

HELPS FOR STUDENTS OF HISTORY, No. 9

EDITED BY C. JOHNSON, M.A., AND J. P. WHITNEY, B.D., D.C.L.

THE PERIOD OF CONGRESSES

BY

SIR A. W. WARD, Litt.D., F.B.A.,

MASTER OF PETERHOUSE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

I

INTRODUCTORY

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INTRODUCTORY

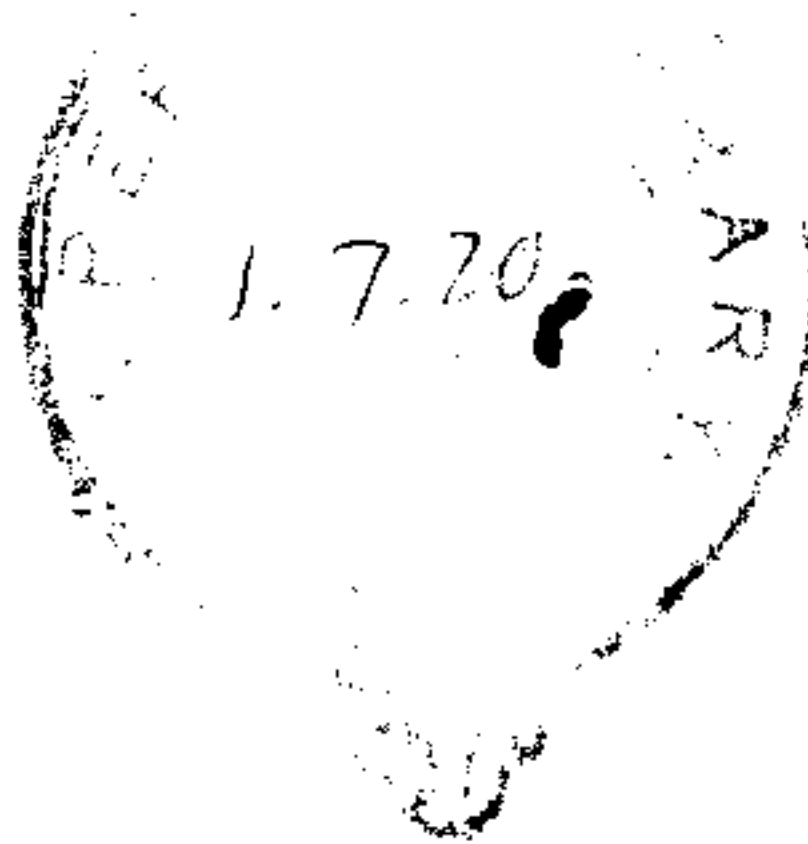
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THE PERIOD OF CONGRESSES

THE title of the outline here offered may, like some other titles, seem to promise either too little or too much. On the one hand, the Congresses of the period 1814-22, to be specially discussed in a second essay, were, as a matter of course, only a few among very many recorded in the history of Europe or of the world. On the other hand, the claim of these particular Congresses to be regarded as of enduring international significance, though associating itself with some of the loftiest aspirations of our own as well as of earlier ages, has, by almost general consent, been relegated into the limbo of obsolete experiments. Were the Congress of Vienna and those which sought to supplement its work merely an armistice in an ever-recurring state of war, or did they constitute an attempt, with such means as were at the disposal of the nations, to secure the Peace of Europe, which meant the Peace of the World, for its own sake? The truth may lie somewhere in the mean. In order to show what these Congresses accomplished, and wherein they failed, it is indispensable to take note, in the first instance, of what may be called the antecedents of the earliest and most famous among them, and to this purpose the present introductory survey will be devoted.

I

INTRODUCTORY

1648-1814

THE PEACE OF WESTPHALIA

THE Peace of Westphalia (1648) put an end alike to the universal ecclesiastical authority of Rome and to the political system of the Roman Empire with which it had been inseparably connected, and which had already become largely unreal in the face of a grouping of sovereign states as yet devoid of international sanction. What remained to the Papacy was the right of protest; what was left to the Empire was a dignity to nearly all intents and purposes phantasmal. Meanwhile, the concurrent Congresses of Münster and Osnabrück had reconstructed the European state system with a relative completeness never, until our own time, attempted before or afterwards, except in the case of the Congress of Vienna.¹

¹ For an exposition, still unrivalled in lucidity, of the general historic evolution referred to above, see Lord Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire* (4th Edit., 1878), chapter xix.: "The Peace of Westphalia: Last Stage of the Decline of the Empire." The whole subject of the evolution of modern diplomacy, consequent upon the changes in the international relations of the European world, is treated at great length but with much ability in D. J. Hill's *History of Diplomacy in the International Development of Europe* (3 vols., New York and London, 1905-14), of which vol. iii. deals with the period from the Peace of Westphalia to the Partition of Poland. For a general survey of the Peace of Westphalia, cf., also, *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. iv., chapter xiv. It is noteworthy that, with view to deliberations such as were afterwards actually carried on at Münster and Osnabrück, and were in their results declared void by his successor, proposals for the assembly of a Congress were made by Pope Urban VIII., so early as 1635; but Sweden would have nothing to say to Conferences

With the territorial arrangements of the Peace of Westphalia (the 'satisfactions' of certain of the Powers) we need not concern ourselves here. What directly interests us is the fact that from the great international compact of this Peace date the real beginnings of modern international law, as resting upon the principle of territorial sovereignty then first definitely acknowledged; and that, as has been well said, 'the work of Grotius was rendered necessary by the failure of Empire and Papacy.'¹

The century and a half, or rather more, of Euro-

held under Papal mediation in a Catholic city (Cologne). After the death of the Emperor Ferdinand II. in 1637, negotiations took place at Hamburg, and were ultimately opened at Münster, between France and the Emperor, under the mediation of the Pope and the Seignory of Venice; and at Osnabrück, under that of King Christian of Denmark, and, from 1643 (when hostilities broke out between Denmark and Sweden), without a mediator. At Vienna, in 1814, Talleyrand contended that, from Westphalia to Teschen, Congresses had never been held without a mediator, and that France should now be called upon to perform this task. Great Britain (through Castlereagh) actually played the part for a time, in the critical Polish-Saxon difficulty. No Christian Power was unrepresented at one or the other of the two Westphalian Congresses, except the Kings of England and Poland and the Grand-duke of Muscovy, and these sovereigns were alike included in the Peace, as allies of certain of its signatories. The Porte took no part in the whole transaction. It may be worth adding that, though the Papal protest offered, immediately after the conclusion of the Peace, on behalf of the Papal claims at large was subsequently reiterated in the Bull *Zelo domus Dei*, it is not known to have been ever invoked against any provision of the Treaties. The pretensions of the Papacy to a direct (if it could no longer be a controlling) share in the settlement of the Peace of Europe were not, indeed, abandoned: such is not the usage of the Vatican. A Papal protest followed on the Congress of Nymegen (1678), as it had on that of Münster. At the Congress of Châtillon (March, 1814), a note in favour of the Pope had at the last moment to be appended to the protocol of its final sitting—as it, said Stadion, to show that we have not forgotten the Holy Father.

¹ Cf. T. A. Walker, *The Science of International Law* (1898),

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pean history which followed, and which presents an incessant sequence of congresses and conference,¹ is not, on that account, to be any more regarded as a period of political chaos than the Peace of Westphalia itself could be held to mark a retrogression in European political and religious life. But the absence of substantial securities from the international system established in the Westphalian Treaties, and from what may be described as the supplementary Treaties concluded in the next dozen years, more than once made necessary a fresh revision of the political map of Europe. And now France—and, afterwards and more gradually, Russia—sought to play over again the part which the unique heritage of the House of Habsburg had of old encouraged it to assume, but which its eastern branch had virtually let drop in the Peace of Westphalia, and its western in that of the Pyrenees (1659).

