to the inevitable, and that she ought to yield to it with dignity, as behoves a great nation? I must claim no longer the sympathy of "Scrutator" for Germany and the German cause, for his heart is in France; but for the sake of France I adjure him to counsel peace and timely concessions to prevent the utter ruin of the country which he loves.

MAX MÜLLER.

POSTSCRIPT.

After this controversy between "Scrutator" and myself had been summed up with judicial impartiality by a leading article in the 'Times,' "Scrutator" has renewed the conflict once more in a letter printed in the 'Times' of November 15. I refrained from answering it, because on the main points of the argument nothing new had been advanced, while a few minor objections could, as I thought, be safely left to the discernment of the English public.

I had to complain in my last letter that "Scrutator" had offended against one of the recognized rules of argumentation, and I am sorry to say that, in the hurry of writing, he seems again to have allowed himself to commit some breaches of those laws of civilized warfare which are binding on soldiers of the pen as much as on soldiers of the sword.

He writes:—"*M. M. asserts that a peace without the seizure of the enemy's territory would be subversive of the cardinal principles of public right.*"

Would any reader believe that I could have made so absurd a statement? What I really said was:—

1. *That it would be subversive of the cardinal principles of public right to allow an unprovoked war to be atoned for by a pecuniary fine.*

This proposition requires no proof till some one will venture to assert the contrary, viz. that the right punishment for an unprovoked war is simply a payment of damages.

I then proceeded to lay down my second proposition :—

2. *That Germany, after her dearly-bought victories, has a right to the most ample guarantees for the safety of her south-western frontier.*

This, I believe, is admitted by "Scrutator."

I then put these two propositions together, and I concluded that, if the crime of France made her liable to more than a pecuniary mulct, and if the injured party, viz. Germany, had established her right to ensure the safety of her south-western frontier, England, as a friend of France, still more as a friend of justice and peace, should impress on France the duty and necessity of yielding to the demands of Germany.

"Scrutator," by substituting the special application for a general principle, makes me say what is absurd, but he can hardly have believed that the readers of the 'Times' could be deceived by these little artifices. No judge need be ashamed to say that it would be subversive of the cardinal principles of justice to allow a murder to be atoned for by a pecuniary fine; but to say that it would be unjust not to hang a murderer would be absurd, because he might be beheaded, or

shot, or transported, though never let off with a mere mulct.

"Scrutator" next makes me say that "a peace without the seizure of the enemy's territory would be without a precedent in the annals of history."

How could I have said so, considering how many battles have been drawn battles, how many wars have had no decisive issue? What I really said was this. Under the peculiar circumstances of this war between France and Germany, a peace without ample guarantees for the safety of the oft-invaded frontier of Germany would be without a precedent. And I said this, not in order to exalt the self-denial required of Germany, but in answer to those who with one breath call on Germany to raise the standard of public morality, *i. e.* to do something over and above the old standard of public morality, and who with the next breath turn round and call Germany "almost brutal" for not doing what has never been done before. If it were necessary to discuss the precedents adduced by "Scrutator," I should say that they had not been happily chosen. At the end of the Crimean War an alteration of the boundaries at the mouth of the Danube *was* made with the very object that alone justifies, in my eyes, an alteration of the boundaries between Germany and France; and at the end of the Napoleonic wars, while everybody helped himself to

something, Germany alone, owing to her divided state, was persuaded to practise that noble generosity which has just cost her another war, and which she is yet invited to practise once more.

I am sorry for the length to which this controversy between "Scrutator" and myself has run, but I am glad to find that at the end of our discussion we do not differ so much, at least on essential points, as we did in the beginning. We differ as to what is the best way of securing the safety of the German frontier; or rather, while I abstain from expressing any opinion on a question that must be solved by the masters of military science, "Scrutator" seems to have formed a definite opinion on this subject. But we agree, or very nearly agree, as far as principles are concerned.

My two positions have remained throughout unshaken,—

1. *That it would be subversive of the cardinal principles of public right to allow an unprovoked war to be atoned for by a pecuniary fine.*

2. *That Germany, after her dearly-bought victories, has a right to the most ample guarantees for the safety of her south-western frontier.*

I place by their side "Scrutator's" almost unwilling, though all the more honourable admissions:—

1. *That Germany would not be guilty of a great*

crime by annexing some of the territory she has conquered.

2. *That it would be criminal on the part of France to refuse peace now on such terms.*

And I finish with the concluding words of the leading article of the 'Times:'—

"*Welcoming the ascendency of the German people, which, by its history, its geographical position, its educational progress, and its domestic character, is, of all Continental nations, the least dangerous to Europe.*"

OXFORD, *Dec.* 6, 1870.

