CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

I

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 IN ITS INFLUENCE UPON EUROPE

Contemporary History. — The term "contemporary" may well be applied to the history of the world since 1848. The present leaders in all branches of activity were born before this period began. Many persons now living have watched the unfolding of each of its successive phases. It possesses a distinct character of its own. While preëminent in its scientific and humanitarian achievements, it has specially contributed to political progress, not so much in what it has originated as by what it has developed. More than most periods of like duration, it is the direct consummation of the years immediately preceding. It differs from them as the harvest differs from the seed-time.

Its most memorable achievements in the domain of politics have been along the lines of constitutional government and unification of nationality. Yet here as everywhere else human attainment is partial and incomplete, but these two contributions to the advance of humanity will be prominent as we narrate its story. Because we are so near the events to be described and because the sources of information are so many, the narration will be difficult. As contemporaries of these events we are ourselves tossed by the billows on which we gaze.

Outbreak at Vienna and Fall of Metternich. — The progress of the public mind is indicated as we compare the effect produced in foreign countries by the successive French revolutions of 1789, 1830 and 1848. The first revolution was attended nowhere by any immediate popular uprising and apparently concerned only the kings. The second

caused commotions and renewed demands for constitutions in some of the smaller states, but the disturbances were soon repressed. The third came upon Europe as an electric shock. West of Russia and of the Ottoman Empire every state was convulsed.

Reactionary Austria, of whose policy the astute Metternich had been for almost forty years at once the incarnation and the champion, was among the first to feel its effects. The Provincial Estates of Lower Austria were only the phantom of a deliberative assembly without power or influence. But they served as a rallying point to the excited populace of Vienna, destitute of organization or of a centre. The Estates were to convene on the 13th of March, seventeen days after the fall of Louis Philippe. When they assembled the whole city was in an uproar. Immense crowds, headed by students, surrounded the hall. They demanded that the Estates should be their messengers to the emperor and should make the following demands: regular publication of the state budget, open session of the courts, freedom of the press, reform in municipal administration, and a general parliament to which all classes should be eligible. The terrified Estates called the troops to their assistance. A hand-to-hand fight raged through the streets between the soldiers and the people, and many lives were lost. The tumult constantly increased, but the citizens could not reach the imbecile Emperor Ferdinand IV, who was kept in concealment. The battle-cry was "Down with Metternich!" The veteran statesman was forsaken by all his colleagues. At last he saw that resistance was useless. On the following day he escaped from the capital in a laundry cart. The emperor was induced by his attendants to give a verbal grant of all that the revolutionists demanded, but Vienna was placed under martial law. Finally, on April 25, an illusory constitution was proclaimed. Three weeks later the emperor fled to Innsbruck. Nevertheless his authority seemed at no time endangered. Metternich fallen, the people supposed that everything was gained.

Troubles in Bohemia. — The Bohemians had acted even more quickly. On March 11, at a public meeting in Prague, they drew up a petition, asking however little more than improvement in the condition of the peasants and a general system of public instruction. The news from Vienna made them bolder. The students formed an academic legion. A few days later a second petition demanded reconstitution of the Bohemian crown, a Bohemian Diet, a Bohemian ministry, and full equality between the Slavs and the Germans in the kingdom. A committee was sent to convey these demands to Vienna, where it was well received; but in the constitution promulgated on April 25 all their claims were ignored. The irritation of the Czechs became more intense. A congress of all the Slavic peoples assembled at Prague. Its chief object was to secure recognition of the race rather than the rights of individuals. Against such recognition the government and all the other nationalities of the empire were bitterly opposed. Prague was captured by the imperial troops and martial law proclaimed.

