

THE AUSTRO-GERMAN ALLIANCE.

THE journey of Prince Bismarck to Vienna, his almost royal reception there, and the close-drawn relations of Austria and Germany, announced as they have been *urbi et orbi*, have produced a deep impression on the whole of Europe. This conspicuous proceeding on the part of the Prince has indeed made a real and a sudden change in the aspect of European affairs. Its meaning could not be mistaken: the alliance of the three Emperors had come to an end. It was succeeded by an alliance of two of them, directed against the third. This was a blow evidently and openly aimed at Russia, and it was made of more importance by the fact that its author was determined that nobody should mistake its meaning. Prince Bismarck and Count Andrassy had had quite opportunities enough at Gastein of meeting and making all necessary arrangements. The Vienna journey could thus have only one object; it was an anti-Russian demonstration. At the same time official journals told us that the Emperor William had only made up his mind with the greatest reluctance to adopt his chancellor's new policy, and that his people owed him the liveliest gratitude for this sacrifice of his most cherished sentiments to the welfare of Germany.

Prince Bismarck had taken great care, by assiduous attentions to the French ambassador at Vienna, to show that he had no designs on the French Republic, and the German press kept repeating that the relations of the two countries had never been upon a better footing. As I write, indeed, Count de Saint Vallier, the French ambassador at Berlin, is a guest at Varzin, an exceedingly unusual thing for a foreign minister. Russia had seen the storm coming and had on her side been recently looking out for allies. The Czarewitch had, in the first place, paid a visit to Stockholm, where he had received the most cordial welcome. Now in case of war the neutrality of Sweden is indispensable to Russia. Finland has continued to be Swedish at heart, and the language and institutions of Sweden still prevail in her towns, the province being only nominally connected with Russia. The autonomy of Finland has been scrupulously respected and the Finns have no grievance against Russia. There is therefore no actively separatist feeling. But their sympathies with their brethren on the other side of the Baltic are lively, and this sympathy would probably, at the sight of the Swedish banners, resolve itself into an insurrection on behalf of the old country. To restore Finland to Sweden would be a handsome price to pay for a Swedish alliance, and

the bargain might, under certain circumstances, be a tempting one to strike. In 1854, Sweden allowed herself to be worked upon by England and France, and in November of that year a treaty was signed, whereby she bound herself to invade Finland in the spring of 1855.

Recently, too, Russia has taken steps as though to secure the support of France. The Czarewitch even went to Paris without stopping at Berlin. It seems likely indeed that France will not enter into engagements with any one, but will accept with gratitude the kind expressions of Germany, of Austria, of Russia, and of England alike, reserving the power to act as occasion may demand in her own interests. The existing political situation of Europe may therefore be thus summed up. Germany and Austria are in close alliance and supported by England, Italy is undecided, France is watching her opportunity, and Russia is isolated. What then is the motive, and what the object, of the Austro-German alliance? Will it rest upon a real community of interest? or has it no other justifying cause than the views of the ministers for the time being? What again will be its consequences as concerns Europe? Such are the points which I now propose to examine.

The understanding between Austria and Germany cannot in any way surprise those who have taken the trouble to follow closely the course of events for the last ten years. It is the logical consequence of the new situations brought about in 1870, and could be deduced from them by a process of reasoning almost mathematical in its strictness. In a work published in 1869, and entitled *View of the Eastern Question*, the Russian General Rotislaf Fadaieff put forward with surprising lucidity the reasons which were likely to bring about an Austro-German alliance. "As long," said he, "as the rivalry between France and Prussia lasts, Russia will have a certain liberty of action, but when this difference has been peaceably adjusted, or settled by an appeal to arms"—let us remember that this was written in 1869—"then Russia must hasten to get any difficulty out of her way at once, for in all probability she will have to look to an alliance of England, Austria, and Prussia, far more dangerous to her than the existing alliance between England and France." The personal sentiments of the Emperor William have been the only obstacle to this hitherto. Farther on General Fadaieff writes as follows: "The termination of the hostile attitude of Austria towards Prussia, and her alliance with that power, will give her much greater strength than an alliance with France, which would always be insecure and intermittent. The contiguity of their territories, the identity of their interests in the east, the popular sentiments on both sides, and the sympathies of race, make an alliance with Prussia far more advantageous than any other to Austria. If the situation of Russia