MR. CARLYLE ON THE WAR.

To the EDITOR *of the* 'TIMES.'

Sir,—It is probably an amiable trait of human nature, this cheap pity and newspaper lamentation over fallen and afflicted France; but it seems to me a very idle, dangerous, and misguided feeling, as applied to the cession of Alsace and Lorraine by France to her German conquerors, and argues, on the part of England, a most profound ignorance as to the mutual history of France and Germany, and the conduct of France towards that country, for long centuries back. The question for the Germans, in this crisis, is not one of "magnanimity," of "heroic pity and forgiveness to a fallen foe;" but of solid prudence and practical consideration what the fallen foe will, in all likelihood, do when once on his feet again. Written on her memory, in a dismally instructive manner, Germany has an experience of four hundred years on this point, of which

on the English memory, if it ever was recorded there, there is now little or no trace visible.

Does any of us know, for instance, with the least precision, or in fact know at all, the reciprocal procedures, the mutual history, as we call it, of Louis XI. and Kaiser Max? Max in his old age put down, in chivalrous, allegorical, or emblematic style, a wonderful record of these things, the *Weisse König* ("White King," as he called himself; "Red King," or perhaps "Black," being Louis's adumbrative title), adding many fine engravings by the best artist of his time: for the sake of these prints, here and there an English collector may possess a copy of the book; but I doubt if any Englishman has ever read it, or could, for want of other reading on the subject, understand any part of it. Old Louis's quarrel with the Chief of Germany at that time was not unlike this last one of a younger Louis: "You accursed Head of Germany, you have been prospering in the world lately and I not; have at you, then, with fire and sword!" But it ended more successfully for old Louis and his French than I hope the present quarrel will. The end at that time was that opulent, noble Burgundy did not get re-united to her old Teutonic mother, but to France, her grasping step-mother, and remains French to this day.

Max's grandson and successor, Charles V., was hardly luckier than Max in his road-companion and contem-

porary French King. Francis I., not content with France for a kingdom, began by trying to be elected German Kaiser as well, and never could completely digest his disappointment in that fine enterprise. He smoothed his young face, however, swore eternal friendship with the young Charles who had beaten him, and, a few months after, had egged on the poor little Duke of Bouillon, the Reich's and Charles's vassal, to refuse homage in that quarter, and was in hot war with Charles. The rest of his earthly existence was a perpetual haggle of broken treaties and ever-recurring war and injury with Charles V.,—a series, withal, of intrusive interferences with Germany and every German trouble that arose, to the worsening and widening of them all, not to the closing or healing of any one. A terrible journey these two had together, and a terrible time they made out for Germany between them, and for France too, though not by any means in a like degree. The exact deserts of his most Christian Majesty Francis I. in covenanting with Sultan Soliman —that is to say, in letting loose the then quasi-infernal roaring-lion of a Turk (*then* in the height of his sanguinary fury and fanaticism, not sunk to *caput mortuum* and a torpid nuisance, as now) upon Christendom and the German Empire—I do not pretend to state. It seems to me no modern imagination can conceive this atrocity of the most Christian King, or how it

harassed and haunted with incessant terror the Christian nations for the two centuries ensuing. Richelieu's trade again was twofold: first, what everybody must acknowledge was a great and legitimate one, that of coercing and drilling into obedience to their own Sovereign, the vassals of the Crown of France; and secondly, that of plundering, weakening, thwarting, and in all ways tormenting the German Empire. "He protected Protestantism there." Yes, and steadily persecuted his own Huguenots, bombarded his own Rochelle, and in Germany kept up a thirty-years' war, cherishing diligently the last embers of it till Germany were burnt to utter ruin; no nation ever nearer absolute ruin than unhappy Germany then was. An unblessed Richelieu for Germany, nor a blessed for France either, if we look to the ulterior issues, and distinguish the solid from the specious in the fortune of nations. No French ruler, not even Napoleon I., was a feller or crueller enemy to Germany, or half so pernicious to it (to its very *soul* as well as to its body); and Germany had done him no injury that I know of, except that of existing beside him.

Of Louis XIV.'s four grand plunderings and incendiarisms of Europe—for no real reason but his own ambition and desire to snatch his neighbour's goods—of all this we of this age have now, if any, an altogether faint and placid remembrance, and our feelings on it

differ greatly from those that animated our poor forefathers in the time of William III. and Queen Anne. Of Belleisle and Louis XV.'s fine scheme to cut Germany into four little kingdoms, and have them dance and fence to the piping of Versailles, I do not speak; for to France herself this latter fine scheme brought its own reward: loss of America, loss of India, disgrace and discomfiture in all quarters of the world—Advent, in fine, of the French Revolution, embarcation on the shoreless chaos on which ill-fated France still drifts and tumbles.