Revolt in Hungary. — A movement, in some respects similar to that in Prague, was meanwhile in progress under the lead of Kossuth at Pressburg and Pesth. There, however, the desire for reforms was subordinate to the still stronger desire for emancipation from Austria. Its dominant motive was the sentiment of awakened Hungarian nationality. But it in no way included antagonism to the sovereign, to whom on many occasions the Magyars have shown a loyalty surpassing that of the Austrians. Nor did it include recognition of the just demands of the various Slavic and other peoples who constituted a large proportion of the population. In April Ferdinand IV granted whatever was asked, practically recognizing Hungary as an autonomous state with himself as its sovereign. Count Batthyany was authorized to form the first Hungarian ministry.

These measures discontented the Slavs, especially the Servians and Croatians. The newly appointed Ban of Croatia, Jellachich, took up arms, proclaiming his opposition to those "who want liberty only for themselves and who wish to monopolize for the Magyar minority the treasures acquired by the sweat of the Slavs, the Germans and the Roumanians." A partisan of absolute rule and apparently in secret alliance with the emperor, Jellachich marched upon Pesth. Batthyany resigned, but Kossuth was appointed to organize the national defence. His volunteers defeated the Ban. The Viennese, through hatred of the Slavs, showed a momentary passionate sympathy for the Hungarians. They rose against the government on October 7, and begged the assistance of the Hungarians

trious sons. Now were brought together within the walls of a single edifice all who had most contributed to the common welfare, and to them was confided the task of national regeneration. In its promise this was the golden day of German history.

II

THE SECOND FRENCH REPUBLIC

(1848-1852)

The Provisional Government. — It was installed by the mob on the day of revolution, and its title to authority was based upon the submission with which for a time its orders were received. The provinces as usual acquiesced in the government set up at the capital. The eloquent orator, Lamartine, was at the head as minister of foreign affairs and Ledru-Rollin was minister of the interior. The latter was a radical. The other ministers were moderate republicans. This suddenly improvised government was without cohesion or plan. Yet, while ruling as a despotic oligarchy, it seemed ardently though vaguely desirous of doing something noble. In order to furnish occupation to the unemployed it set up national workshops and guaranteed work with pay or pay without work to every citizen. Soon it had on its roll the names of over 120,000 men, one-half of the laboring population of Paris. Meanwhile it supplied bread to their families in proportion to the number of children. Private enterprise became disorganized, and those evils increased which the national workshops were designed to cure.

Universal suffrage had been proclaimed. On April 23 elections were held all over France for the choice of deputies to a national assembly. Ten days later the Assembly met. It reaffirmed the Republic and commended the provisional government, most of whose members it reappointed to office as an executive commission. The socialist leaders of Paris raised mobs and endeavored to seize the power, but their first attempt was put down by the national guard. The national workshops had become the greatest menace to the state. The Assembly ordered that all the younger men enrolled in them should enlist in the army or cease to receive pay.

The Barricades. — Then broke out a fearful insurrection at Paris. Barricades were suddenly erected all over the eastern part of the city and were defended with military precision by the rioters. In the emergency General Cavaignac, the minister of war, was appointed dictator. The pitched battle of the streets began June 23 and lasted four days. However disguised by party names, it was a conflict between the penniless and the moneyed classes and a menace to the rights of property. The insurgents held their ground with savage courage and were not subdued until 8000 persons had been slain and 12,000 taken prisoners. Among the victims were two deputies, seven generals, and the venerable archbishop of Paris, Monseigneur Affre. Horrified at the fratricidal slaughter he had climbed a barricade, where the fighting was hottest, and was shot down while imploring the combatants to throw away their arms.

General Discontent. — The frightful victory left the government not the less humiliated and weakened. Apprehension and discontent pervaded all classes, not only at Paris but throughout France. The masses were sullen because none of the socialistic utopias, prophesied so often of late, had been realized. The well-to-do classes were panic-stricken at the peril property had just undergone and at future perils in store. The state revenues diminished, therefore taxation increased. But commerce and manufactures were paralyzed in the absence of confidence, and it was more difficult to pay.