THE BALANCE OF POWER

It was, hereupon, endeavoured, by means of a series of alliances as well as of other treaties, to bring about a Balance of Power—in other words (for the idea is essentially a negative one), to prevent any one state, with its allies and depen-

¹ Diplomatic usage has not sought to establish a precise distinction between these two terms. Speaking generally, congresses are gatherings of plenipotentiaries (often ministers for foreign affairs, or even prime-ministers), held for purposes of superior importance, as distinguished from conferences, which are often carried on by regularly accredited ambassadors or ministers, and deal with questions of various kinds on which light or agreement is desired (cf. Sir I. Satow, *A Guide to Diplomatic Practice*, vol. ii., p. 10). But it would not be difficult to show that this distinction is frequently ignored both by politicians and by historians.

dents, from becoming so strong as to be likely to overwhelm the rest. Hence—to mention only the most salient combinations in the struggle against France—the Triple and the Grand Alliance (1668 and 1701), the Partition Treaties (1698 and 1700), and the Utrecht settlement (1714). Although their conditions were largely due to circumstance, while the territorial changes approved in them ignored any claims of the populations to a share in the decision of their destinies, the Utrecht pacification, with the agreements supplementary to it, remained for nearly half a century the sheet-anchor of the Peace of Europe. In a succession of Congresses on the affairs of its eastern, northern, and western parts (Passarowitz, 1717-18; Nystad, 1721; Cambray, 1722), British mediation succeeded in the adjustment of the trembling political scales. After the Western Powers were once more at discord, and, with the Wars of the Austrian Succession, another great European conflict had set in, the results of the Congress and Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) showed that the main structure of the political edifice still held out. The Seven Years' War, with its reversal of the system of alliances between the chief European Powers, and the confirmation of its results in the Treaties of Hubertusburg and Paris (1763), appeared again to have brought about an enduring political change in the European system. The decline of the power of Austria seemed to be made more manifest at the Congress of Teschen (1779), which closed the War of the Bavarian Succession. Here, too, Russia—who in the Peace of Kutschuk-Kainardje (1774) had, by securing to herself the protection

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of the Christian subjects of the Porte, really established her ascendancy in the affairs of the Near East—had first asserted her voice in those of Central Europe. Other events—the failure of the schemes of Joseph II. and the conclusion of the League of (German) Princes (1785)—indicated the decadence of the power of Austria.

THE PARTITIONS OF POLAND AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

But, for the future Peace of Europe, Austria's most disastrous act had been her reluctant assent to the First Partition of Poland (1775), which bade utter defiance to the system, battered and impaired as it was, of treaties between the States of Europe mutually guaranteeing their territorial dominions. The Second, and more extensive, Partition of Poland (1793), quickly followed by the Third (1795), had been preceded by the Convention of Reichenbach (1790), by which war between the two German participants in Russia's assault upon the political order of Europe had been averted, and by the Congress of Sistova (1790–91) and the Treaty of Jassy (1792), which ended her war against Turkey. The coincidence of this Partition with the victorious progress of the French Revolution, and the conclusion, soon afterwards, of the Treaty of Bâle (1795), illustrate, with almost unparalleled force, the potent interaction of apparently disconnected historical movements.¹ Thus, in a twofold sense, was rung the death-knell of the *ancien régime*, if we may apply that term not only to the con-

¹ From this point of view, no student of modern political history should fail to read Sybel's *History of the French Revolution*.

dition of Old France, but to the political system of Europe at large, such as had carried on a broken existence since the Peace of Westphalia. The Partitions of Poland signified the ruthless violation, for selfish purposes, of that principle of the common ('fraternal') interests of nations which the French Revolution inscribed upon its banner, and under cover of which it began the process of extending the 'frontiers of 1792,' afterwards almost indefinitely developed by Napoleon. Yet even he, the heir of the Revolution, was not altogether deluding himself or others, when, in the days of his exile at St. Helena, he declared his secret ideal to have been to weld the great nations of Europe, under the *ægis* of his Empire, into a great confederation united by the same 'codes, principles, opinions, feelings, and interests.'¹

PROJECTS OF PERPETUAL PEACE

Like most of the ideas of the French Revolution, this project had its roots far back, and was, in truth, substantially identical with the Abbé de Saint-Pierre's proposal for developing the Treaty of Utrecht into a plan securing a Perpetual Peace to the nations of the civilised world. Bentham's plan of an international court of judicature and a 'fixation' of armaments was obviously suggested by the futile Armed Neutrality of 1780; Kant's more famous treatise, containing his scheme of a Perpetual Peace (1795), though it transcended all merely pragmatic limits, was doubtless, in the first instance, occasioned by the Peace of Bâle

¹ See the opening of W. Alison Phillips's chapter on "The Congresses, 1815-22," in vol. x. of *The Cambridge Modern History*.

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and the attempted guarantee of North-German neutrality. The projects of universal peace cherished by Tsar Alexander I., and beginning with that contained in the instructions communicated by him to N. N. Novosiltov on his mission to Pitt in 1804, were likewise occasioned by political events, though based on sincere conviction. But they interest us chiefly in connexion with later transactions, and more especially with that of the foundation of the Holy Alliance.¹

CONGRESSES OF THE NAPOLEONIC AGE

Meanwhile, the resistless enthusiasm of self-regenerated France, and the imperial genius of the great man to whom she had entrusted her destinies, had transformed the political map of Europe. The Congresses of this period have no special significance for a survey of methods of international pacification, and the treaties concluded may be said, in the main, to have merely registered the results of the great European conflict in its successive phases. Italy, Germany, and other parts of Europe were resettled on lines more or less corresponding to the political impotence to which the states comprised under these geographical names had been in turn reduced; and the twofold process was only temporarily arrested by the Peace of Amiens and the treaties supplementary to it (1802). The frontiers of now imperial France were further extended by a continuous advance, of

¹ As to these schemes, see W. Alison Phillips's extremely interesting *The Confederations of Europe* (1914); and cf. A. F. Pollard's outline *The League of Nations in History* (1918). As

which later Congresses found it an arduous task to fix the principal stages. For Central Europe, 1805 and 1806, the years of Austerlitz and Jena, marked the most important territorial transformations, which included the spread of French 'influence' in the shape of the setting-up of dependent monarchies or confederations under French protection. In 1807, however, the Treaty of Tilsit (1807) seemed to announce that the process would be carried on under new conditions, and that, instead of a single Power endeavouring to extend its dominion over the whole civilised world, a bargain to divide between them the rule or control of it had been struck between Napoleon and the Russian Tsar. The Congress of Erfurt (1808) confirmed this strange alliance, and the Peace concluded with twice-vanquished Austria at Schönbrunn (1809) appeared to verify the omen. The annexation of the Papal States (in the same year) had already typified the termination of the Old Order.

