

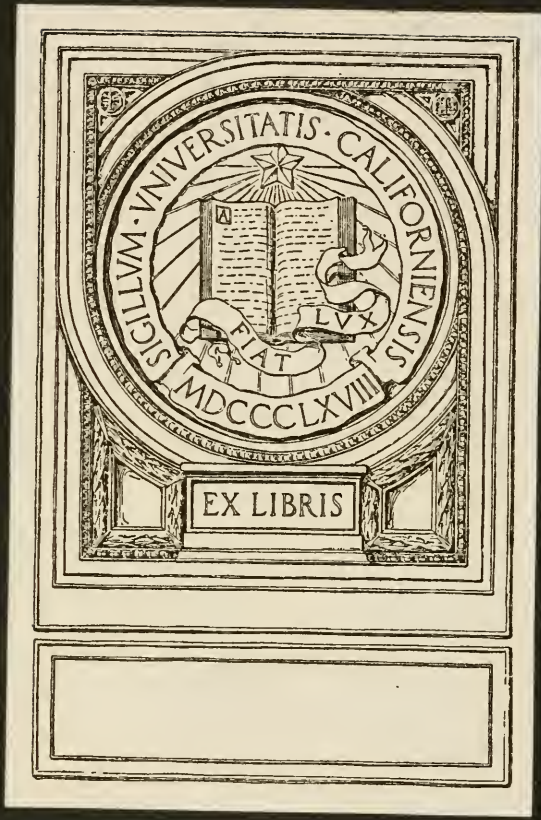
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THE
SUBMERGED
NATIONALITIES
OF THE
GERMAN EMPIRE

BY
ERNEST BARKER

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BY
ERNEST BARKER
NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD

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PREFACE

I write a preface for one reason, and one reason only ; and that is to thank the Regius Professor of Modern History for the invaluable help he has given me in writing the following pages. He has lent me not only books, but also his own manuscript notes ; he has read through my proofs, and made several suggestions which I have gladly adopted.

I am delighted to have this chance of thanking the Regius Professor for the encouragement and help which he constantly gives to all students of history.

E. B.

OXFORD,

March, 1915.

THE SUBMERGED NATIONALITIES OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE

EACH nation thinks itself good. This does no harm, so long as it keeps its thoughts to itself. On the contrary it does good. Just as each man has to respect himself, and to think that he is worth something, if he is to get his work done, so with each nation. But it does very little good, and a great deal of harm, when a nation thinks itself better than other nations. When a nation falls into that vein, its foreign policy suffers. Standing on tiptoe to prove itself taller than other nations, it strains its own resources and keeps the rest of the world at a strain. But its domestic policy suffers worst of all. It becomes unfair to the small national minorities who may be included with itself in the same State. It begins to say that though, of course, they can never be like itself, it is their bounden duty to be as like itself as possible. And if these national minorities do not listen to its saying, it turns to coercion.

These things are the besetting sins of all large nations. Perhaps every great people has suffered from national megalomania in its day. In these days the great sufferer is Germany. Germans can be admirably modest in private life; but nobody would say that the German nation, as it is organized in the German Empire to-day, is content to blush unseen. Its restless foreign policy is based on an uneasy emulation. Feeling that other nations do not adequately recognize its greatness and superiority, it has tried to secure recognition of its merits by pursuing a policy of what Shakespeare would call 'the Counter-Check Quarrelsome'. The results are with us, and we are all painfully aware that Germany is indeed

a great military power. What we are apt to forget is that Germany has pursued a similar policy to the national minorities within her own borders. She has sought to enforce her own type on the Poles in her Eastern Marches, the Danes in North Schleswig, and the French in the annexed provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. Their language must be her language, and their thoughts her thoughts; they must recognize her greatness by conforming to her type. She has of course some excuse for her policy. In the Eastern Marches, in North Schleswig, and in Alsace-Lorraine there live subject peoples of a nationality alien to her own, who border on peoples kindred to themselves that lie outside the boundaries of Germany. The German Poles stretch out longing hands to the neighbouring Poles in Galicia and Russian Poland; the Danes of North Schleswig look to the Danes just across the German borders in the Kingdom of Denmark; the people of Alsace-Lorraine have not forgotten, and seem very unlikely to forget, the ties of affection that bind them to their French friends across the Vosges and the Moselle. Here are three problems that seem to require tact and conciliation. But Germany feels that if you grasp a nettle tender-handed, it may sting you for your pains. She has resolved to act like a man of mettle: she has preferred, on the whole, though with some vacillation, a policy of coercion to a policy of conciliation. Enamoured of their own great culture, the Germans have determined to extend its benefits to the five and a half million subjects who have other cultures than their own. Strong in their own great power, they have puffed away, as scraps of paper, the promises made in 1815 to the Poles, and the provisions of 1866 in favour of the Danes. They have invented a theory of 'necessity', which excuses anything done by their power, if it seems necessary to the triumph of their culture. In the strength of this theory they started in 1908 a policy of evicting their own Polish citizens from the land in order to replace them by German

settlers ; in the strength of the same theory they marched into Belgium in 1914. They have become the apostles of a new doctrine of Nationalism. They are 'Nationalists' to a man ; but their Nationalism means that they themselves are to have all the 'rights of nationality'. It means even more. It means that they have identified their own national civilization with Civilization itself, and that they feel that they spread Civilization when they use coercion to replace another national civilization by their own.

Germany has a population of some 65,000,000. Nearly 60,000,000 of these are German. About 3,500,000 are Poles, who are almost all to be found on the East, along the river Oder, though many of them have settled—always, however, with the hope of returning to their native East—in the industrial districts of Western Germany. About 150,000, in North Schleswig, are Danes. Finally, in Alsace-Lorraine, there is a population of some 1,800,000, which is largely French in sympathy, though a very large part of the population, particularly in Alsace, is German in origin and speaks a German dialect.¹ All these three populations, it is to be noted, are recent additions to Germany, and all three are acquisitions made by force. It is less than 150 years ago since Germany began her acquisitions in Poland ; it is only some 50 years ago that North Schleswig and Alsace-Lorraine were acquired. Germany was not born with these problems ; she entered upon them deliberately, in pursuit of a policy of military and territorial expansion. She has not grown like France, by a process of expansion which, if sometimes military in its methods, has been consolidated and, one may almost say, consecrated by a national solidarity which has made every element incorporated an essential and living factor of the national spirit. She has added by force a number

¹ The total number of German subjects who do not speak German is said to be 4,200,000. In Alsace-Lorraine there are only some 200,000 who do not speak German.

of alien elements to the body politic ; and she has failed to solve the grave duty of assimilation which she need never have undertaken, and which was a duty all the graver because it had been undertaken with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.

I

PRUSSIAN POLAND

The German Empire is a federation, in some respects like, but in many unlike, the United States. In this federation the largest and the dominant State is Prussia, which, with a population of 40,000,000, is more than half of the whole Empire. The German Poles all live in Prussia, and are governed by Prussia. They have, of course, their representatives in the Imperial Diet, or *Reichstag*, like all other German subjects ; and laws may be made in the Reichstag which will affect their interests. But they are governed immediately by the King of Prussia ; and the laws which touch them most closely are the laws made in the Prussian Parliament.

Prussian Poland is the Ireland of Prussia. But there are two differences between the relation of Prussia to the Poles and that of England to the Irish. In the first place England has been in Ireland since 1170, and the fortunes of England and Ireland have been associated together for seven centuries and a half. Prussia, on the other hand, first acquired Polish territory in 1772, and she has only held her Polish territories in their present form since 1815. The Poles still remember the days, not far remote, as nations count, when Poland was—as she was for centuries—a great and independent kingdom. They still remember how, when Prussia joined in the destruction of the Kingdom of Poland—or, rather, when Prussia suggested to her accomplices, Austria and Russia, the partition of that kingdom—she brought to the ground an old and

civilized, if turbulent and unruly, State. In the second place the sins of England towards Ireland—and they are many—were committed many years ago, and chiefly in the two centuries which lie between the Elizabethan settlement and the meeting of Grattan's Parliament, that is to say, between 1580 and 1780. Prussia is doing to-day, and in the full light of the twentieth century, the things which England did in the seventeenth, in the days of James I and Cromwell.

To-day there are some 20,000,000 Poles, of whom 3,500,000 'belong' to Prussia, 4,250,000 to Austria, and about 12,000,000 to Russia. In 1770 they were united in a single sovereign State. By three successive partitions, between 1772 and 1795, they were divided by the three neighbouring States into the 'partitionments' in which they now live. There was perhaps some excuse for the partition. The old Polish State was an aristocratic republic—in form a monarchy, in fact a feudal chaos: it was torn by the struggles of three rival confessions—the Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, and the Protestant; and while nobles and churches struggled, the peasantry fell into an intolerable misery. The interference of neighbours with such a state was inevitable; its absorption by its neighbours was, if not inevitable, at any rate easy. That absorption has brought to the mass of the Poles far greater prosperity than they knew before. What it has not brought them is happiness or contentment. They have lost national liberty: they have gained economic prosperity; and they have preferred what they have lost to what they have gained.

Not only have the Poles lost national liberty. In all the three partitionments they have lost their own law. In two out of the three, Prussia and Russia, they have lost the use of their language for education and in public business. In one—and that one is Prussia—they are beginning, under a law passed in 1908, to lose by compulsory expropriation even their land. Of all the three

governments of tripartite Poland, the Prussian is to-day the most scientifically and thoroughly oppressive.

When Prussia regained in 1815 her present Polish territories, which had been temporarily lost in the days of Napoleon's power, her ruler, Frederick William III, issued a rescript to his Polish subjects. He promised to respect their nationality: he promised a provincial constitution; he promised respect for their Church and a competence for its ministers: he promised to place their property under the protection of the law, and to give them a voice in the discussion of laws; he promised their language an equal position with German in public meetings; he promised to open public offices to Poles according to their capacity. Soon after 1830 these promises began to be broken: since 1886 they have been flagrantly broken. They have been broken partly because Prussia learned, from the risings, not of her own, but of the Russian Poles, in 1830, in 1848, and in 1863, that the Poles had not forgotten their ancient liberty; but partly, and of late days much more, because Prussia has been alarmed by the increase of the Poles on her Eastern boundary, and has feared that the German nation would have to recede before the Polish advance, unless it were artificially protected. The campaign against the Poles began to grow serious after 1870: it became acute after 1886: it reached its culmination in 1908.

I. The Poles had fought for Prussia in the wars of 1866 and 1870; Bismarck, whose policy they had thus aided, rewarded them with persecution. In 1872 he began the *Kulturkampf*, a struggle with the Roman Catholic Church, which is the Church of the Prussian Poles. 'The necessity of beginning this struggle', he says in his *Thoughts and Recollections*, 'was forced on me by the Polish side of the questions.' In other words, it was in order to bit and bridle the Poles that in 1872 he took away the inspection of schools from the clergy and gave the work to Government officials, and that in 1873 he ordered the

exclusive employment of German in schools, except for religious instruction—and even that, he ordered, might be given in German to pupils sufficiently advanced to understand it.

Bismarck's own version of his policy would seem to suggest that he attacked the Catholic Poles in order to curb a national disaffection which covered itself with the veil, and excused itself by the plea, of separate religious rights. The suggestion is hardly justified. There had been comparative peace in Poland before 1872. The protection of the Prussian administration had enabled 24,000 peasants to establish themselves on their own account in the last fifty years. If in 1840 Polish societies had begun to be founded for educational purposes, and if after 1865 agricultural organizations had been started among the Poles, such movements had been no menace to Prussia. The truth would seem to be that in 1872 Bismarck attacked Catholicism, by attacking the Catholic schools; that by this policy he alienated a Polish people devoted to its religion and its schools; and that he raised a Polish question, which had hitherto slumbered, by an ill-considered religious policy which proved a general failure. By persecuting the Poles not as Poles but as Catholics, he involved himself subsequently in a policy of persecuting the Poles as Poles; and he found himself forced to transfer a struggle which he had himself provoked on the ground of religion to the ground of political repression and economic tyranny.

