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PRUSSIAN MANIFESTO.

[CONCLUDED.]

But is it neceſſary to appeal to treaties to form a juſt judgment of this extraordinary event—Previous to all treaties, nations have their rights? and had not France ſported with the ſanctity of an oath, the act of unexampled deſpotiſm would exaſperate every mind. To deprive princes who had never offended France and to render them the vaſſals of others, themſelves the vaſſals of the French government—to aboliſh with a ſtroke of the pen, a conſtitution of a thouſand years duration—which long habit, the remembrance of ſo many illuſtrious periods and ſo many various and mutual relaions, had rendered dear to ſuch a number of princes—which had ſo often been guaranteed by all the European powers and even by France herſelf—to lay contributions on the cities and towns a the midſt of profound peace, and leave the new poſſeſſions only an exhauſted ſkeleton—to aboliſh this conſtitution wiout conſulting the emperor of Germany, from whom a crown was wreſted, or Ruſſia, ſo lately became the guarantee of the German league, or Pruſſia, interested intimately in that league thus arbirarily diſſolved. Numbers of wars ad continued victories have ſometimes produced great and remarkable cataſtrophes; but ſuch an example in times of peace was never before given to the word.

The king commiſſerated the unfortunate princes wh ſuffered by theſe tranſactions; but hepitied not leſs thoſe who had ſuffered themſelves to be lured by the hope of gain and he would reproach himſelf, ſhould he increaſe their unhappineſs by judging them with too great a ſeverity. Deluded by the reward of their compliance; probably forced to obey commands which admitted of no oppoſition, or, if ſurpriſed into conſent, ſufficiently puniſhed by their acquiſitions, and by being reduced to a ſtate of vaſſalage, as harſh and degrading as their relations were honorable, they deſerve not to be treated by Germany with the utmoſt rigor.—Perhaps, when the magnanimous nation to which they formerly belonged, ariſes around them on every ſide to contend for their independence, they may liſten to the voice of gratitude and honor, and, at leaſt, abhor their chains, when they find they muſt be ſtained with the blood of their brethren

It was not enough that theſe deſpotic acts were immediately injurious to Pruſſia The emperor of France was intent on rendering them ſenſible to the perſon of the King in all his ſtates. The exiſtence of the Prince of Orange was under the common guarantee of the two powers; for the king had acknowledged the political changes in Holland only under this condition. For ſeveral years this prince had expected that his claims, ſecured by the mutual ſtipulations of Pruſſia and France, ſhould be ſatisfied. The Batavian republic had been willing to enter in an accommodation, but the emperor Napoleon forbade it. Neither the recollection of the circumſtance, nor the conſideration of the ties of blood which united his majeſty to the prince, nor the declaration, twenty times repeated, that the king could not deſert the rights of his brother-in-law, could prevent his being added to the heap of victims. He was the firſt who was deprived of paternal property. Eight days before, he had received from the emperor a letter, condoling with him in the uſtomary forms, on the death of his father, and wiſhing him joy on his undiſturbed ſucceſſion to the ſtates of his houſe. None of theſe circumſtances are unimportant; each throws a light on the whole.

Cleves had been allotted to Prince Murat—Scarcely become a ſovereign, he wiſhed likewiſe to be a conqueror.—His troops took poſſeſſion of the Abbies of Eſſen, Werden and Eſten, under the pretext that they appertained to the Duchy of Cleve, though they were entirely territories newly acquired, and between them and the ceded pro-vince. Great labor was employed, in vain, to give even a color to this outrage.

Weſel was to belong to the new duke, not to the emperor Napoleon. The king had never reſolved, to give up the laſt fortreſs on the Rhine into the power of France. Without a word by way of explanation, Weſel was annexed to a French department.

The exiſting ſtate of the Auſtrian monarchy, and of the Porte, had been mutually guaranteed. The emperor Napoleon certainly wiſhed that Pruſſia ſhould be bound by this guarantee; for in his hands it was an inſtrument which he might employ as ſuited his politics, a pretext for demanding ſacrifices in a conteſt which his ambition might occaſion. He himſelf, however, did not obſerve it longer than it contributed to his intereſt. Raguſa, though under the protection of the Porte, was taken poſſeſſion of by his troops. Gradiſka and Aquileia were wreſted from Auſtria, under nearly the ſame pretexts which had been employed when the French ſeized the Three Abbies.

In all political proceedings it was naturally taken for granted, that the new States formed by France, were States in the proper ſenſe of the term, and not French provinces. But it coſt the cabinet of St. Cloud only a word to deprive them of their independence. The appellation *The Great Empire*, was invented, and that empire was immediately ſurrounded with vaſſals.

