

On December 18, 1870, an address from the North German Parliament was read to King William at Versailles, asking him to accept the imperial crown. He assented, and on January 18, 1871, an imposing ceremony was held in the splendid Mirror Hall (*Galerie des Glaces*) of Louis XIV., at the royal palace of Versailles. The day was a wet one, and the king rode from his quarters in the prefecture to the great gates of the chateau, where he alighted and passed through a lane of soldiers, the roar of cannon heralding his approach, and rich strains of music signalling his entrance to the hall.

William wore a general's uniform, with the ribbon of the Black Eagle on his breast. Helmet in hand he advanced slowly to the dais, bowed to the assembled clergymen, and turned to survey the scene. There had been erected an altar covered with scarlet cloth, which bore the device of the Iron Cross. Right and left of it were soldiers bearing the standards of their regiments. Attending on the king were the crown-prince, and a brilliant array of the princes, dukes, and other rulers of the German states arranged in semicircular form. Just above his head was a great allegorical painting of the Grand Monarch, with the proud subscription, "*Le Roi gouverne par lui même*," the motto of the autocrat.

The ceremony began with the singing of psalms, a short sermon, and a grand German chorale, in which all present joined. Then William, in a loud but broken voice, read a paper, in which he declared the German empire re-established, and the imperial