

Duke of these two duchies, wanted to oppose this plan, and in conjunction with Austria declared war against Denmark and forced it to resign its claim to the duchies (1864). Straightway, the duchies became a bone of contention between the victors, Austria and Prussia. Bismarck was bent on annexing while Austria was determined that its rival should not get them.

3.8.8 Austro-Prussian War

The endless disputes that followed, was adroitly handled by Bismarck to declare war against Austria. The Austro-Prussian War that followed was no longer for the two duchies but for the leadership of Germany. At Sadowa or Koniggratz the Austrians were defeated. By the peace which followed, Austria retired from Germany and agreed to allow Prussia to reorganize the German states as its wish.

3.8.9 Partial Unification

The exclusion of Austria removed the chief obstacle to German unity and Bismarck set to work to reorganize Germany. Those states of the North which had resisted Prussia were annexed to Prussia. The other states of North Germany retained their independence but were joined together in the North German Confederation under the presidency of Prussia. Thus was taken a long step towards German unity.

3.8.10 Hurdles to Unification

The states of the south were yet wanting to complete the unification of Germany. There were two obstacles in the way. First the Southern States were jealous of Prussia and were averse to entering a confederation in which Prussia dominated. Secondly, there was the opposition of France which viewed with ill concealed jealousy the rise of the new Prussian power.

3.8.11 Hohen Zollern: Quarrel with France

Bismarck's policy was to overcome these obstacles by a deliberately provoked war with France. He wanted

to wage a national war so as to create a national feeling which would bind together all the German states, northern and southern, in a common cause. His opportunity came when in 1869 the Spanish throne became vacant, and Leopold of Hohenzollern a distant relative of the Prussian king was offered the crown. Napoleon III of France protested against such a measure and Leopold withdrew his candidature.

3.8.12 Franco - Prussian War

Napoleon demanded of the Prussian king an assurance that no member of the Hohenzollern family should ever, with his consent, become a candidate for the Spanish throne. The Prussian king policy refused such a demand but Bismarck, by a falsified telegram, produced the impression that the French ambassador had been insulted and rudely dismissed by the Prussian King. This inflamed the war passion of the French people and the war which Bismarck so earnestly desired, came about. The French were terribly defeated at Sedan and the patriotic pride created by this success, led the southern states of Germany to join the north German Confederation. Thus the king of Prussia became the emperor of united Germany.

3.9 Unification of Italy

Disunion and foreign domination had been a curse of the Italians for several centuries in the past. The country was split up into a number of small states whose weakness made them the sport of intriguing dynasties, and whose mutual jealousies prevented the development of any sense of nationality. But towards the close of the eighteenth century the Italians were stirred by the liberal ideas of the French Revolution, which made them impatient of foreign rule and despotic government.

3.9.1 Italy and Congress of Vienna

The subsequent conquest of Italy by Napoleon, indeed disappointed their newly awakened aspiration but at the same time it gave them the first impulse towards unity. Napoleon had, in a partial way, uni-