SAXE-ALTENBURG (Germ. *Sachsen-Altenburg),* a duchy in Thuringia, and an independent member of the German empire, consists of two detached and almost equal parts, separated from each other by a portion of Reuss (junior line), and bounded on the S. and W. by the grand- duchy of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, on the N. by Prussia, and on the E. by the kingdom of Saxony. There are in addi­tion 12 small exclaves. The total area is 510 square miles (about half the size of Cheshire in England), of which 254 are in the east or Altenburg division and 256 in the west or Saal-Eisenberg division. The former district, traversed by the most westerly offshoots of the Erzgebirge and watered by the Pleisse and its tributaries, forms an undu­lating and fertile region, containing some of the richest agricultural soil in Germany. The western district, through which the Saale flows, is rendered hilly by the beginnings of the Thuringian Forest, and in some measure makes up by its fine woods for the comparatively poor soil. The mineral wealth of Saxe-Altenburg is scanty; lignite, the chief mineral, is worked mainly in the eastern district.

According to the returns for 1883, 581/2 per cent. of the entire duchy was occupied by arable land, and 271/2 per cent. by forests, of which four-fifths were coniferous. The chief crops were rye (42,317 acres, yielding 20,412 tons), oats (36,807 acres, 22,996 tons), barley (21,390 acres, 13,912 tons), wheat (17,490 acres, 9724 tons), and potatoes (19,870 acres, 113,209 tons). The cattle­raising and horse-breeding of the duchy are of considerable importance. In 1883 the duchy contained 9934 horses, 60,335 cattle, 20,996 sheep, 46,387 pigs, and 12,420 goats. About 35 per cent. of the population are directly supported by agriculture. The manufactures of the duchy are very varied, but none is of any great importance ; woollen goods, gloves, hats, porcelain and earthen­ware, and wooden articles are the chief products. Trade in these, and in horses, cattle, and agricultural produce, is tolerably brisk. The chief seats of trade and manufacture are Altenburg the capital (29,422 inhabitants in 1885), Ronneburg (5485 inhabitants in 1880), Schmölln (6394), Gössnitz (4949), and Meuselwitz (3402) in the Altenburg division ; and Eisenburg (6277), Roda (3465), and Kahla (2999) in the Saal-Eisenburg division. Besides these there are the towns of Lucka (1505) and Orlamünde (1461), and 449 villages, of which Russdorf (1781), in an exclave, is the largest.

Next to the two principalities of Reuss, Saxe-Altenburg is the most densely peopled part of Thuringia. In 1880 the population was 155,036, or 304 per square mile. Of these 154,187 were Protestants, 741 Roman Catholics, 33 Jews, and 75 of other sects. The population in 1885, according to a provisional return of the census of that year, was 161,129. In the west division the popu­lation (49,788) is wholly Teutonic, but in the east (111,341) there is a strong Wendish or Slavonic element, still to be traced in the peculiar manners and costume of the country-people, though these are gradually being given up. The farmers and peasant-proprietors of the east division (Altenburger Bauern) are an industrious and well-to-do class, but like similar classes in other countries they are said to be avaricious and purse-proud. Their holdings are seldom divided; a custom corresponding to Borough-English *(q.v.)* though not supported by law, obtains among them ; and sometimes the elder brothers are employed by the youngest as servants on the paternal farm. The destitution to which the disinherited children are often reduced by this custom is seriously prejudicial to morality. The Altenburg peasants are pleasure-loving, and in spite of their avarice are said to gamble for very high stakes, especially at the complicated card-game of “ skat,” now universal in Germany, which many believe to have been invented here.

Saxe-Altenburg is a limited hereditary monarchy, its constitution resting on a law of 1831, subsequently modified. The diet consists of 30 members, elected for 3 years, of whom 9 are returned by the highest taxpayers, 9 by the towns, and 12 by the country districts. The franchise is enjoyed by all males over 25 years of age who pay taxes. The duke has considerable powers of initiative and veto. The government is carried on by a ministry of three members, of whom two administer justice and finance respectively, and the third all the other departments of home and foreign affairs. The budget for 1884-86 estimated the yearly income at £127,180 and the yearly expenditure at £125,530. The Altenburg troops are united with the contingents of Schwarzburg, Rudolstadt, and the two Reusses to form the 7th Thuringian infantry regiment of the imperial army. Saxe-Altenburg has one vote in the Reichstag and one in the federal council.

