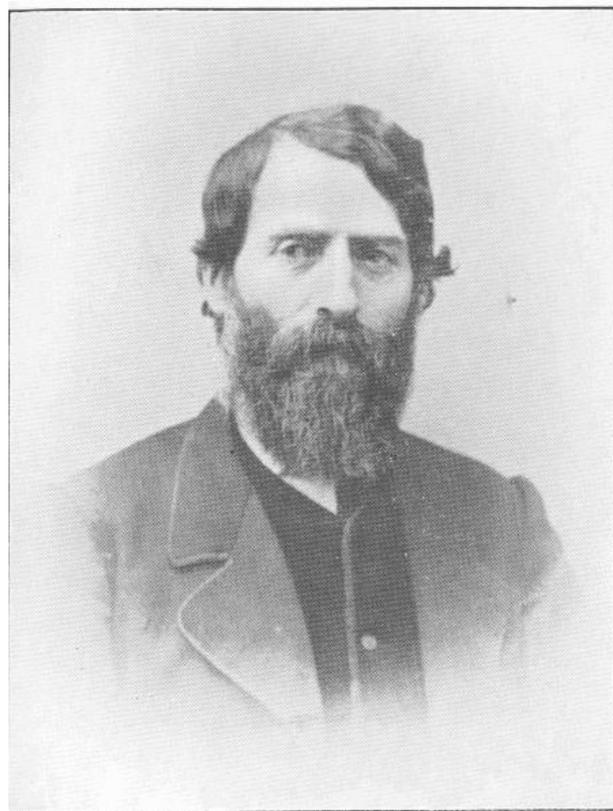


IRELAND, FRANCE AND PRUSSIA.

A SELECTION FROM THE SPEECHES AND
WRITINGS OF JOHN MITCHEL.

INTRODUCTION BY J. DE. L. SMYTH.



John Mitchel
(Paris, 1861)

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INTRODUCTION.

It is the lot of few men to influence the times in which they live; of still fewer to survive by their teachings through successive generations. Of those who in the past have helped to guide the destinies of the Irish people, and from whose writings inspiration is still drawn, few can be adjudged more potent than John Mitchel. It would be of interest, therefore, to direct attention to the attitude which that great writer would in all probability have adopted had he survived till the great European cataclysm of today. We are fortunately able to do this. For John Mitchel has left us in his own clear and terse language a record not merely of momentary passion, but of principles and moral force which, unchanged and unchangeable, last all time. "I do not know," he said, "who has a better right to speak for France than an Irishman." It was not altogether for the efforts, though, that France had made on behalf of Ireland, nor for the sacrifices of Irishmen in behalf of France, that he was so enthusiastic for her; it was because she was the foremost champion of human right as against a pretended "Divine right."

"It is because France is standing up as the great champion of human freedom and the right of the population to dispose of their own destinies and to order their own government, that we sympathise with her."

Such was the dominant note that Mitchel struck in his speeches and writings during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

Mitchel had resided for some years in France, where he had made many friendships, and the ties which he had formed there were strengthened by a close and intimate knowledge of her people.

He visited Paris three times between 1859 and 1866. He first arrived there from New York in August, 1859, remaining for

about five months. He came next in August, 1860, accompanied by his wife and children. Their residence lasted for more than two years and was only terminated owing to the Civil War in America which determined him to leave for New York with the object of getting through the lines into the Confederate States. He left Havre, in September, 1862, accompanied by his youngest son, William, who fell mortally wounded a year afterward on the battle of Gettysburg. He sailed once more from New York in November, 1865 – soon after his release from Fortress Munroe – and resided in Paris until October, 1866, when he bade a last farewell to France.

“I looked back,” he wrote after leaving Brest, “until the blue lines of the French coast faded into the evening mist. Perhaps it is the last time I shall ever see that fair and pleasant land. Yet who knows? ... Anyhow, *Vive la France!*”

Thus ended his last visit to France.

