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LIFE OF
PRINCE METTERNICH

BY

COLONEL G. B. MALLESON, C.S.I.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

In writing this sketch of the statesman whose career occupies so great a space in the history of Europe for fifty years I have consulted, amongst others, the following works: (1) "The Autobiography of Prince Metternich"; (2) Binder's "Fürst Clement von Metternich und sein Zeitalter, 1836"; (3) "Neuer Plutarch," vol. v.; (4) Thiers' "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire"; (5) Capefigue's "Diplomates Contemporains"; (6) Gervinus's Geschichte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts"; (7) Maurice's "Revolutions of 1848–49"; (8) Alderstein's "Chronologisches Tagebuch der Magyarischen Revolution"; (9) "Napoleon and his Detractors."

G. B. M.

CONTENTS.

LIFE OF PRINCE METTERNICH.

CHAPTER I

EARLY TRAINING.

1773–1805.

DURING the first moiety of the present century, that is, from the year 1800 to the year 1848, Continental Europe was alternately ruled by two men. One of these, he who ruled from 1800 to 1814, made his hand so heavy on the nations he had subdued and crushed, that, on the first great opportunity, they rose against him, and, by a stupendous effort, cast him down from his place of supremacy. To ensure the potential character of that effort, to render it absolutely decisive, no one contributed more than the second of the two men to whom I have referred. He had his reward. When Waterloo had completed the overthrow which Leipsig had initiated, Prince Metternich stepped quietly into the seat whence Napoleon had been hurled, and, for the three-and-thirty years that followed, directed, unostentatiously but very surely, the policy of the Continent. Throughout that period his was the central, the omnipotent, figure, to which

sovereigns referred for advice and guidance, and before which nations bowed. His system differed, in its essentials, from that of the great conqueror to whose seat he had succeeded. The despotism of Napoleon was the despotism of the conqueror who had swept away the old system, and who terrorised over its former supporters. The despotism of Metternich, not less actual, used as its willing instruments those very supporters upon whose necks Napoleon had placed his heel. His system was the more dangerous to human freedom because it was disguised. He was as a Jesuit succeeding an Attila; and when, after enduring it long, the peoples of Europe realised its result in the crushing of every noble aspiration, of every attempt to secure real liberty, we cannot wonder that they should have asked one another whether it was to obtain such a system that they had combined to overthrow Napoleon. When the awakening was complete, retribution speedily followed. The peoples, who, led in 1813 by the kings upon whom Napoleon had trampled, had, after completing their mission, trusted their leaders, rose in 1848 to rid themselves of those very leaders. During the earlier epoch, Metternich had been the leading spirit to inspire the uprising; in the later, he was the first victim. His system, established by the successful "rising of the nations," was destroyed by the "rising of the peoples." But it had lasted over thirty years. It had procured for Europe, wearied by twenty years of constant war, if not internal repose, at least external tranquillity. Contrasted with the system on the ruins of which it rose, it thus captivated, for a period, the generous spirits who had contributed to establish it. Men were long unwilling to believe that so much blood had been shed, so much enthusiasm evoked, only to substitute a velvet-gloved despotism for the despotism of the sword;

that the one result of the "rising of the nations" had been to ensure the more perfect triumph of absolutism. When, at length, they did realise that one more crime had been committed in the name of liberty, they hastened to avenge the chief profaner of the sacred temple. But the time required for the general awakening was long. The despotic reign of Napoleon had lasted, dating from Marengo, barely fourteen years. The despotism of Metternich endured thirty-three. It is the object of this little book to pourtray the qualities and character which made such a result possible; to show how a young German diplomatist became so great a force in Europe as, on more than one occasion, to hold in his hands the fate of the most famous man the world has ever seen:—on one, especially critical, to bind together the combination which ensured his overthrow; finally, to rise on his ruin; to occupy, virtually, his seat; to hold it for thirty-three years; and then to descend from it at the indignant call of the people he had betrayed; and—a contrast to his predecessor—to be forgotten ever after. The name of Napoleon still lives: supreme as a warrior, great as a statesman, great in the enthusiasm it may even yet evoke. The name of Metternich arouses no recollection but that of the aphorism to which, in the plenitude of his power, he is said to have borrowed from Louis XV.: "*Après moi le déluge.*"

The career of Metternich divides itself naturally into ten epochs. The first, from his birth to the embassy to Paris in 1806; the second, from 1806 to the outbreak of the war in 1809; the third, from the war of 1809 to the retreat from Moscow; the fourth, from the winter of 1812 to the armistice of Pleiswitz; the fifth, from the armistice of Pleiswitz to the renewal of hostilities; the sixth, from the rupture of the armistice to the fall of Napoleon in

1814; the seventh, during the crisis before the Hundred Days—and after; the eighth, the rise and progress of the Continental system he established; the ninth, the decline and fall of that Continental system; the tenth, the conclusion of his career. I shall begin, without further preface, with the first.

Clement Wenceslas Nepomuk Lothair Metternich belonged to an old noble family located on the Lower Rhine. His father, Francis George Metternich, a diplomatist of some repute, had married Maria Beatrix Aloisa, Countess of Kageneck, and of this marriage the subject of this sketch was the first issue. Clement Metternich was born at Coblentz the 15th of May, 1773. Until he attained the age of fifteen he was educated at home with his brother, eighteen months younger than himself, by three successive tutors. In 1788 he proceeded to complete his studies at the University of Strasburg. The year he went there, he tells us in his memoirs, the youthful Napoleon Bonaparte had just left. "We had," he adds, "the same professors for mathematics and fencing." At the University, Metternich went through the usual course, but he had not yet completed his studies when, in October, 1790, he was summoned by his father to Frankfort, to assist there at the coronation of the Emperor Leopold. After this ceremony he resumed his studies, not at Strasburg, but at the University of Mayence, to read law and jurisprudence. He was then only seventeen, but already he had seen something of the world, for, at Frankfort, he had made the acquaintance of the Archduke, who subsequently became the Emperor Francis, and many other members of the Imperial family. He had also taken his first step as an official, for he was chosen there by the Catholic Imperial Courts of the Westphalian Bench to be their Master of the Ceremonies. The French

Revolution was then in its early initiatory stages. "From that moment," he writes, "I was its closest observer, and subsequently became its adversary; and so I have ever remained." At Mayence, Metternich divided his time between his studies, and a society of which he writes, that it was "as distinguished for intellectual superiority as for the social position of its members." This society was composed mainly of French emigrants of the higher classes, whose exile was voluntary. Association with them confirmed the hatred of the Revolution previously imbibed. He evidently regarded these emigrants as the true representatives of the French nation, for he writes of them: "In this way also I came to know the French; I learned to understand them, and to be understood by them."

From Mayence, Metternich was summoned, in 1792, to proceed to Frankfort to attend the coronation of the Emperor Francis, who had been elected successor to his brother Leopold. Again was he selected to perform the same ceremonious offices as had been entrusted to him on the previous occasion, and again did he improve his acquaintance with the frequenters of the courtly circle. Amongst these he notes especially Prince Auton Esterhazy, the principal ambassador of the Emperor; and the Princess Louise of Mecklenburg, afterwards Queen of Prussia. This illustrious lady, mother of the late Emperor of Germany, was two years younger than Metternich, but he had known her from childhood, for her grandmother, by whom she had been brought up at Darmstadt, had been on intimate terms with his mother.

From the University of Mayence, Metternich proceeded, first to Coblentz, and then to Brussels, in the University of which city he became a student. But his occupations, at this period, would seem to have been of a very

desultory character. The French armies were invading the Low Countries, and Metternich relates that his studies were interrupted by having to pass to and fro between Brussels and the Austrian army, sometimes with commissions from his father, sometimes to see his friends. In this manner, visiting also the scenes of military operations, he passed the winter of 1793–4. In the beginning of the latter year he accompanied the chief treasurer of the Netherlands Government on a mission to London. There, not only was he received by the King "with unusual kindness and affability," but he came to know, personally, William Pitt, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Grey, and other leading men. He frequented the sittings of Parliament, and followed with the deepest attention the trial of Warren Hastings. He adds: "I endeavoured to acquaint myself thoroughly with the mechanism of the Parliament, and this was not without use in my subsequent career." Amongst those with whom he became intimate was the Prince of Wales, "one of the handsomest men I ever saw," and of whose abilities he formed a high opinion. Whilst in London, the young diplomatist received from his Court his nomination to the post of Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Hague. The passage to the Continent was difficult, as a French fleet was in the channel. Metternich proceeded then with the sanction of the King, to see the English fleet which had assembled at Portsmouth to sail, under Admiral (soon to become Lord) Howe, against the enemy. The sight of this fleet, and of a large convoy of merchant ships under its wing, from the top of the hill behind Cowes, on which Metternich had posted himself, was, he relates, the most "beautiful sight I have ever seen—I might say, indeed, the most beautiful that human eyes have ever beheld!" So impressed was

he, that he requested the Admiral to allow him to remain on board his ship, to see the impending fight; but the Admiral would not. Two days later was fought the famous battle of the 1st of June.

The journey of Metternich to the Continent was accompanied by many circumstances attended with danger, but he finally reached Holland, visited Amsterdam, part of North Holland, and the Hague, and thence proceeded to the Lower Rhine to take up his post, the French armies having rendered a prolonged stay in the Netherlands impossible.

The progress of the French arms continuing, and the Metternich estates on the Rhine having been confiscated, Metternich was called by his father to Vienna, and, a little later, was sent to Bohemia to manage the family property in that kingdom—the only property remaining to them. After settling this property he returned to Vienna, where he found his parents busily engaged in arranging for his marriage with a grand-daughter of the famous Prince Kaunitz. This marriage was celebrated, Sept. 27, 1795, at Austerlitz—a place destined, ten years later, to become so famous.

By this time the experience he had acquired of diplomacy had quite disgusted Metternich with his career. He had determined, he says, "to remain in private life, and to devote my time to the cultivation of learning and science." But events were too strong for him, or possibly, the disgust was only of a passing character. Though for two years he adhered to his resolution, devoting himself to science and the society of scientific men, the request made to him by the Counts of the Westphalian "Collegium" to represent them at the Congress of Rastadt, drew him back to the world of diplomacy and politics. He accompanied thither his father, the first plenipoten-

tiary of the German Empire, and remained there till the middle of March, 1799. Then he returned to Vienna, his respect for diplomatists and diplomacy not apparently increased, and resumed his scientific studies. His life at this period, he writes, "was that of a man who sought exclusively good society. The day was usually given entirely up to business, and the evening was divided between work and recreation. I frequented those *salons* by preference in which I was sure to find pleasant conversation, convinced that such conversation tends to sharpen the intellect, correct the judgment, and is a source of instruction to those who know how to keep it from degenerating into mere babbling." It was at this period that he made the acquaintance of Pozzo di Borgo, then employed as a secret agent by the English Cabinet, and remarkable at a later time for the rancorous hatred he bore to Napoleon; of the Prince de Ligne; of the Princess Liechtenstein; and of others moving in the same circle. Still maintaining his attitude of reserve on the subject of official employment, he yet occasionally visited the Foreign Minister, Baron Thugut, and sometimes waited on the Emperor. The latter lost no opportunity of rallying him on what he termed his "indolence." On one occasion, however, just before the retirement of Thugut in 1801, Francis said to him: "You live as I should be very happy to do in your place. Hold yourself ready for my orders; that is all I expect from you at present."

The retirement of Thugut in 1801 in consequence of the conclusion of the Peace of Lunéville, rendered necessary a complete redistribution in the *personnel* of the Imperial diplomatic service. One of the secondary posts, that of Dresden, was offered to Metternich, with the alternative of that of Copenhagen, or of remaining at

home as Minister for Bohemia in the German Reichstag. After some consideration, Metternich, warning the Emperor that he submitted to his commands to enter a sphere for which he believed he had no vocation, selected Dresden, as, "being one stage on the way to Berlin or St. Petersburg," it was "a post of observation which might be made useful."

Nominated in January, 1801, Metternich did not join his new post till the close of that year. Though peace nominally prevailed, a considerable agitation, based on apprehension regarding the future, pervaded all the great countries of Europe. Under the First Consulship of Napoleon the French Republic existed only in name; the German Empire was visibly approaching its dissolution; the violent death of the Emperor Paul, in March of that year, had increased the general tension. At Dresden, however, none of this anxiety was felt. The city, and especially the Electoral Court, formed a contrast to the universal agitation. "To judge from this Court alone," wrote Metternich, "one might have believed the world was standing still." "If etiquette, costume and precise regulations, could be a solid foundation for a kingdom, Electoral Saxony would have been invulnerable."

As a post of observation on the Northern Courts, Metternich found that he had not exaggerated the value of the embassy to Dresden. He kept his eyes and ears open, and was thus able to transmit to his Court exact intelligence of all important matters that were discussed. The Elector, Frederick Augustus, appears to have impressed him as a man of solid ability, better fitted, however, for a peaceful era than for the stormy times in which he lived. On the whole, we may gather that the period of about eighteen months passed in Dresden by the budding diplomatist was a period usefully employed, and

that the experience acquired there was helpful to him in his subsequent career.

That he gave satisfaction to his own Court was proved by his nomination, in the summer of 1803, to the embassy of Berlin. Leaving Dresden, he proceeded first to Ochsenhausen, to take possession of the abbey-lands which the Emperor had granted to his father as a compensation for the hereditary estates on the left bank of the Rhine confiscated by the French Republic; thence to Vienna; and thence, after a short stay, at the end of the year, to Berlin.

The situation in Berlin during the year 1804 required the exercise, on the part of the representative of Austria, of tact and judgment of no ordinary character. This was especially the case when, in May of that year, Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor of the French. France was at war with England, and, whilst threatening an invasion of that country, was preparing for that Continental struggle which no man more than the Emperor knew to be inevitable. England, at the same time, was doing her utmost to stir up Austria and Prussia to join her in the struggle she was making, as her statesmen believed, against the subjugation of Europe. She had found at Vienna willing listeners; sovereign, ministers, and people in full sympathy with her; eager to begin, whilst anxious to obtain the co-operation of Prussia. At Berlin, however, the task was not so easy. There, there were two parties—the one, the patriotic party, led by Hardenberg, anxious for the Anglo-Austrian alliance, which, they foresaw, could alone save the country and Europe from the domination of one man; the other, under the inspiration of Count Haugwitz, desirous of maintaining a selfish neutrality, partly from fear of Napoleon, partly from the conviction that by con-

niving at the despoiling of Austria, they would increase the relative importance of Prussia, and might even, perchance, receive the bone of Hanover as a reward for their neutrality. Such was the situation in Europe, and such the state of parties at Berlin, when Metternich arrived in that capital.

The task entrusted to Metternich was naturally that of convincing the Prussian Court that its interests would best be served by a cordial co-operation with England and Austria. And not alone with those two powers. The Emperor Alexander, anxious to take a great part in the affairs of continental Europe, and desirous to wipe out the recollection of the disastrous result of the last campaign of Suwarrow, was bound, heart and soul, to Austria. He was now, by means of his ambassador, urging the Court of Berlin to declare itself. Attributing, after a time, the long hesitations of that Court to want of energy on the part of his representative, he endeavoured to persuade Metternich to supply by his advocacy the deficiencies of that official. Tired out, at last, by the continued evasiveness of the language employed by the Prussian cabinet, Alexander, to force its hand, pushed on his army to the frontiers of Prussia. Still the King vacillated. Nor could the prospect of an interview with the Czar bring him to a decision. War with Austria had by this time broken out, and the catastrophe of Ulm, though they knew it not, was impending. The utmost that could be wrung from the King, in reply to the urgent solicitations of the Czar, at this period, October 6, 1805, was the assurance that he had offered the neutrality of Prussia to the belligerent Powers, and that he should consider himself at war with the Power which should violate that neutrality. How, in making this declaration, the King's mind was acted upon by dread of Napoleon, was proved by the fact that when, a few

hours later, he heard that the French army, to outflank the Austrian army concentrated at Ulm, had violated the territory of Anspach, he did not declare war against France, but contented himself with informing the Czar that the frontiers of his kingdom were open to him.

On receiving this message Alexander set out for Potsdam. Then began, not only the negotiations for the entrance of Prussia into the alliance existing between the two Imperial Courts; but, what is more germane to this narrative, the intimacy, speedily increasing to friendship, between the Emperor Alexander and Metternich. From this period, in fact, dates the influence which, after the fall of Napoleon, the Austrian statesman exercised, with the most important results, on the mind of Alexander.

Never was more necessary the exercise of that supreme tact which it is given only to a very few to possess. For whilst, on the one hand, Metternich had to impose a curb upon, to moderate the impetuosity of, Alexander; he had, on the other, to meet the tortuous suggestions of Count Haugwitz and the French party. In his interesting autobiographical memoirs he states very frankly how he was beset. "From the first moment," he writes, "the Emperor and I fell under the ill-will of the Prussian negotiators. With ill-concealed anger they resorted to every imaginable pretext to protract the arrangements which, in face of the calamitous circumstances of the war on the Danube, grew more and more urgent." At length, after a too great delay, the King of Prussia, yielding apparently to the arguments and representations of Alexander and of Metternich, signed on November 3rd a treaty of alliance with Russia and Austria. But, as if he thought that he had gone too far, the King, always temporising, despatched Count Haugwitz to the French head-quarters, avowedly to inform Napoleon that such a

treaty had been signed, and that Prussia would inevitably join the allies unless the French armies should halt in their victorious career. In entrusting this communication to a partisan of the French alliance the King might feel tolerably secure that circumstances would be allowed to decide as to whether it should be delivered or withheld.

So, indeed, it happened. Haugwitz, who delayed purposely his departure for eight days beyond the time agreed upon, joined Napoleon at Brünn, beyond Vienna. Once in the presence of Napoleon, Haugwitz did not dare to deliver the message in its entirety, but gave to it a character purely complimentary. Napoleon, not deceived, sent back Haugwitz to Vienna, there to wait events. Those events were precipitated by the rashness of Alexander, who pressed forward to Austerlitz, and there met his fate—for the time. Haugwitz presented himself to the Emperor on his return as a conqueror to Vienna—and offered him his congratulations. To the Emperor's sarcastic question as to whether, if he had returned defeated he would have spoken to him of the friendship of the King, his master, Haugwitz made no reply. He bargained, however, for the cession of Hanover, and this, Napoleon, to embroil Prussia with England, and to undermine the bases on which the German Empire rested, not unwillingly granted.

Thus it happened that the labours of Metternich at Berlin were to a great degree fruitless. Thanks to the vacillation of the King of Prussia, and to the duplicity of Haugwitz, the treaty negotiated by the Emperor Alexander and himself proved powerless to change the current of events. But, for himself, the qualities he had displayed had not been displayed in vain. They procured for him, as I have said, the lifelong friendship and esteem of the Czar. His own sovereign, too, the Emperor Francis, had

noted with approval the tact, the talent, and the quick decision, displayed by his envoy under circumstances of great difficulty. He marked that approval by conferring upon the young Minister the Grand Cross of St. Stephen, and by nominating him to represent the Austrian Empire at the Court of Europe which required, above all others, in an ambassador, the possession of acuteness, tact, firmness, and penetration—the Court of the Emperor Napoleon.

CHAPTER II.

THE EMBASSY TO PARIS.

1806–1809.

THE battle of Austerlitz had been followed by the Peace of Pressburg. That treaty ceded to Italy, Venetia; the principality of Eichstadt, part of the Bishopric of Passau, the city of Augsburg, Tirol, the possessions of Austria in Suabia, in Brisgau, and Ortenau, to Bavaria and Würtemberg, the rulers of which were created kings. The Peace of Pressburg, in fact, completed the dissolution of the old German Empire, and secured for France a predominating influence in central and southern Germany.

At Vienna, it followed naturally that the Ministers who had instigated a war which resulted in so disastrous a peace should no longer hold office. Count Stadion, then, who had been ambassador at St. Petersburg, was directed to replace Count Colloredo at the Foreign Office; and, at the express instance of the Emperor Alexander, Metternich was ordered to succeed Stadion. For the embassy at Paris, Count Philip Cobenzl had been named, but Napoleon objected to him, and had indicated Metternich as the man most suitable to strengthen the relations he was anxious to see established between the two Empires. Metternich learned this change in his

destination only when he had reached Vienna on his way to take up, as he believed, the embassy at St. Petersburg.

To himself the change was most unwelcome. It came upon him, he tells us, "like a thunderbolt." We cannot wonder. The relations between himself and the Czar had been of a most cordial character, and he had looked forward with real pleasure to a residence in a country with the sovereign of which he had so many sympathies. For, alike at this time and always, Metternich hated the French Revolution and all its offspring. He regarded Napoleon, he tells us, as its "incarnation." Alexander, at that time, completely shared his views on this point. He had not been discouraged by Austerlitz; not even sufficiently humiliated to recognise as an Emperor and an equal a man whom he regarded only as a Corsican adventurer. All that, and more, were to come. But, in the beginning of 1806, the Czar still employed the contemptuous utterances regarding the great Emperor which the jackals, who for ten years grovelled before him, used after his fall.

Well, indeed, might Metternich, holding the views he did, and animated by the prejudices which influenced him all his life, shrink from the embassy to Paris. But the sacrifice of his personal wishes had become a necessity. Though Austria had been vanquished, she had not been wholly discouraged. So much, in war, depends on fortune, and the Emperor Francis felt that fortune had been unkind. The selection of Mack to be Commander-in-chief had been a mistake such as would never be repeated. Then, from a military point of view, the Czar had been the evil genius of the campaign. Francis had always urged that no battle should be fought at Austerlitz, but that the French should be lured on to the extremities of the Empire, when an attempt should be

made to destroy their long line of communication; but Alexander would insist on fighting. Though the allies had been beaten, then, the Austrian Court was not discouraged. All that they wanted was time—time to rally, time to reorganise, time for recuperation; and Francis felt that he could most surely obtain that time by sending to Paris as his ambassador a man agreeable to the French Emperor, and yet upon whose tact and knowledge of the world he could thoroughly depend. When, therefore, Napoleon expressed his desire to see Metternich at Paris, Francis, who knew Metternich well, very readily complied. He received him on his arrival in Vienna with his usual kindness; praised him for his conduct in Berlin; and set before him the necessity of accommodating himself to what he called his destiny, with expressions which made it impossible for him to oppose his wishes.

But the soft words of his sovereign did not hide from Metternich the difficulties which would await him at Paris. France was still at war with England; no peace had been made with Russia; a very guarded conduct was necessary for the Austria whose interests he would represent. Then, too, there was Prussia, grovelling at the feet of Napoleon; rejoicing in her heart of hearts at the humiliation of her ancient rival; and yet dreading lest the next blow should fall on her. If, argued Metternich, hostilities might be averted till Austria could recoup herself, then all might go well; if not, the next state of Germany would be worse than that then existing. Still he did not despair. He had belief in himself: belief in his power to win the confidence of others, without betraying his own secret views. He would enjoy, moreover, the opportunity—golden to a cold, determined nature such as he possessed—to study the character of the man who held in his hand the fate of Europe, and to keep his

master well informed as to the chances which might befall.

The new ambassador quitted Vienna for his destination in July, 1806. At Strasburg he was delayed for a time, as Napoleon was then endeavouring to arrange terms of peace with Russia, and, apparently, he did not wish that Metternich should arrive until the Russian agent should have departed. Consequently it was not till the first week in August that he reached Paris. The first important personage he called upon was the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the courtly Talleyrand. The impression he received of that statesman was favourable. He found him courteous and inclined to meet the views he put forward. For he at once asserted his own position, explaining to the minister, when he spoke of his desire to cultivate friendly relations with Austria, what the Emperor Francis understood by friendly relations, "which," he added, "must not be confounded with submission."

This interview Metternich himself calls the beginning of his public life. "All that had gone before," he writes, "might have shown the independence of my character. As a man of principles, I could not and I would not bend when it came to the point of defending them. Within a short space of time destiny had placed me face to face with the man who at this epoch ruled the affairs of the world; I felt it my duty, and I had the courage, never to offer to mere circumstance a sacrifice which I could not defend to my conscience both as a statesman and a private individual. The voice of conscience I followed; and I do not think it was a good inspiration of Napoleon's which called me to functions which gave me the opportunity of appreciating his excellence, but also the possibility of discovering the faults which at last led him to

ruin, and freed Europe from the oppression under which it languished."

Metternich was right. Napoleon never made a greater mistake than when he invited to his Court this most implacable enemy. Yet there are few sentences in the Autobiography of Metternich which reveal his character more completely than that which I have just quoted. The intense self-appreciation; the allusion to the voice of conscience, as if in him the voice of conscience had been other than an intense desire to rid Europe of the incarnation of the hated revolution. Those who follow his career will not fail to recognise that from 1806 to 1814 this was the one aim, the solitary purpose, to which the Austrian ambassador, more Austrian in this respect than his own sovereign, directed all his efforts. That aim never left him. It was with him alike when intriguing with the Russian ambassador and with Talleyrand, and when apparently enjoying the friendly conversation of Napoleon and the Empress. At the Court of the Emperor, whom he never ceased to regard as a '*parvenu*,' he had made himself liked—only that he might enjoy better opportunities of studying, in order to find the weak points in, the character of the man who was in it the prominent figure.

Metternich was extremely well received at Paris, alike by Napoleon and the members of the Imperial family, and in general society. Young, with a physiognomy which might well be called distinguished, with the courtly manners of the old *régime*, talking well and possessing the wit which is nowhere more appreciated than in France, having, besides, a special interest in making himself agreeable, he could scarcely fail to make good his footing. His real opinion regarding Napoleon breaks out repeatedly in his Autobiography. He read

him, he tells us, at their first interview. The fact that Napoleon kept on his hat on the occasion when Metternich presented his credentials; that, possessing, as the Austrian ambassador records, a short broad figure, and dressing negligently, the Emperor should have endeavoured to make an imposing effect, "combined," he writes, "to weaken in me the feeling of grandeur naturally attaching to the idea of a man before whom the world trembled." This first impression, he tells us, was never entirely effaced from his mind.

What follows is more curious still. The impression thus formed, adds the same authority, helped to show him the man as he was, "behind the masks with which he knew how to cover himself. In his freaks, in his fits of passion, in his brusque interpellations, I saw prepared scenes, studied and calculated to produce a certain effect on the person to whom he was speaking."

When Metternich tells us that he discovered all this, and imbibed an impression regarding Napoleon which was never entirely effaced, from what passed at their first interview, we turn with some curiosity to the recorded account of that interview. We are fortunately able to present that record on the authority of one to whom Metternich himself would have offered no objection, for it is his own story. "I presented myself to Napoleon," he writes, "without delivering an address at the first audience I had at St. Cloud, as was the custom of my colleagues. I confined myself to stating that as, in accordance with his own wishes, I had been chosen to represent the Emperor of Austria at his Court, I should strive on every occasion to strengthen the good relations between the two empires on that basis upon which alone a lasting peace could be established between independent states. Napoleon answered me in the same simple style,

and our subsequent personal relations took their tone from this first meeting." This is the "unvarnished" account. The other represents the version compiled in later years, based upon the violent antipathy inspired by the incarnation of the Revolution in the mind of a representative of the ideas which prevailed prior to 1789.

The same spirit is displayed by Metternich when he attempts to describe, and to ridicule when describing, the hospitalities of Fontainebleau. "The aspect of the Court at Fontainebleau," he wrote in 1807, "could not but offer many objects of curiosity to an impartial observer. This Court sometimes endeavoured to go back to the old forms, and sometimes rejected them as beneath the dignity of the moment. The Emperor hunted forty miserable deer which had been brought from Hanover and other parts of Germany to refill a forest twenty leagues round, because the kings too had their fixed days for hunting. He did not really care for the sport, except for the violent exercise, which suited his health; and, besides, he merely went at full speed, right and left, through the forest without regularly following the hunt." It was, in fact, in the eyes of the aristocratic Austrian, who had imbibed his ideas in the society of the *émigrés*, the Court of a *parvenu*.

It is easy to understand why, with the feelings which animated him, Metternich was anxious that Napoleon should not wage war with Prussia. Austria lay disarmed and bleeding, yet secretly determined to prepare to use the first fitting occasion to recover what she had lost. Prussia, full of resources, and still possessing the prestige which Frederick II. had won for her, was to be humbled before Austria could recover. Such was the Imperial programme, and Napoleon set out to execute it just two months after the arrival of Metternich in Paris. During the war, then, which ended in the dismemberment of

Prussia, Metternich remained in the French capital, noting, he says, the impression which the news of Napoleon's victories produced there. He states that the impression was certainly not one of joy; that it was simply one of satisfaction that France had escaped the consequences, and that her internal peace was not endangered. When, at last, Napoleon returned, "intoxicated with victory," from the banks of the Niemen to Paris, and all the representatives of Foreign Powers crowded to his reception to welcome him, Metternich records how they all had in turn to hear unpleasant things from the mouth of the conqueror. He adds: "I came off best, although," with respect to certain negotiations regarding the boundary between Austria and Italy which had just been concluded—"the feeling of Napoleon betrayed itself in a way anything but satisfactory to the wishes of Austria."

From that moment dates the study of the character of Napoleon which Metternich used with so much effect subsequently to 1809. He had many opportunities, for, as I have said, he could make himself more than agreeable, and Napoleon, enjoying his society, revealed himself to him. Recognising, as he records, all the great qualities of Napoleon, his vivid intellect, his clear and precise conceptive power, his love of action when his resolution was taken, the directness of his aims and views, and yet his power to modify them at any given moment, his marvellous insight, the abstract justice of his mode of arguing, the fact that he was never rooted to his own opinions when reason could be shown on the other side, never influenced in public affairs by affection or by hatred; he was keenly alive, on the other hand, to his failings. He found him full of faults; a gambler on a great scale, thinking of nothing but to advance, reckoning alike on the weaknesses and

errors of his adversaries. It was the abuse of the last-named habit in which Metternich recognised, even during the time of his embassy to Paris, the charmed weapon which, if Austria would but hold herself in readiness, could be used with deadly effect against the Revolution and its living incarnation; which Austria did attempt to use in 1809, coming much nearer to success than the casual reader would suppose; and which she did wield with triumphant result in 1813-4.

The triumph of Napoleon over Prussia had culminated in the Peace of Tilsit and an agreement for future action with the Czar. Almost from the day of his return to Paris the Emperor began to set in motion the design he had already conceived of replacing the Bourbons of Spain by a member of his own family. The observations which Metternich had been able to make at this period by means of his intimacy with the several ambassadors at Paris had convinced him that, to use his own phrase, "France had not one friend in Europe." He did not foresee, no one at the moment foresaw, the extent to which the projected occupation of Spain would swallow up the material, and weaken the moral, resources of the conqueror. But, in his heart he welcomed the new departure as likely to give to Austria a larger and less scrutinised field for her preparations than that which she could enjoy whilst Napoleon was in Paris watching her every move. As time went on, and the nature of the abyss—"the great Spanish ulcer," as he called it at St. Helena—which Napoleon was preparing for himself became clearer and clearer, the hopes which Metternich had begun to entertain became stronger, the preparations of Austria more decided. First, there came as a great encouragement, the news of the catastrophe of Baylen, 20th of July, 1808. Surely if a French army, commanded by a general of whom Napoleon had so high an

opinion that he was about to bestow upon him the staff of a Marshal, could be forced to surrender by the despised Spaniards, there must be hope for Austria. Napoleon was travelling in the south of France when he heard of Baylen. He had received shortly before warnings regarding the intentions of Austria, and, knowing that the news of Baylen would stimulate her to press forward her preparations, he was very eager to return at once to Paris, and demand explanations from Metternich. But he had announced that after visiting the southern departments he would proceed to La Vendée, and he was unwilling to make a change in his programme which might be attributed to anxiety. He therefore continued his journey to Rochefort and Rochelle, to Nantes and Saumur; was received everywhere with the greatest enthusiasm. Thence he hurried to Paris, arriving there on the eve of his *fête*, the night of the 14th of August.

The next day he received, with great ceremony, the diplomatic corps. What happened at that reception has been recorded by Metternich in his Autobiography in the following acrid style:

"Just before noon the diplomatic corps was conducted to the audience chamber. I took my usual place in the circle, having Count Tolstoy on my right, the rest of the diplomatic corps being arranged in a semicircle, in the centre of which was the Emperor. After some minutes of unusual silence Napoleon advanced towards me with great solemnity. He stopped two feet in front of me and addressed me in a loud voice and pompous tone: 'Well, Sir Ambassador, what does the Emperor, your master, want—does he intend to call me back to Vienna?' This address did not disconcert me; I answered him calmly, and in no less elevated tones. Our conversation, the longer it lasted, took, on Napoleon's side, more and more

the character of a public manifestation, Napoleon raising his voice, as he always did when he had the double end in view of intimidating the person he was addressing, and of making an effect on the rest of his hearers. I did not alter my tone, and met his worthless arguments with the weapon of irony. From time to time Napoleon appealed to Count Tolstoy as a witness; but when he observed that the Count preserved an unbroken silence, he turned round, breaking off in the middle of a sentence, and strode to the Chapel without completing the round of the circle. This scene lasted more than half an hour."

The termination of the incident is curious, especially if it be remembered that the instincts of Napoleon had led him to a conclusion which was perfectly accurate, though he did not possess the proofs. "As soon," continued Metternich, "as Napoleon had left the audience-chamber, all my colleagues thronged round me, to congratulate me on having, as they said, given the Emperor a lesson. A few hours afterwards I went to the hotel of Count Champagny, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, who gave a great banquet in honour of the day. On my entrance he said to me he was ordered by his master, the Emperor, to assure me that the scene at the audience had nothing personal in it; and that his master's intention had been merely to explain the position. I assured the minister that I, too, put the same construction on the incident; and, for my part, did not regret that the Emperor had given me an opportunity to explain before assembled Europe what the monarch whom I had the honour to represent wished, and what he did not wish. "Europe," I continued, "will be able to judge on which side reason and right are to be found." Champagny made no answer.