The Revolution and Napoleon I., and their treatment of Germany, are still in the memory of men and newspapers; but that was not by any means, as idle men and newspapers seem to think, the first of Germany's sufferings from France; it was the last of a very long series of such—*the last but one,* let us rather say; and hope that *this* now going on as "Siege of Paris," as wide-spread empire of bloodshed, anarchy, delirium, and mendacity, the fruit of France's latest "*marche à Berlin*" may be the last! No nation ever had so bad a neighbour as Germany has had in France for the last 400 years; bad in all manner of ways; insolent, rapacious, insatiable, unappeasable, continually aggressive.

And now, furthermore, in all history there is no insolent, unjust neighbour that ever got so complete, instantaneous, and ignominious a smashing down as

France has now got from Germany. Germany, after 400 years of ill-usage, and generally ill-fortune, from that neighbour, has had at last the great happiness to see its enemy fairly down in this manner; and Germany, I do clearly believe, would be a foolish nation not to think of raising up some secure boundary-fence between herself and such a neighbour now that she has the chance.

There is no law of nature that I know of, no Heaven's Act of Parliament, whereby France, alone of terrestrial beings, shall not restore any portion of her plundered goods when the owners they were wrenched from have an opportunity upon them. To nobody, except to France herself for the moment, can it be credible that there is such a law of nature. Alsace and Lorraine were not got, either of them, in so divine a manner as to render that a probability. The cunning of Richelieu, the grandiose long-sword of Louis XIV., these are the only titles of France to those German countries. Richelieu screwed them loose (and, by happy accident, there was a Turenne, as General, got screwed along with them;—Turenne, I think, was mainly German by blood and temper, had not Francis I. egged on his ancestor, the little Duke of Bouillon, in the way we saw, and gradually *made* him French); Louis le Grand, with his Turenne as supreme of modern Generals, managed the rest of the operation, except indeed, I

should say, the burning of the Palatinate, from Heidelberg Palace steadily downwards, into black ruin; which Turenne would not do sufficiently, and which Louis had to get done by another. There was also a good deal of extortionate law-practice, what we may fairly call violently sharp Attorneyism, put in use. The great Louis's "*Chambres de Réunion*," Metz Chamber, Brissac Chamber, were once of high infamy, and much complained of, here in England, and everywhere else beyond the Rhine. The Grand Louis, except by sublime gesture, ironically polite, made no answer. He styled himself on his very coins (*écu* of 1687, say the Medallists), *Excelsus super omnes Gentes Dominus*, but it is certain attorneyism of the worst sort was one of his instruments in this conquest of Alsace. Nay, as to Strasburg, it was not even attorneyism, much less a long-sword, that did the feat; it was a housebreaker's *jemmy* on the part of the *Grand Monarque*. Strasburg was got in time of profound peace by bribing of the magistrates to do treason, on his part, and admit his garrison one night. Nor as to Metz la Pucelle, nor any of these Three Bishoprics, was it force of war that brought them over to France; rather it was force of fraudulent pawnbroking. King Henri II. (year 1552) got these places—Protestants, applying to him in their extreme need—as we may say, in the way of pledge. Henri entered there with banners spread and drums

beating, "solely in defence of German liberty, as God shall witness;" did nothing for Protestantism or German liberty (German liberty managing rapidly to help itself in this instance); and then, like a brazen-faced, unjust pawnbroker, refused to give the places back,—had ancient rights over them, extremely indubitable to him, and could not give them back. And never yet, by any pressure or persuasion, would. The great Charles V., Protestantism itself now supporting, endeavoured, with his utmost energy and to the very cracking of his heart, to compel him, but could not. The present Hohenzollern King, a modest and pacific man in comparison, could and has. I believe it to be perfectly just, rational, and wise that Germany should take these countries home with her from her unexampled campaign, and, by well fortifying her own old *Wasgau* ("Vosges"), *Hundsrück* (Dog's-back), Three Bishoprics, and other military strengths, secure herself in time coming against French visits.

