

was to be realized, in his own words, 'not by speeches nor by the decisions of a majority, but *by blood and iron*.' In the hands of such a man, with a clear goal before him, undeterred by any moral scruples in his advance towards it, and gifted with consummate diplomatic ability, the sovereigns of Europe were the merest puppets. He played with them one by one as a cat plays with a mouse, and made them each in turn serve his purpose in the attainment of his great end. With the assistance of von Roon, the War Minister, and von Moltke, the chief of the general staff, he employed the newly-reorganized army as his instrument, and forced unity upon the German people by his own particular methods. Three wars were required for the purpose: against Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866, and France in 1870; and they were thoroughly and decisively carried through.

The ostensible cause of the Danish War was the question of the succession in Schleswig-Holstein, two provinces under Danish rule but chiefly German in population. Bismarck's real motive, however, was to destroy the *Bund*, the German Federation of 1815, by going to war on his own account, against the wishes of the Diet. The two provinces were easily crushed by Prussia in temporary alliance with Austria, and as King William was not yet won over to his minister's designs against Austria, a temporary settlement was effected by the Convention of Gastein (1865), by which Holstein was given to Austria and Schleswig to Prussia.

Next year Bismarck negotiated a three-months' alliance with Italy, in order to have her assistance against Austria, and he then proceeded to quarrel with the latter, with the aim of expelling her from the confederation. The southern states allied themselves