question of food or munitions. As the long struggle dragged on from phase to phase, and the financial distress of the land increased, the commanders of both sides were forced to fall back upon the looting of towns and villages, both for supply and to make up the arrears of their soldiers' pay. The soldiers became, therefore, more and more mere brigands living on the country, and the Thirty Years' War set up a tradition of looting as a legitimate operation in warfare and of outrage as a soldier's privilege that has tainted the good name of Germany right down to the Great War of 1914.

The earlier chapters of Defoe's *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, with its vivid description of the massacre and burning of Magdeburg, will give the reader a far better idea of the warfare of this time than any formal history. So harried was the land that the farmers ceased from cultivation, what snatch crops could be harvested were hidden away, and great crowds of starving women and children became camp followers of the armies, and supplied a thievish tail to the rougher plundering. At the close of the struggle all Germany was ruined and desolate. Central Europe did not fully recover from these robberies and devastations for a century.

Here we can but name Tilly and Wállenstein, the great plunder captains on the Habsburg side, and Gustavus Adolphus, the King of Sweden, the Lion of the North, the champion of the Protestants, whose dream was to make the Baltic Sea a "Swedish Lake." Gustavus Adolphus was killed in his decisive victory over Wallenstein at Lützen (1632), and Wallenstein was murdered in 1634.

In 1648 the princes and diplomatists gathered amidst the havoc they had made to patch up the affairs of Central Europe at the Peace of Westphalia. By that peace the power of the Emperor was reduced to a shadow, and the acquisition of Alsace brought France up to the Rhine. And one German prince, the Hohenzollern Elector of Brandenburg, acquired so much territory as to become the greatest German power next to the Emperor, a power that presently (1701) became the kingdom of Prussia.

The treaty of Westphalia also recognized two long accomplished facts, the separation from the empire and the complete independence of both Holland and Switzerland.

§ 5

The Splendours of Grand Monarchy in Europe.

We have opened this chapter with the stories of two countries, the Netherlands and Britain, in which the resistance of the

private citizen to this new type of monarchy, the Machiavellian monarchy, that was arising out of the moral collapse of Christendom, succeeded. But in France, Russia, in many parts of Germany and of Italy—Saxony and Tuscany e.g.—personal monarchy was not so restrained and overthrown; it established itself, indeed, as the ruling European system during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. And even in Holland and Britain the monarchy was recovering power during the eighteenth century.

(In Poland conditions were peculiar, and they will be dealt with in a later section.)

In France there had been no Magna Charta, and there was not quite so definite and effective a tradition of parliamentary rule. There was the same opposition of interests between the crown on the one hand and the landlords and merchants on the other, but the latter had no recognized gathering-place, and no dignified method of unity. They formed oppositions to the crown, they made leagues of resistance—such was the "Fronde," which was struggling against the young King Louis XIV and his great minister Mazarin, while Charles I was fighting for his life in England—but ultimately (1652), after a civil war, they were conclusively defeated; and while in England after the establishment of the Hanoverians the House of Lords and their subservient Commons ruled the country, in France, on the contrary, after 1652, the Court entirely dominated the aristocracy. Cardinal Mazarin was himself building upon a foundation that Cardinal Richelieu, the contemporary of King James I of England, had prepared for him.

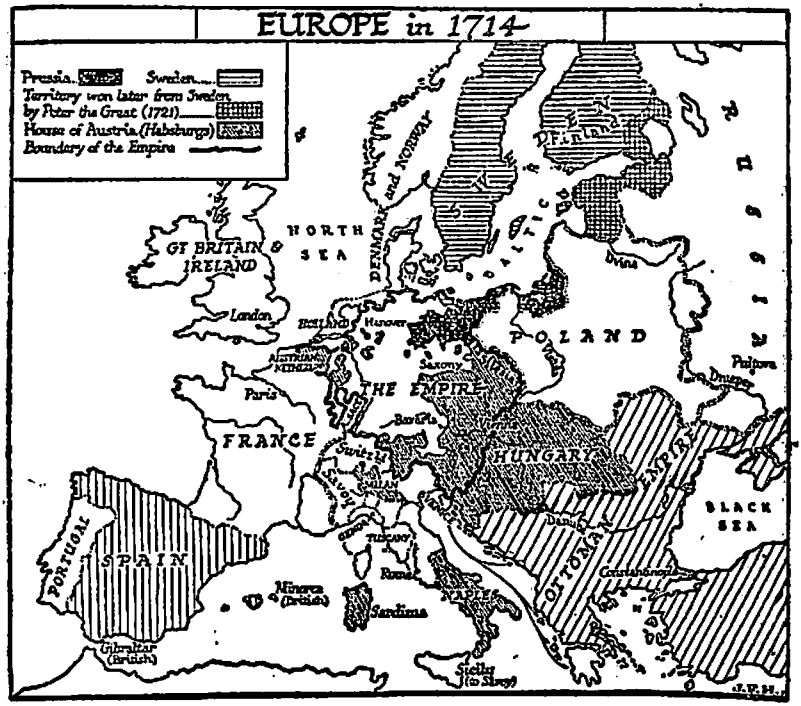
After the time of Mazarin we hear of no great French nobles unless they are at Court as Court servants and officials. They have been bought and tamed—but at a price, the price of throwing the burthen of taxation upon the voiceless mass of the common people. From many taxes both the clergy and the nobility—everyone indeed who bore a title—were exempt. In the end this injustice became intolerable, but for a while the French monarchy flourished like the Psalmist's green bay tree. By the opening of the eighteenth century English writers are already calling attention to the misery of the French lower classes and the comparative prosperity, *at that time*, of the English poor.