was difficult enough already when Austria protected Turkey, it will become much more difficult when Prussia is at the back of Austria. A triple range of defences—Austria, Prussia, England—will defend the Balkans thenceforward.” This is the exact programme which Prince Bismarck and Count Andrassy have recently agreed upon at Vienna, indicated ten years in advance by a clear-sighted Russian. I have myself more than once endeavoured, in the pages of the *Fortnightly Review*,¹ to show that England has nothing to fear in reference to the permanent establishment of Russia in Turkish territory. I then argued that Germany would never permit the great river which, after watering so many German lands, opens a way from them to the Black Sea, to fall into Russian hands. As long as Prussia occupied a subordinate position in reference to Austria, she might be content to follow the fortunes of Russia. But since Austria, driven out of the Germanic confederation, has ceased to be a formidable rival; and since Prussia, once humble, has become Germany and great, she holds herself bound to sustain German interests on the Danube, as well as on the Rhine. *Die Wacht am Rhein* has been a war song against France; the Germans and the Austrians may very well sing *Die Wacht an der Donau* in chorus, against Russia. To prevent Russia from occupying Turkey is, for England, merely a question of the balance of power, and of the interests of her colonial empire. Even if the Czar were reigning at Constantinople, he would still be a long way from India. But to the Germans the advance of Russia is a question of life and death. Should she succeed in absorbing the Slavs of the Danube, the realisation of Panslavonic dreams becomes a certainty. A glance at any ethnographic map will show that the Slavs reach to Trieste, to Gratz, and even to the western borders of Bohemia; that is to say, that they occupy three-fourths of Europe, having the advantage over the Teutonic races, not merely in number, but still more by the extent of a territory where a hundred millions of men could well establish themselves. Germany may have chosen to show herself favourable to the Russians during their war with Turkey, because she hoped to find her account therein; but she will never permit them to reap the fruit of their victories. Such were the views which I set before the readers of the *Fortnightly Review* two years ago, and the course of events seems to show that these views were not far wrong.

To explain the recent proceedings of Germany we must go back to 1870. At that time Russia saved Prussia by preventing Austria from taking her in flank when Napoleon III. crossed the Rhine.²

(1) July, 1877; February, 1878; November, 1878.

(2) In a dispatch of the 20th July, 1870, to the Austrian ambassador at Paris, Count Beust says, “We think it certain (with all respect to General Fleury) that Russia holds to her alliance with Prussia so strongly that, in certain eventualities, the inter-

This permitted the Germans to crush France, and to become an empire. It was clearly a blunder on Russia's part, and she is probably well aware of it by this time. What, then, were the reasons which inclined her to commit it? There were some which were not devoid of speciousness, and were quite independent of family ties and of the personal affection which existed between the Emperor Alexander and King William. The triple alliance of England, France, and Austria had, in 1855, covered Turkey, had forced peace upon Russia, and still continued to interpose an insurmountable barrier to Russian designs. To recover liberty of action in the East it was therefore necessary to weaken France and Austria, and so to reduce England to impotence on the Continent. Sadowa and Sedan thus had an appearance of being Russian victories, and Prussia seemed to be doing the Czar's work by humbling his adversaries. The Treaty of Frankfort in 1871 was the revenge for the Treaty of Paris in 1856, and opened, or seemed to open, the road to Constantinople for the Muscovite eagles. Without spending a rouble or moving a soldier the face of Europe was changed, and, as it seemed at least, entirely in the interest of Russia. Another eventual advantage seemed also in sight. Russia can always come to an understanding with any state which, for the time being, desires some special object more strongly than it fears the preponderance of the Slav element. She can never count upon Germany or Austria or England giving up to her the Danube and the Balkans. Nor would it seem that France, either as the ancient ally of Poland or as representing revolution principles, can ally herself with Russian despotism. But France mutilated, burning for revenge and for the recovery of her lost provinces, might some day make terms with a power which should help her to re-establish her ancient frontier by a joint attack on the German Empire. A Russian alliance, therefore, which would once have appeared a monstrosity, might become even for republican France a temptation and a ground of hope. Thus Prince Gortschakoff had played the game well, and seemed to have it in his hands. After weakening, by means of the Prussian arms, his two enemies of 1853 and 1863, he had left in the rear of Prussia herself a nation rich, warlike, nearly forty millions strong, on the aid of which he might always count when the day should come on which a serious attack on Germany should become necessary.

Prince Bismarck was not blind to this danger. He knew that it is not possible to alter the map of Europe for one's own profit, with-

vention of the Russian army must be looked upon not as probable but as assured. We also think it certain that our taking the field would be followed immediately by a similar step on the part of Russia, which threatens us not merely in Galicia, but also on the Pruth and on the Lower Danube."

out exciting formidable jealousies. He saw well enough that the day might come when he would have to make head on all sides at once, against France, against Russia, and against Austria. The Russians have a natural hatred of the Germans, and are at the same time fond of the French. The rapid successes of the German army in 1870 wounded the susceptibilities of the Russian army, which thenceforward became still more French in sympathy. These hostile sentiments were indeed balanced by the affection of the Emperor Alexander for his uncle. But it was known that the heir to the Russian throne was quite otherwise minded, and that he shared the dislike of the people for Germany. The hostility of Austria, that is to say of the Austrian court and army, was also unquestionable. Indeed it appears from a correspondence interchanged in the newspapers between Count Beust and the Duke de Gramont,¹ that Austria had actually undertaken to attack Germany about the beginning of September, 1870. After the first French defeats, and under the threats of Russia, the excuse was made that Napoleon III. had declared war without waiting for Austria to be ready. Thus Austria aspired to take revenge for Sadowa, just as France did for Sedan. Should a change of sovereign take place in Russia, Germany might find herself threatened on three sides at once, like Frederick II. in the Seven Years' War. The German government well understood the danger, and devoted the whole of its energies to the strengthening of its military establishment. Objections were made on all sides, even in the German Parliament, to the military mania. But when Count Moltke mounted the tribune to defend the war estimates, he had no hesitation in indicating boldly the dangers which had to be foreseen, and against which it was necessary to take precautions on

