

## Metternich

**F**LEETING time brings us many changes, but never before in the history of the world, has there been such a rapid turn of the tables as has occurred in the past century. One hundred years ago, and Austria ranked supreme among the nations of the world ; her army had grown tremendously in number and quality since her ignominious defeat at Austerlitz ; her subjects were contented ; and her statesmen were unequalled in Europe. But it was the stern will of fate that the brilliancy of such glory should be dimmed. History gives us many examples of the downfall of nations, and though we should be prepared to hear Austria's tale, yet the fact that Austria is defeated, disintegrated and dismembered must come as a shock to all. Can this, one says, be the Empire of the Hapsburgs, the Empire of Maria Teresa, the land of Metternich ? Is this the country which less than a century ago boasted of having one of the greatest statesmen that ever lived ? Yes ! it is true ; it is the same country which proudly looked upon Metternich as a loyal subject ; but with his death and that of the men who worked with him, passed the glory and prestige of the Austrian Empire.

Charles Wenzlaus Metternich, Prince, and first minister of Austria from 1809 to 1848, was born at Coblenz in 1773, the son of Count George of Austria, and Countess von Kagenneck. He entered the University of Strasburg at the age of fifteen. It was about this time that the French Revolution began ; soon the cry of Liberty spread to Strasburg, where the innovators by their terrible atrocities thoroughly disgusted young Metternich, and influenced him in

later years to refuse the granting of liberty in any form to the common people.

His political life began at the Congress of Radstadt where he represented a group of Westphalian nobles, and secured for them many rights of which they had long been deprived. In 1801, Francis II, Emperor of Austria, hearing of Metternich's great tact and ability, appointed him as Ambassador to the Court of Dresden; two years later he was promoted to the same position at Berlin. This was indeed fortunate for Metternich as it opened for him the road to success and power. His was the difficult task to win over Prussia to the side of Austria and her allies against Napoleon. Though he did not attain such a measure of success, he persuaded the Prussian leader to remain neutral, and thus saved Austria and Europe from complete destruction. The position of Ambassador to France was now vacant, and the only man who could fill it with success was Metternich, who set out for Paris in 1806.

Just about this time Napoleon, after joining hands with Russia at Tilsit, decided to dismember Turkey and secure a large amount of booty for France. Although Metternich was prepared to meet Napoleon on this question whenever the crisis came, yet there was no need of it. Oriental affairs had for the time dropped into the back-ground, and in 1808, hearing that Napoleon was intending to attack Austria, Metternich co-operated with Count Stadion, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in preparing for war.

In 1809 the attack came; Vienna fell, and the Austrian forces were completely routed at the battle of Wagram. As a result Austria was forced to cede many provinces to the French Emperor, and only

after much remonstrance was Francis allowed to keep his crown.

We may safely say that just at this juncture Austria was in a most degraded condition. But she was destined to rise again, and completely triumph over her enemies; and the man who gave her the power to do this, was the newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs—Metternich.

One of the first important tasks of his new administration was the securing of a temporary peace with France. This he effected by the marriage of Marie Louise, daughter of Francis II, to Napoleon. Metternich was thus enabled to keep on friendly terms with the French Emperor, and as a result had an opportunity to sever relations between him and Alexander of Russia.

His chance came in 1814, when in nominal alliance with Napoleon, he sent to Southern Russia a small army of Austrian soldiers who completely annihilated the French troops stationed there. The Czar, thinking that Napoleon's case was hopeless, and not wishing to be on the losing side, sent his troops in conjunction with the Prussians against the French army. The allied forces, however, were no match for Napoleon's men, the veterans of a dozen battles, and accordingly were forced to retreat. Austria, which at Metternich's advice, had remained passive, now came forward and offered her services as armed mediator.

Napoleon made various offers for Austria's aid, or at least her neutrality; Metternich refused, and in return offered Napoleon very favorable terms if he would cease fighting; the latter however madly rejected them, and parted from the Austrian Ambassador with his oft repeated threat; "We shall meet in Vienna." War was inevitable, and Metternich himself



gave orders for the lighting of the fiery signal declaring war. The battle of Leipsic and the campaign of 1814 soon followed, with the result that Napoleon was defeated and banished to Elba.

The representatives of the different powers then met at Vienna to draw up the peace terms, and settle the boundaries of the different countries of Europe. Scarcely had they convened when they disagreed over the Polish question; later they quarrelled over the settlement of German and Italian affairs; and thus they went on, till the news of Napoleon's escape reached them, and roused them to action against the common enemy. Peace was signed by the great powers less than two weeks before the famous battle of Waterloo, where Napoleon was completely defeated, and as a result banished to St. Helena.

