The Confederation and France had been closely con­nected for so long that the outbreak of the French Revolution could not fail to affect the Swiss. The Helvetian Club, founded at Paris in 1790 by several exiled Vaudois and Freiburgers, was the centre from which the new ideas were spread in the western part of the Con­federation, and risings directed or stirred up. In 1790 Lower Wallis rose against the oppressive rule of the upper districts; in 1792 Porrentruy defied the prince-bishop of Basel, despite the imperial troops he summoned, declared the “Rauracian” republic, and three months later became the French department of the Mont Terrible ; Geneva was only saved (1792) from France by a force sent from Zurich and Bern ; and the massacre of the Swiss guard at the Tuileries on August 10, 1792, aroused intense indigna­tion. The rulers, however, unable to enter into the new ideas, contented themselves with suppressing them by force, *e.g.,* Zurich in the case of Stäfa (1795). St Gall managed to free itself from its abbot (1795-97), but the Leagues of Rhætia so oppressed their subjects in the Valtelline that in 1797 Bonaparte (after conquering the Milanese from the Austrians) joined them to the Cisalpine republic. The diet was distracted by party struggles, and the fall of the old Confederation was not far distant. The rumours of the vast treasures stored up at Bern, and the desire of securing a bulwark against Austrian attack, specially turned the attention of the Directory towards the Confederation ; and this was utilized by the heads of the reform party in the Confederation,—Ochs, the burgo­master of Basel, and La Harpe, who had left his home in Vaud through disgust at Bernese oppression, both now wishing for aid from outside in order to free their land from the rule of the oligarchy. Hence, when La Harpe, at the head of twenty-two exiles from Vaud and Freiburg, called (November 20, 1797) on the Directory to protect the liberties of Vaud, which France by the treaty of 1565 was bound to guarantee, his appeal found a ready answer. In 1798 French troops occupied Mühlhausen and Bienne (Biel), as well as those parts of the lands of the prince- bishop of Basel (St Imier and the Münsterthal) as regards which he had been since 1579 the ally of the Catholic members of the Confederation. Another army entered Vaud (February 1798), when the “Lemanic republic” was proclaimed, and the diet broke up in dismay without taking any steps to avert the coming storm. Brune and his army occupied Freiburg and Solothurn, and, after fierce fighting at Neueneck, entered (March 5) Bern, deserted by her allies, and distracted by quarrels within. With Bern, the stronghold of the aristocratic party, fell the old Confederation. The Revolution triumphed throughout the Confederation. Brune, on March 19, put forth a won­derful scheme by which the Confederation with its “asso­ciates” and “subjects” was to be split into three republics —the Tellgau (*i.e.,* the Forest districts), the Rhodanic (*i.e.,* Vaud, Wallis, the Bernese Oberland, and the Italian bailiwicks), and the Helvetic (*i.e*., the north and east portions); but the Directory disapproved of this (March 23) and on March 29 the Helvetic republic, one and indivis­ible, was proclaimed. This was accepted by ten out of the thirteen members of the old Confederation, as well as the constitution drafted by Ochs. By the new scheme the territories of the Everlasting League were split up into twenty-three (later nineteen, Rhætia only coming in in 1799) administrative districts, called “cantons,” a name now officially used in Switzerland for the first time, though it may be found employed by foreigners in the French treaty of 1452, in Comines and Machiavelli, and in the treaties of Westphalia (1648). A central Government was set up, with its seat at Lucerne, comprising a senate and a great council, together forming the legislature, with an

executive of five directors chosen by the legislature, and having four ministers as subordinates or “chief secretaries.” A supreme court of justice was set up ; a status of Swiss citizenship was recognized ; and absolute freedom to settle in any canton was given, the political “ communes ” being now composed of all residents, and not merely of the burghers. For the first time an attempt was made to organize the Confederation as a single state, but the change was too sweeping to last, for it largely ignored the local patriotism which had done so much to create the Con­federation, though more recently it had made it politically powerless. The three Forest districts rose in rebellion against the invaders and the new constitutions which destroyed their ancient prerogatives ; but the valiant resistance of the Schwyzers, under Alois Reding, on the heights of Morgarten (April and May), and that of the Unterwaldners (September), were put down by French armies. The proceedings of the French, however, soon turned into disgust and hatred the joyful feelings with which they had been hailed as liberators. Geneva was annexed to France (1798); Gersau, after an independent existence of over 400 years, was made a mere district of Schwyz ; immense fines were levied and the treasury at Bern pillaged ; the land was treated as if it had been conquered. The new republic was compelled to make a very close offensive and defensive alliance with France, and its directors were practically nominated from Paris. In 1799 Zurich, the Forest cantons, and Rhætia became the scene of the struggles of the Austrians (welcomed with joy) against the French and Russians. The manner too in which the reforms were carried out alienated many, and, soon after the Directory gave way to the Consulate in Paris (18 Brumaire or November 10, 1799), the Helvetic directory (January 1800) was replaced by an executive committee.

The scheme of the Helvetic republic had gone too far in the direction of centralization ; but it was not easy to find the happy mean, and violent discussions went on between the “ unitary ” (headed by Ochs and La Harpe) and “federalist” parties. Many drafts were put forward, and one actually submitted to but rejected by a popular vote (May 20, 1802). In July 1802 the French troops were withdrawn from Switzerland by Bonaparte, osten­sibly to comply with the treaty of Amiens, really to show the Swiss that their best hopes lay in appealing to him. The Helvetic Government was gradually driven back by armed force, and the federalists seemed getting the best of it, when (October 4) Bonaparte offered himself as mediator, and summoned many of the chief Swiss statesmen to Paris to discuss matters with him (the “Consulta”—December 1802). He had long taken a very special interest in Swiss matters, and in 1802 had given to the Helvetic republic the Frickthal (ceded to France in 1801 by Austria), the last Austrian possession within the borders of the Confederation. On the other hand, he had made (November 1802) Wallis into an inde­pendent republic. In the discussions he pointed out that Swiss needs required a federal constitution and a neutral position guaranteed by France. Finally (February 19, 1803) he laid before the Consulta the Act of Mediation which he had elaborated, and which they had perforce to accept—a document which formed a new departure in Swiss history, and the influence of which is visible in the present constitution.

Throughout, “ Switzerland ” is used for the first time as the official name of the Confederation. The thirteen members of the old Confederation before 1798 are set up again, and to them are added six new cantons,—two (St Gall and Graubünden or Grisons) having been formerly “ associates,” and the four others being made up of the