

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

# A History of Germany 1715-1815

C. T. Atkinson



*Routledge Revivals*

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A  
HISTORY OF GERMANY  
1715-1815

BY

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## PREFACE

THIS work is the outcome of an effort to produce within moderate compass some account of the affairs of Germany between the Peace of Utrecht and the final overthrow of Napoleon. In view of the dimensions to which the volume has attained I can hardly claim to have been successful in the task of compression, but I am more conscious of shortcomings in omitting things which ought to have been included than of having dwelt at excessive length on those aspects of German history with which I have endeavoured to deal. It may indeed be urged that the character of the subject must bear some share of the responsibility for the length to which the book has run. Germany between 1715 and 1815 was not a nation with a well-defined national life and history, but was merely a chaotic collection of states with conflicting aims and ideals, constantly engaged in struggles with one another; there can be no history of Germany as a whole, because, as this book endeavours to show, there was hardly anything that could be called "German"; particularism and localism were infinitely stronger than any unifying or centralising tendencies. But one has not merely to follow the fortunes of the principal portions of this infinitely subdivided "geographical expression," the struggles of these various members are so completely merged in the international history of Europe as a whole that the affairs of Germany only become intelligible, if at all, when narrated as part of the history of all Europe. It is no exaggeration to say that

Russia, Turkey, Great Britain and above all France play more prominent parts in German history in these years than do some German states of quite respectable size. Thus one cannot neglect battles fought outside Germany by the troops of German states; Marengo and Arcis sur Aube are quite as much part of German history as are Leuthen and Wagram, while the otherwise abortive victories of Prince Charles Edward in "the '45" helped to transfer Silesia from the Hapsburg to the Hohenzollern and thus profoundly affected the course of German affairs for over half a century. Thus, then, when one attempts to narrate the history of Germany from the death of Louis XIV to the overthrow of that other great enemy of Germany, Napoleon, one finds one's self committed to relating the course of European affairs so far as they took place in or immediately affected Germany, a very much more lengthy process than that of narrating the development of one country only. But it must also be remembered that while these affairs for the most part took the shape of wars or rumours of wars, military matters must be treated at some length if they are to be in the least intelligible. Indeed I am afraid that in the effort to compress my accounts of campaigns and battles I have failed not only to be succinct but even to be reasonably clear and, still worse, that I have made statements which need more expansion and justification than they have been given, and have pronounced verdicts without a sufficient setting forth of the grounds on which I have formed my conclusions.

In deliberately choosing the military aspect of German affairs as the feature on which to lay most emphasis, I am aware that I have hardly touched upon the intellectual and literary life of the period. However, I have omitted this side advisedly, feeling convinced that it was in the main a thing apart, which affected the life of the country as a whole but little and certainly had hardly any effect on the politics of Germany. The "Potsdam Grenadiers" are more typical of

eighteenth-century Germany than are Goethe and his fellows. It was only quite at the end of the period, in the days of the War of Liberation, that German literature can be really called "German," that it ceased to be merely cosmopolitan and became national. Considerations of space must be my apology for the inadequate treatment of the social state of the country; when there is so much to be included something must be left out, and in preferring to dwell on the military history of the period I have taken the aspect of the subject which appeals to me most and with which I feel least incompetent to deal.

The appended lists of authorities do not of course make any pretensions to be exhaustive bibliographies: the first gives the names of the principal books from which I have taken my information, the second of some books to which I would refer any one who wants more information on particular points than is here given. Other references will be found from time to time throughout the book to other works which I have consulted less frequently or on special points. Some books (indicated by an asterisk) which appear in both lists have been published since the manuscript of the book was first completed, now some time ago, for unforeseen difficulties have caused considerable delay in the appearance of the book. I have thus not been able to utilise several volumes which might have been very helpful. Before leaving the subject of authorities I should like to make special acknowledgment of my indebtedness to two works, Dr. Ward's *England and Hanover* and Mr. Fisher's *Napoleonic Statesmanship: Germany*, the first of which I have found exceptionally useful when dealing with the attitude, not as a rule very rightly represented, of England towards Germany in the first half of the period, while Mr. Fisher's book I found peculiarly illuminating on a subject on which the German authorities I had utilised were copious rather than clear.

Further, I must plead guilty to what I believe to be generally looked upon as the perpetuation of a vulgar error,

my adherence to the incorrect form "Hapsburg" in preference to "Habsburg," and my preference for such forms as Cologne, Mayence and Ratisbon. Strictly speaking they are no doubt incorrect, but I prefer to use the forms to which I am accustomed.

Finally, I should have liked to have included a good many more maps and plans, but of such things only a limited number can be inserted, and when the requisite things are to be found in the Clarendon Press *Atlas* and in M. Schrader's *Atlas de Geographie Historique* it would be merely superfluous to have given such maps as "the Development of Prussia"; I have therefore preferred to increase the number of plans of battles.

OXFORD, *June* 1908

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# A HISTORY OF GERMANY

1715—1815

## CHAPTER I

### GERMANY IN 1715—THE EMPIRE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

THE practice of dividing history into more or less conventional "periods" is always somewhat arbitrary and unsatisfactory, and at first sight there hardly seems much justification for treating the year 1715 as an important turning-point in the history of Germany. If one is seeking for an end, for a point at which some long struggle has been decided, some doubtful question settled, one would select 1648 rather than 1715, the Peace of Westphalia rather than those of Utrecht, Rastatt and Baden. If, on the other hand, a starting-point is sought, the unloosing of some hitherto unsuspected force, the appearance of a new set of actors, the opening of some great question, 1740 and the attack of Frederick II of Prussia on Silesia would seem to possess a far stronger claim. But the conditions which existed in 1740 and the forces which were then let loose did not spring into being in a moment; they were the fruit of years of development, and to appreciate them one must go back at any rate to the Peace of Utrecht. Similarly, great as were the changes summed up at the Peace of Westphalia, when one looks at it as a landmark in the history of the Holy Roman Empire and of that German Kingdom which, to its own undoing, was associated with the heritage of Charlemagne, it may be argued with some plausibility that the true failure of the Hapsburgs to make real their position as titular heads of Germany came with the premature death of Joseph I (1711). Germany from 1648 to 1815 was little more than a geographical expression, its history, such as

it is, is a history of disunion and disintegration; but between 1648 and 1715 it does possess a small degree of unity, and that is given it by the persistent attempts of France to profit by the weakness and divisions of her Eastern neighbour, and by the efforts of the Hapsburgs to unite the German Kingdom in opposition to the aggressions of Mazarin and Louis XIV. The Spanish Succession War, fought out largely on German soil and by German troops, had a very important bearing on the fortunes of Germany, and at one time it seemed that one result of it might be a great increase in the Imperial authority and prestige, and as if the practical independence of the territorial princes, established at the Peace of Westphalia, might be substantially reduced. But this was not to be, and as far as the constitutional condition of Germany was concerned, the Treaties of Utrecht, Rastatt and Baden, instead of undoing the work of 1648, confirmed it, and left the German Kingdom an empty form, a name with no real substance behind it.

Thus the condition in which the year 1715 found Germany differed in degree rather than in kind from that in which the Thirty Years' War had left her in 1648. The great movement of the Reformation had been fatal to the Holy Roman Empire: it had swept away the last relics of its pretensions to universal dominion by emphasising the national character of most of the states of Western Europe, and by introducing between them differences in religion which were of more than merely religious importance. The Thirty Years' War had done a like office for the German Kingdom: it had completed the ruin of the Emperor's authority over the lands which were still nominally subject to him. The forms of the old constitution, the Imperial title, the nominal existence of the Empire were to endure for another one hundred and fifty-eight years, but the settlement of 1648 amounted in all save the name to the substitution of a loosely-knit confederacy for the potential national state which had till then existed in the shape of the Empire. Not that the settlement of 1648 was the sole cause of this change, even the long and terrible war to which it put an end could not by itself have effected so great an alteration had it not been the last in a long chain of causes whose work was now recognised and admitted. At the Peace of Westphalia the Hapsburgs acknowledged principles which struck at the roots of the authority of the Emperor, they

accepted because they had failed to prevent the results of the disintegrating tendencies which had been at work for so long. The practical independence of the Princes of the Empire was no new thing, but it now received formal recognition; the principle *cujus regio, ejus religio*, now reaffirmed, had been the basis of the Peace of Augsburg. It was all the more strongly re-established because, in the meantime, the Hapsburgs had led the crusade of the Counter-Reformation, and were now forced to leave in Protestant hands many secularised bishoprics as the token of the failure of their great endeavour.

Even before the Reformation the authority of the Emperor over the German Kingdom had been weak and uncertain, though Maximilian I had done much to assert it and had attempted more, while the possibility of converting the German feudal monarchy into a strong national sovereignty like those of England and France was still present. The process of disintegration had, it is true, gone much further in Germany than elsewhere, and localism was stronger and the central institutions were weaker than in France and England. What the Reformation did was that it introduced into Germany a new principle which served to complicate the contest between the spasmodic attempts of the Emperors at a centralising policy, and the disintegrating tendencies of which the Princes were the champions. The already existing aspirations to local independence received the powerful reinforcement of the new spirit of resistance which the revolt from Rome engendered. Seeing how strong the traditions of close relations between the Pope and the Emperor were, and how intimately the idea of the Empire was bound up with the idea of the Universal Church, it was only natural that resistance to the spiritual authority of the Pope should encourage resistance to the temporal authority of the Emperor. Moreover, when Germany was being divided into two antagonistic camps, the Catholic and the Protestant, it was impossible from the nature of the quarrel that the Emperor should be neutral. He could not be the impartial head of the whole nation, he must take one side or the other. It was with a crisis of the most momentous importance for Germany that Charles V was confronted in 1519 when he was required to make up his mind between Rome and Luther. Had he declared for Protestantism, and placed himself at the head of a national movement against the

Papacy, it is possible that the sixteenth century might have seen Germany really united. If the Emperor could have obtained control of the vast territories of the Church, he would have acquired the revenues and resources so badly needed to make the forms of the central government an efficient reality. But such a course must have brought him into collision, not only with all those who clung to the old faith and the old connection, but also with those Princes who adopted Protestantism, partly because they found in it a principle by which to defend their resistance to the Imperial authority; they would not have been so enthusiastic in their support of Protestantism had the Emperor been of that persuasion. Prelates and lay Princes alike would have struggled hard to hinder so great an increase in the Imperial resources and so great a change in the relative positions of the Emperor and his subjects, as that which would have been involved in his annexation of the ecclesiastical territories. As things actually went, the Emperor's continued adherence to Roman Catholicism gave the Protestant champions of local independence a permanent bond of union in their religion. At the same time, even the Princes of the Emperor's own religion could not but be favourably disposed—as Princes—towards resistance to the Imperial authority and efforts to limit the Emperor's powers.

The Peace of Augsburg (1555) was of the nature of a truce rather than a settlement. The evenly-balanced contending forces agreed to a compromise which actually secured to Germany over sixty years of religious peace of a kind, but it was absolutely lacking in the elements of finality. The omission of any regulations for the position of the Calvinists, the failure to enforce any accepted rule as to new secularisations, were bound, sooner or later, to lead to a new conflict: it is only remarkable that the outbreak was so long delayed. Meanwhile the acknowledgment of the principle *cujus regio, ejus religio* was a fatal blow to the Imperial authority and the first great breach in the outward unity of the Empire.

The circumstances under which the great struggle between the rival creeds finally broke out were such as to make it even more impossible for the Emperor to adopt a neutral attitude. The local troubles in Bohemia which culminated in the famous "Defenestratio" of 1618 were only the match

that fired the train, since for some time the Calvinists of Germany had been contemplating a war in defence of their religion. By adopting the Bohemian cause the Elector Palatine and his supporters brought themselves into a double collision with Ferdinand of Austria. By breaking the peace of the Empire they set at naught his authority as Emperor; but he was also King of Bohemia, and by assisting his revolted subjects the Calvinists assailed him as territorial ruler and as head of the Hapsburg house. Thus the Emperor could not interfere disinterestedly: he could not suppress the Calvinist disturbers of the peace without using the Imperial authority, such as it was, on behalf of his own dynastic territorial interests. Not merely was impartiality impossible, he was the leader of one of the contending parties. Much in the same way, by accepting the Bohemian Crown the Elector Palatine made it impossible for himself and his party to disassociate their defence of oppressed co-religionists from their own selfish interests and ambitions. Thus on the one side the cause of order and of unity became identified with intolerance and oppression, on the other anarchy and violence seemed to be the natural corollary to religious freedom. In this dilemma there were but two alternative possibilities. Either the Emperor would succeed in suppressing Protestantism both as a religious and as a political factor, and would thereby vindicate his authority, or by his failure in this attempt he would leave Germany divided between two hostile factions, one of which must always look upon the decadence of the Imperial constitution as the surest safeguard of its own existence.

In 1648 the Peace of Westphalia announced to the world that after thirty years of a most terrible and devastating war both combatants had failed, and had been obliged to assent to a compromise. That the Hapsburgs had failed, was proclaimed by their assenting to such a Peace. To their failure many causes had contributed; their want of material resources, Ferdinand II's incapacity and lack of statesmanship, the lukewarmness of those Catholic Princes whose political aims would not have been served by the complete success of the Catholic cause if championed by the Emperor, but more especially the intervention of foreign powers who had good reasons of their own for dreading the establishment

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of Hapsburg supremacy over Germany. Yet such a result had at one time seemed probable, for Frederick's headlong folly had given the Emperor a chance a statesman would not have missed. But Ferdinand had misused his victory at Prague: he had endeavoured to do to Frederick what Frederick had failed to do to him, he had then driven the Lutherans into taking up arms by his efforts to reverse the compromise on which the territorial distribution of Germany rested: he had parted with Wallenstein at the bidding of the Catholic League when that general seemed to have Protestant Germany at his mercy. Had the Emperor believed in the honesty of Wallenstein, or in the wisdom and justice of the toleration advocated by that mysterious adventurer, sufficiently to stand by him, it is possible that his confidence might have been rewarded by success; but Wallenstein's record was not one to inspire confidence, and toleration was a policy not only in advance of the age but quite opposed to the traditions of the Empire and of the Hapsburg dynasty. Thus though the Peace left Bohemia and its dependencies in the Emperor's keeping, it left the Empire hopelessly and irretrievably disunited. As the next seventy years were to show, not even common dangers of the most formidable kind could weld Germany together effectively. The acknowledgment of the rights of the heretic minority in the Empire was in absolute conflict with the theory of Church and State on which the Empire was based; the concessions which the Princes had extorted reduced the Emperor's authority over them to a mere form, and made the name of Kingdom a complete anachronism when applied to Germany. But signally as the Hapsburgs had failed, their opponents could hardly claim to have been much more successful. The Imperial supremacy which Frederick v and the Calvinist Union had sought to destroy still existed, even if it was a mere shadow of what Ferdinand had hoped to make it. The Protestants, Calvinists and Lutherans alike, had succeeded in freeing themselves from the jurisdiction of the Pope, in wringing from the Catholic majority in the Diet a recognition of their right to freedom of worship in their own lands, and in defending their possession of those ecclesiastical territories which the Edict of Restitution had endeavoured to wrest from them. But they had not managed to obtain

the rich and coveted abbeys and bishoprics of the South: indeed, on the whole they had lost ground. Bohemia and its dependencies had passed from them, and the skilful propagandism of the Jesuits was rapidly extirpating Protestantism from its former strongholds there. The adoption of January 1st, 1624, as the date by which the possession of disputed territories was to be determined on the whole favoured the Catholics, to whom it left a majority of the bishoprics. Moreover, the religious freedom thus won by the sword—and in no small measure by the swords of the Swede and the Frenchman—could only be retained by the sword. It was indissolubly connected with local independence and Imperial impotence; in other words, the disunion of Germany was its only guarantee. Identified as the Hapsburgs were with Rome, with intolerance, with the forcible promulgation of Catholicism, German Protestantism could not but look upon the Imperial institutions as hostile to its rights and could hardly do otherwise than seek to prevent anything which promised to restore their vitality. Loyalty to the Empire seemed to the majority of German Protestants incompatible with the safety of their religion.

