

time—of course we mean stage ghosts—but we never recollect to have made the acquaintance of one who was not provided with creaking boots. Why, we have not been able to discover; but we suppose it is for some dramatic reason not known beyond the precincts of the green-room. We may also add that in our experience, the Ophelia of Wednesday night was the first lady we have ever met with sustaining the character with the slightest pretensions to be called a vocalist. As in the matter of the ghost's boots, they seem to be invariably cast for the character because they are not equal to the occasion in the vocalistic line and for a reason beyond the ken of the uninitiated.

THE INTOXICATION OF POWER.

CONQUERORS sometimes forget that the excess of victory is the promise of ultimate defeat. By humbling the adversary overmuch, they induce an undying animosity; and by stretching their *imperium* beyond the limits of prudence, they make it very difficult to govern. The first Napoleon added kingdom to kingdom, forgetting that they could not be held together; and almost every other great general has been finally defeated by the very grandeur of his plans or his conquests. Xerxes was unsuccessful on account of the immenseness of his army, which accomplished its own dire confusion; and Hannibal failed to march upon Rome, because his soldiers were besotted with victory. Alexander, who before he was two-and-thirty, had conquered the greater part of the known world, left no successor who could hold his empire together. There is a philosophy in conquest as there is in defeat, and to neglect it is to half undo conquest.

We have an example of this truth in the recent victories of Germany, which have so intoxicated the national mind that they will probably bring about a reaction. Having made tributaries of several kingdoms, and annexed a good portion of France, Germany is now dictating to most of the European powers how they should behave themselves towards their superiors. No Cabinet in Europe is safe from the Foreign Office in Berlin. Meanwhile the Catholic Church, which is very powerful in Germany and which is gaining strength and numbers continually, receives homage of Prince Bismarck's hostility, because he respects it and fears it. Materially the Catholic Church has no power whatever; it has no guns, and cannot put an army into the field; but it is the greatest moral force in the world, and for that reason unjust men hate it. The Bishops of Germany resent worldly power; and worldly power detests moral force, because moral force is above it. So, worldly power puts the Bishops into prison; and the Bishops conquer by going there. Then comes the comic part of the strife, when worldly power tries to plead moral principle, as an excuse for perpetrating injustice. Prince Bismarck tells the Bishops, that they are encouraging disloyalty by the example which they set of disobedience; and he takes upon himself to instruct these authorities in their duties as Churchmen and subjects. The Bishops are taken to task by Prince Bismarck on their refusal to obey certain laws, those laws being expressly constructed by Prince Bismarck for the crippling and undermining of the Church. Here we have had an example—such as we had a hundred times in history—of the State presuming to fix the limits of that obedience which the Church must render to the Law; and at the same time, of the presumption which accuses ecclesiastics of misinterpreting Christian duty. It is the State which dares to dictate to the Church both its principles and its immediate practice. Not long since Prince Bismarck said in the Parliament, he would rather obey his Sovereign Emperor, than obey the Pope misguided by the Jesuits; but what he meant was, 'he would rather obey the Emperor, guided solely by Prince Bismarck, than obey the Pope who is guided by God.' It is the old story of a statesman obeying himself, while he professes to obey only his superior ascribing influences and side springs to the Church which exist no where but in his own imagination. The Pope is no more guided by the Jesuits, than by the Dominicans, Benedictines, or Franciscans; whereas the Emperor of Germany is mainly influenced by the Chancellor who was the main cause of His Majesty becoming Emperor.

The recent protest of the Bishops of Germany, addressed to their persecuting Emperor and the answer of the 'State Ministry,' thereto furnish a painful illustration of the hopelessness of mere justice contending against intoxicated power. The State ministry declines to see the truth, that the Catholics of Germany (who have been the best friends of the Emperor, who have done most by their bravery and fidelity, to consolidate the present order of things, and whose principles are the only bulwark which is now left to Germany against national scepticism and infidelity) are not precisely the men whom the State ought to persecute, and whose pastors it should put in the common prison. The answer of the 'State Ministry' is evasive yet subtle, offensive yet cunningly worded. The last paragraph is perhaps the most wicked. It tells the Bishops that they foresaw, before the Vatican Council what the new definition must lead to, and that they foretold its contrariety, with the State. This is true, and yet an evident falsehood. The Bishops foretold that there would be contrariety, but they ascribed the blame of it to the world. What they meant was, that worldly men, like Prince Bismarck, would make an excuse of a spiritual definition for persecuting the Authorities of the Church. This is exactly what has happened. The Bishops never objected to the dogma; what they foresaw was the certainty of strife.—*Catholic Times.*

The Italian government has been guilty of another act of sacrilegious vandalism, by ordering the destruction of the monumental church of San Giuliano, at Palermo, one of the finest in that city. A theatre is to be built out of its ruins, and there are already fifteen theatres in Palermo; "ten too many" says the 'Sicilia,' "since only four can keep open during these hard times."