(1) In a letter addressed to Count Beust on the 8th of January, 1873, the Duke de Gramont establishes irrefutably that in July, 1870, Austria had engaged to give armed assistance to France. He cites an extract from a dispatch of Count Beust of the 20th July, 1870, which says: "Count Witzthum has delivered to our august master the verbal message which the Emperor Napoleon deigned to entrust to him. These words of the Emperor's, as well as the explanations which the Duc de Gramont has been good enough to add, have prevented any possibility of the misunderstandings to which the unforeseen occurrence of this sudden war had given rise. Be good enough, therefore, to repeat to his Majesty and his ministers that, faithful to our engagements, as they are recorded in the letters interchanged last year between the two sovereigns, we consider the cause of France as our own, and we shall contribute to the success of her arms to the utmost of our power—'dans les limites du possible.'" Further: "The word neutrality, which we regret to pronounce, is forced upon us by imperious necessity and by a logical appreciation of our joint interests, but this neutrality is only a means to enable us to reach the true object of our policy, and to complete our armaments without exposing ourselves to a sudden attack either from Prussia or Russia, an attack from which we are not in a position to defend ourselves." On the evening of the 24th July the Austrian ambassador, becoming more explicit on this question of armaments, informed the Duc de Gramont in writing that, in the condition in which the war had surprised Austria, she could not possibly take the field before the month of September.

three sides at once. This situation gives the key to the important events of May, 1875. A rumour was suddenly set afloat that Germany was about to pick a quarrel with France. England and Russia took measures of energetic interference at Berlin, while Austria on the contrary held aloof, saying that she had every confidence in the good faith of her neighbour. War seemed so imminent that the Emperor Alexander and Prince Gortschakoff hurried to visit the Emperor William, and after interviews lasting two days Prince Gortschakoff published in his official newspapers the cruel telegram, "Peace is now assured." Nothing more humiliating for Prince Bismarck could have occurred. It appeared that he had wished to throw himself upon France without any provocation, and that Russia had stopped him. It was to Russia, and Russia alone, that Europe owed the preservation of peace. It can easily be understood that Prince Bismarck has never pardoned Prince Gortschakoff this deadly injury. Again and again, in conversation and in Parliament, he has asserted that he was slandered, and that he never had any designs on France. He says so and we must believe him; but, if it be so, it was the military party which took it into its head to act, for the fact of the projected action is beyond dispute. The French Government knew perfectly well the demands which were about to be made. The claims of Germany were that France should reduce her army to two hundred thousand men, and should instantly put a stop to the reconstruction of her fortresses. During the whole of the month of April the German press had not ceased to accuse France of preparing an attack on Germany. As this was absolutely and manifestly false it was clear that a quarrel (literally a *querelle d'Allemand*) was being picked. The fact received official recognition in the English Parliament. The Foreign Secretary—a question being asked on the subject—answered that it was true that for a moment the peace of Europe had been seriously compromised, but only in consequence of a misunderstanding. France had imagined that she was threatened by Germany, and Germany had believed that she was menaced by France. Thanks to the friendly intervention of Russia and England the mutual apprehension had been removed, and harmony had been restored in Europe. As it was certain that Germany could not for a moment have believed in any menace on the part of France, which was then so little prepared for war that in case of it she had resolved to withdraw her troops behind the Loire, it was not very hard to see from which side the attack had begun. Nor is it difficult now to see what idea had guided, it may be Prince Bismarck, it may be Count Moltke. The wonderful resources of France, and the incredible rapidity with which she was recovering herself, had astounded, and even, with some reason, terrified Germany. She was

thought to have been crushed, and lo! she was again on her feet, with financial and military resources far greater than those she had enjoyed under the Empire. Was it not wise to stop her while there was time, while the tried friendship of the Emperor Alexander could be counted upon? The longer the time of waiting, the greater would be the danger. This at least seemed clear. The tactics of the Prussian army may be thus summed up: "Take the initiative, and attack the enemy as soon as he comes within sight." This principle was transported into the region of politics. But the demand was rather too large a one to address even to the most devoted of nephews. The Czar replied, "If I were to consent, my people would make common cause with Europe against us." The rejoinder was made, "Do what you like with the East, take Constantinople if you must." But Prince Gortschakoff refused. It is said that at Berlin there was an idea of going their own way. They could, it was held, finish France before Russia and England had made up their minds or mobilised a single division, and when the deed had once been done no one would have stirred, or, at the worst, Germany might have fought it out. But the Emperor William would not play for such heavy stakes, nor would he run the risk of war with his nephew.