The Assembly hastily laid the foundations of a new constitution. It confided the executive power to a president, elected for three years by universal suffrage and responsible only to the people. It confided the legislative power to a single chamber, elected to hold office for four years. In the president was vested all power of appointment in the various branches of administration. He was to negotiate treaties and exercise an indefinite control of the army, but he could not take command of the troops or dissolve the Assembly or veto a measure which he disapproved. His power was either too little or too great. While declared ineligible for a second term of office, it would not be difficult with the means at his disposal to regain or retain the presidential authority were he so disposed.

The two chief candidates for the presidency were General Cavaignac and Prince Louis Napoleon. The former was a consistent republican, a soldier rather than a statesman, and the conqueror of the barricades. But the victory, won in the blood of Frenchmen, rendered him unpopular even with his own party. The latter was the nephew and heir of Napoleon. All his life an exile from France, he had returned on the fall of Louis Philippe, but when the provisional government requested him to leave the country, he had complied. In June, elected to the Assembly in four different departments, he had resigned, though reserving his liberty of action. Elected in September by five departments, he no longer withdrew, but took his seat. The romance of his personal history, his manifest calmness and self-control, and above all, the magic of the great name he bore, made him a formidable candidate. His electoral address to the nation was a model of tact and shrewdness. He received 5,434,226 votes, while General Cavaignac could secure only 1,448,107.

Presidency of Louis Napoleon. — His first year in office was marked only by the expedition to Rome, the election of a new Assembly, and a presidential message, memorable for its energetic and even agressive tone. The second year the inevitable divergence between the chief magistrate and the legislative body became more marked. The Assembly was composed of nearly equal groups of Legitimists, Orleanists, and Republicans. The two former regarded the actual government as a makeshift or usurpation, which was to give way eventually to the coronation of the Bourbon, Henry, Count of Chambord, or of Louis Philippe, Count of Paris, grandson of the deposed king. All their energies were devoted to that end.

Public opinion overwhelmingly demanded revision of that clause of the constitution which declared a president ineligible to reëlection. Less than two-thirds of the Assembly voted for revision, but it could be carried only by a vote of three-fourths. In May a decree had been passed which deprived over 3,000,000 Frenchmen of the right of suffrage. It was a fair charge that the Assembly had destroyed universal suffrage and, by refusing to revise the constitution, had denied the people the exercise of choice. The third year was spent in irritating discussions and political manœuvring on both sides. On November 4, 1851, the president demanded the repeal of the law which restricted the suffrage. The Bill of Repeal was defeated by seven votes.

Between president and Assembly it was henceforth a question which should first be able to overthrow the other.

The Coup d'Etat (December 2, 1851). — The Assembly was at the disadvantage of being a many-headed, many-minded body. Louis Napoleon could take his measures with the effectiveness of profound secrecy. On the evening of December 1 he held the customary thronged reception at the Palace of the Elysée. Nothing in his bearing betrayed preoccupation or excitement. At the usual hour he withdrew and closeted himself with his half-brother, De Morny, the minister of war, St. Arnaud, and the prefect of the police, De Maupas. They alone were acquainted with his plans and upon them depended their execution. Before daybreak every formidable opponent of the president had been arrested, the principal quarters of Paris occupied by guards, and despatches sent out to the 40,000 communes of France announcing what had been done. Innumerable manifestoes, everywhere attached to the walls, proclaimed that the president on his own responsibility had dissolved the Assembly, restored universal suffrage, and appealed to the people to express its verdict on his acts in a plebiscite to be held within two weeks. He proposed a new constitution which provided for a senate, council of state, and legislative chamber, and which lengthened the presidential term to ten years. A glowing proclamation was also addressed to the army.

A portion of the Assembly on the next day endeavored to hold a session, but the deputies were arrested. Disturbances broke out in various parts of the capital and in the provinces, but were quickly suppressed. Sixty-six radical deputies were exiled as well as a number of monarchists. But Paris, as well as France in general, received the news of the coup d'état with indifference or satisfaction.