From Paris he had written, as Paris Correspondent, those letters to *The Irishman*, *Charleston Standard*, and *Irish-American*, chronicling European events and breathing his affection for France. They contained more “original” matter every week, as he said, than ever he had written for his papers in America.

From Paris, too, he had set out for a tour on foot through Normandy – an interesting account of which he wrote in his *Journal (Continuation)* – and later in the year 1862 for that “most delightful tour” through the south and east of France described by him in detail in *An Exile in France*.

Those tours gave him opportunities of becoming acquainted with many parts of France, and it is certain that he retained the impressions of the great, gifted people who had enlisted those warm sympathies so clearly reflected in his writings.

But we have said enough to show that there were many and strong ties attaching John Mitchel to France. It would have been strange – impossible, indeed, for him – if, on the declaration of war between France and Prussia in 1870, his sympathy and enthusiasm had not been aroused for France and her cause. His words at the very outbreak of the war were clear and decisive: -
“We take part instantly, frankly and zealously – for France.”

So he spoke then, and his sympathies and devotion remained unchanged to the end.

A selection is given in the following pages from his speeches and writings – in America and France – during and previous to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71; including a striking article written after the decisive battle of Sadowa and only a few days before he left France for the last time.

More than forty-five years have passed since Mitchel spoke, yet his words are as appropriate now as they were then. France was at that time in the throes of another war, undertaken for the same cause which, since Charles Martel broke the power of the Saracens, and saved Europe, has inspired her. To Mitchel she was the representative champion of freedom who had taught the world its blessings, and his countrymen can recall with pride that he realised the menace which the march of Hohenzollern Imperialism constituted for Europe. Nor can it be forgotten that he manifested his fervid sympathies for France, who, struggling in defence of her liberty and to check the strides of Prussian aggrandisement, was yet to achieve her destiny through the heroism and self-sacrifice of her sons.

J. de. L. S.

I.

THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR.

(The Irish Citizen, July 23, 1870.)

Everybody is taking part in the grand struggle. We take part instantly, frankly and zealously – for France.

France has here the just cause. Everyone who has read the history of the false House of Hohenzollern, whether in the pages of their partisan Carlyle or anywhere else, must have got an idea of the insatiable ambition and utterly desperate treachery of that royal house. No family of professional burglars- the burglar father training up the burglar son – has ever been so unrelentingly bent upon living on the plunder of others, and coming by that plunder through all possible and conceivable lies, frauds, and violence, as this brood of the Hohenzollern.

The creator of Prussia as a great military power was, of course, the “Great” Frederick; and the “Great” Frederick was one of the smallest and meanest of human creatures. He formed, however, and settled the characteristic national policy of that kingdom; and the kingdom has retained his impress ever since. The Prussian policy is to prepare very actively, in secret, for some unjustifiable aggression, to affect friendship till the last moment, to employ military and engineering spies on an immense scale, to affect innocence and unconsciousness if taxed with these tricks; and at last, when the moment has arrived, to burst in with overwhelming force. So the “Great” Frederick won Silesia; so the present William broke into Bohemia and won Sadowa; and just so the present King intended to surprise Napoleon, and probably to be at the gates of Paris before the Emperor should be quite wide awake.

Nothing could exceed the innocent surprise of this fine old Prussian gentleman, King William, at the wild idea that he had anything to do with putting forward his interesting young relative, Prince Leopold, for the Crown of Spain. He was especially surprised, this worthy old man, at the charge of preparing in secret an army and navy, and garrisoning points that he had no right to – thereby preparing for the customary felon spring of Prussia. But, in fact, the fine old King and his astute Minister were both in the hands of their master this time. The Emperor of the French understood them from the first and fully appreciated the astounding insolence of these Berlin Hohenzollerns in assuming that they could establish a *hegemony* not only over Germany but over all Europe.