There can be no doubt that the incident of May, 1875, was a grave and dangerous check for Germany. The whole of Europe had combined against her to defend France. But in the Eastern Question Prince Bismarck found a way out of the difficulty much superior to that which the war party had preferred. The Herzegovinian insurrection was from its beginning supported by Austria and by Germany. The Austrian Government kept as governor of Dalmatia General Rodich, a man devoted to the Slavs, and the insurgents were at no loss for ammunition and help of all kinds. The interviews and the alliance of the three Emperors followed. At this England was disturbed, but without any reason, for in the long-run her interests in the East could not be threatened thereby. The alliance gave Russia full liberty to bring the Turks to book, and even to go to Constantinople, but only because it was certain that Germany and Austria could at any moment bring her back again by cutting her off from her base. Austria was to have Bosnia and the Herzegovina to rectify the Dalmatian frontier. For Germany, what was the gain? None at all; merely the pleasure of obliging her good friends. But as a matter of fact the advantages she hoped for were not small. In the first place the Anglo-Russian understanding of the month of May with France was broken up. Russia was sure to draw upon herself the enmity of England, and perhaps even actual hostilities. In the struggle with the Turks she must necessarily be weakened, and the good-will of Germany would become absolutely

necessary to her. On the other hand Austria, by advancing into the Balkan Peninsula, was certain sooner or later to awake the jealousy of Russia, and thus she also would be unable to do without the support of Germany. From that moment, indeed, a complete understanding existed between Prince Bismarck and Count Andrassy; nor did the Prince make any mystery about it. Being interrogated in Parliament about his foreign policy, he replied that he was on terms of friendship and alliance with the two neighbouring empires, but that if in certain eventualities it became necessary to make a choice, he could not but incline to the side to which community of interests and of race drew him; that is to say, the Austrian alliance had become the foundation-stone of German policy. During the Russo-Turkish war, and especially at the time of the siege of Plevna, Germany recovered full liberty of action. The plan of May, 1875, might have been taken up again without fear of troublesome intervention; but Prince Bismarck did not take it up again, perhaps because it had never been his, perhaps because he had his eye on something better. When a man has had three enemies to face, and has been able to turn one of them into a friend, the reduction of another of them to a condition of impotence is sufficient to restore the feeling of security. Now it was easier to checkmate Russia than France. Against Russia Germany could always count on England and on Austria, while these two powers would by no means have been equally disposed to sacrifice France, the military power of which was besides far superior to that of Russia. The saying of Prince Schwarzenberg, "Austria will astonish the world by her ingratitude," is not forgotten. This saying might nowadays be transferred to Prussia. It seems to be the destiny of Russia to meet with ingratitude. At the time of the Treaty of Berlin Prince Bismarck did not assist Russia in maintaining the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano. The only support he gave her was in her demand for the portion of Bessarabia touching on the mouths of the Danube. The gift was one of doubtful value, for it has drawn on Russia the hatred of the Roumanians, who did them such yeoman's service at Plevna. Austria, without drawing the sword, has had the best luck. By means of Serajevo and Novi Bazar she has made her way to the heart of the peninsula; she is within a step of Mitrovitza, the terminus of the Salonica Railway, and she will inevitably make her way thither. Years ago Herr Hahn, the sometime consul of Austria at Syra, pointed out in a well-written pamphlet that Salonica was the true gate of Eastern Europe. It is by this port that Austria and Germany can bring about the object they have in view—the commercial development of all eastern countries. Germany, on the other hand, has been absolutely disinterested. She found ample

compensation in the recovery of the security of her position. To put shortly what has just been said, it is evident that the Austro-German alliance, confirmed recently with so much solemnity at Vienna, is Prince Bismarck's revenge for Prince Gortschakoff's telegram of May, 1875.

In what, then, does the agreement arrived at by Prince Bismarck and Count Andrassy, and ratified by the two Emperors, consist? This is not precisely known. It may be taken for granted that the object is not to attack this power or that. It may be, perhaps, if not a customs union, which would not be easy to carry out, at any rate a half-union, brought about by a reciprocal adjustment of tariffs; the extension of Austrian influence, and probably also of the Austrian occupation, in Turkey, and especially in Macedonia; the joint development of the commerce and the resources of the East; and finally, the entrusting to Austria of the guardianship of the peninsula against Russia. There should follow as a corollary on this the obligation to defend the arrangement jointly against anybody who should oppose it or find fault with it. In short, it may be a highly pacific and businesslike convention, but still one with a couple of million bayonets in the background.

We have now to consider whether this understanding has no ground except in the personal views of the two chancellors, or whether it is solidly founded in the permanent interests of the two empires. No doubt it was much easier for Prince Bismarck to come to terms with a Hungarian than with a pure-blooded Austrian. All good Magyars bless Sadowa, which gave them back their constitution, their autonomy, and their ancient liberties. Nor must we forget that in 1866 Prussia had formed a Hungarian legion to raise Hungary. Thus Count Andrassy had nothing to forget in his colloquy with Prince Bismarck; he had, on the contrary, not a little to remember in the way of service done to his country. Besides, had he not been condemned to death in 1848, and obliged to fly before the Russian armies when they invaded Hungary to force it under the detested yoke of the Austrian despotism? The memories and personal dispositions of Count Andrassy must therefore have facilitated the understanding. But there was more than this; the alliance seemed to be commanded by the clearly understood interest of the two empires. Of this, in the case of Germany, there can be no doubt. A firm alliance with Austria would permit her, if need were, to make head at once against enemies from the westward and from the eastward. By discouraging aggressive projects, such an alliance would be the best guarantee of peace. It is, moreover, far more popular at Berlin than a Russian alliance would be. It may be remembered with what bitterness the Russophil policy of Prince Bismarck two

years ago was attacked both in the parliament and in the press of Germany. The understanding with Austria practically restored the state before 1866, in the time of the Germanic Confederation.

