

Duke of Nemours, not a popular prince, and the young Duke of Montpensier, a woman and a child, the Duchess of Orleans and the Count of Paris. The duchess presented herself before the Chamber with the Count of Paris, but the insurgents followed her there and caused a provisional government to be proclaimed, composed of M. Dupont (de l' Eure), Arago, Lamartine, Crémieux, Ledru-Rollin and Garnier-Pagès. Thus through the incapacity of the government and the audacity of a party, France had, instead of a reform regularly carried out by the public authorities, a new insurrection which was to arrest work, destroy millions, shed blood, and interrupt the peaceful progress of the country.

III.

THE REPUBLIC OF 1848.

The Provisional Government.— On the evening of the 24th the provisional government proclaimed the Republic. The provinces, resigning themselves as usual to the measures taken at the capital, appeared to accept the Republic. M. Ledru-Rollin everywhere replaced the prefects by commissioners charged with administering public affairs in the spirit of the new government; and to reassure Europe, Lamartine declared in a manifesto that the Republic threatened no one, but that she would everywhere prevent intervention for the repression of the legitimate claims of the peoples. Arago issued a decree emancipating the blacks in the colonies.

Meanwhile industry and commerce were interrupted, the revenues of the State diminished, and the abolition of the salt-tax and a few other unpopular taxes diminished them still more. The minister of finances was therefore obliged to levy an extraordinary tax. Many manufactories had been closed, and thousands of workmen were left without food, and in a fit state to become the dupes of the prevalent communistic doctrines. The provisional government committed the imprudence of guaranteeing them work, when it had neither work to be done nor money to pay for it, and it authorized one of its members, M. Louis Blanc, to discuss the relations of labor and capital with delegations of laboring men. Finally, to occupy the working class, it established

national workshops, in which dangerous idleness and discouraged honesty were thrown together.

These excitements brought about a fresh contest. The national guard made an imposing demonstration in behalf of the bourgeoisie, the artisans a rival manifestation in favor of the proletariat. The provisional government was obliged every day to issue discourses and proclamations, to bring again into Paris a few battalions of the army, and to form an additional militia called the *garde mobile*.

Opening of the National Assembly; the Executive Committee.— After another socialistic manifestation, which was suppressed by the national guard (April), the electoral colleges assembled on Sunday, April 22. The elections took place for the first time by universal suffrage. The electors were thus increased in number from 220,000 to 9,000,000; an expansion for which nothing was prepared and which was certain to cause disturbances. On the 4th of May the Constituent Assembly met, solemnly proclaimed the Republic, and unwisely confided authority to an executive committee composed of five members, MM. Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Marie, Lamartine, and Ledru-Rollin. It seemed that there was now nothing to be done but to draw up the constitution. But widely different views prevailed as to the nature of the revolution and the extent to which it should be carried.

Outbreaks of May and June.— On the 15th of May, under pretext of carrying to the deputies a petition in favor of Poland, a movement took place against the Chamber. Lamartine tried in vain to keep back the rioters by his eloquence; as many as two thousand of them crowded into the hall of the Deputies. Blanqui summoned the Assembly to declare immediate war upon Europe for the deliverance of Poland. Barbès demanded a tax of a thousand millions upon the rich. The president was driven from his seat, and the Assembly declared dissolved. Fortunately a few battalions of militia came up and dispersed the insurgents; the Assembly returned to its session. It soon after determined to abolish the national workshops, which formed an army of one hundred thousand proletarians, having arms, leaders, and discipline. This news excited the anger of the agitators and the despair of the working class, deceived by false hopes. On the 22d barricades were thrown up with astonishing rapidity in the faubourgs and soon occupied half of Paris. The Executive Committee had at its disposal only twenty

thousand soldiers of the line, the garde mobile, and a part of the national guard. With these troops, General Cavaignac occupied all the principal avenues. A frightful battle began in which legions of the national guard fought against other legions, in which the garde mobile, composed of men of the people, struggled with the workmen. The Assembly forced the Executive Committee to send in their resignations and appointed Cavaignac chief of the executive department. The struggle continued. The archbishop of Paris, Mgr. Affre, while attempting mediation, fell a martyr to his patriotic zeal. Finally, the insurrection was driven back into the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, and the insurgents surrendered. This battle of four days had cost the two parties five thousand killed, among whom were seven generals and two representatives: four other generals and three representatives were wounded. Twelve thousand prisoners or persons arrested afterward were transported to Africa.