THE COMING WAR.

AN ENGLISH WRITER ON THE FIGHTING CAPACITY OF THE NATIONS.

FRANCE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the desire which may exist on the part of the French people to rush into a war with Germany, to gain revenge for the defeat of four years ago, it is doubtful if the French Government would encourage the aspiration. Torn as France is by political dissensions, it is extremely doubtful whether any Ministry would add to the cares and the perils of war to the other prominent dangers of its existence. Neither is the French army in condition—nor is it likely to be for many years—to undertake a campaign of any magnitude. The military organization of the Second Empire was entirely broken up by the disasters of the German war. At the present time no fixed plan can really be said to have been adopted for the organization of the army; the questions as to depots and *cadres* are still unsolved. French military men assert that their artillery is in a powerful state; but it may reasonably be doubted that, in the short time that has elapsed since the enormous loss of that arm which occurred in the German war, it can have been replaced by guns judiciously selected and carefully manufactured. Though there is not a great dearth of men in the French army, it can not be said the recruits are of a satisfactory kind. The weakness of the commissariat arrangement was one of the potent causes of the failure of the French in the German war. It has not yet been thoroughly changed for the better. The mitrailleuses, which were so zealously guarded, and which were expected to strike terror in the German ranks, were found to be a failure in the war, and have now been abandoned for all practical purposes of campaigning; so that at present France is not in a condition to "rush into war." It has taken England twenty years to reorganise from the breakdown of her military system in the Crimean war, and a vast amount of money has been expended in effecting the changes; and it can hardly be possible that things are so much better managed in France that she can in four or five years put an army in the field with any prospect of winning back the laurels so rudely wrested from her in her last great contest.

BELGIUM AND SWITZERLAND.

As to the two neutral countries of Belgium and Switzerland little need be said. The neutrality of one is guaranteed by the Great Powers, and the other has perhaps a still greater guarantee of neutrality in the shape of public opinion in Europe. The Belgian army may be 80,000 strong. Perhaps they are not the finest troops in the world, but still they are not, as a great statesman is reported to have said of them, "merely all coat and musket and little man." It is certain that Belgium, unaided, could not hold her frontiers against either Germany or France if either of these powers wished to make the Netherlands its battle-field or its line of communications.

RUSSIA.

"A great and mysterious power looms up in the North." On the 1st of November last a law came into force in Russia by which every Russian subject became liable to military service, and the consequence of this decree is an enormous increase in the army. It is estimated that next year Russia will be able to put into the field 1,500,000 men. These men are excellent soldiers in many respects. They may not be acute or intelligent, but they are strong, hardy, capable of bearing fatigue, have an intense loyalty to their sovereign, believe that the Russian Government can do no wrong, and would enter upon any campaign ordered by that Government with all the religious excitement of a crusade. The organization of the army is simple and well-conceived. The men are tall, strong and fine, and, if properly led and supplied with good ammunition, the Russian army would be most formidable in any war. For defensive purposes Russia holds a peculiarly advantageous position. The terrible example of the First Napoleon still gives a shiver to almost anybody who contemplates the idea of invading her. No doubt an invasion at the present time would be a very different matter from what it was at the beginning of this century. Still, it would be attended with enormous difficulties, not the least of which would be the inhospitable climate, the impossibility of feeding an invading army on a wild and sparsely-populated country, and the necessity which would fall on the invaders of drawing their supplies almost wholly from their base. A line of communication might become so much extended that the troops requisite to guard the line, and the officers necessary to administer it, would consume more of the provisions than the line itself could bring up. In future wars it is doubtful whether, considering the number of men that would probably be engaged, it will ever be possible to rely on the supply of an army from its base of communications. A weighty oppression, however, hangs over the military organization of Russia. The official administration is so corrupt that it is almost certain that in case of war peculation would be rife, and that the Russian soldiers—brave, loyal and hardy as they might be—would find themselves worsted by an internal enemy more deadly than any external foe. All this is well-known and talked of openly on the soil of Russia.

SWEEDEN AND NORWAY.

The united power of Sweden and Norway possesses certainly a small but excellent army, but probably would be too wise to enter upon any European war, even of great dimensions. It would have little to gain by descending into the theatre of contest, and possibly might lose some provinces to Russia. Denmark might, indeed, be anxious to join an alliance against Germany, for the sore of the Schleswig-Holstein campaign is not healed over. But she has been so hampered by the war of 1864, and her population has been so reduced that her tiny army of 40,000 men would rank as comparatively insignificant in the consideration in the consideration of the military capacities of the Continent.

TURKEY.

Turkey is always a source of danger in European policy, and must be "almost a nightmare in every foreign office." The men