On such terms of unrighteousness, what we may call "Grand Monarchy" established itself in France. Louis XIV, styled the Grand Monarque, reigned for the unparalleled length of seventy-two years (1643–1715), and set a pattern for all the kings of Europe. At first he was guided by his Machiavellian minister, Cardinal Mazarin; after the death of the Cardinal he himself, in his own proper person, became the ideal "Prince." He was, within his limitations, an exceptionally capable king; his ambition was stronger than his baser passions, and he guided his country towards bankruptcy through the complication of a spirited foreign policy with an elaborate dignity that still exhorts our admiration. His immediate desire was to consolidate and extend France to the Rhine and Pyrenees, and to absorb the Spanish Netherlands; his remoter view saw the French kings as the possible successors of Charlemagne in a recast Holy Roman Empire.

He made bribery a State method almost more important than warfare. Charles II of England was in his pay, and so were most of the Polish nobility, presently to be described. His money, or rather the money of the tax-paying classes in France, went everywhere. But his prevailing occupation was splendour. His great palace at Versailles, with its salons, its corridors, its mirrors, its terraces and fountains and parks and prospects, was the envy and admiration of the world.

He provoked a universal imitation. Every king and princelet in Europe was building his own Versailles as much beyond his means as his subjects and credits would permit. Everywhere the nobility rebuilt or extended their châteaux to the new pattern. A great industry of beautiful and elaborate fabrics and furnishings developed. The luxurious arts flourished everywhere; sculpture in alabaster, faience, gilt wood-work, metal work, stamped leather, much music, magnificent painting,

beautiful printing and bindings, fine cookery, fine vintages. Amidst the mirrors and fine furniture went a strange race of "gentlemen" in vast powdered wigs, silks and laces, poised upon high red heels, supported by amazing canes; and still more wonderful "ladies," under towers of powdered hair and wearing vast expansions of silk and satin sustained on wire.



Through it all postured the great Louis, the sun of his world, unaware of the meagre and sulky and bitter faces that watched him from those lower darknesses to which his sunshine did not penetrate.

We cannot give here at any length the story of the wars and doings of this monarch. In many ways Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XIV* is still the best and most wholesome account. He created a French navy fit to face the English and Dutch; a very considerable achievement. But because his intelligence did not rise above the lure of that Fata Morgana, that crack in the political wits of Europe, the dream of a world-wide Holy

Roman Empire, he drifted in his later years to the propitiation of the Papacy, which had hitherto been hostile to him. He set himself against those spirits of independence and disunion, the Protestant Princes, and he made war against Protestantism in France. Great numbers of his most sober and valuable subjects were driven abroad by his religious persecutions, taking arts and industries with them. The English silk manufacture, for instance, was founded by French Protestants. Under his rule were carried out the "dragonnades," a peculiarly malignant and effectual form of persecution. Rough soldiers were quartered in the houses of the Protestants, and were free to disorder the life of their hosts and insult their womankind as they thought fit. Men yielded to that sort of pressure who would not have yielded to rack and fire.

The education of the next generation of Protestants was broken up, and the parents had to give Catholic instruction or none. They gave it, no doubt, with a sneer and an intonation that destroyed all faith in it. While more tolerant countries became mainly sincerely Catholic or sincerely Protestant, the persecuting countries, like France and Spain and Italy, so destroyed honest Protestant teaching that these people became mainly Catholic believers or Catholic atheists, ready to break out into blank atheism whenever the opportunity offered. The next reign, that of Louis XV, was the age of that supreme mocker Voltaire (1694–1778), an age in which everybody in French society conformed to the Roman Church and hardly anyone believed in it.

It was part—and an excellent part—of the pose of Grand Monarchy to patronize literature and the sciences. Louis XIV set up an academy of sciences in rivalry with the English Royal Society of Charles II and the similar association at Florence. He decorated his Court with poets, playwrights, philosophers, and scientific men. If the scientific process got little inspiration from this patronage it did at any rate acquire resources for experiment and publication, and a certain prestige in the eyes of the vulgar.

The literary activities of France and England set the key of most of the literary activities of Europe during this period of big and little Grand Monarchs, of great country houses and of growing commercial powers. French conditions were much more monarchist than the English, more centralized and uniform. The French writers lacked the great tradition of such a free and undisciplined spirit as Shakespeare, French intellectual life centred upon the Court and was more conscious of control than

the English; it never produced such literary "common men" as the English Bunyan, and in the seventeenth century it had no such release of the dissentient spirit as the Commonweal, to liberate a Milton. Its disposition was much more towards correctitude and limitation, it was more completely under the sway of the schoolmaster and the scholarly critic. It subordinated substance to style. The organization of an Academy still further restrained its already excessive restraints. As a consequence of these differences, this French literature before the nineteenth century was saturated with literary self-consciousness, and seems to have been written rather in the spirit of a good scholar who fears bad marks than in that of a man seeking frank expression. It is a literature of cold, correct and empty masterpieces, tragedies, comedies, romances and critical dissertations extraordinarily devoid of vitality. Eminent among the practitioners of dramatic correctitude were Corneille (1606–1684) and Racine (1639–1699). Molière (1622–73) also triumphed over his period with comedies that some authorities esteem the best in the world. Almost the only vein of easy, vivid and interesting reading to be found among this genteel and stately mental furniture of the French Grand Monarchy is to be found in the gossiping and scandalous memoirs of the time. There is that, and there is some lively social and political controversy.