The collapse of the old constitution not unnaturally occupied the minds of the pamphleteers and publicists of the day, and many were the schemes for reconstruction and reform put forward in the second half of the seventeenth century. Among the most important and interesting of these is the *Dissertatio de ratione status in Imperio nostro Romano Germanico*, written by Philip Boguslaw Chemnitz, a Pomeranian jurist of some repute, and published under the pseudonym of Hippolytus à Lapide. The treatise sets out an ideal which was never realised, and was based on a theory which was neither sound historically nor accurate as a statement of the existing facts, the assumption that neither the Emperor nor the Electors, but the whole Diet was the sovereign body. This may be accounted for by the fact that Chemnitz was actuated throughout by an intense hostility to the Hapsburgs. When he looks at them the sight of the sack of Magdeburg rises before his eyes, and the Edict of Restitution is for him the type of their acts and aims.

Chemnitz was not the first writer to find salvation for Germany in the decrease of the Imperial authority and in the

increase of the powers of the Princes, but he may be taken as the best example of those who hold that view. He regarded the Emperor as the representative of an aristocratic republic, the sovereignty of which resided rather in the assembled Estates than in the Emperor. To him the Emperor was little more than the nominal head, the minister of the Estates, not their superior. Thus it is by the Diet, not by the Emperor, that the decision as to peace or war must be taken, to the *Kammergericht*<sup>1</sup> rather than to the *Reichshofrath*<sup>2</sup> that the final jurisdiction belongs. Throughout Chemnitz assails the Hapsburgs in unsparing terms; their pretensions are the principal danger to Germany, their power must be diminished, their Imperial authority curtailed and restricted in every possible way. "*Delenda est Austria*" is his panacea for the ills of Germany and the burden of every page of his pamphlet.

Rather different was the account given by Pufendorf, who, writing under the name of Severin de Monzambano, a fictitious Italian traveller who had made the tour of Germany, compared the Holy Roman Empire to the league of the Greeks against Troy, and pronounced it neither monarchy, aristocracy, nor democracy, but an anomalous blend of all three, "a half-way house between a kingdom and a confederation," which the Emperor was striving to make more like a kingdom, the Princes to make more of a confederation. The Princes, he pointed out, though nominally in vassalage to the Emperor from whom they held their fiefs, enjoyed a practical independence, having all sovereign rights in their own territories. Indeed one thing only prevented Germany from being as absolutely disunited as Italy: the possessions of the Austrian Hapsburgs formed a connected state which alone gave Germany some approach to unity by being able and willing to maintain the forms and institutions of the Empire.

Pufendorf's treatise provoked a reply from no less eminent a man than the philosopher Leibnitz, who in his *Contra Severinum de Monzambano* dealt mainly with the need for unity against the enemies of Germany. He dwelt on the defencelessness of the Empire, the utter absence of military organisation, the need for a standing army and of proper provision for its support. But he had also to point out how

<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Chamber of Justice; cf. p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> The Imperial High Court, the so-called "Aulic Council"; cf. p. 15.

slight were the chances that any permanent organisation would be established. To some Princes the present situation offered a good prospect of profiting by the troubles of their neighbours, others for religious reasons entertained suspicions of the use that might be made of a standing army, others again feared that it might be employed by the greater powers to suppress their petty neighbours, and thus Leibnitz's appeal to the Princes of the Empire to cultivate better relations with the Emperor fell on deaf ears.

The substantial accuracy of Pufendorf's description of the state of Germany will be realised when one examines more closely the Imperial constitution and the component portions of this anomalous mixture of a confederation and a kingdom. The Imperial office, nominally elective, had practically become hereditary in the Austrian branch of the Hapsburg family, which had provided the Holy Roman Empire and the German Kingdom with an uninterrupted series of rulers ever since the election of Albert II in 1438. But the elective element had not entirely disappeared: indeed, it might have been better for the Empire if it had. Its survival merely served to further the decadence of the Imperial institutions, for, from Charles V onward, each new "Emperor Elect" had had to purchase the suffrages of the Electors by means of "Election Capitulations" which circumscribed and curtailed yet further the meagre powers and rights still attached to his office.<sup>1</sup> Such influence and authority as the Emperor possessed was his on account of his hereditary possessions, not in virtue of his Imperial office.

Yet on paper his rights as Emperor were still considerable. In addition to the so-called *Comitial rechte*, those rights which he exercised on behalf of and by the authority of the Diet, he had certain "Reserved Rights" with which the Diet had nothing to do. He could veto measures submitted by the Diet, he could make promotions in rank, confer fiefs, titles of nobility and University degrees. Further, he represented Germany in all dealings with foreign powers, and it was from him that the Princes had to obtain the coveted privileges, *de non appellando* and *de non evocando*, which removed their law-courts from the superintendence of the Imperial tribunals and made their territories judicially independent. A certain amount of rather indefinite influence and prestige still, after all

<sup>1</sup> For those of Charles V, cf. Turner, p. 120.

deductions, attached to the Imperial office, and it need hardly be mentioned that the Emperor possessed in his hereditary dominions all the ordinary sovereign rights which the Princes enjoyed in their territories. Indeed, it was the great extent of the rights and powers of which the Princes had become possessed rather than any lack of powers theoretically his which made the Emperor so powerless and his office so anomalous.

The process by which this had come about has been admirably described by Sir John Seeley<sup>1</sup> as "the paralysis of the central government and, consequent upon that, the assumption by local authorities of powers properly Imperial." "A number of municipal corporations," he writes, "which in England would have only had the power of levying rates for local purposes and of appointing local officers with very insignificant powers, had in Germany become practically independent republics. Magnates who in England would have wielded a certain administrative and judicial power as members of Quarter Sessions, had risen in Germany to the rank of sovereigns." With all the Princes of the Empire practically independent in their domestic affairs and almost as completely their own masters in their dealings with foreign powers, not much scope was left for the intervention of the Emperor or of any of the machinery of the Empire. Only in regulating matters which concerned two or more German states was the Emperor likely to be called upon to act, and his intervention was rather that of the president of a federation of independent states than of the King of even a feudal monarchy. What he lacked was the force needed to compel obedience and secure the execution of his orders. The extent of his impotence may best be judged from the condition of the Imperial revenues and from the composition and organisation of the Army of the Empire.

To say outright that the Empire possessed neither revenues nor an army would strictly speaking be inaccurate, but it would be a great deal nearer to the real truth than to affirm that either of these effectively existed. Since 1521 there had been a unit of assessment, the so-called "Roman Month," which represented the amount voted by the Diet in that year for an expedition to Rome which Charles V was contemplating. The sum then voted, 120,000 florins, was calculated to provide

<sup>1</sup> *Life and Times of Stein*, i. 12.

4,000 horsemen at a rate of ten florins a month and 20,000 foot-soldiers at four florins. Since 1521 fractions or multiples of this rate had been voted from time to time, for the convenience of utilising an existing assessment was enormous. Hard as it was to obtain payment of contributions even when the due proportions were assigned to those liable to pay, as was the case when the Imperial Roll of 1521 was utilised, the difficulty of collection and the friction arising out of it would have been multiplied many times had a fresh assessment been necessary whenever a vote was passed. But even this was far from giving the Empire a standing army or even the machinery for raising one; it merely settled the proportions, and each new call for troops involved a fresh settlement by the Diet, which required almost as much diplomacy and negotiation as an international agreement for joint action. It was never certain whether the Diet would vote for sending men or money; though whichever form the contributions might take the Roman Month gave the proportion in which the individual states were liable. It was, of course, to the advantage of the Emperor that the contribution should be in money, but the contributors preferred to send men: it gave them the appearance of allies rather than of tributaries, and, moreover, enabled them to exercise more control over the war: a contingent could always be recalled, it was less easy to recover a money contribution once it had entered the Imperial coffers.<sup>1</sup> Nor was it certain whether the vote of the majority bound the minority, or whether only those who had voted in favour of a tax were liable to pay it.

Thus though many of its members possessed armies of considerable strength and efficiency, as a military power the Empire was an almost negligible quantity. More than one attempt at reform was made in the second half of the seventeenth century. In May 1681 the Diet issued a decree fixing the total force to be provided by the Circles at 12,000 horse and 28,000 foot, each Circle being given the choice between providing its own men or paying another "armed estate" (*Armirte Stande*) to supply its allotted contingent. But though a new unit of assessment was thus substituted for

<sup>1</sup> It is easy to see that this uncertainty very much increased the inefficiency of the defensive arrangements of the Empire: a noteworthy example was the delay over the despatch of troops to assist the Austrians in the Turkish War of 1663-1664.

the Roman Month not even now was a permanent force kept on foot, and in the War of the League of Augsburg there was continual friction between the "armed members" who provided troops and the "assigned" who contributed to their support. So inefficient was the protection afforded to the "assigned" states by the Army of the Empire that the Franconian and Swabian Circles finally resolved to reorganise their own resources, and by raising troops of their own to avoid being "assigned" any longer. With this object a scheme was drawn up by Margrave Louis of Baden-Baden, the colleague of Marlborough and Eugene in the Blenheim campaign, which was finally adopted (Jan. 1697) at a meeting held at Frankfort. These two Circles, with the Bavarian, Westphalian and the two Rhenish, formed the Association of Frankfort, undertaking to provide 40,000 men between them, and to draw up definite regulations for their equipment and organisation. This scheme would probably have provided a more efficient *Reichsarmee* than had hitherto existed, but the prompt conclusion of peace prevented it from being put into practice, and thus, never getting the chance of being tested in a campaign and put into working order, it remained a mere paper scheme. At the outbreak of the Spanish Succession War it was necessary to make entirely new arrangements, and that struggle found little improvement in the Army of the Empire. It was lacking in discipline, in homogeneity, in organisation, in equipment, in almost everything that goes to make an army efficient. The states which, like Hesse-Cassel and Brandenburg, possessed really efficient forces preferred to hire out their troops to fight the battles of the Maritime Powers rather than employ them in the less lucrative task of defending the "lazy and sleepy Empire,"<sup>1</sup> which was thus overrun again and again by French armies who levied in requisitions and in unofficial plunderings sums far larger than would have sufficed to provide troops enough to keep Villars at bay. Nowhere, indeed, was the disunion of Germany so evident as in its defensive arrangements, and the last appearances of the *Reichsarmee* during the Seven Years' War were a fitting finale to its career.

Not the least potent reason for the inefficiency of the defensive arrangements of the Empire was its poverty. Nearly

<sup>1</sup> *Portland Papers*, iv. 441; Hist. MSS. Commission.

all the lucrative sources of income had passed from the Emperor to the local rulers. The Imperial Chamber of Justice was supported by a special tax, first voted in 1500 and known as the Chamber Terms (*Kammerzieler*); a certain amount of revenue was derived through the exercise of the Emperor's "Reserved Rights" and the Imperial Cities paid a small tribute amounting to about 12,000 gulden;<sup>1</sup> but these sums were quite insufficient to defray the maintenance of the Imperial institutions, and the want of an Imperial revenue was one of the reasons why the Hapsburgs remained so long in unchallenged possession of the costly dignity they alone could afford to support.

Where there was hardly any Imperial income it is not surprising that there was no common Imperial treasury, still less any administrative machinery. Police was left to the Circles, an organisation the germs of which are to be found in the fifteenth century, but which had only been extended all over the Empire in 1512 by the Diet of Cologne;<sup>2</sup> but this attempt to provide for the execution of the judgments of the Imperial Chamber had never enjoyed more than a very partial success, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century the institution had fallen into abeyance in many parts of the country. In three of the Circles only, the Franconian, the Swabian, and the Westphalian, was the organisation sufficiently effective to demand serious consideration. This was because in these Circles there was no single Prince powerful enough to become predominant, as was, for example, the Elector of Bavaria in the Bavarian Circle; on the contrary, they included a very large number of Imperial Knights and of minor Princes, all so evenly balanced that the Princes chosen from time to time as Directors of the Circle had no chance of making themselves predominant. An even less effective piece of administrative machinery was the Imperial Deputation, created in 1555 to assist the Circles in the discharge of their duties. It was in effect a standing committee of the Diet, comprising the Electors and representatives of the other two Estates and

<sup>1</sup> In 1677 an edict fixed the gulden at 60 kreuzer, the thaler being 96: the equivalents in English money may be roughly estimated at half a crown and four shillings.

<sup>2</sup> Even then Bohemia and the lands of the Teutonic Order had been excluded from its operation.

of the Emperor-King, but it was no better able to make its authority effective than was the Diet. After the Peace of Westphalia efforts were made to reconstruct it; it was proposed by the Protestants that the Deputation should be drawn equally from the two religions; but as a majority of the Electors were Roman Catholics, this could only be done by permitting one Protestant to vote twice or by not counting one Catholic vote, both solutions being equally unacceptable. In the end nothing was done to increase the efficiency of the *Reichsdeputation*, and it was never of much influence or importance.

