XXXI

VICTORIOUS COALITION OF PEOPLES AND KINGS AGAINST NAPOLEON

(1811-1815)

Popular Reaction against the Spirit of Conquest represented by Napoleon. — The revolution of 1688 in England remained wholly English, so it did not leave its own island. The French Revolution was cosmopolitan. The members of the French National Assembly, not merely solicitous of the ancient liberties of the country, had the larger idea of rights common to all men united in society. Thus they placed the Declaration of Rights as a preamble to the Constitution of 1791. They thought of humanity no less than of France. This largeness of view constituted the grandeur and also the misery of the French Revolution. As a result the new order of things emerged from the past only with frightful throes.

But the general character of the first French Constitution and of the principles of 1789 applied as fully to the banks of the Meuse, the Rhine and the Po, as to the banks of the Seine. Hence this sentiment aided in French success. One day the Revolution abdicated its principles into the hands of a soldier of genius. He separated the legacy of 1789 into two parts. The one, liberty, he postponed; the other part, civil equality, he undertook to establish everywhere. In this task he sought the greatness of France, but above all his own. Condemned by the hatred of the English aristocracy to an endless war, he forgot in the intoxication of victory and power his true rôle and assumed that of a conqueror whose hand brushes aside or reduces to powder every obstacle. Thus at Presburg and Tilsit, Napoleon rearranged the map of Central Europe according to his will and indulged in dreams even greater than the realities of which he furnished a spectacle to the world. The nations, formerly allies of France, became for him the pieces on a chess board

wherewith he played the game solely according to the combinations of his own mind. He seized some, he delivered others, without the slightest heed to those old traditions, affections, or interests which would not change. And he never dreamed that from the midst of those masses, for a time inert, a force was soon to spring greater than that of the best drilled armies, more formidable than those coalitions of kings which he had already for four times destroyed. This force was found in the will of men resolved that they would no longer be treated like cattle which are bought and sold, yoked or separated. Indifferent at first to the fall of their royal houses, the peoples at length understood that they were the cruelly tried victims of those political convulsions. They learned that independence is not only national dignity as liberty is individual dignity, but that it is also the safeguard of personal interests. They learned that habits, ideas and one's most private feelings are sadly wounded by a foreign master, even though he presents himself with his hands full of benefits. Then, to defend their political conscience, men regained the enthusiasm which they had possessed three centuries earlier to defend their religious conscience. It is a painful confession for France, though none the less too true, that the force which shattered Napoleon and the French state was of the same nature, though of another order, as that which had shattered Philip II and the Inquisition.

Preparation for Insurrection in Germany. — After having broken up a fifth coalition at Wagram, Napoleon thought that he was more secure than ever. But his arms were no longer invincible. Junot and even Masséna were unable to conquer Portugal and General Dupont signed in 1808 the shameful capitulation of Baylen. The hopes of the enemy increased and England was confirmed in her resolution to fight to the death, when she beheld hostility against Napoleon on the part of the government gradually descending into the hearts of the people.

After Jena Prussia had given up the struggle. Army corps capitulated without a combat. Powerful fortresses surrendered without firing a shot. Nevertheless she was the principal instrument of German vengeance against France, although her own virtues did not prepare her for that great rôle. Her king, Frederick William, was a mystic and replied to those who demanded reforms by saying, "I am he

whom Providence has reserved for the welfare of Prussia." But none of the persons around him and not even he himself had the conception of anything different from the ancient Prussian monarchical system. The number of those who resigned themselves to the existing condition of affairs was very large. Germans like Stein of Nassau and Scharnhorst and Hardenberg of Hanover, who were strangers to Prussia, provoked the regeneration of that country. Baron Stein set to work immediately after Tilsit. "The sentiment of a common existence must be aroused," said he. "The forces which lie quiescent must be utilized. An alliance must be concluded between the spirit of the nation and the spirit of authority." He abolished serfdom of the soil. He granted to the peasants the right of holding property and to the cities the right of appointing their own magistrates and of administering their own affairs by elective councils. He reformed the higher administration in a liberal sense and caused it to be decided that rank and office, hitherto reserved to the nobles, should form the reward of courage and merit. Scharnhorst, on being appointed Minister of War, undertook to elude the article of the treaty of Tilsit which reduced the standing army of Prussia to 42,000 men. He insisted upon obligatory service under the flag for all men of an age to bear arms, sending them home as soon as they were sufficiently trained. In a short time in this way he prepared an army of 150,000 men who only awaited the signal of a grand uprising to make their appearance on the field of battle. These reforms, inspired by the ideas of 1789, renewed patriotism and created a public spirit in Prussia by interesting all classes of the population in the public safety. An association, founded by several professors under the title of the Association of Virtue, or Tugendbund, had at first only twenty members, but rapidly spread throughout all Germany where the affiliated were soon numbered by thousands. Its self-appointed mission was to restore "German strength and character." In 1809 one of its members, the student Staaps, tried to assassinate Napoleon at Schönbrunn. Though proscribed, the Association continued to exist in secret. It penetrated the deepest strata of the population and prepared the way for the awakening of 1813.

