

century Grotius strove to systematize previous attempts to create an international law; but the fact that its problems remain to-day essentially what they were in the sixteenth century shows how little progress has been made; and the mixture of literature and ethics which we call International Law still lacks the sanction to give it any real effect. Academic attempts to create an international force behind it were occasionally made in the seventeenth century. In his old age Sully, the great minister of Henri IV, or perhaps the Abbé who edited Sully's memoirs, concocted a fiction according to which Queen Elizabeth proposed to Henri IV a 'grand design', nominally to ensure the peace of Europe, but really to control the House of Austria; and in 1713 the Abbé de St. Pierre, who was secretary to the French plenipotentiary at the peace of Utrecht, propounded a further scheme for a League of Princes with a more impartial object. The presidency of the League was to be held by each great Prince in turn, the differences between the contracting parties were to be settled by arbitration or judicial decision at a congress of plenipotentiaries, and the League was to impose by force of arms the common will upon recalcitrant States.

Congresses did in fact become the order of the day. One sat, formally at least, at Brunswick for years to settle the affairs of Northern Europe; another sat, or as Carlyle puts it 'endeavoured to get seated',