II. At any rate, he set to work on this new ground after 1886. He began the policy of buying out Polish owners of land and replacing them on the soil with German settlers. By a law passed in 1886 he obtained £5,000,000 for this purpose; and at intervals in the next 20 years £20,000,000 in addition was voted by the Prussian Parliament. All the £25,000,000 was spent between 1886 and 1906: over 800,000 acres were bought: 12,000 new families were settled on the land, of whom 11,500 were

Protestants, and 500 Roman Catholic. But if the intention of the Government was the eviction of Catholic Poles, and the substitution of Protestant Germans, that was not the effect. The effect has been, on the contrary, to give new political strength to the Poles, and to stimulate them to an economic development which, based itself on a fine co-operative organization, has in turn become the basis of Polish nationalism.

The Poles have gained new political strength because they have gained solidarity. Before 1886 there had been something of a cleavage between the native Polish aristocracy, who led the national cause, but too often led it at a distance as absentee landlords, and the mass of the Polish peasantry. Bismarck had already done something to end the cleavage by the *Kulturkampf*, which drew the nobility and the peasantry together in a common defence of their religious rights. He now hoped to foster disunion by buying out the Polish landlords: he only succeeded in rallying together the landlords, the peasantry, and the clergy in a firm alliance. Meanwhile, his policy failed entirely to strengthen the political influence of the German element in the Eastern Marches. The Poles increased in numbers relatively to the Germans in the areas of settlement, in spite of the importation of 12,000 German families between 1886 and 1906; and in the same period Germans lost property in land to the Poles to the extent of 125,000 acres, in spite of the purchases of the Government. The fact is partly that the Government had often to buy from Germans who were anxious to sell in order to escape from the uncomfortable East, and partly that, as fast as the Government bought land from the Poles for new German settlers, the Poles bought land from German landlords for themselves. The figures tell their own tale. In 1886, of 62 estates bought by the Government, only 5 were German. In 1910, of 37,000 acres bought by the Government, nearly 34,000 were bought from German owners.

In a period of 25 years the Government imported 90,000 colonists of German origin into the Eastern Marches. In the same period the Polish population increased by 200,000.

While the whole policy was a political failure, it was a great economic success, but not exactly in the way the Government had intended. True, the Government produced some of the effects it wished to produce. It built beautiful model villages for the new German settlers ; it increased the number of pigs by half a million, and decreased the number of sheep by the same number ; in a word, it gave a new economic prosperity to the Eastern Marches. But by far the greatest economic result of the Government's policy, and one certainly not intended by the Government, has been a very decided increase in the prosperity of the Poles themselves. This result has been brought about in various ways. In the first place the entry of the Government into the market inevitably sent up the price of landed property. An average of £11 per acre in 1886 had become an average of £27 per acre in 1906. Polish landowners profited by the increase. But the growth of Polish prosperity was also due to the Poles themselves. Stung to the quick by the Prussian policy, which forced them to contribute taxes which went to provide the funds for their own expropriation from their native soil, they mobilized all their economic resources in order to maintain themselves on the land. The weapon they found to their hands was co-operation ; and a network of co-operative associations, on a strictly nationalist basis, soon covered the land. The Poles formed a system of national saving and lending banks ; with the aid of the funds thus accumulated, they succeeded in buying land in the country to be divided in small holdings among the peasantry, in acquiring all the businesses in the small towns, and in capturing all the smaller businesses in the large towns. The Polish flood has risen : the new German settlers,

in their model villages, have been isolated ; and dependent on the Polish country towns for their market, they have tended not so much to Germanize the Poles, as to Polonize themselves.

III. If a Prussian medicine fails, Prussia does not change the medicine : she increases the dose. By 1906 she had discovered the failure of the dose originally prescribed in 1886. She had begun in 1886 with her Polish subjects disaffected, but disunited ; she found herself in 1906 face to face with Polish subjects disaffected, but now closely united together in all manner of associations—associations not only economic, but also social and educational ; associations not only of great Polish landowners, but of peasants, of artisans, and even of agricultural labourers. In a word, Prussian Poland had become more Nationalist than Nationalist Ireland, and more wedded to and schooled in co-operation than the Irish Agricultural Organization Society.

Accordingly, the Government began to increase the rigour of its measures. To stop the advance of Polish farming, it forbade, in 1904, the building of new farm-houses without official consent. The law did not succeed in stopping the growth of Polish farms : it only meant that a Polish farmer on a new farm made his bed with the cattle in his shippon. To stop the use of Polish in the schools, the Government began to make religious instruction in German compulsory, if half the scholars of a school were German by birth ; and a decree of 1899 required teachers not to speak Polish in their homes. The very children went on strike. The Government replied by fining their parents. Some schoolboys at Thorn ventured to read Polish books. The books were confiscated ; sixty boys were put on trial ; several were expelled from the town and district.

In 1908 Prussia resolved that the time had come for 'frightfulness'. In that year two laws were proposed. One of these, the law of associations, was passed by the

Imperial Diet for the whole Empire. By this law German became the necessary language for all public meetings, except at election times. An exception was made for those districts where more than 60 per cent. of the population did not speak German ; but even this exception was to disappear after 1928. As the vast majority (indeed, more than three-quarters) of German subjects who do not speak German belong to Prussia, the law of associations was peculiarly in the interest of Prussia. Altogether conceived in that interest was the Expropriation Law, passed by the Prussian Parliament early in 1909, after a year's debates.

The Government was driven into the policy of compulsory expropriation of Polish landowners partly by despair of achieving any results along the old lines, and partly by the pressure of agitation. By 1908 it found that the only estates it could buy from willing sellers were estates owned by Germans, and it found that even these were only to be bought at a price which it could not and would not pay. Meanwhile, it was being pushed towards expropriation by the policy of the ' Union of the Eastern Marches ', an association of German landowners in the East, nicknamed by the Poles, from the initials (H. K. T.) of three of the leading members, the ' Hakatists '. The pressure of the ' Hakatists ' was reinforced by the Pan-German Union, always ready to promote, by almost any means, the claims of German nationality. The Government succumbed to nationalist agitation, as it has a habit of doing in Germany. What the Pan-German Union says to-day, the Government does to-morrow. Prussian officials began to use the plea of ' necessity ' ; they began to urge that ' the State was in danger '. ' The Germany of the Eastern Marches ', it was said, ' keeps guard for all the nation on the Vistula and the Wartha, and the guard kept there is more important than that on the Rhine.' To maintain the *Wacht an Weichsel und Warta*, the Government asked the Prussian Parliament

for a vote of £20,000,000 and the power of taking by way of expropriation all the land it could get for its money. Parliament cut down the grant to £6,250,000, and limited the amount of land to be taken to 175,000 acres. But it endorsed the policy.

The proposal raised a good deal of debate. The Prussian Junkers, landlords to a man, could not feel any great enthusiasm for what was after all an attack on landed property. They might detest the Poles; they also detested expropriation. The German Socialists, on the other hand, were enamoured of the principle, if they were not so fond of its application. They would have preferred to carry the principle further, and expropriate all landlords. In truth the Government had embarked on a dangerous course. It was undermining the foundations of the Prussian State, which is based on the landed interest. It was breaking the promise of the Prussian King in 1815, that Polish property should be placed under the protection of the law. It was violating the general rule of all civilized states, that powers of compulsory purchase should only be used in order to acquire some particular portion of land which is needed for purposes of general utility, and it was proposing to take whole estates in the particular interest of German nationality. Nevertheless it went ahead. The earnest and serious—only too earnest and serious—bureaucracy of Prussia felt that it was the only way. Conciliation was of no avail with the proud and sullen Poles; and if coercion had not done much, more coercion might do more. It is always the way with a policy of coercion: you must constantly be adding to the weight. The Government persuaded the Junkers that a new weight was necessary, and they voted the measure.

For four years the law of 1908 remained inoperative. The reason was simple. The Government was afraid that if it were put into operation the Poles, who would have to be bought out at the high prices which its own past

policy had done so much to produce, would use the large purchase moneys they received to buy new estates in neighbouring provinces of Germany. The fear was by no means ungrounded. As a matter of fact, there had been for some years past a considerable migration of Poles into the German provinces of Upper Silesia and Pomerania, and the immigrants had acquired thousands of acres in their new homes. It was not to be tolerated that Poles who were bought out of Posen at high prices should at once proceed to buy land at low prices in Upper Silesia and Pomerania. A law was therefore passed in 1912 which put £5,000,000 at the disposal of the Government for the purpose of maintaining German peasantry on the soil in all Eastern Germany.¹ Thus forearmed the Government set to work in October 1912. Some of the chief Polish leaders were expropriated from estates of a total area of over 4,000 acres. For one of these estates, which had been worth about £5,000 in 1898, the Government paid a price of £50,000, which was equivalent to a rate of £40 per acre.

The persistence of officialdom in its paths is wonderful. Failure makes it only the more tenacious. For thirty years Prussia has tried to Germanize the Poles by force. What tact and conciliation might do—what would be the effects of toleration of the Polish language, of admission of Poles to official positions, of the institution of a local Polish Council—there has been no attempt to discover, except for a passing phase of conciliation from 1890 to 1894, which quickly and somewhat mysteriously ended. And yet the result of the opposite policy is confessed by the Prussians themselves to be a failure. 'The Polish language', wrote a German professor, only a year ago, 'gains not only in the country districts, but in the towns as well, and even in the capital of Posen. The Polish middle class grows, while the German decreases. For

¹ The law of 1912 also applied, as we shall see, to North Schleswig, where German 'culture' is also 'threatened'.

eight years there has been no archbishop in Gnesen, for the authorities have not dared to install in that "German" town a German archbishop who would put a stop to the anti-German agitation of the Polish clerics.'

While the policy of Prussia has thus failed in its immediate object, the results which it has actually achieved have been detrimental to Polish Prussia, detrimental to Prussia at large, and detrimental to the German empire, alike in its internal economy and in its foreign policy. They have been detrimental to Polish Prussia. A gulf of distrust has been set between the governing German and the governed Pole: petty persecution has been answered by cunning reprisal: the arbitrariness of a suspicious police has been met by a general boycott. They have been detrimental to Prussia at large. She dare not, even if she would, introduce a wider suffrage and a fairer electoral system, because she is afraid of the resultant influx of Polish voters. They have been detrimental to the internal economy of the German empire. The unfair and unequal treatment of submerged nationalities prevents any proper realization of the idea of legal and political equality, and fosters the growth of an intransigent Social Democracy. Finally, they have been detrimental to the foreign policy of the Empire. The Polish question is a millstone round the neck of Germany. Under its burden she fails to achieve any results in the field of foreign policy commensurate with her vast strength. She is constantly agitated by ambitions which she is constantly unable to realize; and the German people, conscious that something is wrong, but unable to diagnose the malady, blames the Imperial Government for a weak and spiritless foreign policy, when it should properly blame the Prussian Government for a domestic policy whose unsympathetic rigour turns national strength into weakness, and national spirit into tyranny.

When one thinks about Poland, one begins the next

minute to think about Ireland. The Poles and the Irish are both peasant peoples ; both belong to the Roman Church ; both have suffered from Protestant rulers of Teutonic blood, the one from the Prussian, and the other from the Anglo-Saxon ; and yet there has been some difference between the behaviour of the Anglo-Saxon and that of the Prussian.

The worst sins of England against Ireland were in the seventeenth century. In that age of plantations and penal laws, the English were ruthless enough. When they expropriated the Irish in Ulster and Connaught, they might, indeed, plead that, according to English notions of law, the Irish tribesmen were not owners of the soil, and were not being deprived of any valid title ; but though historians may find justification in the ideas of an age three centuries removed from our own for practices intolerable to a modern conscience, there is no justification that can wipe away all the stain of guilt. When one remembers how English and Scotch were put on the best land ; how the Irish were prevented from retaining the land they possessed, or acquiring fresh lands by purchase ; how the upper classes were all anglicized, and the lower classes reduced to Gibeonites—it is better to feel shame than to plead justification. But Prussia is pursuing the same sort of idea—the idea of plantation on lands to be gained by compulsory expropriation—in the light of the twentieth century. Prussia does it with a less blundering cruelty, and with a good deal of fair-seeming modern argument. These are the days of the press, and of international trade and credit ; and nations that wish to sell to or to borrow from other nations cannot be as ‘ thorough ’ nowadays as men were three hundred years ago. But Prussia can hardly be excused for what she does in the twentieth century, however civilized or scientific her methods may be, by the fact that England did similar things in the seventeenth century.