The French complain dreadfully of threatened "loss of honour;" and lamentable bystanders plead earnestly, "Don't dishonour France; leave poor France's honour bright." But will it save the *honour* of France to refuse paying for the glass she has voluntarily broken in her neighbour's windows? The attack upon the windows was her dishonour. Signally disgraceful to any nation was her late assault on Germany; equally

signal has been the ignominy of its execution on the part of France. The honour of France can be saved only by the deep repentance of France, and by the serious determination never to do so again—to do the reverse of so for ever henceforth. In that way may the honour of France again gradually brighten to the height of its old splendour, far beyond the *First* Napoleonic, much more the *Third*, or any recent sort, and offer again to our voluntary love and grateful estimation all the fine and graceful qualities Nature has implanted in the French. For the present, I must say, France looks more and more delirious, miserable, blamable, pitiable, and even contemptible. She refuses to see the facts that are lying palpable before her face, and the penalties she has brought upon herself. A France scattered into anarchic ruin, without recognizable head; *head*, or chief, indistinguishable from *feet*, or rabble; Ministers flying up in balloons ballasted with nothing but outrageous public lies, proclamations of victories that were creatures of the fancy; a Government subsisting altogether on mendacity, willing that horrid bloodshed should continue and increase rather than that *they*, beautiful Republican creatures, should cease to have the guidance of it: I know not when or where there was seen a nation so covering itself with *dis*honour. If, among this multitude of sympathetic bystanders, France have any true friend, his advice to

France would be,—To abandon all that, and never to resume it more. France really ought to know that "refuges of lies" were long ago discovered to lead down only to the Gates of Death Eternal, and to be forbidden to all creatures!—that the one hope for France is to recognize the facts which have come to her, and that they came withal by invitation of her own: how she—a mass of gilded, proudly varnished anarchy—has wilfully insulted and defied to mortal duel, a neighbour not anarchic, but still in a quietly human, sober, and governed State, and has prospered accordingly. Prospered as an array of sanguinary mountebanks *versus* a Macedonian phalanx must needs do;—and now lies smitten down into hideous wreck and impotence, testifying to gods and men what extent of rottenness, anarchy, and hidden vileness, lay in her. That the inexorable fact is, she has left herself without resource or power of resisting the victorious Germans; and that her wisdom will be to take that fact into her astonished mind; to know that, howsoever hateful, said fact is inexorable, and will have to be complied with,—the *sooner* at the cheaper rate. It is a hard lesson to vainglorious France; but France, we hope, has still in it veracity and probity enough to accept fact as an evidently adamantine entity, which will not brook resistance without penalty, and is unalterable by the very gods.

The quantity of conscious mendacity that France, official and other, has perpetrated latterly, especially since July last, is something wonderful and fearful. And, alas, perhaps even that is small compared to the self-delusion and *un*conscious mendacity long prevalent among the French; which is of still feller and more poisonous quality, though unrecognized for poison. To me, at times, the mournfullest symptom in France is the figure its "men of genius," its highest literary speakers, who should be prophets and seers to it, make at present, and, indeed, for a generation back have been making. It is evidently their belief that new celestial wisdom is radiating out of France upon all the other overshadowed nations; that France is the new Mount Zion of the universe; and that all this sad, sordid, semi-delirious, and, in good part, *infernal* stuff which French Literature has been preaching to us for the last fifty years is a veritable new Gospel out of Heaven, pregnant with blessedness for all the sons of men. Alas, one does understand that France made her Great Revolution; uttered her tremendous doom's voice against a world of human shams, proclaiming, as with the great Last Trumpet, that shams should be no more. I often call that a celestial-infernal phenomenon,—the most memorable in our world for a thousand years; on the whole, a transcendent revolt against the Devil and his works

(since shams are *all* and sundry of the Devil, and poisonous and unendurable to man). For that we all infinitely love and honour France. And truly all nations are now busy enough copying France in regard to that! From side to side of the civilized world there is, in a manner, nothing noticeable but the whole world in deep and dismally chaotic Insurrection against Shams, determination to have done with shams *coûte qu'il coûte*. Indispensable that battle, however ugly. Well done we may say to all that; for it is the preliminary to everything; but alas, all that is not yet victory; it is but half the battle, and the much easier half. The infinitely harder half, which is the equally or the still more indispensable, is that of achieving, instead of the abolished shams which were of the Devil, the practicable realities which should be veritable and of God. That *first* half of the battle, I rejoice to see, is now safe, can now never cease except in victory; but the further stage of it, I also see, must be under better presidency than that of France, or *it* will for ever prove impossible. The German race, not the Gaelic, are now to be protagonist in that immense world-drama; and from them I expect better issues. Worse we cannot well have. France, with a dead-lift effort, now of eighty-one years, has accomplished under this head, for herself or for the world, nothing, or even less,—in strict arithmetic, *zero* with *minus*

quantities. Her prophets prophesy a vain thing; her people rove in darkness and have wandered far astray.