Before I ask my readers to accept this narrative, I must beg them to recollect that it is the narrative of one of the

interested parties; that it was written long after the date of the events purported to be recorded, and that, inasmuch as it exalts the narrator, and consigns to a ridiculous position the great master of legions, it bears improbability on its face. Fortunately we have another, and certainly a more probable account of the same interview, written at the time by the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, and abridged for his readers by a historian who has occupied the highest position in his own country. The memoirs of Metternich are of great importance to history, for they are the memoirs of an eye-witness. But, inasmuch as many of those memoirs were written after he had triumphed; after his chief enemy had disappeared; as, moreover, there is much confusion in their arrangement, and there are abundant proofs, one of which I shall shortly notice, of their having been edited; especially, moreover, as they invariably glorify their author and depreciate the several adversaries of the author;—it is only right that the traditional grain of salt should be at hand when they are perused; that, whenever opportunity offer, they should be tested. Now, I have set before the reader the account given by Metternich of this famous interview; I append that recorded by M. Thiers, based on the memoir of Champagny above referred to.

"Although Napoleon," he writes,* "resting on Russia, would have nothing to fear from the Continent, yet the determination to transport a portion of the grand army from the Vistula to the Ebro was so grave; the displacement of his forces from the north to the south might so embolden his enemies, that he was resolved, before doing it, to force Austria to explain herself, to know exactly the view he ought to take of her. If she wanted war, he would prefer to make it immediately, to make it with his

* *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, tome ix., p. 253.

full strength, without invoking even the aid of the Russians, to finish for ever with her, to fall back then from the Danube to the Pyrenees to subdue the Spaniards, and to throw the English into the sea. But this was only an extreme measure. He preferred not to have to wage a new war. . . . Thus it was that, without wishing to provoke Austria, he was bent on obtaining from her the clearest explanations.

"Receiving the representatives of the Powers as well as the principal officials of the Government, on the 15th August, he seized the occasion to have with M. de Metternich, not a passionate, aggressive explanation, such as he had had with Lord Whitworth, and which had led to war with England, but an explanation, calm, quiet, yet peremptory. He showed himself courteous, even gracious, with the ministers of all the Court, engaged with M. de Tolstoy, although he had to complain of his military follies; friendly, frank, but pressing with M. de Metternich. Without attracting the attention of those present by the loudness of his voice, he yet spoke in a manner to be heard by some of them, especially by M. de Tolstoy. 'Do you want to make war on us, or to frighten us?' he said to M. de Metternich. M. de Metternich having declared that his cabinet desired neither the one nor the other, Napoleon replied at once, in a calm but positive tone: 'Then why your armaments which agitate you, which agitate Europe, which compromise peace, and ruin your finances?' Receiving the assurance that these armaments were purely defensive, Napoleon set himself, as profoundly cognisant of the circumstances, to prove to M. de Metternich that they were of quite another character. "If your armaments," he said to him,

"were, as you pretend, purely defensive, they would be less hurried. When one wants to create a new organisation, one takes time, one

does not rush at it, because one does better that which one does slowly. But one does not form magazines, one does not order the assembling of troops, one does not buy horses, especially artillery horses. Your army is nearly 400,000 strong; your militia number probably almost as many. If I were to imitate you, I should have to add 400,000 men to my effective, and that would be a senseless armament. I have no need to call out so many. Less than 200,000 conscripts will suffice to maintain my grand army on a formidable footing, and to send 100,000 old troops into Spain. I shall not then follow your example, for in that case it would soon become necessary to arm women and children, and we should revert to a state of barbarism. But, meanwhile, your finances suffer, your exchange, already low, is getting lower, and your commerce is stopped. And for what? Have I asked anything of you? Have I laid claim to a single one of your provinces? The treaty of Pressburg has smoothed all differences between the two empires; the word of your master, in the interview we had together, ought to have terminated all dispute between the two sovereigns. There remained only some arrangements to make on the subject of Braunau, which remained in our hands; on the subject of the Isonzo, the road through the valley of which (Thalweg) had not been sufficiently determined, but which has been settled by the convention of Fontainebleau. I ask nothing of you, I desire nothing of you but friendly and peaceful relations. Are there any difficulties—is there one single difficulty—between us? Let me know what it is, that it may be settled at once."

"M. de Metternich having again affirmed that his Government was not dreaming of attacking France, and alleging as a proof that it had ordered no movement of troops, Napoleon replied to him at once, with the same calmness but with the same firmness, that he was in error; that troops had been assembled in Galicia and in Bohemia, on the borders of Silesia, in face of the quarters of the French army; that these massings could not be contested; that the immediate consequence would be to oppose to them other massings not less considerable; that instead of completing the demolition of the strong places in Silesia, he was going, now, to place some of them in a state of repair, to arm and provision them, to call on the contingents of the Confederation of the Rhine, and to

replace everything on a war footing. "I shall not allow them to take me by surprise, you know very well," he added,

"I shall be always ready. You count, perhaps, on the Emperor of Russia, and you deceive yourselves. I am sure of his adhesion, of the formal disapprobation he has manifested on the subject of your armaments, and of the resolution which he will take under the circumstances. If I had any doubt, I would at once wage war on you and on him, for I do not intend to allow the situation of affairs on the Continent to be at all doubtful. If I confine myself to simple precautions, it is because I am absolutely confident regarding the affairs of the Continent, because I am completely so with respect to the Emperor of Russia. Do not then indulge in the belief that the occasion is a good one to attack France; that would be a grave mistake on your part. You do not want war, M. de Metternich; I believe that of you; I believe it of your Emperor, and of the enlightened men in your country. But the German aristocracy, discontented with the changes which have come about, is filling Germany with its hatreds. You allow yourselves to be touched; you communicate your emotion to the masses, pushing them to arm. By degrees, arming and arming, you arrive at an extraordinary situation, impossible to endure long; and, by little and little, you will be led to the point when a crisis, a solution, becomes desirable, and this crisis, this solution, can only be war. Moral nature and physical nature alike, when they arrive at the pent-up period which precedes the storm, feel the need of an explosion to clear the air, and to bring back calm. That is what I fear from your present conduct. I repeat to you," added Napoleon, "I do not want anything from you; I ask for nothing but peace, peaceful and sure relations with you; but if you continue to make preparations, I also shall make such as will ensure the superiority of my arms to as great an extent as in preceding campaigns, and then, to preserve peace, we shall have brought about war."

The reader will not fail to notice that whilst there is not a word in this account inconsistent with the account given by Metternich himself, there is absent from this the impression which the other conveys that the attitude of Metternich made the Emperor appear ridiculous. The circumstances of the time lend credit to the idea that the French record is absolutely true. Austria was resolved at that very time to take advantage of the first turn in the

fortunes of Napoleon. Napoleon instinctively knew it. He was on the eve of starting for Erfurt to hold there with the Emperor Alexander the interview which should consolidate the alliance. From Erfurt he would proceed in person to Spain, to finish with the risings and the English intervention in that country. To attain such a result he would naturally diminish largely his garrisons in Germany; and he foresaw, as Metternich and the Emperor Francis foresaw, that his own departure, and the diminution of the army in Germany, would give a Power, whose pride he had lowered, and who was thirsting for revenge, opportunities which she might not be able to let pass. Therefore on this solemn occasion, the day after his return from La Vendée, a month only before his departure for Erfurt, on his way, so to say, to Spain, Napoleon solemnly warned Metternich, in the presence of the whole diplomatic corps, that he was thoroughly acquainted with the dispositions of the Austrian court, and that a continuance of a policy such as that it was pursuing could only lead to war.

Writing in his Autobiography of this period, Metternich admits and justifies the course then pursued by Austria; and thus, in spite of himself, justifies also the course adopted by Napoleon at this famous interview. Telling us that under the weight of the unhappy issue of the war of 1805 Austria had collapsed; that the Confederation of the Rhine had taken the place of the German Empire; that Tirol had been given to Bavaria, and that the duchy of Warsaw had been pushed in between Russia and Austria; that the peace of Tilsit had brought about an alliance between Russia and France, "the twofold object of which was the silent assent of the former Power to the attacks of the latter, and the partition of the Ottoman Empire between the two, adjusted on the supposition of

its impending fall," he adds this confession: "Austria, therefore, was not in a position in which she could possibly maintain herself."

Then peeps out the fear, which subsequent events proved to have been utterly unsubstantial, but which pervaded the Court of Vienna, and inspired all its action: "Napoleon was so convinced of it that he looked upon Austria as a prize in prospect for one of his new German allies." The justification of Napoleon's warning of the 15th August follows:

"Not only, then, was the renewal of war in the nature of things, but it was for our Empire an absolute condition of its existence. The question was to my mind settled. But the points which remained, and, in my view, required ripe consideration, were, the choice of the right moment for beginning the war, and the settling of the plan of operation."

Here we have the keynote to the policy of Metternich during the entire period of his embassy to Paris. It was to cover, to conceal, to hide from view, the preparations for war made by Austria; to foment, as we shall see later on, discontent and intrigue against the French Emperor in Paris; to knit friendly and confidential relations with foreign ministers, notably, as we shall also see, with the Russian ambassador, for the same purpose; to watch for the most favourable opportunity for the commencement of hostilities.

Napoleon reached Erfurt the 27th September. The Court of Vienna was represented there by Baron Vincent. The Russian ambassador at Paris, Count Tolstoy, whose sympathies were strongly allied to those of Metternich, went thither also to meet his sovereign. Metternich, whose repeated solicitation to be allowed to accompany Napoleon had been refused, remained at Paris. From that city he kept up a correspondence with his friends at

Erfurt, Tolstoy and Vincent. These, not well informed themselves, responded as best they could. But, either their reports were faulty, or the conclusions which he drew from them did no credit to his prescience. He declared his belief that the interview was "a trap laid for the Russian monarch on the part of the French Emperor." The "trap," if laid at all, was laid, not by Napoleon, but by Alexander. It was he who, in his many conversations with the French ambassador at St. Petersburg, M. de Caulaincourt, first expressed his ardent desire for a fresh interview as soon as possible, *pour nous entendre, et maîtriser l'Europe.*" *

Despite all his efforts Metternich was unable to discover the secrets of the conference at Erfurt. Four persons alone were present at the political discussions which had taken place there: Napoleon and his Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. de Champagny; Alexander and the Chancellor of the Empire, M. de Romanzoff. To the Austrian minister, Baron Vincent, no confidences were made, and when he complained, he was told that as Austria was arming, for a purpose which she declined to explain, it was impossible to take her into the confidence of two monarchs of whom she might at any moment declare herself the enemy. It may safely be concluded, then, that during the continuance of the conference, Metternich obtained no reliable evidence regarding the matters discussed there. On that subject his Autobiography is virtually a blank.

Returning to him in Paris, we find that on the 30th of that month he wrote to Count Stadion that

"the return of General de Vincent must have secured for his Imperial Majesty full information as to the conference at Erfurt and the turn

* *Thiers*, ix. 269.

which matters have taken there. I have the less hurried to send off this courier that I might be able to tell your Excellency of the return of the Emperor to his capital and his departure for Bayonne, for which place he started yesterday afternoon."

Napoleon, in fact, had quitted Erfurt the 14th October; reached St. Cloud the 18th; made all his arrangements to finish with Spain; and had set out for Bayonne the 29th. Six days before this departure he had received the diplomatic corps, when, towards Metternich personally, he had, by the admission of that ambassador, shown great politeness.

During the Emperor's absence Metternich renewed his intimacy with Count Tolstoy, and his acquaintance with the Russian Chancellor, Count Romanzoff. The latter he describes as "having been caught in the nets of Napoleon," which is as much as to say that he represented, at that period, the views of his master, the Czar. Metternich became, too, intimate with Talleyrand, who, towards the end of 1808, had begun to use his vast faculty for intrigue to undermine Napoleon—a purpose he adhered to steadfastly till it had been accomplished. It can easily be conceived how, in this man, Metternich found a congenial spirit; how he revelled in the revelations, true or false, which Talleyrand made to him of his secret interviews with Alexander at Erfurt. Recording his impressions of an interview with that faithless intriguer at this period, Metternich thus writes in a memorandum he drew up at the close of the year:

"The first day of his arrival (at Erfurt) Talleyrand presented himself to the Emperor Alexander, and said to him the memorable words: 'Sire, what are you going to do here? It rests with you to save Europe, and you can only accomplish this by resisting Napoleon. The French people are civilised, its sovereign is not; the sovereign of Russia is civilised, and his people are not; it is therefore for the sovereign of Russia to be allied with the French people.'"

In another interview he stated that he had said to him: "The Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, are the conquests of France. The rest are the conquests of the Emperor of France, and we shall not hold them." Talleyrand, who had always been a supporter of the Austrian alliance, further told Metternich, on his return to Paris from Erfurt, "that since the battle of Austerlitz the relations of Alexander with Austria have not been more favourable;" and, again, that Napoleon's ambassador at St. Petersburg, Caulaincourt, was entirely devoted to his—Talleyrand's—point of view, and had been instructed to second all the steps of the Austrian ambassador, Prince Schwarzenberg.

Full of hopes inspired by his conversation with this man and others like him, who, whilst wearing the livery of the Empire, were doing their best to undermine it, Metternich applied for, and was granted, leave to proceed to Vienna. He arrived there the 10th November,* and at once saw Count Stadion, the Minister for Foreign Affairs. From him he learnt that Austria was far nearer to war than he had thought when he left Paris. Metternich entered with his whole heart into the scheme, the innermost secrets of which were then revealed to him. The day following he saw the Emperor. From a conversation which lasted several hours with Francis he came to the conclusion that whilst there was no difference of opinion between the Emperor and his Cabinet as to the necessity of war—a conclusion which amply justified the prevision of Napoleon—the former was not so decided as the latter as to the right moment for waging it. The interview ended with a request made by Francis to his ambassador at the French Court that he would examine

* In his Autobiography he states "10th of October," but that is evidently a misprint; Metternich was in Paris all October.

the question thoroughly, and assist the cabinet with his advice.

Of all tasks this was the most congenial to Metternich. Hating, as he did—we cannot too often repeat it—the Revolution and its offspring, the Napoleonic system; believing that that system was personified in one man, and that it required only his humiliation to cause it to fall; that, moreover, it lay in the power, and that it was the duty, of re-strengthened Austria to ensure that humiliation by choosing the opportune moment to strike a blow with all her force; he felt that the request of his sovereign had vested him with power to decide the selection of that opportune moment. Francis would no longer resist the Cabinet if Metternich could show that the policy of the Cabinet was based on reason; the Cabinet would yield to Francis if Metternich could lay before it a justification of the views of Francis.

In this spirit Metternich began his task. It resulted in three memoranda addressed to the Emperor Francis. In these he entered very fully into the relative conditions of France and Austria at the time, 1806, when he proceeded as ambassador to Paris; showed how the Peace of Pressburg had undermined the last rampart of the independence of Europe, and caused even the people of Germany to believe that Austria's safety was only to be found in a close alliance with France, or, at least, in a system of the strictest neutrality; that few statesmen had then realised that "friendship and neutrality" are two words void of meaning to Napoleon; that the campaigns of 1806–7 proved, however, that the part of a neutral was not less difficult to sustain than that of an enemy; that even before the close of that campaign Napoleon had prepared the destruction of Spain; that the resolution thus to destroy "the oldest, the most tried, the most

disinterested of the allies, not only of Napoleon, but of all preceding Governments of France, must prove to the world that friendship is unavailing to preserve any Power, if that Power cross the path of the Emperor of the French." *

This being the preamble, the demonstration that the part of enemy, the part of neutral, the part of friend, were all equally powerless to save a continental nation from the devouring ambition of Napoleon, Metternich proceeded to argue that the only chance of being able to shake off a yoke, which in any one of its three diverse forms was intolerable, was to watch the opportunity when the dominant Power should be hampered by one of the schemes into which its insatiable ambition would certainly draw it, and then, having meanwhile prepared, to strike. Such an opportunity, he proceeded, was now approaching. "Providence determines the limits of every usurping Power. Spain was called to save Europe; yet," he added, "these chances, too, would have passed in vain, if we had waited for them to occur before taking up the only attitude proper to us."

Proceeding to prove, then, that France was tired of fighting; that the wars she was waging were not her wars, but simply the wars of her ruler; that a strong party was forming in France, guided by men of the intellectual strength and calibre of Talleyrand and

* In the *Autobiography of Prince Metternich* the memoirs from which the summary in the text has been made are thus headed: "Two memoirs by Metternich, drawn up in Vienna, December 4, 1808." Upon this I desire to remark that though it is possible they may have been written in outline in that year, they contain internal evidence that they were considerably touched up afterwards. Thus, referring to the action of Napoleon in establishing the two Spanish princes, Ferdinand and Carlos, at Valençay, the property of Talleyrand, the memoir adds: "where they lived at the expense of the proprietor, till the day when their House was restored." Their House was restored in 1814. Yet.

Fouché, to oppose the destructive plans of the Emperor, and to bring back peace on terms consistent with the well-being of the nations of Europe; that the interview at Erfurt had been arranged by Napoleon with the express object of persuading the Czar to take active measures against Austria whilst he and his army should be engaged in Spain; that, owing to the energetic administration of the heads of the departments, Austria was now ready or nearly ready for war; that Napoleon's war with Spain had divulged the fact that he had but one army, the *Grande Armée*, which had fought under his command in 1805, 1806, 1807; that that army had suffered serious losses in Spain, that, deducting those losses and the other troops he had sent to that country, he could not put into the field against Austria more than 206,000 men, of whom only 107,000 would be French; that the war with Spain would exhaust him far more than his contests with Germany, the conditions of warfare in that country being much less favourable to an invader; Metternich inquired, only that he might answer the inquiry in the negative, whether Napoleon could abandon Spain in order that he might bring all his forces against Austria. He arrived, then, at the conclusion that under the most favourable circumstances for Napoleon, his forces would be weakened by more than 120,000 men necessary for the occupation of the Peninsula; and that, thus, "the forces of Austria, so inferior to those of France before the insurrection in Spain, will be at least equal to them after that event."

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as I have said, the memoir bears the date of 1808. Throughout the Autobiography there runs a coincidence of advice with accomplished events, which, with such a proof of editing as I have given, ought to make the reader suspect the prescience which Metternich claims for himself.

But it was not upon Austria alone that her statesmen at that period counted. Count Stadion and his colleagues reckoned much on the strong antagonism to French domination which had risen, and was daily increasing, in North Germany; they were hopeful, too, that if they could gain a first striking success in the field, Bavaria might remember that she was, after all, a German power; and that, under the same circumstances, even the Czar might return to his old alliances. Metternich did not share those views. Austria must, he said, indulge in no illusions; she must trust to herself alone. His opinion was shared by the illustrious prince to whom Austria was about to entrust the command in chief of her armies, the Archduke Charles. Meanwhile, the opposing ideas, which I may call the ideas of the Cabinet, were being acted upon. It was only at the last moment that the opinion of the Archduke and of Metternich prevailed, and the military plans were modified accordingly. The fatal result of divided counsels, and of completely changing the military plan within a short time of the breaking out of hostilities was manifested at the moment when Austria, a fortnight too early, decided the question of peace or war, by seizing the person of the bearer of the French despatches.

Metternich was engaged in stimulating the preparations of Austria, when information reached Vienna that Napoleon had quitted his army when in pursuit of the English, and that he was on his way to Paris. Knowing the speed at which the Emperor travelled, and that his own absence from Paris when Napoleon should arrive there might precipitate matters, Metternich made immediate preparations to return thither. The winter was a severe one, but in spite of the rigour of the season, he travelled day and night, and reached Paris early on the morning of the

1st January (1809). Napoleon had not arrived, but the Empress held a reception, and this the Austrian ambassador attended. He was cordially welcomed by the several members of the Government — with whom, as well, let it always be remembered, as with the Imperial family, he was a great favourite—for his return dissipated the apprehensions which some among them had begun to feel regarding the cause of his prolonged absence. He found public opinion in Paris excited and rather depressed about Spain. An interview which he had with the Foreign Minister, M. de Champagny, afforded him no information on any subject. But, though the utterances of the minister were of the vaguest character, Metternich could read under them the earnest personal desire of Champagny for the maintenance of peace. In his despatch to Count Stadion, dated a few days later, 11th January, however, he stated that, from the frontiers of Austria to the centre of Paris, he found but one conviction prevailing, and that was that, by the coming spring, at latest, Austria would take the field against France. Those who thus reasoned, he continued, base their opinion on the fact that Napoleon was occupied at a distance of 600 leagues from the frontiers of Austria; that the greater part of his forces were directed to that distant point; that Austria was strong and ready for war; that Russia might be induced to change her system, and join Austria; and that the increasing impatience of French domination might lead the North German people to follow the same course.

On the 16th January, Metternich saw Talleyrand. The interview was long and interesting, leaving, as it did, no doubt on the mind of the Austrian that the discarded Foreign Minister was plotting against his master. The reader will recollect how the Austrian ambassador had

reported to the Emperor Francis the advice pressed upon the Czar by Talleyrand at Erfurt; he heard him now utter similar sentiments. In his despatch to Count Stadion, dated 17th January, reporting this interview, he says, referring to a previous report on the same subject: "I do not know how to add to what I sent by my last courier about M. de Talleyrand. I see him, and his friend Fouché, always the same—very decided to seize an opportunity, if one offer, but not having sufficient courage to make one." It is clear from the tone of this despatch that the position of the French army in Spain, and the uncertainty regarding Napoleon himself, had inspired Metternich with the absolute conviction that the Austrian projects would, if vigorously carried out at the right moment, have a great chance of success.

On the night of the 22nd, Napoleon arrived. He had made a remarkable quick journey, having taken only six days from Valladolid to Paris. From the former to Burgos he had ridden the whole way. On the 24th he received the ambassadors at a diplomatic audience. A fresh outburst against Austria had been expected; but the expectants were at fault. The Emperor addressed Metternich a few commonplace words on his first round, and not at all on the second.

It goes far to prove how completely Metternich had—to use a vulgar but expressive term—"taken in" Napoleon, that, despite his secret machinations, the private relations of the Austrian ambassador with the Emperor and the Imperial family were never more friendly than at this period. "Napoleon continued," writes Metternich, "to treat me with his customary kindness. . . . If the Paris public judged from my relations to the Court, it must have been difficult for it to believe in the impending outbreak of a new war with Austria." This circumstance

tends to show that, even at this period, Napoleon desired to avert the hostilities on which, he was well aware, Austria and her ambassador were alike bent. The Chancellor of the Russian Empire, M. de Romanzoff, had accompanied Napoleon from Erfurt to Paris, and during the Emperor's visit to Spain, he had remained at that city. He was one of the men whom Metternich had failed to seduce. He believed in Napoleon, and, in common with many others, thought that Austria would, if she were to declare war, rush upon her doom. Napoleon, immediately after his return, spoke to this Minister with perfect frankness on the subject. "It would seem," he said to him and to others whom he trusted, "that the waters which wash the walls of Vienna are the waters of Lethe and not the waters of the Danube. . . . I do not desire war with Austria; I have no interests to serve by such a war; all my efforts are directed to the field of battle which England has chosen, that is, Spain. But, unless she disarm, I shall have to make upon her a war of destruction." A few days later, wishing to prove to the Russian Minister the sincerity of his desire for peace, the Emperor requested him to communicate with the Courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg his proposal to offer to the Emperor of Austria the joint guarantee of France and Russia for the maintenance of his actual dominions. Foreseeing, nevertheless, that Austria would neither disarm nor accept his guarantee, he made preparations for every possible danger by calling out 80,000 men of the reserves; then, in order to warn Austria that he was prepared at all points for any movement she might make, he ordered the division Dupas from the shores of the Baltic to Magdeburg, replacing at the same time by Polish-Saxon troops the detachments of French troops at Dantzig, Stettin, Custrin, and Glogau. He ordered

Marshal Davout to march from Saxony into Franconia, to fix his headquarters at Wurzburg, and to send a division to occupy Bayreuth. He directed General Oudinot to obtain the consent of the King of Bavaria to his march from Hanau to Augsburg; whilst he despatched the divisions Carra Saint-Cyr and Legrand from the environs of Paris to Metz; the divisions Boudet and Molitor from Lyons to Strasburg. To the commanders of the various corps in Italy, he also sent instructions so to dispose their troops as to be ready to meet any demonstration on the part of Austria. To obtain, likewise, accurate information as to the location of the several Austrian corps, he directed his ambassador at Vienna, General Andréossy, to apply for permission to visit Paris, and, on his journey thither, to take the route of the centres where, it was probable, he would have the opportunity of obtaining information on that head.

But Austria had gone too far to retire now, and the movements of French troops, far from frightening her, only roused in her the conviction that she must strike immediately if she would win. Her agents had been busy in Tirol, which had been transferred to Bavaria by the Peace of Pressburg, and Tirol was ready to rise. Delay in that quarter was impossible. The army had been thoroughly reorganised, and was on a war footing. The Landwehr had been created to serve as a reserve, and was thoroughly organised. Enns had been strongly fortified to guard against a hostile advance from the side of Bavaria; Brück-on-the-Mur, to protect Vienna on the side of Italy; and Komorn, to serve as a point of retreat and rallying in Hungary. The Archduke Charles had ready in hand for immediate hostilities an army 300,000 strong, with reserves numbering 200,000.

Meanwhile Metternich remained at Paris. He received,

he says, "no instructions from Vienna," probably because the Emperor Francis, knowing that he was secretly aware of the intentions of his Court, considered that he would be better able to play his part if he were left perfectly untrammelled. Naturally enough, he records in his Autobiography, he regarded war as certain. He knew it because his Court had, on his reports, finally resolved upon it. He gathered much, too, there can be no doubt, from the studied reserve of Napoleon. Whilst he was cordially received in the Imperial circle, the Emperor and the members of his family never broached to him the subject of the political situation. The Emperor was, it would seem, deceived to the very last in the character of Metternich. Fatally for himself, as was proved in 1813, he never realised the intense personal and political hatred which Metternich felt for his system, and for himself as the corner-stone and sole support of it. To crush that system, or rather to accumulate means whereby it might be crushed, had been the one object of Metternich's embassy, and was to continue the one object of his life till it had been accomplished. Napoleon failed to read that inscrutable face. He was deceived to the last by that courtly and impressive manner.

Matters were still unsettled when the answer of Alexander to the proposal of a joint guarantee reached Paris. He preferred, he said, to deal with Austria direct. There can be no doubt but that Alexander was most desirous to prevent the outbreak of a war between France and Austria. He preferred, he said, to act alone, because an Emperor could be more yielding, more able to yield with a good grace, than two ambassadors. "Let me act and speak," he said to Caulaincourt, "if war can be avoided, I will avoid it." Napoleon agreed at once to this proposal, and despatched to the Czar a secret

authority to promise, not only the double guarantee, but the complete evacuation of the territory of the Confederation of the Rhine, that is to say, the withdrawal of the French troops from Germany.*

Alexander made, then, the proposal to the Austrian ambassador at his Court, Prince Schwarzenberg. He told him frankly that peace was a necessity to him to carry out certain plans which he had at heart, and that he would employ all his forces against that power, whichever it might be, which should embroil Europe in war. The report of this conversation had the effect the exact opposite of that it was intended to produce. Austria had, I have already said, gone too far, and, still hoping that a first success would change the dispositions of Alexander, she sent orders to her troops to march, and to Metternich to inform the Foreign Minister at Paris that, in consequence of the demonstrations made by Napoleon since his return to Paris, she had been obliged to place her forces on a war footing. Champagny replied in a sarcastic tone, stating that to bring an army from a peace to a war footing was the work of six months; that the Emperor had not been deceived; that he had long known of Austria's preparations; that he was prepared; and that if the war were to result disastrously for Austria, it would not be his fault. After some further conversation the two ministers separated, each convinced that war was inevitable.

Napoleon would have preferred peace for many reasons. If there had been no other, there was this all-important one, that all his best troops were in Spain. Seeing, however, that Austria was bent on war, he pushed forward his preparations to wage it with effect. What these were it does not come within the scope of this book

* *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, tome x., pp. 78, 79.

to relate. It must suffice to record that, in the first week of April, the Austrians seized, at Braunau, a French officer, the bearer of despatches from the French legation in Vienna to their legation in Munich. Furious at this breach of the law of nations, Napoleon ordered, as a reprisal, the immediate arrest of all Austrian couriers within reach. On the 10th April the Archduke Charles crossed the Inn—at the time, his Rubicon. On the night of the 14th Napoleon quitted Paris to join his army. On the morning of the 15th Metternich received a message from Champagny telling him that he had orders to give him his passports, but that, until an exchange of the *personnel* of the embassy should have been effected, he would not be allowed to leave Paris. He remained there for about six weeks, enjoying the pleasures of society just as though there had been no rupture between the two countries. On the 16th May, Fouché wrote to him that, in consequence of the orders of the Emperor, he had to request him to go to Vienna, there to be exchanged for the *personnel* of the French embassy. He quitted Paris the 26th, and, travelling by Lunéville, where he heard that the French had lost a decisive battle, referring to Aspern; and by Strasburg—where he saw the Empress Josephine, who, he found, fully believed in the report as to the issue of the battle, and went so far as to express her belief that Metternich might possibly meet Napoleon returning to France—he reached Vienna the 5th June.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE WAR OF 1809 TO THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

1809–1812.

VIENNA was occupied by the French. The bulk of their army was massed in the Isle of Lobau, whence it was to issue just one month later to fight the battle of Wagram. It could not be expected that Napoleon, smarting under the repulse of Aspern, or, as the French call it, of Essling—a battle which might have cost him half his army, if, in the very crisis of it, the Archduke Charles, who commanded the Austrians, had not been paralysed by a nervous attack, which, for three hours, deprived him of the use of his faculties—would grant any favour to an Austrian minister whilst the French diplomatic agent, seized before the outbreak of the war, should remain a prisoner. Accordingly, on the morning of the 7th, Metternich was invited to take up his quarters in a country-house belonging to his mother, at Grünberg, a mile and a half from Vienna, and close to the garden of Schönbrunn. He proceeded thither, with his effects, the following morning. In the interval he had had time and opportunity to notice, he says, that public spirit had been aroused in Vienna by the result of the two days' battle of

Essling, and that the French had lost confidence. Champagny, indeed, with whom he dined the evening of the 6th, told him that the Emperor was "in a good humour" as to the result of the campaign. It was but natural, nevertheless, that the real author of the war should, after the battle already fought, indulge in hope as to the issue of the campaign, and it is certain that at this period that supreme consoler in times of difficulty and danger was the constant companion of the ex-ambassador.

A few days after he had installed himself at Grünberg, Metternich received a visit from General Savary, a man whom he knew to be in the confidence of Napoleon, and employed when the Emperor particularly desired to bring about a given result. It soon appeared that the aim of Savary was to persuade the Austrian statesman to enter, as it were casually, the garden of Schönbrunn, which was but a step from his own, for the purpose of encountering Napoleon. Savary added that the Emperor was in the most peaceful disposition, and that a meeting between the two might result in his being commissioned to convey an important message to the Emperor Francis. It would appear from Metternich's version of this incident that he repulsed the proposal of his visitor, somewhat haughtily, "with a stiff upper lip." It was a salve to his pride to regard himself as a prisoner at Grünberg. He concluded, then, his conversation with Savary with this repelling remark: "I have nothing to say to your master, and nothing to hear from him. I am practically a prisoner, and prisoners of my kind consider themselves, if they do their duty, as dead." It was clear that hope was strong within him, for he similarly refused an overture of the same character made to him by Champagny, because, we gather from his Autobiography, he saw that Napoleon shrank from the risk of another battle, whilst he himself hoped

everything from a second meeting of the two armies, and would do nothing which might prevent it.

Metternich, then, did not see Napoleon at Vienna. On the 26th June he left Grünberg under an escort to be exchanged against the French officer who had been seized and detained by the Austrian Government. The exchange was to take place at Acs, in Hungary, beyond Pressburg, a little place which had been declared neutral for the purpose. Metternich relates an incident of the journey thither, which, for the moment, he did not probably find amusing. "Opposite the place where, near to Gönyö," he writes, "the high road runs along the banks of the Danube, an Austrian battery had been erected. The officer in command of it, when he saw a train of carriages coming forward, guarded by a strong escort, thought it must be the retinue of the Viceroy of Italy, and fired a volley at once. Although the zeal was misplaced, I could not but do justice to the skill of our artillerymen. Of the first two shots one went through the wheel of my carriage, the other passed two feet above the roof of it. Upon this, my escort left the high road, and took me as quickly as might be across the fields."

Metternich was exchanged at Acs on the 2nd July, three days before the battle of Wagram began. He is not sufficiently candid to admit that his detention, such as it was, was due entirely to the action of his own Government in seizing the French officer with despatches before the declaration of war, and keeping him a prisoner until he could be exchanged. In the minds of the authors of the Holy Alliance a deed, good or bad, changed its character according as whether the perpetrator was Napoleon or one of themselves. The one could do no good, the others could do no wrong.

On the evening of the 3rd (July), he reached Wolkers-

dorf, a little village some fifteen miles from Vienna, on the road to Brünn, and the headquarters of the Emperor Francis. He saw the Emperor the same evening, found him "quiet and firm as ever, penetrated with the difficulty of the situation," daily expecting an event decisive of the "war." Francis, who had been eagerly expecting Metternich, informed him that he intended to keep him with him during the remainder of the campaign. Metternich then visited Count Stadion, whom he found in the depths of despondency.

The day of July the 4th was spent by both sides in preparations for the impending battle. The following day it began. "On the morning of July 5," writes Metternich, "I joined the Emperor on the battlefield on which the fate of the Empire was to be decided. The battle was soon general, and we did not return to Wolkersdorf till nightfall, amid the blazing buildings which covered the Marchfeld. When we repaired to our post of observation in the grey of the early morning of the next day, we witnessed the apparently decisive result of the right wing of our army. About one o'clock in the afternoon, however, Count Colloredo, a general-adjutant of the Archduke, came with the information to the Emperor, that his Imperial Highness had ordered the retreat of the army. Without losing his self-possession, the Emperor asked the messenger whether the Archduke had only determined on the retreat, or whether it had already commenced. When the Emperor heard that the army was in full retreat, he said to the adjutant, 'Very well,' and, turning to me, added, 'We shall have much to retrieve.' His Majesty gave immediate orders to remove his headquarters to Znaim."