After the conquest of the Wends, the present Altenburg district became an imperial possession, lying partly in the Pleissengau and partly in the Voigtland, while the west district was divided among

a number of small nobles. The margrave of Saxony obtained permanent possession of Altenburg about 1329, and the west division was also early incorporated with his dominions. Both districts were among the lands assigned to the Ernestine line of the house of Saxony by the convention of Wittenberg in 1547 (see Saxony). From 1603 till 1672 there existed an independent duchy of Altenburg; but in 1826, when the present division into the four Saxon duchies was made, both Altenburg and Eisen­burg belonged to Gotha. Duke Frederick, who exchanged Saxe- Hildburghausen for the present duchy of Saxe-Altenburg in 1826, was the founder of the reigning line. A constitution was granted

in 1831 in answer to popular commotion ; and greater concessions were extorted by more threatening disturbances in 1848. The second duke (Joseph) abdicated in 1848 in favour of his brother George. Under Ernest, who succeeded his father as fourth duke in 1853, a period of violent reaction set in, so that even now the constitution is considerably less liberal than it was in 1849. In 1873 the long-disputed question as to the public domains was settled, two-thirds of these being now regarded as belonging to the duke in *fideicommissum* and in lieu of a civil list.

SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA (Germ. *Sachsen-Koburg- Gotha),* a duchy in Thuringia, and an independent member of the German empire, consists of the two formerly separate duchies of Coburg and Gotha, which lie at a distance of 14 miles from each other, and of eight small scattered exclaves, the most northerly of which is 70 miles from the most southerly. The total area is 760 square miles (about 2 square miles more than the county of Surrey in England), of which 217 are in Coburg and 543 in Gotha. The duchy of Coburg is bounded on the S.E., S., and S.W. by Bavaria, and on the other sides by Saxe- Meiningen, which, with part of Prussia, separates it from Gotha. The considerable exclave of Königsberg in Bavaria, 10 miles south, belongs to Coburg, Lying on the south slope of the Thuringian Forest, and in the Franconian plain, this duchy is an undulating and fertile district, reaching its highest point in the Senichshöhe (1716 feet) near Mirsdorf. Its streams, the chief of which are the Itz, Steinach, and Rodach, all find their way into the Main. The duchy of Gotha, more than twice the size of Coburg, stretches from the south borders of Prussia along the northern slopes of the Thuringian Forest, the highest summits of which (Grosse Beerberg, 3225 feet; Schneekopf, 3179 feet; Inselberg, 2957 feet) rise within its borders. The more open and level district on the north is spoken of as the “ open country ” (“ das Land ”) in contrast to the wooded hills of the “ forest ” (“ der Wald ”). The Gera, Hörsel, Unstrut, and other streams of this duchy flow to the Werra or to the Saale.

In both duchies the chief industry is agriculture, which employs 33 per cent. of the entire population. According to the returns for 1883, 531/2 per cent. of the area was occupied by arable land, 10 per cent. by meadow-land and pasture, and 30 per cent. by forest. In the same year the chief crops were oats (43,715 acres, yielding 19,229 tons), barley (37,387 acres, 20,148 tons), rye (29,077 acres, 12,048 tons), wheat (24,255 acres, 9,272 tons), and potatoes (24,546 acres, 116,695 tons). A small quantity of hemp and flax is raised (less than 1000 acres of each), but a considerable quantity of fruit and vegetables is annually produced. Cattle-breeding is an im­portant resource, especially in the valley of the Itz in Coburg. In 1883 the two duchies contained 8187 horses, 58,196 cattle, 73,249 sheep, 51,549 pigs, and 27,015 goats. The mineral wealth of Saxe- Coburg-Gotha is insignificant; small quantities of coal, lignite, ironstone, millstone, &c., are annually raised. There are also salt­works and some deposits of potter’s clay.

The manufactures of the duchies, especially in the mountainous parts less favourable for agriculture, are tolerably brisk, but there is no large industrial centre in the country. Iron goods and machinery, safes, glass, earthenware, chemicals, and wooden articles, including large quantities of toys, are produced; and various branches of textile industry are carried on. Ruhla (two- fifths of which is situated in Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach) is famous for its meerschaum pipes and cigar-holders, which are exported to all parts of the world; and the maps of Perthes’s geographical institute at Gotha may also be reckoned among the national products. Coburg (15,791 inhabitants in 1881) and Gotha (28,100 in 1885) are the chief towns of the duchies, to which they respectively give name ; the latter is the capital of the united duchy. There are seven other small towns, and 320 villages and hamlets. The villages of Fried-