

tween Germany and France does not appear considerable, because of the impotence of the latter at this time. It may be regarded as almost certain that unless France should provoke Germany to the utmost she would be content with guarding her recently acquired acquisitions and not again cross the Moselle as an invader nor attempt to dictate a new peace at the gates of Paris. On the south matters hardly appear to be so entirely satisfactory. The inhabitants of Austria at large have almost forgotten the war of 1866. The benefits which accrued to their country from the results of that crushingly rapid campaign have been so great that they have blotted out the sense of soreness that sprang from the defeats which the Austrian army suffered. But though antagonism against Germany has ceased among the peoples composing the Austro-Hungarian empire, it still lurks between the cabinets and governments of the two countries, and on the Austrian side not only does there appear to be a feeling of personal resentment against the Cabinet of Berlin among some of the advisers of the Crown, but it is almost universally believed that the head of the State has a deep personal and individual grudge against his northern neighbour, and refuses to meet even half way or perhaps in any way, the advances which have often been made to him from Berlin. This fact, if not clearly ascertained, is at least thoroughly believed north of the Giant Mountains, and the belief leads to a feeling of distrust on the part of Northern Germany towards Austria. It is the attitude of the Austrian Court which is one of the prime reasons why Germany keeps up her great and expensive armament. But this state of things cannot always endure. Throughout the Fatherland there is a feeling that it must come to an end, and that the only way to reduce these enormous armaments to a footing proportionate to the capabilities of the people is to force on events, and somehow or other disarm those on account of whom these military preparations are necessary.

What role would England take in case of a great European contest? The general answer will doubtless be—that of neutrality. But is it possible that neutrality can always be maintained? If the British realm were confined to the two small islands which constitute its heart, it might be true that it could keep out of war, but with widespread colonies and foreign entanglements it would be almost impossible for England to avoid taking part, sooner or later, in the struggle. How, then, is she prepared for emergency that is almost sure to arise? The navy is apparently in good order. The numerical strength of the British fleet is larger than that of any other power, and English sailors have not deteriorated. But a large part of the navy is composed of vessels built since England was engaged in a great naval war. Their construction, to a certain extent, has been experimental. Suppose on going to war it should be discovered that the navy had been built on faulty principles? The result might be to nullify that arm of the national defence, and uncover the coast of England to any powerful nation intent upon invading the country and laying it under tribute. The enormous wealth accumulated in London is a bait to avarice which must not be ignored in considering the possibilities of hostile invasion. Suppose the coast should be defenceless, what kind of an army could England oppose to the magnificent troops of the Continent? The militia and volunteers would be useless. The regular army would be effective as far as it goes, but at most it would be but 60,000 strong. What could this handful do against

the tremendous hosts of Germany, Russia, or France. If England will save herself she must be willing to spend her money freely to maintain a large and efficient regular army. If Englishmen will not serve their country in person, they must be prepared to pay the price for that immunity as for any other luxury. That price is not so great as that which might be assessed by a committee of Continental bankers, in session in captured London.

### General Wimpffen at Sedan.

The action brought by General de Wimpffen against M. Paul de Cassagnac for libel, has had the effect of throwing fresh light on the incidents of the battle of Sedan. The proceedings were occasioned by an article written by the defendant in the *Pays*, in which General Wimpffen was accused of ignorance and incapacity, and with having been the immediate cause of the capitulation. As the witnesses called on either side were the generals and other officers engaged in the action, and as the defendant pleaded a justification in the facts, the remarkable spectacle was witnessed of a strictly military issue being tried by a body of civilians. The battle of Sedan was thus fought over again, for even the political element which influenced the catastrophe was not wanting in the court. M. Jules Favre, as a Republican, was retained by General Wimpffen, who had grossly attacked the late Emperor, and at one moment, when he expressed an opinion as the plans of General Ducrot, the presiding judge sharply interrupted him by asking, "What could he know about it?" This was paying the advocate pretty well for his forgetfulness of the Army of the East in the negotiations with Prince Bismark at Ferrières. In fact, all the bitterness of the controversy at Sedan was revived in court, with a result that all who have sufficient knowledge of the history of the war, and of the steady set of opinion in France in favour of the late Emperor must have foreseen.

