

of Maria Theresa. But it is a fact that from the first the French kings set themselves to win the confidence of their new subjects ; and the evidence is overwhelming that they succeeded in a delicate task. The assimilation of Alsace was discreet and gradual. Its governors were in general well chosen. Its distinctive traditions and its language were respected. Its industries were fostered, and for the first time in their history its people felt themselves secure. The Protestants of Alsace were privileged ; so were the Jews of Metz. As for the Duchy of Lorraine, it was in essentials French already before it was united to the kingdom of France. What was left to do was done by the Revolution. Lorraine and Alsace embraced its doctrines with enthusiasm. The *Marseillaise* was sung for the first time in the house of the mayor of Strasbourg. The Republican spirit indeed was in the blood of the Strasbourgeois and of the Messin ; and to no part of France did the extinction of feudal rights bring greater relief than to these provinces, where so many foreign princelings still had privileges. In the repulse of the invader and in the Napoleonic wars Alsace and Lorraine played a glorious part. They gave to the French armies Ney and Kellermann, Kléber and Lefebvre, to name no lesser heroes. And from Napoleon's fall until the end of the French connexion, their loyalty remained above reproach ; they were visibly prosperous, undeniably contented ; and they contributed freely and conspicuously to all the activities of the national life.

The Germans in 1871 had little to gain by an appeal from the reluctance of the conquered provinces to their remoter history ; but the past does throw some light upon the chances with which the experiment of annexation started. Its success—a gradual moral conquest