That battle of Sadowa was certainly a lucky hit; it intimidated Baden and overwhelmed Saxony and Hanover; but France was another kind of customer; and when bluff old King William, counselled by his evil genius, Bismarck, at length allowed his young cousin and subject and commissioned officer, Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, to be proposed as a candidate for the Crown of Spain, the King and his Minister knew it was a *casus belli*, they intended it for a *casus belli*, puffed up as they both were by their Sadowa victory. It is utterly impossible to believe that they flattered themselves France would suffer a Prussian King on the Pyrenees as well as another on the Rhine. Therefore, Bismarck and King William must have meant war. And they have got it.

II.

KING WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA.

(The Nation, September 8, 1866.)

To me it seems that all there does not exist now in all the world a more thorough-going *Divine-right* despot.

PARIS,

September 5, 1866.

III.

THE FRENCH EMPIRE.

(The Irish Citizen, September 10, 1870.)

This may possibly be an end, and if it is, we care not, of the "Second Empire." The proper and only competent judges of that question are the French people; and it is a fickle and restless people. Notwithstanding the prosperity and general well-being of the French in these last twenty years; in spite of their rapidly increasing wealth and luxury, or perhaps, in consequence of these very things - the French wanted, about this time, a new excitement and sensation. Von Bismarck and Von Moltke were the very men to furnish this needful stimulant. *They* also required a new European conquest, as the Prussian monarchy periodically does require; so covered France with spies; spies at the Press and in society; spies in the Emperor's Cabinet and military staff, until they knew in Berlin every gun, every fort, the depth of every moat, the capacity of every inn and stable in the whole Empire, especially on the frontier, from Basle to Recroy; knew it all far better than the Quartermaster-General of the Imperial Forces knew it; and when all was ready they slapped the Emperor on the face. Perhaps he might have taken it; he is an old and broken man and feels more keenly than anybody else in the world that he is no warrior. But France could not take it; the thing was too palpable, too ostentatious. There could be no mistake that here was a moral defiance; if the poor decrepit Emperor could have endured the provocation, his people could not; and it has been better for him to fall into the hands of King William than into the hands of the French.

It is sad to have to speak harshly of an unfortunate man, now a prisoner of war, and suffering the agony of his position

with all the acuteness and intensity of his highly intellectual and imaginative nature; but better do justice upon one man than do injustice to a grand nation of men.

The Empire is at an end; no galvanism nor art-magic can bring it to life again. But the Empire is not France. France is not conquered, and is only now fairly beginning the war. A nightmare has lain for some years upon the heart and body of the great nation, and is now shaken off. King William and the Count von Bismarck are going to see at last what sort of enemy they have roused up. English and American newspapers tell us, of course, that Paris must surrender; that Strassburg, and Montmédy, and Metz, and Toul, and Verdun, and Phalsbourg, the fortresses which are holding out so gallantly, must now be given up; that Paris must be starved out in a few days, and that there are not in all France either soldiers, or arms, or generals, to bar the triumphal march of the Prussians from one end of France to the other.

It is strange how men forget history. Once before, when France was stripped naked, without an army, without generals or arms, armies grew out of the earth – armies were made as they were wanted, and generals sprang from the ranks, such as Hoche and Moreau, and the First Napoleon himself, who so handled the ragged and barefooted conscripts that they trashed all the royal armies from one end of Europe to the other.

Once more France is roused – she is full of wealth and of brave men; it is not one campaign that can conquer the great nation. The blood of France is up; she will make King William welcome to the possession of her ex-Emperor, and even of his son – poor little fellow! – but, before France is conquered, the Elbe and the Spree will see the bear-skins of the Imperial Guard.

IV.

PRUSSIAN AMBITIONS.

(The Irish Citizen, October 1, 1870)

Prussia cannot be England's friend. Prussia has her own aspirations and ambitions; one of these is to be a great maritime Power, or rather *the* great maritime Power of Europe; and nothing in the future can be more sure than that Prussia, if successful finally in this struggle with France, will take Belgium and threaten from Antwerp the mouth of the Thames.

V.

THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR.

(The Irish Citizen, January 7, 1871.)

