

effectually smuggling a few of their nostrums into the "Imperial Constitution," first became bound to support it, although in every essential point it flatly contradicted their own oft-proclaimed principles, and at last, when this mongrel work was abandoned, and bequeathed to them by its main authors, accepted the inheritance, and held out for this *Monarchical* Constitution, even in opposition to everybody who *then* proclaimed their own *Republican* principles.

But it must be confessed that in this the contradiction was merely apparent. The indeterminate, self-contradictory, immature character of the Imperial Constitution was the very image of the immature, confused, conflicting political ideas of these Democratic gentlemen. And if their own sayings and writings--as far as they could write--were not sufficient proof of this, their actions would furnish such proof; for among sensible people it is a matter of course to judge of a man, not by his professions, but his actions; not by what he pretends to be, but by what he does, and what he really is; and the deeds of these heroes of German Democracy speak loud enough for themselves, as we shall learn by and by. However, the Imperial Constitution, with all its appendages and paraphernalia, was definitely passed, and on the 28th of March, the King of Prussia was, by 290 votes against 248 who abstained, and 200 who were absent, elected Emperor of Germany *minus Austria*. The historical irony was complete; the Imperial farce executed in the streets of astonished Berlin, three days after the Revolution of March 18th, 1848, by Frederick William IV., while in a state which elsewhere would come under the Maine Liquor Law--this disgusting farce, just one year afterwards, had been sanctioned by the pretended Representative Assembly of all Germany. That, then, was the result of the German Revolution!

LONDON, July, 1852.

XVI.

THE ASSEMBLY AND THE GOVERNMENTS.

AUGUST 19th, 1852.

The National Assembly of Frankfort, after having elected the King of Prussia Emperor of Germany (*minus Austria*), sent a deputation to Berlin to offer him the crown, and then adjourned. On the 3rd of April, Frederick William received the deputies. He told them that, although he accepted the right of precedence over all the other princes of Germany, which this vote of the people's representatives had given him, yet he could not accept the Imperial crown as long as he was not sure that the remaining princes acknowledged his supremacy, and the Imperial Constitution conferring those rights upon him. It would be, he added, for the Governments of Germany to see whether this Constitution was such as could be ratified by them. At all events, Emperor or not, he always would be found ready, he concluded, to draw the sword against either the external or the internal foe. We shall see how he kept his promise in a manner rather startling for the National Assembly.

The Frankfort wiseacres, after profound diplomatic inquiry, at last came to the conclusion that this answer amounted to a refusal of the crown. They then (April 12th) resolved: That the Imperial Constitution was the law of the land, and must be maintained; and not seeing their way at all before them, elected a Committee of thirty, to make proposals as to the means how this Constitution could be carried out.

This resolution was the signal for the conflict between the Frankfort Assembly and the German Governments which now broke out. The middle classes, and especially the smaller trading class, had all at once declared for the new Frankfort Constitution. They could not wait any longer the moment which was "to close the Revolution." In Austria and Prussia the Revolution had, for the moment, been closed by the interference of the armed power. The classes in question would have preferred a less forcible mode of performing that operation, but they had not had a chance; the thing was done, and they had to make the best of it, a resolution which they at once took and carried out most heroically. In the smaller States, where things had been going on

comparatively smoothly, the middle classes had long since been thrown back into that showy, but resultless, because powerless, parliamentary agitation, which was most congenial to themselves. The different States of Germany, as regarded each of them separately, appeared thus to have attained that new and definite form which was supposed to enable them to enter henceforth the path of peaceful constitutional development. There only remained one open question, that of the new political organization of the German Confederacy. And this question, the only one which still appeared fraught with danger, it was considered a necessity to resolve at once. Hence the pressure exerted upon the Frankfort Assembly by the middle classes, in order to induce it to get the Constitution ready as soon as possible; hence the resolution among the higher and lower bourgeoisie to accept and support this Constitution, whatever it might be, in order to create a settled state of things without delay. Thus from the very beginning the agitation for the Imperial Constitution arose out of a reactionary feeling, and sprang up among these classes which were long since tired of the Revolution.

But there was another feature in it. The first and fundamental principles of the future German Constitution had been voted during the first months of spring and summer, 1848, a time when popular agitation was still rife. The resolutions then passed, though completely reactionary *then*, now, after the arbitrary acts of the Austrian and Prussian Governments, appeared exceedingly Liberal, and even Democratic. The standard of comparison had changed. The Frankfort Assembly could not, without moral suicide, strike out these once-voted provisions, and model the Imperial Constitution upon those which the Austrian and Prussian Governments had dictated, sword in hand. Besides, as we have seen, the majority in that Assembly had changed sides, and the Liberal and Democratic party were rising in influence. Thus the Imperial Constitution not only was distinguished by its apparently exclusive popular origin, but at the same time, full of contradiction as it was, it yet was the most Liberal Constitution in all Germany. Its greatest fault was, that it was a mere sheet of paper, with no power to back its provisions.

