

A Lasting Peace through the Federation of Europe

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I. Statement of Saint Pierre's Project

Never did the mind of man conceive a scheme nobler, more beautiful, or more useful than that of a lasting peace between all the peoples of Europe. Never did a writer better deserve a respectful hearing than he who suggests means for putting that scheme in practice. What man, if he has a spark of goodness, but must feel his heart glow within him at so fair a prospect? Who would not prefer the illusions of a generous spirit, which overleaps all obstacles, to that dry, repulsive reason whose indifference to the welfare of mankind is ever the chief obstacle to all schemes for its attainment?

I doubt not that many readers will forearm themselves with scepticism, as the best defence against the pleasure of yielding to conviction. I pity the melancholy mood which makes them take obstinacy for wisdom. On the other hand, I trust that every generous spirit will share the thrill of emotion with which I take up the pen on a subject which concerns mankind so closely. *I see in my mind's eye all men joined in the bonds of love. I call before my thoughts a gentle and peaceful brotherhood, all living in unbroken harmony, all guided by the same principles, all finding their happiness in the happiness of all. And, as I dwell upon this touching picture, the idea of an imaginary happiness will cheat me for a few moments into the enjoyment of a real one.*

In these opening words, I could not refrain from giving way to the feelings which filled my heart. Now let us do our best to reason coolly. Resolved as I am to assert nothing which I cannot prove, I have the right to ask the reader in his turn to deny nothing which he is unable to refute. It is not so much the reasoners. I am afraid of as those who, without yielding to my proofs, steadily refuse to bring any arguments against them.

No man can have thought long upon the means of bringing any Government to perfection without realising a host of difficulties and obstacles which flow less from its inherent nature than from its relation to its neighbours. The result of this is that the care which ought to be given to its internal welfare has to be largely spent upon its outward security; and we are compelled to think more of providing for its defence against others than of making it as good as may be in itself. If the social order were really, as is pretended, the work not of passion but of reason, should we have been so slow to see that, in the shaping of it, either too much, or too little, has been done for our happiness? that, each one of us being in the civil state as regards our fellow citizens, but in the state of nature as regards the rest of the world, we have taken all kinds of precautions against private wars only to kindle national wars a thousand times more terrible? and that, in joining a particular group of men, we have really declared ourselves the enemies of the whole race?

If there is any way of reconciling these dangerous contradictions, it is to be found only in such a form of federal Government as shall unite nations by bonds similar to those which already unite their individual members, and place the one no less than the other under the authority of the Law. Even apart from this, such a form of Government seems to carry the day over all others; because it combines the advantages of the small and the large State, because it is powerful enough to hold its neighbours in awe, because it upholds the supremacy of the Law, because it is the only force capable of holding the subject, the ruler, the foreigner equally in check.

Such a form of Government is to some extent a novelty, and its principles have been fully understood only by the moderns. But it was not unknown among the ancients. The Greeks had their Amphictyons and the Etruscans their Lucumonies; the Latins had their *fence* and the Gauls their city-leagues; the Achæan League gave lustre to the death-struggles of Greece. But not one of these Federations was built up with half the wisdom which has gone to the making of the Germanic Body, of the Helvetic League, or of the States General. And if these Bodies are still so scarce and so far from the perfection which we feel they might attain, that is because the realisation of the good invariably falls short of the ideal; because, in politics as in morals, the more we enlarge our knowledge, the more we are forced to recognise the extent of our misery.

In addition to these formal Confederations, it is possible to frame others, less visible but none the less real, which are silently cemented by community of interests, by conformity of habits and customs, by the acceptance of common principles, by other, ties which establish mutual relations between nations politically divided. Thus the Powers of Europe constitute a kind of whole, united by identity of religion, of moral standard, of international law; by letters, by commerce, and finally by a species of balance which is the inevitable result of all these ties and, however little any man may strive consciously to maintain it, is not to be destroyed so easily as many men imagine.

This concert of Europe has not always existed; and the special causes which produced it are still working to preserve it. The truth is that, before the conquests of the Romans, the nations of this continent, all sunk in barbarism and each utterly unknown to the others, had nothing in common beyond the character which belonged to them as men: a character which, degraded by the practice of slavery, differed little enough in their eyes from that which constitutes the brute. Accordingly the Greeks, vain and disputatious, divided mankind, it may almost be said, into two distinct races: the one—their own, of course—made to rule; the other—the entire rest of the world—created solely to be slaves. From this principle it followed that a Gaul or a Spaniard was no more to a Greek than a Kaffir or Red Indian; and the barbarians themselves were as deeply divided from each other as the Greeks from all of them.

But when these men, born to rule, had been conquered by their slaves the Romans, when half of the known universe had passed beneath the same yoke, a common bond of laws and government was established, and all found themselves members of the same empire. This bond was still further tightened by the recognised principle, either supremely wise or supremely foolish, of imparting to the conquered all the rights of the conqueror: above all, by the famous decree of Claudius, which placed all the subjects of Rome on the roll of her citizens.

Thus all members of the Empire were united in one body politic. They were further united by laws and civil institutions which reinforced the political bond by denning equitably, clearly and precisely, so far as this was possible in so vast an empire, the mutual rights and duties of the ruler and the subject, of one citizen as against another. The Code of Theodosius and the later legislation

of Justinian constituted a new bond of justice and reason, which came in to replace the sovereign power at the very moment when it showed unmistakable signs of slackening. This did more than anything else to stave off the break-up of the Empire and to maintain its authority even over the barbarians who ravaged it.

A third and yet stronger bond was furnished by religion; and it cannot be denied that Europe, even now, is indebted more to Christianity than to any other influence for the union, however imperfect, which survives among her members. So true is this that the one nation which has refused to accept Christianity has always remained an alien among the rest. Christianity, so despised in its infancy, ended by serving as a sanctuary to its slanderers. And the Roman Empire, which had persecuted it for centuries with fruitless cruelty, drew from it a power which she could no longer find in her own strength. The missionaries did more for her than any victory; she despatched bishops to redeem the mistake of her generals and triumphed by the aid of the priest when her soldiers were defeated. It is thus that the Franks, the Goths, the Burgundians, the Lombards, the Avars and many others ended by recognising the authority of the Empire which they had mastered, by admitting, at least in appearance, not only the law of the Gospel, but also that of the Prince at whose command it had been preached to them.

Such was the respect which this august body inspired even in its death-throes that, to the very end, its conquerors felt themselves honoured by the acceptance of its titles. The very generals who had humbled the Empire became its ministers and officials; the proudest kings welcomed, nay even canvassed for, the patriciate, the prefecture, the consulate; and, like the lion who fawns upon the man he could easily devour, these terrible conquerors did homage to the imperial throne which they might at any moment have cast down.

Thus the priesthood and the Empire wove a bond between various nations which, without any real community of interests, of rights, or of mutual dependence, found a tie in common principles and beliefs, the influence of which still survives even after its foundation is withdrawn. The venerable phantom of the Roman Empire has never ceased to unite the nations which once formed part of it; and as, after the fall of the Empire, Rome still asserted her authority under another form,¹ Europe, the home of the temporal and spiritual Powers, still retains a sense of fellowship far closer than is to be found elsewhere. The nations of the other continents are too scattered for mutual intercourse; and they lack any other point of union such as Europe has enjoyed.