III

TRIUMPH OF REACTION IN EUROPE

Subjugation of Hungary. — The real ruler of Austria in December, 1848, was Prince Schwartzenberg, the head of the ministry. His political principles differed little from those of Metternich. He proposed to tolerate no reforms save such as should be extorted and to reduce all other ambitions in the empire to complete subjection to the Austrian Germans. Austria in its medley of races and of débris of other states is the most heterogeneous power in Europe. By a playing off of race against race and utilizing each to overthrow some other, Schwartzenberg proposed to attain his ends.

The Hungarians regarded the new emperor as a usurper, and hence must be reduced to subjection. Though fighting to preserve Magyar independence of Austria and to maintain the concessions granted them by Ferdinand, they treated their subjects in their Transylvanian and Slavic provinces as oppressively as the Austrians had treated them. The Austrian general, Puchner, subdued Transylvania. Windischgrätz, with the main army, invaded western Hungary and captured Pesth. Dissensions speedily broke out between the orator Kossuth, the head of the committee of defence, and General Görgei, commander of the army. Kossuth removed Görgei and appointed a Pole, the incapable Dembinski, to the chief command. The Austrians won a series of successes, but Schwartzenberg alienated the Slavs, who offered to unite with their hereditary foes, but the Hungarians rejected their overtures. Görgei was restored to his command and he and Bem swept the invaders from the country, leaving only a few fortresses in their hands. The Hungarian Diet declared that the house of Hapsburg had forfeited its rights to the throne and that Hungary was henceforth an independent state. Austria had been thoroughly defeated. The only resource left her was to entreat the willing intervention of the Tsar.

Eighty thousand Russians entered from the north while

equally overwhelming forces marched from the south and east. The Hungarians, though constantly defeated, fought heroically against hopeless odds. General Klapka made a magnificent defence at Komorn. The last battle was fought at Temesvar on August 10, 1849. Three days later Görgei, to whom Kossuth had resigned the dictatorship, surrendered with all his forces to the Russians at Villagos.

Exasperated by the consciousness that they had been rescued from defeat only by the intervention of Russia, the Austrians inflicted terrible atrocities upon the vanquished. Bem, Kossuth and other leaders with about 5000 Hungarians escaped to Turkey, where they found generous protection. The Sultan, although threatened with war by Russia and Austria, refused to surrender the refugees. Hungary was crushed. Its political existence, for a time at least, seemed annihilated.

Return to Absolutism in Austria. — A Constitutional Assembly had met on July 22, 1848. In the polyglot body eight nationalities were represented. It was a burning question as to which language should be declared official. The deputies sat like enemies in as many hostile groups. Every theory found fierce expression. Order and even decency of debate were impossible. Nevertheless at their request the emperor returned to the capital. In a street riot Latour, the minister of war, was stripped naked and hanged to a lamp-post. The timorous emperor fled to Olmütz, thinking he would find his most trusty protectors among the Slavs. But he left a manifesto behind, wherein he declared that he would take such measures as he thought best to repress anarchy and preserve liberty. An imperial rescript suspended the sessions of the Assembly, although authorizing them to meet some weeks later at the Moravian town of Kremsier. Only a meagre fraction availed themselves of the permission. Meanwhile Schwartzenberg was appointed to the Cabinet, inasmuch as he knew "how to put down revolutions." Yet the ministry made a general declaration in favor of constitutional liberty. Their most difficult task was to find an equilibrium between the various Austrian states and to regulate the relations of the whole with Germany, of which the Austrian Empire constituted a part. Yet by March 4, 1849, an anomalous and impracticable constitution had been devised. In the universal discontent it was never put into execution. So Schwartzenberg could well declare that it was only "a basis on which to reëstablish the authority of the throne." On January 1, 1852, this figment of a charter was definitely suppressed. Nothing had been gained except a slight improvement in the condition of the peasants.

