to the imperial tribunals.” This was intended to mean exemption from all obligations to the empire (with which the Confederation was connected hereafter simply as a friend), and to be a definitive settlement of the question. Thus by the events of 1499 and 1648 the Confederation had become an independent European state, which, by the treaty of 1516, stood as regards France in a relation of neutrality.

In 1668, in consequence of Louis XIV.’s temporary occupation of the Franche Comté, an old scheme for set­tling the number of men to be sent by each member of the Confederation to the joint army, and the appointment of a council of war in war time, that is, an attempt to create a common military organization, was accepted by the diet, which was to send two deputies to the council, armed with full political powers. This agreement, known as the *Defensionale,* is the only instance of joint and unanimous action in this miserable period of Swiss history, when re­ligious divisions crippled the energy of the Confederation.

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries the Confedera­tion was practically a dependency of France. In 1614 Zurich for the first time joined in the treaty, which was renewed in 1663 with special provisions as regards the Protestant Swiss mercenaries in the king’s pay and a promise of French neutrality in case of civil war in the League. The Swiss had to stand by while Louis XIV. won Alsace (1648-), Franche Comté (1678), and Strasburg (1681). But, as Louis inclined more and more to an anti- Protestant policy, the Protestant members of the League favoured the Dutch military service ; and it was through their influence that in 1707 the “ states ” of the principality of Neuchâtel, on the extinction of the Longueville line of these princes, decided in favour of the king of Prussia (representing the overlords—the house of Challon-Orange) as against the various French pretenders claiming from the Longueville dynasty by descent or by will. In 1715 the Catholic members of the League, in hopes of retrieving their defeat of 1712 (see below), agreed, while renewing the treaty and capitulations, to put France in the position of the guarantor of the League, with rights of interfering, in case of attack from within or from without, whether by counsel or arms. This last clause was simply the surrender of Swiss independence, and was strongly objected to by the Protestant members of the Confederation, so that in 1777 it was dropped, when all the Confederates made a fresh defensive alliance, wherein their sovereignty and independence were expressly set forth. Thus France had succeeded to the position of the empire with regard to the Confederation, save that her claims were practically asserted and voluntarily admitted.

Between 1648 and 1798 the Confederation was dis­tracted by religious divisions, and feelings ran very high. A scheme to set up a central administration fell through in 1655, through jealousy of Bern and Zurich, the pro­posers. In 1656 a question as to certain religious refu­gees, who were driven from Schwyz and took refuge at Zurich, brought about the first Villmergen war, in which the Catholics were successful, and procured a clause in the treaty asserting very strongly the absolute sovereignty in religious as well as in political matters of each member of the League within its own territories. Later, the attempt of the abbot of St Gall to enforce his rights in the Toggenburg swelled into the second Villmergen war (1712), which turned out very ill for the defeated Catholics. Zurich and Bern were henceforth to hold in severalty Baden, Rapperschwyl, and part of the “ common bailiwicks ” of the Aargau, both towns being given a share in the government of the rest, and Bern in that of Thurgau and Rheinthal, from which as well as from that part of Aargau she had been carefully excluded in 1415 and 1460.

The only thing that prospered was the principle of “ reli­gious parity,” which was established by every treaty.

The diet had few powers ; the Catholics had the majority there ; the sovereign rights of each member of the League and the limited mandate of the envoys effectually checked all progress. Zurich, as the leader of the League, managed matters when the diet was not sitting, but could not en­force her orders. The Confederation was little more than a collection of separate atoms, and it is really marvellous that it did not break up through its own weakness.

In these same two centuries, the chief feature in domestic Swiss politics is the growth of an aristocracy: the power of voting and the power of ruling are placed in the hands of a small class. This is chiefly seen in Bern, Lucerne, Freiburg, and Solothurn, where there were not the primitive democracies of the Forest districts nor the government by guilds as at Zurich, Basel, and Schaff­hausen. It was effected by refusing to admit any new burghers, a practice which dates from the middle of the 16th century, and is connected (like the similar move­ment in the smaller local units of the “ communes ” in the rural districts) with the question of poor relief after the suppression of the monasteries. Outsiders (Hintersässen or Niedgelassene) had no political rights, however long they might have resided, while the privileges of burgher­ship were strictly hereditary. Further, within the burghers, a small class succeeded in securing the monopoly of all public offices, which was kept up by the practice of co-opting, and was known as the “ patriciate.” So in Bern, out of 360 burgher families, 80 (in 1776 18 only} formed the ruling oligarchy ; and, though to foreigners the government seemed admirably managed, yet the last thing that could be said of it was that it was democratic. In 1749 Henzi made a fruitless attempt to overthrow this oligarchy, like Fario at Geneva in 1707. The harsh character of Bernese rule (and the same holds good with reference to Uri and the Val Leventina) was shown in the great strictness with which Vaud was kept in hand: it was ruled as a conquered land by a benevolent despot, and we can feel no surprise that Davel in 1723 tried to free his native land, or that it was in Vaud that the principles of the French Revolution were most eagerly welcomed. Another result of this aristocratic tendency was the way in which the cities despised the neighbouring country districts, and managed gradually to deprive them of their equal political rights and to levy heavy taxes upon them. These and other grievances (the fall in the price of food after the close of the Thirty Years’ War, the lowering of the value of the coin, &c.), combined with the presence of many soldiers discharged after the great war, led to the great Peasant Revolt (1653) in the territories of Bern, Solothurn, Lucerne, and Basel, interesting histori­cally as being the first popular rising since the old days of the 13th and 14th centuries, and because reminiscences of legends connected with those times led to the appearance of the “three Tells,” who greatly stirred up the people. The rising was put down at the cost of much bloodshed, but the demands of the peasants were not granted. Yet during this period of political powerlessness a Swiss literature first arises: Gessner and Tschudi in the 16th century are succeeded by Scheuchzer, Haller, Lavater, Bodmer, De Saussure, Rousseau, J. von Müller; the taste for Swiss travel is stimulated by the publication of Ebel’s guide-book, based on the old *Deliciæ* ; industry throve greatly. The residence of such brilliant foreign writers as Voltaire and Gibbon within or close to the territories of the Confederation helped on this remarkable intellectual revival. Political aspirations were not, however, wholly crushed, and found their centre in the Helvetic Society, founded in 1762 by Balthasar and others.