There are other, and more special, causes for this difference. Europe is more evenly populated, more uniformly fertile; it is easier to pass from one part of her to another. The interests of her princes are united by ties of blood, by commerce, arts and colonies. Communication is made easy by countless rivers winding from one country to another. An inbred love of change impels her inhabitants to constant travel, which frequently leads them to foreign lands. The invention of printing and the general love of letters has given them a basis of common knowledge and common intellectual pursuits. Finally, the number and smallness of her States, the cravings of luxury and the large diversity of climates which Europe offers for their satisfaction, make them all necessary to each other. All these causes combine to make of Europe not, like Asia and Africa, a purely

¹ Respect for the Roman Empire has so completely survived her power that many jurists have questioned whether the Emperor of Germany is not the natural sovereign of the world; and Bartholus carried this doctrine so far as to treat anyone who dared to deny it as a heretic. The writings of the canonists are full of the corresponding doctrine of the temporal supremacy of the Roman Church. [Rousseau's note]

imaginary assemblage of peoples with nothing in common save the name, but a real community with a religion and a moral code, with customs and even laws of its own, which none of the component nations can renounce without causing a shock to the whole frame.

Now look at the other side of the picture.

Observe the perpetual quarrels, the robberies, the usurpations, the revolts, the wars, the murders, which bring daily desolation to this venerable home of philosophy, this brilliant sanctuary of art and science. Consider our fair speeches and our abominable acts, the boundless humanity of our maxims and the boundless cruelty of our deeds; our religion so merciful and our intolerance so ferocious; our policy so mild in our text-books and so harsh in our acts; our rulers so beneficent and our people so wretched; our Governments so temperate and our wars so savage: and then tell me how to reconcile these glaring contradictions; tell me if this alleged brotherhood of the nations of Europe is anything more than a bitter irony to denote their mutual hatred.

But, in truth, what else was to be expected? Every community without laws and without rulers, every union formed and maintained by nothing better than chance, must inevitably fall into quarrels and dissensions at the first change that comes about. The historic union of the nations of Europe has entangled their rights and interests in a thousand complications; they touch each other at so many points that no one of them can move without giving a jar to all the rest; their variances are all the more deadly, as their ties are more closely woven; their frequent quarrels are almost savage as civil wars.

Let us admit then that the Powers of Europe stand to each other strictly in a state of war, and that all the separate treaties between them are in the nature rather of a temporary truce than a real peace: whether because such treaties are seldom guaranteed by any except the contracting parties; or because the respective rights of those parties are never thoroughly determined and are therefore bound—they, or the claims, which pass for rights in the eyes of Powers who recognise no earthly superior—to give rise to fresh wars as soon as a change of circumstances shall have given fresh strength to the claimants.

More than this: the public Law of Europe has never been passed or sanctioned by common agreement; it is not based upon any general principles; it varies incessantly from time to time and from place to place; it is therefore a mass of contradictory rules which nothing but the right of the stronger can reduce to order: so that, in the absence of any sure clue 'to guide her, reason is bound, in every case of doubt, to obey the promptings of self-interest—which, in itself, would make war inevitable, even if all parties desired to be just. With the best intentions in the world, all that can be done is to appeal to arms, or put the question to rest for the moment by a treaty. But the old quarrel soon comes to life again, complicated by others which have arisen in the interval; all is confusion and bewilderment; the truth is obscured so hopelessly that usurpation passes for right and weakness for wrong. In this general welter, all bearings have been so utterly lost that, if we could get back to the solid ground of primitive right, few would be the sovereigns in Europe who would not have to surrender all that they possess.

Another source of war, less obvious but not less real, is that things often change their spirit without any corresponding change of form; that States, hereditary in fact, remain elective in appearance; that we find Parliaments or States General in Monarchies and hereditary rulers in Republics; that a Power, in fact dependent on another, often retains the semblance of autonomy; that all the provinces

ruled by the same sovereign are not always governed by the same laws; that the laws of succession differ in different dominions of the same sovereign; finally, that the tendency of every Government to degenerate is a process which no human power can possibly arrest. Such are the causes, general and special, which unite us only to work our ruin. Such are the reasons which condemn us to write our high-sounding theories of fellowship with hands ever dyed afresh in blood. The causes of the disease, once known, suffice to indicate the remedy, if indeed there is one to be found. Every one can see that what unites any form of society is community of interests, and what disintegrates is their conflict; that either tendency may be changed or modified by a thousand accidents; and therefore that, as soon as a society is founded, some coercive power must be provided to co-ordinate the actions of its members and give to their common interests and mutual obligations that firmness and consistency which they could never acquire of themselves.

It would, indeed, be a great mistake to suppose that the reign of violence, described above, could ever be remedied by the mere force of circumstances, or without the aid of human wisdom. The present balance of Europe is just firm enough to remain in perpetual oscillation without losing itself altogether; and, if our troubles cannot increase, still less can we put an end to them, seeing that any sweeping revolution is henceforth an impossibility.

In proof of this conclusion, let us begin by glancing at the present condition of Europe. The lie of the mountains, seas and rivers, which serve as frontiers for the various nations who people it, seems to have fixed for ever their number and their size. We may fairly say that the political order of the continent is, in some sense, the work of nature.

In truth, we must not suppose that this much vaunted balance is the work of any man, or that any man has deliberately done anything to maintain it. It is there; and men who do not feel themselves strong enough to break it conceal the selfishness of their designs under the pretext of preserving it.

But, whether we are aware of it or no, the balance continues to support itself without the aid of any special intervention; if it were to break for a moment on one side, it would soon restore itself on another; so that, if the princes who are accused of aiming at universal monarchy were in reality guilty of any such project, they gave more proof of ambition than of genius. How could any man look such a project in the face without instantly perceiving its absurdity, without realising that there is not a single potentate in Europe so much stronger than the others as ever to have a chance of making himself their master? No conqueror has ever changed the face of the world unless, appearing suddenly with an army of unexpected strength, or with foreign troops hardened to war in other service, he fell upon nations who were either disarmed, or divided, or undisciplined. But where is a European prince to find an army of unexpected strength sufficient to crush all the others, when the most powerful of them has only a fraction of the strength belonging to the whole body and all the rest are watching so carefully to prevent him? Will he have a larger army than all of them put together? It is impossible; or he will only ruin himself the sooner; or his troops will be less good, just because they are more numerous. Will his troops be better trained? They will be proportionally fewer; not to mention that discipline is now everywhere the same, or will have become so before long. Will he have more money? Its sources are open to all, and no great conquest was ever made by money. Will he fall upon his enemies suddenly? Famine, or fortresses, will bar his way at every step. Will he strive to win his way inch by inch? Then he will give his enemies time to unite their forces to resist him; time, money and men will all be bound to fail him. Will he try to divide the other Powers and conquer them one by one? The traditional maxims of Europe make such a policy impossible; the very most stupid of princes would never fall into such a trap as that. In a word, as all

the sources of power are equally open to them all, the resistance is in the long run as strong as the attack; and time soon repairs the sudden accidents of fortune, if not for each prince individually, at least for the general balance of the whole.

Now let us take the supposition that two or three potentates league themselves together to conquer all the rest. Those three potentates, take them where you please, will not together have behind them as much as half of Europe. The other half will, quite certainly, make common cause against them. They will therefore have to conquer an enemy stronger than themselves. I may add that their interests are too contradictory and their mutual jealousies too great to allow of such a project ever being formed. I may add further that, even if it were formed, even if it were put in act, even if it had some measure of success, that very success would sow the seeds of discord among our victorious allies. It is beyond the bounds of possibility that the prizes of victory should be so equally divided, that each will be equally satisfied with his share. The least fortunate will soon set himself to resist the further progress of his rivals, who in their turn, for the same reason, will speedily fall out with one another. I doubt whether, since the beginning of the world, there has been a single case in which three, or even two, Powers have joined forces for the conquest of others, without quarrelling over their contingents, or over the division of the spoil, and without, in consequence of this disagreement, promptly giving new strength to their common enemy. From all this it appears improbable that, under any supposition, either a king, or a league of kings, is in a position to bring about any serious or permanent change in the established order of Europe.