Some of the brightest and best writing in French during this time was done out of France by Frenchmen in exile and in revolt. Descartes (1596–1650), the greatest of French philosophers, lived for most of his life in the comparative security of Holland. He is the central and dominant figure of a constellation of speculative minds which were active in undermining, modifying and dwarfing the genteel Christianity of their age. Towering above all these other exiles and above all other contemporary European writers is the great figure of Voltaire, of whose mental attitude we shall speak later. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), another outcast spirit, with his sentimental attack on formal morals and his sentimental idealization of nature and freedom, stands out as the master novelist of his time and country. Of him, also, we shall have more to say.

The English literature of the seventeenth century reflected the less stable and centralized quality of English affairs and had more vigour and less polish than the French. The English Court and capital had not swallowed up the national life as the French had done. Against Descartes and his school one may

put Bacon, of whom we have already told in our account of the scientific renaissance, and Hobbes and Locke. Milton (1608–1674) wore a mixed garment of Greek and Latin learning, Italian culture and Puritanical theology, with a glory all his own. There was a considerable free literature outside the range of classical influence finding perhaps its most characteristic expression in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). The still underrated creative work of Defoe (1659–1731) again, is manifestly addressed to a public innocent of the accomplishments and affectations of the academic world. His *Robinson Crusoe* is among the great inventions of literature. His *Moll Flanders* is an admirable study of manners, and both that and his fictitious developments of history are technically far in advance of any of his contemporaries. Nearly on a level with him was Fielding, the London magistrate, the author of *Tom Jones*. Samuel Richardson, the linendraper who wrote *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, was a third great figure among the living realities of English literature in the eighteenth century, the literature that did not trouble to be literary, and with these three it is the custom of criticism to associate the name of the far inferior Smollett. With these names and with that of J. J. Rousseau, the novel, the pseudo-real account of ways of living, of going about in the world, of the encounter with moral problems, comes back into importance. It disappeared in the decline of the Roman Empire. Its return marks the release of new, indeterminate sorts of people curious about life and conduct, people of some leisure, people anxious to supplement their own experience by stories of kindred adventures. Life has become less urgent and more interesting for them.

Here perhaps, before we end this literary parenthesis, we may note also as significant in English literature the graceful emptiness of Addison (1672–1719) and the lumpish lovableness of Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), the compiler of the first English dictionary. Of his actual writings scarcely anything except a few short lives of the poets remains readable, but his sayings and oddities have been preserved for all time in the inimitable biography of Boswell. Alexander Pope (1688–1744), classical in intention and French in spirit, translated Homer and transmuted a broadly Deistic philosophy into neatly polished verse. The most powerful writing of this age of polite and secondary men in England as in France came from a spirit in exasperated conflict with the current order, and, indeed, with the whole order of the world, Swift (1667–1745), the author of *Gulliver's Travels*. Laurence Sterne (1713–1768), the rather

disreputable clergyman who wrote *Tristram Shandy* and taught later novelists a hundred turns and devices, drew his vitality from the greatness of the pre-classical Frenchman Rabelais. Gibbon, the historian, we shall quote in a subsequent section, and then we will animadvert again upon the peculiar mental limitations of this gentlemanly age.

The Grand Monarque died in 1715. Louis XV was his great-grandson and an incompetent imitator of his predecessor's magnificence. He posed as a king, but his ruling passion was that common obsession of our kind, the pursuit of women, tempered by a superstitious fear of hell. How such women as the Duchess of Châteauroux, Madame de Pompadour, and Madame du Barry dominated the pleasures of the king, and how wars and alliances were made, provinces devastated, thousands of people killed, because of the vanities and spites of these creatures, and how all the public life of France and Europe was tainted with intrigue and prostitution and imposture because of them, the reader must learn from the memoirs of the time. The spirited foreign policy went on steadily under Louis XV towards its final smash.

In 1774 this Louis, Louis the Well-Beloved, as his flatterers called him, died of smallpox, and was succeeded by his grandson Louis XVI (1774–93), a dull, well-meaning man, an excellent shot, and an amateur locksmith of some ingenuity. Of how he came to follow Charles I to the scaffold we shall tell in a later section. Our present concern is with Grand Monarchy in the days of its glory.

Among the chief practitioners of Grand Monarchy outside France we may note first the Prussian kings, Frederick William I (1713–40), and his son and successor, Frederick II, Frederick the Great (1740–86). The story of the slow rise of the Hohenzollern family, which ruled the kingdom of Prussia, from inconspicuous beginnings is too tedious and unimportant for us to follow here. It is a story of luck and violence, of bold claims and sudden betrayals. It is told with great appreciation in Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*. By the eighteenth century the Prussian kingdom was important enough to threaten the empire; it had a strong, well-drilled army, and its king was an attentive and worthy student of Machiavelli. Frederick the Great perfected his Versailles at Potsdam. There the park of Sans Souci, with its fountains, avenues, statuary, aped its model; there, also, was the New Palace, a vast brick building erected at enormous expense, the Orangery in the Italian style, with a collection of pictures, a Marble Palace, and so on. Frederick carried culture

to the pitch of authorship, and corresponded with and entertained Voltaire, to their mutual exasperation.

