

STORY OF THE CENTURY.

onger than any other form of government since the days of the Great Revolution, and that the visitors from foreign countries who have lately been studying, with most intelligent observation, the condition of France have borne testimony to the marvellous prosperity which makes itself evident all over the country-

THE PROGRESS OF PRUSSIA.

One of the most remarkable phenomena of the century, especially in its later half, has been the political uprising of Prussia and her establishment as the centre of a German Empire. During the former half of the century Prussia may be said to have counted for almost nothing in the political life of Europe. One who lived in those days might well have forgotten that there ever had been such a Sovereign and soldier as Frederick the Great, or such a statesman as Von Stein. Prussia was generally regarded by the outer world as a land of professors of beer-drinking students, or pedants and dreamers, and of soldiers drilled to the wearing of uniform. "Germany is Hamlet," said a gifted and popular German poet, made melancholy by the thought that his country could only dream and allow itself to be pushed aside while other countries were imperiously asserting their rights to a share in the government of Europe. It is curious to notice how, up to a comparatively recent date some of the most experienced even among English statesmen and diplomatists set down Prussia as counting for nothing in European affairs. How such an idea came to exist concerning a people more highly educated as a whole than any other in Europe, and almost entirely free from the distraction of conflicting nationalities in one State system it is not necessary for my present task to inquire too curiously. But it is certain that up to middle of the century the yearning for German unity, which found so much expression in poems, and treatises, and discourses throughout German populations, was regarded in Europe generally as the mere dream of Teutonic students and sentimentalists. The hour and the man came with the rise of Bismarck to the front and it was soon evident that the two stars of Austria and Prussia could not keep their motion in the one sphere of Germany; and the triumph of Prussia during the Seven Weeks war settled the controversy. Then the world began to see that France and Prussia were drifting into rivalry. M. Prevost-Paradol, in words that will long be remembered likened these two States to two express trains started from the extremes of the same line and therefore doomed to inevitable collision. The result of the collision was the fall of the Second Empire in France and the elevation of Prussia to the supreme position in German affairs, with a German Emperor to preside over her councils, and an organization of minor sovereigns to support him.

AUSTRIA AND THE NEAR EAST.

Austria has had to make great sacrifices during the century, but the sacrifices would be cheap if they obtained for what remains of the empire a more thorough union of interests and sentiment. The Austrian Empire, as we know it in modern times, has been compelled to try to its utmost straits the experiment of holding together a large number of diverse nationalities under one central authority. The Empress of Austria had Italian, Hungarian, Bohemian, Polish and German populations under their sovereignty, and, indeed, the whole Austrian system in this century was the direct outcome of the policy which inspired the Congress of Vienna. Such a policy could come to nothing but failure, and Austria, as its most characteristic embodiment, soon found that her peculiar composition proved an irresistible temptation to some of her rivals on the European continent. France assailed her through her Italian populations, and Bismarck later on followed the example. A little later in the history of the century Hungary had gone into rebellion, and would beyond all question, have secured her absolute independence but that Russia intervened and won for Austria the victories which Austria was unable to win for herself. Of late years Hungary has obtained something like recognition of her national



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right to domestic self-government, and there seems no reason why the Austrian Empire as it now stands should not hold safely and harmoniously together. Russia has grown and consolidated remarkably during the present century. Her influence is probably greater than it ever was before.

Continued on Page 3

STAGE

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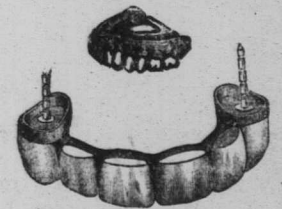
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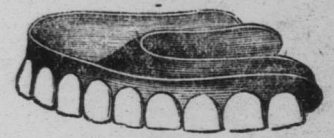
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