This does not mean that the Alps, the Rhine, the sea and the Pyrenees are in themselves a barrier which no ambition can surmount; but that these barriers are supported by others which either block the path of the enemy, or serve to restore the old frontiers directly the first onslaught has spent its force. The real strength of the existing order is, in truth, to be found partly in the play of conflicting policies which, in nine cases out of ten, keep each other mutually in check. But there is another bulwark more formidable yet. This is the Germanic Body, which lies almost in the centre of Europe and holds all the other parts in their place, serving still more perhaps for the protection of its neighbours than for that of its own members: a Body formidable to all by its size and by the number and valour of its component peoples; but of service to all by its constitution which, depriving it both of the means and the will to conquer, makes it the rock on which all schemes of conquest are doomed infallibly to break. In spite of all its defects, it is certain that, so long as that constitution endures, the balance of Europe will never be broken; that no potentate need fear to be cast from his throne by any of his rivals; and that the Treaty of Westphalia will perhaps for ever remain the foundation of our international system. Accordingly, the system of public Right, which the Germans study so diligently, is even more important than they suppose. It is the public Right not only of Germany, but even, in many ways, of Europe as a whole.

But the established order, if indestructible, is for that very reason the more liable to constant storms. Between the Powers of Europe there is a constant action and reaction which, without overthrowing them altogether, keeps them in continual agitation. Ineffectual as they are, these shocks perpetually renew themselves, like the waves which for ever trouble the surface of the sea without ever altering its level. The nations are incessantly ravaged, without any appreciable advantage to the sovereigns.

It would be easy for me to draw the same lesson from a study of the special interests of all the Courts of Europe; to show that those interests are so cunningly interwoven as to hold their respective forces mutually in check. But current theories of commerce and money have bred a political bigotry which works such rapid changes in the apparent interests of princes that it is

impossible to arrive at any firm conclusion as to their real interests, seeing that everything now depends upon the economic systems, for the most part thoroughly crazy, which chance to flit through a minister's brain. For all that, commerce tends more and more to establish a balance between State and State; and by depriving certain Powers of the exclusive advantages they once drew from it, deprives them at the same time of one of the chief weapons they once employed for imposing their will upon the rest.²

If I have dwelt upon the equal distribution of forces which springs from the present constitution of Europe, it was in order to draw from it a conclusion of the highest importance to the project for establishing *a* general league among her peoples. For, if we are to form a solid and lasting Federation, we must have put all the members of it in a state of such mutual dependence that no one of them is singly in a position to overbear all the others, and that separate leagues, capable of thwarting the general League, shall meet with obstacles formidable enough to hinder their formation. Failing this, the general League will be nothing but an empty name; and under an appearance of subjection, every member of *it* will in reality be independent. But, if those obstacles are such as *I* have described at the present moment—a moment when all the Powers are entirely free to form separate leagues and offensive alliances—judge what they would become, if there were a general League, fully armed and ready at any moment to forestall those who should conceive the design of destroying or resisting it. That in itself is enough to show that such a Federation, so far from ending in mere vain discussions to be set at defiance with impunity, would on the contrary give birth to an effective Power, capable of forcing any ambitious ruler to observe the terms of the general League which he has joined with others to set up.

From the above survey three certain conclusions may be drawn: the first that, Turkey excepted, there already exists among the nations of Europe a bond, imperfect indeed but still closer than the loose and general ties which exist between man and man in the state of nature; the second, that the imperfections of this association make the state of those who belong to it worse than it would be if they formed no community at all; the third, that these rudimentary ties, which make such an association injurious, make it at the same time readily capable of improvement, that all its members might easily find their happiness in what actually makes their misery, that from the state of war which now reigns among them they might perfectly well draw an abiding peace.

Let us now consider the means by which this great work, begun by chance, may be completed by wisdom. Let us ask how the free and voluntary association which now unites the States of Europe may be converted, by taking to itself the strength and firmness of a genuine Body politic, into an authentic Federation. There is no doubt that such a Federation, by giving to the existing bond the completeness which it now lacks, will increase all its advantages and compel all the parts to unite for the benefit of the whole body. But, before this result can be brought about, the Federation must embrace all the important Powers in its membership; it must have a Legislative Body, with powers to pass laws and ordinances binding upon all its members; it must have a coercive force capable of

² There has been a great change since I wrote these words (1756); but my principle will always remain true. It is easy enough to foresee, for instance, that England, with all her glory, will be ruined within twenty years, and, moreover, will have lost what remains of her freedom. All the world asserts that agriculture nourishes in that island. I would wager anything that it is dying fast. London grows every day; therefore the Kingdom is being depleted. The English have set their minds on being conquerors; therefore they are hastening to be slaves. [Rousseau's note, 1761. For *what remains of her freedom*, he had originally written simply *her freedom*.]

compelling every State to obey its common resolves whether in the way of command or of prohibition; finally, it must be strong and firm enough to make it impossible for any member to withdraw at his own pleasure the moment he conceives his private interest to clash with that of the whole body. Those are the sure signs by which the world may satisfy itself of the wisdom, usefulness and solidity of our structure. It only remains now to carry our speculation a stage further: to discover by analysis what are the practical consequences which should flow from it, what the means best fitted to realise it, and whether there is any reasonable hope of putting it in execution.

From time to time there are convoked in Europe certain general assemblies called Congresses, to which deputies from every State repair solemnly, to return in the same way; where men assemble to say nothing; where all the affairs of Europe are overhauled in detail; where men lay their heads together to deliberate whether the table they sit at shall be square or round; whether the hall shall have six doors or five; whether one plenipotentiary shall sit with his face or his back to the window, whether another shall come two inches further, or less far, into the room on a visit of ceremony: in fine, on a thousand questions of equal importance which have been discussed without any settlement for the last three centuries and are assuredly very fit to engross the statesmen of our own.

It is possible that the members of one of these assemblies may, once in a way, be blessed with common sense. It is even not impossible that they may have a sincere desire for the general good. For reasons to be assigned shortly, it is further conceivable that, after smoothing away a thousand difficulties, they will receive orders from their sovereigns to sign the Constitution of the Federation of Europe, which I suppose to have been summarily drafted in the five following Articles.

By the first, the contracting sovereigns shall enter into a perpetual and irrevocable alliance, and shall appoint plenipotentiaries to hold, in a specified place, a permanent Diet or Congress, at which all questions at issue between the contracting parties shall be settled and terminated by way of arbitration or judicial pronouncement.

By the second shall be specified the number of the sovereigns whose plenipotentiaries shall have a vote in the Diet; those who shall be invited to accede to the Treaty; the order, date and method by which the presidency shall pass, at equal intervals, from one to another; finally the quota of their respective contributions and the method of raising them for the defrayal of the common expenses.

By the third, the Federation shall guarantee to each of its members the possession and government of all the dominions which he holds at the moment of the Treaty, as well as the manner of succession to them, elective or hereditary, as established by the fundamental laws of each Province. Further, with a view to suppressing at a single stroke and at the source those incessant disputes which arise between them, it shall be agreed to take as basis of the respective rights of the contracting Parties the possession of the moment, as settled in each case by the last treaty concluded, with a general renunciation on all sides of every anterior claim: exception being made for all disputed successions and other claims to fall due in the future, all which shall be determined by arbitration of the Diet, to the absolute exclusion of all attempts to settle the matter by force or to take arms against each other under any pretext whatsoever.

By the fourth shall be specified the conditions under which any Confederate who may break this Treaty shall be put to the ban of Europe and proscribed as a public enemy: namely, if he shall have refused to execute the decisions of the Grand Alliance, if he shall have made preparations for war, if

he shall have made a treaty hostile to the ends of the Federation, if he shall have taken up arms to resist it or to attack any one of the Confederates.

