an open opposition, and it would be pleasant to feel more certain than we can feel that his vigorous denuncia­tion of the war with Prussia was the result of honest conviction, and not merely of the fact that it was not *his* war. At any rate, it brought him great unpopularity for the moment, with a corresponding reaction of gratitude when the crash came. Again it is impossible to be sure whether mere “ canniness,” or something better, kept him from joining the Government of the National Defence, of which he was in a manner the author.

Nevertheless the collapse of the empire was a great opportunity for Thiers, and it was worthily accepted. He undertook in the latter part of September and the first three weeks of October a circular tour to the different courts of Europe, in the hope (which he probably knew to be a vain one, though the knowledge neither daunted his spirit nor relaxed his efforts) of obtaining some inter­vention, or at least some good offices. The mission was unsuccessful; but the negotiator was on its conclusion immediately charged with another—that of obtaining, if possible, an armistice directly from Prince Bismarck. For a time this also failed, as the Provisional Government would not accept the German conditions ; but at last France was forced to yield. The armistice having been arranged, and the opportunity having been thus obtained of electing a National Assembly, Thiers was chosen deputy by more than twenty constituencies (of which he preferred Paris), and was at once elected by the Assembly itself practically president, nominally “chef du pouvoir exé­cutif.” He lost no time in choosing a coalition cabinet, and then personally took up the negotiation of peace. Probably no statesman has ever had a more disgusting task ; and the fact that he discharged it to the satisfaction of a vast majority, even in a nation popularly reputed the vainest, the least ballasted with common sense, and the most ungrateful to public servants who are unsuccessful, is the strongest testimony to Thiers’s merits. After contest­ing the matter, on the one side with the determination of Germany to have the pound of flesh, on the other with the reluctance of the Assembly to submit to the knife, he succeeded in convincing the deputies that the peace was necessary, and it was (March 1, 1871) voted by more than five to one.

Thiers held office for more than two years after this event,—a length of tenure which, in the circumstances and considering the French temper, is very surprising, and shows the strength of the general conviction that he alone could be trusted. He had at first to meet and crush at once the mad enterprise of the Paris commune ; and the severity which was undoubtedly shown in doing this is more than justified by two considerations,—first, that failure to suppress it would have meant anarchy through­out France; and, secondly, that the Germans would almost to a certainty have made it a pretext for further demands. Soon after this was accomplished, Thiers be­came (August 30) in name as well as in fact president of the republic, and he set himself with vigour and success to the tasks of rearranging the army, the finances (includ­ing the paying off of the war indemnity), and the civil service, and of procuring the withdrawal of the German army of occupation.

The strong personal will and inflexible opinions of the president had much to do with the resurrection of France ; but the very same facts made it inevitable that he should excite violent opposition. It seems to be gene­rally acknowledged that to him personally were due the establishment and retention of the republican rather than the monarchical form of government, to which latter the Assembly as first elected was notoriously disposed. He was a confirmed protectionist, and free-trade ideas had made great way in France under the empire ; he was an advocate of long military service, and the devotees of *la revanche* were all for the introduction of general and com­pulsory but short service. Both his talents and his temper made him utterly indisposed to maintain the distant, Olympian, apparently inactive, attitude which is supposed to be incumbent on a republican president ; and (for his tongue was never a carefully governed one) he sometimes let drop expressions scarcely consistent with constitutional theories of the relation of the chief of the state, whether president or king, to parliament. In January 1872 he formally tendered his resignation ; but the country was then in too manifestly disorganized a condition to allow even his enemies to accept it. His position, however, was clearly one not tenable for long in such a country as France. The Right (and not merely the Extreme Right) hated him for his opposition to the restoration of the monarchy, and with some justice reminded him of former declarations and opinions on the subject ; the Extreme Left could not forgive the suppression of the commune, while some radical leaders, who may have had little sympathy with the commune itself, saw in his great reputation and imperious personality a bar to their own accession to power. His chief supporters—men like Rémusat, Barthélemy Saint- Hilaire, and Jules Simon—were men rather of the past than of the present ; and he had few younger adherents.

The year 1873 was, as a parliamentary year in France, occupied to a great extent with attacks on Thiers. In the early spring regulations were proposed, and on April 13 were carried, which were intended to restrict the executive and especially the parliamentary powers of the president. On the 27th of the same month a contested election in Paris, resulting in the return of the opposi­tion candidate, M. Barodet, was regarded as a grave disaster for the Thiers Government, and that Government was not much strengthened by a dissolution and recon­stitution of the cabinet on May 19. Immediately after­wards the question was brought to a head by an interpel­lation moved by the duke of Broglie. The president declared that he should take this as a vote of want of confidence ; and in the debates which followed a vote of this character (though on a different formal issue, and proposed by M. Ernoul) was carried by 16 votes in a house of 704. Thiers at once resigned (May 24).

He survived his fall four years, continuing to sit in the Assembly, and, after the dissolution of 1876, in the Chamber of Deputies, and sometimes, though rarely, speaking. He was also, on the occasion of this dissolution, elected senator for Belfort, which his exertions had saved for France ; but he preferred the lower house, where he sat as of old for Paris. On May 16, 1877, he was one of the “363 ” who voted want of confidence in the Broglie ministry (thus paying his debts), and he took considerable part in organ­izing the subsequent electoral campaign. But he was not destined to see its success, being fatally struck with apoplexy at St Germain-en-Laye on September 3. Thiers had long been married, and his wife and sister-in-law, Mlle. Dosne, were his constant companions ; but he left no children, and had had only one—a daughter,—who long predeceased him. He had been a member of the Academy since 1834. His personal appearance was remarkable, and not imposing, for he was very short, with plain features, ungainly gestures and manners, very near-sighted, and of disagreeable voice; yet he became (after wisely giving up an attempt at the ornate style of oratory) a very effective speaker in a kind of conversational manner, and in the epigram of debate he had no superior among the statesmen of his time except Lord Beaconsfield.

Thiers is by far the most gifted and interesting of the group of literary statesmen—not statesmen who have had a penchant for