The Austrian dominions were kept too busy between the hammer of the French and the anvil of the Turks to develop the real Grand Monarch style until the reign of Maria-Theresa (who, being a woman, did not bear the title of Empress) (1740–80). Joseph II, who was Emperor from 1765–90, succeeded to her palaces in 1780.

With Peter the Great (1682–1725) the empire of Muscovy broke away from her Tartar traditions and entered the sphere of French attraction. Peter shaved the Oriental beards of his nobles and introduced Western costume. These were but the outward and visible symbols of his westering tendencies. To release himself from the Asiatic feeling and traditions of Moscow, which, like Peking has a sacred inner city, the Kremlin, he built himself a new capital, Petrograd, upon the swamp of the Neva. And of course he built his Versailles, the Peterhof, about eighteen miles from this new Paris, employing a French architect and having a terrace, fountains, cascades, picture gallery, park, and all the recognized features. His more distinguished successors were Elizabeth (1741–62) and Catherine the Great, a German princess, who, after obtaining the crown in sound Oriental fashion through the murder of her husband, the legitimate Tsar, reverted to advanced Western ideals and ruled with great vigour from 1762 to 1796. She set up an academy, and corresponded with Voltaire. And she lived to witness the end of the system of Grand Monarchy in Europe and the execution of Louis XVI.

We cannot even catalogue here the minor Grand Monarchs of the time in Florence (Tuscany) and Savoy and Saxony and Denmark and Sweden. Versailles, under a score of names, is starred in every volume of Baedeker, and the tourist gapes in their palaces. Nor can we deal with the war of the Spanish Succession. Spain, overstrained by the imperial enterprises of Charles V and Philip II, and enfeebled by a bigoted persecution of Protestants, Moslems, and Jews, was throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sinking down from her temporary importance in European affairs to the level of a secondary power again.

These European monarchs ruled their kingdoms as their noblemen ruled their estates: they plotted against one another, they were politic and far-seeing in an unreal fashion, they made wars, they spent the substance of Europe upon absurd "policies" of aggression and resistance. At last there burst upon them a great storm out of the depths. That storm, the First French

Revolution, the indignation of the common man in Europe, took their system unawares. It was but the opening outbreak of a great cycle of political and social storms that still continues, that will perhaps continue until every vestige of nationalist monarchy has been swept out of the world and the skies clear again for the great peace of the federation of mankind.

§ 6

Music in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a period of vigorous progress in music. The intellectual instrument had been elaborated; the major and minor scales with their fixed succession of notes, their adaptability to modulation and their possibilities of harmonic colour, were established. It was possible to define a musical intention clearly, to regulate the co-operation of diverse instruments with great exactitude. And social conditions, the growing towns, the Courts, the country houses were adding new fields of musical possibility to the older range of the church choirs. Masques and pageants had been popular in the sixteenth century; they gave opportunities for elaborate music; and with the seventeenth came a great development to operas and oratorios.

In Italy appeared the "Nuove Musiche." Lully (1635–1687), says Sir W. H. Hadow, "is the most important historically, not only for the dramatic power of his melody but for the close accuracy of his declamation." Beside him stands the Italian Monteverde. Music began to work upon a large scale in this period.

"The sixteenth-century Masses were written for the church choir, the sixteenth-century madrigals for a party of friends round the supper-table; only towards its end do the lutenists and the virginalists begin to introduce into executive art the conception of the virtuoso. . . . The vast improvement in organ building brought with it a succession of great performers: Bull and Philips the Englishmen, Sweelinck the Netherlander, Frescobaldi at Rome, Froberger in Vienna, Buxtehude in Lübeck, whom Bach travelled on foot to hear. . . . Along with this goes the development of virginal music. . . . Not less momentous was the arrival, and the tardy acceptance, of the violin and its family. Dating from Tieffenbrücker and the Amatis in the first half of the sixteenth century, it took nearly a hundred years to make its way into public favour; as late as 1676 Mace, the lutenist, can still inveigh against the 'scoulding violins,'

and regret the quieter and more even tone of its ancestor the viol. But its wider compass, its greater agility and its more poignant power of expression made themselves felt in the long run. . . . In Italy, its natural home, though clumsily held and clumsily played, it came to be recognized as the only instrument which could rival the human voice."[1]

For a time, we are told, the display and adoration of the vocalist in Italian opera retarded musical development; the seventeenth-century singers, and especially the male sopranos, sustained almost as vulgar and terrible a fame as the modern film star, yet the period produced the abundant and beautiful music of Alessandro Scarlatti (1659–1725), the precursor of Mozart. In England a great outburst of musical activity followed a phase of quiescence during the Commonweal and culminated in Purcell (1658–1695). In Germany the little Courts and town-bands provided numberless centres of musical stimulation, and in 1685 in Saxony J. S. Bach and Handel were born, to carry German music to a pitch of supremacy it was to retain for a century and a half. "Of all composers," says Sir W. H. Hadow, "before the Viennese period they are the most closely related to our own day, their voices sound in our ears with the most familiar accents."