The Republic was greatly weakened by this frightful struggle. The Assembly hastened to lay the basis of a new government with a single legislative assembly and an elective president. There were two prominent candidates for the presidency of the Republic,—General Cavaignac, chief, since June 24, of the executive department; and Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of the Emperor. General Cavaignac, a man of noble character, received 1,448,107 votes against 5,434,226 given for the prince (December 10).

Presidency of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.—Louis Napoleon, born in 1808, the third son of Hortense de Beauharnais and Louis Bonaparte, king of Holland, had twice, in 1836 and in 1840, attempted without success, at Strassburg and at Boulogne, to reawaken sympathy for the name of Napoleon and the glory of the Empire. After the second attempt he was condemned by the Court of Peers and shut up in the château of Ham, from which he escaped in 1846. The revolution of February revived his hopes. An active propaganda obtained for him many suffrages, and the mistakes of the Republicans and the magic of his name did the rest. His election to the presidency was a protest against the government which Paris had imposed on France on the 24th of February.

The new constitution was ill-suited to the times and the

circumstances under which it was produced. The executive and the legislative had the same origin, because they both proceeded from universal suffrage, and because they were renewed, the one after three, the other after four years of exercise. But the President had this advantage, that, elected by millions of votes, he seemed to represent the entire nation. Antagonism between the two was inevitable. Moreover, the President had been given either too much power or too little; and with the temptation to assume the usual prerogatives of public authority, he had been also given the means of success. The President and the Assembly, however, agreed upon the questions of establishing order and repressing the extreme parties.

The European revolutions, born of the revolution of February, had been promptly suppressed by the kings. Austria, victorious in Hungary, thanks to the Russians, had defeated Charles Albert, king of Sardinia, at Novara, and Lombardy had again fallen into her power. The republic proclaimed at Rome, after the flight of the Pope, vainly tried to defend itself. In order to prevent the establishment of Austrian domination throughout the peninsula, it was thought necessary for France, in intervening, to bring to an end the Roman Republic. The Prince-President and the Assembly sent a French army into Italy under the command of General Oudinot. The Parisian Republicans tried, by an insurrection, to save the Roman Republic. But the outbreak was at once suppressed. General Oudinot entered Rome, after a brief siege, and restored the Pope. The Legislative Assembly, which succeeded the Constituent Assembly, approved the conduct of the President, and the French troops remained at Rome for the protection of the Holy Father.

The Legislative Assembly (1849–1851).—The new Assembly (May 28, 1849) numbered fewer Republicans and socialists, and a much larger number of its members united under the general denomination of friends of order; but many of these latter were in correspondence with the Bourbon or the Orleans princes. The session of 1850 was marked by a law which struck off three million electors, by requiring, for the obtaining of a ballot, the proof of an actual residence of three years in the electoral district. In that of 1851, irritating discussions took the place of the transaction of business. The powers of the President and those of the Assem-

bly were both to terminate in the following year, 1852, with an interval of three months, and universal suffrage, which had now become restricted suffrage, was to be called upon almost at the same time to renew the two chief authorities of the Republic. In the state of anxiety into which this doubtful future plunged the country, petitions which bore signatures numbering 1,500,000 were addressed to the Assembly, praying for the revision of the constitution. But the Assembly was greatly divided. Many demanded that nothing fundamental should be changed; some would consent to a revision of the article which forbade the re-election of the President; others desired a complete revision which might open the way for the restoration of one or other of the three fallen monarchies. The necessary three-fourths vote could not be obtained.

On the 4th of November, 1851, the President demanded the re-establishment of universal suffrage. The Assembly, persisting in excluding from the ballot the nomadic or floating population, rejected the presidential proposition. On the following days irritating debates rendered the situation still more difficult; a few spoke of imprisoning the Prince at Vincennes. But an assembly is always feeble in action. The Prince, on the other hand, had on his side the army, a part of the Parisian population, almost all France, tired of these disorders, and unity of command: he could therefore await an attack, but he preferred to forestall it.