The facts that mainly concern us, however, are those which were given in evidence relative to the conduct of General Wimpffen in the field. It will be remembered that when Marshal MacMahon was struck down at Sedan, General Ducrot succeeded at right to the command of the first corps, and with a perfect mastery of the military situation he commenced his preparations for a retreat eastward, by way of Mézières. At the same time an action was going on beyond the Balan Gate, and Gen. Wimpffen, who had allowed Ducrot to act when a disaster appeared inevitable, saw (in his ignorance of the enemy's movements) a chance of success, and suddenly claimed the command in virtue of an appointment which he secretly carried in his pocket, by the Council of War at Paris. The retreat was countermanded, and while the German forces were moving up to envelop both wings of the French Army, Wimpffen made a vain attempt to persuade the Emperor to cut his way through, and a little later, when the enemy's shells were actually falling in the town, he proved the futility of the proposition by reeling back into Sedan with the shattered force of about 3000 men whom he had led out to court destruction, and who were all he could muster even by declaring that the guns they heard were those of Bazaine in the rear. The delay was fatal. The German guns were got into position on the heights around Sedan, the shells were already falling in the streets, and the old fortress town, with its streets full of a disorderly mob of soldiers and civilians, would in a few hours have been pounded as

in a mortar, into a mass of bloody rags and broken masonry and shivering human flesh. To save his soldiers from this horrible fate the Emperor ordered the white flag to be suspended from the walls, and the capitulation followed, both as a matter of military necessity and of pure humanity.

These substantial facts were previously known, but the historical details which have been brought out by the trial are extremely interesting, as they tend to show the hopeless state of division among the French generals, and the chaos in which the poor Emperor was compelled to act an independent part, as the *deus ex machina* of the situation, and which he afterwards justified by the true and pathetic observation that at least he was still sovereign. After the failure of Gallifet's splendid charge at the head of his Cuirassiers, the fate of the French Army was sealed, and the rival Generals met, crestfallen, in the presence of the Emperor. "If I have been beaten," said Wimpffen, addressing himself immediately to the Emperor, "it is the fault of your generals, who refused to obey me." "No!" thundered Ducrot, flinging round upon him, "you have been too well obeyed, and it is your senseless presumption which has destroyed the Army!" The vital fact is—and this was what the trial has brought out into clear light—that Wimpffen forbore to take over his command when the battle appeared lost, and the retreat inevitable, and, some two or three hours later, when he wrongly imagined there was a favourable turn in events, suddenly produced his authority, and countermanded the orders of his colleague.

The French court, before whom the facts were proved, have justified M. Cassagnac's denunciation by their verdict for the defendant. Of Wimpffen's splendid courage there is no doubt whatever, and it may be admitted as barely possible that he would have borne the Emperor bravely through the German lines, in the midst of his proposed force of a few thousand men, with the loss, perhaps, of half their number, and the certain destruction of those who remained behind by the German guns. That the Emperor, after a moment's hesitation, refused his consent to such a butchery in the name of false honour, will for ever redound to his credit in history. That General de Wimpffen should afterwards condescend to blacken his memory, and invite his countrymen to endorse what may be called his own act of moral delinquency, is a circumstance which we will only characterise by saying that it has deserved the stigma which has been fixed upon it by the verdict of the court.

**THE LATE PRINCE CONSORT.**—On Saturday, February 13, the casting of the statue of the late Prince Consort, to be placed under the dome of the Albert Memorial, in Hyde Park, was completed at the foundry of Messrs. Prince & Co., Ewer street, Southwark. The figure is seated in a chair of State and is of colossal size, being fifteen feet in height—from the base to the crown of the head. The artist, the late Mr. J. H. Foley, R. A., fortunately completed the model before his death. It will form an enduring monument of his great artistic skill. The statue would have been completed some months since but for an unfortunate accident. The workmen were removing a portion of the mould, weighing some twenty tons, from one part to another of the foundry when a chain broke and the vast mass fell down to the ground, thus destroying the labour of months. The statue now only requires the final chiselling before being fixed in its final resting place.