At a meeting in the Cooper Institute, New York, on Thursday evening the 5th of January, 1871, John Mitchel said:

Americans, Frenchmen, Irishmen, if there be any here – I do not know who has a better right to speak for France than an Irishman. It is very true that France sent to this country in its trouble some of her greatest warriors and statesmen to aid in the establishment of your independence against British domination – Lafayette, Rochambeau, D’Estaing – and they had the good fortune and happiness to triumph in your triumph. But do not forget – Irishmen will not forget – that when France was a Republic before – that is to say in ’98 – France sent to the shores of Ireland a larger expedition in ships and soldiers than ever she sent to America. And she sent them to aid in the same purpose – to throw off British dominion. The weather was against them, however; the weather turned out to be English weather, and the splendid fleet was four of five days beating about in Bantry Bay, and at last was driven off entirely by the easterly winds. Another time a second expedition landed in Killala Bay, and another expedition came to Lough Swilly, with Theobald Wolfe Tone on board, and this, too, to aid a small nation to win its liberty.

Now, what nation has ever done such things except France? Yet it is not altogether for these efforts that France has made in our behalf that I am so enthusiastic tonight on behalf of Frenchmen. Neither is it for the blood shed by my people on behalf of France, though 450,000 have fallen fighting her battles in the last hundred and fifty years. Neither is it for that, that I speak for her tonight. No; it is because France this day stands up

in Europe the representative champion of a great principle – and that principle is the right of self-government.

Gentlemen, the man who most personifies, who resumes within his own person the whole of the German cause, is that mighty person the Count von Bismarck. You may receive his name with displeasure – it is a name I hate. Nevertheless, I cannot deny to him the most potent intellect, the most indomitable will, the greatest intrepidity that any man in Europe now possesses. If it were not for that he could not have done the actions which he has done. Now, do you know the whole character of that man's life? He is a man six feet high – a man of fine presence, a soldier, a lawyer, a statesman. Well, that man avows that his highest pride and honour, his greatest distinction in the world, is to be a vassal – literally a vassal. I tell you truly, Count von Bismarck says that he belongs to the class of small proprietors that they call *Junkers* – Brandenburg vassals to the Margrave of that Principality; and he has always declared that his sphere in life, his whole social and political status, and duty and existence, are summed up in being a faithful vassal to his Margrave. This Margrave happens to be the King of Prussia; so he is a subject by accident of the King of Prussia, but still he has the honour to be a vassal of the House of Brandenburg; and if he is a vassal himself he must have vassals under him, because there never was a vassal that had not a serf. If you were to say to this statesman, “Why, Count, you are after all a man; you have the rights and duties of manhood, and are fit to be a free citizen,” the Count would spurn you with both his heels. A *Junker* he; nothing else; and the maxim and policy of his life, ever since he entered political life in 1847, has been to induce and force the Prussian monarchy to trample upon and extinguish all civil rights in Germany. If you consult his biography, lately published by his devoted friend, Hezekeel, of Berlin, you will find that the

Count has uniformly denied the right of a King of Prussia to yield to Constitutionalism or Parliamentarianism, because this would be an invasion of his status and privileges as a Brandenburg vassal. He maintains that all the world has no right to make a free man of him against his will.

And thus to-day we find him trying to trample under foot the liberties of France; for it was France, by her great Revolution, that destroyed vassals, and serfs, and nobles, and margraves, and landgraves. Since that Revolution there has not been in France a single nobleman, nor a single vassal, nor a single serf. One man may be rich and another poor, but they are all equal before the law, and one man's son is as good as another. It is for that that the great Prussian monarch is precipitating his forces upon France, under the lead of his vassal, Bismarck.

I think that I describe the situation pretty exactly in its general view. But let us take one example; the Prussians say that they have conquered France - not that it is all over yet - but they say that they have conquered; they say that they intend to take possession of two great counties - Alsace and Lorraine. I mention this as between the German theory of government on the one hand and French freedom on the other.