The judicial institutions of the Empire retained rather more vitality; but even they were in a moribund condition and had been hard hit by the anarchy and disorganisation produced by the Thirty Years' War. The most important of them, the Imperial Chamber (*Kammergericht*), had been established towards the end of the fifteenth century as a permanent court of justice in place of the feudal courts (*Hofgerichte*) which the Emperors had till then been wont to summon at irregular intervals whenever enough judicial business had accumulated. These had proved quite inadequate to meet the requirements of the Empire: indeed, the establishment of a permanent court of justice had been one of the measures most urgently advocated by the active reforming party of the day, led by the then Elector of Mayence, Berthold of Henneberg.<sup>1</sup> Maximilian I had given this court a permanent establishment of a President (*Kammerrichter*) and sixteen Assessors (*Urteiler*), and some additions had been subsequently made to its staff. It was a court of original jurisdiction for those holding immediately of the Emperor-King, of appellate jurisdiction from the courts of those members of the Empire who did not possess the liberally granted privilege *de non appellando*.<sup>2</sup> During the Thirty Years' War the Imperial Chamber had almost fallen into abeyance, but at the Peace of Westphalia and at the Diet of Ratisbon (1653) attempts were made to reform and reconstruct it. The number of Assessors was raised to fifty, and it was

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Turner, pp. 72, 104 ff.; also *C.M.H.* i. 304 and 317.

<sup>2</sup> This privilege, granted to the Electors by one of the clauses of the Golden Bull, and since then extended to most of the chief Princes, prohibited appeals from the territorial courts to the Imperial Courts; the corresponding privilege *de non evocando* forbade the Imperial Courts to call up cases from territorial courts.

provided that twenty-four of them together with two of the four Vice-Presidents should be Lutherans, and also that in all cases in which one of the parties was a Protestant and the other a Roman Catholic the Assessors chosen to decide the case should be equally divided between the two religions. Moreover, a commission was promised to expedite the procedure and improve the efficiency of the Chamber. But these reforms produced no real improvement. The revenues of the Chamber were quite insufficient for its expenses and it proved impossible to keep up the full staff. The decay of the Circles involved inefficiency in the execution of the decisions of the Chamber, since it was on the Circles that this depended.<sup>1</sup> And it is characteristic of the traditions of the Imperial constitution that the reforming commission, which was to have begun its labours in 1654, never really got to work till 1767. That under such circumstances efforts to wipe off arrears, to accelerate business, and to check factious appeals and undue litigation proved quite fruitless, will be readily understood. A disputed decision was practically adjourned *sine die* and the mass of arrears grew rather than diminished.

Soon after the establishment of the Imperial Chamber, Maximilian proceeded to set up (1492) a rival organisation which was far more closely identified with the Emperor than was the Imperial Chamber, whose members were jointly appointed by the Diet and by the Emperor. Originally this *Reichshofrath* or so-called "Aulic Council"<sup>2</sup> was intended to deal with all business from the Empire or the King's hereditary principalities; to it were also to be referred all cases in which he had to adjudicate as King. It was to be something more than a mere law court, it was also to exercise administrative functions in the hereditary possessions of the Hapsburgs. These objects, however, were not realised, and the Council had to be reconstructed in 1518, when it was put on a regular footing, with a President, Vice-President and sixteen Councillors. Its members were appointed by the Emperor, and with his death their commissions were to lapse. It was at this time also that the administration of the Austrian dominions, hitherto entrusted to it, ceased to form part of its functions.<sup>3</sup> In 1559 further changes occurred, Ferdinand I

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Turner, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *C.M.H.* i. 313.

<sup>3</sup> Pütter, *Germanic Constitution* (Eng. trans.), i. 358.

confining its sphere to Imperial business, and giving it jurisdiction as a high court of the Empire. But it was not till the Peace of Westphalia that it received formal recognition as such from the Diet, which then for the first time took cognisance of it, regulating its procedure and applying to it the principle of equality between religions, which was the rule with the Imperial Chamber. At the Diet of 1653 another attempt was made to reform it; but the Emperor, resenting the interference of the Diet and anxious to retain control over the Council, resisted the proposed changes and issued an Imperial edict (without allowing the Diet to intervene) introducing certain reforms. On the whole, it was more efficient as a court of justice than was the Imperial Chamber, its decisions being reached more certainly and rapidly. To a certain extent the spheres of the two courts coincided and collisions were not infrequent; but whereas the Imperial Chamber may be said to have dealt rather with cases between Princes or between subjects of different Princes, the Aulic Council's province included matters relating to fiefs of the Empire and cases in which the Emperor was personally concerned. At the same time its position was somewhat complicated by its political aspect. It had originally been an administrative rather than a judicial body and it had never wholly lost this character. Indeed, as the Empire possessed neither a Privy Council nor a War Office, the Aulic Council may be said to have to a certain extent supplied their place.<sup>1</sup>

There was also another but even less important Imperial Court, the *Hofgericht*, which had its seat at Rottweil on the Neckar. It represented the old royal courts of a period prior to the erection of the Imperial Chamber and the Aulic Council, and had been revived and re-established by Maximilian I in 1496, and again by Maximilian II in 1572. Still it had always been disliked by the Diet, and the reforms of 1572 notwithstanding, its position was most insecure, so that one of the questions which the negotiators of the Peace of Westphalia had left over for the next Diet was that of its abolition. It is perhaps unnecessary to add that the Diet came to no decision, and the Court protracted a useless and inconspicuous existence until the year 1802.<sup>2</sup>

Of all the institutions of Germany, however, the Diet

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Z.S. i. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Turner, p. 136.

(*Reichstag*) was the most important. Its origin may be traced back to the general councils annually summoned by Charles the Great. During the Middle Ages it had occupied a position approximately corresponding to the *Etats Généraux* of France and to the feudal forerunners of the English Parliament. A purely feudal body, in which tenants in chief alone might appear, it had undergone modifications parallel with the change in the position of the great feudal nobles. As the Dukes of Bavaria and the Counts Palatine of the Rhine had developed into petty sovereigns, as their estates had become in all but name European states of the third and fourth rank, so the Diet also had changed. It had really become a congress; those who attended it were, as a rule, mere representatives of the great feudatories who in former days had been wont to appear in person. From a body which was practically an international conference measures tending to the efficient government of Germany were not to be expected. Particularist ideals were bound to prevail over any feeble tendencies towards unity, the interests of Germany were sure to be sacrificed to local aims and objects, any proposal to strengthen the central institutions and to set the constitutional machinery in effective order could not but excite the opposition of vested interests, and was certain to be judged not on its merits but from the particularist point of view. Yet even so, it was in the Diet that the nearest approach to German unity was to be found. The Netherlands, the Helvetic Confederation, Burgundy and other countries once part of the Empire had been lost to it, but not even the strongest and most separatist of the minor powers of Germany had obtained or even sought exemption from membership of the Diet. No privileges corresponding to the right *de non appellando* marred the completeness of its sphere of influence. Indeed, though the link it provided may have been more negative than positive, as long as it existed there could be no formal dissolution of the Empire. It made no attempt to arrest the process of disintegration, it never considered or contemplated a constitutional reconstruction, but the fact of its existence did to some extent check disintegration and maintain the semblance of German unity.

Since the fifteenth century the Diet had been organised in three Chambers, the College of Electors; the College of the Princes, Counts and Barons; and the College of the Imperial

Free Cities. Of these that of the Electors was the most important, since to it fell the duty of electing a new Emperor when the Imperial throne became vacant. The privileges of the Electors were extensive: they not only enjoyed the rights *de non evocando* and *de non appellando*, but they received royal dues (*regalia*) from mines, tolls, coinage and the dues payable by their own territories and were to all intents and purposes independent sovereigns. The Golden Bull, which amongst other things had greatly exalted their status by declaring conspiracy against their lives to be high treason, had fixed their number at seven and defined the great court offices held by them. The three ecclesiastical Electors of Mayence, Cologne and Treves were respectively Arch Chancellors of Germany, Italy and Burgundy: among the lay Electors the King of Bohemia was Arch Butler, the Count Palatine of the Rhine was Arch Steward, the Duke of Saxony Arch Marshal, and the Margrave of Brandenburg Arch Chamberlain. Further, the Bull had attached the electoral votes to the electoral territories, which it declared to be inalienable and indivisible, while it made primogeniture the rule of succession to the lay Electorates. It was because of this declaration that the validity of Ferdinand II's action in depriving Frederick V of the Palatinate of his vote and transferring it with his territories to Maximilian of Bavaria was so hotly disputed, the partisans of the dispossessed family maintaining that the Emperor had exceeded his rights. They did not deny the Emperor's right to depose Frederick, but argued that as Frederick's offence had been personal, so his deposition was a purely personal matter and could not affect the right of his descendants to the Electorate. At the Peace of Westphalia the question was solved by a compromise, which altered the constitution as laid down in the Bull in several important respects. An eighth voter was added to the Electoral College; but while Charles Lewis, the eldest son of Frederick V, regained the Electoral dignity for his branch of the Wittelsbachs, he did not recover the office of Arch Steward, which his ancestors had held, but had to be content with the newly created office of Arch Treasurer and the Bavarian vote was recognised as the fifth, so that the compromise was decidedly in favour of Bavaria.<sup>1</sup> This solution left the balance of religions in the Electoral

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Erdmannsdörffer, i. 56.

College inclined to the Catholic side, which with Bavaria and the three ecclesiastical Electors had a clear majority over Saxony, Brandenburg and the Palatinate, even when the Bohemian vote, which had fallen into abeyance, is not reckoned to their credit.

Between the Peace of Westphalia and the end of the seventeenth century the balance was to some extent redressed by the creation of a new Electorate for the house of Guelph, (1692) when Ernest Augustus of Hanover obtained the coveted dignity for himself and his heirs;<sup>1</sup> but any advantage the Protestants might have hoped to gain from this was lost through the conversion of Frederick Augustus of Saxony to Catholicism (1696) in order to improve his chances of obtaining the Crown of Poland, for which he was then a candidate, and by the accession of a Catholic branch of the Wittelsbachs to the Palatinate.<sup>2</sup> But by this time religious differences were beginning to lose some of their political importance, as may be gathered from the fact that, despite his conversion, the Elector of Saxony remained the recognised head of the *Corpus Evangelicorum*, in other words, the nominal leader of German Protestantism.

The connection which the success of the candidature of Frederick Augustus established between Saxony and Poland is also of interest as illustrating the increasing power and importance of the Electors. Saxony was not the only lay Electorate whose fortunes became closely linked with those of a non-German territory. The accession of George Lewis of Hanover to the throne of Great Britain (1714) started a connection which was destined to exercise a very important influence over the affairs of Germany during the next century, and the conclusion of the celebrated "Treaty of the Crown" (1701),<sup>3</sup> which recognised Frederick of Brandenburg as Frederick I, King *in* Prussia, may be said to mark the point at which the Hohenzollern became of European rather than of merely German importance. So, too, the close connection between Bavaria and France, the result of the policy followed by Maximilian Emanuel in the Spanish

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 45.

<sup>2</sup> In 1685 the Simmern line became extinct with the death of Charles, son of Charles Lewis, who was succeeded by Philip William of Neuburg. Cf. p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 42.

Succession War, enabled yet another Elector to play the part of an almost independent sovereign with a policy of his own, and submitting to hardly any control from the nominal ruler of the country.

The College of Princes had in 1648 some seventy-six members with "individual votes" (*Virilstimmen*), forty-three of them laymen and thirty-three ecclesiastics, besides four bodies of voters who delivered a "collective vote" (*Curiatstimme*). Of these last there had only been three before 1640, one being given by the numerous prelates who were below princely rank, the other two by the Counts and Barons, divided for voting purposes into two so-called "benches," the Swabian and the Wetterabian. From this last body a new "bench" had been formed in 1640, under the title of the "Franconian Counts," while in 1653 the collective votes had been increased to five by the grant of a second vote to the Prelates. At the Diet of 1653-1654 a proposal had been put forward by the Counts that a fourth College should be erected for them and the Prelates; but the scheme found little support and nothing more was heard of it. The *Curiatstimme* ranked as equivalent to an individual vote, so that it would be fair to regard the voting strength of the College of Princes as about eighty in 1648, while by 1715 it had risen to over ninety. This increase was caused by the occasional exercise by the Emperor of his right to raise to the princely rank Counts and other nobles not hitherto in possession of a *Virilstimme*. This right, which gave the Emperor the power of rewarding his supporters and at the same time increasing his influence in the College of Princes, had been in dispute until the Diet of 1653-1654, at which it had been definitely recognised, with the limitation that those thus raised to the rank must possess as a qualification territories held immediately of the Emperor, a condition imposed to prevent the swamping of the College by lavish creations. At the same time there were never as many individual holders of *Virilstimmen* as there were *Virilstimmen*, for many Princes had come into possession of more than one qualifying piece of territory. Thus it was that the Electors were members of the College of Princes, Brandenburg having as many as five votes, while Austria possessed three, Burgundy, although actually in Spanish possession,

Styria and Tyrol providing her qualifications. The balance between the religions favoured the Catholics, who were in the proportion of five to four even after several of the votes attached to the secularised bishoprics of North Germany had passed into Protestant hands in 1648. Of these Halberstadt, Kammin and Minden had fallen to Brandenburg,<sup>1</sup> Magdeburg to Saxony,<sup>2</sup> Ratzeburg to Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Hersfeld to Hesse-Cassel, Schwerin to Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and Bremen and Verden to Sweden.<sup>3</sup> Another foreign ruler was also a member of the College of Princes as the possessor of Holstein. Glückstadt provided the King of Denmark with a qualification, but Savoy had allowed her vote to lapse into abeyance. Among the possessors of more than one vote may be mentioned the Palatine Wittelsbachs who had five,<sup>4</sup> the various branches of the Brunswick family who had also five between them,<sup>5</sup> while a like number were held by the Ernestine Saxons. Baden, Hesse and Mecklenburg had three apiece, and Würtemberg two, for Mömpelgard (Montbéliard) and Stuttgart.

Least in importance was the remaining College of the Diet, that of the Free Imperial Cities. It might have been thought that the constant quarrels between the two other Colleges would have been turned to good use by the third. The Princes were always bitterly jealous of the privileges of the Electors, and friction was frequent. But the Cities were in no position to profit by this. It was only at the Peace of Westphalia that the old dispute as to the value of their vote had been settled in their favour, and that it had been agreed that they should possess the *Votum decisivum* and not merely the *Votum Consultativum*. Even then the parallel questions, whether the Cities should be called upon to decide when the Electors and Princes disagreed and whether the Electors and Princes combined could carry a point against the Cities, had been left to the next meeting of the Diet, to be decided in 1653-1654 in a manner which made the recognition of their claim to the

<sup>1</sup> Her other votes were for Cüstrin and Eastern Pomerania.

<sup>2</sup> On the death of its Saxon administrator, Augustus, son of John George I, in 1680, Magdeburg reverted, as duly arranged, to Brandenburg.

<sup>3</sup> The cession of Bremen and Verden to Hanover (1720) added two votes to those possessed by the Guelphs.

<sup>4</sup> For Lautern, Neuburg, Simmern, Veldenz and Zweibrücken.