Palestrina, who marked a previous culmination in music, is by comparison, a being in a different world. He was the crowning master of choral music before the days of instrumental achievement. Following upon the names of Bach and Handel came others in a constellation; Haydn (1732–1809), Mozart (1756–1791), Beethoven (1770–1827), stand out among the brightest stars. The great stream of modern music was now flowing wide and deep. And still flows. Here we can but name composers and further on give, in a brief paragraph or so, a few compact generalizations about the music of the nineteenth century and our own days. At the time of its making this seventeenth and eighteenth-century music was the privilege of a small cultivated world—people in Courts, people in provincial towns and country houses who could organize performances, people in cities large enough for opera-houses and concert-rooms. The peasant and the worker of Western Europe had less and less music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries while these new forms were developing. Folk singing had declined and seemed likely to be forgotten. A few popular songs, a few hymns, was all the musical life left to the generality of people. Religious revivals in those days probably

[1] Sir W. H. Hadow, *Music*.

owed something of their impetus to their release of the pent-up singing impulse. It is only to-day, with a vast development of the mechanical methods of musical reproduction that music, modernized, evolved and exalted, returns into the common life, and Bach and Beethoven become a part of the general culture of mankind.

§ 7

Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Painting.

The painting and architecture of this period, like its music, reflect the social conditions of the time. It is a time of fragmentation for ideas and for power, and no longer do considerations of object and dignity dominate pictorial art. Religious subjects are relegated to a secondary place, and where they are dealt with they are dealt with as incidents in a narrative and not as great spectacular facts. Allegory and symbolic figures decline. The painter paints for the sake of the vision and neither for the idea nor the fact. The picture of reality replaces the heroic or devotional picture just as the novel replaces the epic and the fantastic romance. The two supreme masters in the painting of the seventeenth century are Velazquez (1599–1660) and Rembrandt (1606–1669). To them it would seem all life was equal except in so far as it gave them more or less scope for the realization of beauty, in atmosphere, in light, in substance. Velazquez at the decaying Court of Spain painted popes and kings without flattery, and dwarfs and cripples without contempt. Minute, analytical and documentary drawing of objects gives place in the work of these, the first of the moderns, to a broad rendering of effect, to a concentration upon unity of impression at the cost of all secondary considerations. Hitherto, in the more centralized life of the past, the picture had been a witness, an exhortation, a flatterer, an embellishment; now, in a great many cases, it became a thing in itself, existing for the sake of itself. Pictures were hung up as pictures—collected into galleries. Landscape developed vigorously, also genre painting. The nude was painted pleasantly and excitingly, and in France Watteau, Fragonard and others delighted and flattered the gentlefolk with a delicate apotheosis of the facts of country life. One realizes in these things the evidences of a growing community of secure, prosperous and quite fine-spirited people, appreciative of life and a little detached from either its magnificences or its sufferings.

The Elizabethan period in England had no plastic enthusiasms

to match its literary and musical activities. It imported its painters and architects. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the accumulating wealth and prosperity of what had hitherto been a very marginal country in European civilization created conditions favourable to artistic effort, and in the eighteenth century such English painters as Reynolds (1723–1792), Gainsborough (1727–1788) and Romney could challenge comparison with any contemporary effort.

This period of the monarchies and gentlefolk was also extremely favourable to the development of certain types of architecture. Processes already active in the sixteenth century were going on now with enhanced vigour. Everywhere monarchs were building and rebuilding palaces, and the nobles and gentry were demolishing their castles and replacing them with fine houses. The town house was being conceived upon an ampler scale. Ecclesiastical architecture had waned; municipal effort was relatively less important: it is the large prosperous individual in this as in all things who sets the key of the period. In England the burning of a large part of London in the Great Fire of 1666 gave peculiar opportunity to Sir Christopher Wren, and his Saint Paul's Cathedral and his London churches mark a culminating phase in the history of British architecture. Drawings were sent by him to America for various country houses erected there, and his peculiar genius stamped itself also upon early American design. Inigo Jones was a second great figure among the English architects of the early seventeenth century, and his Banqueting Hall—it was to have been part of an unfinished palace in Whitehall—makes his work familiar to every visitor to London. Both these men, and indeed all English, French and German architects of this period, were working upon the still living and developing lines of the Italian Renaissance, and many of the best buildings of these countries were the work of Italians. Gradually, as the eighteenth century drew to its end, the free and natural development of Renaissance architecture was checked by a wave of classical pedantry. The gradual coagulation of classical studies in the schools of Western Europe had its correlative in a growing tendency to imitate Greek and Roman models. What had once been a stimulant was now becoming a traditional and stupefying mental drug. Banks, churches, museums, were dressed up as Athenian temples, and even terraces of houses were subjected to the colonnade. But the worst excesses of this deadening tendency were in the nineteenth century and beyond the limits of our present period.

§ 8

The Growth of the Idea of Great Powers.

We have seen how the idea of a world-rule and a community of mankind first came into human affairs, and we have traced how the failure of the Christian churches to sustain and establish those conceptions of its founder, led to a moral collapse in political affairs, and a reversion to egotism and want of faith. We have seen how Machiavellian monarchy set itself up against the spirit of brotherhood in Christendom and how Machiavellian monarchy developed throughout a large part of Europe into the Grand Monarchies and Parliamentary Monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But the mind and imagination of man is incessantly active, and beneath the sway of the grand monarchs, a complex of notions and traditions was being woven as a net is woven, to catch and entangle men's minds, the conception of international politics not as a matter of dealings between princes but as a matter of dealings between a kind of immortal Beings, the Powers. The Princes came and went; a Louis XIV would be followed by a petticoat-hunting Louis XV, and he again by that dull-witted amateur locksmith, Louis XVI. Peter the Great gave place to a succession of empresses; the chief continuity of the Habsburgs after Charles V, either in Austria or Spain, was a continuity of thick lips, clumsy chins, and superstition; the amiable scoundrelism of a Charles II would make a mock of his own pretensions. But what remained much more steadfast were the secretariats of the foreign ministries and the ideas of people who wrote of State concerns. The ministers maintained a continuity of policy during the "off days" of their monarchs, and between one monarch and another.

