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United Germany,
By.
Christer NAMES.
1893.

Chester Nichols Ames, '93

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Among the districtive frecultarities of the modern, as distinguished from the med. isval period, more is more strik orig than the constant endeavor to secularize publities. Ecclesias tical control has been a hnoct mir-Er sally renounced and political unity, in contradistinction to a common allegranice to one church, has ones to be the one. great thing descrid . With this has na turally been associa ted and Effort to combine the smaller states into large kingdoms. a project which in Germany has

been successful. To on there the Luc cessive movements which led to German unity; to glance at the se twa trois of the em fire as it exists today and, possibly, to form some opinion as to its of. ligations at the present critical ferriod in European politics, will be the object of this address. The kistory of German unity marrates the victory of a national desire over two of posing franci fles. The first was the Frankish our tim of dividing among all the various heirs everything, Events a kungdom. This custom in time threw off from the Empire the

great district that afterwards developed mito modern France. The secund was the never ceasing effort to limit the power of the Emperor. against this mitimal of. position sure save a charles or an Otto were able successfully to contend; while preserving at the same time the bounds clamwid for the empire. Even Frederick Barbarocca failed to a coon flick his grante hope, to ma he firm his hold on Italy, and to prevail over his continually re belling varials. no one more for erful Ducceeded him, and on the death of the last of the Alo henstay Encued what is known as the "Great

Interregumon" and a dreamy curl war. Every force truding to dis. in tegration now wow hed withont restraint, and the empire seem. Ed to be dissolved. The rein's of imperial weakness were taken in f by Rudolf; and then, as the fire of the Romansance began to glow, and finally, ruper the continent brotanito flame, the house of slaps, burg, by its light, working out the franciples of government, formed at length the great German Empire na trival fee ling however was not fresent, and the two hundred wide fendent Estates were show to yield to a centralized administration. The

"Latherland' did not yet Exist. that term being an Expression of the modern Jennane fatroliam. The Thirty years Was, omitting its religions con sequences, was Afective chiefly in intensifying hatreds, and in lessening the in Louil authority. Meanwhile a rival power to anostru had grown when the north Mark, Bruss and at the close of the sighteenth century there two great hungdowns Stood face to face, ready for a conflict that could met be avoided. yet first, however, was to be Endured the storm of the Napoleonic wars; and this bafetisin of fire ded

for Germany what centuries of under turbed deve lope ment had not been able to account lish. Be neath the stars at Lodi, Morengo, Hohenlinden, Jena and aver stadt the German soldier, in his anguist, first realized that not alone his fetty province, but all Germany was cal ling him for aid. The thought brought forth the wars of the liber ation. With Lis fais and waterlos came at last the fatherland nat. vleen had made Germany fatrette De German Confederation formed by the congress of vienna was no minin. Yet it preserved the fringdoms from internal war un

til the great tidal waves of thought of 1830 and 1848 had sweft over Envope and frosd political withtutions. Then Protestant Prussia rose, and in the fulfillment of her long cheric hed fur fine, force & Riman Catholic austria out of Germany Even this did not result in muin. Invo confederations were firmed, the north and the South. There is but me more chaf. ter in the history of the movement. again France, this time mod. dened by the aggrandzen into Prussia, marched her vast army northward to the cry "an to Berlin. But the wave broke, and then

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the empire is the subject of discus Luis. Russia on the north, has not forgotten the Berlin Conference, when German deflimacy defrived her of the conquests made in the Russo Trustest was. Her friendship with France is not a matter of mere sen timent. The hatred of France is no recret, nor the fact that she dread war only because she distructs the La belity of here The full can institu times. The could today take the field with seventy thousand more reg. wears than Germany. at home the growth of socialisin stready threaten Bismanks fabric. Taxes for the suffert of given ment bear very

Leavily on the German feafile, less able by far to fay them than their richer Southern fres. alarmed at the threating as fect of his neighbors, the Emperor affears before the Reichstag with his now much discussed "army Bill;" the object of which briefly stated is to add ninety thousand regulars to the standing army, and twenty mullion of dollars, yearly, to the taxes. It is bitterly offoxed, and deems likely not to Jasa. Want of money is the real obstacle. The mation can furnish all the flish and blood the Emperor may demand; but the country grown under the

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It is vain to talk of feace unaccompanied by a change of from their. and who will cay that France would be Ratisfied by the return of the two frontier from is? I ar that, were France satisfied, Rus. Dia would cease to heat against