The battle of Wagram, won by Napoleon chiefly because the Viceroy of Italy, Eugène de Beauharnais, obeyed

his orders and joined him with the army which had been operating in Italy, whereas the commander of the Austrian forces opposed to him, the Archduke John, did not obey his brother's orders to join him, but remained idle at Pressburg while the battle was raging, was, in no sense, a decisive battle. The Austrians were forced to retreat, but the retreat never became a rout; they lost no cannon, and their army, if it had fallen back upon Hungary or Moravia, and taken up that of the Archduke John, would have been very capable of prolonging the war, and of making its opponent, compelled to move further and further from his base, feel more and more strongly every day the insecurity of his position. Of this no one was more sensible than Napoleon. Spain was engulfing his best troops; he had in front of him an army which, though beaten, was equal in numbers to his own; whilst around him he had a seething Germany, ready, as the events of 1813 proved, to rise *en masse* against him, should it appear that Fortune had abandoned him. His clear, penetrating, mind read the situation in all its bearings, and he determined, by the means at his disposal, to force peace on the Emperor Francis.

That sovereign, on the other hand, ought, in his own interest and in the interest of his people, to have insisted, as, in similar circumstances, Alexander insisted in 1812, on the continuance of the war. It is due to the Austrian Emperor to admit that he recognised the wisdom of such a course; but he was liable to be despondent, to act upon impulse. He had, however, by his side, a man who recognised the situation almost as clearly as did Napoleon, and who, at the moment, occupied the position which would enable him to give effect to his convictions. For, on the morrow at Wagram, Count Stadion, the Foreign Minister who had prematurely begun the war,

resigned his office. He was actually, though not at the moment nominally, succeeded in it by Metternich, who had gained the confidence of his master by his services at Paris, and who kept it to the last hour of the Emperor's life. The selection, under the circumstances, was a specially happy one, for Metternich had made of the character of Napoleon a study, and his keen, cold, and unimpassioned intellect had recognised its strong and its weak points alike. He was resolved that, so far as he could influence events, there should be no humiliating peace—that is, no peace which should weaken Austria as Prussia had been weakened; that, rather, the war should be continued until, from alarm at his isolated position and the events surging around him, the French Emperor should be forced to retreat. Then, when he should have evacuated Austrian territory, Metternich would treat for a peace which should be solid.

But events were too strong for Metternich. He could not command the army, and the Archduke Charles, who did command it, committed at this period one of those mistakes which, in war, is almost always irretrievable. Instead of retreating, after Wagram, upon Hungary—a retreat which would have drawn to him the army of his brother John, assured to him all the resources of that fertile country, and drawn the French dangerously far from their base—or upon Moravia, he chose to fall back into Bohemia, the very line which Napoleon himself would have prescribed to him had he had a voice in the matter. For a short interval the French generals, sent to pursue the Austrian army, were puzzled as to the line the enemy had taken, there being some indications that a portion of their troops were trending towards Moravia. The sagacity or the happy inspiration of Marmont solved the doubt. Certain indications produced in the mind of that

general the conviction that Znaim would prove the covering angle of the retreat. Upon Znaim, then, despite every temptation to pursue another route—and these were not wanting—Marmont unhesitatingly pressed; established himself in front of the Austrian corps occupying the place the afternoon of the 10th (July); was joined in the morning by Masséna. That famous general, the greatest in the French army after Napoleon, at once attacked the Austrian position, reinforced during the night by the Archduke in person, and carried it. The cavalry not having arrived, the enemy could not be pursued.

Meanwhile Napoleon arrived on the ground. Almost simultaneously there came Prince John of Liechtenstein to demand a suspension of arms, and to promise the opening of a negotiation for the conclusion of immediate peace. After a short consultation with his marshals, Napoleon consented, simply requiring from Prince John a promise that plenipotentiaries should be at once appointed to negotiate the conditions of a truce. This demand was conceded, and Prince John nominated Baron Wimpffen as negotiator on behalf of Austria. Napoleon named Berthier.

The men to negotiate a permanent peace were, naturally, the statesmen of the two countries. The day after the truce had been arranged, Napoleon sent Champagny to Komorn, where Francis and Metternich, bearing the title of Minister of State, had taken up their abode, to propose the carrying into effect the arrangement he had come to with Prince John of Liechtenstein. Francis being inclined to agree, Metternich arranged with Champagny that the negotiations should be carried on at the town of Altenburg, in Hungary, by the two Foreign Ministers in person. Meanwhile Prince John of

Liechtenstein took command of the Austrian army, in place of the Archduke Charles who resigned, and, a few days later, Francis moved to Totis, the headquarters of the new Commander-in-chief. It is necessary to add that Count Bubna was appointed military commissary for the Emperor with Napoleon, and that Count Nugent was nominated to act as second negotiator under Metternich.

The real thoughts of the Austrian plenipotentiary at this period may be gathered from a letter written to his mother from Altenburg, dated August 1, 1809:

"It is true it is not we who hang back, it is true it is we who desire peace, but it must be a peace which shall rid us of the necessity of watching our safety every hour of the day and night, which shall allow us to enjoy the blessings of peace—to disarm, to flatter ourselves with the possibility of remaining quiet for a time. Again, if we do not wish to undergo certain death in six months, if we do not wish to throw the monarchy out of the window, and that window one from which the leap would be equivalent to the Emperor's last resource, we must not desire it. If Napoleon desire the destruction of Austria—at any rate it is better to fight him with 300,000 men, than with 50,000."

The meaning of these words is too clear to be misunderstood. "We want peace, but not a Napoleonic peace—a peace which will cripple our resources, and reduce our army to the level to which the Prussian army has been reduced. Better to fight now when we still have 300,000 men, than to make a humiliating peace, only to fight a few years later, when our army shall have been reduced to 50,000."

No doubt this was a true and a patriotic view. But on this occasion Metternich was neither so cool nor so clear in his purpose as we shall see him at a later epoch. It is impossible to read his letters to his mother without being driven to the conclusion that despair was beginning to lessen his self-confidence. Certainly in one important respect, the basis of his action was wrong: for, if his

Autobiography is to be trusted, he did not correctly read the motives of the French Emperor in assenting to a truce. He says that he did not believe that the Emperor was serious in his negotiations for peace; that he regarded his treating as a mode of gaining time to recruit his forces to renew the war, unless, by this demonstration, he could terrify Austria into accepting a peace which should so cripple her resources as to render her powerless to resist further aggressions on the part of the conqueror. Now it is abundantly evident that at this time—and Metternich learnt it at a later period—Napoleon was resolved to make peace with Austria, peace on his own terms if he could, but almost any peace rather than continue the war. Matters were not progressing well in Spain. The jealousy—that bane of French commanders in the Peninsula—of Marshal Victor had not only extricated Sir Arthur Wellesley from a false position at Talavera: it had caused the loss of a battle. Then a formidable English army was approaching the shores of Holland. The continuance of the war with Austria would involve Napoleon in a campaign which might, if the Austrians should be led by a man who understood the situation, be long and tedious. Already Napoleon had been surprised at the solidity of the resistance which he had encountered. In 1806, Prussia had fallen before him like a house of cards. Austria, on the contrary, had beaten him at Essling, and though he claimed, and justly claimed, Wagram as a victory, it was a victory by which he gained merely the ground on which the battle had been fought. If, then, he could obtain, as he believed he could obtain, by the prestige of his position as occupying the enemy's capital, and as supporting his army on the enemy's country, terms of peace which, while satisfying his vanity as victor, should yet somewhat, though not to

the extent he had originally determined, diminish the resources of Austria, he would hold his hand, and divert to Spain the resources which would be no longer required in Southern Germany.

At the outset of the negotiations it seemed as though the distance between the pretensions of the two Powers was so vast that it would be very difficult to find a middle way. If we are to believe the historian of the Consulate and the Empire, Metternich demanded that Austria should be dealt with in a large and generous spirit; that she should not be required to make any cession of territory. Treated thus, he added, Austria would become to France a firmer and more constant ally than Russia; less given to change, and at least as powerful; that such a procedure would be far more advantageous to Napoleon than would be the despoiling of the Austrian Empire for the benefit of ungrateful Powers such as Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Saxony. A peace of that character, he added, would of all solutions be the solution most favourable to French interests, but if such a basis were inadmissible, it only remained to bargain how much Austria should resign; that such a method would be cruel for Austria, and really disadvantageous for France; further, that if that method were adopted, it would not be for him, but for the French negotiator, to take the first step.*

Champagny replied that the first system had been tried after Austerlitz, and had failed; that, after such an experience, it was no longer possible to be generous; that it was necessary that war should be made costly to those who entered upon it so lightly, and with so little scruple. After some further conversation he presented the proposal of treating on the basis of the *uti possidetis*. To this claim, which, it will be readily understood, was not

* *Thiers*: tome xi., pp. 255–8.

seriously put forward, Metternich replied that rather than discuss it Austria would fight so long as there was a man left to bear a sword.

Of this conversation there was no written record. Napoleon had objected to the use of protocols, and though he subsequently withdrew his objection, it was only, according to Metternich, when he had resolved to carry out the negotiation in a manner peculiarly his own. After the conversations I have recorded the two negotiators remained for a time inactive, waiting, it would seem, for instructions. At length the French Minister, acting on his master's orders, made the first move. The Emperor, said Champagny, reserving the question of Italy, will be content with the cession of, on the Danube, the line of the Enns, to form there the frontier of Bavaria. As this cession would transfer to Bavaria 800,000 souls, and bring her frontier to within about a hundred miles of Vienna, it was clear that Austria could not accept it; but, before replying, Metternich insisted on learning the French propositions regarding Italy. These proved to be at least as startling. Napoleon, forced to reply, demanded through his Minister, Carinthia, Carniola, and the right bank of the River Save, from its source at Wochein in Carniola to the frontiers of Bosnia. Such terms were impossible, and it is certain that Napoleon knew that they would be so considered. But they produced the effect he intended, that is, they produced on Metternich and on the Austrian Emperor a feeling of profound discouragement; the belief that Napoleon, who was in his heart not only eager but nervously anxious for peace, was determined to reduce Austria to nothing, or to continue the war. For the moment, then, Metternich gave an evasive reply, asking whether this demand included all the sacrifices required by the French Emperor.

It did not. On the 4th September, Napoleon completed his demand. He required, he said, three circles of Bohemia to be given to his ally, the King of Saxony, and about one half of Galicia, to add to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. If all these demands should be granted the population of Austria would be diminished by five millions. "The Austrian legation," writes M. Thiers, "still made no reply, but M. de Metternich continued in his private conversations to deplore the system of peace adopted by Napoleon, calling it narrow, cruel, bargained (*marché*), instead of a generous peace which would have assured a long period of repose, and a definitive pacification."

The silence of Austria, a silence which was the result of the profound discouragement created by the demands made upon her and by the fear lest the negotiations should be broken off and hostilities renewed, was so little satisfactory to Napoleon that he determined, *more suo*, to finish with the matter. On the 7th September, he directed Count Bubna, who, I have stated, had been appointed Austrian Military Commissary at the headquarters of the French Emperor, to request the Emperor Francis to send Prince John of Liechtenstein to Vienna. "The diplomatists," added Napoleon, "do not know how to manage an affair like the present; we soldiers understand each other better," and more of the same sort. Bubna presented the intentions of Napoleon with respect to the conditions of peace as more favourable than had appeared previously; but as he brought with him no guarantee, nothing but empty words, Francis, who was not under the spell of the fascination exercised by Napoleon upon his Commissary, declined for the moment to accede to the request; but sent back Bubna with a letter stating that the conditions indicated by Napoleon in his conversation with that official were not such as Austria could accept—

that further concessions were necessary, if the French Emperor desired a peace which should be stable.

This reply responded so little to the wishes of Napoleon that he resolved to take measures such as he thought would intimidate Austria into compliance. Making it clear to Count Bubna that his army had been reinforced, that he was ready to recommence hostilities, he sent him back to Francis to declare that the message of which the Count had been the bearer on his previous journey was his *ultimatum*, and that if that were rejected, hostilities would be at once renewed.

If Metternich had been the Emperor Francis, it is almost certain that the proposal would have been rejected and the war been renewed, unless, at the last moment, Napoleon should himself have given way. But Metternich was not even by the side of his master; and Francis, afraid to take upon himself the responsibility of renewing hostilities, the result of which, if adverse, would be the breaking up of his Empire, and hoping something from compliance, despatched Prince John of Liechtenstein with Count Bubna to Vienna.

Of the nature of the mission entrusted to Prince John there are two versions. M. Thiers asserts that the Prince went to Vienna with power to consent to the principal bases posed by Napoleon at his first interview with Count Bubna, but instructed to endeavour to obtain concessions with respect to the sacrifices demanded in Upper Austria; to the contributions required for the expenses of the war, and, generally, to the details. Metternich, on the other hand, declares that Prince John, who stopped at Altenburg to see him on his way to Vienna, brought him a letter from the Emperor Francis telling him that the mission had no other object but to arrive at a knowledge of Napoleon's intentions; that the Field Marshal (Prince

John) had orders to listen to everything, but not to enter into any discussion. It is clear, however, that Prince John showed him his more extended powers; for, he adds, that he informed the Prince of the mistake he was committing in proceeding on such an errand.

"When the Prince," he writes, "had informed me of the instructions he had received, I said to him: 'If I had been aware of your mission, rather than you should have passed the outposts of the French army, I would have taken upon myself to request you to wait, till I had spoken to the Emperor. We are no longer in Altenburg; you are within reach of the hostile army, and must go on. But I tell you beforehand, that of two things one will happen: either Napoleon will lead you to do something which will compromise our cause, or he will prevent you from returning to your post. The army must have its commanders; this Napoleon knows, and has drawn you away from it. He will either constrain the Emperor to conclude a peace which he ought not to conclude, or he will deprive him of the means of carrying on the war.' The Prince, who was much agitated by what I said, declared he was ready to go back to Totis. I showed him that he must perform the commission he had undertaken, but must make every effort not to depart from it."

When the *Autobiography of Prince Metternich* first appeared, the passage I have just quoted was one of the passages which especially attracted attention. To me, after close examination, it appears to bear, as so many passages in the Autobiography appear to bear, the signs of having been "edited." The reader will not fail to notice that the action of Francis in sending Prince John to Vienna, even as Metternich asserts, that he might play there only the part of a listener, was to take the negotiation out of the hands of Metternich and Champagny. Then again, is it reasonable to believe that Prince John was sent merely as a listener, when Count Bubna had already twice fulfilled that function? Why should the Commander-in-chief of the Austrian army accept a position, the duties of which had been ably performed by the sub-

ordinate to whom they properly belonged, and in which he could do little more than act the part of a mute. "The Field-Marshal had orders to listen to everything, but not to enter into discussion on any subject," writes Metternich. It seems the height of absurdity to suppose that the Field-Marshal would accept such a mission. Scarcely less absurd is the plea put forward by Metternich as to why he refrained from accepting Prince John's offer to return to his post, after he had enlightened that Prince as to the alternative which lay before him. "We are no longer in Altenburg," says Prince Metternich. But they were in Altenburg. "The Prince stopped to see me at Altenburg;" then followed the conversation on which I am commenting. If he would not take upon himself the responsibility of stopping and sending back Prince John before passing the cordon of French troops round Altenburg there seems no reason why, if he considered the danger so great, he should not have detained him for at least a few hours until he could communicate with his master. Equally fanciful, it seems to me, is the notion, prominently set forth, that Napoleon had invited Prince John to Vienna, in order to deprive the Austrian army of its Commander-in-Chief. Such a policy would have been intelligible if the Commander-in-Chief of the Austrian army had been a Hannibal, a Prince Eugène, a Villars, a Frederick, or a Masséna; but to deprive an army of a Prince John of Liechtenstein was surely not very much. The Prince had assumed the command but a few days before; distinguished as a fighting soldier, he had never held a separate command. On the other hand, the reason why Napoleon wanted Prince John at Vienna is clear. He had had previous relations with him of a very friendly character; it was Prince John who had negotiated the conditions of the armistice after Austerlitz, and who had signed

the Peace of Pressburg. Napoleon knew the generous nature of the man, and felt sure he could attain his ends more surely by working upon that nature, than by continuing to negotiate with Metternich. For these reasons I cannot regard the account given by Metternich of the origin and progress of the negotiations of Prince John of Liechtenstein with Napoleon as other than an ebullition of spleen, produced by the feeling that the matter had been, without warning and somewhat cavalierly, taken out of his hands.

What followed may be compressed within a few words. Prince John and Count Bubna proceeded to Vienna the 27th of September, and, on the 30th, agreed with Napoleon as to the conditions of peace. The only point left unsettled was that which referred to the payment of an indemnity. To obtain definite instructions on this point, Bubna proceeded to Totis, to take there the orders of his master. Bubna found great uncertainty at the Austrian headquarters as to whether a continuance of the war was not preferable to a peace which would enormously reduce the resources of the Empire. But if we may believe M. Thiers, a well-timed intimation from Russia that if Austria were to continue the war, she, Russia, would be compelled to assist Napoleon in the field, almost decided the Emperor Francis. Prince John then took upon himself to take a step beyond his instructions, and, on the 14th October, signed the Peace of Vienna.

To that peace, and to its terms, Metternich was an absolute stranger. He goes so far as to assert that Napoleon obtained it by unworthy artifices, and, having procured the signature of the Austrian Commissioners, announced the fact to the citizens of Vienna by the firing of a cannon so as to render it impossible for Francis to disavow it. Here again, I think his Autobiography is not

a safe guide. He says that the treaty, which Prince John believed to be only "the project of a treaty to be submitted to the Emperor of Austria," was signed the night of the 13th, and communicated by the firing of cannon to the Viennese on the morning of the 14th; that he himself was aware of it from the mouth of Prince John himself on the evening of the same day:

"Yet," he continues, "without compromising himself and his Empire in a most dangerous manner, the Emperor could not reject the conclusion of a peace which had been already announced, amid the rejoicings of the people in the capital, and in more than a third part of the country still remaining to him. The Emperor ratified the treaty."

Surely, what is this but to declare that it was at any moment in the power of an unscrupulous man such as Metternich believed Napoleon to be, to fire cannon and to send out couriers to announce peace which had not been concluded, in order thus to obtain thereto the consent of his antagonist. If this treaty was, as Metternich asserts, no treaty, but only the project of a treaty, how was it that Prince John did not at once denounce it?

The treaty having been ratified, Metternich became, by title as well as in fact, Chancellor of the Empire and Minister for Foreign Affairs. In that capacity he returned with Francis to Vienna at the end of November, and devoted himself to the task of seeing that the conditions of the treaty were loyally carried out. He could not but recognise that the war of 1809 had resulted most disastrously for his country, in that the peace which was the consequence of it had bound it with a circle of iron; deprived it of its communication with the Adriatic; and, by a secret clause, had limited the maximum of the Austrian forces to 150,000 men. Still, he maintained his lofty attitude—still he hoped. The success of Napoleon in

this campaign would, he believed, still more inflate his pride.

"I foresaw," he wrote, "that neither he nor his undertakings would escape the consequence of rashness and extravagance. The *when* and the *how* I could not pretend to determine. Thus my reason pointed out to me the direction I had to take in order not to interfere with the natural development of the situation, and to keep open for Austria the chances which the greatest of all powers—the power of circumstances—might offer, sooner or later, under the strong government of its monarch, for the much-threatened prosperity of the Empire."

We find him again tracing all the misfortunes of Europe back to the Revolution, "which," he says, "found its highest expression in Napoleon."

At Vienna, then, Metternich resumed the *rôle* he had played at Paris—the *rôle* of master-conspirator against Napoleon. The fact that the secret combinations made between 1806 and 1809 had resulted in a further dismemberment of the Austrian Empire and a large diminution of its resources, in no way abated his pride or lowered his confidence. He still remained the centre, the soul, the hope, of those to whom the name of Napoleon was abomination. He was that centre, that soul, and that hope, when an event occurred which caused him, for a brief moment, to reconsider his position.

At a masked ball at Paris, given by the Arch-Chancellor, Cambacérès, Napoleon sounded Madame Metternich as to whether she thought that the Archduchess, Marie Louise, would accept his hand, and whether her father would agree to the alliance. Madame Metternich replied that that was a matter on which the then Austrian ambassador, Prince Schwarzenberg, not she, should be consulted; and, the same evening she mentioned the conversation to that Prince. The following morning, Prince Eugène, Viceroy of Italy, called on the Austrian ambassador, and "in the name of the Emperor and with

the knowledge of his mother, the Empress Josephine," made the same offer. Prince Schwarzenberg at once referred the matter to Vienna.

We are bound, it seems to me, to accept Metternich's version of what happened at Vienna when the courier arrived there with the despatch containing the offer, for, in it, he and the Emperor Francis were alone concerned. "As soon as the courier brought me this news," he writes, "I repaired to the Emperor. Your Majesty," said I, "is here placed in a situation in which the ruler and the father can alone say yes or no. One or other must be spoken by you, for a doubtful or hesitating answer is not possible." On the Emperor asking Metternich what he would do in his place, the cautious statesman replied that there were cases in which it was impossible for one man to put himself in the place of another, and that this was one of them. Finally Francis resolved to leave the decision entirely to his daughter, and Metternich at once waited upon Marie Louise. The interview was short but decisive. The Archduchess placed herself absolutely in the hands of her father, to be disposed of as high policy, that is, the interests of Austria, might dictate. The Emperor Francis, believing that the marriage would secure to Europe some years of political peace, despatched a courier to Paris to accept the offer, with the sole reservation that on neither side should any condition be attached to it.* This was the event which, I stated in

* In his Autobiography Metternich repeatedly brings into prominent notice the manner in which he was guided by his conscience. In the matter of the marriage of Marie Louise it has often been wondered how the consciences of the high dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the Emperor of Austria and his family, should have sanctioned a divorce, when divorce is contrary to the law of the Church. Metternich, with a strange forgetfulness of facts, denies that there was any difficulty. He says: "One question which naturally

a preceding page, caused Metternich for a brief moment to reconsider the situation. "That this event," he wrote, "drew a line between the past and present is quite evident."

Was that line a line of effacement? Would the conqueror, admitted within the pale of the ancient *régimes*, put his sword in its sheath, and build up the future of France? Or, would he, with the help of Austria, found a dynasty, and yet continue his system of conquest? These were the questions which occurred to Metternich, and which he felt he could not solve at Vienna. He therefore requested his master to allow him to proceed to Paris at the same time as the new Empress, and to remain there until he could satisfy his mind. Francis assented; whereupon, after the marriage had been celebrated, by proxy on the part of Napoleon, at Vienna (March 11, 1810), Metternich set out for Paris, though not by the same road as that taken by Marie Louise and her suite.

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had a great interest for the public was the divorce of Napoleon and Josephine. For the Church the question did not exist, and therefore not for the Emperor. Napoleon had contracted a civil marriage with the express understanding that the union could be dissolved; in the eyes of the Church, therefore, it was not a valid marriage. *Indeed, had it been otherwise, the scheme could not have been entertained for a moment.* The dissolution of the first marriage, so called, had only, therefore, the value of a mere formality such as the French civil law required." Thus Metternich. The truth, however, is that Napoleon and Josephine, who had, indeed, been only civilly married under the Directory, were religiously united, two days before the Coronation, by Cardinal Fesch, before an altar which had been erected in the Emperor's cabinet. This fact, which the historians of the time do not fail to mention, is placed beyond all doubt by the memoirs of Madame de Rémusat. Did Metternich and the Austrian Court, then, voluntarily shut their eyes to a fact, which, according to Metternich, *would have prevented the entertaining for a moment of the idea of the marriage?* It is very difficult to believe that they did not.

He did not, thus, meet Napoleon until after the latter had seen his bride.

Napoleon welcomed Metternich "with visible signs of satisfaction." He spoke to him, amongst other pleasant matters, of "an entire forgetfulness of the past, of a happy and peaceful epoch, of the impossibility that anything should disturb the natural relations between us." Regarding the war of 1809, the Emperor admitted, for a moment, that if in the month of September, Austria had recommenced hostilities, "I should have been lost;" but noting the effect of the word "lost" on his listener, he withdrew it, and substituted the phrase, "in great difficulties." But Metternich insisted on the first expression, held to it in his argument; and, there can be very little doubt, so used it as to inspire those with whom he conversed with the conviction of its truth. The time was to come when Alexander would be, after the battle of La Moskowa (Borodino), in a position almost analogous to that of Francis after Wagram. Rendered wise by the experience of others, he declined to treat.

Metternich enjoyed many confidential conversations with the Emperor at Compiègne, and these were continued when he returned to Paris. There, he tells us, Napoleon placed at his disposal the Hotel of Marshal Ney with a complete household. It would seem that Napoleon's remarks on political matters were characterised by great frankness and sincerity. Talking of Russia he expatiated at length on his relations with that Power, convincing his listener that Austria would require to exercise prudence and wisdom to avoid a rupture with her. He displayed a strong desire to render himself useful and agreeable to Austria; and in these first moments left upon the mind of Metternich the belief that the Emperor was animated by a very decided conviction that the existence of Austria,

far from being incompatible with that of aggrandised France, "would serve him as a shield." Everything seemed to show that the impressions of the Austrian Chancellor were correct. There existed at this period a very strong feeling of antagonism between Napoleon and Pope Pius VII. By a decree, dated 17th May, 1809, issued from Vienna, the Emperor had incorporated with the French Empire all the estates of the Church, and had declared Rome an imperial and free city. The Pope had replied, 10th June, by a bull of excommunication. Whereupon, Napoleon had caused the Quirinal to be surrounded, and the Pope conveyed to Savona, where he was detained a prisoner. He was still a virtual prisoner at Savona when Metternich visited Paris, and Napoleon was desirous to avail himself of the mediation of his guest to induce Pius VII. to return to Rome. Metternich undertook the task, and despatched an envoy upon whom he could rely, the Chevalier Lebzeltern, to Savona with propositions for a compromise, on the understanding, however, that the Pope was to return to Rome, and accept the disposal of the States of the Church made by Napoleon at Vienna. Lebzeltern saw the Pope, and seemed for an instant to have thought that the matter might be arranged if Napoleon would make only a few more concessions; but a letter from Pius VII. to Metternich, dated the 21st May, dissipated this illusion. The Pope declined "to make conditions not suitable to the dignity of the Holy See, and to the Vicar of Jesus Christ"; and the mediation failed.

These and other confidences which passed between the Emperor and his guest went far, if not to remove, at least to weaken, some of the prejudices against Napoleon which up to that time had formed a part and parcel of Metternich's moral being. It is just possible that if he had left Paris then, when he had been there but two

months, he would have modified his previous views, and possibly his policy. But he was but half convinced that the "Incarnation of the Revolution" had been so metamorphosed by his marriage as to have become, in all his ideas and sympathies, as one of the family with which he was now allied. When, then, in May, he broached to the Emperor the question of the prolongation of his stay in France, and the Emperor warmly responded, Metternich, who was less anxious to talk of the past than to obtain a glimpse of the future, clutched eagerly at the suggestion. The conversation on the subject illustrates the extreme cordiality which existed at this period between the two men, one of whom was, in spite of himself, at heart, the irreconcilable opponent of the other. Metternich having told the Emperor of the duties which required his presence at Vienna, had added:

"The Emperor Francis wished me to accompany his daughter into France; I have come by his orders, but it must be evident to you that my wish goes beyond this, and I would gladly find a guiding principle for my political action in a more remote future." "I understand you," answered Napoleon; "your wish corresponds with my own. Stay with us a few weeks, and you will leave us with satisfaction." *

* "According to my conviction, Napoleon never knew me, never divined me. The cause is very simple. Napoleon was the man in all the world who most despised the human race. He had a strange aptitude for discovering the weak sides of men, and all passions are weak sides, or produce them. He loved only men with strong passions, or great weaknesses; he judged the most opposite qualities in men by these defects. In me he encountered a calmness which must cause despair to one who founded his calculations on passions. Hence he denied the existence in me of every quality bearing on pure reason, or which is reason itself. I have often involuntarily laughed in Napoleon's presence, when I remarked that he judged me falsely. Therefore I knew Napoleon much better than he knew me. Seven years of resolute study suffice to know a man, especially a man whose nature and actions are all external—that is, for a calm observer who is not led astray by any feeling of fear and awe."—*Autobiography of Prince Metternich*, vol. iii.

Metternich thus stayed to find "a guiding principle" for the policy of Austria towards France; to satisfy himself whether the husband of Marie Louise had become a different man to the husband of Josephine. He enjoyed many opportunities of forming an opinion. He accompanied the newly-married pair to Cambrai, on their way to Brussels, and was an eye-witness to the enthusiasm with which the young Empress was everywhere received by the people. On his and their return to Paris, he continued his cordial relations with Napoleon. He mentions more than once that the Emperor seemed to be anxious to convince him of the many-sidedness of his character; that he was as clear-headed and capable as an administrator as he had proved himself to be as a warrior. Still he watched, and watched in vain, for the uplifting of the veil which hid from him the secret dispositions of his host. To no purpose did Napoleon give him every opportunity to see and converse with Marie Louise alone, that he might hear from her all that she might choose to say to her father's friend and confidant; it was without the result he desired that he was asked to act as the friend of her childhood had a right to act, that is, to give her advice whenever he might think advice necessary; that Napoleon showered upon him attention after attention. He remained unsatisfied; calculating; suspicious; waiting the hour when Napoleon should make the sign which should enlighten him. That the closer intercourse into which he was now drawn increased his intellectual appreciation of Napoleon as a man of genius is evident from the expressions which appear so constantly in his journal of this period; but, though he listened with admiration, he always listened with the hope of hearing more. At last his patience was rewarded. In September, after six months' careful watching, the veil was lifted.

The occasion was the election of Marshal Bernadotte to the vacated throne of Sweden. In a conversation on this event Napoleon showed, in a manner to convince his guest, that he had prompted this with the view of giving a check to Russia, careless if it should lead to a Franco-Russian complication. Russia could not fail to see, in the selection of a French Marshal for such a throne, a pledge between the new sovereign and his people for the re-conquest of the territories which she herself had but just conquered, and the conquest of which had been one of the stipulations of Tilsit. Referring to this subject, Napoleon let fall the mask, and showed himself, in the eyes of Metternich, as the untamed and untameable Incarnation of the Revolution.

"I consider," he said, "the Swedish affair as a more or less distant motive for a war with Russia. . . . The time will soon approach—and I am very far from hastening it either by my wishes or my deeds—when hostilities will be inevitable. What part will you play?"

Then, telling Metternich how, he was confident, the possession by France of the Illyrian provinces must be galling to Austria, he added:

"Will you one day refuse to confer with me for the exchange of an equal portion of Galicia for these provinces? Whenever I find it necessary to make war with Russia, I should have a great and powerful ally in a King of Poland. I shall not need your provinces, and you too will find this combination not less useful to you."*

The conversation continued in the same strain, Napoleon telling his guest that it was confidential, that he had not spoken on the subject to Champagny, and that he did not

* Of the genuineness of this conversation there can, I think, be no doubt. The editor of the Autobiography writes that the sketch of it was written in German for the Emperor Francis under the fresh impression of the occurrence; and that the sketch follows exactly the text of the Autobiography.

wish that anyone should know of it except the Emperor Francis and himself. After listening to it, Metternich left St. Cloud, conscious that he had at last obtained light; that the object of his stay in Paris had been attained. On the 24th of the same month he had his farewell audience with the Emperor, obtained from him the revocation of the secret article by which Austria had been limited to the maintenance of an army of only 150,000 men, and proceeded, by way of Vienna, to join the Emperor Francis at Gratz. There, having had ample time for reflection, he laid before his master the result of his more than six months' stay in Paris. They were, if we can trust his Autobiography,* that, in the spring of 1812, Napoleon would range his own forces, greatly strengthened, and those of his allies, to strike a great blow at Russia; that, in such a case, it would behove Austria to take a neutral part, and to take such a position as would ensure to her the power to take decisive action during the war and at the end of it; that, meanwhile, she must prepare for that eventuality.

A curious circumstance connected with this affair is that at the very time that Napoleon was confiding to Metternich his conviction that war with Russia was, sooner or later, inevitable, the Adjutant of the Emperor of Russia, Count Schuvaloff, arrived at Vienna, with a plan, cut and dried, for an alliance in case of a new war with France. It was clear that the Swedish affair had directed the thoughts of Napoleon and the Czar simul-

* The editor states that this report was merely verbal, and that no record of it exists. It corresponds so closely with the events which did actually happen, that it is not absolutely free from suspicion. On the other hand, knowing as we do, that the conversation with Napoleon was genuine, we are bound to admit that the advice Metternich gave to his master is just the advice which a man possessing his cold, calculating character would have given.

taneously to the same conclusion. Austria rejected the project.

The real hopes which Metternich entertained were displayed in the communications which he made, at this period, to the Prussian Cabinet. Confident that war between France and Russia would ensue, and hoping that such a war would or might ensure the deliverance of the sovereigns and the aristocracies of Europe, he placed before King Frederick William III. the true position of Austria and Prussia with respect to Napoleon, showed him that those positions were identical, and that their only hope lay in time and the vicissitudes of Fortune. This advice, backed up by the promise that when that time should arrive, Austria would stand by Prussia as a firm friend, was, it will be well to recollect when we come to the professed mediation of Austria in 1813, given in 1810.

When, then, in October of that year, Metternich resumed at Vienna the portfolio of the Foreign Office, his line of policy was fixed. It was to nurse the finances of Austria, to strengthen her army, and to prepare her for the opportunity which was to come in two years. For the financial operations he had at his side a minister, Count Wallis, who allowed himself to be guided by the firmer will and more extended views of the Chancellor of the Empire. But in the War Minister, Count Bellegarde, Metternich possessed a friend who was able to enter into all his plans, and whom he trusted implicitly. Regarding this statesman Metternich uses a phrase which explains very neatly and very curtly the principle he himself had adopted in his intercourse with Napoleon. He says: "He understood as well as I did the value of letting men talk."

