

# Blood and Iron

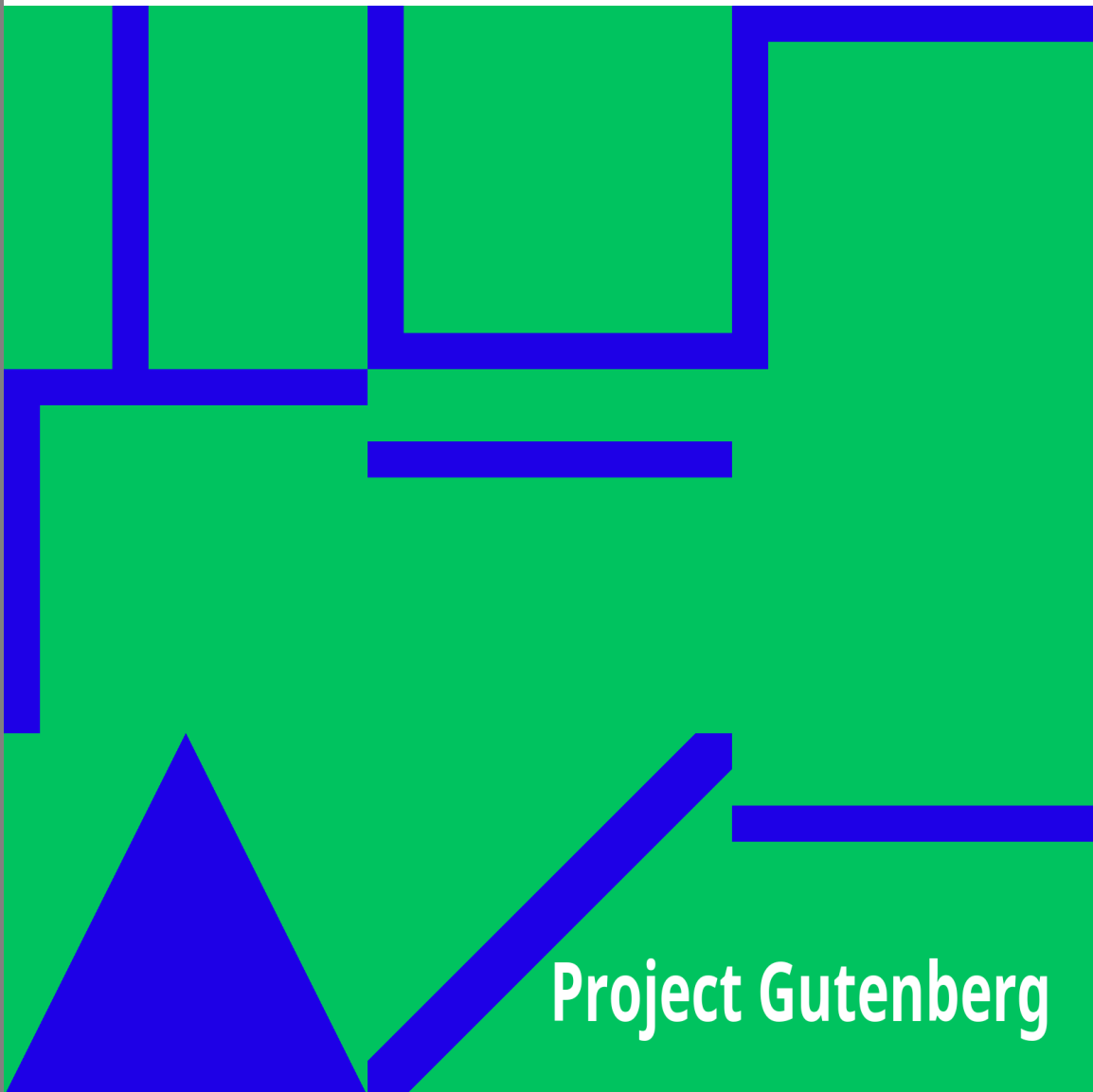
John Hubert Greusel



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John Hubert Greusel



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IRON \*\*\*

# **BLOOD and IRON**

*Origin of German Empire  
As Revealed by Character  
of Its Founder, Bismarck*

BY

JOHN HUBERT GREUSEL

THE SHAKESPEARE PRESS  
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*Dedicated to  
Stella*

*My Wife*

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# BOOK THE FIRST

## Bismarck's Human Essence

### CHAPTER I

#### The Man Himself

1

Hark, Hark! The giant's ponderous hammer rings on the anvil of destiny. Enter, thou massive figure, Bismarck, and in deadly earnest take thy place before Time's forge.

¶ It is, it must be, a large story—big with destiny! The details often bore with their monotony; they do not at all times march on; they drag, but they do indeed never halt permanently; ahead always is the great German glory.

¶ Forward march, under Prince Bismarck. He is our grim blacksmith, looming through the encircling dark, massive figure before Time's forge.

The sparks fly, the air rings with the rain of blows: he is in deadly earnest, this half-naked, brawny Prussian giant; magnificent in his Olympian mien; his bellows cracking, his shop aglow with cheery-colored sparks as the heavy hammer falls on the unshapen ores on the big black anvil.

¶ Thus, toiling hour after hour in the heat and sweat, our Pomeranian smith with ponderous hammer beats and batters the stubborn German iron into a noble plan—for a great Nation!

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¶ From a human point, we do not always see the ultimate glory.

For that is obscured by dark clouds of party strife, extending over years, the caprices of men and the interplay of ambitions both within and without the distracted German lands. Russia, Austria, Italy, Great Britain, France, Spain, have their spies engaged in all the under-play of political intrigue; there are a thousand enemies at home and abroad, in camp, court and peasant's cottage.