By the same Article, it shall be agreed that all the Confederates shall arm and take the offensive, conjointly and at the common expense, against any State put to the ban of Europe, and that they shall not desist until the moment when he shall have laid down his arms, carried out the decisions and orders of the Diet, made amends for his offence, paid all the costs and atoned even for such warlike preparations as he may have made in defiance of the Treaty.

Finally, by the fifth Article, the plenipotentiaries of the Federation of Europe shall receive standing powers to frame—provisionally by a bare majority, definitively (after an interval of five years) by a majority of three-quarters—those measures which, on the instruction of their Courts, they shall consider expedient with a view to the greatest possible advantage of the Commonwealth of Europe and of its members, all and single, In none of the above five Articles, however, shall any change ever be made except with the unanimous consent of the Confederates.

These five Articles, thus summarised and reduced to the most general form, are, I am aware, exposed to countless petty objections, several of which would call for lengthy explanations. But petty objections are easily removed in case of need; and, in an enterprise of this importance, they are beside the point. When the policy of the Congress comes to be considered, a thousand obstacles will present themselves and ten thousand ways of removing them. It is *our* business to ask whether, in the nature of the case, the enterprise is possible or no. We should lose ourselves in volumes of trifles, if we had to foresee all and find an answer to all. Confining ourselves, as we do, to incontestable principles, we have no call to satisfy every reader, nor to solve every objection, nor to say how every detail will be settled. It is enough to show that a settlement is possible.

In judging of this scheme, then, what are the questions that have to be considered? Two only; for I will not insult the reader by proving to him the general proposition that the state of peace is a better thing than the state of war.

The first question is whether the Federation suggested would be certain to answer its purpose and give a solid and abiding peace to Europe. The second, whether it is for the interest of the various sovereigns to establish such a Federation and to pay the price I have mentioned to obtain a lasting peace.

When we have thus proved our scheme to be for the advantage both of Europe as a whole and of all the States composing her, what obstacle is left, we ask, that can possibly prevent the execution of a design which, after all, depends solely upon the will of those concerned?

In discussing the first Article, for instance, let us apply what has been said above of the general order now established in Europe and of the common resolve which confines each Power practically within its traditional limits and does not allow it wholly to crush any of the others. In order to make my argument clear, I give here a list of the nineteen Powers here assumed to constitute the Commonwealth of Europe, to each of which I give an equal voice, making altogether nineteen votes, in the deliberations of the Diet:

The Emperor of the Romans,³
 The Emperor of Russia,
 The King of France,
 The King of Spain,
 The King of England,
 The States General,⁴
 The King of Denmark,
 Sweden,
 Poland,
 The King of Portugal,
 The Sovereign of Rome,⁵
 The King of Prussia,
 The Elector of Bavaria and his associates,
 The Elector Palatine and his associates,
 The Swiss and their associates, The ecclesiastical Electors and their associates,
 The Republic of Venice and her associates,
 The King of Naples,
 The King of Sardinia.

Several minor sovereigns—for instance, the Republic of Genoa, the dukes of Parma and Modena, and others—are omitted from the list. They will be associated with one or other of the less powerful States, with whom they will share a vote, after the fashion of the joint vote (*votum curiatum*) of the Counts of the Empire. It is useless to make the list more precise because, at any moment before the scheme is put in force, things may happen which, without affecting the principle of the measure, may call for alterations of detail.

A glance at the list will be enough to prove conclusively that it is impossible either for any single Power to resist the united action of all the others, or for any partial league to be formed capable of defying the Federation as a whole.

How, indeed, could such a league be formed?

Between the more powerful of the Confederates? We have already proved that such a league could never last; and with the list before us, it is easy enough to see that it could never be reconciled with the traditional policy of any of the great Powers, or with the interests inherent in their respective positions. Between a large State and a number of small ones? Then the other large States, with the Federation behind them, will crush such a league in no time; and it is clear that the Grand Alliance, being perpetually armed and concerted for action, will find no difficulty in forestalling and crushing in advance any partial and seditious alliance, likely to trouble the peace and the public order of Europe. Look at the cohesion of the Germanic Body: and that, in spite of its defective discipline and the glaring inequality of its members. Is there a single prince, not even excepting the most powerful, who would dare to expose himself to the ban of the Empire by openly defying its laws, unless indeed he had good reason to suppose that the Empire would never have the courage to take action against the culprit in good earnest?

³ i.e. the Potentate commonly, but incorrectly, called the Emperor of Germany. [Translator's note]

⁴ i.e. the Dutch Netherlands. [Translator's note]

⁵ i.e. the Pope. [Translator's note]

That is why I regard it as proved that the Diet of Europe, once established, will have no rebellion to fear and that no abuses which may creep in are ever likely to defeat the aims with which it was founded. It remains to ask whether those aims are really secured by the proposed Federation.

With a view to answering this question, let us consider the motives by which princes are commonly led to take up arms. These motives are: either to make conquests, or to protect themselves from aggression, or to weaken a too powerful neighbour, or to maintain their rights against attack, or to settle a difference which has defied friendly negotiation, or, lastly, to fulfil some treaty obligation. There is no cause or pretext of war which cannot be brought under one or other of these six heads; and it is manifest that not one of the six is left standing under the new order which I propose.

As for the first, the thought of conquests will have to be given up from the absolute impossibility of making them. The aggressor is sure to find his way barred by forces stronger than his own; he is powerless to gain anything, and he risks the loss of all he has. At present, an ambitious prince, who wishes to extend his dominions in Europe, relies upon two weapons; he begins by securing strong allies, and then seeks to catch his enemy unawares. But, under the new conditions, no special alliance could stand for a moment before the General Alliance, which is stronger and subsists permanently; and as there is no longer any pretext for arming, no prince can do so without being at once detected, stopped and punished by the Federation always under arms.

Again, the very thing which destroys all hope of conquest relieves him at the same time from all fear of being attacked. And, under the guarantee of all Europe, not only are his territories as strongly assured to him as the possessions of any citizen in a well-ordered community, but they are even more so than they were when he was their sole and only defender; in exactly the same proportion as the whole of Europe is stronger than any one of her princes taken singly.

Thirdly, having no more reason to fear his neighbour, neither has he any more reason for desiring to weaken him; and having no hope of success in such an enterprise, he is under no temptation to attempt it.

As for the maintenance of his rights, I begin by remarking that a whole host of pettifogging claims and obscure pretensions will be swept away at one stroke by the third Article of Federation, which settles for ever all the conflicting rights of the allied princes, on the basis of what they actually hold. By the same Article, we have a clear principle for settling all claims and pretensions which may be raised in the future: each will be decided in the Diet, as it arises. It may be added that, if my rights are attacked, I am bound to defend them by the weapon used against me. They cannot be attacked by force of arms without bringing the ban of the Diet upon the assailant. It is not by arms then that I shall have to defend them. The same may be said of injuries, wrongs and claims for damage—in short, of all the unforeseen differences which may arise between two Sovereigns. The same Power which is bound to maintain their rights is bound also to redress their grievances.

As for the last head, the question settles itself. It is clear at a glance that, having no longer any assailant to fear, I have no longer any use for treaties of defence; and that, as no treaty can be so strong or so trustworthy as that guaranteed by the Grand Federation, any other treaty would be useless, illegitimate and consequently null and void.

For all these reasons it is impossible that the Federation, once established, can leave any seed of war between its members; impossible that our object, an abiding peace, should not be absolutely attained by the proposed system, if it were once set on foot.