The true comparison, however, is between the Ireland of to-day and the Prussian Poland of to-day. That comparison is instructive. While Prussia has been evicting the Poles, Great Britain has been settling the people of Ireland on the land. The Irish Land Act of 1870 gave tenants compensation for eviction and for the improvement of their holdings. The measure of Irish land purchase, introduced in the early years of this century, has gone still further, and given to the Irish peasantry the ownership of the soil. In the very same decade of the twentieth century, in which the Prussian Parliament was voting millions for the expropriation of the Poles and the settlement of Germans, the British Parliament was voting a loan of tens of millions in order to buy out landlords, many of them English, and to set the Irish in possession of the land. A similar contrast may be drawn in the field of educational and ecclesiastical policy. In 1869 Great Britain disestablished the Anglican Church in Ireland; in 1872 Bismarck began the *Kulturkampf* 'from the Polish side of the question', and deprived the Catholic Poles of the control of their schools. The Gaelic league has flourished without impediment in modern Ireland; and since 1878 the Irish language has been taught, and its teaching has been subsidized from the public funds, in Irish schools.¹ The Polish language is proscribed in Polish Prussia; it cannot be used in schools, in the courts, or in public meetings; indeed, it cannot be read with impunity even in the home. These facts throw an instructive light on German interest in the Irish question. May one not fairly say to Dr. Kuno Meyer, 'Physician, heal thyself'?

One of the most significant facts of late years is that

¹ Up till 1878 the Irish language was excluded from Irish schools. After that year it was admitted, and a grant was made of ten shillings for each pupil who passed after a three years' course. Mr. Long attempted to economize on this grant in 1905, but his policy was reversed by Mr. (now Lord) Bryce in 1906.

the Poles have begun to look towards Russia. Whatever the culture of Germany, it has been less of a magnet to the Poles than what the Germans call 'Muscovite barbarism'. Since 1864 Russia—largely it is true to gain a counterpoise to the Polish nobility—has been encouraging the growth of the Polish peasantry in Russian Poland. Under her government, whatever its political oppression, a middle class has developed, and towns have grown by leaps and bounds. Since 1901 it has been the policy of Dmowski, the chief leader of the Poles, to bring about the reunion of the three 'partitionments' under the suzerainty of Russia, provided that Russia would grant autonomy within her Empire to a re-united Poland. The Prussian Expropriation Law passed in 1909 was answered in Russian Poland by a boycott of German goods. In Russia at large the Liberal party has been as anxious for a settlement with the Poles, as the Liberal party in England for a settlement with the Irish. Finally, in 1914, the Russian Government itself proclaimed its adhesion to the policy of Dmowski, and pledged itself to the re-creation of an autonomous Poland under Russian suzerainty.

The Poles are a people capable of great things. Quick, vivacious, alert, lovers of music and the arts, they have been called the French of the East. Throughout the nineteenth century they have never despaired. They have been in the vanguard of all Liberal causes. In 1848 Poles fought on the Liberal side in nearly every country in Europe. No nation has been so afflicted; no nation has kept its heart higher; no nation has organized its national life more closely and intimately by every manner of voluntary association. It is the duty of all who love liberty to remember Poland, and to pray that to Poland, too, 'at the long last', there may come light and deliverance.

II

NORTH SCHLESWIG

The rule of Prussia in Schleswig-Holstein, that important territory through which runs the Kiel Canal, dates back to 1866. For years before 1866 this territory had been in dispute between the Danes and the Germans. In favour of the Danes was the fact that the King of Denmark had been for hundreds of years Duke of the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein: in favour of the Germans were the facts that Holstein was German in population; that the Danish King had always ruled there not as Danish King, but as one of the Princes of Germany; and that Schleswig, if not German, was at any rate considerably Germanized. The Germanic Confederation, which in the years 1815 to 1866 constituted a federal union of the German States analogous to, but much weaker than, the modern German Empire, was anxious to retain Holstein, and to include Schleswig (which lies north of Holstein and immediately south of Denmark) within its fold. On the other hand, a patriotic party among the Danes, called the Eider Danes, wished to incorporate most of the territory with Denmark, and to extend the kingdom to the River Eider—or, in other words, to the southern boundary of Schleswig. This would have meant the separation of Schleswig and Holstein; and that separation was desired by nobody in those duchies, and by nobody in Germany.

The Confederation was an unwieldy body, and eventually, in 1864, two of its members, Prussia and Austria (then and until 1866 included in Germany) took action on their own account, and invaded the two duchies. The Danes were defeated after a brave resistance, and were compelled by the Treaty of Vienna to cede the duchies. After a brief period of joint administration, it was agreed, by the Convention of Gastein (1865), that

Austria should administer Holstein and that Prussia should govern Schleswig. By 1866 Austria and Prussia were at war, nominally on the matter of Schleswig-Holstein, but really to determine which of the two should be at the head of Germany. Austria was beaten at Sadowa, and by the Treaty of Prague Prussia became master of both Schleswig and Holstein.

It would need a long argument to decide how Bismarck's policy in the whole of this matter, from 1864 to 1866, should be judged. He certainly pushed the Danes into war by leading them to think that they would be helped by England (who, with the other great Powers, had guaranteed by the treaty of 1852 the integrity of the dominions of the King of Denmark), though all the time he knew that this was not the case. Again, he was anxious to acquire Kiel for Prussia, whatever the rights of the matter, in order to found a Prussian Navy and to build a canal across Holstein to give that navy direct access to the North Sea. But the rights of the matter are very tangled; and in any case, it is our business to see how Prussia has governed the Danes in the two duchies since they were incorporated in her territories.

Holstein, as has been mentioned, is German in population, and no question arises here of the Prussian treatment of subject nationalities. In Northern Schleswig there is a Danish population of 150,000, out of a total, in the whole of the province, of 400,000. By an article of the Treaty of Prague—an article inserted by the influence of Napoleon III, who believed in the rights of nationalities and the virtues of *plébiscites*—the population of North Schleswig was to be ceded to Denmark if its inhabitants, on a free vote being taken, should express a desire for union. The article, it may be urged, only imposed an obligation on Prussia in regard to Austria, the other partner to the treaty, and when Austria agreed to the cancelling of the article in 1878, Prussia may be held to have been freed of the obligation in the letter,

if not in the spirit. But the Danes of North Schleswig clung for long years to Article Five of the Treaty of Prague as the Magna Charta of their liberties ; and the refusal of Prussia to fulfil the Article, and to permit a vote to be taken, has divided her irretrievably from her Danish subjects.

Nor is that all. It has also been a definite set-back to the cause of European civilization. And here it is perhaps permissible to say a good word for Napoleon III. Whatever the offences by which he climbed to power, and maintained himself in power, he was nevertheless something of an idealist ; and one of his great ideals was the preservation of the rights of nationalities. That ideal was a genuine motive and a genuine passion, and he served it in ways which did not always serve his own interests. In its pursuit he was willing to look quietly on the development of German unity down to 1866, and even to aid that development. He left the two German powers a free hand in their dealings with Holstein, which he regarded as an integral member of the German nation ; and it was his influence which helped to prevent England from intervening in 1864 in defence of Denmark and in fulfilment of the guarantee which she had given to Denmark in 1852. His proposal of a *plébiscite* in North Schleswig is not inconsistent with his German policy. On the contrary, it is the logical result of that belief in the rights of nationalities which inspired his German policy. Nor was the proposal one without precedent. It was supported by a number of recent precedents in the history of Italy—that country to the achieving of whose national unity Napoleon had, in his own way, done good service. A *plébiscite* in Milan had brought about a temporary fusion with Piedmont in 1848. *Plébiscites* had united Emilia and Tuscany to Piedmont in the spring of 1860 ; and at the same time Napoleon had at any rate gone through the form of a *plébiscite* in Savoy and Nice before declaring their incorporation in France. Later

in the same year Naples and Sicily, the Marches and Umbria, had all declared themselves in favour of incorporation in a United Italy by means of *plébiscites*. A *plébiscite* united Venetia to the rest of Italy in 1866, in the very year of the Treaty of Prague; a *plébiscite* in Rome, in October of 1870, declared for the annexation of the city to the kingdom of Italy. The *plébiscite* in disputed territories was on its way to becoming a regular method of European statesmanship, when Prussian pride and Prussian rigour combined to put a full stop to its further development.

The dangling of a *plébiscite* before the eyes of the Danes of North Schleswig from 1866 to 1878 had bad effects on the Danes themselves as well as on their relations with Prussia. The hope of a *plébiscite* diverted them from turning their attention to a proper policy of internal consolidation. Instead of trusting to their own strength or in the work of their own hands, they put their faith in the generosity of Prussia, or in international complications which might lead to the raising and settlement by European statesmanship of their own vexed question. Article Five of the Treaty of Prague became an obsession. Upon it turned every election that was held in North Schleswig. As citizens of Prussia, the Danes had representatives in the Prussian Parliament; as members of the Empire, in virtue of their Prussian citizenship, they had also representatives in the Reichstag. Constituencies were jerrymandered by the Government in order to bring about German majorities; but the Danes succeeded in winning elections in spite of the Government. Their representatives, however, preferred intransigence to action. Krüger, their chief leader, seldom appeared in the Reichstag; and by refusing, along with his colleague, to take the oath of allegiance to the King of Prussia down to 1881, he deprived himself of his seat, and his constituents of any representation, in the Prussian Parliament.

On its side the Prussian Government was from the first, and has in the main continued to be, unsympathetic and unyielding. There has, it is true, been a good deal of vacillation; and indeed it is one of the defects of the Prussian Government that it has not been constant either in conciliation or in coercion, but has kept the Danes in constant suspense by vacillating between the two. Harsh during the war of 1870, it was conciliatory between 1871 and 1878. Rigorous between 1878 and 1880, it ameliorated its policy down to 1884, when it changed again, and in something of an Assyrian fashion ordered a wholesale expulsion of Danes. The accession of William II in 1888 marked a new era of rigor. His grandfather's whips were turned to scorpions. In a famous speech at Frankfort-on-Oder, he declared that he would sooner see eighteen army corps dead on the field of battle than surrender a single conquest of Germany. The speech was a death-knell to any Danish hopes; and it was followed by a new attack on Danish nationality. William II's early years were thus marked, somewhat inconsistently, by an attempt to conciliate the Poles and by an attack on the Danes. Neither the one nor the other was consistently pursued. Just as the policy of conciliation in Prussian Poland enjoyed but a fleeting existence of some four years, so the attack on the Danes passed away during the régime of Caprivi after 1890. Coercion began once more in 1898, when a new Governor, von Köller, came from Alsace-Lorraine to North Schleswig. His first step was a new wholesale expulsion of Danes in 1898. His confession of faith is worth quoting. 'I come here', he said, 'with the burning wish to promote Germanism with all the means at my command. The policy I followed was free from all sentimentality, and was based on the principle that Prussia had the right to be master in its own house. It was a policy which was apt to be hard and inconsiderate where necessary.' Necessity—it is always necessity—

German necessity. And this same necessity, if it left the Danes a little peace in the early years of the twentieth century, has descended upon them again of late years, and especially in 1912, with all its freedom from sentimentality and all its harsh inconsiderateness.

There are four main problems in the politics of North Schleswig. There is the problem of the 'optants'. There is the problem of language. There is the problem of religion. Lastly, there is the problem of the land. If we study these four problems in turn, we shall best see Prussian policy at work, and best understand its motives and methods.