One defect which almost at once forced itself upon his attention at this epoch was the weakness of the central

power in Austria. To obtain that unity of action which, he had seen, constituted one of the great forces of Napoleon, it was necessary to organise a body which, without restricting the exercise of the separate rights of the provinces, should secure to the common head of the Empire the disposal of supreme sovereign power. Such a body, organised by Kaunitz under the title of Council of State, had to a certain extent exercised such functions in the time of Maria Theresa, but, originally somewhat faulty in construction, it had fallen into decay. Metternich proceeded then to revive it on an improved system. His idea was to make of the Council of State a deliberating body, selected by and associated with the Emperor, and procuring for him, by its management of details, greater leisure and facility for carrying on his own work. Whilst thus the Council would constitute a deliberating and advising body, the entire executive power would still remain vested in the Emperor alone. It was a plan which, from time immemorial, has been the delight of despots; to place by the side of the sovereign a body, not elected but selected, which should nominally advise him but really take his ideas, and impart to them the form of legality. The same principle, put in action in England, formed the Star Chamber under Charles I.; and, in France, constituted the Council of State under Napoleon. It secured, in fact, a firmer concentration of power in the hands of the sovereign. Such, disguised under a few specious phrases,* was the Metternich system, to force

* For instance: "There lies in the existence of a well organised council, filled with able men, ready to advise the monarch on every occasion with enlightened and impartial counsel, so high a degree of security for the whole body politic, that this feeling will soon become general, and secure to the Government strength and repose in equal measure." (Minute by Metternich on the organisation of an Imperial Council.)

which upon Europe in the name of freedom it was essential first to beat down Napoleon.

I have stated in an earlier portion of this sketch how, at a certain period of his career, Metternich had taken refuge from the strife of politics in the congenial study of literature and science.* From that most charming and engrossing of all studies he had divorced himself, somewhat unwillingly, at the bidding of the Emperor Francis; and, once divorced, he had not returned to the society of the siren. But there were at Vienna those who remembered the delightful days when he who had become Chancellor of the Empire had been their cherished companion. They showed their appreciation of him and of his merits at this period by suggesting that he should be nominated Curator of the Academy of Fine Arts. The idea was carried out, to the surprise—for it was quite unexpected—and gratification of the recipient of the honour. He calls it, in his Autobiography, "an unexpected and honourable appointment, which opened up to me an unfamiliar but congenial sphere of activity, in which there was full scope for my strong consciousness of duty, heightened as it was in this case by my inclination."

Not for a moment, however, did he lose sight of his main object. The year 1811 passed, he tells us, as he had foreseen. Napoleon advanced his forces as far as the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, and made Dantzig a *point d'appui* for the supplies necessary for a great campaign. The armies of the States belonging to the Confederation of the Rhine were preparing to join the *Grande Armée*, already strengthened by the Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian contingents. Prussia, depressed and suffering, was endeavouring, as much as she dared, to stir up a patriotic feeling in North Germany by means of the

* Pages 7–8.

Tugenbund. Austria alone seemed quiescent and pacific, "supposed," as the director of her policy writes, "to be exclusively occupied in healing the wounds which the last war had inflicted on the Empire." The aspect of Europe appeared to the Austrian Minister, than whom no one was better qualified to judge, not as that of the calmness which, in nature, precedes the storm, "but the sad aspect of a general humiliation of princes and people under the verdict of an inexorable fate."

At length the dreaded year arrived, and Napoleon, notifying to the Courts of Berlin and Vienna his intention of invading Russia, demanded the active support of the sovereigns they represented. Prussia could only reply in the affirmative. Austria, guided by Metternich, was more reserved. Metternich had devised a plan whereby he might, while yielding to the demands of the French Emperor, maintain still his relations with Alexander. Napoleon, he saw, did not require an Austrian contingent so much for fighting purposes as for a material guarantee that the rest of the Austrian army should be retained within the limits of the Austrian dominions. Whilst, then, he raised no difficulty to the signing with France, the 14th March, 1812, of a treaty by which Austria agreed to furnish an auxiliary corps of 30,000 troops for the invasion, receiving in exchange, besides the guarantee of her integrity, a promise that, in the event of the reconstitution of the Kingdom of Poland, she should recover Illyria, or, that portion of it the loss of which, as it included Trieste, she lamented the most, Metternich stipulated that the treaty should be kept secret as long as possible in order that he might take credit with Russia, and pose before her as a neutral. The Czar, it would seem, thoroughly understood the powerlessness of Austria to act other than she did act, and, notwith-

standing the presence in the line of Napoleon's army of the corps of 30,000 men, he never, throughout the campaign, regarded her other than as neutral or friendly. Metternich goes so far as to state that Alexander considered the closing of the Austrian territory as a useful defence for the southern provinces of the Russian Empire.

On the 21st April Alexander quitted St. Petersburg for Wilna, having renounced all hope of staving off the war. As soon as he heard of this departure Napoleon resolved to hasten to Dresden, to receive there the vassal sovereigns of the several States of the Continent of whose contingents he was about to dispose, and to communicate to them his final hopes and his final intentions. Amongst those who received invitations to proceed to Dresden were the Emperor and Empress of Austria. They accordingly quitted Vienna for that purpose, accompanied by Metternich, timing their departure so as to arrive the day after Napoleon, that is, on the 17th of May. For the twelve days that followed, Dresden presented a spectacle such as has rarely been equalled. The Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, the Kings of Bavaria and Saxony, and other lesser stars, paid their homages to the great conqueror whom, in a few short months, they were to attack with all the bitterness of stored-up hatred. At Dresden, in that month of May, no one doubted the triumph of Napoleon. The proudest spirits bent before him. Even Metternich, coldly calculating, and in his heart desiring the triumph of Alexander, did not believe in it. He resumed here, he tells us, his old confidential intercourse with Napoleon—the intercourse of 1810. The conclusion he drew was that Napoleon did not deceive himself as to the greatness of the undertaking upon which he was entering; that he looked upon his success as "the keystone of an edifice

which hovered before his mind as a Carlovingian Empire under a Bonapartist dynasty." It is quite possible that if he had followed the plan of campaign which he unfolded to Metternich, he would have realised this idea. He spoke to the Austrian Minister the words I am about to quote, and which, that Minister most truly says, subsequent events have made for ever memorable:

"My enterprise is one of those the solution of which is to be found in patience. Victory will attend the most patient. I shall open the campaign by crossing the Niemen. It will be concluded at Smolensk and Minsk. There I shall stop. I shall fortify these two points, and occupy myself, at Wilna, where the chief headquarters will be during the next winter, with the organisation of Lithuania, which burns with impatience to be delivered from the yoke of Russia. I shall wait and see which of us tires first: I, of feeding my army at the expense of Russia; or Alexander, of sustaining my army at the expense of his country. Perhaps I myself may pass the most inclement months of the winter at Paris."

Metternich continues: "To my question what he would do in case the Emperor Alexander did not vouchsafe to make peace because of the occupation of Lithuania," Napoleon answered:

"In that case I should in the following year advance quite to the centre of the Empire, and I shall be as patient in 1813 as I shall have been in 1812. The affair, as I told you, is a question of time."

It was difficult for Metternich, thus confidentially informed of his plan by the greatest captain of the age—a captain who, he had seen, had beaten this same enemy, when he was allied, as in 1805 with Austria, and, as in 1806–7 with Prussia, and who now wielded against him all the resources of Continental Europe, to doubt the result of a campaign based upon a plan so prudent and apparently so certain. Metternich did not doubt. Yet, true to his nature, writhing under the domination exercised by the *parvenu*—as he always regarded Napoleon—

who controlled the destinies of every nation on the Continent, he never forgot that although the chances might be fifty to one in favour of France, yet the possibility always existed that Russia might prevail. That chance was, indeed, too remote to be counted upon. It was hardly to be seriously thought of. Nevertheless it was a chance, and, as a chance which would bring him his heart's desire, he deemed it prudent to regulate his conduct, secretly, as though it might happen. Thus we find him, from the very outset of the campaign, renewing, endeavouring to knit together more closely, the ties between Vienna and Berlin. There exists, in the handwriting of Metternich, written in 1851, a note on a letter received by him from Frederick Gentz, dated July 24, 1812, which fully explains the aims of the Austrian Minister, not only at this period, but throughout the period of the Napoleonic sway. Gentz had detected, at his epoch, symptoms of what Metternich calls "the Providential beginning of Napoleon's end." Metternich writes on this: "That I have helped this forward as much as lay in my power—history will testify." He was right. History will testify to that fact, but, in testifying to it, she will also demand an account of the use he made of the power he acquired through the accomplishment of that task; how he treated the generous spirits, who, in fighting against Napoleon, believed, as they had been led to believe, that they were fighting for their emancipation from political thraldom.

Meanwhile he followed the movements of the Napoleonic army with the keenest interest. When he saw that Napoleon, tempted by the constant retreat of the Russians, was abandoning the safe programme he had revealed at Dresden, his hopes that the one chance might become a certainty increased. For the French army to winter at Moscow instead of at Smolensk would, he saw, be a

mistake which a determined enemy might, without much difficulty, turn into a misfortune. Not foreseeing yet the retreat with all its horrors, he might reasonably argue that the position of Napoleon at Moscow after Borodino was much less favourable than the position of the same leader at Vienna after Wagram; and he had Napoleon's own admission, made to him in 1810, that if Austria had then refused peace he would have been lost. Day by day his hopes grew stronger. At last the catastrophe came. Then he felt that upon him would probably devolve the mastery of the situation—and to accomplish that end he began at once to act. How, and with what effect he acted, must be considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE WINTER OF 1812 TO THE ARMISTICE OF PLEISWITZ, JUNE—AUGUST, 1813.

1812–1813.

THE army-corps, contributed by Austria to the grand invading army of Napoleon, amounting to 30,000 men, had done little, and had suffered little. Practically, it was intact. When Metternich first realised the full extent of the disaster which had befallen the French Emperor, he was unwilling that this corps, which had been joined by the Saxon contingent, should be utilised to cover the French retreat. He did not at once, it is true, direct it against Napoleon, as Prussia did as soon as she safely could, with the troops she had contributed, but wishing, as he states, to prepare to strike a decisive blow at a decisive moment, in 1813, he transmitted orders to the Commander of the corps Prince Schwarzenberg, to fall back upon Galicia. Then, by no means certain that the power of Napoleon had been destroyed; thinking it quite possible that, if he would but moderate his demands, he might yet preserve a position which might be preponderating if not predominating; unwilling to run once more the chance of being on the losing side; yet resolved, as resolved as was Prussia, to break the despotic chain with which the French Emperor bound Continental Europe; to restore the equili-

brium of 1803 or 1805, according as might be decided in consultation with Prussia, Metternich, carefully reviewing the situation, and calculating how it might be possible to constitute a new German Confederation on the ruins of the Confederation of the Rhine, came to the conclusion that, for the moment, Austria should temporise, in the meanwhile increasing her army, until the moment should arrive when she could strike with effect. Russia and Prussia were confident that they had only to push forward to bring to a decisive issue the advantages which the terrible Russian winter had in part secured for them. Metternich was not nearly so confident. On the contrary, he was convinced that, even after so great a disaster, those two powers would not be a match for Napoleon. The Machiavellian policy, then, would be, to arm and wait until the allies, feeling their impotence without Austria, should demand, nay, implore, Austria's aid; that, manœuvring meanwhile so as to hoodwink Napoleon, already too confiding on the strength of his marriage with a daughter of the Habsburgs, he would intervene forcibly at the critical moment. This is the policy which he says he thought out at the time, and which he actually adopted. It is as well that the reader should bear this in mind when he comes to study the period of the armistice of 1813. All the calculations of the Austrian Minister in the winter of 1812-13 were based upon the conviction that it would become necessary that Austria should join Russia and Prussia to effect the overthrow of Napoleon. Upon that overthrow he was throughout bent. Every line he has written proves that he never dreamt it would be possible for Austria, under any circumstances, to unite with Napoleon. "The Emperors of Austria and of Russia, the King of Prussia, and their three cabinets," he says, writing of this period, "were never really separated."

The first necessity for the successful carrying out of this policy was to impose upon Napoleon. "All that remained," he wrote to his father, "was to find the opportunity of carrying out my intentions without running any serious risks." So, in January, 1813, he commissioned Count Bubna to proceed to Paris to assure the Emperor of the fidelity of Austria, but to urge upon him the advisability of securing peace, and, to attain such a result, to propose the mediation of Austria. Count Bubna had a certain success. Napoleon, unfortunately for himself, was under the delusion that the Emperor Francis would not turn against his son-in-law, and though he could not fail to recognise the bad faith of Austria in the instructions sent to Prince Schwarzenberg, he had still the conviction that he was strong enough to defeat combined Russia and Prussia, and that, once triumphant over them, Austria would declare herself in his favour, in the hope to profit by his victory. When Count Bubna arrived, then, Napoleon called together an extraordinary Council to consider the course to be pursued. This Council comprised the most eminent statesmen of the Empire. There were present, Talleyrand, Caulaincourt, Cambacérès, Champagny, Maret (Duke of Bassano), MM. de la Besnadière and d'Hauterive. To them Napoleon gave a summary of the situation; then posed the question whether France should wait to receive proposals of peace, or whether she should make them; in the latter case, whether she should address herself directly to Russia, or avail herself of the mediation of friendly Austria. Caulaincourt, Cambacérès, and Talleyrand, gave their voices in favour of direct negotiation with Russia: the Duke of Bassano, who was supposed to express the inner thought of Napoleon, expressed the same confidence—I should rather write—the same false confidence his master felt in the sincerity

of Austria, and urged the advisability of taking advantage of her mediation. He was supported by the other three members. Napoleon was of the same opinion, for, totally misled as to the real views of the guiding spirit of Austria's policy, he believed that the offer to restore to her Illyria, without conditions, would range her at once secretly on his side. After seeing, then, Count Bubna, he addressed a letter to his father-in-law, in which, beginning by an account of the campaign of 1812 painted in colours distinctly French, he stated that he would very shortly be in a position to throw back the Russians on the Vistula and from the Vistula on the Niemen ; but that, in spite of that certainty, he desired peace, and that to obtain peace, he was ready and willing to avail himself of the intervention of Austria. He added, however, a proviso which, at the moment, he could have scarcely believed would be acceptable. He would not, he said, accept conditions of peace, he would impose them !

To this letter, which M. Thiers, arguing that it might have been possible at that critical moment by liberal concessions to have gained Austria, calls " a fatal letter," the Duke of Bassano added another, addressed to Metternich in terms even less conciliatory. At the moment when all Europe was rising in arms against the French Empire he warned Metternich that the several nations of Europe might have to repent bitterly their conduct if they were to choose such a period to wound the just susceptibilities of the French nation. He added, that whilst France was willing to accept the intervention of Austria, that Power must remember that France would accord to Russia the conditions only which she had granted at Tilsit ; to Austria the conditions she had granted after Wagram. As a counterpoise, and a counterpoise which he thought would attach Austria, he added that the King of Rome,

the grandson of the Emperor Francis, was about to be crowned, and that the Regency of France, in the event of any accident to the Emperor, would be secured to Marie Louise. Nothing is more clear to the student of the despatches of this period than the fact that the Austrian matrimonial alliance blinded the usually clear intellect of the Emperor; it was the lure which led him to his destruction.

The replies of Napoleon and his Minister to the proposal of the Austrian Court made through Count Bubna could not but confirm Metternich in his secret policy; the policy of arming and waiting the opportune moment to strike. His main difficulty at this period and later was to restrain the enthusiasm of the German population of Austria. Prussia, through the defection of the contingent she had supplied to the Grand Army had greatly augmented the difficulties, the dangers, and the losses of the retreat, only declared herself openly as the ally of Russia and the enemy of France in March; the King of Saxony, so long the ally of Napoleon, had not been able to withstand the enthusiasm caused throughout Germany by this event, and had retired into Bavaria, there to await the possibilities of the future. These events had roused tremendous excitement in German Austria. But neither the Emperor Francis nor his Minister had been so brought under the personal influence of the Czar, animated as he was by a desire to pose as the saviour of Europe, as had been the King of Prussia. They both regarded the action of that sovereign, in declaring against Napoleon whilst Napoleon could yet wield against them considerable resources, as dangerous and premature. They were equally determined to fall neither under the spell of Russia nor under the yoke of popular clamour, but to act, as became statesmen in their position, so as to secure the interests of

Austria. They were far from believing that Napoleon was destroyed. A premature declaration against him might ensure, they felt, the destruction of Austria. For these reasons Metternich resolved to allow nothing to cause him to deviate from the line he had marked out—to arm and to wait.

Meanwhile he held many conferences with the French Minister at Vienna, M. Otto, with the view of discovering, if possible, the advantages which it might be possible for Austria to secure in the event of a general peace. When he found that Otto was unable to speak authoritatively on this subject, he communicated to him, with the view doubtless of the report of the conversation reaching Napoleon, the views held by himself. As, he urged, it was no longer possible for France to maintain against England the continental blockade, Russia and Prussia having renounced it, it would certainly be for the interest of France to resign those places which were useful to her solely for the enforcing of that blockade. In this view the Hanseatic towns and their dependencies had become rather a burden to France, and might well be abandoned. Similarly, as, after the campaign of 1812, it would be impossible to dream of the reconstitution of Poland, it would be advantageous to France to see a strong Prussia, as the barrier of the rest of Europe against Russian barbarism: then, whilst England might possibly admit the union of Holland with France, she would always be firm on the subject of Spain. That point Napoleon would have to yield. Again, with regard to the Confederation of the Rhine, already doomed by the opinion of Germany and useless to France, France must be content with the boundary afforded by that river, and must leave Germany beyond it to herself. Finally Metternich allowed the French Minister to divine that if Napoleon would lower

his pretensions sufficiently to accept a general peace on the terms about to be indicated, then it might be possible for Austria to support him. The terms were: the restitution of Spain to the Bourbons; of the Hanseatic towns to Germany; the suppression of the Confederation of the Rhine; the partition of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw between Russia, Prussia, and Austria; and, as to the latter power herself, the restoration to her of Illyria, and the rectification of her frontier on the Inn. But, whilst indicating these conditions as constituting a fair basis, Metternich was careful to commit himself to nothing. He had sketched an outline to which he would not bind himself, and which events might modify any day.

Meanwhile, in pursuance of the reply of Napoleon to the mission of Count Bubna, he proceeded to use Austria as a mediator between the contending parties. From every quarter he met rebuffs. England, by the voice of Lord Castlereagh, declared, whilst courteously acknowledging the reception of the message, that the language of Napoleon proved that he would accept no reasonable terms. Russia not only gave a similar reply, but added that Austria herself would soon recognise the impossibility of coming to an understanding with a man so insatiably ambitious as Napoleon; that when that time should arrive, when she, Austria, should resume her natural position as ally of the rest of Europe, she would be recognised as arbitress of the situation, as dictator of the conditions of peace. These replies Metternich transmitted at once to Paris, adding, in the despatch communicating them, that he had requested Prince Schwarzenberg, who had commanded the Austrian corps in the campaign of 1812, to proceed to that city, to endeavour to obtain from the Emperor explanations more frank than those of which Count Bubna had been the recipient; that he the more

confidently reckoned on the realisation of his hope in this particular, inasmuch as the Prince had been the negotiator of the marriage; the lieutenant of Napoleon during the last war; and had remained his constant and sincere admirer.

Unfortunately for Napoleon he remained, in spite of the tone of the despatches of the Austrian Foreign Minister, still under the delusion engendered by his marriage with a Princess of the Imperial House. This delusion prevented him from reading the set purpose of Metternich; concealed from his usually clear vision the fact that at this period as I have already quoted, "the Emperors of Austria and Russia and the King of Prussia and their cabinets were never really separated." Not in vain had the Austrian Minister studied, in the intimacy of private intercourse, in diplomatic controversy, in the confidential conversations covering the period of the six months immediately subsequent to the marriage, the character and habits of thought of the man who to him was always, and never more than in 1813, the incarnation of the hated Revolution. Great as was Napoleon on the battlefield, he was, at this moment, on this diplomatic tilting-ground, an infant in the hands of Metternich. The situation may be described in a sentence: Napoleon trusted Metternich—a man whom he liked, whom he had admitted to the closest intimacy, whom he cherished as one of the main supporters of his marriage, and whom he believed he could dazzle by holding before him the prospect of possessing not only Illyria, but that Silesia for which Maria Theresa had shed tears of blood. Metternich, on the other hand, knowing that he had made an impression of this nature on the mind of Napoleon, used it deliberately to destroy him. The nearer we approach the date of the famous interview at Dresden, the more clearly are

disclosed the methods employed by Metternich to hoodwink, to lead on, his victim. At that meeting, the reader will see, the mask is dropped altogether. We might draw the same conclusion from his own testimony. "History," he wrote in his Autobiography, referring to the negotiations and events of 1812–3, "will bear witness to my having made use of all the means in my power to second the hands of God."

Napoleon, then, still influenced by the opinion regarding Metternich and the views of Austrian policy mentioned in the preceding paragraph, confident that he could beat combined Russia and Prussia, and almost as confident that he could tempt Austria to share with him the inevitable despoiling of the latter, had not only made no attempt to dissuade Austria from arming, but had even pressed her to arm. Informed at the period at which we have arrived, March 1813, of the mission of Prince Schwarzenberg, he went a step further; replaced M. Otto at Vienna by M. de Narbonne, and commissioned the new ambassador to urge Austria to debouch with 100,000 men from Bohemia into Silesia, taking the allies in flank whilst he should attack them in front, and thus finish the war in one short campaign. The share of Austria in the spoil should be Silesia, Illyria, and a part of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, whilst Prussia should be hurled back beyond the Oder. Anxious above all things to join his army, he had given these instructions to M. de Narbonne, had made dispositions regarding the regency and other pressing matters, and was on the point of setting out, when Prince Schwarzenberg arrived (5th April). For any result from his mission he might as well have remained at Vienna. He found Napoleon determined to fight, confident of victory, not at all mistrustful of Austria, or

doubting her ultimate co-operation. These thoughts he expressed in the rapid and decided manner habitual with him. Schwarzenberg was not at Paris to contradict him. Either obeying the instructions he had received to listen rather than talk, or overpowered by the confident assertions of Napoleon, he made no attempt to disclose the secret thoughts of his master, or of his master's foreign minister. He preferred, according to M. Thiers, to mutter a few inconsequent words ("il proféra quelques mots sans force et sans suite"), and went so far as to allow the Emperor to believe that Austria would be true to the treaty of the 14th March, 1812, and to declare that the corps which he had commmanded should march with the corps of Prince Poniatowski into Upper Silesia.* A few days later, 13th April, Napoleon set out for his army. The campaign of 1813 had begun.

Whilst Prince Schwarzenberg was thus, as it were, effacing himself at Paris, and M. de Narbonne was journeying to Vienna, Metternich was steadily working for the issue he had at heart. To pass gradually from the position of ally of France to that of ally of Russia and England, by assuming the intermediary position of mediator, to retain that intermediary position as long as it could be held with safety, or until events should force Austria to declare herself, and then—unless Napoleon should have gained a success so striking as to make him irresistible—to join the allies with all the troops she was, at the express wish of Napoleon, engaged in arming;

* "Napoléon dit donc au Prince de Schwarzenberg qu'il allait expédier à ce corps des ordres, pour qu'il s'avançât avec le Prince Poniatowski vers la haute Silésie, et qu'il espérait que ces ordres seraient exécutés. Le Prince de Schwarzenberg, qui savait bien que son gouvernement ne voulait plus tirer un coup de fusil, craignit de l'avouer à Napoléon, et eut la faiblesse de lui répondre que le corps Autrichien obéirait."—*Thiers*, tome xv., p. 390

such was his policy. In the presence of a man so imperious and so searching as was Napoleon, the task was attended with some risk, though not with so great a risk as some historians have represented, for, in point of fact, Napoleon, with the English and Spaniards on his hands at one extremity, and the allies in front of him, had all his work cut out for him; and, besides, it cannot be too often repeated, he was specially at this period under the glamour of his marriage.* So strongly did Metternich realise this, that he even ventured to carry his intrigues further, and to endeavour to detach the King of Saxony completely from the French alliance. That prince had, during the excitement caused in Germany by the disasters of the Moscow retreat and the declarations of Prussia, sought a refuge from the solicitations of his countrymen, first at Ratisbon, afterwards at Prague. There Metternich entered into secret negotiations with him, urging him to renounce his claims to the Grand Dukedom of Warsaw, and to promise to act as Austria should act, and at the same time. There remained yet another arrangement which could only be furthered by the diplomatic dexterity of which Metternich was a master. The reader will recollect that at Paris Prince Schwarzenberg had promised Napoleon that the Austrian corps he had commanded should accompany the Franco-Polish corps under Prince

* After Napoleon had quitted Paris for the army, Prince Schwarzenberg, who remained behind, was more open in his conversations with M. de Bassano than he had ventured to be with the Emperor. One day, when he had given Bassano many reasons why Austria should not put her troops in line with those of France, Bassano urged the marriage as a decisive reason why she should. Schwarzenberg, transported by sudden impulse, exclaimed: "The marriage, the marriage! . . . Policy made it, and policy may unmake it." Bassano, according to Thiers, did not report these words to Napoleon, "lest," he adds, "he should irritate him against Austria." Such conduct was not faithful service.

Poniatowski into Upper Silesia. The two corps were cantoned, side by side, in Polish and Austro-Polish territory, and Poniatowski had received instructions not to let the Austrians out of his sight. Finding the presence of Poniatowski dangerous to the scheme he was meditating, Metternich had recourse to an expedient, extremely hazardous in itself, but one which, under the circumstance of Napoleon being at the moment actually engaged on the field of battle, he thought he would be able to excuse. He made a secret convention with the Russians, whereby the latter, by a pretended display of superior forces, should appear to compel the Austrians to repass the Vistula, and to fall back into Galicia, taking with them the corps of Poniatowski. That corps, then, by the orders of the King of Saxony, who, as Grand Duke of Warsaw, was its sovereign, and who had agreed to the design, might be disarmed. This convention, which was made at Kalisch towards the end of April, was but another web in the net which Metternich was weaving round Napoleon.

Metternich virtually gained for the moment, the King of Saxony. Having by this means arranged to rid himself of the Franco-Polish troops on the Austrian borders, he turned his attention to Bavaria. To treat of defection from Napoleon to the King of that country was a business requiring special delicacy of touch, for Bavaria had been something more than the immemorial ally of France. She was the country in Europe which had the most benefited from that alliance, and benefited, moreover, at the expense of Austria. To her the triumph of the allies, if Austria were to join the alliance, would mean the renunciation of Tirol, the Salzkammergut, and portions of the valley of the Danube. Yet, notwithstanding the difficulty of the task, Metternich attempted

it, and made an impression which revealed itself after Leipsig.*

Meanwhile, M. de Narbonne arrived in Vienna, and was received there with the greatest distinction. Metternich talked to him in the same sense as regarded the conditions of a general peace in which he had talked to his predecessor. The French ambassador soon, in a manner presently to be stated, recognised the fact to which all his countrymen had been blind, which Napoleon himself, duped by the marriage, had never admitted, that Austria not only would not lend herself to the designs of his Emperor; she would do her utmost to thwart them.† He discovered the truth in this wise. Shortly after his arrival he received from the Duke of Bassano instructions to propose to Austria to constitute herself a mediator between the contending powers in the sense of a supporter of the views of France; that is, to notify to the allies that unless they would agree to the terms proposed by France and Austria conjointly, terms really dictated by France, she would launch an army of 100,000 men into Silesia. Metternich listened to the proposal with his usual calmness; then quietly inquired what were the

* On the 8th October, eight days before the beginning of the battle of Leipsig, Count Wrede, who commanded the Bavarian forces, persuaded his sovereign to sign a convention with the allies by virtue of which Bavaria joined the alliance. Wrede, then, with an army 60,000 strong, proceeded to occupy a position at Hanau, between Leipsig and France, in order to cut off Napoleon. The French Emperor, retreating from the fatal field, and having in hand only 17,000 men at the moment, came upon the position occupied by Wrede, barring his further progress. He at once proceeded to reconnoitre, then, turning to his generals and exclaiming, "Poor Wrede! I made him a Count, but I never succeeded in making him a General," attacked and dispersed his army.

† Napoleon at St. Helena used these words: "Until the arrival of M. de Narbonne at Vienna, we had been the dupes of Austria: he had not been there fifteen days before he discovered everything."

conditions which would be proposed to the allies in the event of their preferring, under the circumstances, peace to war. On that point Narbonne was only expecting instructions. Metternich then retired to consider what profit he could derive from the proposal made to him.

It seemed to him that the profit might be very great indeed—greater, far greater, than he had dared to hope for. By accepting the *rôle* of mediator, proposed by Napoleon—by accepting that *rôle*, that is to say, not as Napoleon understood it, but as Austria might choose to understand it—Austria would, without any announcement, abandon the perplexing position of ally then held under the provisions of the treaty of March, 1812. Then, again, the acceptance of that *rôle* would necessitate further arming to make it a *rôle* which could be respected. Such acceptance would, besides, sufficiently explain the action of Prince Schwarzenberg's corps in retreating behind the Galician frontier. After taking, for appearance' sake, some time for reflection, though in point of fact, his mind had been made up on the instant, Metternich saw again M. de Narbonne, and told him that on all the important parts of his recent communication he was happy to find himself in perfect agreement with the French Emperor; that the Emperor Francis thought, and he also recognised, that it was no longer possible for Austria to confine herself to the secondary *rôle* she had occupied in 1812; that the circumstances being very different, her action should be different also; that Austria had foreseen this, and was prepared for it; that it was because she had perceived it that she had armed, and was now ready, including the corps she had withdrawn into Galicia, to concentrate 100,000 men in Bohemia. As to the mode of presenting herself to the allies, Austria again had the happiness to be in perfect

accord with Napoleon; there was but one way, and that was to pose as an armed mediator. She would propose to the Powers to cease hostilities, to agree to an armistice, to appoint plenipotentiaries. If they would consent to it, then would be the time to produce the conditions, and he would await with impatience those promised from France. If, on the contrary, they should refuse to agree to peace on any terms, then would be the time to act, and to arrange how the armies of France and Austria could best work for a common end. Metternich concluded by again alluding to the necessity which had arisen for the withdrawal of the Austrian auxiliary corps from Poland, and by repeating the intense pleasure he felt at being in perfect agreement with Napoleon.

"Never," writes M. Thiers, "in this formidable and complicated game of diplomacy, has one played better and gained more than did M. de Metternich on this occasion. With one blow, in fact, he had solved all his difficulties. From being an enslaved ally he had boldly made himself not only mediator, but armed mediator. He had dared to declare that the treaty of alliance of March 1812 was no longer applicable to existing circumstances; he had given reasons for his armaments to which France could not offer a single objection; he had solved in advance a great difficulty, fast approaching him, that of how to employ the auxiliary Austrian corps. As to the offer to enter into the views of France, to act with her to finish the overthrow of Germany, to displace Prussia, that is, to destroy her, to take Silesia, &c., it is not necessary to add that Austria would not have it at any price, not indeed from love for Prussia, but for love for the common independence. She eluded then this offer, by professing to regard the case as a case of war, with which she would occupy herself later on, when the belligerent Powers should have refused every overture for peace, a result in the highest degree improbable. M. de Metternich terminated his declaration by announcing that a courier extraordinary would at once start for Paris to convey a copy of it to Prince Schwarzenberg."

This is quite true. Metternich carried his powers of deception so far as to make it appear that he accepted the French scheme, whereas he simply intended to use it

to concert measures with the allies against Napoleon. It was another and a very important mesh in his web. Yet his success was not quite so great as the reader might gather from the perusal of the commentary of M. Thiers. He mystified, but he did not take in M. de Narbonne. The French ambassador was too clear-headed a man to fail to be struck by the facility with which the Minister agreed to all his proposals. Not so readily, he thought to himself, would Austria, in the circumstances then existing, assent to a proposition which would place, according to his view of it, in the hands of Napoleon, the direction of the forces she had raised and armed with so much haste. For granting, as one could not fail to grant, that the allies would refuse the proposals of Napoleon, though presented by the hand of Austria, that was the logical alternative, the only alternative, of his proposals, as he intended them to be understood. If Metternich had understood him in a different sense, then there must be a further explanation. Yet he had seemed to understand him—and had not raised one objection. Puzzled, convinced that all was not right, Narbonne endeavoured, by further questioning, to get behind the real meaning of the Minister. To accomplish this, he asked him what would happen if France and Austria could not agree on the terms of peace to be offered to the allies. This was to beg the whole question. Metternich, recognising this on the instant, conscious that a direct answer would show the Frenchman that he was being played with, hastened to elude a reply by an adroit interruption. "The question of conditions does not disturb me," he hastened to interpose.

"Your master will be reasonable—it is impossible he should not be. What! he would not risk everything for that ridiculous chimera of the

Grand Duchy of Warsaw, for that not less ridiculous protectorate of the Confederation of the Rhine, for those Hanseatic towns which will be of no further use to him on the day when, signing a general peace, he shall renounce the Continental blockade—no, no, it is not possible."

Still Narbonne was not satisfied. He pushed Metternich more closely, until finally he posed the home question as to what Austria would do in case Napoleon should not be reasonable. Thus pressed, Metternich, impatient, anxious to finish, had to declare that Austria, as mediator, and as armed mediator, would be an arbiter who had in her hands the means of compelling respect for right and justice. As though he had in this said too much, he added, that all the prepossessions of the arbiter were in favour of France. "But," replied the persistent Frenchman, resolved to probe the question to the bottom, "in certain eventualities you would side against us?" "No, no," answered Metternich, anxious by any subterfuge to be rid of further interrogation, "we should not do that, because you would be reasonable." This reply, which practically finished the conversation, left no doubt in the mind of the ambassador as to the real object of Metternich, and he reported his opinion to his master. From that moment he watched all the movements of the Austrian statesman, demanding explanations on every doubtful point, and subjecting him to a cross-examination which Metternich found most embarrassing.

Napoleon received the reports of his ambassador at Mayence on his way to join the army. Believing that a decisive victory over the allies would solve every difficulty, he wrote to M. de Narbonne telling him that whilst he understood the double game Austria was playing, it was not advisable to push her to an immediate declaration; that it was as well to soothe her till he should have cut the Gordian knot at Dresden. He quitted Mayence the

26th April; met and defeated the allies at Lützen the 3rd May; followed them, and again encountered and defeated them at Bautzen the 20th and 21st of the same month. This last defeat decided Metternich to throw off the mask. Before I proceed to describe how, and with what determination to prevent peace, to push matters to extremities against Napoleon, he carried out this operation, it is necessary to say a few words as to the line he had followed with the French ambassador at Vienna since we left him in the middle of April.