But may not Austria have been outwitted in the bargain? Some of her friends are of this opinion. If the Austro-Hungarian Empire, say they, following the road pointed out by Prince Bismarck, plunges into Oriental affairs, it will come out of them a Slavo-Magyar state, the centre of which will be at Pesth; and the German provinces, irritated at losing their predominance, will turn their eyes to the great German fatherland. No doubt the position of Austria, made up as she is of three different, and at heart hostile, races, is difficult enough. Whatever policy be adopted, stubborn resistance must be met with, and serious danger. But it is necessary to make up the mind to that which offers the least of both. The three chief points which have to be observed are as follows. Austria cannot suffer any Russian aggrandisement in Europe without danger in the future. Secondly, Austria cannot continue to sacrifice to the Germans and the Magyars the Slavs, who are as numerous as the Magyars and the Germans put together. The further progress they make in civilisation, the more conscious do they become of their strength, and if their just demands be not complied with, they will turn to Russia. Lastly, Austria cannot refuse the difficult but glorious task of taking into wardship the Balkan Peninsula. The new States which have been formed there wish to retain their independence. But if they are left to themselves they are as yet too weak to resist the will of Russia. Eastern Roumelia and Macedonia will soon follow their example. Must not they too be protected? Grave disorders will once more break out in Turkey. Who is to quiet them? If it be not Austria, it must be Russia. There is, therefore, no alternative for the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It must either accept the wardship and defence of the Peninsula, or abandon it to Russia. Now this latter alternative would infallibly bring about the triumph of Panslavism. But to accomplish the mission which has been imposed upon her in the East, in face of Russia, necessarily hostile and irritated, Austria needs an ally who can be depended upon, who is close at hand, who has the same interests as herself. And this ally can but be Germany. No advantage could accrue to Germany from the destruction of Austria. The increase in the number of her Roman Catholic subjects would complicate her internal difficulties; and what could she do with the Magyars, the Czechs, and the other Slavonic races? To incorporate them in the Empire, or annex them as subordinate States, would be to make irreconcilable enemies of them. Thus the understanding between Berlin and Vienna has another basis than the mere personal

sympathies of Count Bismarck and Count Andrassy. Germany has need of the friendship of Austria, and Austria cannot dispense with the support of Germany. The new Austrian Chancellor, Baron Haymerle, has been chosen expressly for the purpose of carrying out the policy adopted by his predecessor as to Eastern affairs. He has lived much in the East; he speaks all its languages; he knows all the interests and all the races concerned. He understands the mission and the responsibility of his country in these quarters, and no minister in Europe is more capable of discovering practical and advantageous solutions of the problem. If he is not hampered by paltry private enmities, he will make Austria take in reference to Turkey the position which her self-preservation dictates. For we must not forget that to Austria the question is, "To be or not to be."

Now let us consider how the Austro-German understanding may affect the interests of other European States, and what view disinterested friends of liberty should take of it. Turkey, as she has been left by the Treaty of Berlin, is an impossibility, a monstrosity which cannot live, either from the point of view of geography or of finance or of administrative government. The best government in the world could not extract from these fragments of disorganized territory the means of meeting the difficulties, exterior and interior, which are continually on the increase. The situation is intolerable. The treasury is empty; the Sultan himself is penniless; the officials are not paid; the soldiers, who are equally unpaid, desert or live by plundering the inhabitants. At the spectacle of so many evils it is impossible to avoid a feeling of indignation against Lord Beaconsfield and his Ministry, who insisted upon the continuance of this detestable *régime*. As Mr. Gladstone admirably remarked in one of his articles in August, 1879:—"Upon every contested question that has arisen in the councils of Europe, we have been the champions, not of liberty, but of oppression. Not an inch has been added to free soil through our agency or with our good-will. Servia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Greece, perhaps Roumania—every one of them are smaller through our influence than they would have been without us. For the first time, it can now be said with truth, that in the management of a great crisis of human destiny it would have been better for the interests of justice and of liberty if the British nation had not existed." How can we not desire that an end should be put, in one way or in another, to the miseries of the Turkish *régime*? Who would not greet with enthusiasm even the Cossack's lance as the signal of deliverance? The faults of this *régime* are such that at the moment I write these lines, the English Cabinet is setting its fleet in motion to obtain reforms which the Sultan may pro-