The Coup d'Etat. — On the morning of December 2 the leaders of the different parties in the Assembly were arrested at their homes, and the palace of the Assembly was occupied by an armed force. At the same time a decree from the President declared the Assembly dissolved and universal suffrage re-established, and proposed to the people the outlines of a new constitution with a responsible head elected for ten years. Resistance was attempted in the centre of Paris and on the boulevards, but after a short struggle was suppressed. Vigorous measures promptly restored tranquillity. The people, by 7,437,216 affirmative votes against 640,737 negative, accepted the constitution proposed by the President, and gave him power for ten years. Thus frightened France gave herself to Louis Napoleon, and the great current of 1789 was once more turned aside. During these sixty years, instead of advancing slowly and surely by regular progress, France had moved

by leaps and bounds, running in a few months from one extremity of the political world to the other.

The decennial presidency was only a journey towards the Empire. The new constitution, published in January, 1852, had borrowed its principles from the institutions of the Consulate and the Empire, and under the semblance of liberality, concealed the omnipotence of the Prince. The head of the State was responsible, and governed by the aid of ministers who depended on himself alone. Two assemblies were instituted: the Corps Législatif, an outgrowth of universal suffrage, had the power to vote laws and taxes; a Senate, composed of the distinguished men of the country, was to watch over the preservation and development of the constitution. Councillors of State, appointed as were the Senators, by the Prince, prepared laws, defended them before the Corps Législatif, and examined the amendments. Before putting the constitution into effect, the President, clothed with the Dictatorship, remodelled the whole administration. The national guard was reorganized and placed at the disposal of the executive, the press again put under the jurisdiction of the correctionary tribunals, the government of the departments concentrated in the hands of the prefects, the nomination of the mayors restored to the government. Order being restored, labor resumed its activity. Carried away by the movement which had taken possession of it after the first vote in favor of Louis Napoleon in 1848, the nation hoped to find repose and order in the bosom of a hereditary monarchy.

IV.

THE SECOND EMPIRE.

(1852-1870 A.D.)

Re-establishment of the Empire (1852). — A senatus-consultum proposed to the people the re-establishment of the imperial dignity in the person of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, with heredity in his direct descent, legitimate or adoptive; the people adopted this proposition on the 21st and 22d of November, by 7,839,552 affirmative votes against 254,501 negatives, and the Empire was solemnly proclaimed on the 2d of December, 1852. Thus the nation ratified the coup

d'état of the 2d of December, 1851, as she had ratified that of the 18th Brumaire, and voluntarily linked her destiny to that of the Napoleons. The new Emperor took the title of Napoleon III. From his marriage with Eugénie de Guzman, a Spanish countess, was born, in 1856, the Prince Imperial. The Empire was extremely popular; the Emperor was not a *roi fainéant*. He had two special aims: at home, to give satisfaction to the general needs of the country as well as to popular interests; abroad, to improve the political situation of France, which was still suffering from the great reverses of 1815.

Benevolent Institutions.—The savings-bank system was extended, as were also the operations of mutual benefit societies. Arrangements were made for bringing justice and medical relief more easily within the reach of the poor. Attention was given to the sanitary improvement of workmen's dwellings. Three establishments were founded for convalescents discharged from the hospitals. Workingmen's pensions were proposed.

Public Works; Encouragements to Agriculture, Industry, and the Arts.—The government gave to public works an activity which, in ten years, almost renewed the great cities, but also overexcited speculation and led to disasters. Paris was almost rebuilt, on a magnificent plan, and well provided with sewers. Other cities followed the example. The Louvre was finished; boulevards were cut through, old quarters made healthy, new ones called into existence, schools, *mairies*, and churches built in each *arrondissement*; in the centre, the Halles constructed in an original style; everywhere gardens and promenades laid out; and at the two extremities of the city, the magnificent Bois de Boulogne and Bois de Vincennes. Railroads, the construction of which had until then been carried on slowly, in a few years reached from the centre to the extremities, beside the new network of cross-lines. Immense works were also carried on in the construction of canals, roads, and ports, and the restoration of the churches.

The organization of boards of agriculture, the establishment of agricultural prizes, contributed to spread the best methods among farmers and breeders. Special institutions for their benefit were founded. The renewal of forests on the mountains, the division and sale of common lands, were facilitated. A subvention of 100,000,000 was appropriated

to facilitate, by advances of money, the employment of systems of draining, and portions of lands hitherto considered unfit for culture were reclaimed by this method. A law was prepared for the completion of parish roads, and elementary instruction in agriculture was required in the schools.