THE BREAK-UP OF THE NAPOLEONIC EMPIRE

But, though it had been thought that the first symptoms of the Spanish insurrection (in 1808) would prove transitory, the revulsion against the progress of the great dual design was not long in becoming manifest. By 1811, the friendship between Napoleon and Alexander had changed into suspicious hostility; in 1812, the French invasion of Russia ended in the tragic catastrophe which led to Napoleon's fall. The Convention of Tauroggen, whereby, on the last day of that year, the Prussian General Yorck broke away from the French command, opened the revolt against the

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Napoleonic ascendancy in Germany which swelled into the War of Liberation. Inasmuch as our 'Period of Congresses' comprises the efforts of a liberated Europe to build up its future permanently on a new basis, adopted and elaborated by the assemblies in question, it may be well, from this point onwards, to adhere more closely to the chronological sequence of events.¹

The leading statesmanship of the interval between Napoleon's Russian catastrophe and the resettlement of Europe after his downfall was that of Metternich. His policy in so far directed the process whereby this downfall was ultimately brought to pass, that the decision of Austria determined the combination which overwhelmed Napoleon at Leipzig, and forced him at Paris to submit to the terms of the victorious Allies. Yet, before these results were reached, Metternich cautiously reserved to Austria the choice of her own time for entering

¹ Of the transactions from the end of 1812 to the Second Peace of Paris (November, 1815) a lucid account, pervaded by a fine spirit of patriotism, will be found in vol. viii. of A. Sorel's *L'Europe et la Révolution Française* (Paris, 1904). A clear account of the peace negotiations of this period, and of their interaction with the course of military affairs, is given in J. H. Rose's standard *Life of Napoleon I.*, vol. ii. (1902), chapters xxxiii. to xli. The most useful German book of reference for the same years is W. Oncken's *Das Zeitalter der Revolution und des Befreiungskrieges*, vol. ii. (Berlin, 1886). For Metternich's Dresden interview with Napoleon, and his instructions for the Prague Conferences (1813), see *Memoires de Metternich*, vol. ii. (Paris, 1880). The diplomatic history proper of the War of 1814, up to the close of the Congress of Châtillon, is most completely treated in A. Fournier, *Der Congress von Châtillon* (Vienna and Prague, 1900), the extremely interesting Appendices to which, especially the still unpublished extracts from the Journals of Hardenberg, should not be overlooked. By the side of these authorities, the impassioned narrative in vols. i. and ii. of Treitschke's *German History* (Engl. Transl., 1915-16) will continue to find readers; but they should always—e.g., when he is speaking of Metternich—bear in mind the historian's 'point of view.' As to the Congress of Vienna in particular, see *post*

into what he intended to be the final conflict. His design was, in any case, to prevent the premature close of the Russo-Prussian effort against Napoleon, and to secure to his own Government the control of its issue. In the first instance, therefore, Austria was to make an offer of intervention between Russia, with Prussia, and France, and, if the belligerents were disposed to accept her mediation, to attempt to impose upon Napoleon her terms of peace. This design was to be carried out by means of a Congress summoned to Prague.

But, before this Congress met, Russia, who had driven back Napoleon's armada, and Prussia, whose most ardent spirits had long been panting to free Germany from his yoke, had entered on a very different course of action. The Treaty of Kalisch between the two Powers (signed in February, and made public in March, 1813) corresponded to the ambition of Tsar Alexander by placing him at the head of the Coalition which Austria was invited to join; and Russia thus put forward a claim to a hegemony among the States of Europe which she cannot be said to have altogether dropped for twoscore years.¹ At the same time, the right of nations to a voice in the determination of their own future was first clearly asserted in the stirring *Appeal to my People* issued by King Frederick William III., on March 17th, 1813.² Since the British Government was ready to guarantee the

¹ In this spirit were conceived the proclamations issued by Alexander's orders after the Russian frontier had been crossed, in which he promised his aid to the nations taking up arms against Napoleon or kept in submission to him by their own rulers.

² Of this very remarkable manifesto, exposed by the younger T. G. von Hippel, see L. Häusser's sympathetic notice in his *Deutsche Geschichte*, 4th edit. (1863), vol. iv., book ii.

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Treaty of Kalisch, the responsibility of deciding on the formation of a European Coalition would at least be shared with Austria by the Power on which all the rest depended for subsidies in the final struggle.

Lützen and Bautzen (May, 1813) were insufficient as victories to render Napoleon indifferent to the action of Austria; so that he suddenly became willing to accept her mediation at a Congress, and concluded an armistice with the Allies for the purpose at Pleisnitz (June 4th). But Metternich, though he was contemplating Austria's entrance into the Coalition as the ultimate result of the Congress, was, at the same time, vigilantly intent upon preventing a great increase of the power of Russia as a direct consequence of the overthrow of the 'French colossus.' In the Treaty of Reichenbach, concluded during the armistice between the three Eastern Powers (June 21st, 1813), it was therefore laid down that, in case Austria joined the Coalition, the duchy of Warsaw should be partitioned among them, the reconstruction of the Prussian monarchy of 1805 being in this way to some extent accomplished. In view, particularly, of the fact that the Congress of Vienna and, with it, the Peace of Europe were nearly wrecked upon this question, it should be noted that the idea of uniting under his own sceptre the lands that had of old formed the kingdom of Poland had long been cherished by Alexander. It was with a view to its realisation that he had gone to war with Napoleon in 1805. He had recurred to the scheme towards the end of 1810; but it was not till after the great events of 1812 that it could assume

a practical shape. Although he persistently enjoined secrecy towards Austria and Prussia on his confidential adviser Count Adam Czartoryski, who had long fostered the design in his mind, it came to the ears of the statesmen of both Powers; and Metternich felt that more was at stake than even the future of Austria's Polish province, Galicia.

The Prague Congress (July–August, 1813)—a solemn make-believe, as it has been appropriately called—came to its predestined nugatory end. Although, even after his famous stormy interview with Metternich at Dresden (June 26th), Napoleon had refused to believe that Austria would go to war with him, and although the Emperor Francis shrank from it almost to the last, the archdeceiver (to mitigate Napoleon's description of him) carried through his purpose. This was no other than, by means of a succession of notes, to contrive to throw the responsibility of the predetermined rupture upon the French Emperor. Great Britain had signified her adhesion to the Reichenbach agreement, and the question was only as to the form, about which Metternich displayed great anxiety, in which the Austrian *ultimatum* should be communicated. It comprised the relinquishment by France of the control of the duchy of Warsaw, the dissolution of the Confederation of the Rhine, the reconstruction of Prussia up to the Elbe, and the cession to Austria of the Illyrian provinces. In the end, without the Congress having really entered into deliberations, Napoleon's refusal of these demands was, as it were, extorted from him, and the war reopened (August 10th).

The Treaties of Töplitz between the three

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Eastern Powers which followed (September) renewed the engagements into which they had mutually entered, and bound them to engage in no peace negotiations with France, except in common. Secret articles more closely defined the conditions of peace which they were resolved to exact, and provided that the future of the territories comprised in the duchy of Warsaw should, when the time came, be settled by agreement among the contracting Powers. Before the three armies closed in upon the common foe, the Coalition was joined by Sweden, whose actual ruler, Bernadotte, was immediately intent upon securing Norway, while indulging the dream of ultimately taking Napoleon's place in France. And, though too late to take part in striking the decisive blow, Bavaria entered into a treaty of alliance with Austria at Ried (October 8th), which guaranteed complete independence to her. Württemberg did not follow suit till nearly a month later.

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH NAPOLEON

The crowning victory of Leipzig was gained on October 18th; the death of Prince Poniatowski on the next day extinguished a high national aspiration of the Poles, and the all too faithful King Frederick Augustus of Saxony was transported as a prisoner to Berlin. At Frankfort-on-the-Main, which the Allies reached in the first week of November, Napoleon, still in half-boastful mood, declared that, albeit he had no concern either for the Confederation of the Rhine or for the Continental System, France would not tolerate his concluding a 'bad peace.' *En route* at

Meiningen (October 29th), Metternich, mindful of the fact that already at Leipzig (on October 17th) an informal communication from Napoleon had been received through the captive Austrian General Count Merveldt, which had been left unanswered, took a preliminary step towards the opening of peace negotiations. Baron Saint-Aignan, a French diplomatist accredited to the Court of Weimar, was released from captivity and, on November 7th, instructed by Metternich, with the consent of the Tsar and of the British ambassador at Vienna (now at Frankfort), Lord Aberdeen, to offer peace to France on the basis of her 'natural' frontiers—a term implying those which the Revolution had secured to France: the Alps and the Rhine, with the Pyrenees.