Under these circumstances it was natural that the so-called Democratic party, that is, the mass of the petty trading class, should cling to the Imperial Constitution. This class had always been more forward in its demands than the Liberal-Monarchico-Constitutional bourgeoisie; it had shown a bolder front, it had very often threatened armed resistance, it was lavish in its promises to sacrifice its blood and its existence in the struggle for freedom; but it had already given plenty of proofs that on the day of danger it was nowhere, and that it never felt more comfortable than the day after a decisive defeat, when everything being lost, it had at least the consolation to know that somehow or other the matter *was* settled. While, therefore, the adhesion of the large bankers, manufacturers, and merchants was of a more reserved character, more like a simple demonstration in favor of the Frankfort Constitution, the class just beneath them, our valiant Democratic shopkeepers, came forward in grand style, and, as usual, proclaimed they would rather spill their last drop of blood than let the Imperial Constitution fall to the ground.

Supported by these two parties, the bourgeois adherents of the Constitutional Royalty, and the more or less Democratic shopkeepers, the agitation for the immediate establishment of the Imperial Constitution gained ground rapidly, and found its most powerful expression in the Parliaments of the several States. The Chambers of Prussia, of Hanover, of Saxony, of Baden, of Würtemberg, declared in its favor. The struggle between the Governments and the Frankfort Assembly assumed a threatening aspect.

The Governments, however, acted rapidly. The Prussian Chambers were dissolved, anti-constitutionally, as they had to revise and confirm the Constitution; riots broke out at Berlin, provoked intentionally by the Government, and the next day, the 28th of April, the Prussian Ministry issued a circular note, in which the Imperial Constitution was held up as a most anarchical and revolutionary document, which it was for the Governments of Germany to remodel and purify. Thus Prussia denied, point-blank, that sovereign constituent power which the wise men at Frankfort had always boasted of, but never established. Thus a Congress of Princes, a renewal of the old Federal Diet, was called upon to sit in judgment on that Constitution which had already been promulgated as law. And at the same time Prussia concentrated troops at Kreuznach, three days' march from Frankfort, and called upon the smaller States to follow its example, by also dissolving their Chambers as soon as they should give their adhesion to the Frankfort Assembly. This example was speedily

followed by Hanover and Saxony.

It was evident that a decision of the struggle by force of arms could not be avoided. The hostility of the Governments, the agitation among the people, were daily showing themselves in stronger colors. The military were everywhere worked upon by the Democratic citizens, and in the south of Germany with great success. Large mass meetings were everywhere held, passing resolutions to support the Imperial Constitution and the National Assembly, if need should be, with force of arms. At Cologne, a meeting of deputies of all the municipal councils of Rhenish Prussia took place for the same purpose. In the Palatinate, at Bergen, Fulda, Nuremberg, in the Odenwald, the peasantry met by myriads and worked themselves up into enthusiasm. At the same time the Constituent Assembly of France dissolved, and the new elections were prepared amid violent agitation, while on the eastern frontier of Germany, the Hungarians had within a month, by a succession of brilliant victories, rolled back the tide of Austrian invasion from the Theiss to the Leitha, and were every day expected to take Vienna by storm. Thus, popular imagination being on all hands worked up to the highest pitch, and the aggressive policy of the Governments defining itself more clearly every day, a violent collision could not be avoided, and cowardly imbecility only could persuade itself that the struggle was to come off peaceably. But this cowardly imbecility was most extensively represented in the Frankfort Assembly.

LONDON, July, 1852.

XVII.

INSURRECTION.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1852.

The inevitable conflict between the National Assembly of Frankfort and the States Governments of Germany at last broke out in open hostilities during the first days of May, 1849. The Austrian deputies, recalled by their Government, had already left the Assembly and returned home, with the exception of a few members of the Left or Democratic party. The great body of the Conservative members, aware of the turn things were about to take, withdrew even before they were called upon to do so by their respective Governments. Thus, even independently of the causes which in the foregoing letters have been shown to strengthen the influence of the Left, the mere desertion of their posts by the members of the Right, sufficed to turn the old minority into a majority of the Assembly. The new majority, which, at no former time, had dreamed of ever obtaining that good fortune, had profited by their places on the opposition benches to spout against the weakness, the indecision, the indolence of the old majority, and of its Imperial Lieutenancy. Now all at once, *they* were called on to replace that old majority. *They* were now to show what they could perform. Of course, *their* career was to be one of energy, determination, activity. *They*, the *élite* of Germany, would soon be able to drive onwards the senile Lieutenant of the Empire, and his vacillating ministers, and in case that was impossible they would--there could be no doubt about it--by force of the sovereign right of the people, depose that impotent Government, and replace it by an energetic, indefatigable Executive, who would assure the salvation of Germany. Poor fellows! *Their* rule--if rule it can be named, where no one obeyed--was a still more ridiculous affair than even the rule of their predecessors.

The new majority declared that, in spite of all obstacles, the Imperial Constitution must be carried out, and *at once*; that on the 15th of July ensuing, the people were to elect the deputies of the new House of Representatives, and that this House was to meet at Frankfort on the 15th of August following. Now, this was an open declaration of war against those Governments that had not recognized the Imperial Constitution, the foremost among which were Prussia, Austria, Bavaria, comprising more than three-fourths of the German population; a declaration of war which was speedily accepted by them. Prussia and Bavaria, too, recalled the deputies sent from their territories to Frankfort, and hastened their military preparations against the National Assembly, while, on the other hand, the demonstrations of the Democratic party (out of Parliament) in favor