The reader will recollect the manœuvre by which Metternich had enticed the Austrian auxiliary corps which had been stationed in Poland, with the corps of Prince Poniatowski accompanying it into Bohemia. Once in that country he had experienced no difficulty in persuading the King of Saxony to direct that it should be disarmed. Napoleon heard of this extraordinary interference with the Polish troops at Mayence, and not quite understanding it, despatched thence a courier to Poniatowski to forbid him to deliver up his arms on any pretext whatever.

Narbonne, to whom these instructions had also been communicated, was very uneasy as to what might happen if the Austrian Government should persist in its intention, and, whilst Napoleon was fighting at Lützen, he was engaged at Vienna in endeavouring to procure from Metternich a satisfactory assurance with respect alike to Poniatowski's corps and to the auxiliary Austrian corps, both of which, he contended, were still by treaty under the orders of the French Emperor. Metternich, bound by his secret convention with Russia to keep these troops out of the fighting line, strove first to elude the demand, saying that it was impossible to be at the same time mediator and combatant. Pressed, however, by Narbonne to

explain his intentions categorically; to say directly whether Austria was, or was not, bound by the treaty of the 14th March, 1812, Metternich, greatly embarrassed, replied, with all the suavity he could command, that it was true that Austria was still the ally of France and wished to remain so; but she was mediator also, and, in that capacity, her *rôle* as belligerent was for the moment suspended. He begged, then, the French ambassador not to push him further; not to insist on the recommencement of hostilities with Russia, for, as he could not accede to that demand, to persist in it would be to place him in a false position. Then he added the words with which he felt confident he could win his interlocutor—words of specious appearance, but as false in their real significance as any words ever spoken by a minister. Resolved, thoroughly resolved, as he was at the moment he uttered them, to make common cause with the allies; waiting only for the time when he could make the interference of Austria most decisive against Napoleon; he added, "if I refuse you 30,000 men to-day, it is only that I may give you 150,000 later on, when we shall have agreed upon a peace which will be acceptable to all Europe." But Narbonne was not under the spell of the minister. His early doubts regarding him had now become absolute distrust. Unconvinced, then, by the reply of Metternich, he transmitted to him a formal note requiring the Court of Vienna either to execute the treaty of March 14, or to say that it no longer existed. At the time that he gave in that note he demanded a personal interview with the Emperor, in order that, before a reply to the note should be sanctioned, he might have the opportunity of putting before Francis the grave results which must follow the rejection of his demand. The interview was at once granted. Francis,

who had learned his lesson, replied to Narbonne's insistance in terms almost identical with those used by Metternich. He even went so far as to express a fear lest the ambassador was not overstepping the spirit of his instructions in demanding a categorical reply to his note. The latter, then, could only repeat the grave apprehensions he felt on the subject, and declined to withdraw his note.

Forced to reply to that note, driven also to dissemble and deceive till the time for action should arrive, Metternich could only fall back upon the verbal assurance he had already given, to the effect that Austria, being mediator as well as ally, the *rôle* of the latter must be suspended till the duties of the former should have been accomplished. To soften the practical refusal contained in this answer, he added to it an engagement that no attempt should be made to disarm Poniatowski's corps during its march through Austrian territory.

Matters were in this condition at Vienna when the news of the result of the battle of Lützen arrived there. At first, as often happens, rumours prevailed, and, being conformable to the wishes of the Court, were believed, that the advantage had been with the allies. Soon, however, the information that whilst the French were at the gates of Dresden, the allies had been compelled to cross the Elbe, revealed the truth. The moment there could be no longer any doubt on this point Metternich hastened to the French ambassador, and, telling him that he was not surprised at Napoleon's success, inasmuch as he had based all his pacific calculations upon his victories, added that the result of the success at Lützen would be that the pretensions of the allies would be diminished by two-thirds; that he had counted on such a result; that he had felt that the one-third which remained

of the allied propositions embodied the principle upon which a lasting peace could be secured; that Austria could now seriously take up her *rôle* of mediator; that, to carry it to a successful issue, he proposed to send Count Bubna to the headquarters of Napoleon, and Count Stadion to the headquarters of Alexander. He went on to express himself more decidedly than he had ventured to do before regarding the conditions which commended themselves to the Court of Vienna as reasonable. They comprised—the sacrifice by France of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to be restored mainly to Prussia; the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine; the giving-up of the Hanseatic towns; and the restoration to Austria of the Illyrian provinces. Nothing was said of Holland, or of Spain, or of Italy.

Napoleon, informed during the interval between Lützen and Bautzen of what had been passing at Vienna, was fast repenting the confidence engendered by the marriage which had impelled him to propose to Austria the *rôle* of mediator. He realised now, to a certain extent, though not yet completely, the use, or rather the misuse, she would make of that *rôle*, and he was inclined to find fault with his ambassador for having pushed her so closely as to force her to make the declaration that in the presence of her duties as mediator, her *rôle* as active ally had ceased.* An accident, a chance, came at this period to confirm his suspicions of the bad faith of

* At St. Helena, Napoleon wrote: "The penetration of M. de Narbonne was more injurious than serviceable to my interests. Austria, recognising that he had divined her intentions, threw off the mask, and hastened her action. Had there been less penetration on our part, she would have been more reserved, more slow. She would have prolonged her natural indecision, and, during that time, we should have had other chances."—*Memorial de St. Hélène*, by Count de Las-Cases, tome iii. p. 95.

Austria. At Dresden the French captured a courier conveying despatches from the Russian Minister at Vienna to the Russian Chancellor with the Czar. These despatches gave abundant evidence of the double game Metternich was playing. They were full of excuses for the delay of Austria in making common cause with the allies. The Minister reported in them that Metternich had pleaded the manner in which he was fettered by the treaty of the 14th March, 1812; by the marriage; by the danger of declaring prematurely; by the backwardness of Austria's preparations. The despatches contained, besides, expressions which went far to show that the heart of the Austrian statesman was with the enemies of France. M. Thiers argues that this revelation should have made Napoleon more willing to accept the conditions which Metternich had proposed to M. de Narbonne as the conditions which Austria would impose on the allies. But we, to whom Metternich has revealed himself in his Autobiography, may well doubt whether he would have been true to those conditions. Certainly, during the armistice after Bautzen, he went far beyond them. I am inclined to think that the instinct of Napoleon was more true when, on discovering this double-dealing on the part of Metternich, he decided to recur to the policy of Caulaincourt and Talleyrand, that is, to treat directly with Russia, passing by the mediation of Austria. Succeeding in that, that is, in making peace with Russia, he was prepared to agree to the terms imposed by England regarding Spain, in order that he might be free the more effectually to punish the two German powers which had betrayed him. He instructed, then, his ambassador at Vienna to press Metternich no more; to recognise, even, that the treaty of March 14th was not applicable to existing circumstances; to let him plainly see the extent

of the resources of the Emperor in Italy, in Bavaria, and in France. At the same time he despatched Prince Eugene into Italy, to raise there an army of 100,000 men; made fresh arrangements regarding his reserves; and effected a reconciliation with the King of Saxony, who had come to Dresden for the purpose. He was in these dispositions regarding Metternich and Austria when the plenipotentiary despatched by the former to negotiate the mediation, Count Bubna, arrived at Dresden.

At that moment Napoleon was on the eve of setting out to deal to the allies a blow which he hoped might finish everything. He gave the Austrian envoy a very cold reception, but this latter, a man of resource, had the happy inspiration to draw from his portfolio a letter addressed to Napoleon by his father-in-law. This letter revived the false hopes based on the matrimonial alliance between the two crowns, and induced Napoleon to listen with patience, and something more than patience, to the proposals of mediation of which Bubna was the bearer.

Napoleon was prepared to yield something, though not all that Austria asked for. As his armaments were not completed, he caught rather too readily, in the course of conversation, at the idea, suggested by Bubna, of an armistice, and concerted with that envoy a letter which the latter should write in his own name to Stadion, then at the headquarters of the Czar, in which should be suggested the proposal for the meeting at Prague of a congress to arrange conditions of a general peace. Bubna, having written this letter under the eye of Napoleon, and despatched it, returned to Vienna, very satisfied with his mission, the bearer of a letter from Napoleon to his father-in-law. In view of the negotiations which took place in consequence of Bubna's mission, and to enable the reader thoroughly to understand and

appreciate the conduct of Metternich, it is necessary to add that this letter contained an earnest, even an affectionate appeal to Francis, to protect, in the negotiations, the honour of his son-in-law. Napoleon said, in fact, that whilst earnestly desirous of peace, he valued his honour more; that, son-in-law of the Emperor Francis, he confided his honour to his care; that he preferred it to the exercise of power; that he would rather die than accept humiliating terms.

Having despatched Bubna to Vienna, and Caulaincourt to the headquarters of the allies to open negotiations with the Czar, Napoleon quitted Dresden, 18th May, to join his army, and attack the allies. I have already recorded that he attacked and defeated them at Bautzen on the 20th and 21st May. If Marshal Ney, after having carried the village of Preititz on the second day, had at once marched upon Hochkirch, the war would have been then and there ended, for, in all probability, the Czar and the King of Prussia would have been captured. But though this mistake prevented the victory from being absolutely decisive, it was nevertheless a victory, which, but for Metternich and the lingering trust placed by Napoleon on his matrimonial alliance with the House of Halsburg, might have been used with decisive effect. The enemy were driven beyond the Oder; their commander-in-chief, Barclay de Tolly, strongly urged a further retreat into Poland; had Napoleon followed them without intermission, the coalition must have been dissolved. At this decisive moment, by one of those fatalities which come to mar fortune, Napoleon, half trusting, half distrusting, Austria; believing, too, that time would work more for him than for the enemy; agreed, at Pleiswitz, to an armistice. That armistice became, by the intervention and careful plotting of Metternich, the most fatal act, up to that time, of his career.

CHAPTER V.

FROM THE ARMISTICE OF PLEISWITZ TO THE RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES.

June–August, 1813.

METTERNICH was at Vienna when, at four o'clock on the 29th, he received news of the loss of the battle of Bautzen. He proceeded at once to report the fact to the Emperor. His mind was made up as to the course to be pursued. He writes:

"I had made my choice. The point was this—to prevent Napoleon's onward march, and to remove all uncertainty as to the decision of the Emperor from the minds of the Emperor Alexander and King Frederick William. The Russian army was much demoralised; it had but one wish—to get back into its own territory. The Emperor Alexander had indeed resolved to carry on the war; but the will of the army might at last have got the better of his intentions. The allied armies had decided to retreat towards Silesia. This manœuvre, well-planned from a military point of view, clearly showed the intention of the Emperor Alexander, who desired to drive Austria into a corner and oblige her to join the alliance. If Austria were to show that she was not inclined to take part in the war against Napoleon, this would give the Russian monarch the excuse to cross the Warta, and conclude the war."

Thus resolved to put Austria in the line with Prussia and Russia against France, yet conscious that Austria was not quite ready to play her part:—conscious, too, that it

was yet in the power of Napoleon to decide the retreat of Russia before Austria could make an effective demonstration, Metternich, to be near enough to the allies to carry on his intrigues successfully, persuaded his master to accompany him to a locality midway, or nearly midway, between Dresden and the headquarters of the Czar. The village of Gitschin appeared to them, from its position on the map. to be such a locality. They accordingly at once proceeded thither, arriving there the 3rd June.

On their way to that village, the illustrious travellers had, on the 2nd, met Count Nesselrode, sent by Alexander to urge Austria to a rapid decision. After giving a reply of an eminently encouraging character, they continued their journey, and arrived at Gitschin, as I said, on the 3rd. The next day Metternich sent to the French headquarters to demand a personal interview with the Duke of Bassano, and to inform him that Francis had quite determined to give the necessary authority to the proposals for mediation. But, on the proposition of Count Bubna, the armistice of Pleiswitz had been signed that very day. Metternich states that he expected the answer of the French minister to be evasive; that he wanted it to be evasive, in order to furnish him with a pretext for concerting measures personally with the Czar. The reply was not. in point of fact, evasive, though Metternich calls it so. The date of it was the 4th of June, and Napoleon, busy with his troops, only reached Dresden on the 10th, and the time of his arrival was then uncertain. Taking advantage, then, of the fact that the reply of Bassano mentioned the absence of Napoleon, and did not, because it could not, fix a date for an interview, Metternich hurried off to Opocno, the place appointed by Alexander to meet him. The Czar, accompanied by his sister, the Grand Duchess Katharine; by Count Nesselrode; by Count Stadion, the

head of the anti-French party in Austria; and by Lebzeltern, the envoy employed by Metternich in 1810 to negotiate between Napoleon and the Pope, had been there some hours when Metternich arrived.

The first interview, which took place at once, lasted two hours. It was decisive as to the question of the co-operation of Austria. Metternich treated it as an arrangement absolutely resolved upon. When Alexander expressed some fear lest Napoleon should accept the meditation of Austria, and that this acceptance might derange the plans of the allies, the reply of Metternich rang clear and unalterable. The meditation, he was determined, should lead to nothing.

"If," he said, "Napoleon decline the mediation, the armistice lapses; if he accept, the negotiations will prove that he does not wish to be wise or just, and the result will be the same. In any case, we shall have gained the time necessary to bring our troops into such a position that we need not fear a separate attack made either upon them or you, and we shall be able, in our turn, to assume the offensive." *

In subsequent interviews, Metternich succeeded in regaining entirely the confidence of Alexander. We have the testimony of Frederick Gentz, who was at Opocno at the time, that the ruling desire of Alexander, the idea which had taken possession of his somewhat narrow mind, was to pose as the saviour of Europe.

* This admission on the part of Metternich proves the enormous mistake Napoleon made in consenting to an armistice. Before the armistice he had scattered Russia and Prussia, and he was in a position to turn round and rend unprepared Austria. Prince Napoleon (*Napoleon and his Detractors*) writes on this point: "Napoleon has been reproached with that armistice as a fault. It would, doubtless, have been a military mistake had Napoleon been certain of Austria's treachery." Why was he not certain of a treachery which was so evidently predetermined? It was simply because he never believed that the Emperor of Austria would proceed to extremities against the husband of his daughter. Alas! that fatal marriage!

"I could see," wrote Gentz, June 22nd, "that the idea of withdrawing from the war, without the attainment of the great end with which he had been flattered, pierced his very soul, and that he (such is his feeling) would give a kingdom if he could stir up Austria without any attempt at peace. Yet he seems to see that it is utter insanity to continue the war without Austria's concurrence."

Five days after Gentz had penned these words, the Austrian envoy with the Czar, Count Stadion, signed at Reichenbach, in Silesia, with the full concurrence of Metternich, a treaty with Russia and Prussia for the overthrow of Napoleon. The reader will remember that this took place whilst Austria was acting as mediator between Napoleon and the allies, and after she had freed herself from the obligations of the treaty of March 14, 1812, on the plea that she could not be at the same time ally and meditator.*

The salient points of this treaty were, (1) that Austria bound herself to Russia and Prussia to declare war on France, unless, before the 20th of July of that year (changed afterwards to the 10th August), France should have accepted the conditions laid down by the Emperor of Austria as "indispensable to a state of equilibrium and durable tranquillity in Europe:" (2) con-

* The treaty of Reichenbach was kept a profound secret, so secret that it never even came to the knowledge of M. Thiers, and is never referred to by him in his history of the events of the period. This may be accounted for by the fact that Thiers accepted too blindly the assurances of Metternich, whom he greatly admired, and with whom he was in constant communication. It would have lifted the veil from the impression which Metternich desired to produce on the French politicians of the period if he had allowed M. Thiers to read a document which proved that it was not Napoleon, but Austria, which was bent on the rupture of the armistice. Of the authenticity of the treaty there can be no doubt. Metternich alludes to it in the documents appended to his Memoirs (Vol. ii., p. 165, *French edition*). The full text of it is given by Prince Napoleon in his admirable work, *Napoleon and his Detractors*, Appendix, p. 373, *English edition*.

tains the conditions, which were the same as those previously formulated: (3) contains a promise on the part of Austria that should those conditions not be accepted, she will employ all her available forces to secure their adoption: (4) "reciprocally, the two Courts of Russia and Prussia engage to act henceforth in concert with Austria in the capacity of allies, and each with those of her forces available at the time:" (5) regulates the number of troops to be employed: (6) "as soon as war shall have begun, the three allied Courts shall regard, as the aim of their simultaneous efforts, the execution of the articles expressed by the Russian and Prussian cabinets in their notes of May 16, which shall be construed in the widest acceptation." (These articles included: the retrocession of Hanover to England; the renunciation by France of all the territories on the right bank of the Rhine; the independence of the intermediate States between the Rhine and the Alps; the reconstitution of the frontiers of Austria and Prussia, on the basis of 1805): (7) the three Courts to agree to nothing except by mutual consent: (8) each Court to appoint officers to arrange the plan of campaign with the Commander-in-chief of the Austrian army: (9) the allied Courts most solemnly bind themselves not to enter into any separate agreement with France: (10) a similar engagement on the part of Austria alone: (11) the convention to be kept secret; the consent of Austria being required to its disclosure: (12) the convention to be ratified within six days.

Metternich quitted Opocno seven days before this convention had been actually signed. He had, however, arranged all its provisions, and he could return with a light heart to Gitschin. This he did on the 20th, and there he found a pressing invitation from Bassano to come to Dresden. Before he accepted the invitation he con-

municated with the Russo-Prussian cabinet sitting at Reichenbach, and assured them that they could depend on him. On their side, he writes, "there was much dejection." Evidently they did not quite trust him. They had not realised, they could not realise, that Metternich, having carefully studied the three sovereigns, was really aiming at the domination of the Continent; the first essential step to which was the fall of Napoleon. They might have safely trusted him. Already, whilst on his road to Dresden, to treat nominally with Napoleon for peace, he was hurrying the levy of troops; establishing magazines; removing supplies from places likely to be occupied by the French; laying *têtes-de-pont* on the Elbe and the Moldau. He tells us plainly that these preparations were being made, not that they might aid Austria to pose effectually as a mediator, but to serve Austria and the Allies, when war should have succeeded to the armistice.

Metternich reached Dresden the 24th June. Napoleon was, at the moment, absent, and did not return till the following day. On that day occurred the historical interview between the Emperor and the Austrian Minister.

Of that interview there are two versions, differing from each other in all essential points. And yet, one of the two is the only possible version. There were only two men present at the interview. Only those two, therefore, could have certainly known what passed on the occasion. All other versions must be imaginary and fictitious. We are, then, in this predicament for historic truth; that each of the two principals has left a record of what passed at an interview which was to decide the question of peace or war, and the two records are irreconcilable. Which is the true one?

To help us to answer that question it is well that we should ascertain the spirit which animated the two actors immediately prior to the interview. This has been done with great effect and with perfect impartiality by Prince Napoleon in the book* to which I have more than once referred. The Prince, at all events, may be accepted as an authority for the frame of mind which he has discerned in his uncle. That which animated Metternich is told too plainly in his Autobiography.

To begin with the Emperor. "With his shrewd mind," writes the Prince, "Napoleon wanted a longer armistice; he admitted the neutrality and mediation of Austria, but looked for some prospective basis of a durable peace." He concludes, then, that Napoleon went to the interview really wishing for a peace which should be based on durable principles, but determined not to accept terms for ever shifting and expanding according to the accident of the hour.

Metternich, on the contrary, went to the interview in a frame of mind absolutely hostile to Napoleon and his cause. He records one or two little incidents or impressions at this particular moment which tend to give evidence of his bitterness against the Emperor, of his conviction that the time for striking had come. On the first head he uses this expression: "Napoleon's head-quarters were at the Marcolini Garden, near the Elster meadows. He had not the courage to live in the town." This remark, directly impugning the courage of the man who never spared himself on the battlefield, besides being an imputation reflecting on the mind of the man who made it, shows a bitterness of soul, an aggravation of vindictiveness, which would ill prepare the utterer for friendly intercourse with the man against whom it was

* *Napoleon and his Detractors*, pp. 176–8.

directed. There was a very good reason why Napoleon should have his headquarters in the Marcolini palace. First, it had attached to it a large garden; secondly, it was near his troops. The Marcolini palace and garden, now used as an hospital, are situated in a suburb of Dresden called Friedrichstadt. They had the reputation of being healthy, and the garden was beautifully laid out. When Napoleon had occupied Vienna he had taken up his residence at the Schonbrünn palace, because it was a palace with a garden, in which he could walk and meditate without attracting attention. He did the same for the same reason at Dresden. Yet Metternich, on the eve of an interview which was to decide the fate of Europe, writes down his antagonist as a coward because he preferred a palace with a garden to the crowded streets of a large city. The remark may be trifling in itself, but few will dispute that it betrays a concentrated bitterness of soul and a prejudice sufficient to render dispassionate judgment impossible.

Then, again, Metternich states that he had discerned a great and rising feeling against Napoleon amongst a large section of Frenchmen; that the army sighed for peace, and had little confidence in the issue of the war. Surely, the knowledge of the existence of such feelings among the subjects of his enemy could not but steel the heart of the Austrian against peace, when he was confident that in continuing the war he would be fighting Napoleon with two forces: with the enthusiasm of oppressed and revolting Germany; and the disillusion and weariness of the French people.

But these are not the only indications which Metternich gave of his determination to prolong the war at all hazards. First, we have the convention of Reichenbach, arranged before he quitted Opocno, and signed the 27th

June. Then we have this pregnant sentence, already given in nearly the same words, but which will bear repetition.

"What will become of our cause," asked Alexander at Opocno, "if Napoleon accepts the mediation." "If he should decline it," I answered, "the armistice will cease as a matter of course, and you will find us among the number of your allies. If he should accept it, the negotiations will prove Napoleon to be neither wise nor just, and the result will be the same. In any case, we shall have gained the time we required, and we shall be able to take the offensive."

Constrained, then, to accept only one of the two versions, we are bound to reject that of the man who went to the interview with his mind fully bent on a continuance of the war, who had a bitter personal spite against Napoleon, and whose memoirs have been so touched and re-touched as to be only reliable when the events they record are supported by concurrent testimony. The version dictated by Napoleon is, on the other hand, borne out by the knowledge we have of the views and hopes and plans he entertained at the period. We accept it, therefore, in its entirety.

"So you have come, Metternich," said Napoleon to the Austrian statesman on his entering the room. "You are welcome. But, if you wish for peace, why come so late? We have already lost a month, and your mediation grows almost hostile by reason of its inactivity. It appears that it suits you no longer to guarantee the integrity of the French Empire. Let it be so. But why did you not say so before? Why did you not frankly inform me of it on my return from Russia, by Bubna, or, more recently, by Schwarzenberg? I might, perhaps, have been in time to modify my plans; I might not even have entered the field.

"By allowing me to get exhausted by new efforts, you doubtless relied on less rapid events. Victory crowned those bold efforts. I win two battles. My enemies, weakened, are on the point of recovering from their illusions. You suddenly glide in between us. You speak to me of armistice and mediation; to them of alliance. You embroil everything. But for your fatal intervention, peace would now be signed with the Allies.

"What have hitherto been the results of the armistice? I am not acquainted with any other than the two treaties of Reichenbach, which England has just wrung from Prussia and Russia. Another treaty with a third Power is also mentioned. But M. de Stadion is on the spot, Metternich, and you ought to be better informed than I on that subject.

"Admit, that since Austria assumed the title of mediator, she no longer sides with me, that she is no longer impartial; she is hostile. You were on the point of declaring against us, when the victory of Lützen startled you. Seeing me still so powerful, you felt it necessary to develop your strength, and were anxious to gain time.

"To-day, your 200,000 men are ready. Schwarzenberg commands them. He assembles them, near by, behind the curtain formed by the mountains of Bohemia. And, because you believe yourselves to be in a position to dictate the law, you come to me. The law, indeed! And why, pray, do you wish to dictate it only to me? Am I no longer the same man whom you defended yesterday? If you are really a mediator, why not, at least, hold the balance even?

"I have divined your intentions, Metternich: your Cabinet wishes to take advantage of my difficulties, and increase them as much as possible, in order to recover the whole or part of what has been lost. The main point for you to ascertain is whether you can obtain a ransom from me without fighting, or whether you will have to rank openly with my enemies. You are not yet quite sure which alternative will be most advantageous, and, perhaps, you only come here to ascertain it. Well! I do not refuse to come to terms. What do you want?"

This was a sharp attack. M. de Metternich met it with a complete array of diplomatic phrases. The only advantage the Emperor, his master, was jealous of acquiring was the influence which would impart to the Cabinets of Europe the spirit of moderation, and respect for the rights and possessions of independent States, with which he himself was animated. Austria was desirous of establishing a state of things which, by a wise re-partition of power, would place the guarantee of peace under the protection of a confederation of independent States.

"Explain yourself," interrupted the Emperor, "and let us come to the point. But remember that I am a soldier who understands better how to break than how to bind. I offered you Illyria as the price of

your neutrality. Are you satisfied? My army is quite sufficient to bring the Russians and the Prussians to terms, and your neutrality is all I ask."

"Why, Sire," replied quickly M. de Metternich, "should your Majesty remain unsupported in the contest? Why should you not double your forces? You can do so, Sire, for it rests entirely with you to make use of them. Indeed, things have reached a climax, and we can no longer remain neutral; we must declare either for or against you."

Then the conversation became almost inaudible, and the Emperor led M. de Metternich to the map-room. After a rather long interval, the Emperor again raised his voice, and said:

"What! not only Illyria, but half Italy, and the return of the Pope to Rome! the giving up of Spain, Holland, the Confederation of the Rhine, and Switzerland! That is what you call the spirit of moderation with which you are animated! You only think of taking advantage of every opportunity. Your sole preoccupation is to transfer your alliance from one camp to the other, in order to be always in that in which a share of plunder is to be had, and you speak of your respect for the rights of independent States! In fact, you want Italy, Russia wants Poland, Sweden wants Norway, Prussia wants Saxony, and England insists on the possession of Holland and Belgium. In short, peace is only a pretext; you are all longing for the dismemberment of the French Empire! And, to realise such a scheme, Austria thinks it sufficient for her to declare herself! You expect here, by a stroke of the pen, to bring down the ramparts of Dantzig, Küstrin, Glogau, Magdeburg, Wesel, Mayence, Antwerp, Alessandria, Mantua, and of all the strongest fortresses of Europe, the keys of which I only obtained after numerous victories! As for me, docile to your policy, I should have to evacuate Europe, half of which I still occupy, to bring back my legions behind the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, as though I had been vanquished; and subscribing to a treaty which would only amount to a vast capitulation, I should thus surrender to my enemies, and rely, for a doubtful future, upon the generosity of the very men whom I have now crushed! At a time when my colours are still flying over the mouths of the Vistula and the banks of the Oder, when a victorious army is threatening Berlin and Breslau, when I am myself here at the head of 300,000 men, Austria, without striking a blow, without even drawing the sword, presumes to compel me to subscribe to such terms! Without drawing the sword! Such pretension is indeed outrageous! And it is my father-in-law who

entertains such a design! It is he who sends you! In what position, then, does he wish to place me towards the French people? He is strangely mistaken if he believes that in France a mutilated throne can shelter his daughter and his grandson! Ah! Metternich, how much did England give you to decide you to act thus towards me?"

On hearing these words, which Napoleon was unable to control, Metternich changed colour. Deep silence followed, as, with long strides, they continued pacing across the room. The Emperor's hat fell on the floor. They repeatedly passed it. On any other occasion M. de Metternich would have hastened to pick it up. In this instance, he allowed the Emperor to do so himself.

Some time elapsed before they both recovered.

Napoleon, having calmed himself, resumed the conversation. He declared that peace would not yet be despaired of by him, if Austria would consent to listen to her own interests. He further insisted on the summoning of the Congress, and formally requested that, in the event of the re-commencement of hostilities, negotiations should still be continued, in order that an opportunity might yet be left open for the reconciliation of nations.

When parting with M. de Metternich, the Emperor expressly informed him that the cession of Illyria was not his last word.*

The day following the interview Metternich saw the Duke of Bassano, and told him he was about to send him a note containing the proposal for the Austrian mediation. More than ever resolved now to strike, but anxious to avoid the error of striking too soon, Metternich sent that night to the Commander-in-chief of the Austrian army, Prince Schwarzenberg, to inquire, 1st, whether a prolongation of the armistice would be useful for the purposes of

* The account of this interview is taken from Prince Napoleon's work, *Napoleon and his Detractors*, Appendix, Part II.

the crowned conspirators; 2nd, to ask "the most useful, and consequently the only allowable, extreme length of such a prolongation." Within thirty-two hours he received the following reply: "My army would, in twenty days, add to its strength 75,000 men. I should consider the possibility of obtaining this extension a happy circumstance; the twenty-first day would be a burden to me." Naturally enough, under the circumstances, Metternich used all his efforts to obtain that extension of twenty days. The only means by which such an arrangement could be arrived at was to again practise deception on Napoleon. I shall now proceed to state the means Metternich employed to accomplish this purpose.

Four days after the historical interview I have recorded, Metternich was on the point of leaving Dresden when he received a message from Napoleon requesting to see him before he should leave. The interview between them took place the same day (June 30th). Napoleon had resolved to put to the test the professions of Austria. Accordingly he took Metternich with him into a private room, saying: "Perhaps we shall understand each other better—you and I. Come into my private room, and let us come to some agreement."

Seated in the private room, Bassano being also present, Napoleon asked Metternich to formulate his conditions of the mediation. Metternich then and there formulated them, and Napoleon then and there accepted them.

The conditions drafted by Metternich and accepted by Napoleon were as follows: (1) the acceptance by Napoleon of the armed mediation of Austria; (2) the arrangement for the plenipotentiaries of the Powers to meet at Prague the 10th July; (3) the 10th August to be the last day of the negotiations; (4) hostilities to cease till that date.

Now, the reader will recollect that the armistice would

expire the 20th July. Let him add the twenty days required by Prince Schwarzenberg to that date, and we come to the 9th August, but one day short of the period inserted by Metternich in the document he drew up for Napoleon to sign! He did more. When Napoleon, unsuspicious of double-dealing, noticed the date, and suggested that to arrange it it would be necessary to prolong the armistice to the 10th August, Metternich, whilst professing his personal inability to prolong the truce, agreed to give a guarantee on behalf of the two allied monarchs, that it should be prolonged. Nay, more. Finding Napoleon in a facile humour, he persuaded him to sanction the transport from Austrian territory, of provisions for the allied armies to enable them to subsist for the twenty days necessary to enable the Austrian army to be increased to an efficient strength.

The precise views indulged in by Metternich at this period may be gathered from a report he addressed from Brandeis, in Bohemia—whither he had gone to be near the place where the negotiations were to be carried on—to his master. This report, dated 12th of July, and the Emperor's reply to it, dated 18th idem, prove that whilst Austria was prepared, in the event of Napoleon refusing her *minimum*, to throw her whole weight on behalf of the Allies, she was not ready to act similarly towards Napoleon in the case of the Allies refusing the same conditions. Metternich had asked his master if he could rely upon his firmness in case Napoleon should not accept the preliminaries demanded by Austria; whether, in the event of such non-acceptance his Majesty was "unalterably determined" to cast in his lot with the Allies. The reply to this, he said, would be the corner-stone of his instructions, the basis of his future policy. Francis answered in the sense I have indicated. He gave to his minister the

assurances he required, but, like him, he provided only for the event of a refusal coming from one only of the contracting parties; in the meanwhile military preparations were made as though that refusal had been already pronounced.

To Metternich, in fact, the circumstances bore a strong resemblance to the position of affairs after Wagram. Then, he had complained, Napoleon had negotiated over his head, and obtained a peace which he would not have granted. He could not but remember, now, the expression on this subject which Napoleon used to him at Paris, to the effect that if he had not obtained that peace, he would have been "lost." The position of the Allies, if Austria were to join them, would now be infinitely better than the position of isolated Austria after Wagram; whilst that of Napoleon was less favourable than at that period. If Napoleon would have been "lost" then, if peace had not been made, what would happen to him now? According to all rule he was doomed.

The phrase used by Napoleon in 1810 was never at this period absent from the thoughts of the Austrian minister. He displayed then no earnestness regarding the assembling of the Congress at Prague. He caused its meetings to be postponed from the 10th to the 12th of July. In consequence of a misunderstanding on the part of the allied generals as to the date on which hostilities were to recommence in the event of the proceedings at the Congress proving abortive, a further delay occurred. Meanwhile Napoleon had proceeded on a tour of military inspection. The delays initiated by the Allies caused delays also on the side of the French. When the negotiators at last met, Metternich raised objections to the presence at the Congress of the first French plenipotentiary, the Duke of Vicenza,

because his credentials had not arrived. It was in vain that the Duke declared that it was a mere formality, that the credentials were on their way. The consequence of all these delays was that the 10th of August came and went before any serious business had even been attempted. As the clock struck twelve that night Metternich caused to be lighted the beacons which were to announce to the allied sovereigns that Austria had declared war against Napoleon, and that the allied troops were free to cross the Silesian frontier.

The war which those beacons heralded was not, though its authors were careful to declare it to be so whilst it lasted, a war for the enfranchisement of the nations. So far as it related to the Continent, it was a life and death struggle for supremacy between Metternich and Napoleon.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM THE RUPTURE OF THE ARMISTICE OF PLEISWITZ TO THE FALL OF NAPOLEON.

August, 1813, to March, 1814.

THE alliance had scarcely been formed when it became apparent that, unless the allied sovereigns would submit to their new master, it might break up at any moment. Metternich tells us that a few days after the armies, obedient to his signal, had crossed the Silesian frontier, Alexander sent for him, and announced his intention of conferring the command-in-chief of the allied forces upon Moreau, who had just returned from America to bear arms against the French Emperor. Metternich at once declared that if such an intention were persisted in, Austria would withdraw from the alliance. Alexander, after some conversation, agreed to defer the question. The gunners of the French army, some indeed say, Napoleon himself, decided it for him, two days later, at the battle of Dresden.

It was on the 26th of August that the Allies, now commanded by the Schwarzenberg whom we have seen ambassador at Paris, attacked Napoleon at Dresden. The result of that and of the following day's fighting has thus been described by a great poet:

"Dresden surveys three despots fly once more
Before their sovereign—sovereign as before."

