

mended their peoples "to strengthen themselves every day more and more in the principles and exercise of the duties which the Divine Saviour has taught to mankind." This document, probably unique in the annals of diplomacy, was the product of the varying emotions of Alexander I., still under strongly pietistic influences. Some contemporaries saw in it, as has been said, a profound political design, thinly cloaked in the language of religious hypocrisy. Those best capable of judging did not take this view; they ascribed the declaration to unsoundness of intellect. Castlereagh called it a "piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense"; Metternich thought "it was quite clear that the Tsar's mind was affected." To pronounce a definite opinion upon the strange psychology of Alexander would be extremely rash, but this view probably contains more truth than the other. In any case, to seek for the origin of the new political system inaugurated by the Alliance in this strange document is quite unnecessary; it can be found in the treaty signed by the four Powers on November 20, 1815. This renewed the pact of Chaumont<sup>1</sup> for the purpose of preserving the peace of Europe from revolutionary troubles in France, and bound the Powers to renew, at intervals, meetings which should discuss measures necessary to be taken for that end and for the general security. In other words, the Powers pledged themselves to the preservation of the European settlement secured by the Act of the Vienna Congress and the Second Peace of Paris.

The importance of this treaty will be seen when the nature of that settlement is recollected. In it the principles of the Revolution were utterly ignored; the idea of nationality was set at naught by the partitioning of Poland

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. IV. Bk. I.