Progress of Liberal Ideas in Europe. — The resistance of Spain produced a great sensation in Germany. Stein turned

to profit every piece of news which reached him concerning that heroic struggle. Napoleon, a genius of the military order, took little heed of moral forces. He believed in himself and in his strategic or administrative combinations, and never dreamed that an idea could stand firm against the shot of cannon. Thus the significance of Stein's reforms escaped him. He laughed at the minister who "in default of troops of the line meditated the sublime project of raising the masses." But later on he demanded his dismissal and finally in an insulting decree dated from Madrid he proscribed "the said Stein" (1809). The insult was deeply resented throughout the whole of Prussia and Germany. Nevertheless Hardenberg continued his reforms in the emancipation of the peasants, in securing freedom of industry for the purpose of stimulating labor and in abolishing some exceptional laws levelled against the Jews. Not to leave any force unemployed, he created the University of Berlin (1810) whence Fichte was to address his discourses to the German people, and which sent as many recruits to the insurrection as did the burning poems of Arndt and Schenkendorff, the *Death Song* of Körner and the *Sonnets* of Rückert. "Then was born in tears, in blood and despair, but also in prayer and faith, the idea of liberty, the consciousness of the fatherland."

Thus liberal ideas were likewise turning against France in Spain and Italy. The Cortes of Cadiz drew up a constitution derived from the principles of 1789. It declared the sovereignty of the nation, the delegation of the executive power to the king and of the legislative power to the representatives of the country, the responsibility of the ministers and the suppression of privileges in adjusting taxation. The former king of Naples, who fled to Sicily, gave that province a constitution modelled upon that of England. Thus kings and peoples were preparing to fight France with the very weapons which at the beginning of the Revolutionary wars had ensured the conquest of the Netherlands, Holland, the right bank of the Rhine, Switzerland and Italy. Privileges were abolished. What still survived of feudalism was replaced by free institutions. As France now represented military dictatorship, an ancient and worn-out form of government, she was bound, despite the extraordinary man placed at her head, to succumb in the struggle.

Formation or Awakening of the Nations. — France was

now opposed by two irresistible forces. One force she had herself created. It was that of liberal ideas and of the sovereign rights of the nation with all the consequences which flow therefrom. The foundation of the other force she had provoked by doing violence to the peoples. This force was the new principle of nationality. Under the pressure of French weapons the Spanish insurgents and the members of the Tugendbund had recovered the fatherland, to which their ancestors in the eighteenth century had paid so little heed. While they demanded the abolition of unjust privileges, they wished to preserve their autonomy. Thus in the mountains of Castile, of the Tyrol and of Bohemia, on the banks of the Elbe and the Oder, as in the plains of Brandenburg, this idea of nationality had its birth or its revelation. It renewed history by introducing the question of race; literature, by investigation of folk songs; philology, by comparison of languages; politics, by the study of the interests which result from a common origin, a common language and common traditions. It is this idea which in our own day has made Italy and Germany into nations.

As early as 1809, when Austria had completed her armaments against France, public opinion in Germany with energy demanded that Prussia should take part in the war. Scharnhorst urged the king to this step, but Frederick William dared not undertake anything so bold. After Wagram he humbly made reparation to the victor for the premature patriotism of Prussian subjects. Nevertheless the secret movement, undermining the earth beneath the feet of the mighty autocrat of the West, was making progress. Many persons even in France discerned the signs of impending ruin. It was at this crisis that Napoleon undertook the rashest of all his expeditions.