Alsace is one of the most fertile counties, one of the best counties in France, with the grand old city of Strassburg for its capital. But Alsace is not only a very fertile and prosperous county - it is the most intensely French province in all France. It is true that many of the inhabitants can speak German; they learned that long ago. Sometimes Alsace was a fief of the German Empire, and sometimes of the French Kingdom; but over two hundred years ago all Alsace became French, and French it has remained until this day. All their national memories, all their proud recollections are French. Their soldiers, their young men for generations - for two hundred

years – have served the French cause in the armies and in the highest places. Then came the French Revolution, which gave to every man in France his own farm. Well, Alsace got rid of all these Landgraves and Margraves from that moment. Every farmer in Alsace owns his own farm, and they feel that it was France that made men of them. Ask one of these Alsacians whether he is a German or a Frenchman, and he will look at you with astonishment. Why, it was Alsacians that were foremost to meet these Germans when Prussia came across the Rhine seventy years ago, met their assault, and flung them back. Who did this? Kellerman and the men of Alsace. Another Alsacian was Kleber, one of the greatest of French Marshals, and Napoleon's successor as commander of the French armies in Egypt. In short, when an Alsacian thinks of military glory it is always in connection with the old Tricolour, with the eagles of the Empire, or of the Republic – Empire is a word that we must, perhaps, forget for the present.

It is because France is standing up as the great champion of human freedom and the right of the population to dispose of their own destinies and to order their own government, that we sympathise with her. It is not many years ago since a statesman of England – Lord John Russell, I think – avowed the same principle. There was only one country that he excepted from this principle, and that was Ireland. Now, it is expressly to crush down that French aspiration for self-government that all Germany is united today to conquer France, and to crush her down by mere weight.

I do not deny that it was the Emperor of the French who commenced this war. I do not excuse him. He was bound, before commencing, to see that he had an army fit to do the work. He was the sole governor of France, and he ought to have known what was in the arsenals of his dominions. He ought to have had

confidence in his Marshals. Well, if he commenced this war rashly, he has paid the penalty.

But France is not the Emperor. France is grander than all emperors, and before long she will appeal so loudly to all lovers of freedom that even our German citizens themselves must respond. There are vast numbers of excellent German citizens in this country; they came here for self-government, or else what brought them here – and they fully participate in the free exercise of the rights of citizenship and of manhood. They naturally feel some degree of pride that the black and white flag should soar high, amid the glare of the battle-smoke, above the banners of France. There is something in the idea that intoxicates them, but when they see that it is a conspiracy of a feudal oligarchy, why then I believe that even our German friends will unite with us in sending over words of cheer, and say with all their hearts, as we do, *Vive la France*.

VI.

THE MEANING OF THE WAR.

(The Irish Citizen, January 7, 1871)

This great war in France is at last taking more definitely its true character – of a struggle between German feudalism and oligarchy on the one side, and French freedom and Republicanism on the other. It is the same old and inevitable contest which has raged in Europe for eighty years. Even under the “Empire,” so-called, France was substantially and really a Republic; that is to say, every Frenchman has been a free and privileged citizen since that grand Revolution. Aristocracy was abolished, and remained, and now remains, abolished in France. The Emperor himself was an elective officer – just as our President of the United States is an elective officer – and the principle of universal suffrage and the practice of plebiscites were enough to mark the character of the grand French community, and make it the foremost champion of human right as against a pretended “Divine right.”

Hereafter we can have no difficulty in defining our position with regard to the war in France. We are either for the rights and privileges of mankind, or else for the feudal pretensions of an insolent monarchy and aristocracy which pretend to ignore and deny all civil rights whatsoever.

VII.

FRANCE.

(The Irish Citizen, March 25, 1871)

On the evening of the 17th of March, 1871, the re-union of the Knights of St. Patrick took place at a dinner at Delmonico's, New York, in celebration of the National Festival. John Mitchel responded as follows to the toast of: -

"FRANCE - May her present sorrow be a prelude to a future more glorious than her past."