It now remains to settle the other question: that relating to the interests of the several parties concerned. For everyone knows that the general interest is powerless to silence that of the individual. To prove that peace, as a general principle, is a better thing than war is to say nothing to the man who has private reasons for preferring war to peace; to show him the means for securing a lasting peace is only to encourage him to work against them.

In truth, we shall be told: 'You are taking from Sovereigns the right of doing themselves justice; that is to say, the precious right of being unjust when they please. You are taking from them the power of making themselves great at the expense of their neighbours. You are forcing them to renounce those antiquated claims whose value depends on their obscurity and which grow with every fresh growth in power; that parade of might and terror with which they love to awe the world; that pride of conquest which is the chief source of their glory. In one word, you are forcing them to be equitable and peaceful. What amends do you propose to make them for all these cruel privations?'

I do not venture to answer, with the Abbé de Saint Pierre, that the true glory of princes lies in serving the good of the community and the happiness of their subjects, that their highest interest is to win a good name, and that such a name is awarded by the wise in exact proportion to the good which the ruler has done in the world; that the scheme of founding a lasting peace is the most lofty ever conceived and the most certain, if executed, to cover its author with undying glory; that such a scheme would not only do a greater service than any other to the people but also confer higher honour upon the Sovereign; that this is the only ideal not stained with blood, rapine, curses and tears; in a word, that the surest way for a Sovereign to raise himself above the common herd of kings is to labour for the good of the community. Let such language, which has covered the author and his projects with ridicule in all the council-chambers of Europe, be left to irresponsible declaimers. But let us never join in the cry against the arguments it embodies; and, whatever may be the truth as to the virtues of princes, let us confine ourselves to their interests.

All the Powers of Europe have rights, or claims, as against each other. These rights are, from the nature of the case, incapable of ever being finally adjusted, because there is no common and unvarying standard for judging of their merits and because they are often based upon facts which are either disputed or of doubtful interpretation. Nor are the quarrels which spring from them any more capable of being settled beyond appeal, whether in default of any recognised umpire, or because, when the chance offers, every prince goes back shamelessly upon the cessions which have been forcibly torn from him by a stronger Power through treaties, or after an unsuccessful war. It is therefore a mistake to think only of the claims we have on others, and to forget those they have on us, when in reality there is no more justice on one side than the other and both are equally capable of acquiring the means for enforcing their demands. Directly fortune is taken for arbiter, actual possession acquires a value which no wise man will stake against a possible gain in the future, even where chances are equal on both sides; and the rich man who, in the hope of doubling his fortune, ventures to risk it all upon one throw is blamed by the whole world. We have shown, however, that in schemes of self-aggrandisement the chances are never equal and that, even in the present order of things, the aggressor is always bound to find his enemy stronger than himself. The inevitable conclusion is that, the more powerful having no motive for staking his possessions and the weaker

no hope of gaming on the throw, both will find their advantage in renouncing what they would like to win, in order to secure what they possess.

Think of the waste of men, of money, of strength in every form; think of the exhaustion in which any State is plunged by the most successful war; compare these ravages with the profit which results: and we shall find that we commonly lose where we suppose ourselves to gain; that the conqueror, always enfeebled by the war, can only console himself with the thought that the conquered is still more enfeebled than himself. And even this advantage is more in appearance than reality; for the strength which has been gained upon our opponent has been lost against the neutrals who, without changing themselves, are nevertheless stronger relatively to us by all the strength that we have lost.

If all kings have not yet thrown off the folly of conquests, it would seem that the wiser of them at any rate are beginning to realise that they sometimes cost more than they are worth. Without going into a thousand distinctions which would only distract us from our purpose, we may say broadly that a prince who, in extending his frontiers, loses as many of his old subjects as he gains new ones in the process only weakens himself by his aggrandisement; because, with a larger territory to defend, he has no more soldiers to defend it. Everyone knows, however, that, as war is waged nowadays, the smallest part of the resultant loss of life is due to losses in the field.

Certainly, that is the loss which everyone sees and feels. But all the time there is taking place through the whole kingdom a loss far more serious and more irreparable than that of those who die: a loss due to those who are not born, to the increase of taxes, to the interruption of trade, to the desertion of the fields, to the neglect of their cultivation. This evil, which no one sees at first, makes itself felt cruelly in the end. And then the king is astonished to find himself so weak, as the result of making himself so strong.

There is another thing which makes conquests even less profitable than they used to be. It is that kings have at last learned the secret of doubling or trebling their power not only without enlarging their territory but even, it may be, by contracting it, after the wise example of Hadrian. The secret is that the strength of kings lies only in that of their subjects; and it follows from what I have just said that, given two States supporting an equal number of inhabitants, that which covers the smaller extent of territory is in reality the more powerful. It is then by good laws, by a wise discipline, by large views on economic policy that a sagacious sovereign is sure of increasing his power without incurring any hazard. It is in carrying out works more useful than his neighbours' that he makes conquests—the only true conquests—at their expense; and every subject born to him in excess of theirs is another enemy killed.

It may be objected that I prove too much and that, if the matter were as I put it, everyone being manifestly interested in avoiding war and the public interest combining with that of individuals for the preservation of peace, that peace ought to come of itself and of itself last for ever without any need of Federation. Given the present state of things, however, that would be to reason very ill. It is quite true that it would be much better for all men to remain always at peace. But so long as there is no security for this, everyone, having no guarantee that he can avoid war, is anxious to begin it at the moment which suits his own interest and so forestall a neighbour, who would not fail to forestall the attack in his turn at any moment favourable to himself, so that many wars, even offensive wars, are rather in the nature of unjust precautions for the protection of the assailant's own possessions than a device for seizing those of others. However salutary it may be in theory to obey the dictates

of public spirit, it is certain that, politically and even morally, those dictates are liable to prove fatal to the man who persists in observing them with all the world when no one thinks of observing them towards him.

I have nothing to say on the question of military parade because, when supported by no solid foundation either of hope or fear, such parade is mere child's play, and kings have no business to keep dolls. I am equally silent as to the glory of conquest because, if there really were men who would break their hearts at the thought of having no one to massacre, our duty would be not to reason with such monsters but to deprive them of all means for putting, their murderous frenzy into act. All solid grounds of war being swept away by the third Article, no king can have any motive for kindling its horrors against a rival which would not furnish that rival with equally strong grounds for kindling them against him. And it is a great gain to be delivered from a danger in which each finds himself alone against the world.

As for the dependence of all upon the Tribunal of Europe, it is abundantly clear by the same Article that the rights of sovereignty, so far from being weakened, will, on the contrary, be strengthened and confirmed. For that Article guarantees to each Sovereign not only that his dominions shall be protected against foreign invasion, but also that his authority shall be upheld against the rebellion of his subjects. The prince accordingly will be none the less absolute, and his crown will be more fully assured. By submitting to the decision of the Diet in all disputes with his equals, and by surrendering the perilous right of seizing other men's possessions, he is, in fact, doing nothing more than securing his real rights and renouncing those which are purely fictitious. Besides, there is all the difference in the world between dependence upon a rival and dependence upon a Body of which he is himself a member and of which each member in turn becomes the head. In the latter case, the pledges that are given him are really the security for his freedom: it would be forfeited, if lodged with a superior; it is confirmed, when lodged with equals. In support of this, I appeal to the example of the Germanic Body. It is quite true that the constitution of this is such as to trench in many ways upon the sovereignty of its members. It is quite true that their position is consequently less favourable than it would be in the Federation of Europe. But, in spite of those drawbacks, there is not one of them, however jealous he may be of his dignity, who would choose, even if he had the power, to win absolute independence at the cost of severance from the Empire.