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Franco Prussian was be true. He said: Today, when the links, of mitellectual and rightful ann. munity, which began to be knit together at the time of the wars of the Le bera time join - the more slowly, the more surely - the different Germany races, - today that Germany's an. manuent leaves no ferring to the The have endlawared to them, that the union of Germany in the geneum mation of a struggle that has lasted for more than a thousand years. That the empires present sit nation's fraught with winmed, rate finile, and that a state of

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manis the never fading torch, Let high aloft above the nativis. mi the suffert of a government made strong as well against the waves of popular predjudice as the abuse of regal funer. Thus han the gathered of the tring ray in which, combined, she saw her from belities, and their today in the sending forth a steady stream of light in which men live and high Commencement Oration of Chester N. Ames, Class of 1893
Transcribed by Christine Rosenberry, May 2002
Edited by Don Sailer, November 2009

United Germany by Chester N. Ames 1893

Among the distinctive peculiarities of the modern, as distinguished from the medieval period, none is more striking than the constant endeavor to secularize politics. Ecclesiastical control has been almost universally renounced and political unity, in contradistinction to a common allegiance to one church, has come to be the one great things [desired?]. With this has naturally been associated an effort to combine the smaller states into large kingdoms, a project which in Germany has

been successful. To outline the successive movements which led to German unity; to glance at the situation of the empire as it exists today and, possibly, to form some opinion as to its obligations at the present critical period in European politics, will be the object of this address.

The history of German unity narrates the victory of a national desire over two opposing principles. The first was the Frankish custom of dividing among the various heirs everything, even to a kingdom. This custom in time threw off from the empire the

great district that afterwards developed into modern France. The second was the never ceasing effort to limit the power of the emperor. Against this internal opposition none save Charles or an Otto were able successfully to contend; while preserving at the same time the bounds claimed for the empire. Even Fredrick Barborossa failed to accomplish his gigantic hope, to make firm his hold on Italy, and to prevail over his continually rebelling vassals. No one more powerful succeeded him; and on the death of the last of the Hohenstaufen ensured what is known as the "Great

Interregnum" and a dreary civil war. Every force tending to disintegration now worked without restraint, and the empire seemed to be dissolved.

The reins of imperial weakness were taken up by Randolf; and then, as the fire of the Renaissance began to glow, and finally, when the continent broke into flame; the house of Hapsburg, by its light, working out the principles of government, formed at length the great German Empire. National feeling however was not present, and the two hundred independent estates were slow to yield to a centralized administration. The

"fatherland" did not yet exist, that term being an expression of the modern German patriotism.

The Thirty Years War, omitting its religious consequences, was effective chiefly in intensifying hatreds, and in lessening imperial authority.

Meanwhile a rival power to Austria had grown up in the north Mark, Prussia; and at the close of the eighteenth century these two great kingdoms stood face to face, ready for a conflict that could not be avoided.

Yet first, however, was to be endured the storm of the Napoleonic wars; and this baptism of fire did

for Germany what centuries of undisturbed development had not been able to accomplish. Beneath the stars at Lodi, Marenge, Hohenlinden, Jena and Auerstadt the German soldier, in his anguish, first realized that not alone his petty province, but all of Germany was calling him for aid. The thought brought forth the wars of the liberation. With Liefsic and Waterloo came at last the fatherland. Napoleon had made Germany patriotic.

The German Confederation formed by the Congress of Vienna was no union. Yet it preserved the kingdoms from internal war un-

til the great tidal waves of thought of 1830 and 1848 had swept over Europe and freed political institutions. Then Protestant Prussia rose, and in the fulfillment of her long cherished purpose, forced Roman Catholic Austria out of Germany. Even this did not result in union. Two confederations were formed, the North and the South.

There is but one more chapter in the history of the movement. Again France, this time [maddened?] by the aggrandizement of Prussia, marched her vast army northward to the cry "On to Berlin." But the wave broke, and then

rolled back upon its source. Gravelotte, Metz, Ledan and the siege of Paris followed rapidly and in the palace of Versailles itself was fulfilled the old dream of her prophets of a better day, and Germany became at last, in truth "United Germany."