I. By the Treaty of Vienna of 1864 the Danes of Schleswig were given the option of becoming Danish citizens, and they were allowed to make their option at any time during a period of six years which ended on November 16, 1870. Article Five of the Treaty of Prague, which led the Danes to hope for incorporation in the kingdom of Denmark, resulted in the use of the option on a considerable scale. Option, to be effective, had to be followed by definite establishment in a foreign country. There was thus a large movement of emigration down to 1870; and this emigration continued down to 1878—the year of the abolition of Article Five. It is calculated that 60,000 Danes emigrated, and that they carried away a capital of £5,000,000. If the option and the accompanying movement of emigration knitted more closely the Danes of North Schleswig to the Danes of the kingdom, it had also the effect of depriving of their natural leaders those of the Danes who still remained Prussian citizens. And when it was seen that North Schleswig was destined to remain Prussian, and the 'optants' who had emigrated began to return, a grave problem arose which led to serious difficulties, and which has never been finally solved. By 1883, 25,000 optants who had emigrated were back again in North Schleswig. What was to be their status? The Prussian Govern-

ment was not inclined, and is not inclined to-day, to give a lenient answer to the question. It has pursued a policy of treating returned optants, and even their children, neither as foreigners nor as citizens, and of refusing them both the rights of the one status and the privileges of the other. Some irritation was perhaps natural. That a great government should descend to petty persecution was neither dignified nor just. That it should descend to chicanery in the process—that it should quote and enforce against the Danes the laws and the measures which, in the days of the Eider Danes, between 1848 and 1864, the Danish Government had employed in the two duchies in order to enforce Danish predominance—was perhaps subtle, but hardly politic. The *tu quoque* argument is never effective; and when it is employed by a great Power against a small people, it is more humiliating to the great Power than to the small people. Old Danish legislation has furnished the Prussian Government with rods to beat the Danes, just as old French legislation has furnished the German administration in Alsace-Lorraine with rods to beat the Alsace-Lorrainers. But that the Germans should use measures against the Danes which filled them with a sacred fire of national indignation when they were used by the Danes against themselves, does not incline the Danes to kiss the rod or the impartial critic to praise its wielders.

The returned optants have been treated as dubious characters, who might be, and have been, expelled at will, and expelled wholesale, as in 1884, and again in 1898. The definition of an optant has been extended. According to the original practice, a Dane only became an optant if he definitely settled himself in a foreign country; by a ruling of 1907 a short stay in Denmark was made a sufficient presumption, and men were thus turned into optants who had done military service and even stood for the Reichstag. The revocation of the original option has also been made more difficult. By a ruling of 1902 Danes who

had revoked their option before November 16, 1870, were deprived of the rights of Prussian citizenship, though they had enjoyed those rights continuously since 1870. Persecution has even been extended to the children of optants. After 1882 they were not allowed to inherit the position of their parents, and were forced to do military service on pain of instant expulsion. A contradiction between Danish and Prussian law made the position of the children of optants still more hopeless. By the one, citizenship is territorial, and the sons of Danish citizens born abroad are not Danes ; by the other, citizenship is personal, and the children of Danish citizens born in Prussia are not Prussians. It follows that the son of a Danish citizen born in Prussia is neither a Dane nor a Prussian. He is 'homeless' ; he is an outlaw. He may be made to incur a duty of citizenship like military service : he may be deprived of all its rights.

The result of the whole problem of option has been that the returned optants, entangled in a network of inconsistent rules, have lived on the razor's edge, in a constant state of insecurity. Their insecurity has reacted unfavourably on the position of the Danes who remained in the country as Prussian citizens. The optants, who are their kinsfolk, united to them by the closest of bonds, are hostages for their good behaviour ; and any disaffection on their part can be punished instantly in the persons of their optant friends and kinsmen. This position of affairs does not make the Danes of North Schleswig love the Prussian Government, but it makes them fear it. With that the Government is apparently well content. At any rate, it has shown no anxiety to get fully and finally rid of the thorny question of option. On the contrary, the last agreement made with Denmark, in 1907, still left 2,000 of the Danes of North Schleswig in the position of homeless outcasts.

II. It was to be expected, from all analogy, that Prussia would not hesitate to hinder by all the means in

her power the use of the Danish language in North Schleswig. True, such a policy was unnecessary, and indeed impolitic. It was unnecessary, because the dialect used in North Schleswig is a patois different from the language of Denmark. It was impolitic, because a large number of patriotic Germans in Schleswig use the patois, and their German patriotism would not be encouraged by the imposition of unnecessary restrictions. But however unnecessary, and however impolitic, the policy was put into execution. The Danish secondary schools went in 1871. Attendance at the public secondary schools which provide German culture, and especially the German view of history, was made compulsory. An ordinance of 1878 restricted, but did not entirely kill, the teaching of the Danish language and the use of that language in teaching. A circular of 1884 marked the beginning of an attack on private schools which might shelter the Danish language. But the full force of linguistic coercion began with the accession of William II. In 1888 the use of Danish in schools was entirely abolished except for religious instruction: in 1889 parents who sent their children to school in Denmark were deprived of the rights of parental control. Meanwhile the use of the German language in public administration was gradually being enforced—if not without difficulty; for it is hard to govern in German a people that only understands Danish. Even in public meetings, by the Law of Associations of 1908, the use of German has been made compulsory; and if an exception is allowed in districts where more than 60 per cent. of the people do not speak German, this exception, as we have already seen, will cease to be made after 1928.

III. An attack on language readily passes, as we have already seen in dealing with the history of Prussian Poland, into an attack on religion. And, as a matter of fact, it seems indubitable that the cause of religion has suffered in North Schleswig since 1866. Ecclesiastical

organization has come under the control of the Evangelical Church of Prussia ; and that means, in effect, that it has come under the control of the Prussian State. The ministers of the Church have become the servants of the State ; they have had to swear an oath of allegiance to the King of Prussia ; and the very organists must play the Prussian National Anthem at the Easter services. The German language has become the language of church services in places where there is a German population. The Danes can only get services in their own tongue by building voluntary churches of their own ; and if they make this attempt, obstacles are thrown in their way by the authorities. The attempt has nevertheless been made. The Danes have bought religious freedom at the price of schism. As far back as 1867 non-juring ministers, who refused to take the oath of allegiance, began to found free churches. In 1894 was founded the Ecclesiastical Society of North Schleswig, which has separated itself from the official church not only on the ground of organization, but also in the matter of dogma. By such efforts, and in spite of all the difficulties interposed by Prussian officials, more than fifty meeting-houses have been built, in which the Danes of North Schleswig can worship freely, and can worship in their own tongue. The cause of religion has been saved, but it has been saved by the voluntary action of the Danes themselves. Left to itself, the Prussian policy of Germanization, which under Bismarck sought to make Poland Protestant, would have ended by excluding the Protestant Danes of North Schleswig from any Christian service which they could love or even understand.

IV. Attacked on the ground of language and on the ground of religion, the Danes have also been attacked, like the Poles, in their very farms. As long ago as 1890, a society called the German Union was formed in North Schleswig on the analogy of the Union of the Marches of the East, and with the same object of winning an ' alien '

soil for German farmers. The idea has been adopted that North Schleswig ought to be treated after the manner of Poland. It does not matter that the Danes are a mere handful in comparison with the Poles, or that, unlike the Poles, they are as good Protestants, and as much of Teutonic blood, as their Prussian masters. What matters is uniformity. Already during the Köller régime, between 1898 and 1903, an attempt was made to follow a policy of official colonization. It was reserved for the law of 1912 to introduce that perfect uniformity which Germans love. The provisions of that law for the protection of a native German peasantry in Eastern Germany were also extended to Schleswig-Holstein; and in order 'to render stronger and more settled German agricultural property in those parts of the provinces of East Prussia, Pomerania, Upper Silesia and Schleswig-Holstein, which are menaced from a national point of view', the Government was armed with a sum of £5,000,000. It goes without saying that in Schleswig-Holstein, as in Polish Prussia, the results of Prussian policy have hardly been the results which were intended. The amount of landed property in the hands of German owners has not increased, and general resentment, and (so it is said) a policy of boycott, have been encouraged among the Danes.

Besides the action of the Government, and behind the action of the Government, there is also the action of voluntary German associations, which are generally more nationalist than the Government, and sometimes more officious than the officials. The German Union not only promotes an agrarian policy: it is also said to control the Prussian officials, and to instigate them to further severities; and it is even said to influence the decisions of the courts of justice. A similar organization has a newspaper with the motto, indicating its aspirations, 'From the Skaw to the Adriatic'. As the Skaw is the northern part of the Kingdom of Denmark, it may be understood that the Danes of North Schleswig are not

enamoured of a propaganda which seems to aim at the incorporation in Germany of their brethren in the kingdom.

In spite of all coercion, however, whether by the Government or by voluntary associations, the Danes have steadfastly preserved their national characteristics in every possible way. We have already seen what they have done to preserve their religious life. They have also been busily concerned with the preservation of their language. In 1880 was founded the Language Union, which provides Danish libraries for the use of the people; and in 1888 arose a School Union for the purpose of paying the fees of poor children from North Schleswig at Danish High Schools. Other societies provide lectures; while the Annual General Assembly, first instituted in 1902, serves as a national festival for all the Danes of the province. Voluntary co-operation has also been busy in the field of economics. Agricultural Unions have long existed, and have long served to maintain Danish prosperity and to keep the Danes in touch with one another; while in 1909 was founded a Credit Union, intended, like similar Polish Societies, to provide sufficient funds to prevent the land from being bought by the Prussian Government for the plantation of German settlers.

It is from such voluntary societies, founded for the maintenance of their own religion, the preservation of their own language, and the security of their own farms, that the Danes of North Schleswig have gained most comfort and aid. The Danes of the kingdom are friendly; but their kingdom is small, and their fear of Prussia is great. There are 'Co-operative South Jutland Associations' in the kingdom (Jutland is the name of the southern province of the kingdom, and South Jutland—a name proscribed by the Prussian Government—is the name given by the Danes to North Schleswig); and these associations maintain friendly relations between the Danes of the kingdom and the Danes of North Schleswig. But the Danes of the kingdom have not been sufficiently

powerful to give much more than sympathy; and the Danish monarchy has sedulously cultivated friendly relations with Berlin for the last forty years. It is in themselves that the Danes of North Schleswig have to put their trust.

The failure of Prussia in Schleswig-Holstein is perhaps worse than her failure in Poland. She started with many things in her favour fifty years ago. The Danes were a minority even in Schleswig: they belonged to the same Protestant faith as Prussia: they belonged to the same Teutonic stock. Poland is neither Protestant nor Teutonic: Alsace-Lorraine is largely Teutonic, but its people are predominantly Catholic. North Schleswig was a natural and ready ground for conciliation. On this ground Prussia has failed. She has dug a gulf where there was no gulf; she has sowed dissension where dissension need never have been. Is it not pitiful that the Prussian Government should have felt it necessary to arrest, as it arrested in August of last year, numbers of prominent Danes, both men and women, at the very moment when 15,000 of the Danish subjects of Prussia were being mobilized to fight for the Prussian cause?

III

ALSACE-LORRAINE

The Polish districts of the East, and Schleswig-Holstein in the North, both belong to Prussia. Alsace-Lorraine belongs to the German Empire—to the whole Federation. It does not belong to any State in the Federation, and it is not itself (though a long step was taken in that direction in 1911) a regular State of the Federation.

Alsace-Lorraine came to Germany in 1871, after the Franco-Prussian War. A German would emend the sentence; he would write 'came back to Germany'. The truth is that the border region between France and Germany has been debated for a thousand years. In 870

Charles the Bald of France and Lewis of Germany were disputing about Lorraine : in 1870 the same land lay once more in the balance of war. During the Middle Ages Alsace and Lorraine belonged to Germany. As the Middle Ages wore to their end, Germany fell more and more into disunion—a disunion from which she has only escaped in the last fifty years ; while France, on the other hand, grew ever stronger and more united. By the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 France gained a footing in Lorraine by acquiring legal possession of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, the ‘ three bishoprics ’, which she had first occupied in 1552. By two articles in the same treaty she also obtained possession of all the rights and possessions in Alsace which had hitherto belonged to the house of Habsburg. In 1681 Louis XIV awarded himself, by the decision of a local court, called a chamber of reunion (which he had himself appointed), the possession of *all* Alsace, and seized by a sudden *coup* the free city of Strassburg. In 1735 France made a dynastic arrangement with the Habsburgs, by which the husband of a Habsburg princess, who was the ruler in the Duchy of Lorraine, was to resign his Duchy and receive compensation in Italy. Under this treaty France ultimately, about 1760, acquired the Duchy ; and owning already the three bishoprics, she thus became mistress of all Lorraine.