So we find that the prince gradually became less important in men's minds than the "Power" of which he was the head. We begin to read less and less of the schemes and ambitions of King This or That, and more of the "Designs of France" or the "Ambitions of Prussia." In an age when religious faith was declining, we find men displaying a new and vivid belief in the reality of these personifications. These vast vague phantoms, the "Powers," crept insensibly into European political thought, until in the later eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries they dominated it entirely. To this day they dominate it. European life remained nominally Christian, but to worship one God in spirit and in truth is to belong to one community with all one's fellow worshippers. In practical reality Europe does not do this, she has given herself up altogether to the worship

of this strange State mythology. To these sovereign deities, to the unity of "Italy," to the hegemony of "Prussia," to the glory of "France," and the destinies of "Russia," she has sacrificed many generations of possible unity, peace, and prosperity and the lives of millions of men.

To regard a tribe or a state as a sort of personality is a very old disposition of the human mind. The Bible abounds in such personifications. Judah, Edom, Moab, Assyria figure in the Hebrew Scriptures as if they were individuals; it is sometimes impossible to say whether the Hebrew writer is dealing with a person or with a nation. It is manifestly a primitive and natural tendency. But in the case of modern Europe it is a retrocession. Europe, under the idea of Christendom, had gone far towards unification. And while such tribal persons as "Israel" or "Tyre" did represent a certain community of blood, a certain uniformity of type, and a homogeneity of interest, the European powers which arose in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were entirely fictitious unities. Russia was in truth an assembly of the most incongruous elements, Cossacks, Tartars, Ukrainians, Muscovites, and, after the time of Peter, Esthonians and Lithuanians; the France of Louis XV comprehended German Alsace and freshly assimilated regions of Burgundy; it was a prison of suppressed Huguenots and a sweating-house for peasants. In "Britain," England carried on her back the Hanoverian dominions in Germany, Scotland, the profoundly alien Welsh and the hostile and Catholic Irish. Such powers as Sweden, Prussia, and still more so Poland and Austria, if we watch them in a series of historical maps, contract, expand, thrust out extensions, and wander over the map of Europe as amœbæ do under the microscope. . . .

If we consider the psychology of international relationship as we see it manifested in the world about us, and as it is shown by the development of the "Power" idea in modern Europe, we shall realize certain historically very important facts about the nature of man. Aristotle said that man is a political animal, but in our modern sense of the word politics, which now covers world-politics, he is nothing of the sort. He has still the instincts of the family tribe, and beyond that he has a disposition to attach himself and his family to something larger, to a tribe, a city, a nation, or a state. But that disposition, left to itself, is a vague and very uncritical disposition. If anything, he is inclined to fear and dislike criticism of this something larger that encloses his life and to which he has given himself, and to avoid such criticism. Perhaps he has a subconscious fear of the isolation

that may ensue if the system is broken or discredited. He takes the *milieu* in which he finds himself for granted; he accepts his city or his government, just as he accepts the nose or the digestion which fortune has bestowed upon him. But men's loyalties, the sides they take in political things, are not innate, they are educational results. For most men their education in these matters is the silent, continuous education of things about them. Men find themselves a part of Merry England or Holy Russia; they grow up into these devotions; they accept them as a part of their nature.

It is only slowly that the world is beginning to realize how profoundly the tacit education of circumstances can be supplemented, modified, or corrected by positive teaching, by literature, discussion, and properly criticized experience. The real life of the ordinary man is his everyday life, his little circle of affections, fears, hungers, lusts, and imaginative impulses. It is only when his attention is directed to political affairs as something vitally affecting this personal circle, that he brings his reluctant mind to bear upon them. It is scarcely too much to say that the ordinary man thinks as little about political matters as he can, and stops thinking about them as soon as possible. It is still only very curious and exceptional minds, or minds that have by example or good education acquired the scientific habit of wanting to know *why*, or minds shocked and distressed by some public catastrophe and roused to wide apprehensions of danger, that will not accept governments and institutions, however preposterous, that do not directly annoy them, as satisfactory. The ordinary human being, until he is so aroused, will acquiesce in any collective activities that are going on in this world in which he finds himself, and any phrasing or symbolization that meets his vague need for something greater to which his personal affairs, his individual circle, can be anchored.

If we keep these manifest limitations of our nature in mind, it no longer becomes a mystery how, as the idea of Christianity as a world brotherhood of men sank into discredit because of its fatal entanglement with priestcraft and the Papacy on the one hand and with the authority of princes on the other, and the age of faith passed into our present age of doubt and disbelief, men shifted the reference of their lives from the kingdom of God and the brotherhood of mankind to these apparently more living realities, France and England, Holy Russia, Spain, Prussia, which were at least embodied in active Courts, which maintained laws, exerted power through armies and navies, waved flags

with a compelling solemnity and were self-assertive and insatiably greedy in an entirely human and understandable fashion.

Certainly such men as Cardinal Richelieu and Cardinal Mazarin thought of themselves as serving greater ends than their own or their monarch's; they served the quasi-divine France of their imaginations. And as certainly these habits of mind percolated down from them to their subordinates and to the general body of the population. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the general population of Europe was religious and only vaguely patriotic; by the nineteenth it had become wholly patriotic. In a crowded English or French or German railway carriage of the later nineteenth century it would have aroused far less hostility to have jeered at God than to have jeered at one of those strange beings, England or France or Germany. To these things men's minds clung, and they clung to them because in all the world there appeared nothing else so satisfying to cling to. They were the real and living gods of Europe.