Observe further that the head of the Germanic Body, being permanent, is bound to usurp ceaselessly upon the rights of the other members. In the Diet of Europe, where the presidency passes from one to another without any regard to disparities of power, no such danger is to be feared.

There is yet another consideration which is likely to weigh even more with men so greedy of money as princes always are. Not only will an unbroken peace give them, as well as their subjects, every means of amassing abundant riches; they will also be spared vast expenses by the reduction of their military budget, of those innumerable fortresses, of those enormous armies, which swallow up their revenue and become daily more and more of a burden to their subjects and themselves. I know that it will not suit all Sovereigns to suppress their army bodily and leave themselves with no force in hand to crush an unexpected revolt or repel a sudden invasion. I know also that they will have their contingent to furnish to the Federation with a view both to guarding the frontiers of Europe and to maintaining the federal army whose duty it will be, in case of need, to carry out the decrees of the Diet. But, when all these charges are met and, at the same time, the extraordinary expenses of war suppressed for ever, there will still be a saving of more than half the ordinary military budget; and that saving can be divided between the relief of the subject and the coffers of the prince. The result

will be that the people will have to pay much less; that the prince, being much better off, will be in a position to encourage commerce, agriculture and the arts and to create useful foundations which will still further increase his subjects' riches and his own; and, over and above all this, that the State will enjoy a security far greater than it now draws from all its armies and from all that warlike parade which drains its strength in the very bosom of peace.

It will be said perhaps that the frontier countries of Europe will then be relatively worse off, since they will still have to face the chance of war either with the Turk, or the African Corsairs, or the Tartars.

The answer to this is (1) that those countries are under the same necessity at present, from which it follows that they will not be put to any positive disadvantage, but will only have an advantage the less; and this, in fact, is an inevitable consequence of their geographical position; (2) that, being freed from all anxiety on the side of Europe, they will be much more capable of resisting attacks from other quarters; (3) that the suppression of all fortresses in the inner parts of Europe and of all expenses needed for their maintenance would enable the Federation to build a large number on the eastern frontiers without bringing any fresh charge upon its members; (4) that these fortresses, built, maintained and garrisoned at the common charge, will mean so many fresh guarantees, and so much expense saved to the frontier Powers for whose benefit they are built; (5) that the troops of the Federation, posted on the frontiers of Europe, will stand permanently ready to drive back the invader; (6) and finally, that a Body so formidable as the Commonwealth of Europe will make the foreigner think twice before attacking any of its members: just as the Germanic Body, though infinitely less powerful, is still strong enough to command the respect of its neighbours and offer valuable protection to all the princes who compose it.

It may be further objected that, when the nations of Europe have ceased to war among themselves, the art of war will be gradually forgotten, that her armies will lose their courage and discipline, that there will be no more soldiers or generals, and that Europe will lie at the mercy of the first comer.

My answer is that one of two things will happen. Either the neighbours of Europe will attack her and wage war against her; or they will be afraid of the Federation and leave her in peace.

In the former case, there will be plenty of opportunities for training military genius and talent, for practising and hardening our troops. The armies of the Federation will, in this way, be the school of Europe. Men will go to the frontiers to learn war, while in the heart of Europe there will reign the blessings of peace. The advantages of war and peace will be combined. Does anyone believe that no nation can become warlike without perpetual civil war? And are the French the less brave because Anjou and Touraine are not constantly fighting with each other?

In the latter case, it is true that there can be no more hardening for war. But neither will there be any more need for it. Of what use would it be to train for war, when you have no intention of ever making it? And which is the better course—to cultivate a pernicious art, or to destroy the need of it for ever? >If the secret of perpetual health were discovered, would there be any sense in rejecting it, on the ground that doctors must not be deprived of the chance of gaining experience? And in making this parallel we have still to ask which of the two arts is the more beneficent in itself and the more deserving of encouragement.

Let no one threaten us with a sudden invasion. It is perfectly obvious that Europe has no invader to fear, and that the 'first comer' will never come. The day of those barbarian irruptions, which seemed to fall from the clouds, is gone for ever. Now that the whole surface of the earth lies bare to our scrutiny, no danger can reach us which we have not foreseen for years. There is no Power in the world now capable of threatening all Europe ; and if one ever appears, Europe will either have time to make ready or, at the worst, will be much more capable of resisting him when she is united in one corporate body than she is now, when she would have to put a sudden end to all her quarrels and league herself in haste against the common invader.

We have thus seen that all the alleged evils of Federation, when duly weighed, come to nothing. I now ask whether anyone in the world would dare to say as much of those which flow from the recognised method of settling disputes between one prince and another—the appeal to the sword : a method inseparable from the state of anarchy and war, which necessarily springs from the absolute independence conceded to all sovereigns under the imperfect conditions now prevailing in Europe. In order to put the reader in a better position to estimate these evils, I will give a short summary of them and leave him to judge of their significance.

(1) The existence of no solid right, except that of the stronger. (2) The perpetual and inevitable shifting of the balance from nation to nation, which makes it impossible for any one of them to keep in its grasp the power it holds at any moment. (3) The absence of complete security for any nation, so long as its neighbours are not subdued or annihilated. (4) The impossibility of annihilating them, in view of the fact that, directly one is conquered, another springs up in its place. (5) The necessity of endless precautions and expenses to keep guard against possible enemies. (6) Weakness, and consequent exposure to attack, during minorities or revolts ; for, when the State is divided, who can support one faction against the other? (7) The absence of any guarantee for international agreements. (8) The impossibility of obtaining justice from others without enormous cost and loss, which even so do not always obtain it, while the object in dispute is seldom worth the price. (9) The invariable risk of the prince's possessions, and sometimes of his life, in the quest of his rights. (10) The necessity of taking part against his will in the quarrels of his neighbours and of engaging in war at the moment when he would least have chosen it. (11) The stoppage of trade and revenue at the moment when they are most indispensable. (12) The perpetual dangers threatened by a powerful neighbour, if the prince is weak, and by an armed alliance, if he is strong. (13) Finally, the uselessness of prudence, when everything is left to chance; the perpetual impoverishment of nations; the enfeeblement of the State alike in victory and defeat; and the total inability of the prince ever to establish good government, ever to count upon his own possessions, ever to secure happiness either for himself or for his subjects.

In the same way, let us sum up the advantages which the arbitration of Europe would confer upon the princes who agree to it.

1. Absolute certainty that all their disputes, present and future, will always be settled without war: a certainty incomparably more useful to princes than total immunity from lawsuits to the individual.
2. The abolition, either total or nearly so, of matters of dispute, thanks to the extinction of all existing claims—a boon which, in itself, will make up for all the prince renounces and secure what he possesses.

3. An absolute and indefeasible guarantee not only for the persons of the prince and his family, but also for his dominions and the law of succession recognised by the custom of each province: and this, not only against the ambition of unjust and grasping claimants, but also against the rebellion of his subjects.
4. Absolute security for the execution of all engagements between princes, under the guarantee of the Commonwealth of Europe.
5. Perfect freedom of trade for all time whether between State and State, or between any of them and the more distant regions of the earth.
6. The total suppression for all time of the extraordinary military expenses incurred by land and sea in time of war, and a considerable reduction of the corresponding ordinary expenses in time of peace.
7. A notable increase of population and agriculture, of the public wealth and the revenues of the prince.
8. An open door for all useful foundations, calculated to increase the power and glory of the Sovereign, the public wealth and the happiness of the subject.

As I have already said, *I* leave it to the reader to weigh all these points and to make his own comparison between the state of peace which results from Federation and the state of war which follows from the present anarchy of Europe.

