

399. What important events in Europe signalized the year 1866?

A great civil war in Germany caused by the question of the right of Denmark to Sleswick Holstein. Austria at first acted with Prussia, but finding this latter power act with insulting arrogance, she took hostile ground. The war was decided in a short but most disastrous campaign which lasted less than a month. Austria was utterly humbled at the battle of Sadowa, in Bohemia, in consequence of the Prussian troops having been armed with that terrific weapon, the new breech-loading "needle gun," and ceased to be the leading power in Germany. The small principalities were merged in one great State reaching from the Maine to the Baltic, called the North German Confederation. The different States of Italy had in like manner been consolidated under Victor Emmanuel, King of Sardinia, in 1859. The new kingdom of Italy acted in alliance with Prussia in this war, receiving as its reward the province of Venetia. Thus Austrian ascendancy was destroyed both in Germany and Italy. While on this subject of European revolutions, we may mention that in Spain in 1868, in which the despotic rule of queen Isabella has been overthrown; but the future government of that country has not yet been determined.

400. What are the most recent topics of interest in England?

1st. The expedition to Abyssinia to chastise the barbarian acts of its pretended king Theodore, which ended successfully in the storming of his mountain fortress of Magdala by Sir Robert Napier at the head of a part of the Indian army.

2nd. The great extension of the franchise by the Reform Bill of 1868; and

3rd. The recent elections, which have displaced the Conservative ministry of Derby and Disraeli by a Liberal majority under Gladstone, pledged to dis-establish and dis-endow the Protestant Episcopal Church in Ireland.

401. Have the social events of the reign been of equal importance to its political movements?

Fully so. Some of them have been mentioned, but the limits of this little book would fail to contain all. The civilized world has been covered with railways, canals, telegraph