Moscow (1812). **Leipzig** (1813). **Campaign in France** (1814). — To compel Russia not to abandon the scheme of continental blockade he led his armies 600 leagues distant from France, while 270,000 of his best troops and his most skilful captains were occupied at the other extremity of the continent in front of Cadiz and of the English army under Wellington. On June 24, 1812, he crossed the Niemen at the head of 450,000 men. Six days previous the Congress at Washington had declared war against the cabinet of St. James, because English cruisers insisted obstinately on the right to search vessels engaged in American commerce. Had the emperor renounced his mad expedition to Russia, had he, as in 1804, centred his forces and his genius upon the war with England and aided the new ally who was arising on the other side of the Atlantic, unlooked-for results might have been brought about. Unfortunately he trusted in himself alone. At first the expedition appeared to be successful. The Russians were everywhere routed as at Vitesk, Smolensk and Velutina. The bloody battle of the Moskva delivered into his power Moscow, the second capital of the empire, to which the Russians set fire as they retreated.

To his misfortune he thought he had secured a peace by his victories. He waited for it and wasted precious time. When he realized that to extort it a second expedition against St. Petersburg was necessary, it was too late. It was impossible to winter in the heart of a ravaged country and he was compelled to retreat. The retreat might have escaped disaster, had not the winter been unusually early and severe, and had not provisions failed. The greater part of the army, all the horses, all the baggage, perished or were abandoned, either in the snows or at the fatal passage of the Beresina.

While the grand army was melting away, infidelity and treason against which Napoleon should have provided were breaking out behind him. He had forced Prussia, Austria and the Confederates of the Rhine to furnish him numerous contingents. But Arndt, who had taken refuge in Sweden, and Stein, who had fled to Russia, were inundating Germany with patriotic pamphlets, wherein they called upon the Germans in the French army to desert, and represented the Tsar Alexander as the liberator of the nations. Their counsels were heeded. York who commanded a part of the Prussian contingent passed over to the Russians. Frederick William III at once engaged in a two-faced policy. He assured Napoleon "that he was the natural ally of France." He informed Alexander that he was only waiting for the right moment to join him with all his people. He even suggested to Napoleon that everything might be arranged by giving the kingdom of Poland to the king of Prussia and trusting him to arrest "the aggressions of the Russian power." This proposition was a treason even to the "German fatherland," the Vaterland.

Frederick William believed that such duplicity was required by the circumstances. Therein he continued the policy of Frederick II, which justified whatever furthered the success of the Hohenzollerns. But Bülow, who commanded another Prussian corps, followed York's example. Then Stein hastened to Königsberg, the capital of the province of Prussia, which was in full revolt against the king because the latter appeared to disavow his generals and still to side with Napoleon. The states of the province organized war to the death. On February 7 was issued the order concerning the whole military force of the country, the landwehr and the landsturm. A population of a million inhabitants furnished 60,000 soldiers. Then, while still negotiating, the king of Prussia decided to take up arms. Not however till February 28, 1813, did he sign the treaty of Kalisch with Russia. But here again he did not forget the interests of his house, for he made Alexander guarantee him aggrandizement in Germany in exchange for Polish territories. He desired the acquisition of Saxony, which would strengthen Prussia toward the mountains of Bohemia and fortify his position in Silesia.

The long hesitation of Frederick William was due to his uneasiness at the popular movement incited by his ministers. He regarded the people as valuable for saving his crown, but had no idea of rewarding their service by the grant of public liberty. But he could no longer hold back. He launched the "appeal to my people," together with an edict full of warlike fury concerning the landwehr and the landsturm. "The combat to which thou art called justifies all the means! The most terrible are the best! Not only shalt thou harass the enemy, but thou shalt destroy his soldiers whether singly or in troops. Thou shalt slay marauders. . . ." At the same time the lecture-rooms of the universities and the churches rang with calls to arms. The generals and the ministers in their proclamations were lavish of promises of liberty. The war of the nations had begun.

After the passage of the Beresina, Napoleon, who had hastened to Paris, raised another army. But his allies with the exception of Denmark had turned against him. Sweden, led by a former French general, Bernadotte, had set the example of defection. Austria was waiting for a favorable opportunity to unite her arms with those of the Russians, victors without a battle. The whole of Germany, undermined by secret societies, held itself ready to pass over even on the battlefield itself to the ranks of the enemy. The brilliant victories of Lützen, Bautzen and Wurschen, won by Napoleon with conscripts in the campaign of 1813, arrested for a time the action of Austria. But that power at last forgot the ties which she had formed and the emperor Francis soon marched to aid in dethroning his daughter and grandson.