Institutions of Credit; Freedom of Trade.—The *Crédit Foncier* allowed the landed proprietors to raise their mortgages more easily and to improve their property; the *Crédit Mobilier* caused credit to circulate more rapidly, too rapidly indeed, since failures resulted; and the State in contracting loans instead of addressing itself solely to the bankers, invited all the citizens to take part in the operation by direct subscription. After the example of England, free trade was established: beginning in 1860, commercial treaties on the basis of free trade were signed with England, Belgium, Italy, Turkey, etc. Imprisonment for debt was abolished. In 1855, and again in 1867, universal exhibitions were held in Paris which stimulated industrial activity. To foster foreign commerce, new lines of steamships from the Atlantic ports to America, and from the Mediterranean ports to Asia, were established with government aid. In 1862, as a result of these measures, the annual amount of importations and exportations had tripled in twelve years. The right of workmen to combine for the securing of higher wages was recognized by a law of 1864. Co-operative societies were encouraged by one of 1867. Pauperism and crime were diminished.

Education.—In fifteen years the number of children who received primary instruction was increased by a million; school-houses were multiplied and the condition of the masters improved. Thirteen thousand school libraries were established. The education of girls was organized, and evening schools for adults established on a large scale. Technical schools were founded, and the *École des Hautes Études* instituted for advanced scientific researches.

Foreign Policy; Crimean War (1854–1856).—There were, during this reign, wars which the nation accepted as necessities of its old traditions of national policy and military honor. There were also, unfortunately, some of which she disapproved; and the Second Empire fell on account of having undertaken one which was inevitable, but for which it was not prepared.

Since the treaties of 1815 Russia had exercised a menac-

ing preponderance in Europe. The Czar Nicholas had become the personification of a formidable system of repression and conquest. He thought that the presence of a Napoleon on the throne of France would guarantee to Russia the alliance of the English, and believed that the moment had arrived to seize the eternal object of Muscovite covetousness, — Constantinople. He assumed a protectorate over the Christian subjects of the Turkish Empire; he ended by trying to have a secret understanding with England for the division of the spoils of the Sultan. In 1853 he sent forces to occupy the Danubian Principalities and armed at Sebastopol a fleet which seemed formidable. The Emperor gave the first signal for resistance, drew England, which at first hesitated, into his alliance, and assured himself of the neutrality of Austria and Prussia. The destruction by the Russians of a Turkish flotilla was the signal for the commencement of hostilities. The English and French fleet entered the Black Sea while an army forwarded from Great Britain and France assembled under the walls of Constantinople. In September, 1854, the allies, seventy thousand strong, landed on the shores of the Crimea, and the victory of the Alma enabled them to begin the siege of Sebastopol. That siege, the most terrible known in the annals of modern history, lasted almost a year. Continual battles were sustained, two victories, those of Inkerman and Traktir, won, and a struggle bravely maintained against a terrible climate and an enemy continually reinforced. Finally, in September, 1855, French dash and English firmness received their reward. The city was taken, and some months after, the Emperor Nicholas died, foreseeing the ruin of his vast designs.

The English and French fleet in the Baltic had destroyed Bomarsund, and in the Black Sea the French armored gunboats, employed for the first time, had laid Southern Russia open; an allied squadron had even taken Petropaulovsk on the Pacific Ocean. The Czar Alexander II., the successor of Nicholas, asked for peace: it was concluded at Paris. This peace (March, 1856) neutralized the Black Sea, and consequently prevented Russia from having a fleet of war upon it; took from her some parts of Bessarabia, opened the navigation of the Danube to its mouth, and gave security to the rights of neutrals during maritime wars. France recovered the plenitude of her influence in Europe. The visits of various sovereigns to the Emperor Napoleon III. were a

brilliant manifestation of the greatness which she had regained. But this glory was the sole advantage that she derived from the war. When her misfortunes came, the Russians remembered Sebastopol, and England forgot it.