Thus there was no trace of the treaty left, and Pruſſia proceeded to ſhut her ports againſt England, and ſtill conſidered herſelf as having obligations to fulfil.

The emperor, at length, informed his majeſty that it was his pleaſure to diſſolve the German empire, and form a confederation of the Rhine, and he recommended to the king to eſtabliſh a ſimilar confederation in the north of Germany. This was according to his cuſtomary policy; a policy which had long been crowned with ſucceſs; at the moment of the birth-day of any new project to throw out a lure to thoſe courts which might occaſion difficulties in the execution of ſuch project. The king adopted the idea of ſuch a confederation, not that the advice he received made the leaſt impreſſion on him, but becauſe, in fact, it was rendered neceſſary by circumſtances; and becauſe, after the ſucceſſion of the princes who had acceded to the confederation of the Rhine, a cloſe union between thoſe of the North became more than ever the condition of their ſafety. The king took meaſures to eſtabliſh his league, but on other principles from thoſe of the model preſented to him. He made it his pride to collect the laſt of the Germans under his banners, but the rights of each he left unimpaired, and honor alone was the bond of the league.

But could France adviſe the king to any meaſure which ſhould be productive of advantage to Pruſſia? We ſhall ſoon ſee what is to be expected when France makes profeſſions of favor.

In the firſt place, care had been taken to introduce into the fundamental ſtatute of the confederation of the Rhine, an article which contained the germ of all future innovations. It provided, that other princes ſhould be received into this confederation, ſhould they deſire it. In this manner, all relations in Germany were left indeterminate, and as the means were ſtill reſerved to detach and annex to this league the weaker ſtates, either by promiſe or threats, it was but too probable that in time this confederation would be extended into the heart of the Pruſſian monarchy.

And, that this might no longer remain doubtful, but be manifeſt to every one, the firſt attempt was immediately made. Fortunately, it was made on a prince who knows not fear, and who conſiders independence as the higheſt object of his ambition. The French miniſter at Caſſel invited the elector to throw himſelf into the arms of his maſter. Pruſſia, it was alledged, did nothing for her allies! It is true, Napoleon knows how to manage his better; and every one ſees that Spain and Holland, and the king of Wirtemburg and Bavaria, have to thank their alliance with him for peace, independence, and honor!—Pruſſia did nothing for her allies.—Napoleon, on the contrary, would reward the acceſſion of the elector by an enlargement of his territory.

And this treachery was exerciſed towards an ally; and at the very moment when the king was adviſed to form his alliance, of which Heſſe was to be the firſt bulwark, endeavors were made to detach from him a power whom family connections, alliances, and relations of every kind united in the cloſeſt manner to his majeſty's perſon.

But even theſe hoſtile ſteps were not ſufficient. Does any one wiſh to know what was the lure by which it was hoped to gain the elector of Heſſe, and what was the augmentation of territory with the expectation of which he was flattered? It was the prince of Orange, the brother-in-law of the king—that prince who had been twice deceived in the moſt ſhameful manner—who was now to be robbed the third time! He ſtill poſſeſſed the territory of Fulda; this was promiſed to the elector, and it would have been given, and the elector conſented to accept it, had not Pruſſia taken up arms.

His majeſty ſaw the ſyſtem of uſurpation advance every day; he ſaw a circle, continually becoming narrower, drawn round him, and even the right of moving within it beginning to be diſputed with him; for a ſweeping reſolution forbade a paſſage to any foreign troops, armed or not armed, through the ſtates of the confederation. This was to cut off, contrary to the rights of nations, the connection between the detached Heſſian provinces; this was to prepare pretexts on which to act; this was the firſt threat of puniſhment aimed at a magnanimous prince, who had preferred a defender to a maſter.

But even after this, his majeſty cannot reflect on it without admiration; the king conſidered whether a combination might not be found, which ſhould render this ſtate of things compatible with the maintenance of peace.

The emperor Napoleon appeared to be ſolicitous to remove this doubt. Two negociations were then carryiug on at Paris, one with Ruſſia, the other with the Engliſh miniſtry. In both theſe negociations, the intentions of France againſt Pruſſia were evidently manifeſted.

By the treaty which the Emperor of Ruſſia, has refuſed to ratify, France offered, in conjunction with Ruſſia, to prevent Pruſſia from depriving the king of Sweden of his German territories. Yet, for many months, the cabinet of St. Cloud had continually preſſed the king to ſeize thoſe ſtates, with the threefold view—firſt, to revenge himſelf on the king of Sweden; ſecondly, to embroil Pruſſia with all othor powers; and thirdly, to purchaſe her ſilence with reſpect to the ſubverſion of ſouthern Pruſſia. But the king had long been aware that ſuch were the views of France; and his unfortunate diſpute with Sweden was painful to him. He had, therefore, been careful to provide againſt every ſuſpicion of ſelf-intereſted motives, and he confined his explanations to the Emperor Alexander. The ſcene now again changed; and Napoleon, who had ſo long been the enemy of the king of Sweden, was ſuddenly transformed into his protector.

