

this sketch without throwing out the question, whether Talleyrand moves in the department of a territorial and balance-of-power policy, or whether he has, at length, acknowledged that the relations of international right are tending more and more in the direction of attack and defence, either under a stationary or a progressive system. We think the latter supposition very questionable. Talleyrand is not accustomed to see a principle in the French Revolution : to him it is nothing but a catastrophe. Talleyrand's first care was to remove everything extraordinary from the revolution of 1830. The entire change which it might have brought about in the foreign policy of France he checked *in limine*, and compelled her to return to the old hereditary routine. He turned the freedom of nations into a question of territory and balance of power, as the case of Belgium sufficiently proves. He does his utmost to promote Eastern complications, because they involve a question of supremacy and of an old idea to which nations are no longer willing to be sacrificed, and because nothing seems to him more likely to draw Austria away from the Northern alliance. Talleyrand would achieve his masterpiece according to antiquated notions of the balance of power, if he could induce Austria again to resume her old line of policy towards England. But Talleyrand is striving after the impossible. In our times the most skilful diplomatic combination may be destroyed in a moment. Our present period of secretaries of legation cannot last long ; for the old artifices, those elegant sword tricks of parade, cut their way, as Menzel says, even through giants. France complains, and not without justice, that Talleyrand is betraying his country to England. For what advantage has it yet derived from his policy ? It has honour enough left to call ' peace at any price ' no advantage. Talleyrand's policy is a mere game of dice. He plays with nations for the highest throw, whereas he ought to shew them which has the strongest arm. Talleyrand is now moderate in his aims for the first time. He no longer plays to win, but merely to regain the old stake which he lost in the second game. The old man will not let the hilt out of his hands, even though he only beats the air with it. His opponents understand their own affairs and opportunities better. Who can deny that the Northern alliance rests upon a very firm basis ? It steers steadily towards its aim : it has its cannon, its Cossacks, its principles and its tendencies. Talleyrand has more adroitness ; but it is only for a moment that wit is superior to strength. Talleyrand has no aim, for he does not understand the affairs of France : he is not the representative of the revolution, but only of persons who are accidentally involved in it. Thus his only use is by small victories to prepare a great defeat for his own country. And yet, how soon will a funeral catafalque be raised in the halls of Valençai !