Disunited as they were, the Germans resented the loss of Alsace. It was German in population, and it had been seized with a high hand by the Grand Monarch, whose action was felt to be an offence against national sentiment and international justice. In 1709 the restitution of the lost province was demanded, and again in 1815, after the overthrow of Napoleon, the Prussians pressed for its restoration, but were baulked by the opposition of their allies, England and Russia, who both refused to see defeated France punished too harshly. Down to 1870 the Germans remained convinced that the lost province was German by right and German in sentiment. In 1870

they made it German by right, as far as force of arms constitutes right. They found, somewhat to their astonishment, that it was by no means German in sentiment. Seventy-seven per cent. of the Alsatians spoke German, or rather a dialect of German, in 1870. But nearly every Alsatian felt himself a thorough Frenchman.

There is a curious paradox about the matter ; but the paradox is a noble compliment to France. France had done little to spread her culture ; she had certainly not enforced her language, or denied to the Germans their schools or their churches.¹ But she had given to German Alsace, as she had given to the far more French Lorraine, her own republican spirit, her own gospel of the Rights of Man, her own stirring sense of liberty. Her culture spread the more widely because it spread freely ; and France, who before 1870 had considered the country between Rhine and Vosges half German, was almost surprised to find, when it was torn from her sway, that its people were more French than the French. What Louis XIV had annexed, the Revolution had incorporated ; and where he had merely seized more acres, the French spirit had imbued a whole people.

When France lay at the feet of Germany in 1871, and Bismarck was considering his terms, he was resolved on the recovery of Alsace and Strassburg, but willing to concede to France Metz and all Lorraine. There was indeed a considerable difference between the two cases. Alsace was largely German, and much of it had been seized in 1681 by a particularly violent *coup* : Lorraine

¹ Charles X, when he visited Strassburg, apologized for being unable to answer the German address of the Mayor in the same language. Napoleon III, when he visited Strassburg in 1867, thanked the teachers for their pains in spreading French, but advised them not to neglect the teaching of German. In 1868 the local educational authorities of Alsace decided that German ought to be taught with the same care as French. In 1870 the French proclamations of war were posted in Alsace in both languages.

was as largely French, and it had been gained by France under regular treaties. Again, so long as the French had Strassburg, they had a gate into Germany ; while, on the other hand, if the French lost Metz, the Germans would have a gate into France. But the military party insisted on the cession by France of Metz and part of Lorraine. Metz, urged Von Moltke and Von Roon, was equal to an army corps ; and Bismarck yielded to their insistency, though he knew, as he is reported afterwards to have said to the French Ambassador in 1879, that ' the Emperor and the military men behind him were committing the worst of political blunders '.

While the matter was still under discussion, Gladstone, at that time Prime Minister, urged the necessity of a referendum, and prophesied that a policy of annexation would be a standing reproach to Europe, and the beginning of a new series of European complications. Nothing, however, was done, and the Germans had their way. They were inspired by a mixture of motives. One of the strongest was perhaps sentiment, which always appeals to the German. German historians preached that Alsace and Lorraine were lost provinces of the old German Empire of the Middle Ages ; and they awoke in the minds of the German people that historical memory which is so fatal to sound statesmanship, because it causes the problems of the present to be handled in the light of the sentiments of the past. A second motive was, however, definitely political. The war of 1870 had been waged by Prussia and the North German Confederation with the aid and alliance of the still separate and independent Powers of Southern Germany. During the war the German Empire had been formed by the union of the North German Confederation with the South German States in a single Federation. A cement was needed for the new Federal State ; and the cement was found by depriving France of Alsace and Lorraine, and by incorporating these districts in the new Empire as federal

territory (*Reichsland*) owned by the whole Federation. The Empire would thus be united by common ownership of this territory, and the Reichsland would serve as a visible symbol and pledge of German unity. Still a third, and perhaps equally powerful, motive was the military. Germany needed a bastion or *glacis* against France. This was the line adopted by Bismarck in the German Diet. France under the two Napoleons had been an aggressive military power. Germany needed protection against the dangers of a new French offensive.

Impartial observers were dubious about the wisdom of the German policy in 1871. Sir Robert Morier, an English diplomatist in Germany with an unrivalled knowledge of German politics, thought that the new Reichsland might be reconciled with its conquerors. The Alsatians, at any rate, were Germans by descent, and German in language; they had been anxious for autonomy while they were under France; and the Clericalism of Napoleon III's policy had offended the third of the population of Alsace which belonged to the Protestant faith. But Morier recognized that the Alsatians were French in feeling and had no desire to be reunited with Germany; and he was told by the Grand Duke of Baden that the strongest possible national French feeling pervaded the whole population.

This feeling showed itself at once, as soon as it was plain that France was to lose Alsace and Lorraine. As early as February 1871, the deputies of the departments of Alsace-Lorraine protested in the French Chamber at Bordeaux against any cession. 'France cannot consent to it: Europe cannot sanction it. French we are, and French we wish to remain.' Such were the auspices under which the German government of Alsace-Lorraine began in 1871.

I. The first period in the history of that government extends from 1871 to 1874. In 1871 Alsace-Lorraine became a Federal Territory. As such, it was not a

State in the Federation, and was not allowed to have representatives, like the independent States, in the Federal Council (*Bundsrath*) which is the real governing body in the German Empire; but it was to have representatives in the Federal Parliament or Imperial Diet (*Reichstag*). Administratively, it was to be governed by the Imperial Chancellor—the chief executive officer of the Empire. When one reflects that by the practice of the German constitution the Imperial Chancellor is always also chief minister of Prussia, nominated and dismissed by the German Emperor who is always also King of Prussia, one realizes that *de facto* Alsace-Lorraine was put under the control of Prussia. It was to be governed from Berlin by the Imperial Chancellor, acting through a representative stationed at Strassburg; and it was thus by Bismarck, who was Imperial Chancellor down to 1890, that Alsace-Lorraine was governed during the first years after the annexation.

Bismarck kept some relics of the French past. The French administrative divisions remained under German names. French law was retained, and remained in force until the new German code was introduced in 1900. One French relic which Bismarck retained was peculiar. By an article of the law of December 30, 1871, known as 'the paragraph of dictatorship', the Chancellor's representative at Strassburg was authorized to use the powers which, under a French law of 1849, were conceded to the military in a 'state of siege'—or, as we should say, under martial law. In other words, Alsace-Lorraine was to be governed permanently in time of peace as it might have been governed temporarily under French law in a state of war. The government of Alsace-Lorraine was thus assimilated to that of a besieged fortress; and this was the spirit which dominated the administration for years to come. Not till 1902 did the 'paragraph of dictatorship' disappear.

In other respects Bismarck broke entirely with the

French past. All the officials he appointed were German. It must be said at once that the higher officials, at any rate, showed both efficiency and integrity.¹ The taxes were more evenly distributed; the powers of the local *communes* or townships were extended; the administration of justice was improved; roads and railways were built, and tariffs lowered. But the lower officials were tactless, and the whole administration was decidedly harsh. An attack was made on the use of the French language in schools, in official proceedings, and in public places. French was suppressed in elementary schools, and in secondary schools it was only allowed to be taught as a foreign language. This was in 1871. In 1872 German was made the language of administration; in 1882 it was made the language of the Provincial Council; since 1887 it has been made the language of the courts. French names for streets have been proscribed; the use of French has been forbidden for shop-signs, for inscriptions on tombstones, for Christian names, and even on the hats of employés. It was unsafe, a few years ago, to write a menu in French; and a policeman might enter a tobacco shop to order the taking down of a sign which announced, in French, that French cigarettes were for sale! One must not say *café*, but *kaffee*; not *modiste*, but *modistin*; not *coiffeur*, but *friseur*. The result is amusing, but it is also sad. When they are alone, the children in French districts play in French. If a stranger approaches they betake themselves, as well as they can, to German. It is safer. And yet, in spite of it all, the general knowledge of French has increased. The French language has vogue; and newspapers which were once only printed in German have begun also to

¹ Originally higher wages were paid to government officials in Alsace-Lorraine than were paid elsewhere. The result was a great rush, especially of Prussians, for service in the Reichsland. After this premium was abolished the rush stopped, and Alsace-Lorrainers began to get offices.

be printed in French, or even to be printed only in French.

But this is to anticipate later developments. In the period immediately under consideration, from 1871 to 1874, the full blast of the linguistic crusade had not yet made itself felt, and German nationalism was not yet so militant. The Government was feeling its way, and it was feeling its way under difficult conditions. By the Treaty of Frankfort, which closed the war, an 'option' had been given to the inhabitants of the annexed provinces of choosing, if they wished, French citizenship and French nationality. At the end of the period allowed, that is to say by October 1872, 164,000 had chosen French citizenship. The Government, however, declared that it would only regard option as valid if it was followed by emigration, and that it would consider all who remained in Alsace-Lorraine to be German citizens. This gave a new impulse to the movement of emigration which had begun immediately after the annexation. From the one town of Mühlhausen 3,000 workmen departed, flying their flag, to cross the frontier and settle in France. Another motive which hastened emigration was the desire to escape from conscription in the German army. Of 112,000 inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine, liable for service in the four years 1871-4, it is said that only 28,000 presented themselves; and of these, 18,000 only presented themselves because they were sure to be rejected for physical defects. It was a sad feature of this emigration that it carried away some of the stoutest of the population, who might have done better service to their cause by staying to fight its battles; and that it caused something of a cleavage between the *émigrés* and those who, like Asher, 'abode in their breaches.'

II. Something of a new epoch opened in 1874. Alsace-Lorraine ceased to be governed solely by the administrative discretion of the Chancellor, as it had been for the last three years. It was placed under the legislative

control of the Reichstag, and permitted to elect fifteen representatives to sit in that body. Every one of the fifteen elected in 1874 was a 'protester'; all the fifteen came to the Reichstag and demanded that the people of Alsace-Lorraine, annexed without their consent, should be permitted to decide the fate of their province by a *plébiscite*; and, the protestation made, they all withdrew from the Reichstag. The Reichstag of course rejected the demand of the protesters; but later in the same year the Government, resolved to continue its conciliatory policy and hoping to find support from a more moderate section of opinion in the province, created a Provincial Council of thirty members, who were to possess a consultative voice in matters of legislation and taxation.

The more moderate section in which the Government placed its hopes was the 'autonomist' party, which had its chief seat in the Protestant part of Alsace. Unlike the 'protesters', who were simply intransigent, the autonomists were willing to recognize the *fait accompli*, but desired to gain recognition for Alsace-Lorraine as an independent state, with internal self-government and with representation in the Federal Council as well as in the Reichstag. They desired, in a word, that Alsace-Lorraine should be put on the same footing as its neighbour Baden and the other States in the Empire. In 1877 the autonomists were strong enough to carry all the five seats in their part of Alsace, and to send five members to the Reichstag. The Government was encouraged; it hoped that the German Protestants of Alsace would build a golden bridge of reconciliation. In 1877, accordingly, the powers of the Provincial Council were extended to include the right of passing laws and voting the budget. Alsace-Lorraine thus acquired a certain autonomy. It was still subject to the legislative power of the Reichstag, and it remained under the administrative control of the Chancellor; but henceforth laws for Alsace-Lorraine might be made by the

Provincial Council in lieu of the Reichstag, if the Chancellor gave his consent.

III. In 1879 another change was made. Hitherto the Chancellor had governed the Reichsland from Berlin, though he had acted through a representative stationed at Strassburg. The seat of the administration was now transferred to Strassburg, and an Imperial Lieutenant (*Statthalter*) was created to discharge the functions of the Chancellor. By his side was a Secretary of State, and a Council composed of higher officials and ten or more notables chosen by the Government. Other changes were also made. Alsace-Lorraine was permitted to have a representative in the Federal Council, with a deliberative voice, but without a vote. The method by which the Provincial Council was elected was made more popular, and it was emancipated from any legislative control by the Reichstag and placed immediately under the Federal Council.