The Italian War; Peace of Villafranca (1859). — During the Crimean War the king of Sardinia had not feared to join his new army to the English and French troops. This circumstance had made France the protector of Piedmont, and consequently of Italy, of which this little kingdom was the last citadel. Accordingly when the Emperor of Austria, Francis Joseph, in 1859 crossed the Ticino to attack Sardinia, the French Emperor hastened to assist the latter. The war lasted scarcely two months. After the brilliant affair of Montebello, the French and Piedmontese army concentrated around Alessandria; then by a bold and skilful movement turned the right of the Austrians, and compelled them to recross the Ticino. Hemmed in between the army of General MacMahon and the guard at Magenta, the Austrians lost seven thousand killed and wounded, and eight thousand prisoners (June 4). Two days after, the French regiments entered Milan. The enemy then abandoned their first line of defence, and fell back upon the Quadrilateral. Here they had one hundred and sixty thousand men, strongly placed, on ground carefully studied, near the village of Solferino. Napoleon III. attacked them with one hundred and forty thousand and gained a complete victory (June 24).

Italy was delivered, except that Venetia remained in the possession of Austria. The Emperor signed the peace of Villafranca, by which Austria abandoned Lombardy, which France ceded to Piedmont, and accepted the Mincio for her boundary in the peninsula, the different states of which were to form a confederation under the presidency of the Pope. But all the parties interested rejected this plan, and the revolutionary movement continued. All those governments crumbled which, since 1814, had been only lieutenantcies of Austria, and Italy was henceforth to form one kingdom, with the exception of Venice and Rome. As the price of the assistance he had rendered, the Emperor had Savoy and Nice ceded to him, which added three departments to France, and extended her southern frontier to the ridge of the Alps.

Expeditions and Wars outside of Europe. — In 1860 the massacre of the Christian Maronites by the Druses of Syria

again demonstrated the utter incapacity of the Ottoman Empire to protect its subjects. France had the honor to be commissioned by the great powers to send and maintain a body of troops in Syria to aid the Turkish government in punishing the criminals. M. de Lesseps, under the auspices of the French government, began at the Isthmus of Suez a canal which was to unite the Mediterranean and Red Seas, and open direct communication between Europe and the extreme East. In 1860, also, France and England had been obliged to send an expedition against China, which had violated a treaty previously made with it. In less than six months the allied fleets transported fifteen thousand men and an immense supply of ammunition six thousand leagues from the French coast, to the banks of the Pei-ho. The mouths of the river were forced, the forts which defended them were captured after a vigorous and brilliant assault, and the Chinese defeated in the battle of Palikao. The allied armies entered Peking to receive the ratification of the treaty, in virtue of which the Chinese government agreed to admit the English and French ambassadors into the capital, paid an indemnity of 120,000,000, opened the port of Tien-tsin, guaranteed advantageous commercial conditions to the conquerors, and restored to France the churches and cemeteries belonging to the Christians. The Celestial Empire was thrown open and, as a consequence, the Empire of Japan also.

The French government profited by the presence of its forces in these regions to carry out an expedition against the empire of Annam, begun two years before, when France had taken possession of Saigon, and made it the capital of an establishment at the mouth of the great river Cambodia. Troops returning from China defeated the Annamites and imposed upon their emperor a peace which stipulated for consideration for the missionaries, an advantageous commercial treaty, and the possession of three provinces around the mouths of the Cambodia, in an extremely fertile country, between the Indies and China, within reach of the Philippines and the Moluccas.

France, England, and Spain had long had injuries to avenge and complaints to make against the anarchical government of Mexico. At the beginning of the year 1862 the three powers agreed to act in unison, but soon the cabinets of London and Madrid renounced the enterprise. France

persisted. It became necessary to send, instead of the six thousand men who had first set out, as many as thirty-five thousand soldiers. Puebla, the key of Mexico, was captured after a heroic resistance, in May, 1863. A few days after (June 10), the French army entered Mexico, and the people, at the suggestion of France, proclaimed an Austrian prince, the Archduke Maximilian, Emperor. After the departure of the French troops, in 1867, the unfortunate prince was taken and shot by the Republicans. This imprudent and ill-conceived expedition was a great injury to French politics and French finances.

Transformation of the Authoritative Empire into the Liberal Empire. — Great internal prosperity made the nation in general content. In the cities, it is true, the working class was continually agitated by social questions, and by remembrances of the Republic; but the agricultural population asked only a continuation of order. The bourgeois class, enriched by an industry the extent of which was due to freedom of labor and trade, began to claim those liberties and securities which they had in 1852 sacrificed for the moment to the fear of civil disturbances. They wished for the suppression of official candidacies in order to release the country from tutelage; and to secure a voluntary and honest expression of the national will, they demanded that, conformably to the ideas of 1789, the State should be conducted like a great industrial society, with economy and prudence, and for the benefit, and by the action, only of those interested.