<sup>5</sup> For Calenberg, Celle, Grubenhagen, Saxe-Lauenburg and Wolfenbüttel.

*Votum decisivum* a mere farce, for it was settled that the Cities should only be called upon to vote when the other two Colleges were agreed. But the reasons for the unimportance of the Cities lay deeper than any mere uncertainty as to their constitutional position. Their position was uncertain because they had already fallen from their high estate. Some of the "Free Imperial Cities" were no longer free, some were no longer Imperial but had passed under other masters, and some were not worthy of the name of "city." Their decline had begun with the changes in the distribution of commerce caused by the great geographical discoveries of the fifteenth century. Even without the Reformation and the Thirty Years' War, the German cities would have been hard hit by the opening of the new route to the East round the Cape of Good Hope, and by the great advance in shipbuilding which had made commerce oceanic and had freed traders from the necessity of creeping cautiously along the coast. Moreover, the altered conditions of national life in England and France affected German trade adversely. Consolidated kingdoms quickly developed a very definite commercial policy. Protective measures fostered the growth of national commerce and industries to the detriment of the foreigner. The Merchant Adventurers of England disputed the Hanseatic monopoly of the Baltic, and the legislation of Edward VI and Elizabeth dealt the League a crippling blow by depriving it of its privileges in England. And while the old trade-routes of the Middle Ages were being deserted, while the spices of the East were finding their way to the North of Europe by other lines than the traditional route of the Adriatic, the Alpine passes and the Rhine valley, political as well as economic conditions were fighting against the cities of Germany. With the consolidation of the power of the territorial Princes their appetite for the acquisition of valuable sources of revenue increased in proportion, and more than one important city found it impossible to resist the pressure of a powerful neighbour. Of concerted action on the part of the cities or joint resistance to would-be annexers there was no trace. Not, as a rule, individually large enough or wealthy enough to be able to stand alone, the cities were not sufficiently in union among themselves to act together. Had they been ready to give up some part of their independent powers and to place themselves in the hands of the Emperor, they might

have managed to escape having to submit to lesser potentates; but they took no steps in that direction and the Hapsburgs showed no inclination to meet them half-way. But vigorous resistance was hardly to be expected in the unhealthy state into which municipal life had fallen. In most cities a narrow oligarchy had usurped the local government and completely controlled the municipal institutions. Add to all this the tremendous upheaval of the Thirty Years' War, the utter disorganisation of social, commercial and industrial life which it had involved, the lawlessness and violence which followed in the train of war, and it is not surprising that the Free Cities emerged from that struggle as political nullities, and that in the course of the next half-century their political importance decreased rather than recovered itself. In 1715 they still numbered about fifty, though many of the largest and most flourishing of them had failed to retain the independence of which much smaller places were still able to boast. Thus Leipzig had become subject to the Elector of Saxony, while Ulm was still independent. It was not by size or by importance that the question of freedom or subjection was determined, it was by the accident of the strength of the would-be annexer. Sometimes, indeed, a city retained its independence through being the object of conflicting claims. Thus Erfurt, though never technically a Free City, had managed to enjoy a considerable independence for some time by playing off against each other the rival claimants, the Electors of Mayence and Saxony, until in 1664 the former managed to arrange a compromise with his opponent and by the aid of the Rhine League forced the city to submit. Bremen, more fortunate, though compelled in 1654 to admit the suzerainty of Sweden, contrived to regain her independence twelve years later by the assistance of Cologne, Denmark and the Brunswick Dukes.

Those cities which at the beginning of the eighteenth century remained independent were for the most part very conservative, unprogressive even to stagnation, being in the hands of narrow and unenterprising oligarchies and quite devoid of any real municipal or industrial life. Nuremberg, despite her sufferings in the siege of 1632, and Frankfort on Main may be mentioned as exceptions to the general rule of stagnation, while the Italian trade enabled Augsburg to retain

some degree of prosperity and activity. Hamburg and Bremen had had the good fortune to be but little affected by the Thirty Years' War, but the greatness of the Hanseatic League was a thing of the past and in 1648 Lübeck was the only other member of the League which retained its status as a Free City, and even these three had lost much of their old commercial importance. Cologne also owed to her position on the Rhine a certain amount of trade, but the control which the Dutch exercised over the mouths of the Rhine proved a serious obstacle to the development of the trade of Western Germany. Another of the more flourishing cities of Germany had been lost to the Empire when, in 1681, perhaps the most high-handed of all the acts of Louis XIV deprived Germany of Strassburg. Outside the ranks of the Free Cities, Dresden, München and Berlin were gradually rising in importance with the consolidation of the powers of the territorial Princes, and though Vienna had suffered severely in the great siege of 1683, the Austrian capital was in some ways the most flourishing city in the Empire. But Germany was primarily a rural not an urban country; its cities were neither economically nor politically to be compared with those of Italy and the Netherlands, and the unimportance of the College of Free Cities accurately reflects the part which the towns played in German history in the eighteenth century.

It would not be going too far to assert that in none of the institutions of Germany was there anything which offered any prospect of the attainment of unity or real national life. Without a thorough reform of the constitution nothing could be done and of such a reform there was little chance. The Empire as such was moribund, and in no direction was any source of new life or strength to be found for it. To a certain extent the Hapsburgs had attempted in the years between the Peace of Westphalia and those of Utrecht and Rastatt to reassert the claims and pretensions which the Imperial title carried with it, but their success had been of the slightest. It might have been thought that opposition to the encroachments of Louis XIV would have served as a bond of union; that the necessity for common defence against so powerful and aggressive a neighbour would have rallied the country round its nominal head; that the seizure of Strassburg and the other places claimed by Louis in virtue of the verdicts of the *Chambres de Réunion*

would have called to life the dead or dormant national sentiment of Germany, would have brought home to the Princes the need for co-operation and the dangers which they and their neighbours were running through the pursuit of local and particularist aims. If ever Germany was to be forced to realise the need for unity, if ever a national movement was to breathe fresh force into the old institutions and make the German Kingdom something more than a mere name, one might have expected this to have come about in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. That something of the sort was on foot is proved by the countless pamphlets, caricatures and squibs which flooded the country about that period, among which the *Bedenken* of the great philosopher Leibnitz are of more than mere ephemeral interest. In these he pointed out with lucidity and force Germany's urgent need for union and for proper preparation for war. But it was in vain that he urged that the Emperor should put himself at the head of the minor states, and that the Princes should join him in securing that union of Germany which, according to the writer, was the only security for the balance of power and for the preservation of the peace of Europe. The Princes with few exceptions showed no inclination to rally round the Emperor, no disposition to make any sacrifices for the common safety, or to abandon their purely particularist and selfish policies. Louis XIV was fully aware of the merits of the policy of *divide et impera*; he saw that localism was a force which he might use to paralyse and render impotent his neighbour on the East, and he rarely failed to find among the Princes of Germany men whose assistance, or at any rate whose neutrality, could be purchased for a reasonable price. Thus in 1658 Mazarin had founded the League of the Rhine, and though the action of Louis in attacking the Spanish Netherlands in May 1667 under the doubtful pretext of the *Jus Devolutionis* seems to have so frightened the members of the League that they allowed their alliances with him to expire in 1668 and declined to renew them, he was able when attacking Holland in 1672 to secure the neutrality of Bavaria, the Elector Palatine, Treves and Würtemberg, and to obtain the actual support of Cologne, of the Bishops of Münster and Strassburg and of Duke John Frederick of Hanover. It was the lukewarm support he received from the

Princes, notably Bavaria, Saxony and Brandenburg, which caused the Emperor Leopold to assent to the inglorious Peace of Nimeguen in 1679. It was largely because Brandenburg had enrolled herself among the paid retainers of France that Louis was able to set his *Chambres de Réunion* at work to carry out his annexations unopposed, and his successful retention of Strassburg was not merely due to the almost simultaneous troubles in Hungary and the outbreak of a new war with the Turks. The Emperor had to agree to the Truce of Ratisbon in 1684, because Frederick William of Brandenburg saw in the necessities of the Empire a chance for pressing his very dubious claims on Silesia, demanding terms so extravagant that Austria refused to grant them, with the result that the projected coalition fell through, it being realised that unless all Germany were united behind him it would be useless for Leopold to throw down the gauntlet to Louis. The League of Augsburg in 1688 included the majority of the principal states of Germany, and the deliberate devastation of the Palatinate went far to exasperate popular feeling against Louis; but the course of the war showed up not merely the utter inefficiency of the defensive arrangements of the Empire,<sup>1</sup> but also the lukewarm character of the support of many members of the Coalition. Those from whose territories the hostile armies were far distant exerted themselves but little on behalf of their compatriots on the frontier. From 1690 to February 1693 no contingent from Saxony took any part in the war, and only by bestowing on Hanover the largest bribe in his power, the coveted Electoral dignity, did the Emperor avert the formation of an alliance between the Brunswick Dukes, Brandenburg and Saxony, to bring the war to an end. Nor was Germany any more solid in its support of the Emperor in the War of the Spanish Succession. Duke Anthony Ulrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel was only prevented from assisting the French by the prompt action of his cousins at Hanover and Celle, who occupied his territories and disarmed his troops, while the defection of the Wittelsbach Electors of Bavaria and Cologne threatened at one time to ruin the Grand Alliance by allowing the French to penetrate to Vienna and dictate terms to the Hapsburg in his capital.

Nor does the case appear any better when one turns to

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Erdmannsdörffer, ii. 25, and Z.S. ii. 41.

another important theatre and follows the course of the struggle with the still powerful and aggressive Moslem who was threatening Germany from the South-East. At no time was there a complete or a spontaneous rally for the defence of the Cross against the Crescent. Religious fervour and patriotism seemed equally extinct. Northern and Western Germany did little to beat back the tide of Turkish conquest in 1664, and the contingents of the Rhine League who shared in the victory at St. Gotthard on the Raab fought there at the bidding of their patron Louis XIV. In 1683, again, only two North German states were represented at the relief of Vienna, and the contingents of Hanover and Saxe-Weimar did not total two thousand men. Not a man from the Rhineland was there, and once again conditions which the Emperor could not accept were coupled with the protestations of zeal of which alone Brandenburg was lavish. Indeed, for any assistance the Emperor received in the task of ousting the Turk from Hungary a price, not a light one, had to be paid. The despatch of six thousand Hanoverians to the Danube in 1692, helped to earn the Guelphs the Electoral dignity; and when, in 1686, eight thousand Brandenburgers appeared on the Danube, it was because the Emperor had consented to cede Schwiebus to the Great Elector.

It may be argued that the Princes of Germany were thus lukewarm, because they felt that the reconquest of Hungary would be of little benefit to Germany as a whole, and mainly concerned the Hapsburgs and their dynastic interests. This is perhaps to some extent true; but no such plea can be advanced to exculpate those who not only failed to oppose the aggressions of Louis XIV, but were actually his accomplices and abettors. At the same time, it must be admitted that the Hapsburgs cannot escape the charge of having failed to do all they might have done. They were fatally hampered by the strong bias towards aggressive Roman Catholicism and the alliance with the Jesuits which made them objects of suspicion to the Protestant states, by the semi-Spanish traditions of the family, by their dynastic and non-German interests,—as, for example, the secret treaty of January 1668 with Louis XIV, providing for a partition in case the Spanish branch of the family should become extinct. Moreover, their autocratic traditions of government led them

to repress rather than to encourage anything in the shape of a popular movement. Indeed, if they had made more of an effort to reassert themselves and make good their nominal position in Germany, the more vigorous elements in the German polity would have been found opposed to them; for these elements, such as they were, took the shape of the efforts of the larger principalities at territorial independence and aggrandisement. The rise of Brandenburg-Prussia and Bavaria, their development from local divisions of Germany into minor European Powers, fatal though it was to anything like unity in Germany, certainly testified to the existence in those states of some degree of strength and activity. Thus it is that when one attempts to trace the history of Germany during the eighteenth century, one is at once met at the outset by the fact that Germany as a whole hardly has any history; in its place one has the history of the various states of Germany, international not national affairs hardly to be distinguished from the history of Europe as a whole, since France and Russia and England were all more or less directly concerned with the rivalries of the different minor states. At the most, the history of Germany can be said to deal with the complete decay of the constitutional life of the Holy Roman Empire and of the national life of the German Kingdom. Even the modified national existence which had still existed at the end of the fifteenth century<sup>1</sup> had disappeared. A distinguished authority on Romano-Germanic law, Michael Munchmayer, wrote in 1705 that it would have been about as possible to produce unity among Germans as to wash a blackamoor white. Indeed, the disintegration had gone to such lengths that it is really rather remarkable that the forms of unity and of a constitution should still have been retained.