Defeat and Abdication of Charles Albert. — The king of Piedmont had staked his crown upon the issue of war. He dreamed of a reunited Italy under the leadership of his house. But provincial jealousies chilled enthusiasm and hampered unity of action. Each insurgent state concerned itself with its own interests and failed to realize that victory was possible only through concerted effort. The king was a royalist, suspicious of republicanism and of any popular movement. He even disdained the volunteers who were ready to flock to his standard. Nevertheless many of those volunteer bands were to show surprising military qualities when pitted against the veterans of the enemy. Radetzki was one of the few able generals whom Austria has produced. Though over eighty years of age, he was a most formidable antagonist.

On June 24, 1848, a day of intense heat, the decisive battle was fought at Custozza. The defeated Piedmontese withdrew to Milan where bitter quarrels broke out between them and the Milanese. The king surrendered the city and afterwards signed an armistice, agreeing to take no farther part in the war. He had hitherto refused the conditional assistance of the French. Now, when he implored it without conditions, it was too late.

Custozza had really decided the fate of Italy. Her chief soldier withdrawn from the conflict, the submission of the peninsula to the old system was henceforth only a question of time. But the patriots held out with surprising tenacity and with even increasing vigor. Both at Florence and Rome democratic republics were proclaimed and constitutional assemblies convoked. A new wave of resolution swept over the land. But the political question had become complicated with the ecclesiastical question. Cardinal Antonelli asked for the interference of the four Catholic Powers, Austria, France, Spain and Naples, in behalf of the Pope. Austria was ready to act, but Louis Napoleon despatched 7000 men to Rome, though the object of the expedition was not at first clear. Ferdinand of Naples had reduced Sicily and was trampling on his prom-

ises of reform. Bombardment of his Sicilian cities had given him the nickname of "King Bomba," which the subsequent atrocities of his reign were to render odious.

In Piedmont the vociferous populace and the parliament demanded that Charles Albert should again attack Austria, inasmuch as she was apparently the only foreign state which the Italian cause had to dread. The king yielded. But he counted on no assistance from Rome or Florence and he knew that his own army was disinclined to the war. He entered upon the campaign rather as a martyr than as a soldier. It was, and it could be, only disastrous. Despite the heroism of his troops, he met a crushing defeat at Novara. On the evening after the battle the unhappy sovereign abdicated the throne in favor of his son, Victor Emmanuel.

The heart of revolution was now at Rome. Mazzini, like a modern Rienzi, and the impetuous Garibaldi inflamed the resolution of the people not to submit. But it was the French under General Oudinot and not the Austrians who attacked and then invested the city. After a siege, lasting twenty-nine days, despite prodigies of valor on the part of the besieged, the capital was taken and the Roman republic overthrown by the soldiers of republican France (June 29, 1849).

The catastrophe of Novara and the fall of Rome could not shake the courage of Venice. Nowhere was the Austrian rule more abhorred, yet nowhere were fewer crimes and excesses committed in the effort to shake it off. Her resistance lasted seventeen months. During 146 days she experienced all the horrors of siege and bombardment. She succumbed only to the exhaustion caused by famine and cholera. To Venice and to her illustrious dictator, Manin, attaches purer glory than to any other Italian state or leader in the agony of the struggle. On August 28, 1849, the triumphant Austrian flag floated once more over the Piazza of Saint Mark. And the former rulers and the old ways were restored throughout Italy.

Conservatism of Pius IX. — On his accession he had shown sympathy with constitutional liberty. But he dreaded the excesses of the democracy. Desirous of reform, he wished it to come gently and gradually. The frenzied passion of Mazzini appalled him even more than did the iron rule of Radetzki. Though a temporal prince,

he shrank from military action because head of the church. So he refused to yield to popular clamor and declare war against Austria. But in September, 1848, he called Count Rossi to preside over the papal Cabinet, and thus indicated his fixed purpose to pursue a policy of moderate liberalism.