Mr. President and Knights of St. Patrick - Surely there is a peculiar propriety in the toast which has just been drunk at this board; that an assembly of Irishmen celebrating the *fete* day of our National Saint should remember in their festivity the ancient kindred nation from which Ireland never received anything but good. St. Patrick himself came to us from France. It is true that on his first arrival upon the Irish shores he was brought to us as a slave and bondsman. That first time he did not come to us; we went for him, and we go for him still. But again, the second time, when he came of his own accord, as a Christian Missionary, it was also from the shores of France. From France, too, came all the best and noblest, even of the invaders of our soil, of whom I may mention the Geraldines, who became chiefs of a potent Irish clan, and from whose loins sprang the good Lord Edward. And from France, in after ages, came St. Ruth, who was struck down at Aughrim, even as MacMahon was struck down at Sedan, and the cause of Ireland fell with the one, as the cause of France fell with the other. After that luckless day, too, when the Dutch "Deliverer" reigned supreme; in the dark days of the Penal Laws, when education in Ireland became a penal offence under English enactments; where was it that our Irish clergy and

gentry had to learn their letters? Why, in France. In that noble, generous country were always schools and colleges for our countrymen; although to go thither or to return, was always a source of extreme danger, and students had to run the blockade to go to school, and run the blockade again to come back, knowing that if captured in that treasonable practice, they were liable to long imprisonment or transportation to the Colonies of the West Indies. And where was it but in France that towards the end of the last century Irishmen learned something of the *rights of man*? It was on French principles that our fathers founded the United Irish Society, and on French aid they relied to make good those principles of freedom in their own island. If that aid finally failed our people, it was not from want or zeal or friendship on the part of our kinsmen, the French. Bantry Bay saw their Tricolour fly from the mastheads of a noble fleet, which, unhappily, the cruel weather of a savage winter blew out to sea, and scattered; from France came the small squadron of General Humbert and his gallant little force that routed the British at the "Races of Castlebar"; from France set sail that other flotilla which bore Wolfe Tone, bound to free his country or to die. He could but die. So it is that down to this very day our people look to France as a friend, our only friend in Europe, and we cannot look on unmoved in this day of her sore affliction and humiliation.

I do not deny that we owe something also to the Germans; we owe them the Hessians. Not that it is altogether strictly correct to say that Ireland owes anything to those Hessians, because she was made to pay their expenses, and Ireland is at this day paying interest on the money which hired those cut-throats to trample down our brave county of Wexford; and with that very blood-money, their master and owner, the Duke of

Hesse Cassel, built the great palace of Wilhelmshe, the imperial prison of Napoleon III.

It is no wonder, then, in the great struggle between France and Germany, the Irish race, both here and at home, has warmly and ardently sympathised with the French. No wonder that we refuse to believe in the long-continued humiliation of that gay and proud people. I do not wish to say one word against the unfortunate Emperor Napoleon, thrice and four times unfortunate, indeed, in being the official and responsible head of his great nation in the day of her sudden and astonishing collapse. Therefore, it is best to say nothing about him at all. Neither is it possible, here and now, to go into any military review of that tremendous campaign in which it must be admitted that the Germans have approved themselves the most scientific soldiers the world has ever seen. Enough to know that, throughout this terrible business, our kinsmen, the French, maintained all their old reputation for desperate gallantry; so that there is not, perhaps, in all history a finer example of heroism than was seen in the disastrous battle of Woerth, lost by the French against four times their numbers.

And now let me say one word – it is surely appropriate for an Irishman, speaking to Irishmen, on St. Patrick's Day, and in response to the toast of "France" – one word of a countryman of our own, the greatest of French soldiers in this age, to whom six months ago the whole French army and all the rest of the world looked with enthusiasm as the man who would lead to assured victory, and who did hold the cause of France at his sword's point until that sword was struck from his hand. Of other French commanders men have spoken hardly. They have called Bazaine a traitor; Aurelles de Paladine a blunderer; Trochu himself an imbecile; but who is there, French, or English, or German, who

has been bold enough to utter one word against the name or fame of Marshal Patrick MacMahon, Duke of Magenta¹?