It is not ſuperfluous to remark, that this inſidious treaty of the French emperor, in order to ſatisfy the honorable intereſt which the court of St. Peterſburgh took in the maintenance of the rights of the king of Naples, he promiſed the latter an indemnification; engaging to prevail on the king of Spain to cede to him the Belcaric Iſlands. He will act in the ſame manner with reſpect to the augmentation of territory he pretends to beſtow on his allies.

These were all preludes to the ſteps he took againſt Pruſſia; we now approach the moment which determined his Majeſty.

Pruſſia had hitherto derived nothing from her treaties with France but humiliation and loſs; one ſingle advantage remained. The fate of Hanover was in her power; and it muſt remain, unleſs the laſt pledge of the ſecurity of the North were annihilated. Napoleon had ſolemnly guarenteed this ſtate of things, yet he negociated with England on the baſis of the reſtoration of the Electorate. The king is in poſſeſſion of the proofs.

War was, in fact, declared—declared by every meaſure taken by France. Every month produced a new notification of the return of his army; but, on one frivolous pretext or another, it was ſtill continued in Germany; and for what purpoſes?—Gracious Heaven! to eradicate the laſt trace of ſovreignty among the Germans—to treat kings as governors appointed by himſelf—to drag before military tribunals citizens only reſponſible to their own governments: to declare others outlaws who lived peaceably in foreign ſtates, under foreign ſovereigns, and even in the capital of a German Emperor, becauſe they had publiſhed writings in which the French government or at leaſt its deſpotiſm, was attacked; and this at the time when the ſame government daily permitted hired libellers to attack, under its protection the honor of all crowned heads, and the moſt ſacred feelings of nations.

The French troops were in no manner diminiſhed, but continually reinforced and augmented, and continually advanced nearer to the frontiers of Pruſſia or her allies, till they at length took a poſition which could only menace Pruſſia and were even aſſembled in force in Weſtphalia, which certainly was not the road to the mouths of the Cataro.

It was no longer doubtful that Napoleon had determined to overwhelm Pruſſia with war, or to render her for ever incapable of war, ſince he was leading her from humiliation to humiliation, till ſhe ſhould be reduced to ſuch a ſtate of political degradation and feebleneſs, that, deprived of every defence, ſhe could have no other will than that of her formidable neighbor.

The king delayed no longer. He aſſembled his army. General Knobleſdorff was ſent to Paris with the final declaratton of his majeſty. Only one meaſure remained which could give ſecurity to the king, which was the return of the French troops over the Rhine. General Knobleſdorff had orders to inſiſt on this demand; it was not the whole of the king's juſt demands, but it was neceſſary, that it ſhould be the firſt, ſince it was the condition of his future exiſtence. The acceptance or refuſal muſt ſhew the real ſentiment of the French Emperor.

Unmeaning profeſſions—arguments, the real virtue of which were known by long experience—were the only anſwer the king received. Far from the French army being recalled, it was announced that it would be reinforced; but, with a haughtineſs ſtill more remarkable than this refuſal, an offer was made, that the troops which had advanced into Weſtphalia ſhould return home, if Pruſſia would deſiſt from her preparations. This was not all: it was inſolently notified to the king's miniſters, that the cities of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lubeck, would not be ſuffered to join the Northern Confederation, but that France would take them under her protection; in the ſame manner as in the other confederation, ſhe had given away cities, and promulgated laws, without permitting any other power to make the leaſt pretenſion. The king was required to ſuffer a foreign intereſt to be introduced into the heart of his monarchy.

Another contraſt of conduct incenſed the king to the utmoſt. He receives from the emperor a letter full of those aſſurances of eſteem, which certainly, when they do not accord with facts ought to be conſidered as nothing, but which the dignity of ſovereigns renders a duty to themſelves, even when on the eve of war. Yet a few days afterwards, at a moment when the ſword was not yet drawn—when the miniſter of the emperor endeavored to miſlead thoſe of the king by aſſurances on aſſurances of the friendly intentions of France—the *Publiciste* of the 16th September appeared, with a diatribe againſt the king and the Pruſſian ſtates, in a ſtyle worthy of the moſt diſgraceful periods of the revolution, inſulting to the nation, and what, in other times than ours, would have been conſidered as amounting to a declaration of war.

The king can treat ſlanderers that are