Such prophets and such a people;—who in the way of deception and self-deception have carried it far! "Given up to strong delusion," as the Scripture says; till at last the lie seems to them the very truth. And now, in their strangling crisis and extreme need, they appear to have no resource but self-deception still, and quasi-heroic gasconade. They do believe it to be heroic. They believe that they are the "Christ of Nations;" an innocent godlike people, suffering for the sins of all nations, with an eye to redeem us all:—let us hope that this of the "Christ of Nations" is the *non plus ultra* of the thing. I wish they would inquire whether there might not be a "*Cartouche* of Nations" fully as likely as a "Christ of Nations" in our time! Cartouche had many gallant qualities, was much admired, and much pitied in his sufferings, and had many fine ladies begging locks of his hair while the inexorable, indispensable gibbet was preparing. But in the end there was no salvation for Cartouche. Better he should obey the heavy-handed Teutsch police-officer, who has him by the windpipe in such frightful manner, give up part of his stolen goods; altogether cease to be a Cartouche, and try to become again a Chevalier Bayard under improved conditions, and a blessing and beautiful

benefit to all his neighbours, instead of too much the reverse, as now! Clear it is, at any rate, singular as it may seem to France, all Europe does *not* come to the rescue, in gratitude for the heavenly "illumination" it is getting from France: nor could all Europe, if it did, at this moment prevent that awful Chancellor from having his own way. Metz and the boundary-fence, I reckon, will be dreadfully hard to get out of that Chancellor's hands again.

A hundred years ago there was in England the liveliest desire, and at one time an actual effort and hope, to recover Alsace and Lorraine from the French. Lord Carteret, called afterwards Lord Granville (no ancestor, in any sense, of his now honourable synonym), thought by some to be, with the one exception of Lord Chatham, the wisest Foreign Secretary we ever had, and especially the "one Secretary that ever spoke German, or understood German matters at all," had set his heart on this very object, and had fair prospects of achieving it, had not our poor dear Duke of Newcastle suddenly peddled him out of it, and even out of office altogether, into sullen disgust (and too much of *wine* withal, says Walpole), and into total oblivion by his nation, which, except Chatham, has none such to remember. That Bismarck, and Germany along with him, should now at this propitious juncture make a like demand is no surprise to me. After such provocation, and after

such a victory, the resolution does seem rational, just, and even modest. And considering all that has occurred since that memorable cataclysm at Sedan, I could reckon it creditable to the sense and moderation of Count Bismarck that he stands steadily by this; demanding nothing more, resolute to take nothing less, and advancing with a slow calmness towards it by the eligiblest roads. The "Siege of Paris," which looks like the hugest and most hideous farce-tragedy ever played under this sun, Bismarck evidently hopes will never need to come to uttermost bombardment, to million-fold death by hunger, or the kindling of Paris and its carpentries and asphalt streets by shells and red-hot balls into a sea of fire. Diligent, day by day, seem those Prussians, never resting nor too much hasting; well knowing the proverb, "Slow fire makes sweet malt." I believe Bismarck will get his Alsace, and what he wants of Lorraine; and likewise that it will do him, and us, and all the world, and even France itself by-and-by, a great deal of good. Anarchic France gets her first stern lesson there (a terribly drastic dose of physic to sick France!); and well will it be for her if she can learn her lesson honestly. If she cannot, she will get another, and ever another; learnt the lesson must be.

Considerable misconception as to Herr von Bismarck is still prevalent in England. The English news-

papers, nearly all of them, seem to me to be only getting towards a true knowledge of Bismarck, but not yet got to it. The standing likeness, circulating everywhere ten years ago, of demented Bismarck and his ditto King to Strafford and Charles I. *versus* our Long Parliament (*as* like as Macedon to Monmouth, and not liker) has now vanished from the earth, no whisper of it ever to be heard more. That pathetic Niobe of Denmark, reft violently of her children (which were stolen children, and were dreadfully ill-nursed by Niobe Denmark), is also nearly gone, and will go altogether so soon as knowledge of the matter is had. Bismarck, as I read him, is not a person of "Napoleonic" ideas, but of ideas quite superior to Napoleonic; shows no invincible "lust of territory," nor is tormented with "vulgar ambition," etc.; but has aims very far beyond that sphere; and, in fact, seems to me to be striving with strong faculty, by patient, grand, and successful steps, towards an object beneficial to Germans and to all other men. That noble, patient, deep, pious, and solid Germany should be at length welded into a nation and become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless, and over-sensitive France, seems to me the hopefullest public fact that has occurred in my time.

I remain, Sir, yours truly,

T. CARLYLE.

CHELSEA, *Nov.* 11.

WORKS BY

WILLIAM RATHBONE GREG.

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