To have put an end to the nominal as well as to the practical existence of the Empire would doubtless have been logical, but politics are not ruled by logic; and while there was no special reason why the process of disintegration should have been carried to its logical conclusion, for no one in particular stood to profit greatly by that event, there were excellent reasons why it should have been left incomplete. To the maintenance of the forms of the Empire as a hollow sham there were two possible alternatives, reconstruction and im-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Professor Tout's chapter in vol. i. of the *Cambridge Modern History*.

mediate dissolution. Reconstruction was out of the question; even if there had been any real wish for it in Germany, of which there were even fewer indications in 1715 than in 1648, the other Powers of Europe would not have cared to see the Empire so remodelled as to become a reality. Immediately after 1648 an attempt at reconstruction would have met with determined opposition from France and Sweden; in 1715, if Sweden was no longer a force to be regarded, and France was temporarily incapable of active interference, disintegration had gone so far that the diplomatic support of France would have probably been sufficient to enable Brandenburg or Bavaria to wreck the scheme. But, on the other hand, the dissolution of the Empire was about the last thing which anyone desired. The Hapsburgs were not the men to make great changes prematurely; the formal dissolution of the Empire would probably have been the signal for the immediate outbreak of a struggle of the most fearful description, which could hardly have failed to surpass even the horrors of the Thirty Years' War; a scramble among the stronger states for the possessions of the territories of those of their neighbours who lacked the power to defend their independence; a carnival of greed, violence and aggression; the universal application to the petty principalities of Germany of the rule that might is right. This the continued existence of the Empire did at least avert: the semblance of law and order was maintained, private war and armed strife among its members were checked, if not altogether prevented. The existence of the Empire protected the Principality of Anhalt against the danger of forcible annexation to Brandenburg; it made it useless for the ruler of Hesse-Darmstadt to cast covetous eyes on the Counties of Isenburg or Solms; it restrained Würtemberg from attempting to incorporate the Free City of Reutlingen and Bavaria from compelling the Franconian Knights to admit themselves her subjects as she was to try to do at the eleventh hour of the Empire's life.<sup>1</sup> In a way, the very subdivision which made the Empire so weak and unity so unattainable prevented the Empire from being dissolved. As Napoleon declared, "If the Germanic Body did not exist, we should have to create it." Its existence was at least better than the anarchy which dissolution would have brought in its train. The three

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 467-468.

hundred and sixty-five states of one description and another which were included within it were, for the most part, too small and too insignificant to be capable of independent existence. Not even the strongest of the minor states now rising into practically independent sovereign powers was ready as yet for the actual dissolution of the Empire. The substance of independence was as much as Saxony and Würtemberg wanted, and it they certainly already enjoyed. Having obtained ample freedom from the control of the Empire, they had no wish to complete its ruin; and, ruin as it was, there was yet enough potential utility in the old fabric for Austria to find it worth the trouble of its maintenance. The Imperial position, with its great, albeit shadowy, traditions, with its claims, disputed and obsolescent though they might be, might not be worth attaining at a heavy cost, but it was not to be lightly discarded. If Louis XIV had found it worthy of his candidature, Ferdinand III had had good reason for keeping it if he could. Possibilities still lurked in it; it was not even yet beyond all chance of revival. Joseph I had done not a little to reassert the Imperial claims and to raise the Imperial prestige and authority when he was suddenly cut off early in life: had he survived, there would have been a very different end to the Spanish Succession War and the Empire would have occupied a very different position in 1715. And even then there was a chance that at a more favourable season the old machinery might be put into working order, the old constitution might again prove capable of being turned to good account. So for nearly a century after the Peace of Baden the Empire survived, at once in the ideas it embodied the symbol of the German unity which had once existed, and in its actual condition the most striking example of that disintegration and disunion of Germany which is the main theme of these pages.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GERMAN STATES IN 1715

AMONG the three hundred and sixty-five states which together made up the German Kingdom the territories ruled by the Hapsburg family deserve the first place, even apart from their long standing connection with the Empire, since both in area and in population they exceeded all the others. "Austria," if by this convenient though somewhat anachronistic term one may describe the multifarious dominions of the Hapsburgs, was a conglomerate of provinces fortuitously brought together, differing greatly in race and language, in history and traditions, in social and political conditions, with little to connect them save the rule of a common dynasty, but for the most part geographically adjacent. Thus while no foreign territory intervened between Austria strictly so called and the group of provinces in which Bohemia was the chief and Moravia and Silesia the satellites, the territories attached to the Archduchy, Carniola, Carinthia, Styria and Tyrol, formed a connected group, and, to the South-Eastward, Hungary with Croatia and Transylvania continued the Hapsburg dominions in unbroken succession down the great highway of the Danube almost to the gates of Belgrade. Till 1715, Hungary and its dependencies had been the only non-German territories under the rule of the Austrian Hapsburgs, and from 1648 to 1683 Austrian Hungary had included but a small portion of the old Magyar kingdom, so that the non-German element in the Hapsburg polity, which was destined to be of such doubtful benefit during the eighteenth century, was as yet comparatively insignificant. Indeed, in 1648 the only detached portions of territory which Austria possessed were calculated to interest her in the defence of Germany rather than to distract her attention to other quarters, as was the case after 1715. At the Peace of Westphalia she did indeed surrender to France the Sundgau and other portions of Alsace, but she retained

many scattered pieces of Swabia which may be comprehended under the title of "Further Austria" (*Vorder Osterreich*). Though separated from Austria by the Electorate of Bavaria and the Bishopric of Augsburg, these districts along the Upper Danube and in the Black Forest, among which the Breisgau and the Burgau were the most important, were within a very short distance of Austria's Alpine lands, Vorarlberg and Tyrol, and the Wittelsbach alliance with France may be understood when it is realised how these Austrian outposts in Swabia seemed to surround Bavaria with a cordon of Hapsburg territory, and to menace her with that annexation which she had been fortunate to escape during the Spanish Succession War. "Further Austria" might have served as stepping-stones to bring the Hapsburgs to the Middle Rhine, and enable them to assimilate the intervening territory just as Brandenburg's acquisitions in Westphalia<sup>1</sup> helped to plant her in secure possession of the Lower Rhine. The idea of acquiring Bavaria by annexation or exchange was one of the most constant factors in Austrian policy, the dream of Joseph II, the explanation and aim of many of Thugut's intrigues, not definitely abandoned till the need for obtaining Bavaria's help against Napoleon caused Metternich to agree to the Treaty of Ried in 1813.<sup>2</sup>

It would have been of the greatest benefit to Austria, whatever its effects on Germany as a whole, if, instead of conferring the Spanish Netherlands on the Hapsburgs the Treaties of Utrecht and Baden had carried out the project of giving them to the Wittelsbachs in exchange for Bavaria. Rich, fertile, thickly populated though they were, the Netherlands were a possession of little value to Austria. Lying far away from Vienna, they had not even Hungary's geographical connection with the "hereditary dominions." Hampered by the restrictions imposed by the Peace of Münster their trade and industries could not develop naturally, and though they had once been an integral part of the Empire, the folly of Charles VI in treating them as part of that Spanish inheritance he persisted in regarding as rightly his prevented the revival of the old connection. No real attempt was made to attach them either by interest or sentiment to their new rulers, and when the conquering armies of Revolutionary France threatened

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 619.

to sever the connection between the Netherlands and the Hapsburgs Austria's defence of her provinces was so feeble and faint-hearted as to incur, almost to justify, suspicions that she desired to be rid of them.

Of the other acquisitions made by Austria in 1715, the Duchy of Milan also had once been subject to the Holy Roman Emperor, to whom it now returned; but here again the determination of Charles VI to regard it and his other Italian possessions, the island of Sardinia and the kingdom of Naples, as belonging to him as King of Spain, prevented any assimilation of these Italian dominions by Austria. In a way the connection with Italy influenced Austria but little in the eighteenth century; there was not much intercourse between Milan or Naples and the hereditary dominions, and it may be said that it was mainly because they excited the hostility of Spain and so helped to involve Austria in wars with the Bourbon powers, that these possessions affected her. It was only later on, when Austria had abandoned all efforts to reassert her position in Germany, that she turned to Italy to seek her compensation there.

Racial divisions and jealousies, the great problem which confronts the Hapsburgs at the present day, had not yet become a pressing question in 1715. The provinces were too loosely connected, too little in touch with one another, to trouble much about their relations with each other. The connection between them had to become effective before it could be felt to be oppressive. The sense of nationality was dormant, or, at any rate, inarticulate and without influence. The Government was everywhere in the hands of the nobles, who were but little affected by racial sentiment, except perhaps in Hungary. The nationalist movement in Bohemia in the nineteenth century has been largely a popular movement, the outcome in a sense of the great upheaval of the French Revolution. In 1715 there was not the least indication of anything of the sort. Hungary, it is true, clung resolutely to all its privileges and constitutional rights, and in the fifty years that followed the reconquest of Hungary from Turkish rule, the Hapsburgs found their relations with their Magyar subjects a frequent source of trouble. Hungarian disloyalty was a source of weakness to Austria which Louis XIV knew well how to turn to his advantage: in 1703, when Villars and Elector Maximilian of Bavaria threatened Vienna

from the Upper Danube, Hungarian insurgents were in the field lower down the river, and not until January 1711 was the insurrection finally suppressed and the authority of the Hapsburgs completely re-established in Hungary and Transylvania. One of the principal causes of this disloyalty was the mistaken religious policy of Leopold I, whose bigotry had prevented him from utilising the opportunity afforded by the reconquest from the Turks. Had wiser counsels prevailed when, after a century and a half (1541-1686), Buda-Pesth was delivered from Turkish rule, it might have been possible to attach the Hungarians to the Hapsburg dynasty. Religious concessions were all that were needed, for the so-called "Nationalist" party formerly headed by Tököli had been discredited by its alliance with the Turks and the townsfolk were very hostile to the nobles. But the influence of the Jesuits carried the day, and a fierce persecution of the Protestants was set going which caused the Hungarians to identify the Hapsburg dynasty with Roman Catholic intolerance. Not till Joseph I abandoned this impolitic persecution and granted toleration to the Protestant religion was the insurrection brought to an end, or the foundations laid for that reconciliation of the Magyars to their rulers which Maria Theresa was afterwards to complete.<sup>1</sup> Thus in 1715, Hungary was hardly a great source of strength to Austria, and the almost complete autonomy which the country possessed helped to keep them apart. The constitutional relations between Hungary and the Hapsburgs had been put on a definite footing in 1687, when, at a Diet held at Pressburg, the succession to the Hungarian monarchy had been declared hereditary in the Hapsburg family. The Emperor had on this occasion shown a praiseworthy moderation: he had not insisted on his rights as conqueror, but had only introduced one other important modification of the Constitution, the abolition of Clause 31 in the Bull of Andrew II, which had established the right of armed resistance to unconstitutional government, a privilege similar to that of "confederation," which was to prove so potent a factor in the ruin of Poland. These concessions paved the way for the work Maria Theresa was to do, but the recognition of Hungary as a quite independent kingdom established that "dualism" which the twentieth

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 182.

century finds as a force more powerful than ever, and which has served as an effective barrier against the amalgamation of Hungary with Austria.

Regarding the dominions of the Hapsburgs as a whole, one might fairly say that the dynasty was almost the only bond between the groups of provinces subject to it. The germs of a common administration existed at Vienna in the Conference,<sup>1</sup> in the Aulic Chamber (*Hofkammer*), which was occupied with financial and commercial questions, and the War Council; but the existence of this machinery was hardly enough by itself to balance the all but complete autonomy of the provinces. Thus the War Council's task of organising an efficient standing army was made all but impossible by the excessive powers of the local authorities, each province having a separate budget and negotiating separately with the central authority as to its contribution towards the common defence. Bohemia had actually its own Chancery, which was at once judicial and administrative, being the supreme court of justice for Bohemia and its dependencies, and also the channel of communication between the local officials at Prague and the Emperor. The great need of the Hapsburg dominions was centralisation, and in dealing with the Austrian and Bohemian groups of territory, steady progress had been made by Ferdinand III and his sons. Joseph I was doing much when his sudden death deprived Austria of the ruler who seemed about to restore the authority of the Emperor and to weld together his disunited provinces. The change from local autonomy to centralised despotism was no doubt bitterly opposed by those who found themselves deprived of their cherished privileges, but in clipping the wings of the local Estates and wresting from the local nobles who filled those bodies their exclusive control over administrative and financial affairs, the Hapsburgs were following a policy which had every justification. The feudal aristocracies who controlled the provincial Estates administered local affairs with little regard either to the welfare of the whole state of which they formed a part, or to the interests of the mass of the population of the individual provinces. The general weal was sacrificed to a narrow particularism, the peasantry and burghers in each province were sacrificed to the selfish interests of the nobles.

<sup>1</sup> The Council of State had been reorganised under this name in 1709.

Provinces so disunited, feudal oligarchies so incapable of taking any but the narrowest local view, or of considering the interests of any class but their own, needed to be disciplined by the strong hand of a despotic government. Before patriotism could replace localism and selfishness the provinces must be knit together by a common administration.

Next to the Hapsburg dominions, the territories of the Electors deserve notice. The three ecclesiastical members of the College, the Archbishops of Cologne, Mayence and Treves, form a class apart. In the domestic affairs of the Empire these three tended, as Catholics, to take the side of Austria, except that the traditional connection of the see of Mayence with the office of Arch Chancellor, and consequently with the duty of presiding in the College of Electors, usually disposed its occupant to place himself at the head of that party which may be described as that of the "*Reich*,"<sup>1</sup> and which was usually opposed to the Hapsburgs. Thus Mayence is often found opposing the Hapsburgs, and making special efforts to thwart any measures with a centralising tendency lest constitutional liberties should be infringed. Yet it might have been expected that the exposed position of these ecclesiastical Electorates would have made their holders support any reforms which tended to bind Germany together and to make the Empire less defenceless against its aggressive Western neighbour. Mayence, it is true, had but little territory West of the Rhine, for the bulk of her lands lay in the valley of the Lower Main, the chief outlying districts being Erfurt and the Eichsfeld in Thuringia. Cologne, too, held the duchy of Westphalia in addition to the long strip along the left bank of the Rhine from Andernach to Rheinberg, but the Electorate of Treves lay almost wholly in the Moselle valley and was much exposed to France. The accident that the territory along the frontier between France and Germany was not only much split up but was also for the most part in the hands of ecclesiastical rulers, had contributed in no small

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between the body of the *Reich* and its head the *Kaiser* is one for which there is no satisfactory English equivalent. To translate *Reichs* by "Imperial" almost involves translating *Kaiserlich* by "Austrian," which somewhat unduly exaggerates the reputed indifference of the Hapsburgs to the *Reich*; but if one makes "Imperial" the equivalent to *Kaiserlich*, one is left without a word for *Reichs*: "national" would be misleading, "of the Empire" is a rather clumsy and not very clear way out of the difficulty.

degree to the weakness and disunion of Germany, and to make her a ready prey to Bourbon aggression. Had Cologne or Mayence been the seat of a hereditary Electorate in the hands of an able and ambitious house like the Hohenzollern, the history of the "Left Bank" would be very different reading. But ecclesiastical rulers, if on the whole their territories were not ill-governed, had not the urgent spur of the desire to found an abiding dynasty as an incentive to the energetic development of their dominions or to the promotion of the welfare of their subjects. Oppression by an ecclesiastical ruler was infrequent, energetic government rather rarer, reforms and progress almost unknown. Of the occupants of the ecclesiastical Electorates in 1715, Lothair Francis of Schönborn had been Elector of Mayence since 1693, and had distinguished himself by his patriotic conduct during the war of the Spanish Succession. Realising that the Hapsburgs alone could afford to maintain the institutions of the Empire, which he described "as a handsome but portionless bride whose support involves very heavy expenditure," he was, in defiance of the traditions of his see, a firm adherent of the Hapsburg family, and had played no small part in securing the election of Charles VI in 1711. As ruler of Mayence, he not only protected the city with elaborate fortifications, but devoted himself to its interests, and did much for its improvement and embellishment. His colleague at Treves, Charles of Lorraine, had only just been restored to his metropolitan city, which the French had evacuated on the conclusion of the peace. Before the year was out (Dec.) his sudden death at Vienna brought to a close his brief four years' tenure of his see, his successor being a member of the Neuburg branch of the Wittelsbach family, Francis Louis, who had been Bishop of Worms since 1694. The Elector of Cologne, Joseph Clement of Bavaria, had also just regained his Electoral dominions with the Peace of Baden. Though it had been his election to the see of Cologne which had been the nominal *casus belli* between Louis XIV and the Emperor in 1688, Joseph Clement had followed his brother, Maximilian Emmanuel, into the French camp in the Spanish Succession War, with the result that he had been driven from his Electorate, forced to take refuge in France, and had finally been put to the ban of the Empire in 1706. His reinstatement had been one of the concessions which England's

desertion of the Coalition had enabled Louis XIV to exact; but it was not accomplished without some friction, for the Dutch, who were in possession of some of the fortresses of the Electorate, refused to quit Bonn unless the fortifications were destroyed, and finally had to be expelled by force. The incident, however, did not in the end prove serious, as an agreement was reached in August 1717 and the fortifications were duly destroyed, the same being done at Liège, of which, as well as of Hildesheim, Joseph Clement was the Bishop. In this plurality he was merely continuing a custom almost as traditional as that by which the Bavarian Wittelsbachs had supplied Cologne with an unbroken series of Archbishops ever since the election of Ernest of Bavaria to the see in 1583.