mise, but which by common consent he cannot execute. It is necessary, therefore, either to allow the continuance of oppression and anarchy which are ruining the country and decimating the population—an alternative which seems intolerable even to the English Ministers who have maintained such a state of things—or else to take the administration out of the hands of the Turks. But who is to be put in their place? It can only be Austria, which, occupying Novi-Bazar already, has but a step to make to reach Mitrovitza, the railway terminus, and so to make her way to Salonica. What a relief for the unfortunate population of Macedonia, to be saved from the violence and the exactions of the Turkish soldiers and officials! It is in the name of humanity that this solution should be demanded—a solution which is at once the only practicable and the only desirable one. Europe cannot any longer tolerate the disorder prevailing in the provinces which have been left to Turkey, a disorder of such a kind that before long it will reduce them to a desert. This would be an advance towards the radical cure of sending the Turk, that is to say of course the Turkish Government, bag and baggage back into Asia. But then what is to be done with Constantinople? The Greeks claim it, but they could not keep possession of it, the whole of the peninsula behind it being occupied by Slavs. These latter must some day or other have it as their natural capital. But obviously the hour for this is not yet come. Meanwhile a mixed occupation by England and Austria seems to be indicated as advisable. Another combination would perhaps be even better, because it would be a step towards the final solution. Roumania, Servia, Montenegro, Bulgaria,¹ and Eastern Roumelia might form a confederation into which Austria might enter as representing Bosnia and Macedonia; and Austria in the name of the confederation might occupy Constantinople, with the support, and if necessary the military co-operation, of England and Germany, while Greece could have all the provinces where the Hellenic element is dominant. This is evidently the solution of the problem which the future has in store. By hastening its realisation the peoples concerned would be spared years of suffering, and Europe would be relieved from constant occasions of disquiet and of conflict.

Lord Salisbury greeted with an explosion of enthusiasm the Austro-German understanding of which "he only knew what the newspapers said." From the point of view of English interests he

(1) These embryo States, or rather provinces, are said to be now forming a league directed against all extensions of Austria in the East. It is difficult to conceive a more senseless policy. Who can free the Slav districts still under Turkish yoke if it be not Austria? She alone can give prosperity and liberty to the Peninsula, and the Czechs ought to convince their southern brethren of the fact.

was right. But why attempt to show that it was due to his policy? And why speak of it in a tone of menace and bravado towards Russia? Some consideration is surely due to a State with which one is on friendly terms. And besides, Russia, by delivering Bulgaria and laying the axe at the root of the crumbling tree of Ottoman rule, has deserved well of humanity. The commission which Austria has accepted in the East certainly does England a great service. The late war has shown to demonstration that she is not in a position to defend Constantinople against Russia. According to Major Brackenbury, who followed the campaign and whose authority in this matter is great, the Russians might have reached the Sea of Marmora in less than a month. Instead of obstinately determining to take Plevna they should have masked it, and the march of Gourko should have been strongly supported and pushed forward. The Sultan, who, as it was, was preparing for departure, would have crossed into Asia, and Constantinople, a prey to anarchy, would have capitulated. Osman Pasha would not have stirred. The Turks, admirable fighters on their own ground and behind entrenchments, cannot move quickly because they have no commissariat, and still more because the Commander-in-Chief cannot secure obedience to his orders. The subordinate leaders, either from jealousy or want of discipline, act on their own account, and every combined movement becomes frustrated. Now that Turkey exists only in name, and that the base of the Russian army would be the Balkans and not the Danube, Russia could reach Constantinople in a fortnight. The little States on the road would have to give up to her not merely the right of way but also their troops, as Roumania did in the late war, whether they would or no. Thus England would come on the scene too late. It is easy therefore to understand that she looks with satisfaction on the acceptance of the function of guardian of the East by Austria, supported as Austria is by Germany.

Ought France, it will be asked, to be irritated or disquieted at the understanding? As this understanding is before all things a measure of precaution against Russia, France, which has recently shown herself decidedly Turcophile, ought, it would appear, to greet it with satisfaction. But it seems to me that the line of conduct adopted during the last Eastern war by the French journals, especially by the *Journal des Débats* and the *République Française*, has been as much wanting in foresight as in humanity and liberal spirit. They have constantly attacked Russia, who is, after all is said, their only possible ally. They have not had a word to spare for the enslaved races whom the Russian armies came to free. They lavished their sneers upon the admirable speeches of Mr. Gladstone in defence of the rights and liberties of humanity. What was the reason of this

attitude? Was it to please England? But the whole Liberal party of England condemned and abhorred the conduct of their Government. Was it through hatred of Russian despotism? But if Russia does the work of humanity ought she not to be supported? Was it to vex Germany, which was supposed to be the intimate ally of Russia? They may now see how far wrong they were in this respect. The part of the French Republic was clear enough. At any cost she ought to have taken the side of the oppressed populations of Turkey, and to have defended at Berlin, in concert with Russia, the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano. Now when Austria seems willing to complete the work of emancipation which Russia was prevented from accomplishing, she ought frankly to support Austria. The true policy of France is to support everywhere the cause of justice and the rights of peoples; and it is by doing this that she will retain her legitimate influence. The Austro-German understanding is certainly not directed against France, and the situation is quite different from that of 1875. Then it was thought at Berlin that a Triple Alliance hostile to Germany was about to be formed, and that it was necessary to take time by the forelock and disarm France before her military reorganization was complete. To-day, when the Austrian Alliance gives her a sufficient guarantee, Germany has no interest in disturbing France. Should she do so, she would provoke a terrible struggle, whence even if victorious she would derive no profit. She can take no more French provinces without being confronted with geographical and ethnographical impossibilities. Even as it is, it is said that Prince Bismarck was loth to retain Metz. Therefore, if France does not attack, she will not be attacked.