On this informal, but sufficiently definite, offer hinged not only the negotiations at Frankfort, carried on from the beginning of November in the midst of a great gathering of diplomatists, but much that followed. Metternich (although desirous that a more hopeful view should be taken by Great Britain, so as to render her willing to make concessions to France which would facilitate the conclusion of peace) seems to have been slow to believe in the likelihood of the acceptance of the offer conveyed by Saint-Aignan to Napoleon, unless he was nearer to the brink of ruin than at present. The Austrian statesman, therefore, continued to contemplate the invasion of France by the Allies, without being, in accordance with Russian and Prussian patriotic projects, eagerly intent upon it. For nothing would have been more satisfactory to him, not only on account

of the dynastic tie between his Emperor and Napoleon, but more especially in order to preserve an effective counterbalance to the power of Russia and her Tsar, than to have brought Napoleon to a speedy peace, such as public opinion in France unmistakably desired. It should be added that, at this time, neither Metternich nor his master looked for the dethronement of the Napoleonic dynasty, or had any desire for the return of the Bourbons.¹ Napoleon, however, was equally unwilling to precipitate a decision. On November 25th, a communication, dated the 16th, from the French foreign Minister Maret (Duc de Bassano) reached the Allied headquarters, proposing a peace congress at Mannheim, on the basis of the independence of all nations, but making no reference to the basis of 'natural' frontiers proposed through Saint-Aignan. Hereupon, Metternich drew up the celebrated appeal to the French nation, promulgated on December 4th, in which the Allies, while in their turn avoiding any mention of 'natural' frontiers, promised to France limits more extended than had been hers under her Kings. In the meantime, warned by a private letter from Metternich to Caulaincourt (Duc de Vicenza), who was understood to incline to peace, Napoleon had made a step forward. He substituted Caulaincourt for Maret in the management of foreign affairs, and the new minister, on December 2nd, despatched a courier to Frankfort, accepting the general basis of negotiation offered through Saint-Aignan—*i.e.*, the 'natural' frontiers—provided that

¹ At Paris, Talleyrand, about this time, was similarly in favour of peace and a Napoleonic regency.

Great Britain would make possible the conclusion of a general peace allowing no supremacy to any one Power by sea or by land.¹ Metternich now requested Great Britain to offer certain colonial concessions to France, and to name a plenipotentiary for peace negotiations. But, in accordance with his general plan of action, no change was made or proposed in the control of military operations. On December 8th, the Allied headquarters were moved from Frankfort.

The mutual distrust between Alexander and Metternich, which, till driven out by their common fear of revolution, was to prove not the least of the recurring difficulties of the Period of Congresses, was, on the eve of that period, intensified by various causes. The military operations of the Allies were delayed by the Tsar's objection (doubtless first suggested by his Radical Swiss instructor La Harpe) to the crossing of the Swiss frontier, which he at one time declared his intention of constituting a *casus belli*. Bernadotte actively carried on his intrigues, which led to the solid gain by Sweden of the whole of Norway, ceded to her by Denmark in the Peace of Kiel (January 14th, 1814). While the Tsar actually thought of marching direct upon Paris, and there recommending Bernadotte as the successor of Napoleon, Metternich calculated that, by assenting to the acquisition of Saxony by Prussia, he might secure the support of Hardenberg in pressing a speedy peace on Napoleon.

¹ Caulaincourt's letter to Metternich is remarkable from a general as well as a special point of view. In principle it pleads for a peace founded on the Balance of Power in Europe and the common recognition of the integrity of all national territories—in other words, for an international agreement without power of enforcement.

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The Prussian minister, in January, 1814, was certainly persuaded to believe that Austria would consent to the Prussian annexation of Saxony, obnoxious though it was both to the traditions of Austrian policy and to the interests of the lesser German States, inasmuch as it might avert the consummation of Alexander's Polish designs, the dangers of which were quite patent to Hardenberg, untouched as he was by the sentiment of grateful attachment to Russia possessing his sovereign, King Frederick William III. In this curiously inverted order of considerations, what was to prove the chief *crux* of the Congress of Vienna, the Polish-Saxon difficulty, first occupied the attention of the Allied Powers. Yet, curiously enough, the immediate obstacle to the conclusion of peace was now to be found, not in reluctance on the part of Napoleon, aware as he could not but be that his popularity was waning fast, but in hesitation on the part of Metternich—and not of Metternich alone—as to whether still more favourable conditions might not, even without further military pressure, be obtained from the French Emperor. By a separate treaty of peace and alliance (January 11th), Murat had been brought over by Austria to the side of the Allies; and they, including Great Britain, were unlikely to remain contented with the Frankfort basis. Metternich, accordingly, advised Schwarzenberg, the commander of the Austrian invading army, to stay his advance, which he accordingly did at Langres, after taking that place (January 18th). On the same day, Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary and destined chief

peace plenipotentiary, arrived at the Allied headquarters at Bâle. It was here at once (in accordance with his instructions, dated December 26th) settled between him and Metternich, that the conditions of Great Britain's maritime rights (which Napoleon had wished to see defined) should not be called into question in the course of the peace negotiations. Great Britain was prepared, in maintenance of 'the common interest,' to return a large proportion of the French, Dutch, and Danish colonies in her hands. Metternich, also, agreed with Castlereagh that Austria's historic claim to the possession of the Belgian Provinces should not be allowed to stand in the way of their union with Holland. Thus, Antwerp and the 'barrier for Holland' would be secure. While nothing was said about the suggested candidature of Bernadotte for the French throne, Castlereagh was prepared to enter into negotiations with Napoleon, should the French nation continue to recognise his sovereignty; as to the Bourbons, it would be time enough to think of them when that nation proved ready to approve their claims. Castlereagh soon showed himself entirely in agreement with Metternich and Hardenberg as to the impossibility of countenancing Alexander's support of this scheme, in which he persisted, till threatened with the standstill of the Austrian and Prussian armies. What Castlereagh had at heart was a satisfactory peace founded on the old principle of a satisfactory Balance of Power in Europe, and—this addition was to acquire great significance—a guarantee of the preservation of this peace in the form of a defensive and offensive

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Union between the Allies, to continue after the war.¹

On these lines, peace negotiations began at Bâle while, at Châtillon-on-Seine, Caulaincourt, on Metternich's invitation, awaited their progress. They continued in much the same spirit in the new headquarters at Langres (from January 25th), though Alexander and some of his most confidential counsellors were greatly adverse to even a momentary stoppage of military operations. Metternich, after propounding a series of questions which would clear the ground in future discussions as to the reconstruction of Europe, without prejudicing the settlement of Russia's compensations, insisted, by order of his sovereign, upon the immediate opening of peace negotiations on a basis to be settled among the Allies. This implied that the Frankfort basis—the 'natural' frontiers of France—was no longer valid. The British and Prussian ministers concurred; while it was sought to meet halfway the desire of Alexander (who had already left Langres) that the advance on Paris should speedily proceed, by committing the progress of military operations to the judgment of Schwarzenberg as commander-in-chief of the main army. However, only Metternich's threat that Austria would quit the Coalition, and the concession of an advance to some distance beyond Langres, at last induced Alexander to consent to the opening of peace negotiations. The real difficulty had lain in that question of Russian compensations which Metternich

¹ Castlereagh's instructions of December 26th, 1813, plainly convey this design of the British Government, while clearly defining British interests proper in the impending peace negotiations.

nich had hoped to postpone, especially if it was true that Alexander wished to demand Alsace from France and, in exchange for it, to obtain Galicia from Austria. At last (on January 29th), an agreement was reached in the 'Langres Protocol,' to the effect that military operations should continue, but that, on February 5th, preliminary conferences as to the general peace should be held at Châtillon by plenipotentiaries charged, as representing Europe at large, with instructions to offer to France her old frontiers of 1792. The discrepancy between this and the informal Frankfurt offer of the 'natural' frontiers—the real blot upon this entire series of diplomatic transactions—was held to be obviated by an addition, proposed by Castlereagh (whose active exertions on this occasion are very notable), stipulating for an equitable territorial adjustment on both sides of the French frontier. France was to be excluded from any interference in the decisions of the Allies, though kept informed of them so far as possible; on the other hand, the Allies were to abstain from intervening in her internal—i.e., dynastic—concerns. Before the Conferences at Langres arrived at a conclusion, it was agreed to inform Caulaincourt that France would be called upon to acknowledge the independence of all countries formerly under her 'influence'—including Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and Holland—by means of a renunciation, on the part of 'the Head of her Government,' of all titles implying rule or protection.