Among the lay Electorates, Bohemia was in the hands of the Hapsburgs, and the King of Bohemia had become so completely merged in the Emperor that it was a question whether the validity of the Bohemian vote were to be any longer admitted. Saxony was held by the house of Wettin, Brandenburg by that of Hohenzollern, the ambitions of the Guelphs had recently been gratified by the creation for them of a ninth Electorate, that of Hanover, while the Wittelsbach family supplied two Electors, separate branches of the house ruling Bavaria and the Palatinate respectively. Frederick Augustus of Saxony was one of the three Electors who, in addition to their territories within the Empire, were rulers of kingdoms outside its boundaries. The connection of Saxony with Poland was certainly one which had brought no benefits to the Electorate, whatever its influence on the distressful partner with which Saxony had been linked since July 1696. It had deprived the Empire of the assistance of Saxony in the great war against Louis XIV. It had involved the Electorate in the wars which had troubled the Baltic ever since Charles XII of Sweden had opened his chequered career by his attack on Denmark in 1700. It had brought the victorious armies of the Swedish king to Alt Ranstadt, and had seemed at one time likely to prove a link between the Western and the Eastern wars. Indeed, in 1715 Saxon troops were actively engaged in the expulsion of the Swedes from German soil, an enterprise in which Saxony's own interests were but remotely concerned. Moreover, in order that no impediment should be offered to his election to the

Polish throne by his Protestantism—which, it must be admitted, sat but lightly upon him—Frederick Augustus had “received instruction” and had been admitted into the Roman Catholic Church, by which means the Roman Catholic majority in the College of Electors was still further increased. Yet it is not out of keeping with the other anomalies of the Germanic Constitution that despite this conversion the Wettin family retained the nominal leadership of German Protestantism traditional in their line. It was not thought necessary to transfer to another dynasty the headship of the *Corpus Evangelicorum*, the organised union of the German Protestants which had been officially recognised at the Peace of Westphalia. Prussia and Hanover both laid claim to it when in 1717 the Crown Prince of Saxony married the eldest daughter of the late Emperor, Joseph I, and became a Roman Catholic, but no change was made: religious differences were no longer the potent factor in German politics they had once been and the headship of the German Protestants carried with it no real political advantages. But it is not to this that the comparative unimportance of Saxony after 1715 is to be mainly attributed. The Electorate, though fairly populous and including some of the richest districts of Germany, suffered much through the accidental connection with a foreign country to which no ties of interest, sentiment, race, or religion bound it. Moreover, it was involved in further troubles by its geographical position between the two powers whose conflict is the chief feature of German history in the eighteenth century, while its rulers during the period were men of little ability or importance. Frederick Augustus I did, indeed, achieve a European reputation by his unparalleled profligacy, but he was an indifferent soldier and an incompetent ruler, and his son and successor, Frederick Augustus II, cuts but a sorry figure in the Austro-Prussian conflict. It was also unfortunate for Saxony that John George II (*ob.* 1656) had done for the Albertine branch of the Wettin family what had been done for the Ernestine line a hundred years earlier on the death of John Frederick II (1554). By partitioning his territories in order to establish separate cadet branches at Merseburg, Weissenfels and Zeitz<sup>1</sup> for his younger sons Christian, Augustus and Maurice, John George weakened the resources at the disposal of the main

<sup>1</sup> Extinct respectively in 1738, 1725 and 1746.

branch of the Wettin family. This process had been begun with the partition of 1485 between the Albertine and Ernestine branches, from which one may date the decline of the Wettin family, or, at any rate, the disappearance of the chance of making Saxony a compact and powerful state, able to exercise a controlling influence over the fortunes of Central Germany, but the will of John George carried it another stage forward.

Unlike the Wettin family, the Hohenzollern were destined to play a far more important part in Germany after 1715 than had hitherto fallen to their lot. The reign (1640-1688) of the so-called "Great Elector," Frederick William, marks the beginning of the advance of Brandenburg. Not only did the territorial acquisitions which he made at the Peace of Westphalia increase considerably the resources at his disposal, but they helped to connect the central mass of his dominions with his outlying possessions on the Rhine and beyond the Vistula. But far more important were the reforms which he introduced into the constitutional and administrative economy of his dominions. Though "unable to introduce complete uniformity of system and practice into the affairs of his several dominions," Frederick William did "impose the principle of his own supremacy on every official, and made it felt as a positive force throughout the whole frame of local polity."<sup>1</sup> The credit of having laid the foundations on which the power of Brandenburg-Prussia has been built up is clearly his. The reorganisation of the army on a professional basis, the arrangement by which the sums devoted to its upkeep were separated from the rest of the revenue and placed under the Minister of War, the subjection of the local Estates to the power of the Elector, the overthrow of the constitutional liberties and privileges which impaired his absolute authority, the encouragement by the State of all measures by which the material resources and prosperity of the country might be fostered and increased, are all to be found in the days of Frederick William. Personal control, rigid economy and the unsparing exaction of efficiency from officers and civil officials, were the leading features of his system of government; and though perhaps his work lacked the completeness and finish which his grandson, King Frederick William I, was to impart

<sup>1</sup> Tuttle, i. 224.

to it, it was well done, and did not fall to pieces when his guiding hand was removed.

In foreign policy also the "Great Elector" sketched the outlines of the policy which subsequent Hohenzollern rulers were to develop and complete. Of the patriotism and pan-Germanic ideals with which it has pleased some modern writers to credit him, it is hard to detect any traces among the shifts, the inconsistencies and the desertions which constitute his foreign policy: to him the aggrandisement at home and abroad of the House of Hohenzollern was the one and only end, and that end he pursued with an unflinching persistence and no small degree of success. Territorial acquisitions were what he above all desired, and he attained the great success of freeing East Prussia alike from Swedish and from Polish suzerainty. The Archbishopric of Magdeburg fell to him by reversion under the terms of the Peace of Westphalia (1680), he received Schwiebus in 1686 in return for the renunciation of a claim on Liegnitz, and 1666 saw a final division of the disputed Cleves-Jülich heritage. But despite the success of Fehrbellin (1675), Sweden still retained Western Pomerania and held the mouth of the Oder, and no territorial gain resulted from the policy of vassalage to France on which Frederick William embarked in 1679 after he had felt the weight of Louis XIV's hand in the Peace of St. Germain-en-Laye. His heir, Frederick III as Elector and I as King, has perhaps had less than justice done him by those who have done more than justice to the father. Less selfish and aggressive if less capable and energetic, he displayed a loyalty to the House of Hapsburg as head of the Empire which is in striking contrast to the shifting and tortuous policy of his predecessor. In the resistance of Germany to Louis XIV, the part played by Frederick I was certainly more consistent, more honourable, and, on the whole, more effective than that of the Great Elector. In domestic affairs he lacked his father's power of organising, his unsparing energy and his talent for rigid economy, but he did carry on the work which had been begun, and it would be foolish to dismiss as valueless that acquisition of the Prussian Crown with which his name will always be mainly associated. Personal vanity and pride, a love of titles and pomp, may have played their part in the acquisition, but it was an achievement of solid

importance, which not only gave Frederick a better position in international affairs, but by enhancing the prestige and authority of the sovereign was of great use in assisting the consolidation of his scattered dominions. "The Crown" was no mere fad or whim, it was the logical conclusion to the "Great Elector's" work. Though based on Prussia, the Kingship extended over all the possessions of the Hohenzollern, and Frederick was "King in Prussia" not in Königsberg only, but in Cleves, in Minden and in Berlin.

One of the conditions upon which Austria had consented to recognise the new title was that Prussia should support the Emperor in his pretensions to the Spanish inheritance, and Prussian troops consequently played a prominent part in the campaigns of Marlborough and Eugene. Prussian contingents were to the fore at Blenheim, at Turin, at Oudenarde and at Malplaquet; but it has been well said that "Prussia had a policy but no army in the North, she had an army but no policy in the West." Her poverty compelled her to hire out to the Maritime Powers the troops she could not herself afford to support, and this it is which explains why at the Peace of Utrecht, Prussia's gains were insignificant. Guelders, on which the Prussian monarch possessed a claim in virtue of his position as Duke of Cleves, was handed over to him, and the Powers recognised Prussia's right to those portions of the Orange inheritance which had come into Frederick's possession since the death of his cousin William III. Mors and Lingen he had held since 1702, Neuchatel since 1707. But by the time the Peace was signed (April 11th, 1713) the first "King in Prussia" was no more, and his place had been taken by his son Frederick William I (Feb. 25th, 1713).

Some account has already been given<sup>1</sup> of the process by which the Wittelsbach family, which had begun the Thirty Years' War with one Electorate in the family, ended it with two. Of the two, the Bavarian line was incontestably the more important. Maximilian I, whose reign of fifty-three years (1598-1651) may not unfairly be described as the period in which the foundations of the modern kingdom of Bavaria were well and truly laid, not merely had won for Bavaria the coveted Electoral dignity and the rich lands of the Upper Palatinate, but he had been one of the first of the rulers of

<sup>1</sup> P. 18.

the minor states of Germany to establish his autocracy at the expense of his Estates. The Princes wanted to be absolute in their dominions as well as independent of Imperial control, for where lay the benefit of being free from external interference if they were to be hampered by constitutional opposition at home? Everywhere there were contests over taxation between aggressive Princes and recalcitrant Estates, and nearly everywhere it was not the Princes who had to give way. This was partly because the Estates were not, as a rule, really representative and had no force behind them. The peasantry, unrepresented and inarticulate, accustomed to be oppressed and to obey, heavily taxed and in a miserable condition, were of no political importance; the towns had been hit too hard by the wars and the complete disorganisation of trade and industry to have any influence, and the nobles alone were unable to prevent the establishment of more or less absolute autocracies. In this work Maximilian I had been extremely successful; he had stamped out Protestantism in his dominions, he had suppressed the opposition of the Estates, and by his services to the Catholic cause in the early stages of the Thirty Years' War he had made himself the leader of the non-Austrian Catholics. It was their position as the only Catholic Princes capable of contesting the quasi-hereditary claim of the Hapsburgs to the Empire that gave the Bavarian house their special importance in international affairs, and caused them to be looked upon with favour by the power whose policy towards Germany was based on the maxim *Divide et impera*. The relations between France and Bavaria were of slow growth: Ferdinand Maria (1651-1679) had gone to the length of promising to support the candidature of Louis for the Empire (1670), but Maximilian Emmanuel (1679-1726) had at first rejected all the overtures of France, had been an energetic member of the League of Augsburg, and had only at length listened to the offers of Louis when the death (1698) of his son, the Electoral Prince, had taken away Bavaria's chief motive for alliance with Austria, the prospect of Austrian support for the Electoral Prince's claims on Spain. And there was always a reason for the Bavarian Wittelsbachs to look with some suspicion on Austria; for, if the Hapsburgs should ever succeed in obtaining a dominant position in Germany, it would not be long before they would discover

adequate reasons for the incorporation in their own dominions of those Wittelsbach lands which intervened so inconveniently between Upper Austria and the Burgau. Hence the alliance between Maximilian Emmanuel and Louis, and the chequered career of Bavaria in the Spanish Succession War, which afforded not less striking proofs of the advantages to France of possessing a client so favourably situated for forwarding her designs on Austria than of the utility to Bavaria of French protection against Hapsburg land-hunger. It was to the good offices of France that Maximilian Emmanuel owed his restoration<sup>1</sup> to his hereditary dominions; and though the differences which kept France and Spain apart for the decade following the Peace of Utrecht tended to force Franco-Austrian hostility into the background for a time, the old policy was resumed by France when the Empire fell vacant in 1740.

The other branch of the Wittelsbach family was represented in 1715 by John William of Neuburg, the brother-in-law of the Emperor Leopold I and a constant adherent of the Hapsburgs. He was the second of his line to rule in the Palatinate which had passed to his father, Philip William, in 1685 on the death of Charles, the last of the Simmern branch. This branch had not long survived its restoration to the Electorate;<sup>2</sup> and though Charles Lewis (1648-1680), the eldest son of the "Winter King" by Elizabeth, daughter of James I, had done a good deal to restore prosperity to his diminished dominions, rebuilding the devastated Mannheim, refounding the University of Heidelberg, remitting taxation and giving all possible encouragement to commerce and agriculture, the celebrated devastation of the Palatinate by the French in 1674 and its repetition in 1689 had between them thrown back the work of restoration, besides contributing to embitter the relations between Germany and France. The accession of the Neuburg line meant that another Electorate passed from Protestant into Roman Catholic hands, and Elector John William had been mainly instrumental in securing the inclusion in the Peace of Ryswick of the clause by which freedom of worship in the districts then restored by France was not to be allowed "where not expressly stated to the contrary."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was not till 1717 that this restoration was finally completed.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> This so-called "Ryswick clause" was used with effect against the Protestants

Moreover, despite the Compact of Schwabisch-Hall (May 1685), which had guaranteed freedom of worship to the Calvinist and Lutheran inhabitants of the Palatinate, Elector John William had inaugurated an era of rigorous persecution, which was only slightly mitigated by the intervention in 1705 of Frederick I of Prussia. In addition to the Lower Palatinate, the Neuburg line possessed the principality in the upper valley of the Danube from which they took their name, and the portion of the Cleves-Jülich inheritance which had fallen to their lot as representing one of the sisters of the last Duke of Cleves. This, as settled by the definite partition of 1666, included Jülich, Berg and Ravenstein, so that the rulers of the Palatinate possessed more territory in the Rhine valley than any other lay potentate. This exposed them to French hostility and may partly account for their loyal adherence to Austria; but the strained relations between the Neuburgs and their Bavarian cousins may also have tended to influence the attitude of the Palatinate in international affairs.