We can all remember the circumstances under which he first drew his sword in this war. He was summoned hastily from Africa and desired to command a corps of 35,000 men on the frontier, arriving only on the very day before he was to be attacked by 150,000 Germans. He did not, and could not, know the force opposed to him. He only knew that he was expected to hold that frontier pass; and his men – who remembered that he had led them up to the storm of the Malakoff – who remembered how at Magenta he had torn out the Austrian centre, and rolled up their two wings – would follow him anywhere, believing that MacMahon could always achieve the impossible. But this time it was too hard for him. After a desperate and magnificent fight, he retired before the vast masses of the enemy. Again he met them at Sedan; and, in the crisis of that dreadful day, the shell that tore him almost to pieces destroyed the best and last hope of the French Empire.

On the whole, then, his countrymen have reason to be proud of their French Marshal; and especially so, that, although his family has been French, and of the *noblesse* of France, for two hundred years, he still remembers with ancestral pride that his clan was the old Clare family of the MacMahons of Corcabaiscin, with their strong place at Carrigaholt on the Shannon. And when our friend, Smith O'Brien, was last in France, the great Marshal, being then in command of 40,000 Frenchmen on the plains of

-
- The name of MacMahon still flourishes in France. Marshal MacMahon's two sons are distinguished soldiers in the French Army of today. At the beginning of the War Patrice de MacMahon, Due de Magenta, was a colonel. In 1915 he attained the rank of general, in command of the 43rd Brigade of Infantry. In 1916 he was appointed *Inspecteur des Batallions d'Instruction* of the Second French Army. His younger brother, Emmanuel, was a general at the outbreak of the War, and since then he has commanded the 80th Brigade of Infantry. Both of the brothers have won high distinction in Champagne and at Verdun. – *Ed.*

Chalons, ordered a special review of those troops in honour of O'Brien as chief of his Dalcassian clan.

Ah! No wonder that we Irish have a warm heart for the French! If they have given us saints and apostles, if they have made many efforts to redeem and rescue our unfortunate nation, we also on our side have given something to them – brigades of invincible soldiers, marshals, and general officers, who have graced their army and carried their banner (*Fleur de Lys* or Tricolour, it was all one) high over all the standards of Europe. So it was once; so it will be again.

And thus, with all the memories of the past crowding around us, and with all the hopes for the future which we cannot help associating with the new and certain revival of French influence and power, we send our greeting this night to our dear kindred nation. Knights of St. Patrick! I call upon you to join me in draining a glass to the health and long life of Patrick MacMahon, Duke of Magenta.

VIII.

A PRUSSIAN REVOLUTION.

(The Nation, September 29, 1866)

Prussians have no notion of any kind of rights or constitutions. They never have possessed the like, and never will, without a revolution.

Paris,

September 26, 1866.

IX.

THE NATIONALVEREIN.

(The Nation, August 18, 1866)

There happens to exist in Germany a political association called the *Nationalverein*; it is strong both North and South, pervading the whole Germanic race; and it represents first *Pangermanism*, and secondly *Gallophobia*. Its leading idea is "Nationality," in its own sense of that word; namely, the idea that the Teutonic Nationality (for it makes no account of others) is to be *unified*, and bound together in one mighty mass, so as to become predominant and irresistible in Europe. The members of the *Nationalverein* accept the situation created by the war; see in Prussia the only Power strong enough to bind together the Germanic race in one mighty whole, and are desirous accordingly to promote indefinite annexation.

Paris,

August 14, 1866.

X.

PRUSSIAN ANNEXATIONS.

(The Nation, October 13, 1866.)

Why, ah! Why, should there be general war in Europe? Where is the fatal necessity that these poor nations should so soon fly at one another's throats again? Where, indeed - and why? When you expound to me the sound reasons for which nations always have gone to war hitherto, then you may ask such a question, and pause for a reply. All I can do for you now is to point out the systems which demonstrate to every rational being, not that war ought to come, but only that it is coming, and that everybody knows it. Reason, indeed! Since when, I pray you, has Reason presided over human affairs?

