

words in this connexion have become famous : ' I will never allow a sheet of written paper to intervene like a second Providence between our Lord God in Heaven and our country, to rule us by its paragraphs and to put them in the place of ancient loyalty.'

By this time discontent had risen to such a height that the country was ripe for rebellion. ' The train was now laid throughout central Europe ; it needed but a flash from Paris to kindle the fire far and wide ' (Fyffe).

The signal was given from Paris early in 1848, and the flame spread rapidly throughout Germany and Austria. The history of Prussia at this time is largely bound up with that of Austria and the other German states, and is singularly complex and confusing. It was a tumultuous year, but nothing tangible resulted in Germany. All attempts at establishing a united German Empire came to hopeless grief on the three rocks of political incapacity, Austro-Prussian jealousy, and Hohenzollern arrogance. Once more Frederick William IV played with the notion of a constitution, but it was to be one of his own choosing and not the one his people desired. The army, moreover, remained loyal to him, and suppressed the national assembly at his bidding. It seemed, indeed, as if some progress was being made when, early in 1849, the sovereignty of a united Germany was offered to Frederick William, with the title of Emperor, by the German Parliament which had been sitting at Frankfort since May, 1848. But he haughtily refused a ' crown of mud and wood ' from the hands of such a body, and all other attempts at settlement met with a like fate. In the result, all Germany was plunged back into reaction for another ten years. Everywhere the conditions existing before 1848 were restored, and vigorous repression was again