The autonomists, who, under their leader Schneegans, were responsible for the progress made between 1874 and 1879, seemed to have won a great triumph, and the way seemed clear for the development of Alsace-Lorraine into an independent member of the Empire. Manteuffel, the first Imperial Lieutenant, came with high hopes. 'The Emperor', he said, 'has sent me to your country to heal wounds, not to make them.' Unhappily, the autonomists thought that the Government would go further than it intended to go, and the Government thought that the autonomists had gone further than they really had. The autonomists had only accepted German rule as a *fait accompli*, and not as grounded on right. When Manteuffel asked at the elections of 1881 for 'a loyal and open recognition of the union of Alsace-Lorraine with Germany', the true position of affairs appeared in a flash. The autonomist party disappeared; only 'protesters' were elected. Out of 166,000 votes 'protesters' received 133,000.

IV. The disappointed Government turned to repression (1881-91). The use of French was prohibited in the Provincial Council, and one-third of the representatives were thus reduced to silence. Searches and arrests took place; societies and newspapers were suppressed; one of the representatives for Alsace-Lorraine was put on trial for high treason. In a word, the dictatorial powers of the Law of December 30, 1871, came into play, and it was in virtue of those powers that a ministerial ordinance of 1881 instituted the régime of passports which lasted till 1891. Under this régime some obsolete French laws enacted between 1795 and 1814 were revived—the subtlety of the Government in pleading French precedents deserves attention¹—and passports were required of all travellers entering Alsace-Lorraine by the French frontier. The aim of the policy was well stated in 1890 by Caprivi, Bismarck's successor: 'The experiment of Germanizing the people having failed, there is only left the resource of deepening the ditch that divides Alsace-Lorraine from France.' The words are a sad confession of failure.

Manteuffel died in 1885. His successor was Prince Hohenlohe. Manteuffel, in spite of the repression which followed on the elections of 1881, had sought to tread the way of conciliation. Hohenlohe had recourse to the strong hand. The immediate cause of coercive measures was the elections of 1887. The issue before the electors was a new Army Bill, designed to increase the strength of the German Army. These were the days of General Boulanger; and the electors were told that to vote against the Bill was to vote for war. They voted against the Bill. Fifteen 'protesters' were once more elected for the fifteen divisions by crushing majorities. The Government, however, had a majority in the rest of

¹ The same 'subtle' policy (if it deserves that praise) has also been followed, as we have seen, in North Schleswig. Poland is recalcitrant. It provides no precedents for its own oppression.

Germany, and passed its Army Bill. The Bill passed, it proceeded to punish the refractory electors of Alsace-Lorraine. The French language was proscribed in courts of law, even in French districts. The régime of passports, instituted by the ordinance of 1881, came into full play in 1888, and lasted till 1891. What Caprivi called a ditch, and what a French writer calls a Chinese Wall, was thus set between Alsace-Lorraine and France. This was a flat violation of the Treaty of Frankfort of 1871, in which, by Article 11, France and Germany had been pledged (to the benefit of Germany, be it noticed) to 'reciprocal treatment on the basis of the most favoured nation, . . . including rights of ingress and egress . . . and the treatment of the subjects of the two nations'.

V. The period of coercion between 1881 and 1891, and especially between 1887 and 1891, recalls the severities of the early and purely dictatorial régime of the years 1871-4. It was a period of terrorism, in which newspapers were suppressed, societies dissolved, and Frenchmen and Francophil natives were expelled. Gradually, however, a change began to make itself felt. The Boulangist agitation in France died away with Boulanger's collapse (1889), and with it the excitement in Alsace-Lorraine died away also. France turned to colonial enterprise, in which Germany was always ready to encourage her in order to divert her thoughts from Alsace-Lorraine. The change of mood was reflected in the Reichsland. The heroic period of protestation came to an end; and the old autonomist party, which had been active between 1874 and 1881, once more began to appear on the scene. In the elections of 1890, four of the fifteen seats were won by partisans of conciliation.

The period between the year 1891, when the régime of passports ended, and the year 1900 was an intermediary period in which new developments were being prepared. The spirit of protestation took the new form of a stubborn republican independence: the spirit of

autonomism began to enter on a new phase of revindication of constitutional liberty. Behind these changes we may trace the working of new social and economic factors. There had been a considerable influx of German immigrants into the Reichsland—immigrants who were readily 'Alsatianized', but who, just for that reason, were a connecting link between the Reichsland and the rest of the Empire.¹ It was their natural policy to join with the autonomists in claiming for their adopted State the liberties they had enjoyed in the States from which they had come. There had also been a considerable development of industry; and the consequence of that development was the rise of a class of artisans, in which the Social Democratic Party of the Empire began to find recruits. In the elections of 1893 a German Socialist was elected at Mühlhausen, and another, the famous Bebel, was a candidate at Strassburg. The movement of Alsace-Lorraine towards inclusion in the party system of Germany also began to be apparent in another direction. The clerical elements in the country began to draw nearer to the German Clerical Party (the Centre), which is one of the strongest elements in the Reichstag. An amelioration in the conditions of military service began to aid the general movement of affairs. Instead of being sent to serve their time in distant garrisons, the recruits were allowed, if they wished, to serve in their own province.

VI. After 1900 the new movement made itself everywhere conspicuous. The new German code became the law of the land in place of the French *Code Napoléon*. After 1901 the Trade Unions of Alsace-Lorraine were affiliated with those of Germany. The Socialists, who in 1893 had received 46,000 votes out of 240,000, in 1903

¹ It is calculated that since the war 638,000 persons have emigrated from Alsace-Lorraine. Nevertheless, the last census shows that the population has increased since 1871 by 322,000. German immigration is the explanation of these figures, as these figures are in turn the measure of its extent.

received 68,000 out of 280,000. In 1903 a clerical representative of Alsace-Lorraine could say in the Reichstag : ' We are German subjects. We adhere to the situation as it stands, and fulfil all our duties. We place ourselves altogether on the ground of fact. We belong to the Empire.'

After 1900 religious causes were at work to produce a new situation. Apart from the Protestant part of Alsace, the Reichsland is devoutly Catholic. The Catholic clergy had been at the head of the original movement of protestation ; and in Alsace especially they had encouraged, in later years, agricultural co-operation and the foundation of rural banks. After 1890 the German Government, wise in its generation, had begun to look with favour on the Catholics in Alsace-Lorraine. The old days of the *Kulturkampf* were gone, and under William II Germany began to draw closer to the Papacy. The more secularism grew, and the more the Catholic Church was attacked, in France, the more Germany shifted its policy. Instead of seeking to ' decatholicize ' its recalcitrant subjects in order to Germanize them, the Government began to pose as the protector of Catholicism. The motive was, of course, political. The Government sought to stand well with the great Centre Party ; it desired to improve its relations with the Catholic Poles in the East and the Catholic Alsace-Lorrainers in the West ; above all, perhaps, it was animated by consideration of foreign policy, and wished to induce the Papacy to transfer the protection of the Christians in the Turkish Empire from France to Germany, in order that German policy in Asia Minor might find an easier path. In 1902 William II, in a speech at Aix-la-Chapelle, almost professed himself a Catholic, and he certainly succeeded, as far as one can discover, in making a great impression on Pius X.

Meanwhile, France, under Waldeck-Rousseau (1902), under Combes (1903-4), and under Bienvenu Martin

(1905), had proceeded to a definite breach with the Papacy. It was a period of disestablishment and disendowment, in which the Socialists and Radical Republicans had their way. By 1905 the Church in France had lost any connexion with the State ; it had lost the right to form associations except for purposes of charity, and with the loss of that right religious orders disappeared from France ; while its priests had lost the privileges of exemption from military service and taxation, which they had hitherto enjoyed. While the German Government respected religious organizations, exempted the clergy from military service, guaranteed them an adequate salary, and permitted them to join in politics and to sit in Parliament, France dissolved religious associations, included priests in the Army, disendowed the Church, and shut down clerical schools.

Alsace-Lorraine was troubled. Her people began to turn away more and more from France. Her clergy gravitated more and more to the Clerical Party in the Reichstag. The German Clericals were anxious to receive their alliance, and the party held congresses in Alsace-Lorraine to advertise its activity and attract new adherents. A curious rule of procedure in the German Reichstag made the alliance almost imperative for the Clericals of the Reichsland. Only a party which numbers fifteen members can propose a bill or be included in the committees of the Reichstag, in which the really important business of the assembly is transacted. If the deputies of Alsace-Lorraine had been homogeneous, they would not have suffered from this rule. But they were not. The only way, therefore, in which the Clericals could gain any power of real action was to join an existing party in the Reichstag, by an arrangement under which that party conceded representation in committees and partial independence of action in return for a general adhesion to its programme. After 1905 such a fusion took place between the Centre Party and some of the

Clerical representatives of Alsace-Lorraine. The movement, however, was not universal. While the Clericals of Alsace entered into arrangements with the Centre, those of Lorraine were recalcitrant, and refused to follow suit.¹

While religious grounds were thus at work to draw Alsace-Lorraine closer to Germany, social causes were also active. The Socialist Party continued to gain ground. In the elections to the Reichstag of 1907 the struggle was waged, for the first time in the history of Alsace-Lorraine, between the national German parties. Alsace-Lorraine did not elect on its own account, from its own point of view, on its own party lines ; it elected as part of the German Empire, involved like all Germany in the great struggle which the rejection of the colonial budget of the Government by the Centre Party in the old Reichstag had produced. Alsace elected eight members of the Centre, and two Socialists ; and even in Lorraine a candidate of the Centre was elected.

VII. From 1907 may be said to date a new phase in the history of Alsace-Lorraine, of which the crowning-point is the grant of a Constitution in the year 1911. Already in 1902 the Emperor, who had been personally interesting himself in Alsace-Lorraine, had brought about the abolition of ' the paragraph of dictatorship ' of the year 1871. It had not been used for many years, but its abolition was a welcome sign. In the new situation, of which the elections of 1907 were a striking sign, hopes of a regular constitution and a definite understanding ran high. The Alsace-Lorrainers could count on aid from the powerful Centre and from the Socialist Party ; and they pressed for autonomy in the Reichstag in 1907.

¹ The Alsatian Clericals left the Centre in 1911. The Centre, after all, is full of German nationalism, and acts, in effect, as one of the organs of the German policy of nationalization. The Alsatian Clericals felt in 1911 that they had been inadequately supported by the Centre in their demands for constitutional liberty.

Nothing immediate came of their demand ; but a new Imperial Lieutenant was appointed, which seemed to indicate the possibility of a new régime, and a more liberal policy was adopted towards the use of the French language. In 1909 the Abbé Wetterlé, the leader of the Alsatian Clericals, again demanded a new constitution on an autonomist basis, and pleas began to be urged for the use of French in schools. Once more nothing happened. Suddenly, at the end of 1910, the German Government, which loves *coups de théâtre*, published in the *North German Gazette* the plan of a new constitution.

The constitutional position of Alsace-Lorraine, as it had existed since 1881, was somewhat anomalous. On the legislative side there was a Provincial Council, with the power of passing laws and voting the budget ; but this Council was subject to the control of the Federal Council in a way in which no parliament in any other part of the Empire was. On the administrative side, the Reichsland was under an Imperial Lieutenant, appointed by and responsible to the Emperor, while the other parts of the Empire had all their own administration. Again, Alsace-Lorraine had only one member in the Federal Council, and he had only a deliberative voice ; other States of the Empire had representatives in some proportion to their size, and those representatives had a vote as well as a voice. The demand of the autonomists was a demand for assimilation to the other States of the Empire. They demanded an independent parliament, an administration of their own under their own prince (though they would have preferred a republic to a prince), and proportionate and plenary representation in the Bundesrath. Under the plan of the Government they were to be granted an independent parliament (*Landtag*). This was to consist of two Houses, the Lower to be elected by universal suffrage, but on a system of plural voting ; the Upper to be composed, in respect of one-half, of representatives of churches, towns, and other bodies, and, in respect of

the other half, of members appointed by the Emperor on the proposition of the Federal Council. Nothing was said about the administration, or about representation in the Federal Council.