Alas! that we must add:

"But there exhausted Fortune quits the field,
And Leipsig's treason bids the unvanquished yield;
The Saxon jackal leaves the lion's side
To turn the bear's, and wolf's, and fox's guide;
And backward to the den of his despair
The forest monarch shrinks, but finds no lair."*

The doctrine of Juvenal, "*Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia; nos te, nos facimus, Fortuna, deam,*" was never better illustrated than at the battle of Dresden. The battle was won. Napoleon, had he personally directed the pursuit of the enemy, would have made it the decisive battle of the century. The schemes and intrigues of Metternich would have vanished into thin air; but, at the critical moment, Napoleon was summoned back to Dresden by news which he had received from the armies of Oudinot and Macdonald. His magic touch was thus withdrawn from the pursuit. The Allies were on the point of being destroyed; Vandamme blocked up the way of exit; other marshals were on their track. Just at the critical moment St. Cyr failed to give to Vandamme the support that was essential; and the latter was overwhelmed by the whole army of the Allies. By this accident—for it was an accident—the results of the victory of Dresden were lost, and more than lost.

Metternich passes over this event, contenting himself with the simple record that it led to the battle of Leipsig.

"The mysterious attitude of Napoleon," he writes, "after the defeat at Kulm, of the corps under the command of Vandamme, which had forced its way into Bohemia, reversed the position of things, and Prince Schwarzenberg availed himself of that favourable moment to

* Byron's *The Age of Bronze*, v.

carry out his first plan of operation, which culminated in the battle of Leipsig. By that event, the power of Napoleon beyond the frontiers of his own empire was crushed, and in order to terminate the first campaign of the Allied Powers, nothing more was now required but to clear the German provinces between the Pleiss and the Rhine of the French forces."

He makes no allusion to the incident which Lord Byron truly styled the "Saxon treason"* which decided the day, although he had prepared it in the long winter and spring of 1813.

The battle of Leipsig accomplished, and more than accomplished, the aims which the Austrian Minister had propounded in his intercourse with the allied sovereigns and with Napoleon prior to the assumption of arms by Austria. Practically, it had driven the French across the Rhine. Would he, would the Allies, be satisfied with that result? We will let Metternich answer the question.

"The object of the war of 1813," he writes, "was obtained—Napoleon was repulsed and driven back over the Rhine. What was to be done next year? This was what we had to decide.

"On the following points we were all agreed: (1) to carry the war beyond the Rhine into the interior of France; (2) by this proceeding to strike a blow at the very existence of Napoleon which might be decisive in its consequences; (3) to wait to see what effect the misfortunes of the two last campaigns and the invasion of the French territory would have on the mind of the French nation; further, (4) it was resolved, at my suggestion, that if once the heights of the Vosges and the Ardennes were occupied, a plan must be made for the military operations which would amount to a third campaign, deciding the future fate of France, and therefore also the triumph of the Quadruple Alliance."

Metternich did well to insert the words, "at my suggestion," for at this period—from the moment, in fact,

* At the critical moment of the battle (of Leipsig) seventeen Saxon battalions and some regiments of cavalry quitted the French ranks, and turned their fire against their former comrades.

that he had realised the extent of the disasters of the campaign of 1812—he was the soul, the guiding mind, the promoter from motives purely personal, of the conspiracy against Napoleon. The Austrian marriage—that fatal Austrian marriage—had been the main snare with which he had lured the great Emperor into quiescence until Austria could complete her preparations, to be used against him. At Dresden, knowing Napoleon thoroughly—for Napoleon liked him, and had opened himself to him more than to any other foreign minister—he had so manœuvred as to render peace impossible; and now, when all Europe was prepared to make peace on the conditions of leaving to France her natural frontiers—the Rhine, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, he was determined to be content with nothing less than the dethronement of Napoleon. He states this in his memoirs with a frankness which, considering that he wrote, or professed to write, at the time when the Allies were declaring their willingness to treat on the terms I have stated, is almost brutal. Appended to the quotation I have just given—that in which he states the measures which were decided "at his suggestion"—is a reference to his residence at Langres for "the important reasons which decided me to this course." Turning to an account of that residence, also given in the first person, we find him writing thus:

"Every peace with Napoleon which would have thrown him back to the old boundaries of France, and which would have deprived him of districts that had been conquered before he came to power, would only have been a ridiculous armistice, and would have at once been repelled by him. There remained, therefore, only three possibilities: the recall of the Bourbons; a regency till the majority of Napoleon's son; the nomination of a third person to the throne of France."

Such were the thoughts which determined Metternich, in the autumn of 1813, that is, after Leipsig, to work for

the personal overthrow of Napoleon, and for nothing short of that.

The task of inducing the Allies to agree to a fixed plan was not altogether easy. Of the three great Continental Powers, Prussia, which had never forgiven her easy overthrow at Jena—and its consequences—was the only one thoroughly in earnest. The Emperor Francis believed in the sincerity of Napoleon's advances after Leipsig, and would gladly have come to terms, had Metternich allowed him. But Metternich had already obtained the ascendency over his master which he subsequently exercised over Alexander and the Court of Berlin. Alexander, desiring above all things to pose as the arbiter of the situation, and influenced at the moment by the revolutionary Laharpe, the deserter Jomini, and the Prussian organiser Stein, was willing to do anything which should secure to him the lofty position to which he aspired. Metternich, then, availed himself of the savage earnestness of Blücher, bent on the sack of Paris, to influence the consultations. The result was that, during that winter, a plan was formed for the march on Paris, which should terminate the hated Revolution, and dispose for ever of the man who was at once its life and its incarnation.

The dominant influence which the Austrian minister exercised on the deliberations of the Allies was proved by an incident which occurred before the opening of the campaign of 1814. As was to be expected, the generals of the allied armies continued to differ as to the plan of the campaign. Alexander, especially, strongly opposed the plan of Prince Schwarzenberg, who had proposed to violate the neutrality of Switzerland. The differences became so pronounced that it was finally resolved to choose an arbitrator whose decision should be absolute. For this post Metternich was selected. It is needless to add that

he decided in favour of the plan which he had previously settled with Schwarzenberg, or that by the exercise of that tact which was one of his chiefest powers he obtained the adhesion of the Czar.

On the 20th December the Austrian army crossed the Rhine between Schaffhausen and Basel. Actual hostilities did not begin till towards the close of the following month. Before that period Metternich met at Basel one whose desire for the overthrow of Napoleon equalled his own—the English Minister, Lord Castlereagh.

"A few hours' conversation," he writes, "sufficed to lay the foundation of a good feeling between this upright and enlightened statesman and myself, which the following years cemented and enlarged." Further: "I soon saw that his ideas about the reconstruction of France in a manner compatible with the general interests of Europe did not materially differ from mine."

They both believed that by evicting Napoleon they would kill the Revolution. Napoleon was evicted—but the Revolution? The damming up of its waters produced the overthrow which in time was to sweep even the astute Metternich into obscurity.

From Basel Metternich proceeded with the sovereigns and the English minister to Langres, the 25th of January, there, he tells us, to be occupied with negotiations of the greatest importance, and which, he adds, would remain unknown if he had not recorded them. The nature of those negotiations may be summed up in a single phrase. They were to decide upon the most suitable successor to the doomed Napoleon. Alexander wanted to appeal to the French nation. This view Metternich combated with all his force. To him it meant the unchaining anew of the Revolution. He went so far with Alexander as to threaten that Austria would then and there withdraw her forces if the idea were persisted in.

"Napoleon's power is broken, never to rise again . . . there only remain the Bourbons to take possession of their undying rights . . . The Emperor Francis will never favour any other dynasty."

The campaign—the marvellous campaign in which Genius had to combat numbers, and, in the last decisive moment, treachery—began. Almost simultaneously a Congress opened (February 4) at Chatillon. Metternich leaves us in no doubt as to the feelings which induced him to assent to such a meeting. "I saw only great advantages from these attempts at negotiation, without any fear that an untimely settlement would delay the return to a better order of things;" that is, he was resolved that no peace with Napoleon should prevent the return of the Bourbons. He naturally appointed, then, Count Stadion, the leader of the anti-Napoleonic party at Vienna, to represent Austria. Needless to add that the Congress broke up the 19th of March following, having accomplished nothing—the result foreseen and aimed at.

One moment before the final catastrophe doubt fell upon the Allies. It was when they heard of Napoleon's masterly movement from St. Dizier to act upon their communications—a movement which, if Paris could have but held out for three days, would have been fatal to them. But treason, "still his only master," stepped in to save them. The defection of Marmont compelled the abdication of Napoleon.

The arrangement regarding the location of the great Emperor in the little island of Elba had been made before Metternich reached Paris, though the treaty had not been actually signed. Astonished at a provision which would place the dethroned Emperor so near to the country he had governed, Metternich protested against it, and declared that he would take upon himself to refuse to sign on behalf of Austria until he should have obtained his master's express orders to that effect.

It would seem, as Prince Napoleon asserts, that, even in 1814, Metternich was contemplating St. Helena. The negotiations, however, had proceeded too far, and Metternich signed that evening.

In the great duel between the two men the astute intriguer had triumphed over the impetuous soldier. There was to be a brief interval, and then the system of Metternich was to rise on the ashes of the system of Napoleon. The new Avatar had, at least, the advantage of knowing the weak points of the methods which his predecessor had established.

"The vast edifice Napoleon had constructed," wrote Metternich, "was exclusively the work of his hands, and he was himself the keystone of the arch. But this gigantic construction was essentially wanting in its foundation; the materials of which it was composed were nothing but the ruins of other buildings; some were rotten from decay, others had never possessed any consistency from their very beginning. The keystone of the arch has been withdrawn, and the whole edifice has fallen in.

"Such is, in a few words, the history of the French Empire. Conceived and created by Napoleon, it only existed in him; and with him it was extinguished."

It was not so. The events passing before our eyes prove the shallowness of Metternich's judgment alike regarding the man and his work. It was, nevertheless, his judgment—the judgment of the man who had accomplished more than any other individual man to bring about the withdrawal of the keystone from the arch. And now, this man, who finds so fatal a flaw in the work of the mason he has caused to be evicted, is himself to be entrusted with the construction of an edifice on the ground left vacant by the disappearance of the old one. Will his experience of the faults of his predecessor enable him to raise an edifice, of the arch of which he himself shall not be the keystone; which shall not

be wanting in its foundation; which shall be composed of something else than the ruins of other buildings; and which will not fall in when the keystone shall be withdrawn?

That is the question which the second part of the career of Metternich will answer.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CRISIS BEFORE THE HUNDRED DAYS—AND AFTER.

March, 1814, to November, 1815.

NAPOLEON deposed and banished, the victors prepared to divide the spoil. This operation gave rise to many heart-burnings; to so many, in fact, that but for the return at the critical moment of the Emperor from Elba, it is more than probable that the despoilers would have come to blows.

At first all was rose-colour. Metternich believed that the return of the Bourbons was acceptable to a vast majority of the French people, but even he was struck by the attitude of the crowd in the streets when, on the 4th of May, Louis XVIII. made his public entry into Paris. "The most opposite feelings," he wrote, "were depicted in their faces, and found expression in the cry '*Vive le roi*' from the Royalists, and the sullen silence of the enemies of the monarchy." But he cared little for that. He had struck down the lion, and he could afford now to exchange jests at the lion's expense with the respectable mediocrity who had taken his place.

With the rejoicings which followed at Paris—the rejoicings, not of the French people, but of the allied Sovereigns; with the visit of some of them to England;

this narrative has no concern. By degrees the transports subsided, as joy at deliverance gave place to greediness for spoil. There was scarcely a Power that did not want something. France, indeed, by the convention of Paris (23rd April, 1814) had secured the boundaries she possessed on the 1st January. 1792. But Sweden claimed Norway, though Norway was united to, and wished to remain united to, Denmark. Other claims were hinted at, if they were not at the moment urged. In the first impulse it had been resolved that all these weighty questions should be debated at a Congress of the European Powers, to be held at Vienna, and the opening of which had been fixed for the 29th of July. But the visit of the allied Sovereigns to England had rendered a postponement necessary, and it was not till the very end of September that the Congress commenced its sittings. Even then there remained certain preliminaries to be adjusted, such as the relative rank of the great contracting parties. When this had been amicably settled, the real business began.

Frederick Gentz, the *alter ego* of Metternich, his *protégé*, his intimate friend, his confidant, has left on record a memorandum indicating very clearly the aspirations of the several Powers, and the characters of the men who represented them at the Congress. In this memorandum Gentz does not beat about the bush; he goes straight to the point.

"The grand phrases of 'reconstruction of social order,'" he wrote, "'regeneration of the political system of Europe,' 'a lasting peace founded on a just division of strength,' &c. &c., were uttered to tranquillise the people, and to give an air of dignity and grandeur to this solemn assembly; but the real purpose of the Congress was to divide amongst the conquerors the spoils taken from the vanquished.

It soon appeared that the Czar, who had up to that

time posed as the disinterested champion of humanity, wanted the whole of Poland; that Prussia, who, but a year before, had risen against Napoleon because he had annexed the territories of other States, was resolved, if she could manage it, to incorporate Saxony with her dominions; and that, in this resolution, she was supported by Alexander, to whose plans regarding Poland she, in return, gave her countenance. I have already spoken about the claim preferred by Sweden to rob Denmark of Norway. Austria was more moderate. She desired from Bavaria the retrocession only of Tirol and the Voralberg, proposing to take large territorial indemnities in Italy. As Italy was practically unrepresented at the Congress, there was little chance that the claims of Austria, with respect to the country which to Metternich never represented by its name aught but "a geographical term," would be contested.

It can easily be understood that the claims which most disturbed the equanimity of the Congress were the claims of Russia and Prussia. Again was Metternich the leading spirit, the soul, of the opposition to the pretensions of the two Powers which, but for him, would never have recovered from the defeat of Bautzen. Between Alexander and himself there had already been some friction. Alike with respect to the neutrality of Switzerland, the plan of the campaign, the treatment of Napoleon after his abdication, the two men had had serious differences. Alexander, wrote Gentz, had accustomed himself to look on Metternich as a permanent obstacle to his designs, as a man eternally occupied in opposing and thwarting him; at last, as a sworn enemy. Gentz continues:

"The calmness and serenity with which M. de Metternich always opposed to these prejudices, instead of softening the Emperor, appeared only to embitter him the more; private feelings, above all a

strong jealousy of M. de Metternich's success, both in politics and society, increased this irritation. At last it reached the point of an implacable hatred, and during his stay in Vienna, his daily explosions of rage and frenzy afforded an inexhaustible fund of curiosity and amusement to frivolous minds at the court, whilst sensible men deplored them as a great calamity. This hatred is the key to most of the events of the Congress."

The feelings entertained by Alexander towards the English Minister, Lord Castlereagh, were only a shade less hostile than those which he felt towards Metternich. He called him "cold and pedantic,"

"and there were moments," continued Gentz, "when he would have treated him as he did M. de Metternich, if extreme fear of openly compromising himself with the British Government (the only one before which he trembled) had not forced him to dissimulate."

He had little more regard for Talleyrand, the representative of France, whose then master, Louis XVIII., he had never forgiven for having adopted a system of Government different from that which he had advised; for Maximilian-Joseph, King of Bavaria, controlled by Metternich; or for the King of Denmark. Prussia was his sole ally, and Prussia was his ally mainly because its King, Frederick William III., described by Napoleon to Admiral Cockburn during the voyage to St. Helena as "*une pauvre bête*," had subordinated his will to the stronger will of the Czar; partly, also, because, equally bent on rounding their borders at the expense of their neighbours, they had come to an arrangement whereby the pretensions of the one should dovetail with the ambition of the other.

It gradually came about, then, that whilst the union between Russia and Prussia became every day more accentuated, there grew the tendency on the part of Austria, France, and England, to unite to oppose pretensions which they regarded as unjust and unreasonable.

Metternich was, I repeat, the soul of this opposition. In a very able paper, dated the 10th December, he pointed out that whilst it was the interest of Austria that Prussia should be strong and consolidated, he could not agree to the entire incorporation of Saxony by the latter power.

"Germany," he wrote, "must constitute herself a political body; the frontiers between the great intermediary Powers should not remain undecided; the union between Austria and Prussia must, in a word, be perfect, for this great work to be consummated."

Now, the annexation of Saxony would be an impediment to that work; it would prevent the arrangement of the Germanic Federal agreement, inasmuch as the principal German powers had declared that they would not join a Federal agreement on a basis so menacing to their own safety as that of the incorporation of one of the principal German States by one of the Powers called on to protect the common country. Metternich was able to speak with the greater force, inasmuch as he, acting for Austria, had behaved with the greatest liberality towards Bavaria, the incorporation of which with Austria had been the dream of the Court of Vienna from the time of Maria Theresa, and preferring—short-sightedly, I venture to think—to indemnify Austria in Italy, had only required the restitution of Tirol and the Voralberg.

Matters at last proceeded to a condition so critical that, as I wrote in the first sentence of this chapter, the conquerors seemed to be on the verge of coming to blows over the spoil. In fact, Russia and Prussia on the one side, and England, France, and Austria on the other, prepared for war. Alexander despatched a messenger to halt his armies in Poland; the Cabinet of Berlin called out its contingents, declaring that Prussia had conquered Saxony, and would keep it; Austria put her armies in Galicia on a war footing; France was invited to suspend

the disarming of that army which "had made the tour of Europe;" British troops were despatched to Belgiunf. More than that, on the 3rd February, England, Austria, and France signed a secret treaty, offensive and defensive, whereby they contracted mutually to support each other if one should be attacked; to maintain, each of them, an army of 150,000 men for that purpose; and to regulate their views by the terms of the treaty of Paris.

This treaty was not so secret but that the terms of it leaked out. Several notes were interchanged, and finally the northern robbers abated their pretensions. Russia agreed to limit her aspirations with regard to Poland, and Prussia to be content with a part, instead of the whole, of Saxony. Still, considerable friction remained, and there is no saying how the negotiations might have resulted when, on the 7th March, on the eve of a great ball, Metternich received information that Napoleon had left Elba.

The position of Napoleon on that little island had been more than once discussed at the Congress. Early in February the advisability of removing him from so close a vicinity to Italy had been mooted. The Portuguese Minister had suggested the Canary Islands, Lord Castlereagh St. Helena or St. Lucia, as a more fitting, because, as far as related to the interests of the Allies, a safer place of residence. But again on this point Alexander and Metternich were at variance. The former took his stand on the treaty of Fontainebleau, to which he said he had pledged his personal honour. Metternich shook his head. Always doubting the policy of the provision of that treaty which allowed Napoleon to locate himself so near to the shores of France, knowing the inner mind of the Emperor better than any man in Europe, he could not resist the conviction that the soaring genius which had so long swayed the destinies of Europe would never become reconciled to the

confined limits to which the Allies had restricted it; that, if a fair opportunity to break loose should offer, Napoleon would be impelled to seize it. So strongly did the Austrian Minister become impressed with the possibility of such a contingency, that he wrote, at this period, to the Duke of Otranto, begging him to give him his opinion, confidentially, as to what would happen in France (1) if Napoleon were suddenly to return, (2) what, if the King of Rome, with a squadron of horse, were to appear on the frontier; (3) what France would do if left to her own spontaneous action. Fouché replied with perfect frankness. If, he said, Napoleon were to land, and one regiment sent against him were to range itself on his side, the whole army would follow its example; if the King of Rome were to be escorted to the frontier by an Austrian regiment, the whole nation would instantly hoist his colours; left to her own spontaneous action, France would seek refuge in the Orleans dynasty. This reply served only to confirm Metternich in his ideas, and to increase his caution.

It was the misfortune, not the fault, of Napoleon, that the return from Elba took place just a fortnight too soon. By means of a confidential agent, M. Meneval, he had heard in February that the question of deporting him to an island in the Atlantic was being seriously discussed at Vienna. Through the same agency he learned that the sovereigns present in that capital would separate on the 20th of February at the latest. Whilst his mind was under the influence of ideas produced by this information he received from France a batch of newspapers, the perusal of which convinced him not only of the extreme unpopularity of the Bourbons, but that the army and the nation were alike ripe for revolution. This conviction decided him. Just then a visit from M. Fleury de

Chaboulon, an emissary of the devoted Maret, Duke of Bassano, confirmed the impressions which the newspapers had made. Resolved then to act, he was forced to act at once. To evade the vigilance of British cruisers it was necessary to sail whilst the nights were long, and he was approaching the season when they would become short. Then, he believed that the sovereigns had separated. Once separated, it would be difficult for them to agree upon a united action. Another reason, too, weighed with him. The question of deporting him had, he knew, been discussed: if the sovereigns had separated—and his information led him to believe that they had separated—that question had been decided. But which way? That he could not know until, if against him, an English man-of-war should anchor in the roadstead of Porto Ferrajo to carry him off. All these circumstances combining to advise an immediate departure, Napoleon made his preparations accordingly; sailed from Porto Ferrajo at seven o'clock of the evening of the 26th of February; and landed near Frèjus the 1st of March.

Such was the intelligence which reached Metternich on the evening of the 7th of the same month. Upon the allied sovereigns, and the ministers of the allied sovereigns, it came like a thunderbolt. Immediately their minor differences were forgotten or deferred. Prussia dissembled her rapacious greed; Russia her insatiable appetite for spoil; Austria her hypocritical professions of disinterestedness; the one question they all had to consider was what, in the presence of this new and great danger, they should do. Here, for five months, had they been debating, quarrelling, recriminating, almost coming to blows, as to the division of the spoils they had reft from Napoleonic France; and, now, this one man

had landed, who might not only drive them from the yet undevoured carcase, but reduce them to their previous state of vassalage. At this crisis it was union alone that could assure them strength. Had the information on which Napoleon had acted been correct; had the sovereigns separated, as they had intended to separate, before the end of February; the chances of the Emperor would have been enormously increased. After the bickerings and the recriminations which had ensued; after the exposure of their naked selfishness, of the secret aspirations of each member of the crowned confederates; separation would have meant distrust: distrust might have led to the union of one or more, always for selfish ends, probably for the spoliation of a friend, with the returned Napoleon. But, still in each other's presence, reading in familiar glances familiar fears, every despot deriving comfort from the close propinquity of another despot, there was no room for any feeling but an intense desire to combine; to crush this man who had risen from a living tomb to stand between them and their prey; whose very name had dried, to the point of cracking, the lips wet with eager longing; and the tone of whose proclamations drove the blood from faces inflamed by the long-delayed enjoyment of prospective spoil.

But a resolution must be taken. Every day's post brought tidings more and more alarming. First that the landing had been successfully accomplished; then that the conqueror had taken the road for Paris by way of Gap; then that the garrison of Grenoble had joined him; then, that he was making a triumphant progress towards Lyons. As they stared grimly into one another's faces the despots could no longer doubt that the house of cards they had erected with so much care at Paris had fallen with the first push.

A resolution must, therefore, be taken. And the man was there who was ready to formulate one in all respects consonant to the feelings which pervaded the breasts of the allied sovereigns. The occasion was one peculiarly adapted, in fact, to the pre-eminently cool, unimpassioned, calculating intellect of Metternich. At the first formal meeting held to deliberate on the course the Allies should adopt (March 12), he, then, took the lead. His object being to encourage, to unite, he took advantage of a proclamation issued by Napoleon on his victorious march in which he declared that he had returned to France with the concurrence of Austria, and that he would soon be supported by that power with 100,000 men, to urge upon the assembled sovereigns the expediency of announcing to all Europe and to the world that they would make no terms with Napoleon; that they would support the King of France with their whole forces. Resolutions to this effect were passed, and measures were promptly taken to carry those resolutions into effect.

It forms no part of my plan to tell the history of the Hundred Days. I shall confine myself to narrating, as clearly as I have been able to ascertain it, the part which Metternich took in deciding the issue. Practically, his part was accomplished when he had determined the Allies to appeal to the God of battles, and to make no terms with Napoleon. It would seem, however, that he was not altogether confident of the issue of that appeal, for we find him writing on the 9th April to Fouché, to express the desire of Austria to make peace with France provided Napoleon were eliminated. "The Powers will not have Napoleon Bonaparte. They will make war with him to the last, but do not wish to fight with France." He begged Fouché to despatch a man in whom he had confidence to Basel to confer there with a person whom

he would send, and who would make himself known by certain signs. To this confidential person (a certain Ottenfels) Metternich gave instructions that he might discuss with Fouché's envoy as to the prince who might occupy the throne of France, limiting the choice, however, to, (1) Louis XVIII.; (2) to the Duke of Orleans; (3) to the regency of Marie Louise. Of the three, he added, the choice of the last would be least agreeable to Austria.

Nothing came of this; and, a little later, the event of the 18th June decided the fate of Napoleon. Metternich had gone to Heidelberg to watch events. Thence he wrote, 22nd June, to his daughter, an account, as he had received it, of the battle of Waterloo. From Heidelberg he proceeded to Paris to take part in the arrangements which would naturally follow the triumph of the Allies. Arrived in Paris, he was once more in his element, rejoicing over the defeat of Napoleon, exchanging congratulations with the Sovereigns, and helping so to arrange that there should be no possibility of future disturbance on the part of any one bearing the name of Bonaparte. It is curious, as one reads his memoirs, to notice how the recollection of his old intercourse with Napoleon haunted him. He tells his daughter how he dined with Blücher "in the room I have conversed for hours and hours with Napoleon." As the savage hussar crossed the gallery of St. Cloud, Metternich records how he remarked: "That man must have been a regular fool to have all this, and go running after Moscow." Moralising to himself after listening to this classic observation, Metternich congratulates himself, in so many words, that he is not as other men are, least of all like Napoleon. His precise words are: "Let us at least carry away the remembrance of having done some good—and in this respect I would not exchange with Napoleon"

—with Napoleon, of whom he had written in the same letter: "he is still at Rochefort, and that place, including the port, is so completely blockaded that we have every hope of being able to capture him."

For that "greatest of all captains," the end had come at last. Rather than fall into the hands of the Sovereigns of the Continent, Napoleon, appealing to the magnanimity of the Prince Regent of Great Britain, had voluntarily surrendered to the captain of the *Bellerophon* (15th July). In announcing this action to Marie Louise, Metternich assured her that "according to an arrangement made between the Powers he (Napoleon) will be sent as a prisoner to Fort George, in the north of Scotland, and placed under the surveillance of Austrian, Russian, French and Prussian commissioners. He will be well treated there, and will have as much liberty as is compatible with the certainty that he cannot escape." On the 13th August following he writes to her again, to tell her that Napoleon "is on board the *Northumberland*, and *en route* for St. Helena." He gave her, apparently, no explanation as to why St. Helena had been substituted for Fort George.

As for France, the Allies made her pay, and pay dearly, for her complicity with Napoleon. On the 20th November she had to agree to restore certain territories* on the left bank of the Rhine which had been guaranteed by the treaty of 1814; she had to pay £28,000,000, for the expenses of the war, as well as other indemnities, making a total of £61,400,000; to allow the fortresses on her northern borders to be occupied for five years, she defraying the cost; and to restore the works of art

* These were, the fortresses of Landau, Sarre-Louis, Philipville, and Marienburg, with the territory appertaining to each; and Versoix, ceded to Geneva.

captured during the wars of the Revolution and the Empire.

But before that treaty was signed Metternich had put his hand to a work which was to influence his subsequent career. The consideration of this demands a new chapter; for, with the adhesion of the Continental Powers to the Holy Alliance begins the planning out of the new edifice which was to take the place of the destroyed Walhalla of Napoleon.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONTINENTAL SYSTEM OF METTERNICH: ITS RISE AND PROGRESS.

1815-1830.

METTERNICH relates that during the negotiations for the second Peace of Paris, the Emperor Alexander sent for him, and informed him that he was occupied with a great undertaking about which he desired especially to consult the Emperor Francis. The matter, he added, was not one of business, or he would have asked the advice of Metternich: it was a matter purely of sentiment and feeling, and, as such, was a matter which monarchs alone were capable of deciding. Metternich at once reported the conversation to his master, and the two sovereigns saw each other a few days later.

After the interview between them Francis handed to Metternich a document which Alexander had left with him, and on which he had desired his opinion. Francis, to whom Metternich had become indispensable, and who, since the end of the year 1810, had seen only with his eyes, and heard only with his ears, desired to have the opinion of his minister, to enable him then to declare his own.

Metternich, perusing the document, found it, he tells us, to be nothing more than,

"a philanthropic aspiration clothed in a religious garb, which supplied no material for a treaty between the monarchs, and which contained many phrases that might even have given occasion to religious misconstructions."

His master, he found, had imbibed the same impression. The King of Prussia, to whom the document was then shown, agreed with Francis and his minister in the main, "but hesitated to reject entirely the views of the Czar." Metternich was consequently commissioned to suggest to Alexander certain alterations to make the document acceptable to his brother sovereigns. In this Metternich succeeded, though "not without great difficulty;" and the Austrian Emperor, "although he did not approve the project even when modified, agreed to sign it, for reasons which I, for my part, could not oppose."

"This," adds Metternich, "is the history of the Holy Alliance."

Such as the document was, it was worthy of the narrow and fanatical brain of the Czar, from which it emanated. In it the contracting parties declared their intention to conduct their domestic administration and foreign relations according to the precepts of Christianity, and bound themselves to observe three points: (1) to give mutual assistance for the protection of religion, peace, and justice; (2) to regard themselves as delegated by Providence to govern three branches of one Christian nation; (3) to admit any other Powers which should declare their adherence to the same principles.

Metternich takes some pains to declare that this document was simply "a loud-sounding nothing"; that it was "an overflow of the pietistic feelings of the Emperor Alexander"; that it "was not an institution to keep down the rights of the people, to promote absolutism or any other tyranny"; that after it had been signed, it was

never mentioned between the Cabinets. We may admit a great part of this, but the fact still remains that the principles embodied in the Holy Alliance were the principles upon which the three sovereigns who signed it proceeded to base their internal administration. Translated into plain language, it was a league of three despots, each guaranteeing the other against his subjects. The name, likely enough, was not bandied between them in correspondence, but its principle was thoroughly well understood and acted upon. The proof is that the control of the policy of the three signatories gradually fell into the hands of the statesman who managed most skilfully to put in action the principles of this league of sovereigns, by the repression of free thought, of free speech, of free aspirations, throughout his master's dominions. This statesman was Metternich.

The Holy Alliance was signed in September, 1815. It was the keystone of the arch which Metternich was building to replace the fallen temple of Napoleon. England, by the mouth of Lord Castlereagh, refused, naturally enough, to accede to it.

The state of the Continent, at the close of 1815, offered a great opportunity to a real statesman. Twenty-three years of almost incessant warfare had produced a longing for peace, for an era of definite tranquillity, such as has rarely been equalled. But the French Revolution had, in spite of its excesses, widely disseminated its principles throughout Europe. Peace, that is to say, security against invasion, might indeed be attained; but no peace could be real which did not concede to the people some share in the gains of the victory which the people had achieved. The uprising of Germany in 1813 had done much to assure the fall of Napoleon. The men who had fought, and bled, and vanquished, in that great

cause, had earned the right to be treated as free men. They did not want much. Some small recognition would for the moment have satisfied them. But they wanted something, and a clear observer would have detected that unless they should obtain that something, an era of universal peace, accompanied, as it would be, by material prosperity, would be a period fruitful of opportunities for the exchange of ideas, for the birth of discontent; and that such ideas and such discontent would end probably in a resolve to obtain by force the rights which had been denied to abstract justice. The opportunity for statesman-like action was, then, such as might rarely recur. The fall of Napoleon had left a *tabula rasa* upon which to write the principles of a new departure. A little, I repeat, would have sufficed. If Metternich had given that little, or had allowed that little to be given, he would at all events have laid the foundation of a structure which might have become durable.

It seems strange that he did not. He had condemned Napoleon's system because he himself had been the keystone of the arch, which, on his removal, had fallen, leaving only ruins. Yet, having that experience, he proceeded to erect a structure on the same principle; that is, a structure of the arch of which he himself should be the keystone. Such a structure had even less chance of durability than that of Napoleon. Napoleon's arch had at least been cemented by glory. He had made France the dominant factor in the continental system; and he was continually gratifying the pride, and appealing to the generous instincts, of a peculiarly imaginative people. Metternich had no such veneer with which to smear his structure. He had nothing to gratify the tastes of the various races under the sway of his master, some as imaginative as the

French, haters of German rule, and who, though they might be long-suffering, were dangerous when roused. He might have recollected that Italy had been made something more than a geographical expression by Napoleon; that Illyria had enjoyed the benefits of the Code Napoleon; and that both might feel something like repulsion—the one at being degraded to the position of a conquered province, the other at being brought again under the hard measure of Austrian law.* It is probable that under no circumstances would Metternich have played a liberal part. In his mind liberalism was closely connected with revolution, and, above all, with the French revolution, and he hated it. He had hated Napoleon simply because he was the child, the embodiment, the living presence of revolution. Therefore it is, I repeat, probable, that under no circumstances would he have consented to give liberal institutions to the countries which he controlled. But there is a curious passage in his memoirs which shows that even if he had, at any time, been so inclined, he would have abandoned the idea after the experience of Napoleon in 1815. Referring to the battle of Waterloo, he wrote:

"Even if this battle had not resulted in the success due to the iron resolution of the English general, and the courageous assistance of Field-Marshal Blücher, the cause of Napoleon would have been irretrievably lost. The Austrian and Russian armies together, with the contingent of the German Confederation, moving towards the Rhine, would have spread over France. *The power which she possessed before under the Empire was completely broken in consequence*

* When I first visited Carniola, in 1871, I found the semi-Italian people of that province full of traditionary love for the period when their province was under French rule. Administration was better in Austria then, it is still better now, but more than half a century after the re-transfer to Austria the French period had a warm place in the hearts of the people.

of the destructive concessions which Napoleon was constrained to make during the Hundred Days."

With such an example of the result of concessions to popular clamour it could not be expected that Metternich would make any. In his eyes all concession was destructive.

Metternich, then, having a free hand, being in a position in which he could dictate a policy and inaugurate a system which would be supported by the armed force of continental Europe, cast to the winds the generous ideas which the sovereigns had enunciated in the hours of their distress, and went in for repression and one-man rule. In an admirable work dealing with this subject,* Mr. C. Edmund Maurice has put his position so clearly and forcibly that I shall be excused for quoting it in this place. After indicating the leading position which Metternich occupied in the councils of Europe on the fall of Napoleon, Mr. Maurice adds:

"The system of the new ruler resembled that of Napoleon in its contempt for the rights of men and nations; but it was to be varnished over with an appearance of legality, a seeming respect for the rights of kings, and a determination to preserve peace and avoid dramatic sensations, which made it welcome to Europe after eighteen years of almost incessant wars or rumours of wars."