The balance of religions in the Electoral College, disturbed against the Protestants by the succession of the Neuburgs to the Palatinate and by the conversion of the Saxon Electors, had been to some extent redressed by the erection in 1692 of a new Electorate. The greater prominence of the Hohenzollern, and the misconceptions too often prevalent in England as to the true nature of the "beggarly Electorate" with which our country was so closely linked for over one hundred years, have contributed to somewhat obscure the real importance of the Brunswick family. Indeed, had it not been that the principle of indivisibility of territories was not adopted by the family till after the separation of the Dannenberg and Lüneburg lines (1569), and that the connection with Great Britain from time to time involved Hanover in quarrels with which she had little concern, it is hardly fanciful to imagine that Brandenburg might have found in Brunswick a rival quite capable of contesting with her the leading position among the North German states. But until just the end of the seventeenth century the lands of the Brunswick family were but little less divided than those of the Wittelsbachs or of the Ernestine Saxons, while partly

of some parts of Southern Germany in the early part of the eighteenth century, Cf. *Z.S.* ii. 134.

through this and partly through a premature disarmament the Brunswick Dukes had fared very badly at the Peace of 1648, when instead of sharing the Westphalian bishoprics with Brandenburg, they had had to content themselves with alternate nominations to Osnabrück. However, by the year 1680 the various branches of the family had been reduced to four, the Dannenberg or "new Wolfenbüttel" line in the Duchy of Brunswick, the Lüneburg-Celle and Calenberg-Hanover branches of the "new Lüneburg" line, and the comparatively unimportant Dukes of Brunswick-Bevern, a cadet branch of the "new Wolfenbüttels." At this time George William of Lüneburg-Celle had only a daughter, the ill-fated Sophia Dorothea, while his brother Ernest Augustus of Calenberg-Hanover had only one son, George Lewis, afterwards George I of Great Britain. A marriage between these two was therefore the natural method of giving effect to the principle of indivisibility adopted by the Lüneburg line in 1592, and in November 1682 the wedding took place, Ernest Augustus having been recognised two years previously by the Estates of Hanover as the destined successor of George William. The will of Ernest Augustus, now "published by anticipation," laid down as the perpetual law of the family the principles of indivisibility and primogeniture. This arrangement was ratified by the Emperor in 1683 and duly came into force on the death (1705) of George William, undisturbed by the tragedy of the unlucky Sophia Dorothea (1694).<sup>1</sup>

But before this union of Lüneburg-Celle and Calenberg-Hanover, the dignity so ardently desired by the Guelphs as the consummation of their improved position had been acquired by Ernest Augustus. In the necessities of the Emperor the Guelphs found a lever by which to lift themselves into the Electoral College. Austria, occupied simultaneously with the recovery of Hungary from the Turks and the defence of Western Germany against Louis XIV, was in sore need of the considerable military force of which they could dispose; and when, in 1692, Leopold found that the Duke of Hanover

<sup>1</sup> In 1689 the Saxe-Lauenberg line, ruling the duchy of that name on the right bank of the Elbe above Hamburg, had become extinct; and, despite the opposition of several other claimants, among them John George III of Saxony, the Guelphs managed to secure possession of this valuable district, their right to which received Imperial recognition in 1716. Cf. *Z.S.* ii. 107.

was discussing with Sweden, with the Bishop of Münster, and with the malcontent Elector of Saxony<sup>1</sup> the formation of a "third party" within the Empire for the purpose of forcing the Emperor to come to terms with France, he had to give way. In March 1692 was signed the "Electoral Compact," by which the Emperor conferred the Electoral dignity on Ernest Augustus and his sons in return for considerable military assistance both on the Rhine and on the Danube.

The promotion of Ernest Augustus was received not with acclamations but with a chorus of protests, from the Electors jealous at the admission of an upstart into their ranks, from the Princes furious with the lost leader who had deserted them to gain the very privileges he had been foremost in attacking. However, by October 1692, Bavaria, Brandenburg, Mayence and Saxony had recognised the promotion, and most of the other states of Germany followed suit before very long. At the Congress of Ryswick the European Powers recognised Ernest Augustus as an Elector, and at length, in 1708, three years after the union of Celle and Hanover and ten years after the death of Ernest Augustus (1698), his son George obtained formal admission into the Electoral College. In 1714 he succeeded his cousin Anne as King of England, and from henceforward the fortunes of Hanover were destined to be affected by events on the Ganges and Mississippi, and by commercial quarrels in East and West Indies. To England also the connection was a doubtful advantage, though in many respects the Electorate compared less unfavourably with its ruler's new dominions than is usually assumed. If its population was only a little over a half a million as against the six millions of England and Wales, and its revenue only £300,000 as against £6,000,000, the Hanoverian army was but little smaller than the joint establishment of 31,000 men maintained in Great Britain, Ireland and the "plantations." Compared with the territories of their German neighbours, those of the Guelphs were fairly extensive, amounting to about 8500 square miles; but they were neither very populous nor very rich. Moorlands and sandy wastes formed a very large portion of the Electorate, which contained very few towns of any size, and was mainly agricultural, except for a few mining villages. Economically and socially alike the country was somewhat backward, its laws

<sup>1</sup> John George IV, *o.s.p.* 1694.

and system of government being mainly mediæval, local Estates retained enough vitality to prevent centralisation without being themselves efficient or energetic, while the peasantry were in a state of feudal subjugation and were extremely ignorant.

Outside the Electoral College the thirty-three ecclesiastical members of the College of Princes merit some attention. One of the Archbishoprics, Magdeburg, had passed into the possession of Brandenburg in 1680; the only other one, Salzburg, though nearly a fifth larger in area than any of the three Electorates,<sup>1</sup> consisted mainly of wild and unproductive mountainous country, and except in the river valleys its population was scanty.<sup>2</sup> Except that its holder presided in the College of Princes alternately with Austria one hears little of it. Of the Bishoprics, Trent (1650 square miles, 147,000 inhabitants) was chiefly important from its position between Austria and Italy; Bamberg (1400 and 180,000) and Würzburg (2100 and 250,000), which were situated in the fertile valley of the Main, were richer and more populous than the average; Liège (2300 and 220,000), also wealthy and populous, was still part of the Empire, and was generally held in common with Cologne, as was sometimes Münster also. This, the largest and most populous of all the ecclesiastical Principalities of Germany, its area being 4800 square miles and its population 380,000 persons, is less prominent in the eighteenth century than it had been in the last half of the previous century when ruled by that most unepiscopal but energetic prelate, Christopher Bernard von Galen, diplomatist, politician and warrior rather than ecclesiastic. Of the secularised Bishoprics of North Germany, Osnabrück (1200 square miles and 136,000 people), the largest of those so treated, was not wholly lost to the Roman Catholics, as it had been arranged at the Peace of Westphalia that it should be alternately in the hands of a Roman Catholic and of a Protestant "Administrator." For the rest, the College of Princes included the Grand Masters of the Teutonic Order and of the Knights of Malta, the Bishops of Augsburg, Basle, Brixen, Chur,

<sup>1</sup> It was over 3700 square miles, Cologne being 3100, Mayence and Treves both under 2700.

<sup>2</sup> The figures given in *Z.S.* (ii. 181) are Mayence 330,000 inhabitants, Treves 270,000, Cologne 240,000, Salzburg 190,000.

Constance, Eichstadt, Freisingen, Fulda, Passau, Ratisbon, Spires and Worms, and several Abbots.

Now that the Guelphs had attained to Electoral rank, the chief lay member of the College of Princes was perhaps the Duke of Würtemberg. This South German Protestant state is in some ways the most interesting of all the minor Principalities, since it possessed what most of its fellows lacked, a written constitution, established in 1514 when Duke Ulrich had concluded with his subjects the Treaty of Tübingen. In character it was somewhat democratic, for in Würtemberg there was hardly any aristocracy, most of the local nobles of Swabia being Imperial Knights, consequently the burgher element in the Estates was unusually powerful. The Estates owed their escape from suppression to the fact that the constitution gave them the power of the purse, and this they had managed to retain, so that the Duke found his authority much restricted by that of the Standing Committee of the Estates, and thus Würtemberg was a notable exception to the general rule of the establishment of princely absolutism on the ruins of local autonomy. Eberhard III (1623–1674) had lost his dominions in the Thirty Years' War but had regained them in 1648, when the little Principality of Montbeliard (Mömpelgard) passed to another branch of the family on the extinction of which (1723) it reverted to the senior line. Eberhard had made great and not unsuccessful efforts to heal the wounds which the ravages of the war had inflicted on his dominions, while the policy of supporting Austria which he had consistently followed was continued by his successors. In 1715, Würtemberg was under the rule of Duke Eberhard Louis (1677–1733), a man of considerable vigour and capacity, who had managed to obtain from the Estates the establishment of a small standing army, which enabled him to contest the authority of the Standing Committee and to be more tyrannical and extravagant than any of his predecessors. He had been able to do this because the Würtembergers had found that if the strict control the Standing Committee exercised over the Duke enabled his subjects to escape being sacrificed to the caprices of a ruling sovereign supported by military force, it also exposed them to injuries at the hands of their neighbours. *Das gute alte Recht* was no defence against the aggressions of Louis XIV, and Würtemberg suffered almost as heavily in the wars of

1688–1699 and 1702–1714 as in the Thirty Years' War itself. Hence the permanent army which the Duke was allowed to establish for the better defence of the 3500 square miles and the 660,000 inhabitants who owned his sway.

Between Würtemberg and the Rhine lay Baden, divided between the two branches of Baden-Baden and Baden-Durlach, ruled respectively in 1715 by Louis George (1707–1761), son and successor of that "Louis of Baden" who had played so prominent a part in the War of the Spanish Succession as the colleague of Marlborough and Eugene, and by Charles William of Durlach (1709–1738), chiefly noteworthy for having been, like his cousin, a warm supporter of Austria in the war of 1702–1714, but not over successful as a commander. Of the two, Baden-Baden was somewhat the larger, having an area of 770 square miles against 640 and 94,000 inhabitants against 73,000. Both branches of the family were Protestants, as were also the great majority of their subjects.

The territories of the House of Hesse resembled those of their Northern neighbours, the Guelphs, in being much subdivided. The two main branches of the family sprang from the quadruple division which had followed the death of Landgrave Philip the Proud in 1567. Two of the lines then established had died out since then, Hesse-Rheinfels in 1583, Hesse-Marburg in 1604, the extinction of the last-named giving rise to a long contest for its territories between the surviving branches, Hesse-Cassel and Hesse-Darmstadt. This had been decided at the Peace of Westphalia on the whole in favour of Hesse-Cassel, whose claims had been so warmly pressed by France and Sweden that the Emperor had been forced to cancel his original award in favour of his constant adherent Hesse-Darmstadt. Hesse-Cassel had also received the Abbey of Hersfeld and part of the County of Schaumburg, while its ruler, Landgrave William VI (1637–1677), had put a stop to all chance of further partitions by establishing the rule of primogeniture and indivisibility (1650). His son and successor, Landgrave Charles I, who was ruling Hesse-Cassel at the time of the Peace of Utrecht, merits certain attention as one of the first German Princes to turn his dominions into an establishment for the production and supply of mercenary troops. He had raised soldiers on a definitely and systematically organised plan, which enabled him to dispose freely of a

considerable force of excellent troops and thereby to earn large subsidies from Austria and the Maritime Powers, which subsidies, to his credit be it noted, he had spent on his country rather than on himself. One of the German Princes who profited by the expulsion of the Huguenots to welcome them to Cassel, to the great benefit of both sides to the bargain, Landgrave Charles had not adhered to the French alliance which had proved so useful to his family in 1648. Alarmed by the aggressions of Louis XIV, he had joined the so-called Magdeburg Concert of 1688 and had been one of the first German Princes to join the Grand Alliance, while Hessian troops had done excellent service under Marlborough and Eugene.

Considerably smaller and less populous than Hesse-Cassel it had 1750 square miles, mostly South of the Main, and 180,000 inhabitants as against an area of 2850 square miles and a population of 330,000—Hesse-Darmstadt followed a somewhat different policy. Like the Guelphs, it had been consistently Lutheran and consistently loyal to the Emperor; whereas Hesse-Cassel was strongly and aggressively Calvinist and, though loyal enough from 1688 to 1715, had at one time been closely allied with France and Sweden. Its ruler in 1715, Landgrave Ernest Louis (1678–1739), was no exception to the traditions of the family; the son of Louis VI, the founder of the University of Giessen, he had been a member of the Grand Alliance and had, like his cousin at Cassel, provided mercenaries for the Maritime Powers. Of the cadet branches of the House of Hesse those of Hesse-Rheinfels (new), Hesse-Rotenburg and Hesse-Eschwege sprang from Cassel; the Princes of Hesse-Homburg were an offshoot of the Darmstadt line dating from 1596.

But of all the families of Germany, perhaps the most subdivided was that of the Wittelsbachs; for in addition to the two Electors of that house, it possessed several members of the College of Princes, their territories lying for the most part in the Upper Rhenish and Bavarian Circles. Of these lines and of the Electoral branches the common ancestor was Stephen, third son of Robert III, Elector Palatine from 1398 to 1410. On Stephen's death in 1459 his dominions had been divided between his sons Frederick and Louis, ancestors respectively of the Simmern and Zweibrücken lines, the former of which had succeeded to the Electorate in 1559 and had held it till 1685.

A cadet branch of the Zweibrücken line had been established at Veldenz in 1514, and on the death of Wolfgang of Zweibrücken (1569) his lands were divided afresh, three lines being thus established, the Birkenfeld, the Neuburg and the Zweibrücken. Yet another branch was founded in 1614 when the lands of Philip William of Neuburg were divided between his sons Wolfgang William, who took Neuburg, and Augustus, who received Sulzbach.<sup>1</sup> In 1715 the Neuburg branch had succeeded to the Palatinate,<sup>2</sup> Sulzbach<sup>3</sup> was ruled by Theodore (1708–1732), Veldenz<sup>4</sup> had passed to the Elector Palatine on the death of Duke Leopold Louis in 1694, Birkenfeld<sup>5</sup> was under Christian II (1654–1717). Zweibrücken had been divided by John I (*ob.* 1604) between his three sons, but, of the three branches thus established, only the Kleeberg line survived in 1715. To this, therefore, the Zweibrücken lands belonged, it being represented by Charles XII of Sweden, the great-grandson of John Casimir of Kleeberg by Christina of Sweden, daughter of Charles IX. On his death in 1718 the Zweibrücken lands passed to a cousin, Gustavus Leopold, from whom they passed in turn to Christian III of Birkenfeld (1717–1735) in 1731. Thus the multiplication of the Wittelsbach branches was gradually tending to be somewhat simplified; but these infinitesimal subdivisions deprived the family of the political weight it might have enjoyed had all its lands been united under one ruler. But even then they were so much scattered that even a common ruler could hardly have given coherence and cohesion to little parcels of territory distributed about on the Lower Rhine (Jülich and Berg), the Moselle, and between the Danube and the Main.