If our reasoning has been sound in the exposition of this Project, it has been proved: firstly, that the establishment of a lasting peace depends solely upon the consent of the Sovereigns concerned and offers no obstacle except what may be expected from their opposition; secondly, that the establishment of such a peace would be profitable to them in all manner of ways, and that, even from their point of view, there is no comparison between its drawbacks and advantages; thirdly, that it is reasonable to expect their decision in this matter will coincide with their plain interest; and lastly, that such a peace, once established on the proposed basis, will be solid and lasting and will completely fulfil the purpose with which it was concluded.

This is not, of course, to say that the Sovereigns will adopt this project—who can answer for the reason of another?—but only that they would adopt it, if they took counsel of their true interest. It must be observed that we have not assumed men such as they ought to be, good, generous, disinterested and devoted to the public good from motives of pure humanity; but such as they are, unjust, grasping and setting their own interest above all things. All that I do assume in them is understanding enough to see their own interest, and courage enough to act for their own happiness. If, in spite of all this, the project remains unrealised, that is not because it is Utopian ; it is because men are crazy, and because to be sane in a world of madmen is in itself a kind of madness.

II. Rousseau's Criticism of Saint Pierre's Project

The Scheme of a lasting peace was of all others the most worthy to fascinate a man of high principle. Of all those which engaged the Abbé de Saint Pierre, it was therefore that over which he

brooded the longest and followed up with the greatest obstinacy. It is indeed hard to give any other name to the missionary zeal which never failed him in this enterprise : and that, in spite of the manifest impossibility of success, the ridicule which he brought upon himself day by day and the rebuffs which he had continually to endure. It would seem that his well-balanced spirit, intent solely on the public good, led him to measure his devotion to a cause purely by its utility, never letting himself be daunted by difficulties, never thinking of his own personal interest.

If ever moral truth were demonstrated, I should say it is the utility, national no less than international, of this project. The advantages which its realisation would bring to each prince, to each nation, to the whole of Europe, are immense, manifest, incontestable; and nothing could be more solid or more precise than the arguments which the author employs to prove them. Realise his Commonwealth of Europe for a single day, and you may be sure it will last for ever ; so fully would experience convince men that their own gain is to be found in the good of all. For all that, the very princes who would defend it with all their might, if it once existed, would resist with all their might any proposal for its creation; they will as infallibly throw obstacles in the way of its establishment as they would in the way of its abolition. Accordingly Saint Pierre's book on *A Lasting Peace* seems to be ineffectual for founding it and unnecessary for maintaining it. 'It is then an empty dream, ' will be the verdict of the impatient reader. No: it is a work of solid judgment, and it is of the last importance for us to possess it.

Let us begin by examining the criticisms of those who judge of reasons not by reason, but by the event, and who have no objection to bring against the scheme except that it has never been put in practice. Well, such men will doubtless say, if its advantages are so certain, why is it that the Sovereigns of Europe have never adopted it? Why do they ignore their own interest, if that interest is demonstrated so clearly? Do we see them reject any other means of increasing their revenue and their power? And, if this means were as efficacious as you pretend, is it conceivable that they should be less eager to try it than any of the schemes they have pursued for all these centuries? that they should prefer a thousand delusive expedients to so evident an advantage?

Yes, without doubt, that is conceivable; unless it be assumed that their wisdom is equal to their ambition, and that the more keenly they desire their own interest, the more clearly do they see it. The truth is that the severest penalty of excessive self-love is that it always defeats itself, that the keener the passion the more certain it is to be cheated of its goal. Let us distinguish then, in politics as in morals, between real and apparent interest. The former would be secured by an abiding peace; that is demonstrated in the *Project*. The latter is to be found in' the state of absolute independence which frees Sovereigns from the reign of Law only to put them under that of chance. They are, in fact, like a madcap pilot who, to show off his idle skill and his power over his sailors, would rather toss to and fro among the rocks in a storm than moor his vessel at anchor in safety.

The whole life of kings, or of those on whom they shuffle off their duties, is devoted solely to two objects: to extend their rule beyond their frontiers and to make it more absolute within them. Any other purpose they may have is either subservient to one of these aims, or merely a pretext for attaining them. Such pretexts are 'the good of the community,' 'the happiness of their subjects,' or 'the glory of the nation': phrases for ever banished from the council chamber, and employed so clumsily in proclamations that they are always taken as warnings of coming misery and that the people groans with apprehension when its masters speak to it of their 'fatherly solicitude.'

From these two fundamental maxims we can easily judge of the spirit in which princes are likely to receive a proposal which runs directly counter to the one and is hardly more favourable to the other. Anyone can see that the establishment of the Diet of Europe will fix the constitution of each State as inexorably as its frontiers; that it is impossible to guarantee the prince against the rebellion of his subjects without at the same time securing the subjects against the tyranny of the prince; and that, without this, the Federation could not possibly endure. And I ask whether there is in the whole world a single Sovereign who, finding himself thus bridled for ever in his most cherished designs, would endure without indignation the very thought of seeing himself forced to be just not only with the foreigner, but even with his own subjects?

Again, anyone can understand that war and conquest without and the encroachments of despotism within give each other mutual support; that money and men are habitually taken at pleasure from a people of slaves, to bring others beneath the same yoke; and that conversely war furnishes a pretext for of France; and you expect a king to carry his claims before the Diet of Europe? Not to mention that the former offends against the laws, so risking his life twice over, while the latter seldom risks anything but the life, of his subjects; and that, in taking up arms, he avails himself of a right recognised by all the world—a right for the use of which he claims to be accountable to God alone.

A prince who stakes his cause on the hazards of war knows well enough that he is running risks. But he is less struck with the risks than with the gains on which he reckons, because he is much less afraid of fortune than he is confident in his own wisdom. If he is strong, he counts upon his armies; if weak, upon his allies. Sometimes he finds it useful to purge ill humours, to weaken restive subjects, even to sustain reverses; and the wily statesman knows how to draw profit even from his own defeats. I trust it will be remembered that it is not I who reason in this fashion, but the court sophist, who would rather have a large territory with few subjects, poor and submissive, than that unshaken rule over the hearts of a happy and prosperous people, and indisputable, still, being common to all States, they will be appreciated by none. For such advantages make themselves felt only by contrast, and he who wishes to increase his relative power is bound to seek only such gains as are exclusive.

So it is that, ceaselessly deluded by appearances, princes would have nothing to do with peace on these terms, even if they calculated their interests for themselves. How will it be, when the calculation is made for them by their ministers, whose interests are always opposed to those of the people and almost always to the prince's? Ministers are in perpetual need of war, as a means of making themselves indispensable to their master, of throwing him into difficulties from which he cannot escape without their aid, of ruining the State, if things come to the worst, as the price of keeping their own office. They are in need of it, as a means of oppressing the people on the plea of national necessity, of finding places for their creatures, of rigging the market and setting up a thousand odious monopolies. They are in need of it, as a means of gratifying their passions and driving their rivals out of many interests, such as chance can hardly be expected ever to bring about. But, in default of such spontaneous agreement, the one thing left is force; and then the question is no longer to persuade but to compel; not to write books but to raise armies.

Accordingly, though the scheme in itself was wise enough, the means proposed for its execution betray the simplicity of the author. He fairly supposed that nothing was needed but to convoke a Congress and lay the Articles before it; that they would be signed directly and all be over on the spot. It must be admitted that, in all his projects, this good man saw clearly enough how things

would work, when once set going, but that he judged like a child of the means for setting them in motion.

To prove that the project of the Christian Commonwealth is not Utopian, I need do no more than name its original author. For no one will say that Henry IV was a madman, or Sully a dreamer. The Abbé de Saint Pierre took refuge behind these great names, to revive their policy. But what a difference in the time, the circumstances, the scheme itself, the manner of bringing it forward and, above all, in its author!