This idealization of governments and foreign offices, this mythology of "Powers" and their loves and hates and conflicts, has so obsessed the imaginations of Europe and Western Asia as to provide it with its "forms of thought." Nearly all the histories, nearly all the political literature of the last two centuries in Europe, have been written in its phraseology. Yet a time is coming when a clearer-sighted generation will read with perplexity how in the community of Western Europe, consisting everywhere of very slight variations of a common racial mixture of Nordic and Iberian peoples and immigrant Semitic and Mongolian elements, speaking nearly everywhere modifications of the same Aryan speech, having a common past in the Roman Empire, common religious forms, common social usages, and a common art and science, and intermarrying so freely that no one could tell with certainty the "nationality" of any of his great-grandchildren, men could be moved to the wildest excitement upon the question of the ascendancy of "France," the rise and unification of "Germany," the rival claims of "Russia" and "Greece" to possess Constantinople. These conflicts will seem then as reasonless and insane as those dead, now incomprehensible feuds of the "greens" and "blues" that once filled the streets of Byzantium with shouting and bloodshed.

Tremendously as these phantoms, the Powers, rule our minds and lives to-day, they are, as this history shows clearly, things only of the last few centuries, a mere hour, an incidental phase, in the vast deliberate history of our kind. They mark a phase of relapse, a backwater, as the rise of Machiavellian monarchy

marks a backwater; they are part of the same eddy of faltering faith, in a process altogether greater and altogether different in its general tendency, the process of the moral and intellectual reunion of mankind. For a time men have relapsed upon these national or imperial gods of theirs; it is but for a time. The idea of the world-State, the universal kingdom of righteousness of which every living soul shall be a citizen, was already in the world two thousand years ago, never more to leave it. Men know that it is present even when they refuse to recognize it. In the writings and talk of men about international affairs to-day in the current discussions of historians and political journalists, there is an effect of drunken men growing sober, and terribly afraid of growing sober. They still talk loudly of their "love" for France, of their "hatred" of Germany, of the "traditional ascendancy of Britain at sea," and so on and so on, like those who sing of their cups in spite of the steadfast onset of sobriety and a headache. These are dead gods they serve. By sea or land men want no Powers ascendant, but only law and service. That silent unavoidable challenge is in all our minds like dawn breaking slowly, shining between the shutters of a disordered room.

§ 9

The Crowned Republic of Poland and its Fate.

The seventeenth century in Europe was the century of Louis XIV; he and French ascendancy and Versailles are the central motif of the story. The eighteenth century was equally the century of the "rise of Prussia as a great power," and the chief figure in the story is Frederick II, Frederick the Great. Interwoven with his history is the story of Poland.

The condition of affairs in Poland was peculiar. Unlike its three neighbours Prussia, Russia, and the Austro-Hungarian monarchy of the Habsburgs, Poland had not developed a Grand Monarchy. Its system of government may be best described as republican with a king, an elected life-president. Each king was separately elected. It was in fact rather more republican than Britain, but its republicanism was more aristocratic in form. Poland had little trade and few manufactures; she was agricultural and still with great areas of grazing, forest, and waste; she was a poor country, and her landowners were poor aristocrats. The mass of her population was a downtrodden and savagely ignorant peasantry, and she also harboured great masses of very poor Jews. She had remained Catholic. She

was, so to speak, a poor Catholic inland Britain, entirely surrounded by enemies instead of by the sea. She had no definite boundaries at all, neither sea nor mountain. And it added to her misfortunes that some of her elected kings had been brilliant and aggressive rulers. Eastward her power extended weakly into regions inhabited almost entirely by Russians; westward she overlapped a German subject population.

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Because she had no great trade, she had no great towns to compare with those of Western Europe, and no vigorous universities to hold her mind together. Her noble class lived on their estates, without much intellectual intercourse. They were patriotic, they had an aristocratic sense of freedom—which was entirely compatible with the systematic impoverishment of their serfs—but their patriotism and freedom were incapable of effective co-operation. While warfare was a matter of levies of men and horses, Poland was a comparatively strong power; but it was quite unable to keep pace with the development of military art that was making standing forces of professional soldiers the necessary weapon in warfare. Yet, divided and disabled as she was, she could yet count

some notable victories to her credit. The last Turkish attack upon Vienna (1683) was defeated by the Polish cavalry under King John Sobiesky, King John III. (This same Sobiesky, before he was elected king, had been in the pay of Louis XIV, and had also fought for the Swedes against his native country.) Needless to say, this weak aristocratic republic, with its recurrent royal elections, invited aggression from all three of its neighbours. "Foreign money," and every sort of exterior interference came into the country at each election. And like the Greeks of old, every disgruntled Polish patriot flew off to some foreign enemy to wreak his indignation upon his ungrateful country.