The scheme did not satisfy the autonomists, or their allies in the Centre and Socialist parties. It was altered in committee, and the final form, which became law on May 31, 1911, was as follows: (1) Alsace-Lorraine received a Landtag according to the scheme of the Government, with the one change that there was to be no plural voting. The provision that the Emperor was to nominate half of the Upper House on the proposition of the Federal Council obviously kept the Landtag under tutelage, and diminished the value of a concession by which the assembly was released from the direct control of the Federal Council. (2) The Imperial Lieutenant, nominated by and holding his office at the pleasure of the Emperor, still remained; and Alsace-Lorraine did not receive an independent administration of its own. (3) Three representatives of Alsace-Lorraine were to sit and vote in the Federal Council. These three representatives were to be appointed and instructed by the Imperial Lieutenant. (It is the universal rule that the representatives of German States in the Federal Council are appointed and instructed by their Governments, and that each set of representatives from each State votes *en bloc* according to its instructions.) But since the representatives were appointed by an officer who was himself appointed by the King of Prussia—acting, of course, in his capacity not of King, but of Emperor—the difficulty arose that these representatives would really, if indirectly, be instructed by Prussia, and would add to the weight of Prussia in the Federal Council. For this reason the representatives of Alsace-Lorraine were deprived of their power of voting in any case where the addition of their votes would give to Prussia a decisive voice which she would not otherwise have had. The

proviso was meant to safeguard the rights of the other States of the Empire against Prussia ; but it made the representation of Alsace-Lorraine in the Federal Council practically nugatory on all vital issues. (4) Finally came perhaps the gravest of all the provisions of the new constitution. By the ' paragraph of languages ', German was constitutionally made the language of administration and education. The insertion of this clause into the constitution made the use of German a fundamental, which the Landtag was impotent to change.

Only a single deputy from Alsace-Lorraine voted for this constitution. The rest were in the minority of 93 which voted for its rejection. In truth the constitution gave with one hand what it proceeded to take away with the other. The Reichsland became at one and the same time sovereign and subject. It acquired legislative autonomy ; it remained in administrative dependence. It acquired a parliament of its own ; but the composition of the Upper House of that parliament ensured the control of its proceedings by the Emperor. It acquired three votes in the Federal Council ; but the provision against their use in the interest of Prussia practically prevented their being used at all. By the grant of representation in the Federal Council it was admitted in theory to the footing of a free and independent State, on the level of the other States ; by the manner of appointment of the Imperial Lieutenant, and consequently of those representatives, it was left in the position of a subject territory.

VIII. The history of the last few years, from 1911 to the outbreak of war in 1914, has not brought any final settlement. The new Landtag did not prove satisfactory to the German Government. The Under-Secretary of State in Alsace-Lorraine had announced to a locomotive factory at Grafenstaden that the Government would give no further orders for locomotives, until one of the directors of the factory, who was French in his sympathies, had

been dismissed. The Landtag replied by a unanimous vote of censure. The Emperor retorted, during a visit to Strassburg in May 1912, by threatening that, unless there was a change, he might be forced to suppress the Constitution of 1911 and to incorporate Alsace-Lorraine in Prussia. A Socialist deputy in the Reichstag pithily rejoined that the Emperor evidently regarded incorporation in Prussia as the worst punishment he could inflict. The Centre joined with the Socialists in protesting against the unconstitutional character of the Emperor's threat.

The autonomist party in Alsace-Lorraine was now embarked on a policy of securing a definite constitutional position in the Empire with the ulterior object of reconciling France and Germany and promoting a Franco-German *entente*. Their path was not easy. In 1913 the German Government was contemplating measures, to be passed in the Reichstag of the Empire, for restricting the circulation of French newspapers in Alsace-Lorraine and for suppressing associations contrary to the public peace. The Landtag was at once up in arms. Any legislation by the Reichstag which was not general legislation for the Empire, and which was specially directed against Alsace-Lorraine, was in its eyes a breach of the Constitution of 1911, and an invasion of its own rights. The Government argued that it had the right to propose alterations in the Federal Press Law and the Federal Law of Associations, but it dropped the Bills. In the course of the struggle both Houses of the Landtag passed protests, condemning the policy of the Government and expressing confidence that the Reichstag would never pass such exceptional measures. Even in the Upper House of the Landtag, with its large numbers of nominated members, there were only found two cavalry generals and one professor—a very distinguished jurist—who voted on the Government side.

The end of 1913 saw the episode of Zabern. Beginning in a struggle between the Alsatians of Zabern and some officers of a German regiment, especially Lieutenant

Forstner and Colonel Reuter, the incident widened into the broad issue between the rights of civilians and the claims of the military. There is no need to tell the story, but its moral is important. It showed the dominance of militarism in the German Empire. The Reichstag passed a vote of censure on the Government by a large majority. This was the second time in the year that such a motion had been passed (the first vote of censure in 1913 was directed against the Polish policy of the Government), but 1913 is the first year in which a vote of censure has ever been passed on the Imperial Chancellor. Nevertheless the offending officers, though one of them was at first punished, were ultimately acquitted in 1914 with flying colours.

What has just been said of the army may remind us that after all the German government of Alsace-Lorraine has been in effect an armed Prussian occupation. The Reichsland is not part of Prussia. But it is Prussia which recruits, arms, and drills all its troops (as indeed it is Prussia which recruits, arms, and drills the troops of all but three of the States of the Empire, a fact which cannot be forgotten if we are to appraise correctly the position which Prussia holds in Germany). Prussian officers command its troops; Prussian officials occupy the higher posts in its administration. The King of Prussia, in his capacity of Emperor, nominates the Imperial Lieutenant; the King of Prussia, as we have seen, can threaten Alsace-Lorraine with actual incorporation in Prussia. It is Prussian¹ military methods which Alsace-Lorraine has resented—military methods which have led to the treatment of the whole province as if it were a besieged fortress; military methods which in 1914 led to the revocation of the indulgence by which the recruits of Alsace-Lorraine had been permitted to serve their time at home, and sent them once more to

¹ Colonel Reuter justified his action in the Zabern affair by appealing to a *Prussian* Cabinet Order of 1820.

distant garrisons where they could be drilled with proper rigour.

Rigour, discipline, military punctilio; due reverence to uniform, due assimilation to type—these are Prussian ideals, and these are not the ideals of Alsace-Lorraine. One half suspects that the policy of trying to make pattern Germans out of Poles and Danes and Alsatians is due to the fact that a military instinct for uniform has developed into a political instinct for uniformity; that the Government, accustomed to seeing men in actual uniforms, has drifted, by a curious extension of policy, into the idea of putting men into mental uniforms. The waywardness of humanity will always revolt against such a policy, whatever the good intentions in which it is conceived, or the rectitude with which it is conducted. Grave men will play truant, and grown men will break bounds, when the State becomes an over-earnest drill-master.¹ If German is *de règle*, the natural man will say, 'I will talk French'. And so French is fashionable to-day in Alsace-Lorraine, and spreads in vogue—the more because, behind its spread, there is something more than truancy, and something deeper than the instinct to break bounds; because, in a word, French unlocks a thousand treasures of culture which Germany, with all her greatness, can hardly parallel.

But the recalcitrance to German discipline appears in other forms than a preference for French culture. The Alsatians are a witty people, with a turn for jests and a love of laughter. They have turned their wit upon their rulers. Some of the wittiest caricatures in Europe are those published of late years by Zislin in the paper called the

¹ 'The ponderous exactitude of the German, which shows itself as much in the construction of railways as in the application of laws, has come into conflict with Alsatian humour, with a sense of irony and a taste for disobedience encouraged by a long period of French rule.' W. Martin, *La Crise politique de l'Allemagne contemporaine*, p. 262.

Dur's Elsass. To the foreigner it adds to the piquancy of these caricatures (to the German it must add to their enormity) that they are published in German. The great majority of the Alsatians speak a German dialect; and it is in that dialect that Zislin's paper is printed, that a number of plays have been recently written, and that Alsace satisfies its instinct for nonconformity to type. 'What can Germany do', a French writer asks, 'with a people who are French at heart, and who speak German?'

What the Germans have done has been to vacillate between conciliation and coercion, with a preference for the latter. They have been puzzled, and sometimes they have been deceived by appearances; and in their puzzlement and self-deception they have walked with uncertain steps. From 1871 to 1874 they tried the iron hand. That was the reply to the protestation of Bordeaux. From 1874 to 1881 they tried the way of conciliation. That was their bid to the autonomist party led by Schneegans. From 1881 to 1891 they tried coercion. That was their reply to the deception of their hopes in the elections of 1881. Gradually, after 1891, they came back to conciliation. As the German Socialist Party gained ground in Alsace-Lorraine, and as the Clericals of the province began, in reaction against French secularism, to draw closer to the German Centre, their hopes rose high once more. They made a great bid in the Constitution of 1911. The bid was not high enough to be attractive; instead of showing gratitude, the people of Alsace-Lorraine were inclined to be critical; and feeling deceived once more, their rulers reverted once more to the old ways.

There has thus been no steady policy of repression in Alsace-Lorraine, such as has, on the whole, been pursued in Prussian Poland. There hardly could be, in the nature of the case. It would be too absurd to persecute a people which is for the most part German-speaking,

and which, in the German view, is a German stock which has 'come back' to its original home. It would spoil too much the German case, that Louis XIV did a great wrong to the spirit of nationality, and committed a great offence against international law, when he 'reunited' Alsace to France in 1681. It would go too much to corroborate the French argument that a real wrong was done to national sentiment, and a grave offence was committed against public right, when William I 'reunited' to Germany, by force, against their will, a protesting people crying with one voice 'French we are: French we wish to remain'.¹

CONCLUSION.

These, then, are the fruits of the policy of compulsory nationalization pursued by Germany. It is a policy not peculiar to Germany. It is a policy in which the Magyars of Hungary have shown themselves adepts, and in which the Young Turks have made some experiments since 1908. There is indeed a certain fitness in the present armed alliance of the Prussian, the Magyar, and the Young Turk. They are united in arms to-day, because they have been united in aims for years—united in a common devotion to exclusive nationalism, and in a common objection to the rights of subject nationalities. Their common belief

¹ It would convey a wrong impression if one said that Alsace-Lorraine still felt in 1914 as it felt in 1871. Much water has flowed under the bridges of the Rhine since 1871. In 1914 many an Alsatian may well have said in his heart, 'A plague on both your houses'. The native Alsatian would perhaps like to be independent both of France and of Germany. Always particularist, he would like to carry his particularism to the length of independence. But the stern logic of fact assigns Alsace inevitably to one or other of the two great Powers. The heart of Alsace pulls towards France: the argument of the pocket inclines nowadays to Germany. It is a sad dilemma. Let our pity and our prayers be with the people that is confronted by it.

is a belief in the value of compulsory conformity to a dominant type. Their common procedure is to make the language of the dominant type a fetish ; to reserve for the members of that type the chief places in assemblies and the best dishes at banquets ; to repress freedom of the press and freedom of association ; and incidentally, but none the less inevitably, to pass from insistence on ' cultural ' uniformity into something which comes perilously near to religious persecution.

The year 1913 saw this belief and procedure strikingly illustrated in each of the three parts of the German Empire in which submerged nationalities are to be found. In Polish Prussia Prussian postmen were refusing to send or deliver letters addressed in Polish ; and when, in October of that year, a number of Poles at Posen went to lay wreaths on the statue of a national poet, they were arrested for making a ' demonstration ' and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. In North Schleswig the Norwegian explorer, Amundsen, was prevented by the local authorities from delivering a lecture on his travels in his native language, Norwegian, on the ground that it was too closely akin to Danish, and could not therefore be used in a public meeting.¹ In Alsace-Lorraine German officers showed their resentment at the laughter of the natives of a little garrison town by practically running amuck ; and the Crown Prince of Germany showed his approval and gave his encouragement by telegraphing to the chief officer, ' Stick to it hard '.

But this same year—1913—which saw Prussian officials and police and soldiers all doing after their kind, also saw the German Reichstag protesting against their doings. For the first time in its history, as we have seen, the Reichstag passed a vote of censure on the Government, and it did so twice in the course of the year—once by way of protest against the Polish policy of Prussia, and once

¹ The prohibition was afterwards removed by the Prussian Minister of the Interior.

by way of condemnation of military insolence at Zabern. Here there may seem to be hope. After all, one may feel, the Government of the Empire cannot permanently defy the Parliament of the Empire. Ever since it rejected the colonial budget in 1907, the Reichstag has been trying to give itself the procedure and the powers of a true Parliament. Will it not ultimately succeed? And when it succeeds, will not these other things disappear automatically?