To judge of this, let us glance at the state of Europe as it was at the moment which Henry chose for the execution of his project.

The power of Charles V, who reigned over one half of the world and struck awe into the other, had led him to aspire to universal empire, with great chances of success and great talents for making use of them. His son, more rich and less powerful, never ceased to nurse a design which he was incapable of carrying out, and throughout his reign kept Europe in a state of perpetual alarm. In truth, the House of Austria had acquired such an ascendancy over the other Powers that no prince was safe upon his throne, unless he stood well with the Hapsburgs. Philip III, with even fewer talents, inherited all his father's pretensions. Europe was still held in awe by the power of Spain, which continued to dominate the others rather by long habit of commanding than from any power to make herself obeyed. In truth, the revolt of the Low Countries, the struggle against England, the long drain of the civil wars in France had exhausted the strength of Spain and the riches of the Indies. The House of Austria, now divided into two branches, had ceased to act with the same unity; and the Emperor, although he strained every nerve to maintain or recover the authority of Charles V, only succeeded in affronting the lesser princes and provoking conspiracies which speedily broke out and came near to costing him his throne. Such were the slow stages which prepared the fall of the House of Austria and the new birth of the liberties of Europe. No one, however, had the courage to be the first to risk throwing off the yoke and exposing himself alone to the dangers of war; the example of Henry himself, who had come so ill out of the enterprise, damped the courage of all the rest. Moreover, if we except the Duke of Savoy, who was too weak and too much under the curb to move a step, there was not among all the Sovereigns of the time a single one of ability enough to form and carry through such an enterprise; each one of them waited on time and circumstances for the moment to break his chains. Such, in rough outline, was the state of things at the time when Henry formed the plan of the Christian Commonwealth and prepared to put it in act. The project was vast indeed and, in itself, quite beyond praise. I have no wish to dim its glory. But, prompted as it was by the secret hope of humbling a formidable enemy, it took from this urgent motive an impulse which could hardly have come from humanity alone.

Let us now see what were the means employed by this great man to pave the way for so lofty an undertaking. In the front rank of these I should be disposed to put that he had clearly recognised all the difficulties of the task; so that, having formed the project in his youth, he brooded over it all his life and reserved its accomplishment for his old age. This proves in the first place that ardent and sustained passion by which alone great obstacles can be overcome; and secondly, that patient and considerate wisdom which smoothes the way in advance by forethought and calculation. For there is a great difference between an enforced undertaking, in which prudence itself counsels to leave something to chance, and one which is to be justified only by success; seeing that, being under no compulsion to engage in it, we ought never to have attempted it unless that success were beyond doubt. Again, the deep secrecy which he maintained all his life, until the very moment of action,

was as essential as it was difficult in so vast an enterprise, where the concurrence of so many men was a necessity and which so many men were interested in thwarting. It would seem that, though he had drawn the greater part of Europe to his side and was in league with her chief potentates, there was only one man to whom he had confided the full extent of his design; and, by a boon granted by heaven only to the best of kings, that one man was an honest minister. But, though nothing was allowed to transpire of these high aims, everything was silently moving towards their execution. Twice over did Sully make the journey to London: James I was a party to the plan, and the King of Sweden had fallen in with it. A league was made with the Protestants of Germany; even the princes of Italy had been secured. All were ready to join in the great purpose, though none could say what it was; just as workmen are employed in making the separate parts of a new machine, of whose shape and use they know nothing. What was it then that set all these springs in motion? Was it the craving for a lasting peace, which was foreseen by no one and with which few would have troubled their heads? Was it the public interest, which is never the interest of anyone? The Abbé de Saint Pierre might have supposed so. But the truth is that each of them was working for his own private interest which Henry had been clever enough to display to all of them in the most attractive light. The King of England was glad to deliver himself from the perpetual conspiracies of his Catholic subjects, all of them fomented by Spain. He found a further advantage in the liberation of the United Provinces, in whose support he was spending large sums, while every moment he was placed on the brink of a war which he dreaded, or in which he preferred to join once for all with the whole of Europe and then be quit of it for ever. The King of Sweden was anxious to make sure of Pomerania and so win a footing in Germany. The Elector Palatine, at that time a Protestant and head of the Lutheran Confession, had designs on Bohemia and shared all the plans of the King of England. The Princes of Germany aimed at checking the encroachments of the House of Austria. The Duke of Savoy was to receive Milan and the crown of Lombardy which he passionately coveted. The Pope himself, weary of the Spanish tyranny, was in the league, bribed by the promise of the Kingdom of Naples. The Dutch, better paid than all the rest, gained the assurance of their freedom. In a word, quite apart from the common interest of humbling a haughty Power which was striving to tyrannise over all of them, each State had a private interest all the more keenly felt because it was not countered by the fear of exchanging one tyrant for another. It was agreed that the conquests should be distributed among all the Allies to the exclusion of France and England, who were bound to keep nothing for themselves. This was enough to quiet the most suspicious as to the ambitions of Henry. But that wise prince was well aware that, in keeping nothing for himself by this treaty, he gained more than all the rest. Without adding a yard to his own patrimony, it was enough to partition that of the only man who excelled him in power, and he became the most powerful himself. And it is perfectly clear that, in taking all the precautions which would assure the success of his enterprise, he in no wise neglected those which were sure to give him the first place in the Body he was creating.

More than that: he did not confine himself to forming formidable leagues beyond his frontiers, to making alliances with his own neighbours and the neighbours of his enemy. While engaging all these nations in the abasement of the first Power in Europe, he did not forget to put himself in the way of securing the coveted position for himself. He spent fifteen years of peace in preparations worthy of the enterprise he had in mind. He filled his coffers with money, his arsenals with artillery, arms and munitions. He amassed resources of all kinds against unforeseen demands. But he did more than all, we may be very sure, by governing his people wisely, by silently removing all seeds of division, by putting his finances in such order as to meet all possible needs without any vexation of his subjects. So it was that, at peace within and formidable abroad, he saw himself in a position to arm and maintain sixty thousand men and twenty vessels of war, to quit his kingdom without

leaving behind him the smallest germ of disorder and to carry on war for six years without touching his ordinary revenue or laying on a penny of new taxes.

To all these preparations must be added the assurance that the enterprise would be carried out, both by his minister and himself, with the same energy and prudence that had conceived and framed it. And, finally, the knowledge that all the military operations would be directed by a captain of his skill, while the enemy had none left to put against him. From all this it may be judged if any element which could promise success was wanting to his prospects. Without having fathomed his designs, all Europe was watching his preparations with a kind of awe. The great revolution was about to be launched on a slight pretext. A war, destined to be the end of all wars, was about to usher in eternal peace, when a deed, the horror of which is only increased by its mystery, came to quench for ever the last hope of the world. The blow which cut short the days of this good king, also plunged Europe back into ceaseless wars, of which she can now never hope to see the end.

Such were the means prepared by Henry IV for founding the Federation which the Abbé de Saint Pierre proposed to set up by a book.

Let us not say, then, that, if his system has not been adopted, that is because it was not good. Let us rather say that it was too good to be adopted. Evils and abuses, by which so many men profit, come in of themselves. Things of public utility, on the other hand, are seldom brought in but by force, for the simple reason that private interests are almost always ranged against them. Beyond doubt, a lasting peace is, under present circumstances, a project ridiculous enough. But give us back Henry IV and Sully, and it will become once more a reasonable proposal. Or rather, while we admire so fair a project, let us console ourselves for its failure by the thought that it could only have been carried out by violent means from which humanity must needs shrink.

No Federation could ever be established except by a revolution. That being so, which of us would dare to say whether the League of Europe is a thing more to be desired or feared? It would perhaps do more harm in a moment than it would guard against for ages.

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