The history of "United Germany" since 1871 may be summed up in few words: The Rhine province recovered; France made to pay a heavy indemnity; and Strasburg "the key of the house" a German fortress. Under the guiding hand of the "Iron chancellor" the union is made continually more strong. The conflict

with the Vatican is adjusted. Socialism is held down with a strong hand; and an alliance with Austria, made in 1899, the crowning triumph of Bismarks diplomacy. Death twice enters the royal palace, and an eccentric young man the present William II succeeds. He soon rids himself of the Chancellor of his fathers, and makes for the government an enemy in the person of the worlds greatest statesman.

On the day of this writing the German Reichstag sits in council, and the eyes of the world are turned in that direction. The safety of

the empire is the subject of discussion. Russia on the North, has not forgotten the Berlin Conference, when German diplomacy deprived her of the conquests made in the Russo-Turkish war. Her friendship with France is not a matter of mere sentiment. The hatred of France is no secret, nor the fact that she dreads war only because she distrusts the stability of here Republican institutions. She could today take the field with seventy thousand more regulars than Germany. At home the growth of socialism already threatens Bismarks fabric. Taxes for the support of government bear very

heavily on the German people, less able by far to pay them than their rich southern foes.

Alarmed at the threatening aspect of his neighbors, the emperor appears before the Reichstag with his now much discussed "army Bill," the object of which briefly stated is to add ninety thousand regulars to the standing army, and twenty million of dollars, yearly, to the taxes. It is bitterly opposed, and seems likely not to pass. Want of money is the real obstacle. The nation can furnish all the flesh and blood the emperor may demand; but the country groans under the

crushing weight of taxation, and the loss of so many men from the employments of industrial life. Already multitudes of true blooded Germans declare that the burden is even now too heavy to be borne, and that unity is not worth the price it casts. This, in brief, is the present situation.

We hold that the armament of Germany should be limited by naught save that ultimate resources of the nation. Since the fall from power Bismark, the Triple Alliance, his creation, has practically been dissolved. The November '92 elections, in Italy, resulted in an overwhelming

victory for the peace party. Military expenditures are to be reduced almost one half. This is in effect a withdrawal of Italy from the Alliance. Austria Hungary too is clamoring for retrenchment. The recently elected Gladstone ministry promises no aid. At present it is the German empire opposed to Russia and France.

It is vain to talk of peace unaccompanied by a change of frontiers. And who will say that France would be satisfied by the return of the two frontier provinces? Or that, were France satisfied, Russia would cease to beat against

the northern border? The Austro-Hungarian monarchy, as ever, has its fairest bond of union in personal allegiance to its sovereign. On the death of Francis Joseph and the accession of his dissolute and unpopular son, almost all of European statesmen seem to expect a revolution. In case of a dissolution of that monarchy, how could Germany avoid war? The terrible Thirty Years warn her not to meet it [decimated?]. To lessen preparation now is to fail when the inevitable struggle shall have to come. So long as danger lasts, may the words of the then king of Prussia, spoken at the beginning of the

Franco Prussian war be true. He said: "Today, when the links of intellectual and rightful community, which began to be knit together at the time of the Wars of the Liberation, join – the

more slowly, the more surely – the different German races, - today that Germany's armament leaves no penny to the enemy."

We have endeavored to show, that the union of Germany is the consummation of a struggle that has lasted for more than a thousand years. That the empires present situation is fraught with immediate perils; and that a state of

preparation for attack, to the most absolute limit of her possibilities can alone make sure her future.

Today the fatherland stands on the defensive. It is not she who threatens Europe's peace. In the speech quoted above, the emperor, speaking to the North German Confederation, did not hesitate to say: "Inasmuch, as we pursue no other object than the endurable establishment of peace in Europe, - God be with us, as He was with our forefathers." Today the same prayer rises from all Germany.

Her children are industrious, frugal and religious. Within her

borders the Protestant faith has opportunity for complete development. Thence it is sending out bright rays of light and cheer to those in darkness. Aloft in her venerable universities, the artillery of Science points out into the deep blue vaults of the celestial sphere; while labors be patient, methodical sins bring up from the deep places of human research rich stores of intellectual and religious Truth. Fickle France in the dazzling electric spark, struck out, and disappearing, in ever uncertain intervals of bright Cont light and deepest gloom. But Germany re-

mains the never fading torch, set high aloft above the nations, in the support of a government made strong as well against the waves of popular prejudice as the abuse of regal power. This has she gathered up the tiny rays, in which, combined, she saw her possibilities, and thus today is she sending forth a steady stream of light in which men live and hope.