Describing, then, how Metternich had persuaded England—the England of Lord Castlereagh—to look on calmly at the despoiling of Italy; how greed for territory had displaced eagerness for popular rights in the feeble mind of the King of Prussia; Mr. Maurice proceeds thus to deal with the Emperor Alexander:

"There were two difficulties," he writes, "which seemed likely to hinder the prosperity of Metternich's reign. These were the character of Alexander I. of Russia, and the aspirations of the German nation.

* *The Revolutionary Movement of* 1848-9 *in Italy, Austria-Hungary and Germany, with some Examination of the previous Thirty-three Years*," by C. Edmund Maurice, 1887.

"Alexander, indeed, if occasionally irritating Metternich, evidently afforded him considerable amusement, and the sort of pleasure which every man finds in a suitable subject for the exercise of his peculiar talents. For Alexander was eminently a man to be managed. Enthusiastic, dreamy, and vain; now bent on schemes of conquest, now on the development of some ideal of liberty, now filled with some confused religious mysticism; at one time eager to divide the world with Napoleon, then anxious to restore Poland to its independence; now listening to the appeal of Metternich to his fears, at another time to the nobler and more liberal suggestions of Stein and Pozzo di Borgo; only consistent in the one desire to play an impressive and melodramatic part in European affairs."

Such a character was capable of passing from one extreme to another, from the extreme of friendship to the extreme of hatred, and, therefore, eminently required management. The danger for Metternich was that the Czar, who, during 1814–15, had been constantly asserting liberal sentiments, and had chosen as his confidants men of the Revolution, should be swayed to antagonism by the aspirations for liberty which the rising against Napoleon had awakened in all the countries of Europe except his own, in Spain, in Italy, and in Germany. But Metternich had studied Alexander as he had studied Napoleon, and, having read him thoroughly, knew how to direct his enthusiasm into channels so craftily contrived that whilst his liberalism exhausted itself in words, the strength it embodied was used to support the despotic system. Thus it happened, that in spite of occasional outbursts, that system had no surer supporter than Alexander.

He had more trouble with Germany. The King of Prussia, indeed, he had to a great extent enlisted in his cause. Frederick William was weak and selfish, but there was the fact that to no people in Europe had promises been so freely made, in the last three years of the great struggle, as to the people of Northern

Germany. In the early hours succeeding victory these promises had been remembered by the monarch who had made them. They were remembered, however, only to be deliberately broken when the time for their fulfilment arrived: to be broken, indeed, with so little regard for the rights of the human race, that within two years of the triumph which the devotion and valour of his people had gained for him, the King of Prussia had become the most unpopular sovereign in Europe. Indications, in rapid succession, were given of the rising feeling, but it was not until Kotzebue, the friend of the Czar and the apostle of absolutism, had been murdered by Ludwig Sandt, and the Universities of Germany, encouraged by the Duke of Weimar, had made a determined effort to secure the teaching of freedom of opinion, that Metternich resolved to interfere. He had been waiting for some such revolt against the system of repression on which he was bent, to inaugurate an iron rule against which there could be no appeal. Acting, then, on the fears of Frederick William, he persuaded him to dismiss one professor, to arrest another, and to force a third into flight. A little later, in the manner about to be described, he procured the assembly of a Conference at Carlsbad to crush the revolutionary spirit displayed by the very moderate demands of the Universities.

Prior to the meeting of this Conference, Metternich had had, at Teplitz, an interview with the King of Prussia (July, 1819). He found that monarch hesitating as to whether he should, or should not, grant his people a Constitution. Nothing could be more frank than the language used by Metternich on this point. He told the King, in so many words, that Prussia was the *focus* of revolution; that help to him would be forthcoming only on the condition that he did not introduce representation

of the people into his kingdom, "which," he added, "is less fitted for it than any other," and he succeeded in bringing Frederick William to his views. In a conversation a few days later with the Prussian ministers, he convinced them likewise of the necessity for the repression of free thought and free opinion. And, in agreement with them, he summoned a Conference, in which the several Germanic States should be represented, to meet at Carlsbad, to formulate the action which should be necessary to carry out his views.

The mode in which Metternich proposed to combat the revolutionary feeling is thus formulated by him in a memorandum drawn up for the Emperor Francis, and dated the 1st of August. In this, he states that the measures to be adopted at the coming Conference must be (1) the suspension of the licence of the press; (2) the appointment of commissions for the investigation of the German Universities, and the removal of notoriously bad professors; (3) the formation of a special judicial commission acting in the name of the whole Bund, to investigate the conspiracy discovered against the Bund.

The Conference met the same month, carried out the views of Metternich under his own personal auspices, and nominated a Central Investigation Commission "for the protection of social order and the calming of all the well-disposed in Germany."

There remained but one thing necessary to complete the work; to give the death-blow to aspirations for constitutional government. When the allied sovereigns were still under the influence of the gratitude engendered by the exertions which had recovered for them freedom and power, they had inserted a clause in the Treaty of Vienna which suggested the granting of Constitutions by the several rulers of Germany. The existence of this clause

had now become a danger. To the men fresh from a crusade against the teachings of the Universities it was an abomination. Metternich, then, again called the representatives of the German States to Vienna to discuss the obnoxious clause. He met, indeed, with some opposition. The King of Bavaria wrote through his minister that he declined to perjure himself. The King of Würtemberg also protested. But the Conference nevertheless opened on the 20th of November, and carried out all Metternich's wishes. Thenceforth there was an agreement that the Princes of Germany should not be hindered in the exercise of their power, nor in their duty as members of the Bund, by any constitutions.

To understand a man thoroughly it is necessary to dive into his inmost thoughts. This is not always possible even when a man writes his own memoirs, because memoirs may be subsequently altered to suit circumstances. When, however, a conceited and successful man praises himself, such an understanding may be arrived at; for then, we know, he does not lie. The passage I am about to quote will give a better and clearer idea of the opinion of Metternich regarding himself, and of his absolute supremacy in Germany, at this period, than it would be possible to draw from official correspondence. When he had mastered the initial difficulties at the Conference, and had seen clearly that he was about to have an easy victory, he made this entry in his journal:

"I have found a moment's quiet. The business of the Conference proceeds very well. I have gone to the root of this matter—a rare thing in moral and political discussions. I told my five-and-twenty friends in an upright and decided manner what we want and what we do not want. On this avowal there was a general declaration of approval, and each one asserted that he had never wanted more or less, or, indeed, hardly anything different. Now, I am surrounded by people who are quite enchanted with their own force of will, and

yet there is not one amongst them who a few days ago knew what he wants or will want. This is the universal fate of such an assembly. It has been evident to me for a long time that among a certain number of persons only one is ever found who has clearly made out for himself what is the question in hand. I shall be victorious here as at Carlsbad: that is to say, all will wish what I wish, and since I only wish what is just, I believe I shall gain my victory. But what is most remarkable is that these men will go home with the firm persuasion that they have left Vienna with the same views with which they came."

Can we wonder that with the conviction of his own superiority expressed in the words I have quoted; carrying with him the whole strength of Austria; having moulded Frederick William to his will, and secure in the support of the Czar, Metternich should be supreme in Germany? The words he himself recorded prove that he was not only supreme, but that he felt that he, and he alone, possessed the genius necessary to direct the course of all the rulers of the States composing Germany. It is melancholy to have to record that, disposing of this absolute power, he wielded it in a manner which gained for him the hatred of the races over whom he ruled: he used it to repress liberty, to crush thought, opinion, action; he used it, in a word, to enslave the people to whose valour and patriotism Germany owed her deliverance from Napoleon.

So much for his treatment of Germany up to the year 1820. Turn we now to Italy.

Under the Napoleonic system Italy had ceased, or had almost ceased, to be only a geographical expression. But after the catastrophe of Waterloo she was again parcelled out into appanages for princes who were not always Italians. Naples was restored to the Bourbons; the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom was established for Austria; Piedmont was given back, with hard conditions, to the King of Sardinia; and various others Dukedoms and Principalities were allotted to dispossessed princes or

princesses. One fact remained clear; Austria was preponderant in Italy. It was to her that Ferdinand I. of Naples, and Victor Emanuel of Sardinia, alike looked to support them against their own people.

Metternich did not possess in Italy the same power for repression which he had accumulated to himself in Germany. The Lombardo-Venetian kingdom was governed by an Archduke of the Imperial House, and not all the Habsburgs were so submissive to the Chancellor as was the easy-going Francis. Still, he could urge, could advise, and, in a sense, could command; that is, he could command in the name of his master. And he did watch and supervise the Imperial interests in Italy as jealously as it was possible for a man whose duties kept him in the German provinces of the Empire to watch and supervise them.

He had but just completed the measures for the political enslavement of Germany which I have narrated, when information reached him that, in sympathy with those Spaniards who had been driven to revolt by the bad faith of the Bourbon sovereign whom the allies had restored to rule over the peninsula, the Neapolitans had forced their Bourbon king to consent to the appointment of a provisional Junta, and to swear to accept a constitution on the basis of that to which the Spanish Bourbon had with equal sincerity promised to adhere.

Metternich was at Baden, sixteen miles from Vienna, when (15th July, 1820) the news of this attack on his system reached him. He started for Vienna the same day, and proceeded, the following morning, to see the Emperor, who was at the Imperial castle of Weinzierl. On his way thither he had leisure to calculate the effect on his general policy which such a revolt would produce. He records that it was an event, "beyond all calculation;

the consequences will be quickly seen, the remedies must not be long waited for." Believing that the movement had been caused by Russians, anxious to please their sovereign; believing, also, that it would cause blood "to flow in streams," he addressed himself to the Czar, and persuaded him to agree to a Conference of the Powers at Troppau, in Austrian Silesia, to arrange the best mode of suppressing the ebullition. The Conference was fixed for October 20th. On that day Alexander arrived. Metternich had preceded him by twenty-four hours.

Before we proceed to consider the deliberations at Troppau I would ask the reader to spare a moment to consider one or two entries in the diary of the powerful minister the sketch of whose career I am endeavouring to set before them. In those entries we see the inner soul of the man, his conceit, his narrowness, his hatred for all who had opposed him or whom he had opposed; his intense self-appreciation. On the 15th of August, the birthday of Napoleon, for instance, we come upon this entry:

"August 15th (Napoleonstag).

"This is the day of the great accursed! If he were still on the throne, and he were alone in the world, I should be happy."

Then, regarding his master, the Emperor Francis:

"Heaven has placed me near a man who seems as if he had been made for me."

Again:

"The Emperor and I will give the world a great example; we will not leave our posts. If we are destroyed, many will have to smart for their crimes and their folly first. The high character of the Carbonari, the party which has led all the others, is the anxiety."

In another place, commenting on a declaration said to have been made by the Czar, that he was conscious that he had, since 1814, been mistaken as to the mind of the public, Metternich makes this remark: "The man who

allows errors to be seen is no statesman;" adding, however, that the admission of a mistake proves that the man is honourable, and that Alexander was that. Again:

"My head is tired and my heart dried up,* and in this state I feel the world resting on my shoulders. If I should deceive myself for a moment I am brought to recollection by the arrival of some courier with the declaration, 'What will you do?' They say, 'We have confidence only in you. Our fate is in your hands; what shall we do?' That is the substance of all the despatches which arrive, and two-thirds of the questioners are always ready to perpetrate some folly, because they have neither spirit nor courage."

To return to Troppau. There Metternich found that Alexander had come entirely round to his views. The Emperor admitted, with many expressions of penitence, that in 1813–14 he had sinned, but that he was now more than ever convinced of the correctness of the doctrines on which Metternich had acted. "You are not altered," said the Czar to him, "I am. You have nothing to regret, but I have." Commenting upon this, and upon other conversations with the same high personage, Metternich writes: "People might think that the Emperor had only just come into the world and opened his eyes. He is now at the point where I was thirty years ago." A day or two later the Conference† opened. There Metternich was successful, though not quite so successful, as he had been at Teplitz and Vienna. He scored, he tells us, only eighty-five per cent. of the victories. But, whilst he was scoring these the party of

* An allusion to the loss of his married daughter who had then recently died.

† There were present at it, besides the Emperors of Austria and Russia, the Grand Duke Nicholas of Russia; the King and the Crown Prince of Prussia; the Austrian diplomatists, Metternich, Gentz, Zichy, and Mercy; those of Russia, Nesselrode, Capo d'Istria, Golowkin, Alopäus; those of Prussia, Hardenberg and Bernstoff; of England, Stewart; of France, de la Ferronays.

freedom was not idle. The cry of "The Constitution of 1812" was raised likewise in Sicily. Then the King of Naples, impatient alike of his concessions and of his position, announced his intention of attending the Conference, now become a Congress. The sovereigns and ministers present heard of this resolution on the 24th December. It was at once resolved to make a move to the milder climate and more convenient situation of Laibach.

The Congress did not adjourn, however, without having arrived at conclusions common to Austria, Russia, and Prussia, which were to constitute the basis for further action. These conclusions were formulated in a despatch, dated 8th December, which the three Powers transmitted to their agents at the German and Northern Courts. The purport of this despatch was the enforcement and development of the principles the germ of which was contained in the Holy Alliance, viz., the agreement of the sovereigns to put down what they called "rebellion" in the dominions of any one of them. To this England and France were invited to agree; they were further asked to send representatives to Laibach.

Metternich reached Laibach early in January, and the sovereigns and diplomatists quickly followed him. Again were they obedient to the will of their master. By the advice of Metternich it was arranged to despatch 60,000 Austrian troops to "restore order"—that is, the despotic rule of the Bourbon, with all its repressions —in the south of Italy. On the 6th February an army composed of that number of men crossed the Po for that purpose. A campaign of thirteen days sufficed to put down the insurrection, and, although, in the meantime, Piedmont had risen, and demonstrations had been made even in the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, the faith of Metternich in the power of bayonets never wavered.

Writing to Count Rechberg from Laibach, under date the 31st March, he says:

"We shall finish the Piedmontese affair as we did the Neapolitan. Another French Revolution could alone interpose grave—perhaps insurmountable—obstacles to this second enterprise.

"All the venom is at present on the surface. The cure will be so much the more radical; and what we began together in July, 1819, can be finished with the help of God and for the salvation of the world in 1821. It is therefore from Carlsbad that the *Era of Salvation* must be dated."

The Czar was not only an accomplice in the movement of the Austrian troops: he was even eager that his own should be employed. Finally it was arranged that he should despatch 120,000 men to his frontier with orders to move at the first sign Metternich should give. Metternich never gave that sign. He was anxious that the work of repression should be carried out by Austria alone—by that Austria which, he claims in his memoirs, * had contributed two-thirds of the main force which won, at Leipsig, the "battle of the nations." She had won that battle to fight, eight years later, against the victors, the battles of the despots.

The conclusions arrived at at the Congress of Laibach were but a confirmation of the agreement of Troppau. They were contained in a declaration signed by the representatives of the three Powers, and communicated by Metternich to the Austrian agents at Foreign Courts in an explanatory circular despatch dated the 12th May. For the moment the policy was successful. Austrian soldiers repressed the rising in Piedmont as easily as they had put down that in Naples. Metternich then applied his energies to restore order, somewhat disarranged by sympathetic demonstrations, in Lombardy.

* Vol. iii., p. 390 (English translation).

In the work from which I have already quoted,* Mr. Maurice states that Metternich established an Aulic Council at Vienna to superintend the affairs in the Lombardo-Venetian kingdom, and to crush out any local independence; that Count Federigo Confalonieri, who had founded the literary movement which was to instruct his countrymen, was arrested and condemned to death. Mr. Maurice continues: "His case excited sympathy, even in Vienna, where the Empress interceded for his life; and at last, after long entreaty, his sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life in the fortress of Spielberg. There Metternich tried in vain to extort from him the betrayal of his fellow-conspirators." The imprisonment of such a man, and the ignominious treatment in his prison fortress, roused a feeling throughout Italy which, at a later period, bore abundant fruit for the cause on behalf of which Confalonieri suffered.

In 1821 and the following year the affairs of Moldavia and Wallachia and Greece came before the Congress. Metternich, who recognised the necessity of maintaining the Sultan, found it very difficult to give to the mind of the Czar the impression he desired. But he knew the weak points of that impressionable mind, and he played his game with so much art that he believed he had won it. On the 3rd June, 1822, he wrote to the Emperor Francis to tell him that the work of Peter the Great was destroyed; that

"what Russia loses in moral strength the Porte gains. We have done them here a service which they can never sufficiently reward, and it will maintain our influence as well as that of England."

A few days later he again congratulates himself on the result of his influence. He writes:

"My position again is very remarkable; I am at the centre as the

* *Revolutions of* 1848-9 *in Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Germany.*

chief motive power in an affair which is quite simple, but has for months been embarrassed by unreason and unjustifiable measures."

He was expecting and hoping that Lord Londonderry would come to Vienna when he heard of his suicide. His exclamation on hearing it is characteristic. "What a blow! I am armed against all contingencies; my cause will only be lost if I fall myself!" Yes; but what a commentary on his condemnation of Napoleon's system, a condemnation based on the ground that Napoleon was the keystone of the arch, which would fall when the keystone was removed!

The Powers had resolved to hold a Congress at Verona, and it was at that Congress that Metternich had hoped to have the support of Lord Londonderry.

"I awaited him here," he writes from Vienna, "as my second self. . . . He was devoted to me in heart and spirit, not only from personal inclination, but also from conviction. My work would have been reduced by one half, because I should have had him to share it with me; now I am left to my own strength. I am not alarmed at that; but I feel myself overburdened. I have just requested the presence of the Duke of Wellington, the only man who can in a measure replace him."

On the 22nd October following, Metternich writes from Verona that he had just begun his greatest work; that the Congress was composed of honest men, who had confidence in him; that his personal relations with the Czar were

"the most intimate possible, as, for the peace of the world, they ought to be. He believes in me just as my Emperor does, and the business thereby gains as it would by no other combination."

But Metternich soon found that his forecast had been a little premature. In England Canning had succeeded Lord Londonderry at the Foreign Office, and although the Duke of Wellington came to Verona to represent

England, he came not to register the decrees of Metternich, but to support the views of the British Cabinet. The main object of the assembling of the sovereigns and the representatives of the powers at Verona* was to restore the perjured Ferdinand of Spain to the throne he had disgraced, and to secure which for him the blood of England had been from 1809 to 1814 poured out like water. The influence of Metternich and the despotic desires of the sovereigns did indeed ensure an agreement to authorise France to intervene in Spain, but England was no party to it. All that the Duke of Wellington could be persuaded to undertake was to communicate to the four Powers his views on their application of the principles of the Holy Alliance to Spain, in a confidential note, and that note plainly showed that England was averse to all aggressive interference of one nation in the internal affairs of another.

The substitution of Canning for Londonderry in England had then the result of throwing Metternich more completely into the arms of Russia. The change was congenial to him, for the Eastern question and the question of Greece, which was then an important part of that question, seemed to demand a prompt settlement. It is true that an agreement of a nature which he hoped would settle all differences had been arrived at at Verona. But it soon became clear that the main provision of this agreement—the provision namely, that the Porte should herself pacify Greece—was unworkable. Upon that question, then, he would have to come to a complete understand-

* There were present at the Congress of Verona, the Emperors of Austria and of Russia, the Kings of Prussia, of the two Sicilies and of Sardinia, several minor princelets of Italy; the Duke of Wellington, representing England; the Duke of Montmorency and Chateaubriand representing France; Metternich, Pozzo di Borgo, Bernstorff and Hardenberg.

ing with Alexander. Metternich never for a moment doubted his ability to accomplish this result. He had, he believed, the Czar in leading strings. It was about this time, December 1822, that he obtained the adhesion of that sovereign and of the King of Prussia, equally bound to his chariot-wheel, to establish at Mayence a secret Committee of Inquiry, composed of three members, one from each nation, to exercise espionage over the so-called conspirators of Central Europe.

The year 1823 was inaugurated by a small occurrence which, nevertheless, excited the anger of the secret ruler of the Continent. The King of Würtemberg, taking offence at the high dealing of Austria at Verona, had caused to be addressed to the diplomatic agents of his Cabinet a circular despatch in which Austria was roundly accused of appropriating to herself "the heritage of influence in Europe arrogated to himself by Napoleon;" and which, whilst criticising the words and actions of the three despots, protested against the consequences which the political procedure of their Courts might have on the independence of sovereigns of the second order. The sting of this circular lay in its absolute truth. Its effect soon passed, however, as events proceeded to develop themselves in the order Metternich had arranged. France invaded Spain and abolished the Constitution. On the other hand, the Greeks obtained several victories over the Turks, and it became necessary that Metternich and his master should have another personal interview with the Czar. They met consequently at Czernowitz, the Emperor Francis posing as the lay figure, Metternich as the worker. At the conference Metternich found that to work in harmony with Russia on the Eastern question he would have to modify the ideas which had enabled him to act in concert with England; and, England having ceased to be the

England of Castlereagh, he modified them accordingly. The result was that in the matter which affected the occupation of the Principalities he supported the "just views" of Russia, whilst the question of Greece was left to be solved at a Conference of the Powers, which, Metternich recommended, should be held at St. Petersburg.

The following year the internal condition of Germany seemed to demand a reminder that the pilot who, in 1819, had, by the issue of the Carlsbad decrees, repressed the development of free opinion at the Universities, was still at the helm. Reporting to the Emperor, in July, how completely those decrees had purified the Universities, crushed the Press, and searched out and baffled the plans of the demagogues, Metternich suggested that both Bavaria and Baden, in which countries State Assemblies would be convened the following year, should be reminded that they must carry into execution the repressive system so successfully inaugurated at Carlsbad; that no publicity should be given to their proceedings, for that the nail must be driven right up to its head. The Emperor Francis approved of the sketch of the Presidential proposition prepared by his Minister, and the Courts of Bavaria and Baden accepted its principle. To add to the apparent triumph of the authors of this arbitrary action Prussia signified her adhesion to the same plan, and Metternich, replying to the satisfactory assurance on this point which he received in a letter from Frederick William III., was able to assure his Royal correspondent that his life, "for some time, has had but one aim—that of assuring, by my feeble efforts, the noble cause which the monarchs, for the welfare of the world, have sought to maintain."

The question of Greece occupied a great part of his attention during the year 1824. Naturally Metternich had

but little sympathy with the aspirations of the Greeks—*per se*. His life, since 1815, had been spent in combating the principle on which they were acting. Yet he was too closely associated with the policy of the Czar to act with perfect freedom.

"Honour and duty," he wrote, addressing the Austrian minister in London, Prince Esterhazy, "compel them (the Allies) to serve the cause of the peace of Europe; this cause is that of the Emperor Alexander."

He could not or would not believe that that Emperor aimed either "at conquests, or at the thorough emancipation of the Greeks, or at the establishment of a new and revolutionary power." As Austria did not entertain such a belief, and as the Greeks, certainly, and if not the Emperor Alexander personally, the secret directors of the Russian policy, probably, did entertain it; it is not surprising that the question of Greek independence was rather strengthened than otherwise by the reliance of Austria on the moderation of Alexander—strengthened, that is to say, by the trust displayed by Austria, in spite of the wishes of Austria. This was more especially apparent when, some seven or eight years after the death of the Czar, the union between his successor and Metternich became even closer than it had been with Alexander.

In September of this year (1824) the sovereign whom the Allies had imposed upon France in 1814, and again in 1815—Louis XVIII.—died, and was succeeded by his brother, Charles X. The accession of the new sovereign was specially agreeable to Metternich. "Charles X.," he wrote, "is peacefully seated on his brother's throne. This quiet change, which marks an historical episode of the Revolution, undoubtedly proves that moral regeneration has made some progress in France." He had but one fear—whether, in his anxiety to obtain popularity, the new

King had not made too many concessions to the Left; whether he would be able "to resist the Liberal influence which the Dauphin seems to exercise over his father." The clear-sightedness which, after patient study, had read the character of Napoleon, was evidently beginning to fail.

The year following, the real views of Russia on the Greek question—views held not the less strongly because they were not disclosed—produced a coolness, or, as Metternich describes it, a tension, in the relations between Austria and Russia. Metternich could not get away from the point that Greece was in insurrection against the Porte; that Greece aimed at independence; that the Powers could not support Greece in her pretensions, because they were at peace with the Sultan. In fact, according to the principles of the Holy Alliance—principles on which the signatories to it acted in Spain, in Naples, in Northern Italy—they were bound rather to wish well to the Sultan. As the year went on some dim consciousness of the views of Russia, exhibited by a change of tone in the despatches, and in the silence of the Czar, stole over the mind of the Austrian Minister.

"At St. Petersburg," he writes in October, "they seem to be very much offended with me."

Again, the same day:

"Thick mists lie on the Neva, but they will soon be dissipated, for they begin again to see that the road they have taken is not the right one; but as this view of things is disagreeable, they will for some time longer seek elsewhere what they can only find at home."

Still, no progress was made towards a solution, and in December, Metternich was startled by receiving a despatch telling him that Alexander had died at Taganrog. "In spite of my coldbloodedness," he wrote, "this unexpected catastrophe has touched me most deeply." Without

hesitation he fixed upon the Grand-Duke Constantine as Alexander's successor, and he proceeded to make a forecast as to how he could mould him. He recorded the conclusion at which he had arrived in a letter addressed, the 18th, to Baron Ottenfels.

"His policy will be entirely pacific. The bent of his mind has two objects: in politics, the support of the monarchical principle; in an administrative point of view, the internal amelioration of the empire. I deceive myself, if the *History* of Russia does not begin where the *Romance* of Russia ends."

This comparison between History and Romance was, it will be admitted, rather severe on that Alexander whom the writer had kept steadfast to the league against Napoleon; whose generous impulses he had ever exerted himself to pervert; whom he had made his accomplice for the repression of the development of those aspirations which distinguish mankind from the brute creation, and who had only displayed some symptoms of revolt from the yoke on a question with regard to which a Czar of Russia is forced to obey the national feeling. But it serves to show the character, the cold, hard, unfeeling, selfish character of the man. Looking at him as he was, the author of the policy of repression, with kings as his accomplices and peoples as his victims, we can see how he felt that the continuance of his policy depended on a continuance of accomplices of the same mould; and, realising, as he must have realised, that without a central commanding figure to sustain and put into action the common idea, the system must collapse, we can understand how, reviewing in the privacy of his chamber the situation, he must have foreseen that when the keystone of his arch should be withdrawn, the arch, too, would fall.

But Nicholas succeeded, not Constantine. And though Metternich had so far committed himself as to write to

the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg to tell him that his spirit "was transported by the new era he saw commencing" under Constantine's rule, he was able nevertheless, in a later despatch, to express his pleasure at "the calmness and rectitude of principle" displayed by Nicholas.

Shortly after the accession of Nicholas, and before any decisive step in the Eastern question had been taken, Metternich met Lord Hertford. He was delighted with this stern, unbending Tory of the old school.

"I had not for years," he writes, "met with so independent, thoughtful, and clever an Englishman. His words were like an echo of the past."

In the English peer, with regard to his intense dislike of Canning and his hatred for the very name of "reform," Metternich found an ardent sympathiser, and he could not help recording that he felt that Lord Hertford liked him as much as he liked Lord Hertford. Yet it is curious to note how incorrect were the forecasts made at this time by this experienced statesman with reference to the burning question of the day, the question of the attitude of Russia towards Turkey and the Greek revolt, and how correct by comparison were those of Canning. In his despatch to the Austrian Ambassador in London dated June 8 of this year (1826), Metternich once again expressed his conviction that Russia regarded a rupture with the Porte as "a very disastrous event," and that by no possibility could that Power desire to see the Greeks freed from their dependence on Turkey. As the year went on, however, he began to fear lest the sway he had exercised over the mind of Alexander had found no place in the sterner nature of his brother; that "the crafty and unscrupulous mind of Mr. Canning," as he

describes it, might exercise an influence over the Czar sufficient to crush the Holy Alliance, so far as it affected Russia. His alarm on this subject was very real. "If," he wrote to the Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, "the Continental courts fall into the snare"—that is the snare laid by Canning—"the cause will be lost." It was a terrible moment for the man who had led Alexander as and how he liked. In a letter to the Prince of Hesse-Homburg, then at St. Petersburg, he poured out the anguish of his soul. He stated that he was conscious that the Czar had a certain dislike for himself; that—and the reader will mark all the point of the expression, considering the relations which had existed between the writer and the late Czar—"till now he stands alone, not having yet found the man whom he could regard as a powerful instrument to perform his will."

This letter, evidently written to be shown to Nicholas, and which was probably shown to him, did not at the moment produce the desired effect. England, guided by Mr. Canning, was bent on securing the independence of Greece, and Russia had, by her ambassador in London, consented to this course. To the mind of Metternich the acknowledgment of such independence was to recognise the right of rebellion. Against such a right he had directed the policy of Continental Europe since 1815, and he laid the blame of deviation from the sure path the Powers had trodden, on the misleading influence of that Power which, even when guided by Castlereagh, had declined to subscribe to the principles of the Holy Alliance, and which now, directed by the "*faux esprit*" of Canning, was urging Europe towards "inextricable complications." We cannot wonder that when the year ended, the mind of the Austrian Minister was still in a state of great perplexity.

Under the happier auspices of the new year that perplexity began to disappear. In February, Metternich recognised with delight that the Court of St. Petersburg was inclined to make approaches to Austria. Although he was inclined to receive them in the friendliest spirit, he had not yet realised that a great Power which had professed and acted upon well-defined anti-revolutionary principles in the face of Europe, was prepared to act in a sense absolutely contrary when her own interests were involved. Thus it happened that he met in a spirit, not intended to be repelling, but which did repel, the advances of Russia. When it had been decided to hold a Conference of the five Powers in London, the instructions sent by Metternich to the Austrian Ambassador were thus directly opposed to the policy which Russia had resolved to pursue. So opposed indeed were they that they drew from the Russian Ambassador a Declaration of "the most lively regret that the Court of Austria brings forward proposals which differ from those of his Imperial Majesty, and do not adhere to the project of a treaty and to the measures which he had communicated to that Court." The reply of Metternich to this rebuke was full of dignity. It expressed in so many words, his regret that Austria could not be a party to a step which would bring the whole power of Europe to bring pressure on Turkey in an unrighteous cause. In consequence of Metternich's attitude, neither Austria nor Prussia acceded to the Treaty of London between England, France and Russia (July 6th, 1827), an alliance which resulted, three months later, in "that untoward event," * the battle of Navarino and the consequent destruction of the Turkish fleet, and, a little later still, in the war

* The expression used in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of the Session of 1828.

between Russia and Turkey which terminated in the treaty of Adrianople, and the recognition by the latter of the independence of Greece.

Vainly had Metternich tried, and we are bound to render him the fullest justice for his earnest efforts in this respect, to save the Porte from her impending fate. Russia had taken advantage of the generous desire of England to free the Greeks to make of her a consenting party to a deadly blow which she sought to deal at her ancient enemy. The warnings of Metternich, then, whilst they were accepted with expressions of fervent gratitude by the Sultan, did not affect the result. Navarino, whilst it pained, did not surprise Metternich. His expression, when he received the news was: "It has begun a new era for Europe."

The death of Mr. Canning, and the accession to power of the Duke of Wellington, gave Metternich some hope that the old cordial relations which existed between the two countries in the time of Castlereagh might be restored, and he instructed the Austrian Ambassador to make advances in that sense. The result was a temporary understanding between the two cabinets as to the policy to be pursued on the Eastern question. When, in the autumn of 1829, the exhausted army of Diebitch reached Adrianople, Austria, acting with France and England, was instrumental in procuring for the Porte the peace which bears the name of that city, and which, in the state of the Russian army, she needed not. Well advised, Turkey might have extorted, unaided, far better terms. But she possessed neither the moral courage nor the man. Europe stood aloof, indifferent; and thus it came about, for the second time in history, that, at a crisis which might have been used to crush her hereditary enemy, the Ottoman Empire was, to use the emphatic

words of the Austrian statesman, "shaken to its foundations."

One result of the war between Russia and Turkey had been the dissolution of the triple alliance. There had, however, been no corresponding *rapprochement* between Austria and the Czar. To obtain such an understanding as had existed prior to the death of Alexander, Metternich was directing his efforts, when he was startled by the overthrow, in Paris, of the branch of the family which he had been twice instrumental in forcing upon the French people.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF METTERNICH'S SYSTEM IN EUROPE.

1830–1848.

THE manner in which the Revolution of 1830 would affect the policy of Metternich, and the stability of the Empire whose destinies he was guiding, would depend, he saw at a glance, on the use which the French people would make of their reconquered freedom of action. When it transpired that they would be content with the transfer, under certain guarantees, from the elder to the younger branch of the same family; when, moreover, it became apparent, as it did very soon become apparent, that the representative of the younger branch, King Louis Philippe, was disposed to be conservative, peaceful, and, as far as he dared, autocratic, the three despots of Europe realised that it might yet be possible to enforce the system of repression which had been inaugurated on the fall of Napoleon. They took heart accordingly, and each proceeded, in his fashion, to crush the ebullitions which the first news from Paris had caused.

For the moment they encountered little difficulty. Nicholas laid his heavy hand on Poland, and the rising in Poland collapsed. Metternich, confronted by Italy, Germany, and Hungary, had a task less easy, because it

dealt with more than one nationality. But, resting on his prestige, his alliances, and his power to employ force, he was equal to the occasion. In Italy, a rising in Bologna was sternly repressed by Austrian troops. In Germany, in three kingdoms of which—Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Saxony—the desire for freedom had taken the form of proclaiming constitutions, Metternich caused an enactment to be passed by which every ruling prince of Germany became bound to reject petitions tending to the increase of the power of the Estates at the expense of the power of the sovereign. In Hungary, the aspirations of whose nobles had caused him some trouble prior to 1830, he succeeded for the moment in staving off a solution which, nevertheless, so clearsighted a statesman ought to have regarded as simply adjourned, but which he believed, nevertheless, would never be brought up for settlement. England, indeed, had broken for ever with absolutism; but, since the death of Castlereagh, Metternich had never hoped much from England. With a Russia forced by events to recur to the old friendship; a Prussia, and therefore a Germany, completely dominated; and a France governed by a pacific Bourbon bent only on securing the family interests; he thought he would yet be more than a match for the revolutionists who were raising their heads in Italy, and who had begun to undermine Hungary.