No other family in South Germany is important enough to merit special mention; but as one passes Northward from the Bavarian and Swabian Circles to the Franconian and Upper Saxon, one meets at Anspach and Baireuth cadet branches of the Hohenzollern. These Margraviates had come into the hands of Elector Joachim Frederick in 1603, when the

<sup>1</sup> Neuburg and Sulzbach had belonged to the Landshut branch of the Bavarian Wittelsbachs which had become extinct in 1503, whereupon a struggle for their inheritance occurred between the Zweibrücken line and Duke Albert II of Munich: the matter was settled by a compromise, which left Neuburg and Sulzbach to the Zweibrücken.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> In the Upper Palatinate, which it divided in half.

<sup>4</sup> On the Moselle just below Treves.

<sup>5</sup> Just to the East of Treves.

Culmbach line established in them by the *Dispositio Achillea* of Elector Albert Achilles (1473) had died out. Joachim Frederick had bestowed them on his younger brothers, whose descendants, William Frederick of Anspach (1702-1723, brother of Caroline, wife of George II of England) and George William of Baireuth (1712-1726), were ruling them in 1715. Their joint area amounted to about 2600 square miles and their population to over 360,000, rather above the average for the whole country, although no town of much size was included within their boundaries. The main importance of these Franconian Hohenzollerns lay in the fact that they provided their cousins at Brandenburg with a possible excuse for interfering in South Germany, and of obtaining a foothold South of the Main by the annexation of these Margraviates.

If the map of South-Western Germany may be described as a mosaic of petty states, that of Thuringia easily bears off the palm for bewildering intricacy of subdivision. What with the Princes of Reuss, of Schwarzburg, of the various branches of the Anhalt family, and the Counties of Mansfeld and Hohenstein, Thuringian geography would have been complicated enough, even if all the territories of the Ernestine Saxons had been united under one ruler. But the Ernestine Wettins surpassed even their Albertine cousins in the subdivision of their territories and in the number of their cadet branches; of these the most important were Saxe-Coburg, subdivided at the death of the famous Ernest the Pious (1605-1675) between his six sons, rulers respectively of Saxe-Gotha, Saxe-Coburg, Saxe-Hildburghausen, Saxe-Meinungen, Saxe-Saalfeld and Saxe-Eisenberg, and Saxe-Weimar, whose Dukes had been much more moderate in the creation of minor principalities, Saxe-Eisenach being the only offshoot enjoying a separate existence in 1715. Together the territories of the Ernestine Saxons amounted to nearly 2000 square miles, peopled by some 360,000 persons, the joint possessions of the Albertine line covering an area of 15,000 square miles and having a population of 1,700,000.

After the intricacies of Thuringia the affairs of Mecklenburg seem almost simple. A disputed succession to the territories of Gustavus of Mecklenburg-Güstrow, the last of the line (*ob.* 1695), had given rise to certain complications, but had been finally settled by the Treaty of Hamburg in 1701, which

established the two lines of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, with which went Güstrow itself and the vote, and Mecklenburg-Strelitz, to which was given the secularised Bishopric of Ratzeburg. By one of the most remarkable provisions even in that country of constitutional anomalies and curiosities, when Mecklenburg had originally been divided between the Dukes of Schwerin and of Güstrow the Estates of the two divisions had remained united,<sup>1</sup> with the result that the Estates had been able to utilise the division for their own benefit and to defend their aristocratic privileges against their Dukes with no small success.<sup>2</sup> It might have been expected from the extensive seaboard which Mecklenburg possessed that she might have risen to influence and importance by means of commercial and maritime development, but the cession of Wismar to Sweden in 1648 and the admission of Sweden's claim to the tolls (*Licenten*) of the other ports of the country had spoilt this chance, and Mecklenburg remained a merely agrarian country, doomed to poverty and backwardness by the unfruitful character of her sandy soil, thinly populated, and of little weight in German affairs. In 1715 the 300,000 inhabitants of the 5000 square miles of Mecklenburg-Schwerin were ruled by Charles Leopold (1713-1747), soon to make himself important by the complications introduced into Baltic affairs by his attempt to establish a more autocratic administrative system in his dominions. Mecklenburg-Strelitz, not more than a fifth of the size or population of Schwerin, was under Adolphus Frederick II (1708-1749), a prince of no particular importance.

North-Westward of Mecklenburg lies a land whose story involves some of the very worst complications in all German history. To get a clear idea of the relations between Schleswig-Holstein, Denmark and the Holy Roman Empire, it is necessary to go back even beyond the extinction of the old line of the Kings of Denmark in 1448, when the Danish crown was offered to Adolphus VII of Schleswig-Holstein, a member of the Schauenburg family and a subject of the Emperor as Count of Holstein. The connection between Holstein, which admittedly formed part of the Holy

<sup>1</sup> Erdmannsdörffer, i. 73.

<sup>2</sup> The Estates were almost wholly composed of the local nobles, the peasantry being serfs, and the burghers devoid of any political power.

Roman Empire, and Schleswig, which no less certainly did not, had arisen through the cession of Schleswig to Count Gerhard of Holstein (1386) to be held as a fief of the Danish Crown. After various efforts by Denmark to recover immediate possession of Schleswig, it had been left in the hands of Adolphus of Schauenburg as a hereditary fief when Christopher of Bavaria had become King of Denmark (1439). When offered the Danish crown in 1448, Adolphus had declined it, but had suggested as a suitable choice his nephew, Christian of Oldenburg, who had then been offered the crown and had promptly accepted it. In 1459, Adolphus died childless, and Christian at once laid claim to Holstein as well as to Schleswig, claiming both as the nearest male heir of his uncle and Schleswig also as King of Denmark, the overlord to whom the fief should revert on the extinction of its holders. The Estates of the two provinces thereupon chose him as their ruler, but on the express conditions that they should be free for the future to select any of his descendants as their ruler, and should not have to take the King of Denmark.

The next landmark in the history of the Duchies was the division of Schleswig-Holstein made by Christian III of Denmark (1534–1558) in 1544, when the Duchies<sup>1</sup> were shared between Christian III and his brothers. This ultimately established two separate branches of the House of Oldenburg, the Glückstadt or royal line, and the Gottorp or ducal. Unfortunately for all concerned the division was not geographically symmetrical, but the possessions of the two branches were irretrievably intermingled, so that the Glückstadt line not merely ruled the Kingdom of Denmark, but also held portions of the Duchies, in virtue of which the King of Denmark enjoyed a seat in the College of Princes. As was only natural the relations between the two branches were not, as a rule, of the most friendly, for it was the constant endeavour of the Gottorp line to throw off altogether the ill-defined suzerainty which Denmark continued to assert and to attempt to make more definite and complete. To further their end the Dukes of Holstein-Gottorp are always to be found in alliance with Denmark's principal enemies, the Swedish Kings of the Vasa family, in whom they found willing protectors against

<sup>1</sup> Holstein had been erected into a Duchy in 1474, with a seat in the College of Princes.

Danish aggression. Thus in the Baltic wars of the seventeenth century this debatable land between Denmark and Germany was both the scene of hostilities and the prize of victory, and not till Sweden's day of greatness had come to an end at Pultowa and Friedrichshald<sup>1</sup> did Denmark achieve her principal object by the annexation of Schleswig (1721). Meanwhile the successful *coup d'état* of 1660 in Denmark had introduced a new complication by making that kingdom an absolute and hereditary monarchy with female succession, while in Schleswig-Holstein the Salic law still prevailed. In 1715 the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp was a minor, Charles Frederick, who had succeeded to the Duchies in 1703, his father Frederick IV having been killed when fighting for Charles XII at Klissow: the actual government of the Duchies was therefore in the hands of Christian Augustus of Holstein-Eutin, brother of the late Duke and head of the principal cadet branch of the family.

But in addition to the portions of Schleswig-Holstein which the Danish Kings had managed to keep, and which qualified them to rank as Princes of the Empire, they held other and larger territories in Northern Germany. The branch of the House of Oldenburg which had retained possession of the ancestral Duchy on the West of the Weser when Denmark came into the possession of the family, had become extinct in 1667, and Oldenburg, with its appanages of Delmenhorst and Jever, had passed to the King of Denmark, a connection being thus established which was to last over a hundred years. About half the size of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Oldenburg was even more sparsely populated, having barely forty inhabitants to the square mile, and made practically no use of the possession of a seaboard to develop as a maritime state. Possibly its Danish rulers would not have cared to see the Duchy embarking on such a career, but it had no industries on which to base any attempt at commercial enterprise. Be that as it may, Danish rule, however, though mild and not oppressive, was never popular in Oldenburg and the termination of the connection was welcomed when it came by the inhabitants of the Duchy.<sup>2</sup>

Among his fellow-members of the College of Princes, the King of Denmark found his great rival in the Baltic, the King

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter III.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter XVII.

of Sweden. In 1715 Sweden's hold on the possessions ceded to her at the Peace of Westphalia was all but shaken off; the Danes had occupied Bremen and Verden, Pomerania had been overrun by the joint forces of Prussia, Saxony - Poland and Hanover, and Stralsund was closely beset;<sup>1</sup> but technically these portions of the Empire were Swedish still, and even after the conclusion of that group of treaties of which the Peace of Nystad is the most important, part of Western Pomerania with Rügen and Wismar remained to the successors of Charles XII, who must therefore be reckoned among the Princes of Germany.

But while Sweden's constitutional relations with the Empire were clear enough, the same can hardly be alleged of the connection between the German *Reich* and the other foreign power which had taken a leading part in the Thirty Years' War. In 1648, France had received all the Imperial rights over the three Bishoprics, Metz, Toul and Verdun, of which she had been in actual possession since 1552, and also over the Landgraviates of Upper and Lower Alsace, the Sundgau and the town of Breisach, together with the provincial prefecture (*Landvogtei*) over the ten Imperial cities of Alsace, the so-called "Decapolis." But while the three Bishoprics, the Sundgau and Upper and Lower Alsace had been ceded in full sovereignty, this had not been the case with the "Decapolis." It would almost seem as if the uncertainty must have been deliberate, that the clauses of the Treaty of Münster dealing with the matter (Nos. 73, 74 and 87) were purposely worded so vaguely that both parties could interpret them as they wished.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Alsace, like other parts of the Empire, was divided among many different rulers whose lands were inextricably confused, the possessions of the Hapsburgs being mixed up with territory belonging to the Bishoprics of Worms, Spire, Strassburg and Basle, to temporal Princes like Zweibrücken, Baden and the Elector Palatine, to say no more of Counts and Imperial Knights. Formally these districts had not been ceded to France. Practically, however, they soon came to be as good as French; for though the Princes of the Empire who owned them were allowed to levy taxes from them, to nominate officials to govern them and to collect feudal dues and other items of revenue, they were not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter III.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Erdmannsdörffer, i. pp. 39-47.

permitted to keep soldiers in these districts; any fortresses were occupied by French troops, only natives might be appointed to official posts, and the French taxed these districts just as they did those directly subject to the King of France. The towns of the Decapolis chose their own magistrates, and enjoyed local autonomy of a sort with exemption from some taxes; but a royal official was established in each of them to look after the interests of the King of France, and if the nominal connection with the Empire still existed, the events of Louis XIV's reign had left it hardly even a name.<sup>1</sup> The work of the *Chambres de Réunion* had been in part undone at Ryswick and Utrecht, but Strassburg, the prize of the most flagrant of all the "acts of power" committed by Louis, was not recovered for Germany.

Westward of Alsace lay yet another portion of the Empire which was rapidly ceasing to be German. Lorraine, long a debatable land between France and Germany, was in 1715 still in the hands of the descendants of Anthony the Good, the elder brother of the first Duke of Guise.<sup>2</sup> Situated as it was, Lorraine had inevitably been involved in the complicated relations of France, Spain and the malcontent French nobility. Seized by Richelieu in 1634, it had not been restored to its Duke, Charles III, till the Peace of the Pyrenees, and then France had reserved the right of free passage across the Duchy for her troops; and in subsequent wars Lorraine had been to all intents and purposes French. Leopold Joseph (1690-1729), its ruler in 1715, had regained the Duchy at the Peace of Ryswick, subject as before to the French right of passage, and during the Spanish Succession War a French garrison occupied Nancy, though the neutrality of the Duchy was on the whole maintained, and its Duke was thus able to apply himself energetically and with some success to the arduous task of restoring order and prosperity to his much harassed dominions.

Of the remaining members of the College of Princes but little need be said. Anthony Ulrich of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel,<sup>3</sup> one of the few German Princes to join Louis XIV

<sup>1</sup> This information was derived from a course of lectures delivered by M. Rodolphe Reuss of the École des Hautes Études at Paris in 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Claude, *ob.* 1550.

<sup>3</sup> He had succeeded in adding the city of Brunswick to his dominions in 1671, and in 1679 acquired Thedinghausen from Sweden.

in 1702, when he had been promptly suppressed by the Hanoverian cousins he hated so bitterly, had died in 1714; his son and successor, Augustus William (1714-1731), was a man of little note. Anhalt, divided in 1603 between the Bernberg, Dessau, Kothén and Zerbst lines, and Aremberg had had *Virilstimmen* before 1648, but the Counts of Henneberg had been extinct since 1583, their lands had been partitioned between the various Saxon lines, Saxe-Weimar and the Electoral line giving the vote together. The vote formerly held by Savoy had lapsed through long disuse, that of Leuchtenberg had fallen to Bavaria, that of Saxe-Lauenberg to Hanover. But the College of Princes had from time to time been recruited by new creations, and seven new holders of *Virilstimmen* had appeared in 1653 and 1654, the Counts of Hohenzollern-Hechingen, Nassau-Dillenberg and Nassau-Hadamar, the Wildgrave of Salm, Barons Dietrichstein, Eggenberg and Lobkowitz, while subsequent additions had been the Counts of Auersberg (1664), East Friesland (1667), Fürstenberg (1667) and Schwarzenberg (1674).<sup>1</sup> Outside the ranks of these holders of individual votes were many other petty Princes, too numerous and too unimportant for individual mention, such as the Counts of Waldeck, Isenburg and Hohenlohe, who were only represented in the Diet through the *Curiatstimmen*.

Yet one numerous and important class requires description, the Imperial Knights, the rulers of the very pettiest states in all the mosaic of the infinite disunion of Germany. Lords of dominions which, as a rule, consisted of but a village or two, their position in the Empire approximated in some ways to the condition of subjects rather than of Princes. They had no footing in the Diet, not even a solitary *Curiatstimme* among the thousand members of their order. Indeed, in the greater part of the Empire, in Austria, in Bavaria and in North Germany, the lesser nobles, who roughly corresponded to the Knights in position and in the size of their holdings, had already been reduced to the footing of subjects. It was only in the Southern Circles in which there was no one predominant Prince that the Knights were numerous—in other words, that the lesser nobility had managed to become and remain sovereigns.

<sup>1</sup> These dates are those of the definite acquisition of the *Virilstimme*.