There was at that time safety for no man in Rome unless an extremist. Two months later the capable and patriotic minister was stabbed by an anarchist on the very day when he was to open the session of the Chambers with a speech, promising to abolish the rule of the cardinals, to institute a lay government and to insist upon the emancipation and unification of Italy. A radical mob attacked the papal palace. The Pope in disguise escaped to Gaeta. When the Roman republic was proclaimed his temporal power was abolished. Not till 1850 did he return to his capital. No longer did he manifest any inclination toward reform. No triumph of reaction anywhere was more to be deplored than that which it had gained over the mind of the sovereign pontiff.

Dissolution of the General Assembly at Frankfort. — Despite the patriotism and learning of its members, it is a melancholy fact that the Assembly was doomed to failure from the start. It had been elected to draw up a constitution for all Germany, but the degree of its authority was a disputed point and it possessed no means of enforcing its decrees. It could only discuss and recommend. There was not in Germany a race problem as in Austria, and on the part of the German peoples there was a common desire for union. But the country was still too torn by violent and determined factions and too distracted by the selfish aims of the different states to secure common and voluntary acceptance of the salutary measures which might be proposed. Furthermore the deputies were not practical men but theorists without tact or political experience.

For a time however its measures commanded respect. Thus, when it decided to replace the Diet by a central executive and elected Archduke John of Austria as administrator of Germany, the archduke accepted the office and the Diet resigned its authority into his hands. But when the troops of the confederation were ordered to swear fidelity to this administrator, Austria and Prussia ignored the order, and it was obeyed only in the smaller states. Fickleness in dealing with the troubles in Schleswig-Holstein weakened

its influence. Days were wasted in sterile debates on trivial matters.

At the same time, at Berlin, the Prussian national Assembly was holding stormy and fruitless sessions and the city itself was for months in a condition little better than anarchy. Tired of oratory and street turmoil, the Prussians were not displeased when royal decrees placed their capital under martial law and dissolved their Assembly. This failure of the Prussian Assembly at Berlin had an injurious effect upon the General Assembly at Frankfort.

Nevertheless, it patched together a constitution for the whole empire and elected as emperor Frederick William IV the king of Prussia. The constitution was at once rejected by Austria, Bavaria, Saxony and Hanover, and Frederick William in a guarded manner declined the crown. The Assembly daily dwindled away until less than a hundred delegates remained. It was removed to Stuttgart on May 30, 1849, and was finally dispersed by the police. Nothing had been gained. All things continued as they were before.

IV

THE SECOND FRENCH EMPIRE

The Plebiscites of 1851 and 1852. — A French plebiscite is an expression by universal suffrage wherein only "yes" or "no" is answered to a question submitted for decision. The constitution proposed December, 1851, was accepted and the presidential power for ten years conferred on Louis Napoleon by a plebiscite of 7,437,216 "yes" and 640,737 "no."

The decennial presidency heralded the empire. A year afterwards the Senate asked for a plebiscite on the proposition that the empire should be restored in the person of Louis Napoleon and of his descendants. The affirmative vote was 8,157,752, the negative 254,501. So the empire was solemnly proclaimed on December 2, 1852, the anniversary of the coronation of the first Napoleon. The crowned president was speedily recognized as Napoleon III by all the courts of Europe. In the following January he married a Spanish lady of Scottish ancestry, Eugénie de Montijo, Countess of Teba.

Worn out by the turmoils of the preceding years, indignant at the secondary rôle she had filled in Europe since 1815, France desired a strong government which would ensure tranquillity at home, and hence restore credit and develop material prosperity while at the same time making her respected abroad. There can be no doubt that the vast majority of the people were content to leave in the hands of the new "emperor of the French" a power hardly inferior to that exercised by a sultan or shah. The constitution centralized all authority in the person of its elected chief. He alone could command the army, direct public policy, decide upon war, and conclude peace. The ministers, appointed by him, were responsible only to him. They were rather his secretaries or functionaries than a cabinet. The legislative body, elected for six years, voted upon the taxes and the laws submitted to it by the Council