The Vienna interview seems to have given some alarm to Italy. I can understand that the *Italia Irredenta* party is annoyed at anything which throws difficulties in the way of its senseless demands; but every reasonable Italian must admit that to try to take from Austria provinces which Germany would help her to defend, would be an act of criminal folly. Statesmen of eminence at Rome have said to me that they dreaded to see established across the Adriatic a strong power which might menace their eastern coasts. But why should the point of view of possible war be invariably taken? No State will ever attack Italy except in the case of a Legitimist and Papal restoration in France, and in that case the danger would not come from Austria nor from the Adriatic coast. Besides, if the Turkish provinces were better administered, their natural wealth would be developed, and an important opening for Italian commerce would be given. Considering that Italy owes her existence to the principle of nationality, it is both her duty and her interest to support this principle frankly in the East.

Only Russia has reasons for dissatisfaction with Prince Bismarck's last journey to Vienna; though the Austro-German understanding cannot have surprised her. She knew that it had existed for some years; for, as we have said, Prince Bismarck has made no mystery of it either in his private conversations or in his parliamentary speeches. But the circumstances of its promulgation, and the singular speech of Lord Salisbury, made the matter particularly disagreeable for her. The German official journals gave the world to understand that Prince Bismarck wished to save his country from a great peril, and that the Emperor William had sacrificed to the welfare of his people his private sentiments of affection for his nephew Alexander. There was talk of an offensive and defensive alliance. Finally Lord Salisbury flourished the sword of Germany as if already drawn in defence of the Balkans. Such proceedings are in any case unfriendly and unprofitable, and are, therefore, not reassuring. They seemed to show that there was something more behind. It might even be thought that Germany was repeating against Russia the tactics directed in 1875 against France. A menace might be seen in the armaments of Russia, and demands might be imperatively made for their reduction. The moment, certainly, may seem not ill chosen. Russia has not yet recovered from the losses of the last war, especially in point of finance; and the time has been too short to allow her to remedy the faults which the war revealed in her organization. Germany, on the other hand, is stronger than she has ever been, and Moltke is still at her side, as well as most of the officers who served in the wars of 1866 and 1870. The plan of campaign against Russia has been studied in all its details, and it is pretty generally thought that the putting of it into practice would not encounter any insurmountable difficulties. The Germans could reckon on the support, if only the moral support, of Austria, upon the warm sympathy of the English Government, perhaps upon the neutrality of France. Will such a favourable conjuncture ever again present itself? In the world of politics circumstances change often, and nothing is more dangerous than to threaten without acting. What can be the object of ostentatiously excluding Russia from the triple alliance? Such are the considerations which might inspire a fear that the new departure of German policy may bring on a struggle with her eastern neighbour. But, on the other hand, there are not a few chances on the side of peace. In the first place, Prince Bismarck cannot hope that Russia will begin the attack. She knows that she is for the moment isolated, and that the odds against her would be too heavy. Her interest is, therefore, to conceal her resentment, and to endeavour to patch up again the union of the three Emperors: the Czarewitch is at this moment endeavouring to do this. The Emperor William is

sincerely anxious for peace. When Count Münster recently remarked, at the Guildhall banquet, that no sovereign had peace more at heart than his august master, he spoke the literal truth. He had it at heart in 1875; he has it still more now. His family affection, his gratitude towards his nephew, are not empty words. He may have consented to a more intimate understanding with Austria, even at the risk of wounding the Emperor Alexander; but from this to a declaration of war, without either motive or pretext, is a long step. Yet such a declaration would be necessary, for Russia will not begin. Besides, Austria herself cannot wish for great disturbances on her frontiers, disturbances which would, at the very least, require large concentrations of troops, and would thus make fresh demands on her budget, which labours already under far too great a deficit. Thus then, though the maintenance of peace is by no means certain—and how should it be when all the great powers, by the most monstrous of anachronisms, regard each other as enemies, and employ the greater part of their revenues and all their power of invention in furnishing themselves with the means of mutual destruction?—still it is probable that the Austro-German understanding will be chiefly of force in the economic department of politics. This is the point which remains to be examined.