Three hundred thousand men assembled at Leipzig against Napoleon's 170,000 soldiers. After a gigantic struggle of three days' duration, aided by the treachery of the Saxons who in the middle of the action deserted to their side, they forced Napoleon to abandon the field of battle, for the first time vanquished. He was obliged to retreat as far as the Rhine.

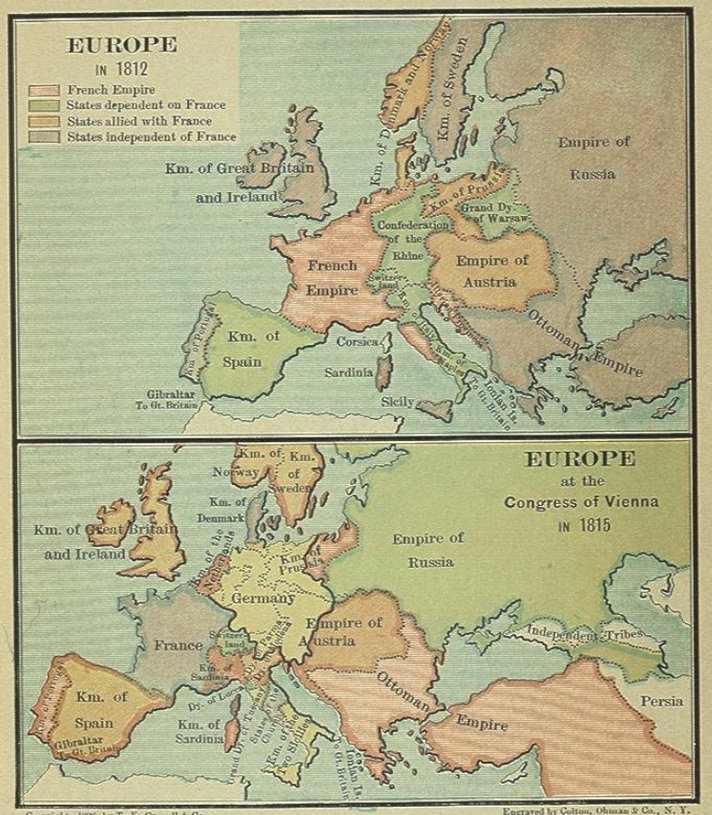
In the following year began that memorable campaign in France where the military genius of the emperor worked miracles. But while he was heroically struggling with a few thousand brave men against combined Europe the royalists raised their heads and the liberals made untimely opposition to his measures. At that critical moment a dictatorship was needed to spare France foreign invasion, that greatest shame which a nation can undergo, but men talked only of political rights and of liberty! To many the enemy seemed a liberator. In vain did Napoleon conquer at Campaubert, at Montmirail and at Montereau. The allies continued to advance, favored by the desertions which broke out in all directions, especially in the south, by which road came Wellington and the English whom Marshal Soult brought to a temporary halt at the battle of Toulouse.

A bold attack on the hostile rear guard might perhaps have saved France. If Paris could but stand firm for a few days, the allies, cut off from their communications, would have been ruined. But Paris, defended only for twelve hours, capitulated (March 30), and the Senate proclaimed the deposition of the emperor. He himself signed his abdication at Fontainebleau (April 11).

The First Restoration. The Hundred Days. Waterloo (1814–1815). — The French princes of the house of Bourbon had fought in the enemy's ranks. The Tsar, the king of Prussia and the emperor of Austria, finding themselves embarrassed as to the choice of government, were persuaded by Talleyrand and the royalists to recognize Louis XVIII

who dated his reign from the death of his nephew, the son of Louis XVI. The white flag replaced the flag of Austerlitz and France reëntered the boundaries of the days before the Revolution. She surrendered fifty-eight strongholds which her troops still held, 12,000 cannon, thirty vessels, and twelve frigates by the first Treaty of Paris, May 30, 1814. In compensation for so many sacrifices Louis XVIII granted a constitutional charter which created two Chambers wherein national interests were to be discussed. The emigrants, who had returned with the princes, were irritated by these concessions made to new ideas. The greed of some, the superannuated pretensions of others, the excesses of all, excited a discontent whose echo reached the island of Elba whither Napoleon had been banished. He thought that in consequence of the general dissatisfaction he could retrieve his disasters. On March 1, 1815, he landed with 800 men on the coast of Provence. All the troops sent against him passed over to his side. Without firing a shot he reëntered Paris, whence the Bourbons fled for the second time. But the allied princes had not yet dismissed their troops. They were then assembled at the Congress of Vienna, occupied in settling after their own pleasure the affairs of Europe. They again launched 800,000 men against France and placed Napoleon under the ban of the nations.