THE CONGRESS OF CHÂTILLON

By the beginning of February, 1814, the plenipotentiaries had assembled at Châtillon. They included Count Stadion (an upright and moderate statesman, who, as it proved, in the end found it impossible to act with Metternich), Count Rastomovsky (rather bellicose in his views) for Russia, Freiherr Wilhelm von Humboldt (whom Metternich considered inclined to pedantry, while he thought Metternich devoid of principle) for Prussia, and for Great Britain her diplomatic representatives at the Courts of Vienna, Petersburg, and Berlin. The gathering was thus by no means altogether composed of diplomatists dominated by Metternich or resolved on peace; and Castlereagh, who, while desirous of it, was aware of the idea of it being still unpopular in England, thought it expedient, without being himself a plenipotentiary, to make a fourth in what Hardenberg called the 'British Sanhedrin.' On February 5th, Caulaincourt pressed the Conference for an immediate communication of the terms of peace; but Castlereagh stated that, even if Napoleon accepted the terms proposed to him, Great Britain could not sign a peace until the Powers had settled the reconstruction of Europe. Two days afterwards, Stadion recited the instructions as to the demand of the 'old' French frontiers, and as to the cessation of all French 'influence' beyond those limits. Hereupon, on the 9th, the Conference or Congress set slowly to work. Caulaincourt was informed that it was intended to constitute Germany a

the same day, Rasumovsky preferred a demand by his sovereign for a suspension of the Conference, due to his belief that Napoleon would be unable to stay a further advance upon the capital, where his dethronement and the establishment of another Government in his place would be easily effected.

In two interviews at headquarters, however, Castlereagh pressed upon the Tsar the risk involved in the imposition upon France of a Government for which she had not yet declared. Very soon, the military prospect clouded, and the effect of several French successes, especially of that of Etoges (February 14th), which drove Blücher back upon Châlons, rendered out of date a letter from Caulaincourt to Metternich, offering to accept the 'old' frontiers, if an armistice were granted, in return for the surrender of certain fortified places by France.

Meanwhile, the ministers of the Allied Powers had been in anxious conference at Troyes. They had been joined here by Castlereagh from Châtillon, where he had come to an understanding with Stadion, that Russia should be made to reveal her Polish plans, and had promised that Great Britain would refuse her consent to the establishment, in any form, of a separate Poland. At Troyes, Metternich, under the mistaken impression that the military struggle was really over, and still hoping to avoid the dangers and difficulties of a seizure of Paris by force, propounded a further series of questions as to the future action of the Allies in French affairs, and the control of Paris if in Allied hands. To these enquiries Hardenberg and Castlereagh replied, more or less in the spirit

in which they were put, advocating the conclusion, after further negotiations at Châtillon, of peace with Napoleon, provided that the allegiance of the French people had not been lost by him, deprecating any attempt to settle the dynastic question at Paris by an appeal in any quarter, and recommending the grant, under satisfactory conditions, of an armistice. On all these heads, the will of Alexander still held out against the opinion of his Allies. He rejected the proposal of an armistice, and insisted on an advance upon Paris, where, if Napoleon's authority were still acknowledged, peace might then be concluded with him. At Paris, the Allies should appoint a governor of the city, whom the Tsar would like to be a Russian, since Russia (here the 'point of view' became manifest) had been longest in the field against the common foe.

The continued repulse of Blücher added force to the contention, resisted by Alexander, that peace should be rapidly concluded; and, already at a Conference held at Troyes on February 13th, Metternich used threatening language about the withdrawal of her army by Austria, and the conclusion by her of a separate peace. Nesselrode refused his signature to a vote of the other Powers, which, while inviting the Tsar to approve the continuance of peace negotiations at Châtillon, expressed the readiness of the Allies to accept the French armistice proposals, if military securities were furnished for the conclusion of a general peace on the basis of the 'old' frontiers. Thus, an *impasse* seemed to have been reached, and Metternich went so far as to propose to Prussia that she should join Austria and Great Britain

in concluding peace without Russia, and thus isolating her. But this proposal put too great a strain upon King Frederick William III.'s fidelity to the Tsar. Ultimately, with Castlereagh's assent, Metternich and Hardenberg signed a Convention, which provided that in no event should any of the Powers depart from the principle of restoring the French frontiers of 1792, while the decision of the dynastic question should be left to the French nation. This Convention Alexander, won over by a concession contained in it as to the eventual military governorship of Paris, and no doubt also impressed by Napoleon's continued military successes, at last accepted (February 14th); and it was agreed that negotiations should proceed at Châtillon, on the basis, not of an armistice, but of a guaranteed preliminary peace. It would seem that the Tsar was prepared to annul the results of these negotiations, should, as he hoped, the military overthrow of Napoleon be still accomplished before their conclusion.

On February 16th, Castlereagh returned to Châtillon, after at Troyes entering into a further agreement with Austria and Prussia, which Russia had after some hesitation approved, laying down certain conditions for the territorial reconstruction of Europe. This agreement stipulated, in accordance with the wishes of Great Britain, for the union of Belgium and Holland, and arranged for the settlement of the lands between the Meuse and Rhine; it also promised the due compensation of King Ferdinand of Sicily for his losses, and the reservation to Great Britain of the ships of war in the ports occupied by her and to be, in the peace, given up to France.

These special conditions obtained by Great Britain reached Châtillon, together with the general conditions of the Preliminary Treaty of Peace agreed upon at Troyes, for communication to Caulaincourt. All French conquests since 1792 were to be ceded, and the independence of all the states of Europe was to be recognised. With certain exceptions (the Mauritius, etc.) and on certain conditions (the prohibition of the importation of slaves, etc.) all French possessions conquered by Great Britain since 1792 were to be returned to France, together with Guadeloupe and Cayenne, while Malta remained with Great Britain. Within specified periods of a few days after the signing of the Preliminaries, France was to evacuate all fortified places ceded by her (including Mainz, Hamburg, Antwerp, and Venice); while Besançon, Belfort, and Huningen were, on the stoppage of hostilities, to be at once surrendered as pledges, to be held till the signing of the definitive Peace.

On the 17th, this draft Preliminary Treaty was communicated to Caulaincourt at the Châtillon Congress, which then adjourned, in order that he might ascertain Napoleon's views. On the same day, Schwarzenberg's advanced guard was driven back across the Seine; and, anxious to avoid staking too much on a battle, the Austrian commander proposed to the Russian and Prussian sovereigns, through Count Paar, to offer an armistice through Marshal Berthier, Chief of the French General Staff. Napoleon, who had revoked the *carte blanche* granted by him to Caulaincourt, and had ordered him to refuse all offers of peace except on the basis of the 'natural' instead of the 'old'

frontiers, was encouraged by the news of Schwarzenberg's proposal (the inopportuneness of which was perceived by both Metternich and Castlereagh) to adhere to the Frankfort terms. What with the existing differences of opinion among the Allies, while Napoleon's plenipotentiary, now all for delaying peace negotiations, was on the watch for the development of these differences, the Châtillon Congress seemed doomed to failure, and the duration of the war to be left wholly dependent on its military vicissitudes.