In reality, the matter is by no means as simple as it seems. In the first place, the Reichstag cannot control the Empire as long as the Empire maintains its present federal form. In the second place, the Reichstag could not control Prussia, even if it controlled the rest of the Empire.

The Reichstag cannot control the Empire. The Empire is a federation of State Governments; and it is the Federal Council, consisting of representatives appointed and instructed by the Governments of the States, which controls the Empire. The Reichstag, a popular body, elected by direct and universal suffrage, has one real power: it votes the federal taxes. Unfortunately it is split into so many groups that the Government, if only it makes concessions enough to different groups to form a majority, need never despair of gaining the taxes it needs. The Reichstag does not control the federal administration; the Imperial Chancellor, who is its head, and who presides in the Federal Council, is nominated by and responsible to the Emperor. The Reichstag may pass votes of censure on the Chancellor; they do not necessarily affect his position. Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg was as firm in his seat after 1913 as he was before. Nor does the Reichstag really control legislation. Important measures are prepared by the Chancellor and the Federal Council; and the measures proposed by the Reichstag have to receive the approval of the Federal Council in order to become law. On the whole, the

Reichstag is a debating body, which can cause the Government inconvenience by its control of supplies, but otherwise can do little more than indulge in innocuous expressions of opinion. This must remain the case as long as Germany remains a federation of State Governments. There cannot be any parliamentary sovereignty exercised by the Reichstag while the Government of Germany depends on the will of the majority of State Governments as expressed by their representatives in the Federal Council.

In any case, the Reichstag cannot control Prussia. On the contrary, Prussia controls the Empire. The rest of the Empire put together is not much more than half the size of Prussia. The Prussian King is German Emperor ; the Prussian Prime Minister is Imperial Chancellor ; the Prussian Army, except for the armies of Bavaria, Saxony, and Württemberg, is the German Army. ' The Empire ', William I once said, ' is just simply an extended Prussia.' The saying is, perhaps, an exaggeration. Prussia, for instance, has less than half the seats in the Federal Council. Yet, in the last resort, the saying is true. What Prussia wills strongly, Germany has to will. After all, even in mere size, Prussia is almost two-thirds of the whole of Germany.

If it be true that Germany has to be what Prussia is, then it follows that there must be a new Prussia before there can be a new Germany. One is putting the cart before the horse if one expects to get a new sort of Reichstag vested with parliamentary sovereignty before a new sort of Prussian Parliament has been developed. Now, the Prussian Parliament is not a parliamentary sovereign. A freely-elected Parliament does not guide the destinies of Prussia. These destinies are guided by the King of Prussia, William II, acting through his permanent officials and his Army. And so long as the King of Prussia governs Prussia, and its Poles and its Danes, by his civil and military officials, and governs by the same methods,

in his other capacity of Emperor, Alsace-Lorraine—so long will things be as they have been.

The Prussian Parliament is not elected by direct universal suffrage like the Reichstag. It is elected on the three-class system. The richest class, comprising some five per cent. of the voters, and composed primarily of Prussian landlords, though the new aristocracy of business is being added to its ranks, exercises one-third of the voting power. The next class, which is some 15 per cent. of the voters, exercises another third. The mass of the people, numbering about 80 per cent. of the voters, exercise the remaining third. A Parliament elected on this basis naturally shows no democratic instincts. It leaves the King and his permanent Ministers to govern, and raises no inconvenient questions, provided the King maintains the sanctity and interests of landed property, and maintains the dignity and rights of the Army, in which the landed class finds its interest and its career.

If once the three-class system goes in Prussia—if once direct and universal suffrage gains entry—there will be a new Prussia. Instead of the dominance of an old and tough and stern landed gentry, there will gradually come about the rule of the Prussian masses. Now, a great part of the population of Prussia—in Westphalia, for instance, and Silesia—is industrial, as industrial as Lancashire or the Black Country. An industrial democracy will be different from a landed aristocracy. Militarism will not suit its book. Exclusive nationalism will not be its gospel. It will not lay heavy hands on Danes or Poles, because it will not have the military cast of mind, or the habit of national arrogance.

If ever there arises a new Prussia, then—but not till then—there will arise a new Germany. Prussia is strong enough to determine the future of Germany for good and for evil. At present she determines it for what most of us regard as evil. She can smile pityingly at the academic Reichstag, while she herself goes her own hard way. A

year ago there seemed little hope that she would ever change her way. To-day we are in the midst of a European war ; and war is a great innovator, who fashions on his stern anvil many new things. Of all the new things he may fashion, there is none the world needs more than a new Prussia, a Prussia remade and regenerate, who will not vex any more the peoples within her borders because their tongue is not her tongue, and their ways are not her ways.

But if, as most of us outside Germany hope and expect, the war goes against Prussia, the fate of Danes and Poles and Alsatians will not depend on the future of Prussia. In a new Europe, their ways will lie with their own peoples. They will be able to speak their own tongue among their own kinsfolk, and to plough their own land among their own brethren. By their own choice, we trust, they will choose their own destiny. May the choice they make be as wise as it is free, and as enduring as it is wise.

NOTE

Three facts should perhaps be noted here, which have not been elucidated in the text.

1. There is a Polish population in four of the provinces of Prussia—East Prussia, West Prussia, Posen, and Silesia. But the parts of Prussia which represent her acquisitions from the ancient Kingdom of Poland in the various partitions at the end of the eighteenth century are only the provinces of West Prussia and Posen. East Prussia, in the main,¹ came to the Electors of Brandenburg (who in 1701 took the title of Kings of Prussia) in the year 1618. It represents the district colonized by the Teutonic knights in the Middle Ages. Silesia was 'acquired' from Austria, to whom it had belonged for centuries, in 1740. There are thus Poles in two provinces of Prussia (in East Prussia, that is to say, and in Silesia) whose ancestors were not members of the Kingdom of Poland. It may be added that for a few years, between 1793-5 and 1806, Prussia held much of the old Kingdom of Poland which she does not now possess. Her boundary stretched south-east to the river Pilitza, and thence to Warsaw; from Warsaw it ran along the line of the Bug almost as far as Brest-Litovsk; and thence it followed the line of the Niemen northwards to Memel. Prussia lost much of this territory after Jena, and Russia eventually gained in 1815 the greater part of what Prussia had lost in 1806. It is these 'lost provinces' which von Hindenburg is now trying to recover.

2. The whole of Schleswig lies to the north of the Kiel Canal, and the Danish part of Schleswig is the northernmost part of Schleswig. The Kiel Canal runs mainly through Holstein, which is inhabited entirely by Germans,

¹ The possession by Prussia of the Bishopric of Ermeland, an enclave in East Prussia, dates from 1772, and sprang from the First Partition of Poland.

though it was governed by the Kings of Denmark, in their capacity of Dukes of Holstein, from 1460 to 1864. But part of the Kiel Canal runs along the boundary between Schleswig and Holstein, and the greater part of the western side of the long inlet that leads to Kiel Harbour is in Schleswig.

3. The French-speaking population of Alsace-Lorraine lies mainly along the western frontier of Lorraine. There is also a small French-speaking population in the northern part of that side of Alsace which borders on France. But, as we have seen, language is no clue to the question of Alsace-Lorraine.

The following are some of the books which deal with the subject treated in the text:

PRUSSIAN POLAND.

H. Moysset, *L'Esprit public en Allemagne* (1911).

W. Martin, *La Crise politique de l'Allemagne contemporaine* (1913).

R. Dmowski, *La Question polonaise* (1909).

W. H. Dawson, *The Evolution of Modern Germany*.

Prince von Bülow, *Imperial Germany*.

NORTH SCHLESWIG.

W. Martin, *op. cit.*

F. de Jessen, *Manuel historique de la question du Slesvig* (1906).

ALSACE-LORRAINE.

M. Leroy, *L'Alsace-Lorraine* (1914).

Florent-Matter, *L'Alsace-Lorraine de nos jours* (1908).

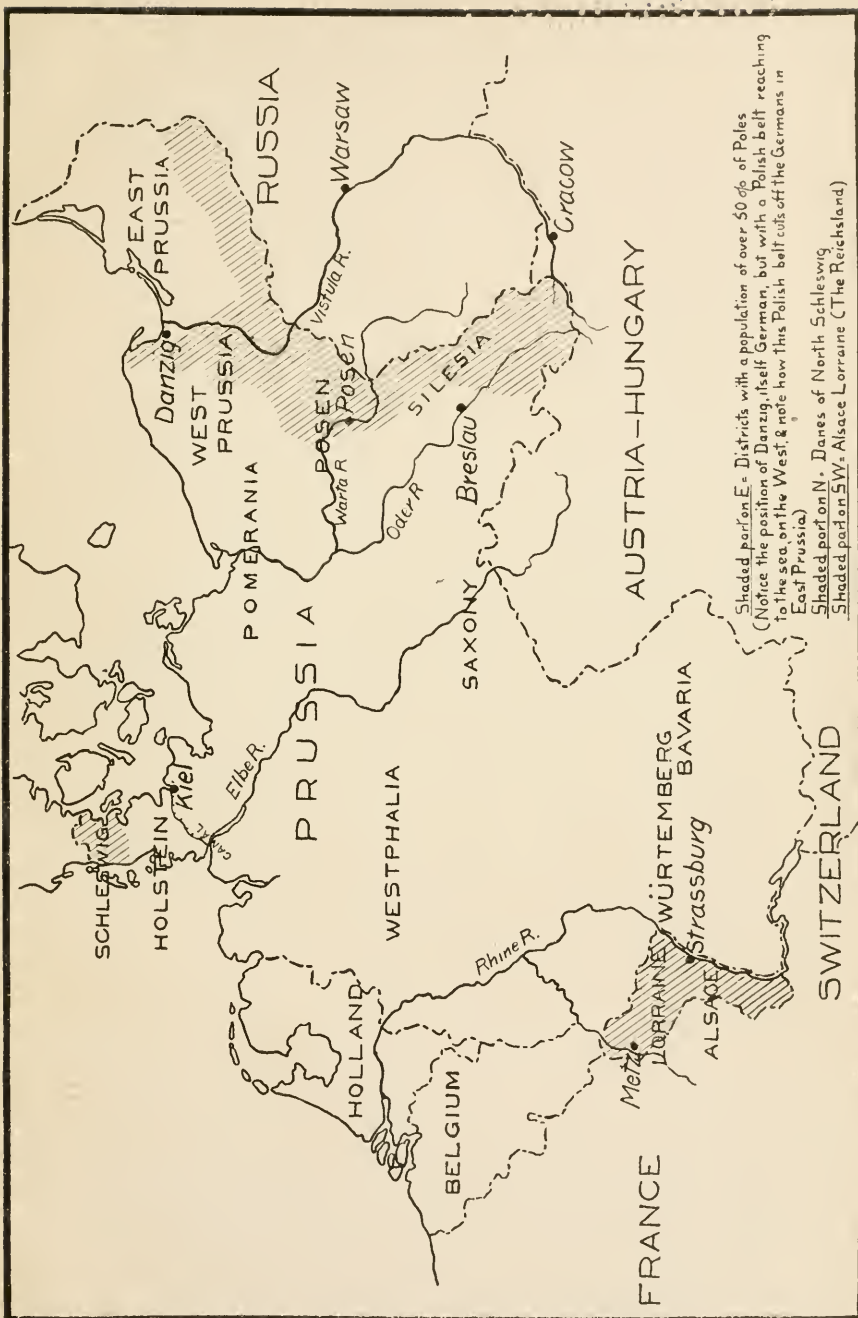
W. Martin, *op. cit.*

Sourires d'Alsace (Zislin's caricatures).

On the German constitution and the position of Prussia in the Empire, see A. L. Lowell, *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe*, and H. von Treitschke's *Politik*, II, § 22. The works of Moysset and Martin, cited above, are valuable for later developments.

ERRATUM

Holstein should be placed a little further to the south in the map.



Shaded part on E = Districts with a population of over 50 ops. of Poles
 (Notice the position of Danzig, itself German, but with a Polish belt reaching to the sea, on the West; & note how this Polish belt cuts off the Germans in East Prussia)
 Shaded part on N = Danes of North Schleswig
 Shaded part on SW = Alsace Lorraine (The Reichsland)



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