Even when the King of Poland was elected, he had very little power because of the mutual jealousy of the nobles. Like the English peers, they preferred a foreigner, and for much the same reason, because he had no roots of power in the land; but, unlike the British, their own government had not the solidarity which the periodic assembling of Parliament in London, the "coming up to town," gave the British peers. In London there was "Society," a continuous intermingling of influential persons and ideas. Poland had no London and no

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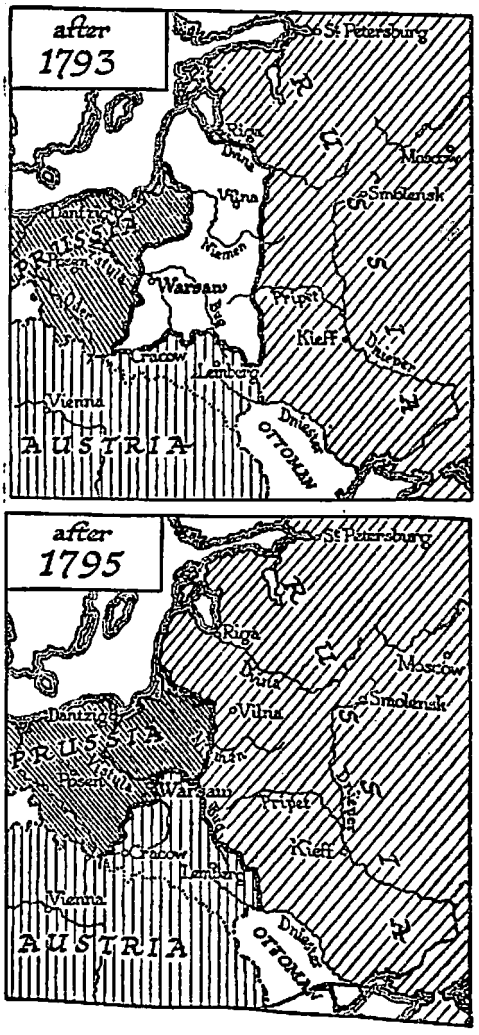

"Society." So, practically, Poland had no central government at all. The King of Poland could not make war nor peace, levy a tax nor alter the law, without the consent of the Diet, and *any single member of the Diet had the power of putting a veto upon any proposal before it.* He had merely to rise and say, "I disapprove," and the matter dropped. He could even carry his free veto, his *liberum veto*, further. He could object to the assembly of the Diet, and the Diet was thereby dissolved. Poland was not simply a crowned aristocratic republic like the British, it was a paralysed crowned aristocratic republic.

To Frederick the Great, the existence of Poland was particularly provocative because of the way in which an arm of Poland reached out to the Baltic at Dantzig and separated his ancestral dominions in East Prussia from his territories within the empire. It was he who incited Catherine the Second of Russia and Maria Theresa of Austria, whose respect he had earned by depriving her of Silesia, to a joint attack upon Poland.

Let four maps of Poland tell the tale.

After this first outrage of 1772 Poland underwent a great change of heart. Poland was, indeed, born as a nation on the eve of her dissolution. There was a hasty but very considerable development of education, literature, and art; historians and poets sprang up, and the impossible constitution that had made Poland impotent was swept aside. The free veto was abolished, the crown was made hereditary to save Poland from the foreign intrigues that attended every election, and a Parliament in imitation of the British was set up. There were, however, lovers of the old order in Poland who resented these necessary changes, and these obstructives were naturally supported by Prussia and Russia, who wanted no Polish revival. Came the second partition, and, after a fierce patriotic struggle that began in the region annexed by Prussia and found a leader and national hero in Kosciusko, the final obliteration of Poland from the map. So for a time ended this Parliamentary threat to Grand Monarchy in Eastern Europe. But the patriotism of the Poles grew stronger and clearer with suppression. For a hundred and twenty years Poland struggled like a submerged creature beneath the political and military net that held her down. She rose again in 1918, at the end of the Great War.

§ 10

The First Scramble for Empire Overseas.

We have given some account of the ascendancy of France in Europe, the swift decay of the sappy growth of Spanish power and its separation from Austria, and the rise of Prussia. So far as Portugal, Spain, France, Britain, and Holland were concerned, their competition for ascendancy in Europe was extended and complicated by a struggle for dominion overseas.

The discovery of the huge continent of America, thinly inhabited, undeveloped, and admirably adapted for European settlement and exploitation, the simultaneous discovery of great areas of unworked country south of the torrid equatorial regions of Africa that had hitherto limited European knowledge, and the gradual realization of vast island regions in the Eastern seas, as yet untouched by Western civilization, was a presentation of opportunity to mankind unprecedented in all history. It was as if the peoples of Europe had come into some splendid legacy. Their world had suddenly quadrupled. There was more than enough for all; they had only to take these lands and continue to do well by them, and their crowded poverty would vanish like a dream. And they received this glorious legacy like ill-bred heirs; it meant no more to them than a fresh occasion for atrocious disputes. But what community of human beings has ever yet preferred creation to conspiracy? What nation in all our story has ever worked with another when, at any cost to itself, it could contrive to do that other an injury? The powers of Europe began by a frantic "claiming" of the new realms. They went on to exhausting conflicts. Spain, who claimed first and most, and who was for a time "mistress" of two-thirds of America, made no better use of her possession than to bleed herself nearly to death therein.

We have told how the Papacy in its last assertion of world dominion, instead of maintaining the common duty of all Christendom to make a great common civilization in the new lands, divided the American continent between Spain and Portugal. This naturally roused the hostility of the excluded nations. The seamen of England showed no respect for either claim, and set themselves particularly against the Spanish; the Swedes turned their Protestantism to a similar account. The Hollanders, so soon as they had shaken off their Spanish masters, also set their sails westward to flout the Pope and share in the good things of the New World. His Most Catholic Majesty of France hesitated as little as any Protestant. All these powers were