In a careful essay recently published—*Nuova Antologia*, 15 October—Signor Luzzatti, a distinguished member of the Italian Parliament, has uttered a cry of alarm on this subject. His opinion deserves attention; for, as he is the person usually charged with negotiating Italy's commercial treaties, no one is better informed as to the tariffs of different nations, and their influence upon commercial relations. Signor Luzzatti thinks it impossible to establish a Zollverein between Germany and Austria, there being too many opposing interests and prejudices concerned. But the two Empires might, he thinks, grant each other concessions based on reciprocity, and thus the imports of other States would suffer, meeting as they would lightly taxed German produce in Austria, and lightly taxed Austrian produce in Germany. The huge Austro-German territory, already including Bosnia, and destined perhaps to include the rest of Turkey, would form in the centre of Europe a market self-supplied and closed to other nations. Must the latter take this quietly? Signor Luzzatti thinks not. Italy is in a position to safeguard the general interest by insisting upon treaty rights; indeed, a commercial treaty was signed between Austria and Italy on the 27th of December, 1878, which accords reciprocally the most favoured nation treatment. We may as well quote this article of the treaty in the terms of the original:—

“ Art. 7. Quant au montant, à la garantie, et à la perception des droits à l'importation ainsi que par rapport au transit, chacune des deux hautes parties

contractantes s'engage à faire profiter l'autre de toute faveur que l'une d'elles pourrait accorder à une tierce puissance.

"Toute faveur ou immunité concédée plus tard sous ces rapports à un tiers état sera étendue immédiatement sans compensation et par le fait même à l'autre partie contractante.

"Les dispositions qui précèdent ne dérogent point: (A.) Aux faveurs actuellement accordées ou qui pourraient être accordées ultérieurement à d'autres états limitrophes, pour faciliter le commerce des frontières, ni aux réductions ou franchises de droits de douane accordés seulement pour certaines frontières déterminées ou aux habitants de certains districts; (B.) Aux obligations imposées à une des deux hautes parties contractantes par des engagements d'une union douanière contractée déjà ou qui pourra être contractée à l'avenir."

In virtue of this article Italy can thus claim in her own favour all the advantages which Austria might give to Germany, unless the exception of the letter A were alleged, which would be in gross violation of the spirit of the paragraph, or unless a real Zollverein were established between the two empires, which does not seem probable. Signor Luzzatti holds that Italy in the interest of all Europe ought to insist on her rights.

While I bow to the exceptional competence in such matters of this eminent Italian economist, I cannot share his fears. As each obstacle to commerce falls, the freetrader ought to applaud. The Zollverein itself was of incalculable advantage not merely to the countries included in it but to others, for a great market as it grows rich always ends by drawing to itself an increased supply of foreign imports. The Austro-Hungarian tariff of 27th June, 1878, and the German tariff of 1879, resemble each other in many points, and on the whole are less protectionist than the tariffs of France and Italy. Even supposing that a customs union were to be established between the two empires, foreign imports would not meet on entering this new Zollverein with any greater obstacles than before. The only real disadvantage would be that they would find themselves in the Austrian market face to face with the competition of German goods more lightly taxed, and this would apply to the East as Austria makes further advances in this direction. But there would be abundant compensation for this in the future. The freedom, complete or even partial, of trade over the immense district stretching from Salonica and Antivari on the south to Hamburg and Königsberg on the north, including the whole of Central Europe, would bring about an immense development of commercial relations, of industrial activity, of wealth, and of civilisation. Now a rich country, even when contrary to its own interest it maintains an antiquated and exorbitant tariff, offers a vast opening for foreign produce, because there are always some products which it needs and for which it can pay. The example of English commerce proves this in the most convincing manner. The value of English goods exported into France amounted for 1877 to £25,663,602, and to

Germany to £28,950,333, while for Austria the total is only £1,397,322. Let no nation be jealous of measures which enrich its neighbours. The more they have the more they will spend, and the more foreign goods they will import. Certainly Bosnia buys now-a-days neither Italian silks nor fine English woollens, nor *articles de Paris* from France. Let Bosnia develop her natural resources, and notwithstanding the Austrian tariff, foreign goods will be in demand there. I think therefore that any treaty which tends to facilitate the commercial relations between Austria and Germany will in the long-run be equally advantageous to Europe at large.

Let us take a lofty view of the matter, a view remote from mere national prejudice. The Austro-German understanding has two sides, one political, the other economical. From the political side it is probably—I can hardly say certainly—a pledge of peace; for it establishes under a new form the old Germanic Confederation which put Central Europe in so strong a position. By covering the flanks of Germany it allows her to give up the plans of aggression to which she was urged by the fear of being attacked on three sides at once. In the East its effect must be to complete the work of emancipation so gloriously begun by Russia. We must have done with the Turkish régime, which is now putting the last touches to the ruin of all the provinces where the support of England has unluckily maintained it. Now, without handing everything over to Russia, it is not possible to get rid of the Turks, if England and Austria are not ready to administer to their inheritance. To assure to the Slav populations liberty, autonomy, and well-being, is the object to be attained, and the only practical means of attaining it is to extend the influence of Austria. As for the economical side of the matter, if a customs union, more or less complete, be established between Germany and Austria, the partisans of free trade can only rejoice at seeing it reign throughout Central Europe, from the Adriatic and the Ægean to the Baltic and the North Sea.

EMILE DE LAVELEYE.