In the meantime the emperor had tried to rally the liberals to his side by proclaiming the Act, additional to the Constitution of the Empire, which confirmed most of the principles contained in the charter. As soon as he had reëstablished order at home, he hastened to march against Wellington and Blücher. He defeated the Prussians at Ligny (June 16, 1815) and for half a day fought victoriously with 71,000 men against 80,000 English, Belgians and Hanoverians. Wellington was near retreat, when the Prussians, who had escaped through a fatal combination of circumstances from Marshal Grouchy, fell upon the exhausted French (June 18). The catastrophe of Waterloo was a deathblow to the empire. Napoleon again abdicated in favor of his son, Napoleon II (June 22). Paris for the second time beheld foreigners enter her walls, pillage her museums and strip her libraries. Napoleon was exiled to Saint Helena in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. There he died on May 5, 1821, after six years of painful captivity.



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XXXII

REORGANIZATION OF EUROPE AT THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA. THE HOLY ALLIANCE

Reorganization of Europe at the Congress of Vienna. The Holy Alliance. Congress of Vienna (1815). — The second Treaty of Paris (November 20, 1815) was more disastrous than the first. A war indemnity was imposed of 700,000,000 francs, not reckoning special claims which amounted to 370,000,000. The foreign occupation was to last five years. Rectifications of the frontier deprived France of Chambéry, Annecy, Phillippeville, Marienburg, Sarrelouis, Landau and the duchy of Bouillon, and created in the line of defence the gaps of the Ardennes, the Moselle and Savoy. In Alsace Strasburg was uncovered by the loss of Landau, and the dismantling of Huningue opened a new road for invasion. On the sea Tobago, Santa Lucia, the Île de France and the Seychelles were lost. England, while leaving France her trading posts in India, denied her the right to fortify them. But some still greater disasters were escaped. England, through a wise policy unwilling to shake the throne of the Bourbons, and the Emperor Alexander, on account of his personal sympathy for France, vetoed the plans of Prussia, who was already ambitious of securing Alsace and Lorraine.

The Congress of Vienna to regulate European affairs opened in September, 1814. All the excesses with which Napoleon had been reproached were repeated there. The four sovereigns of Russia, England, Prussia and Austria, who had declared themselves the instruments of Providence against revolutionary France, remodelled the map of Europe as best profited their own ambition. It resembled a market of mankind. The commission, charged with dividing up the human herd among the kings, was greatly troubled by the exigencies of Prussia who demanded 3,300,000 additional subjects as an indemnity. The Congress even discussed the quality of the human merchandise and gravely recognized the fact that a former Frenchman of Aix-la-Chapelle or

Confederation was also to have its own army and to hold the fortresses which were built with the indemnity paid by France. Thus Luxemburg, Mayence and Landau were to cut off from France the approach to the Rhine, just as Rastadt and Ulm could prevent a French advance to the Black Forest or the valleys of the Danube.

In Switzerland, Geneva and Vaud were enlarged at French expense by a part of the country of Gex and some communes in Savoy. Valais, Geneva and Neuchâtel were added to the nineteen original cantons and formed the Helvetii confederation, which the Congress declared neutral territory. In Italy the king of the Two Sicilies and the Pope recovered what they had lost, but Austria again became all powerful in the peninsula. Mistress of Milan and Venetia, she made sure of the right bank of the Po through the right of placing a garrison in Placentia, Ferrara and Comacchio. She had enthroned an archduke in Tuscany, and had stipulated that the duchies of Parma, Placentia and Guastalla, ceded for life to the ex-Empress Marie Louise, and the duchy of Modena, given to an Austrian prince, should revert to the Austrian crown. Moreover the king of Piedmont, although he had received Genoa and Savoy, was exposed on the Tessin border and seemed at the mercy of his formidable neighbor.

In the north of Europe Sweden, in compensation for Finland which had been taken by Russia, received Norway which was taken from Denmark. Denmark in turn was to have in compensation Swedish Pomerania and Rügen. But Prussia, implacable against the little Danish state which alone had been always faithful to France, forced her to exchange these countries for Lauenburg. This duchy like that of Holstein was only the personal domain of the king, who through his possession of these two German provinces became a member of the Germanic Confederation, that is, of a state organized against France. Denmark experienced later the effect of these artificial combinations.