The second part of Metternich's career extending from 1815 to 1848 is that as leader of European Conservatism. Hitherto he had exercised keen judgment and great wisdom in all his political proceedings; in his new role as veritable master of Europe, he sometimes strayed from this path of wisdom. He was, or pretended to be, blind regarding the good which could come from many potential reforms which would have been enacted, but for him. In almost every country of Europe Liberalism was coming to the forefront, the rulers of Russia, Germany and Prussia were prepared to give more freedom to their subjects, but Metternich resolutely put all his forces to work against such reforms. He did this so well that, though many were opposed to him, he kept up the form of autocratic government until 1848, when the people of the different countries, as a last resort, decided to overthrow their governments. This was such a blow to Metternich that he lost his

former initiative, and from that year, until his death, he took no active part in politics.

Before this occurred however, a revolution had broken out in Naples. Ferdinand, the ruler of this Kingdom, had been forced to grant greater freedom to his subjects. This, as was natural, greatly angered Metternich : and he resolved to deal harshly with the Neapolitans. He called the meeting of the great powers at Troppau. The chief countries represented Russia, Prussia, France, England and Austria. The first two, along with Austria, were prepared to send armies into the field to "tame Naples," as Metternich expressed it. England and France, however, held aloof.

In 1821, an Austrian army in the names of the Allies marched into Central Italy, easily defeating the forces sent against them, and entered Naples on March 24, of that year. Just at this time, however, the Piedmontese rose in revolution, and the Austrian army was in danger of being cut off from supplies. The catastrophe, thanks to Metternich, was happily avoided ; order was restored in Piedmont, and the Austrians were able to effect their purpose. The conclusion of this delicate and difficult task, in which Metternich had played an important role, was his complete and personal triumph. No statesman in Europe was at this time held in such high esteem as was the Austrian Minister.

Hitherto Metternich, as we have already said, showed great skill and judgment in his political dealings. But in the Grecian question he departed from this course of wisdom and left one great stain upon his career. In 1821 the Greeks rose in rebellion against the Turks, who were cruelly oppressing them, and

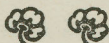
making them conform to the same national and religious observances, as the Turks themselves. No wonder then that the Greeks revolted; Metternich, however, chose to regard it as a rebellion against lawfully constituted authority, and acted accordingly. Thinking that it was at the instigation of Russian agitators that the Greeks revolted, he tried to persuade the Sultan to appease the Czar, and thus he enabled to deal with the Greeks alone. He failed; first because of the obstinacy of the Sultan; second on account of the Czar's perverse conduct; third because Canning, having become supreme in England, had championed the cause of the downtrodden and oppressed Greeks.

A second blow fell upon Metternich in the French Revolution of 1830, as it destroyed the moral fabric he had so proudly built up in 1815. The new spirit of freedom growing up in England was also quite a blow to him; the new ruler of Russia had sadly departed from the manners and customs of his predecessor, who was a very suitable instrument in Metternich's hands; Germany also showed signs of antagonism to him; in Austria alone did he command respect. In 1835 the aged Emperor died, but Metternich held his position until 1848, the revolution of that year ending his political career. He resigned his office, and as a strong and unsympathetic feeling was growing up against him, even in Vienna, the now old and disheartened man, feeble in mind and body, came to England to spend the remainder of his days. Some years later he returned to Vienna, where he died in 1859, being spared the humiliation of witnessing the downfall of that political order which had been his life work to uphold.



Judging him by the standards of his enemies we might call him a crafty and unscrupulous man, but looking at him from the standpoint of a loyal Austrian we would call him a wonderful man—a man of superior intellect. And if we judge him as would a disinterested observer, we must call him a real patriot, who served his King and country with unswerving loyalty, and with signal ability and success in its darkest hours.

G. P. M. '20.



No trumpet blast profaned  
The hour in which the Prince of Peace was born ;  
No bloody streamlet stained  
Earth's silver rivers on that sacred morn.

—Bryant.

It is the Christmas time :  
And up and down 'twixt heaven and earth,  
In glorious grief and solemn mirth,  
The shining angels climb.

—Mulock.

Be merry all, be merry all,  
With holly dress the festive hall;  
Prepare the song, the feast, the ball,  
To welcome Merry Christmas.

—Spencer.

No man can be provident of his time that is not prudent in the choice of his company.—Taylor.