In the present age a dictatorship can only be temporary. Napoleon III. knew it and had early declared that liberty should one day crown the new political edifice. In 1860 he associated the Corps Législatif more directly with the policy of the government. In 1861 he renounced the right to decree extraordinary credits in the interval between the sessions. In 1867 he gave the ministers entrance to the Chambers, so that they could at any time give an account of their acts to the country. In 1868 he caused more liberal laws to be enacted respecting the press and the rights of public meeting. But the unfortunate issue of the expedition to Mexico, and the threatening position assumed in Germany by Prussia after her victory at Sadowa over the Austrians, and the advance of public spirit, favored by the general prosperity, brought about more earnest longings for liberty,

as was shown by the elections of 1869. Therefore the Emperor renounced his personal authority, and in April, 1870, proposed to the French people the transformation of the authoritative Empire into a liberal Empire. On the 8th of May, 7,300,000 citizens answered yes to his proposition, against 1,500,000 who answered no.

In order to make the organization of the country conform to the new constitution, great reforms were necessary. France had long been excessively centralized. It was necessary to rest the institutions of the State upon broad communal and departmental institutions, and in some instances even provincial institutions. It was necessary furthermore to simplify and rejuvenate the central administration, to instruct and arm the people, to make citizens by the practice of an austere liberty, and to make patriots by the national and moral education of the whole French people. But for all this, time and men were wanting.

Approach of War with Prussia. — A great mistake had been made before Sadowa. Thinking that the unity of Germany was possible with and by the aid of Austria, the Emperor allowed that power to be crushed. In reality, the peril for France was not at Vienna, but at Berlin. Prussia, which since Frederick the Great had dreamed of reconstructing the Germanic Empire, knew well that she could attain that good fortune, so menacing to Europe, only after a military humiliation of France, and made preparations for the accomplishment of this end, with indefatigable perseverance. German patriotism was excited against "the hereditary enemy." She armed all her people from the age of twenty to sixty; she required of her officers the most complete instruction, of her troops the strictest discipline, and by an organization which left no portion of her national forces inactive, by a foresight which utilized all the resources of industry and science, she constituted, in the centre of Europe, the most formidable machine of war that the world had ever seen, — 1,500,000 trained and armed men; every man a soldier. And this formidable machine she confided to men held back by no scruple where Prussian aggrandizement was concerned.

France saw nothing, or wished to see nothing, of these immense preparations which were achieved even on her own territory by the minute and secret study of all her means of action or resistance. Ideas of economy dominated the

Corps Législatif; a blind confidence in her military superiority hindered her from proportioning her forces to the greatness of the approaching struggle, and through the incapacity of men, and the insufficiency of the administrative system, those at hand were ill-employed.

CONTINUATION.

THE GERMAN WAR AND THE THIRD REPUBLIC.

(1870-1896 A.D.)

Origin of the War with Germany. — Ever since Sadowa, the relations between France and the North German Confederation then formed had been strained. In 1867 the attempt of the French Emperor to obtain possession of Luxemburg by purchase from its grand-duke, the king of the Netherlands, was foiled by the opposition of Prussia; but war was for the time averted. But Napoleon was surrounded by influences hostile to the maintenance of peace with Prussia, and was also urged towards war by considerations of the internal politics of France. Towards the end of May, 1870, the Duke of Gramont, a bitter opponent of Prussia, was made minister of foreign affairs. The actual occasion of the outbreak of war between the two rival powers was a proposition respecting the throne of Spain, which had now been vacant since 1868. In the beginning of July the Spanish ministers announced their intention to recommend to the throne Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a Catholic German prince remotely related to the Hohenzollerns of the royal family of Prussia. Gramont protested to King William, through the French ambassador, Benedetti. The king disclaimed all responsibility. At the same time Prince Leopold declined the proffered crown. Benedetti was instructed to demand from the Prussian king an assurance that the candidacy should not be renewed. The king refused, declined to hold further intercourse with Benedetti, and recalled his own ambassador from Paris. On July 19 the French government declared war.

Beginning of the War; Weissenburg to Sedan. — Both governments began pushing forward troops into the narrow space of eighty miles between Luxemburg and the Rhine.