The Holy Alliance (1815). — The stipulations of the Congress of Vienna (June 9, 1815) constituted the most important act which diplomacy had effected in Europe since the conclusion of the peace of Westphalia. The sovereigns of Russia, Austria and Prussia undertook to give it religious consecration. On September 14, 1816, under the inspiration of the Tsar Alexander, they signed at Paris the Treaty

of the Holy Alliance, wherein they asserted "in the face of the universe their unalterable determination to take as their rule of conduct, both in the administration of their respective states and in their political relations with every other government, only the precepts of the Christian religion, precepts of justice, charity and peace." In consequence they bound themselves, in the first article, to regard each other as "brethren," in the second, "to display to one another an unalterable good-will," considering themselves "delegated by Providence to govern three branches of one and the same family, to wit, Austria, Prussia and Russia," to form but one Christian nation, which should have for its sovereign "Him to Whom alone power belongs as His possession, because in Him are found all the treasures of love, of knowledge and of infinite wisdom." The kings of constitutional countries could not sign the Treaty of the Holy Alliance, but in all lands a party upheld its principles.

Thus was crowned by a mystical and sentimental act the most self-seeking work of politics. These words, "justice and love," present a singular contrast to the real state of things. "Public right," said Hardenberg, "is useless;" to which Alexander added, "You are always talking to me of principles. I do not know what you mean. What, think you, do I care for your parchments and your treaties?" However, it was at the Congress of Vienna that Talleyrand invented the word "legitimacy." That city, where so many jealousies were in conflict and where so little consideration was paid the wishes and the true interests of kings and nations, was a strange cradle for any idea of rights.

In order to satisfy political requirements Belgium had been yoked with Holland much against her will, and Italy had been handed over to Austria. Thus the way was paved for insurrection in the Netherlands and the peninsula. Poland, dismembered, remained a perpetual cause of conflict between the three "brother monarchs." And lastly, by forgetting the liberal promises made to the peoples in order to stir them up against Napoleon, the spirit of revolt was destined soon to shake that edifice so laboriously erected and of which at the present time nothing remains.

The Germanic Confederation seemed fitted, it is true, to assure continental peace by separating the three great military states of Prussia, Austria and France. The temporizing German character seemed interposed between three

countries accustomed to rapid action: between Russia, which utilizes to the utmost ideas of race and religion; England, which obeys the commercial spirit; and France, which is prone to move with sudden and hasty impulse. As the Germany of 1815 was built on perpetual compromises, it represented in European affairs the genius of compromise, which is that of diplomacy. To fully render this service to the peace of the world, of necessity the Confederation should have been organized for defence and not for attack, and should have been independent both of Berlin and Vienna. But the rivalries and antagonisms of the two were to keep the Confederation in constant anxiety and turmoil and to cease only when one should be able to expel the other.

In 1815 the preponderance in Europe seemed for a long time assured to Russia and England, the two powers which had been invulnerable even to the sword of Napoleon.

XXXIII

THE HOLY ALLIANCE. SECRET SOCIETIES AND REVOLUTIONS

(1815–1824)

Character of the Period between 1815 and 1830. — As the National Assembly of 1789 paid more heed to ideas than to facts, — a course which philosophy always pursues but which politics never does, — it had revived and applied to vast multitudes such principles of political liberty and civil equality as had seldom been realized except in small cities and tribes. Unfortunately society, like an individual, can never carry two ideas to victory at the same time. Equality, inscribed in the Code Napoléon, very quickly passed into the national character, and the French soldiers carried its fruitful germ thoughout all Europe. The Terror, civil discords and the ambition of a great man postponed the triumph of civil liberty. None the less the spirit of liberty among many European peoples united with the sentiment of nationality and added strength to the forces which threatened Napoleon. But the victors of Leipzig and Waterloo had no idea of giving it a place in the national law. They combined on the contrary to fetter what they called revolutionary passion, but what was only, if we eliminate its excesses and crimes, a new and legitimate evolution of humanity. The struggle which they engaged against the new spirit forms the principal interest of the drama unrolling between 1815 and 1830.

In this drama, on which side was justice and consequently the right to life and success? This is the question which must be put in front of every great social conflict. Setting aside commonplace accusations of hypocrisy and obstinacy, of fondness for disorder and search for utopias, there always remains the inevitable battle between an old society, which is unwilling to die, and a new society, which persists in making a place for itself in the world and which deserves to have one.