But the crushing of the rising in Bologna did not mean the permanent repression of the longings of the Italian patriots. Mazzini, who, on the outbreak of the revolution of 1830, had been arrested and imprisoned on the ground that he was fond of solitary walks by night, and habitually silent as to the subject of his meditations, had arrived at the conclusion that a stronger society than that of the Carbonari—a society which should appeal to the natural aspirations of the Italians for unity and

liberty—was required to save Italy. When, after some interrogatories, it was recognised by the King of Sardinia, Charles Felix, that proof of absolute crime was absolutely wanting, that monarch, still regarding him as dangerous, gave him the choice of remaining under *surveillance* in Italy, or of exile. Mazzini chose the latter; proceeded by way of Geneva to Lyons, where he published his first work picturing the rising of Romagna, called "The Night of Rimini"; thence, after a short sojourn in Corsica, to Marseilles. Here, in the early days of 1832, his prison thoughts found expression in the founding of the "Society of Young Italy." The avowed purpose of this society was to make Italy free, united, and republican. These aims were avowed and preached in a journal called after the name of the society, "Giovine Italia."

The character of the founder, the principles which appealed to the reason and passions of a highly-gifted people, kept in a state of bondage by foreign bayonets, soon obtained for the Society a vast number of adherents: amongst them, some of the noblest of the sons of Italy. As naturally, the same causes brought to the front a number of powerful enemies. Prominent amongst these—the first, in fact, to take action—was the sovereign who owed his throne to a revolution, Louis Philippe of France. The publication of the paper was prohibited, its numbers were confiscated when they appeared, and finally Mazzini and his friends had to quit Marseilles and find a refuge in free Switzerland. Establishing himself at Lugano, there, on the very borders of Italy, Mazzini received the fugitives from the tyranny which overshadowed his native land. Thence in February 1834, the patriots marched to strike a blow for freedom. The blow failed, and Mazzini was forced to flee, first to Paris; thence, a little later, to London.

Metternich had been neither blind nor indifferent to, nor had he underrated the importance of, Mazzini's movement. The publication of *Giovine Italia;* the lofty sentiments it inspired; the ability with which it was conducted; had roused the quick suspicions of his sensitive mind. Early in 1834 he had written to his principal agent in Northern Italy to warn him of the new danger, and especially of its author. Nor when, a year later, the expedition from Lugano failed, did the astute Austrian statesman consider the danger at an end. He had Mazzini tracked to his halting-place in Paris, and thence to his lair in London. There his every movement was watched, and thence copies of all his publications were carefully despatched to Vienna. The task of reading these was a long one, for, despite of an occasional interference with his correspondence and his privacy, Mazzini stayed in London till the overthrow of the throne of the barricades indicated to the oppressed peoples of Europe the road to unity and freedom.

But Metternich had on his hands at the earlier stage of this epoch other matters at least as serious as the movements and action of Mazzini. These I shall briefly indicate.

No portion of the territories which acknowledged the sway of the House of Habsburg had made more sacrifices for that House than Hungary. She had saved the monarchy of Maria Theresa: she had poured out her blood like water to resist Napoleon. Hungary possessed a Constitution, under the operation of which the laws were administered by means of county assemblies, empowered to raise taxes and levy soldiers; to refuse obedience to all orders save those which bore the stamp of legality. Those assemblies had no power, however, to alter the laws. This power devolved on the Diet, composed of representatives from the several counties. The maintenance of this

Constitution formed part of the contract by virtue of which the sovereignty over Hungary had devolved on the House of Habsburg.

In the hour of Austria's need, when Francis, on the instigation of his Minister, had resolved to strike the blow which should be fatal to his son-in-law, he had convened the Hungarian Diet. But from 1813 to 1825, the Minister who governed in his name had not once called it together. Having, however, been baffled, in 1823, in an attempt to raise taxes unauthorised by any law passed by the Diet, Metternich, wanting money, was constrained to convene it in 1825. This Diet witnessed the formation of the constitutional opposition, destined, in later years, to achieve so great results. The leader of this movement was Count Stephen Szechenyi, a member of one of the great families of Hungary, and one who lamented the system, introduced by Metternich, of attracting the great nobles of Hungary to Vienna, with the view to divert into other channels aspirations naturally Hungarian. Szechenyi's main object was to restore the use of the Magyar language, and to revivify Hungarian social life. On both these points Metternich opposed him, and for the moment the schemes of the patriot Hungarian, though pushed with a vigour and self-sacrifice rarely surpassed, did not ripen.

Again, in 1830, was the Diet summoned, representing alike Hungary and Transylvania. The first demand made by the Government was one to which no opposition was anticipated. It was simply a demand for new recruits for the army. But the revolution of July had taken place: new aspirations had seized the imaginations of thoughtful men in the two countries, and much opposition was raised to the measure. Again were the questions of the use of the Magyar language, and the

employment of Hungarian officers with Hungarian soldiers strongly urged, but the Diet was dissolved (December, 1830) before any definite resolution had been arrived at.

Again was it called together in December, 1832. This time the Austrian Government and the advocates of the rights of the peasants, represented by Francis Deak, were found on the one side, the nobles and privileged classes on the other. Whilst the discussions on this subject were still proceeding, the Emperor Francis died (2nd March, 1832). His son, Ferdinand,* who succeeded him, though a prince of weak intellect, was good-natured and kind-hearted, and he insisted that some concessions should be made to the popular demands. Metternich made them accordingly, but so grudgingly that the effect which might have otherwise been expected from them was sadly marred. It was in this Diet that Kossuth took the lead as a supporter of the popular feelings.

During the next three years Metternich made serious attempts to allay the growing feeling against Austrian predominance in Hungary. Full of hope that he had attained this end, he summoned a new Diet in June, 1839. To test its loyalty he at once demanded a contribution of four million florins and 38,000 recruits. But, like our own Charles I., he found the popular leaders still determined to harp on the old theme. Before the Diet had been summoned he had caused the most eminent of them, Kossuth, Wesselenyi, and others, to

* Ferdinand, eldest son of Francis by his second wife, Maria Theresa, daughter of the King of the Two Sicilies, was born in 1793. From his childhood he was weak and delicate, and his education was shamefully neglected. The very day his mother died, the tutor in charge of him was dismissed; the successor was subject to a mental malady which rendered him incapable as an instructor; the third and fourth were better, but the change came too late.

be placed under arrest. The Diet refused to discuss any proposition of the Government until those members should be released. Metternich had to give way, alike on that point and on another with respect to the peasants' dues which he had caused the Emperor to impose in 1836. The demands of the Government were then granted, but the check which Metternich had received was severe, and foreboded ill for the future. The Diet did not separate until the question regarding the Hungarian language had been practically settled in favour of the Magyars.

In the Diet which sat in 1843–4 these concessions were confirmed and enlarged. The capability of possessing land and of holding offices was extended to classes not born in the ranks of the nobility, and by a new language-law the predominance of the Magyars was definitely established. The year 1847, in fact, witnessed the till then unheard-of circumstance of the Emperor-King opening its proceedings by a speech in the Magyar tongue. When, however, the Government brought forward its propositions regarding various important reforms, the Opposition, led by Kossuth, demanded the prior consideration of the freedom of the Press, the nomination of a responsible ministry, the union of Transylvania with Hungary, the equal imposition of taxes, equality before the law, reform of the law enforcing compulsory labour on the peasant, and the question of triennial elections. These questions were being debated when the revolution of February, 1848, broke out in Paris.

The attitude of Metternich in the presence of demands made by the other nationalities of the Empire for reform, following one another in rapid succession, had been that of a temporiser who thinks that by skilful manœuvring, he can, in time, defeat, by causing

disunion among, his adversaries. In Hungary he did not dare to play the game with the hard, repressive measures which he had no hesitation in enforcing in Germany and in Italy. The Hungarian Constitution was a contract the validity of which had been recognised by the Habsburgs even when they had infringed its provisions. In that country, then, there was a point beyond which his opposition to peculiar demands, energetically urged, could not go. Although, then, no one better than he understood the underhand means, well-known to tyrants, the methods of seduction, of dividing by sowing suspicion in the ranks of one's adversaries, yet, in his dealings with Hungary, he not only disdained to have recourse to those methods, but, either from over-confidence in his own position, or because he had found that yielding always incited fresh demands, he acted in a manner which united against him all the elements of opposition. He even went so far as to infringe the Constitution by directing Count Apponyi, whom he had made Chancellor of Hungary in succession to the popular Count Mailath—removed for the purpose—to supersede the County Assemblies by administrators appointed by himself. By this action, and by obstinately refusing to concede, even slightly, to the demands of the Diet of 1847, he prepared the way for that outburst of national feeling which obeyed the signal to Europe given by the mob of Paris in February of the following year.

But if Metternich made for himself difficulties in Hungary, others were being prepared for him in Italy, and even in Germany. In the former country, for some years after the expulsion of Mazzini, the surface had been calm. Only the surface, however. The seeds dispersed all over Europe by Mazzini from his sanctuary in London were taking root everywhere, and in many places

the hardy stalk was forcing its way upwards. In 1844, a rising had been concerted in Calabria. The plans were well considered, and it is possible, even probable, that they might have succeeded, had not Sir James Graham, the Postmaster-General of Great Britain, opened Mazzini's letters and communicated their contents to the Austrians. The executors of the plot, then, marched into a trap, and paid the penalty with their lives. For a moment the surface became again calm. Two years later, however, the seizure of Cracow by the democratic party in Poland, spread hope anew. But when Metternich replied to this demonstration by boldly annexing Cracow to Austria, the under-swell, which had not then in Italy broken the surface, subsided. The calm, however, lasted but for a moment. An event occurred just afterwards in the canton of Ticino which proved the little cloud which was to increase and burst forth into storm.

The cause did not seem at the outset to be one of those which bring about great convulsions. In the early part of 1846, Ticino, a canton of Switzerland, on the Italian slope of the Alps, had asked Charles-Albert, King of Sardinia, to allow it to transmit the salt it manufactured through Piedmont. It happened that a predecessor of Charles-Albert had made with Austria, in 1751, a treaty whereby, in consideration of Austria granting to Piedmont the privilege of sending through Lombardy the salt it was selling to Venice, the latter agreed to renounce his trade with the Swiss cantons. To grant the request of Ticino would, then, be to infringe, technically, the treaty of 1751. Nevertheless, Charles-Albert did grant it.

The information of this action on the part of Charles-Albert roused Metternich to a white heat. Of all the cantons of Switzerland Ticino was the most hated. It

was Ticino which had been the abode of, which had given refuge to, Mazzini and his band. It was from Ticino that they had made their abortive attempt on Italy; and now, Charles-Albert, himself always under suspicion, and something more than suspicion, of cherishing designs little compatible with the predominance of Austria in Italy, had conferred a favour on Ticino. Metternich acted with his accustomed decision and vigour. He declared to Charles-Albert that Austria regarded the treaty of 1751 as violated. A few days later, he retaliated by increasing the custom duty on wines sent from Piedmont to Lombardy, taking special care at the same time to inform him that this change would apply only to Piedmont, and to none of the other States of Italy. Charles-Albert retorted by lowering the wine duties between Piedmont and France, and when the Austrian ambassador, alarmed at this act, offered to recall his Government's action if Charles-Albert would withdraw the concession to Ticino, the latter absolutely refused. Not only did he refuse, but recognising tacitly the position which had been assigned to him by the truest lovers of Italian unity, he began to take measures to prepare for an event which, in the excited condition of feeling in Italy, might at any moment be precipitated.

The feeling that Charles-Albert might be depended upon was gradually making its way through Italy, especially in the Papal States, when Pope Gregory XVI. died (June 1st, 1846). Fifteen days later, mainly through the influence of the reforming party to which he was supposed to belong, Giovanni Mastai Ferretti was elected his successor. The new Pope, who took the name of Pius IX., began his papal career by issuing a general amnesty to those condemned for political offences. By this act, though it was hedged with conditions; and

by the support accorded to him by men who greatly influenced the minds of young Italy; Pius IX., a few months after his installation, found himself regarded throughout the peninsula as the national hero. This, too, in spite of one or two attempts he made to restrict the operation of the favours he had granted. Even in Milan, the headquarters of the Austrians, hymns to Pio Nono were sung at the theatre, whilst the Viceroy and his family were received there in silence.*

Metternich had fairly taken the alarm. Whether he instigated, or was aware of, or sympathised with, a conspiracy which was organised by the Austrian party in Rome to get rid of Pio Nono on the occasion of a popular demonstration which took place, and was foiled, on the anniversary of the amnesty of 1846, may, indeed, never be known. But the idea of a revolutionary Pope —and to him reform and revolution were synonymous— was an abomination. His reply to the Papal concessions was the occupation of Ferrara by Austrian troops. This action roused a bitter cry throughout Italy. It quadrupled, and more than quadrupled, the hatred against Austria. The impression spread rapidly that the time had arrived when the Pope and the King of Sardinia must combine to expel the hated foreigner. Before, however, any movement could be inaugurated, Lord Palmerston, who was then wisely directing the foreign policy of England, had sent Lord Minto to Italy to encourage the various princes to stand firm to the cause of reform, whilst he had urged upon Metternich the necessity of evacuating Ferrara. Most unwillingly did the Austrian Minister consent, but he did yield to necessity,

* Maurice's *Revolutions of* 1848-9 *in Italy*, in which these occurrences are detailed at far greater length than I am able to devote to them.

and in December, 1847, the Imperial troops evacuated Ferrara.

But this was not the only blow dealt to the anti-revolutionary policy of Metternich at this period. He was to experience the truth of the saying that the worst foes a man can have are those of his own household. If he could have trusted any one, it would have been the Austrian prince who ruled in Tuscany. But not only did Leopold of Habsburg, who reigned at Florence, refuse the urgent demand of Metternich to dispense with the services of his Liberal councillor, Cosimo Ridolfi, but, as time went on, he showed an increasing sympathy with many of the objects of the reformers. Soon a crisis arose which tried to the utmost the patience of the nations. Under pressure, put upon him by his subjects, a pressure which he had provoked by his unwisdom, the Duke of Lucca had taken advantage of a clause in the treaty of Vienna to resign his territories to Leopold of Tuscany. The same clause which enabled Leopold to accept the transfer necessitated the surrender by him of the district of Fivizzano to the Duke of Modena. The people of that district refused to be transferred; whereupon the Duke, summoning to his aid the troops of Marshal Radetzky, marched into the town of Fivizzano and massacred the inhabitants. Troops of the same nation shortly afterwards occupied Parma, and although the Duke of Modena was forced to yield his pretensions to the towns of Pontremoli and Bagnone, the transaction regarding Fivizzano and the action of the Austrian troops still more embittered the Italians against the foreigner.

Matters were not progressing more favourably for Metternich in the south of Italy. The rule of the Bourbon prince, who ruled at Naples under the title of Ferdinand

II., but who is better known as King Bomba, had been characterised by a tyranny of the worst description. His subjects had shown their sense of its harshness by spasmodic outbreaks. They had risen at Aquila in 1841; at Cosenza in 1844; and, as I have previously recorded, at Calabria, in July of the same year. In every instance the insurgents had been suppressed, and the scaffold and the prisons had restored momentary order. But the spirit which inspired those outbreaks defied the tyranny of the monarch, and, as the repression of all that makes life valuable to a man became more severe, the resolution to buy freedom at whatever cost became more fixed. This resolution developed into action at Messina, the 1st September, 1847.

The rising at Messina was repressed, and, as usual, its repression was sealed with blood. But failure had not deprived the Italian and Sicilian wooers of freedom of their courage. Naples rose, Palermo rose, Ferdinand was driven from every place in Sicily except the castle of Messina, and he was forced, 29th January, to grant a Constitution to Naples. The granting of this Constitution, poor as it was, produced a marked effect on the spirit and the proceedings of the reformers in Rome and in Northern Italy. In the former, the Pope, who had already issued a decree assuring separate and independent responsibility to each of his ministers, now promised a secular ministry and an increase of the army. In Lombardy the patriotic feeling it evoked caused the Archduke Rainier and his councillors to invoke the earnest attention of Marshal Radetzky. A little later, and Radetzky established martial law in Milan. In Turin, Charles-Albert was compelled, though with great reluctance, to grant a *Statuto*, which had the form, though at first not the substance, of a Constitution. In Venice,

Daniel Manin called upon the Venetian congregation to demand a real representation.

All this time Metternich had been, as usual, endeavouring to devise schemes whereby the popular feeling might be repressed. At first he had sent a confidential agent to strengthen the hands of Rainier in Lombardy. The agent had succeeded no better than the Archduke, and both had agreed to invoke the armed aid of Radetzky. That might suffice for Lombardy. But Sicily was lost: Rome, Tuscany, Piedmont, had accepted the constitutional principle; Venice had joined in the cry for freedom; Hungary, we have seen, had wrung from him many concessions. Everywhere, in those regions, except in Lombardy kept down by force of arms, the cause of absolutism seemed lost. Nor, whilst it was gliding from his practised hand in the countries more immediately under his own domination, had it prospered elsewhere. In Switzerland he had supported the reactionary adherents of the Sonderbund and had been forced to witness their humiliating defeat.* With respect to Denmark, the King of which country had issued a proclamation declaring that all the provinces under his Crown formed one sole and the same State, he had been placed in this dilemma: that if he opposed the King, and asserted the claims of Holstein, he would serve the national party; if he were to support him, he would infringe the Treaty of Vienna. Nor, with respect to Germany, were the prospects at all reassuring. Frederick William III., King of Prussia, his ally against Napoleon, had died in 1840. His successor

* Lord Palmerston announced to the French Government, when Guizot was hesitating whether he should, or should not, throw the influence of France on the side of the Sonderbund, that any demonstration in its favour would be met by a counter-demonstration on the part of England.

Frederick William IV., began his reign by according an amnesty to political offenders, by giving a certain amount of liberty to the press, and by granting extended powers to the Provincial Estates. These acts were accomplished in opposition to the warnings of the Austrian Minister who had guided the policy of his father. The King did not indeed proceed so far as to redeem the promise made by his father in 1813–14, and broken on the morrow of Napoleon's downfall—the promise to grant his people a Constitution. He excused himself on the ground that a written Constitution indicated want of confidence. He expressed himself clearly on this point, when, in January, 1847, he summoned to Berlin the representatives of all the Provincial Estates to discuss affairs. "I do not wish," said he, "that a piece of parchment should come between me and my subjects." Even this action, which was not intended to carry much weight, was regarded by Metternich as the insertion of the thin end of the wedge, and he regarded it as fraught with evil consequences.

But if Metternich looked upon the small concessions of the King of Prussia with apprehension, with far greater indignation did he view the movements in those Germanic States which had been, as he thought, completely brought under his influence by the decrees of Carlsbad and the Conferences of Teplitz and Laibach. Twice had he crushed the national aspirations in Baden; once, very decisively, in Bavaria and Würtemberg. But in 1845 there had arisen in Baden a movement, which, though he imprisoned its author, he could not suppress. In the beginning of 1848 the Liberals of that Grand Duchy were ready to place themselves at the head of a movement for the unity of Germany. In Würtemberg, the progress had been made more gradual; but even there, it had far

passed beyond the limits allowed by Metternich, for in 1847 the King had placed a Liberal Ministry in power, and that Ministry had summoned a representative chamber. In Bavaria, at the same time, the Liberals had forced the King, the lover of Lola Montez, to abdicate. His son, Maximilian, confirmed the decree wrung from his father to summon a parliament. In Hesse Cassel, in Hesse Darmstadt, and in Nassau, Liberal decrees were wrung from half-willing, often unwilling, rulers, and the system of Metternich seemed everywhere tottering to its fall.

Contemporaneous with these events came the shock, the electric shock, of the revolution in Paris. That revolution decided the Liberals of Saxony, and drastic reforms were conceded by the helpless king. In Vienna, the arrival of the news was speedily followed by the posting of placards announcing the approaching downfall of Metternich. For the first time in the crisis of revolution through which he had been passing the Austrian autocrat was really alarmed. For the first time in his life he began to admit the necessity of making concessions to the spirit of reform. But he did nothing. He still hoped that the crisis might be tided over. Vienna would not move unless the impulsion should come from without, and, taking a survey of Germany, he did not see whence it should come. Like Napoleon in 1813, he trusted to time to dissolve the alliance against him.

But, though he had scanned Germany, and had even glanced at Italy, he had omitted to take Hungary into his calculations, and it was from Hungary that the blow came which was to strike him down. The most recent action of Metternich towards Hungary, spoken of in a previous page, had convinced Kossuth that there could be no peace with such a man. As Metternich had felt towards

Napoleon in 1813–15, so Kossuth felt regarding Metternich in 1848. On the 3rd of March the Hungarian leader made a speech in the Pressburg assembly, pointing out in glowing terms the hindrances which had prevented a constitutional union between the two countries; declaring that the freedom of any part of the Empire could only be assured by working for the freedom of the whole, and urging that an address should be submitted to the Emperor embodying the reforms actually essential. The circulation of this speech in Vienna caused the greatest excitement, and a certain professor, Dr. Löhner, at a meeting of the Reading and Debating Society of the University of that city, proposed that negotiations on the subject should be opened with the Estates of Lower Austria—then about to sit in Vienna. This proposal was not adopted. In place of it, a petition for moderate reform received the approval of the Professors. The students, bolder and more enthusiastic, took their stand on a programme far more advanced, but in itself just and moderate.

Still Metternich under-rated the danger. Still he showed himself opposed to such concession as would have calmed the rising feeling. Still he calculated that time was with him. Time was not with him. Every post brought news showing that the desire for the unity of Germany was universal; that the committees of the several States of Germany had summoned a Constituent Assembly to meet at Frankfort to ensure that unity. This news so greatly encouraged the reformers that even the Professors resolved to take the advanced step of adding to their programme a clause demanding the removal of Metternich. They presented their petition to the Emperor Ferdinand on the 12th of March. The Emperor received them coldly, and curtly replied that he would consider the matter. With this reply the Professors returned to the

students, whom they had begged to await the result of their action. The students heard the result with a laugh of defiance, and resolved to act for themselves on the morrow.

Accordingly, on the 13th, they gathered in great numbers in the large hall of the University, and marched thence, in serried ranks, to the Landhaus—the meeting-place that day of the Estates of Lower Austria. As they marched on, their numbers increased rapidly. The people were evidently with them. At length they arrived in front of the Landhaus. The Estates within its walls were sitting, awaiting the prescribed hour to begin discussion. Whilst many of them were urging their President to waive ceremony and to begin at once, and the President was stating his reasons for refusing, a confused murmur of voices was heard outside; a few minutes later the door was burst open, and the students rushed in. After some discussion it was agreed that a deputation of twelve of the students should be present at the debates which were about to begin, and the crowd withdrew to elect these delegates. In their absence the Estates rapidly agreed upon the petition which they would present to the Emperor, and their spokesman went out to read it to the crowd. Its demands were so totally inadequate that the crowd rejected it with indignation; and, further roused by the reading of Kossuth's great speech, forced their way once more into the Landhaus, and insisted that the terms of it should be enlarged. Finally the President set off with the petition, and the crowd, now reinforced by many who had come on hearing that the soldiers were marching to attack the students, pressed on and forced their way within the city walls.

Meanwhile, Metternich was in the castle, bent on resistance. He who had hated revolution, who had spent

the best years of his life in reading, in order to overthrow him, the character of the man who, in his eyes, was the Incarnation of the Revolution, was now face to face with the Revolution itself. Not for an instant did he flinch. His proud face was as proud, as calm, as unruffled, as when it had looked at Dresden in 1813, with the assurance of coming triumph, on the features of Napoleon. Not a single point would he yield. Vainly did the President of the Estates, warning him of the danger outside, entreat him to comply with the request of which he was the bearer. Noticing in the attitude and language of the commandant of the castle, Count Latour, some signs of hesitation, Metternich desired him to make over his command to Prince Windischgrätz, a man, he knew, of iron resolution. In this action the Imperial Council, the members of which were present, concurred. But the majority of them declined, for the moment, to accord their sanction to a further proposal of Metternich's, that Windischgrätz should also be appointed military dictator of the city, with power to use cannon against the people.

Meanwhile, the people were asserting themselves with effect against the not too willing soldiers. It soon appeared, too, that the sympathies of the great middle class were with them. As a last resource, one of the Archdukes ordered the gunners to fire on the crowd. The master-gunner refused either to obey his orders or to allow the gunners to obey them. A few minutes later, and the deputations of citizens forced their way into the castle. Treated at first somewhat roughly, they maintained their ground firmly, demanding the immediate resignation of Metternich. For a short space of time their demand was not listened to, but the news that the students had obtained arms and were pressing on,

changed the tone of the courtiers. At last, Metternich, yielding to the urgent pressure of the Archduke John, and, I am convinced, to the general safety rather than to care for his own, stepped forward and declared that as they all told him that his resignation would restore peace to Austria, he resigned, and he wished good luck to the new Government. Of all the Council, the only man who protested against his resignation was Windischgrätz. The Archdukes and the other members seemed glad to be rid of a master.

Thus fell the man before whom Napoleon had fallen. Thus fell with him, the edifice of autocratic absolutism which he had constructed. He fell, conscious of no faults, believing himself a martyr, steadfast in his adherence to his own system. "If," he wrote four years later, "I had to begin my career again, I would follow again the course I took before, and would not deviate from it for an instant."

CHAPTER X.

CONCLUSION—CHARACTER.

1848–1859.

So little had Metternich apprehended the real character of the crisis which overthrew him that he had expected to be able to retire quietly from the Castle to his own villa. He soon learned, however, that not only had his villa been burned, but that his very life was in danger. With infinite difficulty he succeeded in making his way to Dresden. But he was not safe there. He pushed on, then, with all possible despatch into Holland, and crossed thence to England. There he remained secure from the tempest still raging on the Continent, until November of the following year, when, the storm having nearly spent itself, he recrossed the channel, and took up his residence at Brussels. Nineteen months later (June, 1851), he was able to revisit and occupy his Castle of Johannisburg, on the Rhine. There he received a passing visit from the King of Prussia. His stay there, however, was short, for, towards the close of the same year, he returned to Vienna, to reside there permanently.

A new Emperor, Francis Joseph, ruled and reigned in Austria; and, from him, Metternich at an early period after he had installed himself in his house, received a visit. There was no question of his return to office. It

was never offered to him, and, had it been, it is almost certain he would not have accepted it. The policy of the Austrian Empire, though still absolutist, showed symptoms of diverging in a direction contrary to that which Metternich had ever pursued. He loved, however, to criticise, to give advice, to say how he would have acted in this or that circumstance; and the Emperor, very young, impressionable, still in very difficult position, was glad to converse with a statesman who had guided the fortunes of the Austrian Empire in times still more difficult, and when its very existence was at stake. But though he listened with interest and attention to the advice Metternich was glad to offer, Francis Joseph was too shrewd, too well advised, to follow it. Probably he recognised that the world in which he had been called to play so great a part was not the world of which Metternich had cognizance. The old statesman soon realised that his words no longer carried the weight of former days; but even from this he was able to derive consolation. The policy of regenerated Austria was not always a wise policy, and when its failure was conspicuous Metternich was able to comfort himself with the belief—that grand resource of retired statesmen—that if he had still directed affairs, a more fortunate issue would have resulted. This thought must have been an especial support and consolation to the unbending absolutist when he witnessed the undoing, bit by bit, of the work of his lifetime. Within five years of his fall, he saw a Napoleon seated on the throne of France, acknowledged as Emperor with effusion by England, and recognised by all Europe.

He lived to witness the two Powers, who in his years and mature manhood had been persistent enemies, France and England, wage war against his friend of the same period, the Russia which, for the ten years between 1815

and 1825, he had bent to his will. He lived still to see Napoleon III. repeat, towards the Austrian ambassador in Paris, Baron Hübner, the scene in which he himself had taken part with the great Napoleon prior to the war of 1809; and, exactly half a century later, to witness the complement of that scene in the breaking out of war between the two countries. As in 1809 Eckmühl and Wagram followed the declaration of war, so, in 1859, did Magenta and Solferino.

Fortunately for him he was spared the knowledge of the later incidents of that war. He lived long enough to hear of the early advantages of the French at Montebello and Palestro, but he died the 5th of June—the day after Magenta had been fought. He was thus spared the pain of learning, not merely of that defeat, and of the defeat of Solferino, but what would have pained him far more—of the signing of that Peace of Villafranca which dealt a fatal, and, in its results, a decisive blow to his Italian policy of 1815.

Metternich was thrice married. His first wife, I have stated in its place in this book, was the grand-daughter of the famous Kaunitz. She bore him seven children, four of whom died in his lifetime. Of those who survived, three daughters, the eldest married Count Sandor; the other two remained single. The Countess dying in 1825, Metternich married, the 5th November, 1827, the Baroness Maria-Antoinetta von Leykham. She died in childbirth the 12th January, 1829, after having given birth, on the 7th, to a son, who, called Richard, was, in later years, ambassador at Paris. Metternich married for the third time, the 30th January, 1831, the Countess Melanie Zichy, who bore him three children, and died in March, 1854.

Metternich was a very accomplished man. He was

passionately attached to art, to science, and to letters. He was well-read, a good talker, an excellent listener, was skilled in the use of his pencil and paint-brush, and thoroughly versed in those thousand and one artifices which make a man a success in the drawing-room. His appearance was eminently *spirituel*. Though he wrote in later years to Humboldt, and though he recorded in his journal in his youth, that he felt that his vocation called him to art and a study of the exact sciences, he was, in very deed, admirably adapted for the *rôle* which he filled between his entrance into public life and 1815. His calm imperturbability, his invincible, unshakable, "stability" (his own word when describing himself), were weapons which he used with marked success against Napoleon. Nor was his patience a less valuable quality in that great encounter. Brought into contact with a man whom he regarded as the incarnation of a principle which he detested—a principle fraught, he believed, with ruin to society and to nations—he set to work to study, so as at the proper moment to be able to foil, that man. For seven years he listened to his every word, he watched his every gesture. All this time he completely imposed on his intended victim. The charm of his manner and conversation completely deceived Napoleon. Even the aristocratic *hauteur*, which he knew so well how and when to display, fascinated the *parvenu* Emperor. Napoleon believed in him: believed, that is to say, that Metternich had a personal regard for himself. Thus it happened that the ambassador whom of all the ambassadors at his Court he ought to have trusted the least, he trusted the most. But for Metternich, the Austrian marriage—that fatal event in the career of Napoleon—would not have taken place. The Austrian Emperor, on receiving the proposal, consulted Metternich before he spoke to his daughter.

One word from Metternich would have stopped the negotiation. It is not only probable, it is morally certain, that Metternich, knowing Napoleon as he did, would not speak that word because he saw that the marriage would engender a confidence in the friendship of Austria which might lead Napoleon into ventures from which Austria would reap advantage. That happened in the mind of Napoleon which Metternich had foreseen. Whilst he, cold-blooded and calculating in all his political measures, and the Emperor Francis, were firmly resolved that the interests of Austria should count for everything, and the marriage for nothing, in the contest with Napoleon, the French Emperor, misreading Metternich, calculating on the pride, instead of on the humiliations he had forced him to undergo, of the Habsburg Emperor, always looked upon the marriage as a reserve which he could employ with effect when all other resources should fail. He was not undeceived even by the language used by Metternich at the famous interview at Dresden. Even after Leipsig he could not believe that an Emperor of Austria would allow a son-in-law of the Habsburgs to be deposed. All this was the work of Metternich. He had wrung confidences from Napoleon and had not only given him none in return, but had insinuated false hopes which could scarcely fail to lead him to his ruin. And they did lead him to his ruin. It was his trust in his father-in-law that induced Napoleon to continue the exhausting war in Spain whilst he armed all the Continent against Russia. It was the same trust that led him, after the catastrophe, to refuse terms which would have still left France greater than he had found her.

In the events, then, which led to the fall of Napoleon Metternich was the chief factor, the chief conspirator, the principal agent. No man contributed so largely to

that event as he. It might with truth be said that, but for him, it might not have occurred. To say this is, perhaps, to open a subject too wide for discussion in the last pages of an historical sketch. But this at least is certain: it was the too great confidence of Napoleon in Austria that sealed his overthrow. That confidence was the consequence of his marriage with Marie Louise. The marriage with Marie Louise was the work of Metternich. If, then, the overthrow of Napoleon was an unmixed advantage to Europe, Metternich is entitled to receive the chief praise for the accomplishment of a task to which, in my belief, I repeat, no individual man contributed so much as he.

There are many, then, who can regard his career up to 1815 with unmixed admiration. But after 1815? He had struck down Napoleon because he was the embodiment of the Revolution; because he had established a system which was unsupportable to the sovereigns of Europe. Between 1815 and 1820 he obtained an influence such as would have enabled him to lay the foundations of a system which might ensure, by gradual means, to the suffering peoples of Europe, to the peoples who had endured so much, who had made sacrifices without stint, to ensure the triumph of his anti-Napoleonic policy, the realisation of those aspirations the desire for which separates the man from the brute. Did he do this? Did he take a single step towards accomplishing this end —an end which is the goal of all statesmanship worthy of the name? Did he not, on the contrary, employ all his power, all his influence, all his untiring energy, to the forging of new fetters for the human race; for the development of plans which should keep the peoples slaves for ever? If Napoleon rested on brute force—a hypothesis which can be argued—Metternich rested on it also, a truism which

cannot be denied. Can we wonder that when he fell there was no man to pity him, no voice to cry "God save him?" The Napoleonic Legend survived the death of Napoleon, and bore fruits in our own time. It may bear them yet again. The system of Metternich died with Metternich. No power can ever recall it from the tomb.

I am indeed, spared the trouble of writing the epitaph of Metternich, for he unconsciously wrote it himself. He wrote it when he thought he was writing the epitaph of Napoleon. These are his own words: "The vast edifice which he had constructed was exclusively the work of his hands, and he himself was the keystone of the arch. But this gigantic construction was essentially wanting in its foundation; the materials of which it was composed were nothing but the ruins of other buildings; some were rotten from decay, others had never possessed consistency from the very beginning. The keystone of the arch has been withdrawn, and the whole edifice has fallen in."

Such, in a few words, is the history of the system which Metternich established on the ruins of the French Empire.

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