Napoleon, therefore, while he actually consented to the opening at Lusigny, on February 24th, of negotiations for an armistice, instructed his commissioner, General Comte de Flahaut, besides insisting on the Frankfort basis, to demand the continuance of military operations while negotiations proceeded. So much altercation ensued that the cohesion of the Coalition again seemed in danger, and, indeed, it could hardly have been kept together but by Castlereagh's efforts. In the end, a plan suggested by the distinguished Prussian strategist, General von Grolman, was adopted (February 25th), according to which the main (Austro-Russian) army was to fall back so far as Langres, while the augmented Northern army, under Blücher, was to continue its march on the Marne. At the same time, in order to take away any hope of breaking up the Coalition which Napoleon might have founded upon Alexander's jealous interference in the conduct of the campaign, the Allied plenipotentiaries at Châtillon were instructed to fix a date for a definite reply from Caulaincourt as to peace terms, in default of which they would declare the Congress

dissolved. Notwithstanding the positiveness of this demand, not only Metternich, but Hardenberg and Castlereagh were sincerely desirous of peace; and Napoleon himself, though now hoping for better terms than had at one time seemed within his reach, was by no means desirous of a sudden rupture of negotiations; for he was well aware of the widespread desire for peace in France.

On the 26th, Napoleon wrote to Caulaincourt from Troyes, where he had just held his entry among the acclamations of the inhabitants. As to his terms, he let it be understood that he adhered to the Frankfort basis 'and nothing less—neither Belgium nor Antwerp.' For the rest, he was graciously willing to let the Châtillon Congress proceed, and even to facilitate the progress in a locality now held by him, thus seeming to respond to the general desire for peace in France, while able to carry on his campaign against Blücher. For the same reason, he allowed the armistice negotiations at Lusigny to continue, till, on March 5th, these were broken off by the Allies.

THE TREATY OF CHAUMONT

Their centre of political action was now at Chaumont. Here, since the Châtillon peace negotiations had now virtually failed, it was necessary to take measures for the effective joint conduct of the final conflict in arms, whereby the indispensable conditions of peace might be imposed on the archfoe. To this end, the ministers of the Four Powers at once signed a new Treaty of Alliance. The Treaty of Chaumont, of March 4th (signed March 9th), 1814, with its renewals—at London

on June 29th, 1814; at Vienna on March 25th, 1815; at Paris on November 20th, 1815, and at Aix-la-Chapelle on November 15th, 1818—constitutes, in its full development, the foundation of the new system of Congresses conceived and conducted by the Great—originally by Four of the Great—Powers, and of the assumption by them, as Wellington afterwards said at Vienna, of the right of protection over the Peace of Europe. But its immediate purpose was of a more limited nature.

The Treaty of Chaumont¹ was essentially designed as an alliance in arms for the purpose of carrying through the conditions of peace to which, in their preliminary form, the assent of France had not proved obtainable, and of strengthening the Coalition by making the provision required for the continuation and victorious termination of the war.² The Four Powers severally undertook to furnish for this purpose a force of 150,000 men, Great Britain promising, in addition, for the year 1814, a subsidy of five millions sterling. None of the Signatory Powers was to conclude a separate pacification with France. From the Töplitz Triple Alliance Treaty of September 9th, 1813, was taken over—in part *verbatim*—the further provision that, if, after the conclusion of peace, any one of the Four Powers were attacked by France, the rest

¹ The Treaty of Chaumont (which bore the date of March 1st, 1814, but was signed on March 9th) has been repeatedly reprinted—most completely, it would appear, in Martens' *Recueil des Traités conclus par la Russie*, Petersburg, 1874 ff., vol. iii., pp. 155 ff. See also d'Angeberg, vol. i., pp. 116 ff., and *cf.*, for the first three supplementary treaties, *ibid.*, p. 183, and vol. ii., pp. 971 ff., 1636 ff. There can be no doubt that the matter-of-fact handiwork of Castlereagh, who called this Treaty 'my Treaty,' is traceable in its articles. As at Töplitz, so at Chaumont, the Signatory Powers severally signed Treaties with every one of the other three.

of them should come to the rescue with a force of 60,000 men apiece. The Treaty was to hold good for twenty years after the definitive conclusion of peace, and other states specially exposed to French invasion (explained, in a secret article, to refer in especial to Spain, Portugal, Sweden, and the dominions of the Prince of Orange, 're-established in Holland'¹) were invited to accede to it. A secret article of the Treaty enumerated the territorial arrangements stipulated in the Allied draft of a Preliminary Peace, supplementing them so as to provide for the union of the Netherlands under the Prince of Orange. At the conclusion of peace, while the Signatory Powers were to agree among them as to the maintenance in France, for a certain time, of a sufficient military force.

Although terming itself (Art. XVI.) 'a Treaty of 'Defensive Alliance,' the Chaumont compact was also one of Offensive, and was intended to meet later as well as present conditions. It was renewed, whenever France was deemed to show any disposition to pass beyond the territorial limits imposed upon her by the Allies. Thus, as Sorel says, the Alliance of Chaumont constituted the Executive of Europe, while the Treaties of Paris and Vienna formed her Charter. It was by no means a Holy Alliance; but it was an Alliance of Europe against the Power which had long disturbed her Balance.

¹ Bavaria was soon afterwards invited to join by Austria, who, together with Prussia, had significantly declined the Tsar's proposal to invite Württemberg. The two German Great Powers were alike anxious not to allow to any of the lesser German states, except Bavaria and Hanover, the right of declaring war or that of concluding alliances.

For the moment, however, this most important Treaty failed to produce unity in the Coalition with regard to the chief questions in dispute among its members—that of the overthrow of the Napoleonic dynasty, and that of the acceptance of Alexander's Polish design. The Tsar continued to quarrel with Schwarzenberg's plan of campaign, and was countenanced by King Frederick William III. in his suspicions of Metternich's policy. The news of Blücher's success at Laon (March 13th), however, helped to clear the prospect; and, about the same time, the final stage was reached in the peace negotiations with Napoleon, and in the proceedings of the Châtillon Congress.

On the day after the signing of the Treaty of Chaumont, the armistice negotiations at Lusigny had been finally broken off. But even now, and while the plenipotentiaries were still at Châtillon, Metternich had not relinquished the hope that Napoleon might still accept the terms of the Allies, and, so as to be able to 'save his face,' had sought through Count Paul Esterhazy to obtain a French 'counter-project' virtually, though not ostensibly, accepting those terms. But, in spite of the efforts of both Caulaincourt and Joseph Bonaparte (who had remained in Paris with the Empress-Regent Marie-Louise), Napoleon refused to give way. He held fast by the 'natural' frontiers of France, arguing that they included much less territory than had been appropriated by Russia, Austria, and Prussia through the Partitions of Poland, the secularisations in the Empire, and the annexation of Venice, taken together with Great Britain's acquisitions of Malta, and the Dutch

colonies in Africa and the West Indies. He, therefore, demanded a general settlement by a Congress, in which all the Powers at war with him should take part. All this really afforded no material for a 'counter-project'; but, when the close of the armistice (March 10th) was at hand, Napoleon, who still cherished hopes of successes in the field, began to haggle: he could not accept the proposals of the Allies, and in particular their demand of the surrender of Besançon, Belfort, and Huningen (a constant menace to Bâle), as their last word¹; but he might consent to the razing of the fortifications of Mainz, the cession of Dutch Brabant and the valley of the Rhine, besides Isle de France and Réunion.