In the first place, then, Prussia has run mad, mad with pride and ambition; not for the first time in European history. She is not a whit more insolent today, nor more irresistible in her own eyes, than she was the day before Jena. You will have received the proclamation of King William, on occasion of formal taking possession of Hanover. He officially informs the Hanoverians, in their own capital city, that they are his To Have and To Hold "by right of conquest"; and adds that they ought to be charmed by that circumstance, because "whatever is acquired by Prussia is so much gained for Germany"; a subtle proposition, which it would take some time to discuss. Be that as it may, most of the Hanoverians are not of the King's opinion, as they informed him by a deputation a few days ago; and all this while the King of Hanover (or ex-King) at Vienna proclaims to all mankind that the whole of these Prussian transactions in his dominions are null and of none effect; that he stands upon his rights, and "waits for events." What events?

It is proper to add that there is a party in Hanover, partly namely of the *Nationalverein*, which is entirely Prussian; and that thirty-four members of the last Hanover Chamber of Deputies have signed a declaration approving and sustaining the Prussian annexation. Still, with the majority of the people discontented and plainly declaring that they submit only *par force*, and with the ex-King standing on his rights, and "awaiting events," he is evidently one unsettled account, one open question.

Then Prussia is holding military possession of the greater part of Saxony, as a method of exercising a gentle sort of pressure upon that Power, by way of persuading it to yield the Prussian demands. By telegrams received this morning it is stated that the negotiation between Saxony and Prussia, which had come to a stand, is again reopened, with some prospect of peaceable settlement; but this has been announced so often before that one cannot believe it. And it is generally supposed, with some show of reason, that little Saxony would not so stiffly oppose its potent neighbour without promises of support from some quarter or another. In short, here is another unsettled account, and open question; and another potentate in Germany who is "waiting for events." *Grand Dieu!* What events?

Also, we find that the pretence of allowing a voice to the folk of North Schleswig, to pronounce whether they will be German or Danish, has been definitively abandoned. "The Nationalities" are at a discount in Prussia just now; and indeed the *Gazette de la Croix*, great royalist and feudalist organ in Prussia, systematically mocks at the "pretended rights of nationality." During the war, indeed, that was a useful kind of slang to throw out among the Bohemians and Hungarians, in hopes of making them rise upon Austria; but during peace, and in his own case, and among his own populations, King William wants to hear of no such nonsense. So Polish Posen and Danish

Schleswig had better hold their tongues. In short, this Hohenzollern, with a high hand and with an outstretched arm, is arranging Germany to suit himself, and seems for so far to defy the world. The world is not going to be defied in this sort of way with impunity.

And Austria is in the most black and dangerous humour. Never believe, what the English newspapers have been reporting with so much satisfaction, that Austria was destroyed and overthrown for ever at the battle of Sadowa. She has been lower than this ere now, and has been found hard to kill; accepts her humiliation always for the moment; then sets to work to gather up her force again silently, and you find her soon as fresh as ever. At present (and this is the perilous symptom) Austria is diligently conciliating all the populations which live under its sway. Hungary is at last to have her "Constitution of 1848"; and the party of M. Deak is now supreme. A still more remarkable thing has befallen in Galicia (Austrian Poland) – the Emperor has appointed the Count Goluchowski governor of that province, a Pole of the highest patriotic type, and who possesses the love and sympathy of his compatriots; a very marked indication of the new policy of the Austrian Court, to make itself strong in the affections of the various non-German nationalities which compose that Empire.

I may remark that this liberality of Austria towards her share of Poland gives deep umbrage to Russia; and accordingly one cannot be surprised to read among the news of yesterday that:

"General Prince Baryatinski, who was at Geneva, intending to pass the winter there, and who had formed a grand establishment on the shore of the Lake, has been suddenly recalled home to Russia, to take chief command of the Russian army, which is assembling on the frontiers of Turkey."

And which will then be very handy for use against any other Power upon occasion; for the elements of conflagration are on all sides, in every corner of this unhappy combustible continent; and the fuel dry and prompt to kindle; the only question being, Who will apply the match?

Paris,

October 10, 1866.