neither religious party wishing to give the other an excuse for calling in foreign armies. But the troubles in Raetia threatened entanglements. Austria wished to secure the Münsterthal (belonging to the League of the Ten Jurisdictions), and Spain wanted the command of the passes leading from the Valtellina (conquered by the leagues of Ractia in 1512), the object being to connect the Habsburg lands of Tirol and Milan. In the Valtellina the rule of the Three Raetian Leagues was very harsh, and Spanish intrigues easily brought about the massacre of 1620, by which the valley was won, the Romanist members of the Confederation stopping the troops of Zürich and Bern. In 1622 the Austrians conquered the Prättigau, over which they still had certain feudal rights. French troops regained the Valtellina in 1624, but it was occupied once more in 1629 by the imperial troops, and it was not till 1635 that the French, under Rohan, finally succeeded in holding it. The French, however, wished to keep it permanently; hence new troubles arose, and in 1637 the natives, under George Jenatsch, with Spanish aid drove them out, the Spaniards themselves being forced to resign it in 1639. It was only in 1649 and 1652 that the Austrian rights in the Prättigau were finally bought up by the League of the Ten Jurisdictions, which thus gained its freedom.

In consequence of Ferdinand II.’s edict of restitution (1629), by which the *status quo* of 1552 was re-established—the high- water mark of the Counter-Reformation—the abbot of St Gall tried to make some religious changes in his territories, but the protest of Zürich led to the Baden compromise of 1632, by which, in the case of disputes on religious matters arising in the “ com­mon bailiwicks, ” the decision was to be, not by a majority of the cantons, but by means of friendly discussion—a logical application of the doctrine of religious parity—or by arbitration.

But by far the most important event in Swiss history in this age is the formal freeing of the Confederation from the empire.

Basel had been admitted a member of the League in 1501, two years after the Confederation had been practically freed from the jurisdiction of the imperial chamber, though the city was included in the new division of the empire into “ circles ” (1521), which did not take in the older members of the Confederation. Basel, however, refused to admit this jurisdiction; the question was taken up by France and Sweden at the congress of Münster, and formed the subject of a special clause in both the treaties of Westphalia, by which the city of Basel and the other “ Helvetiorum cantones ” were declared to be “ in the possession, or almost in the posses­sion, of entire liberty and exemption from the empire, and *nullatenus* subject to the imperial tribunals.” This was intended to mean formal 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 Europcan 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 Zürich 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 Strassburg (1691). 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, decidcd in favour of the king of Prussia (repre­senting the overlords—the house of Chalon-Orange) as against the various French pretenders claiming from the Longueville dynasty by descent or by will. In 1715 the Romanist 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 their freedom, with rights of interfering in case of attack from within or from without, whether by counsel or arms, while she promised to procure restitution of the lands lost by them in 1712. 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 Zürich, the proposers. In 1656 a question as to certain religious refugees, who were driven from Schwyz and took refuge at Zürich, brought about the first Villemergen War, in which the Romanists 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, while in the “ common bailiwicks” the Baden arrangement (1632) was to prevail. Later, the attempt of the abbot of St Gall to enforce his rights in the Toggenburg swelled into the second Villemergcn War (1712), which turned out very ill for the defeated Romanists. Zürich and Bern were henceforth to hold in severalty Baden, Rapperswil, 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 completely, as regards *both* religions, within each parish in the “ common bailiwick.”

The Diet had few powers; the Romanists had the majority there; the sovereign rights of each member of the League and the limited mandate of the envoys effectually checked all pro­gress. Zürich, 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. Fribourg and Soleure, where there were not the primitive democracies of the Forest districts nor the government by gilds as at Zürich, 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 (Hintersasse or Niedergelassene) 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 69 only towards the close of the 18th century formed the ruling oligarchy—and, though to foreigners the government seemed