END OF THE CHÂTILLON CONFERENCES

Even the futility, in existing circumstances, of such an offer could not yet exhaust Metternich's patience, or extinguish his desire for a peace with Napoleon, which might put a stop to the shifting, ambitious projects of Alexander. Of late, the Tsar, in lieu of speculations upon a Bernadotte candidature for the throne of France, had begun to favour schemes for bringing about the restoration of the Bourbons, which might reckon upon at least the moral support of Great Britain, but from which little or no advantage could accrue to Austria. Metternich, therefore, at this late hour, instructed Stadion to delay the closing of the Châtillon Conferences, even should Caulaincourt present no satisfactory reply to the demands of the Allies

¹ This demand he compared to that addressed by the Romans to the Carthaginians at the close of the Third (*quæry* Second) Punic War.

announced on February 7th. Thus, at a meeting of the plenipotentiaries held on March 10th, a long memorandum read by Caulaincourt, on the subject of these demands, but containing neither an acceptance nor a definite rejection of them, was received in silence, and an offer of certain lesser concessions and conditions made by him was passed over as palpably insufficient. He found himself in a position of almost unparalleled difficulty; for, personally anxious for peace, he had to deal, not only with the Allies—among whom, especially after the departure of Castlereagh, it seemed almost impossible to look for a continual *consensus*—but also with Napoleon himself, who wished for an *ultimatum*, but would not give way as to the main demand which it must contain. On March 13th, the Châtillon Congress met again; but, in reply to Stadion's insistence upon the acceptance or rejection of the Allies' demand, or the presentation of a satisfactory counter-project, Caulaincourt could only bring forward another tentative list of concessions. Further pressed, he, in another sitting held on the same day, asked leave to refer by courier to Napoleon; and, when told that the declaration of the dissolution of the Congress must now be placed on record and could only be reconsidered if fresh instructions arrived for him, he once more asked to be allowed to submit a counter-project. His request was granted, but only on condition that, if this counter-project were not found to harmonise with the draft treaty proposed on February 17th, the Congress should be at once declared dissolved. And any attempt at further delay by means of fresh offers from Napoleon

was frustrated by the request that any such should be at once communicated, not to the Congress, but to the Allied headquarters.

Thus thrown upon the resources of his own diplomacy, Caulaincourt now drafted, and proposed to the Congress, a counter-project which amounted to an elaborate preliminary treaty, but that, at the same time, bore no resemblance to the proposals of the Coalition. Of this draft it seems worth while to recall the chief stipulations, as showing how even a much reduced Napoleonic France was irreconcilable with the establishment of a fair Balance of Power in Europe. Napoleon renounced all titles implying a dominion or authority not derived from his French sovereignty, within the limits defined in the draft Preliminary Peace. These limits excluded the Illyrian provinces (which Napoleon had himself taken occasion to describe as the real matter at issue between Austria and himself) and all departments of the existing French empire beyond the Alps and Rhine, while prohibiting any interference on his part with the future independence of Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Holland (to an augmentation of whose territory he consented), or Italy. But the rule over the last-named he only renounced in favour of his stepson Eugène Beauharnais; while Lucca and Piombino were to be retained by his sister Elisa. On the other hand, the Pope was to recover his territories, with the exception of the principality of Benevento. In Switzerland, the faithful Berthier was to retain that of Neuchâtel; and, which was of more importance, the whole of the kingdom of Saxony was to remain under the sovereignty of

the sorely tried Frederick Augustus. There were some further provisions concerning Germany and Italy; as to the French colonies in the hands of Great Britain, they were all to fall back to France, except certain islands, for which a suitable compensation was to be settled. A special Congress in which, it should be noted, France was, as a matter of course, to take part, would determine the disposal of the European possessions ceded by her; and her soil was to be evacuated by all foreign troops, within from three to five days after the ratification of the Peace.

None of the Allied Powers could regard the provisions of Caulaincourt's draft as meeting its expectations. Austria looked for a very different settlement in Italy, where she hoped to recover Lombardy; Great Britain was consistently anxious as to the destinies of Belgium and Antwerp; and Prussia was intent upon the acquisition of Mainz and the left bank of the Rhine, unmentioned in the draft. Thus, more especially as the military operations of the Allies had of late been successful at several points, the reception given to it was not surprising. But, though the British plenipotentiaries were for breaking off negotiations at once, Stadion was adverse to taking this step without a formal statement of reasons. With this he was furnished by Metternich (March 17th) in the form of fresh instructions, purporting that the 'counter-project' was futile, as calculated to place France once more in the offensive position which had so often tempted her Government to revolutionary enterprise, and that its rejection should therefore be announced, together with a

statement that the Congress of Châtillon was now closed through the fault of the French Government, and that the Allies were not prepared to lay down their arms until it should have accepted the principles laid down by them. We pass over the proceedings which followed, and which comprised a declaration to the above effect, and a counter-declaration by Caulaincourt, whom Napoleon had still left without final instructions. On March 19th, 1814, the Congress of Châtillon came to an end.

LAST NEGOTIATIONS WITH NAPOLEON

Yet this phase of the peace negotiations was, even now, not quite over; for, in accordance with his announcement at the last sitting of the Congress, Caulaincourt remained a few days longer at Châtillon, encouraged by a confidential letter from Metternich; who was still in hopes of an arrangement with the Napoleonic dynasty. Once more, the Austrian statesman's action was determined both by the thought he took of the close connexion (which he had been himself largely instrumental in bringing about) between that dynasty and the House of Austria, and, even more, by his continued fear of the Polish policy of Alexander, against which the establishment of friendly relations with France still seemed the surest safeguard. Hardenberg appears to have attempted to divert Metternich from this line of thought; but, although the latter had an audience from Alexander on March 17th, nothing came of the attempt to create a better understanding between them. On the other hand, Metternich was much impressed by the overtures

of Baron de Vitrolles, an able former *émigré* in the confidence of Talleyrand and Dalberg, and employed by them to help prevent a Peace which would leave Napoleon on the throne. It was made evident that the Bourbons were prepared, if in power in France, not only to conclude peace on the conditions demanded by the Allies, but to effect the constitutional changes required by public opinion, besides providing, in order to satisfy Austria, for Marie-Louise. Conferences were held at the Allied headquarters with de Vitrolles, which indicated that the Powers might be about to support a movement in favour of the restoration of the Bourbons and of its inclusion among the conditions of peace, Napoleon being, so to speak, left out in the cold. Such a movement could hardly fail, now, to be approved of by Castlereagh, who had long felt the difficulty of resisting the current of popular opinion against 'Bonaparte' in England; nor could Metternich, in the end, afford to allow Austria to become isolated. As it chanced, a letter, dated March 19th, fell into his hands, in which Maret intimated to Caulaincourt that Napoleon intended to consider the military situation even after the ratification of the Peace—in other words, that, so far as he was concerned, the Peace would not necessarily end the War. A resumption of peace negotiations with him had, therefore, become an absurdity, unless, indeed, there was to be a total change in the present aspect of the campaign.

As it was, the defeat of Napoleon at Arcis-sur-Aube, followed by the juncture of Schwarzenberg and Blücher and the avowed retreat of Napoleon

42 THE PERIOD OF CONGRESSES—I.

upon Paris, announced the beginning of the end. The Allies resolved to march straight upon the capital, and, on the 23rd, indited their manifesto to the French nation. Gliding over the contradiction between the Châtillon and the Frankfort bases of negotiation, it held out to France the prospect of benefits which her present Government could have secured by a word—for the Allies had even been prepared to allow changes extending beyond the frontiers of 1792. For the rejection of these offers, and for the sufferings thereby entailed, the French nation must hold that Government responsible. Peace alone could heal the wounds inflicted by the spirit of universal conquest—and peace with its attendant blessings, not the dismemberment of France, was offered to her by the Allied Powers.

The French people responded to the appeal, and care for the national welfare prevailed over the traditions of Napoleonic glory. On March 28th, just before the actual issue of the Allied manifesto, Napoleon, more and more isolated in his refusal of peace, had offered to abdicate in favour of the regency of Marie-Louise, if this were guaranteed by Austria. But the Allies pressed on; and, on the 31st, Paris, which Napoleon could no longer protect, capitulated. Alexander and Frederick William entered the capital, while the Austrian Emperor, with both Metternich and Castlereagh, remained at Dijon. In face of a decision still undeclared, though Bordeaux had set the example by declaring in favour of the Bourbons, the moment had come for the managing hand of Talleyrand. He began by persuading Alexander

to accept that 'principle of legitimacy,' of which he was to make such dexterous use at the Congress of Vienna; but the Tsar still hesitated to pronounce for the Bourbons. Hereupon, a declaration was issued, stating that the Allied Sovereigns would no longer negotiate with Napoleon or any member of his family; and, after the Senate had nominated a small provisional Government, with Talleyrand at its head, this Government, in its turn, proclaimed the *déchéance* of the Napoleonic rule. Napoleon's desperate design, formed at Fontainebleau, of marching against Alexander at Paris, having broken down, the defection of Marmont sealed that of the army. Thus Napoleon's retention of the throne became impossible, even before the Allies had agreed with the provisional Government as to his successor. When, notwithstanding the objections of Castlereagh, the Allies had, in his absence, resolved to grant to Napoleon the island of Elba and the retention of the imperial title, the Senate voted the recall of King Louis XVIII. Thus the dynastic question had been allowed the precedence; and, without a clear *consensus* among the Allies, or a general manifestation of opinion on the part of the French nation, the Restoration was an accomplished fact.

Before the actual entry of King Louis XVIII. into his capital took place, an armistice was concluded (April 23rd) which suspended all military operations and provided for the evacuation of France by the Allies in proportion as she evacuated territory beyond her 'old' frontiers.¹ What France and her 'restored' King now alike desired

¹ As a matter of fact, the process occupied several months.

was the conclusion of peace, though there was no more agreement as to its accompaniments inside France than there was among the Allies as to its conditions outside. Alexander, whose personal relations with Louis XVIII. were of the coldest, would willingly have posed as arbiter both within and without the walls of Paris, intervening (unlike the representatives of the British Government) in the elaboration of the Constitutional *Charte*, in whose fundamental principles he had declared his concurrence as part of the pacific compact.

BASES OF PEACE WITH FRANCE

The bases of peace with France—the return to the ‘old’ frontiers—were now a settled matter; France had been reduced to her royal limits, and the work of the Revolution and Napoleon had been undone. Austria and Prussia had recovered a large proportion of the dominions they had possessed; but, as to the adjustment of their gains with those of Russia in particular, and those of lesser states also, and as to the satisfaction of Russia’s own claims, or again, as to the treatment of other territorial questions arising out of the downfall of the French Empire, the Allies had not yet agreed, or were likely to agree, while they stood, arms in hand, at Paris. A very notable attempt was, indeed, made by Hardenberg in his *Plan for the Future Arrangement of Europe*, dated April 29th, to settle at once the new map of the Continent, at least in so far as the claims of the two German Great Powers were concerned. The duchy of Warsaw was to be divided, on terms not unfavourable to them, with Russia; Prussia was further to have all Saxony and the Rhineland from Mainz to Wesel;

Austria the Breisgau, with further acquisitions—and a remote prospect of the recovery of Alsace.¹ But Alexander refused to listen to the plan; and, though Castlereagh was in favour of a strong Prussia, neither he nor Metternich fell in with it. The Allied Powers, accordingly, once more adopted the expedient to which they had already resorted since the formation of the present Coalition, and resolved to refer to a Congress—to be held at Vienna—the solution of all these problems. In the Peace, to be signed immediately at Paris, they proposed to deal only with provisions to which the immediate assent of France was assured. In the deliberations which were to follow at Vienna she was, it was now settled, not to be excluded from participating; but her representatives were not to make their appearance till after those of the Four Powers had previously reached their conclusions—in other words, her participation would be *pro formâ* only.

THE FIRST PEACE OF PARIS

Commissioners were now appointed by the Allies to discuss the actual delimitation question with Comte d'Osmond, the commissioner appointed by Louis XVIII. The Allies, now as before, expressed their willingness to consider an adjustment of the 'old' frontier, though denying that the prospect of an actual increase of population on this basis had been held out to France. Finally, part of Savoy, and certain places in Belgium, together with Saarlouis and Landau, were offered—450,000 souls in all. The 'old' limits of France

¹ This is suggested by Treitschke in his full account of Hardenberg's scheme.

necessarily comprehended her conquests and annexations under Richelieu, Mazarin, and Louis XIV.; but the phrase was not held to include her colonial possessions before 1792, though most of her colonies (except Tobago, Mauritius, and one or two others) were to be restored to her. As to a lesser matter, but one of very considerable importance, because of the effect the decision adopted would be certain to produce, objects of art taken by France out of conquered countries were to be retained by her. By virtue of a curious *quid pro quo*, France promised to support in principle the abolition of the Slave-trade, and to put an end to her own share in it within five years. Thus, peace—the First Peace of Paris—was concluded on May 30th, 1814, by means of identical Treaties with France, signed severally on behalf of the Four Great Powers in arms against her, together with Sweden and Portugal. Spain acceded on July 30th, making eight the total number of the Signatory Powers. Plenipotentiaries sent by these to Vienna within two months were, in a General Congress, to agree upon the arrangements for adding the requisite articles to those now approved. Nothing in the public text of the Treaties placed France on a footing at the Congress differing in any respect from that of the other Powers; and nothing at the Congress, whether previously approved or not by France, could, on the face of the Treaties, be definitively settled without, at least, her formal participation.

But to the public text of the Treaty of Peace were added certain separate and secret articles, which it is difficult not to describe as equivocal in what they included, and as disingenuous in

what they suppressed. The disposal of the territories renounced by France was to be regulated by the Congress on the bases settled by the Allied Powers among themselves, and in accordance with the following general provisions. Lombardy and Venetia were to belong to Austria; the kingdom of Sardinia, diminished by the transfer to France of part of Savoy, but augmented by Genoa, was to be re-established, and Switzerland reorganised; Belgium and Holland were to be united as a single kingdom; and the German territories on the left bank of the Rhine were to serve as compensations to Prussia and other German states. (It may be added that the arrangements indicated were, in the end, all carried out—the much-disputed city of Mainz being ultimately assigned to Hesse-Darmstadt, while its fortress was made Federal.) The future of Saxony, which Prussia had sought to anticipate by occupying it beforehand, was left uncertain, although the end of its existence as an independent kingdom was virtually assumed. Of Poland, with regard to whose future there was as yet no prospect of agreement, not a word was said; and the Constitution of the Germanic Confederation was necessarily reserved for consideration at Vienna.

Peace had been made, and the Allied armies gradually evacuated the soil of France. The whole imperial edifice erected by the great conqueror now caged in Elba had crumbled into the dust; the Sardinian Government had been re-established at Turin, and the Papal at Rome; the Bourbons were enthroned at Madrid, and the Austrians lords of Venice and Milan. Bernadotte had reached Paris in time to assure the future of his dynasty in the north; while Murat still reigned

at Naples. Thus, Europe seemed at last able to draw breath, and to dwell expectantly upon the vast opportunities which awaited the Congress of Vienna, and which threw into the shade the difficulties that must surround its efforts. These opportunities, it was hoped, would be far from exhausted by a redistribution, as equitable and generous as possible, of the territories reconquered from France, and by the consequent recovery of the indispensable Balance of Power among the European states. Surely, Europe would no longer be left without a permanent international tribunal commanding the respect of all the Powers; surely, they would be severally ready to enter into a systematic, though at first it might be only a partial, disarmament. In the individual states the guarantee still generally sought in representative institutions would be without exception set up; and on the sea, piracy would be extinguished and the obnoxious slave-trade suppressed by international consent. Only a fragment of these and additional expectations was to meet with fulfilment; and cynics like Gentz derided them from the first as visionary: the real task of the Congress, said the man who was to write its history in its protocols, was the division of the spoils taken from the vanquished. Nor did many of these ulterior problems so much as engage the actual attention of the Congress. Yet, even so, the limit of the task to which it addressed itself were anything but narrow; and it is not so much omission as perversion which marred the political achievements to be briefly described in the Second Part of this outline.

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