¶ And at times, weary of it all, we throw down the book convinced that, in a welter of sordid ends, the cause is lost in shame.

But, somehow, some way, Germany does in truth ultimately emerge triumphant, in spite of her amazing errors and the endless plots of enemies.

She does indeed justify her manhood—and thus the Bismarck story is of imperishable glory.

---

¶ We say that Bismarck had to re-inspire the Germans to be a fighting nation.

What we mean is that the spirit of the ancient Teutons had to be aroused; for though it slumbered for centuries, it never died.

Rome found that out when she was still in her infancy; the Germans burnt the town by the Tiber; and the fearsome struggle between the Romans and the Germanic tribesmen lasted almost unbroken for nearly five centuries.

¶ The Romans regarded the Germans as the bravest people in the world.

The migrations of the Cimbri and Teutones, and the frightful struggles in which after superhuman endeavors the Roman Marius destroyed his German enemies is one of the heroic pages of all history. It was a hand-to-hand contest, and torrents of human blood ran that day. Menzel tells us, (*Germany*, p. 85), that the place of battle enriched by a deluge of blood and ultimately fertilized by heaps of the slain, became in after years the site of vineyards whose wines were eagerly sought by connoisseurs.

¶ The Cimbri were drawn up in a solid square, each side of which measured 7,000 paces. The foremost ranks were fastened together with chains, that the enemy might not readily break through. Even the German dogs that

guarded the baggage train fought with animal ferocity. The battle went against the Germans and the slaughter was frightful. When all was lost, the Germans killed their women and children, rather than see them fall into the hands of the Romans. German courage inspired terror and created foreboding throughout the Roman world. It is a heroic story and sustains the German tradition that Germans born free under their ancient oaks never will be slaves, though the whole world is against them.

The success varied, but the Germans conquered, even in death, becoming lineal descendants of the Empire. And on the ruins were builded the German nation, as the successor of the old Holy Roman Empire.

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¶ We picture to you these shadowy glimpses of remote battle-scenes to show you that Germans were ever fighting men, who preferred death to loss of liberty.

On the ruins of Roman imperial glory, Teutonic conquerors founded an Empire that defied time and chance for upwards of 1,000 years; then there crept in a peculiar dry rot. The ancient German oak died at the top. Along came Napoleon, hacking away the limbs and scarring the gnarled trunk with fire and sword. The ruin seemed complete. Dead at the top, dead at the root, men said. And what men say is true. There is no longer a Germany, except as a mere geographical designation; when you speak of the German Empire you recall merely the echo of a once mighty name.

It now becomes Bismarck's solemn duty, fortified by a noble appreciation of the ancient legend, to make the German oak green again in its immortal youth. And he watered the roots with blood.

¶ We cannot tell you the great story in a few baby-sentences; you must read and grasp the broad spirit as it gradually unfolds. Bismarck in the crudity of his early inspiration scarcely finds himself for years. But all the while he is holding fast to the idea that the Fatherland should under God be free and united, sustained by the ancient Teutonic brotherhood in arms.

We present him in part as a tyrant, a wild, intolerant spirit, working his own plans to be sure, but those plans in the end are to redound to the good of the nation he long and unselfishly serves.

We ask you to see him in his weakness and we hope with some of his strength, always with his high purpose.

We ask you to behold him as a man with all a strong man's frailties and faults. We do not spare him. We paint him black, now and then, deliberately, that you may know how very small oftentimes are the very great; also to realize that if we are to wait for perfect human beings to front our reforms then those reforms will never be made.

Bismarck is too great a man to be belittled by the glamour of spurious praise for spurious virtues.

It was not necessary for him to cease to be a human being in order to carry out his work. He remained, to the end, grossly human, for which the gods be praised.

2

Grossly human is our Bismarck, whose lust for control is idiomatic; let us get this clearly, first of all.

¶ Did you ever see a bulldog battle with one of his kind? The startling fact is this: The dog suddenly develops magnificent reserve force, making his battling blood leap; is transformed into a catapult, bearing down his adversary or by him borne down—it matters not which!—for the joy of battle. To fight is the realization of his utmost being.

¶ A peculiar fact known to all admirers of a fighting bulldog is this: The dog during the fight, looks now and then at his master near-by, as much as to say, "See how well I fight!"

¶ Thus Bismarck looked at his King.

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¶ The nature of the pit bulldog is seen in Bismarck's head. His surly face inspires a sense of dread. There is that in his physiognomy that shows his ugly disposition, when aroused. If you saw that moody face in the crowd, one glance would be sufficient to make you feel how vituperative, short, sharp, murderous the unknown man could be, on occasion.

¶ Yet the fear stirred by the sight of a pit bulldog is oftentimes largely illusionary. The dog at heart is genial in a brute way, and never a more loyal servant than the bulldog to his friends—devoted even to death, to his master.

¶ It is the sense of dread in the bulldog's head that strikes home! So with Bismarck's physiognomy. The Iron Chancellor had but to come into the room to make his onlookers experience uneasiness. There was an ever-present suggestion of pent-up power, that could in an instant be turned upon men's lives, to their destruction!

¶ It is true that Bismarck had his genial side, but it cannot be said that he drew and held men to him. He had thousands of admirers to one friend. During the greater part of his life he was either hated or feared—at best, misunderstood. Like the pit bulldog, Bismarck was born to rule other lives—and he fulfilled his mission.

¶ The element of absolutism in the man, his uncompromising severity, his command of the situation regardless of cost, sorrow or suffering to other men, is seen in his realistic physiognomy. We study these facts more and more, as we go along.

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¶ There was always something imperious about this great man. He brooked no interference. His excessive dignity compelled respect. He never allowed familiarities; you could not safely presume on his good nature. He never permitted you to get too near. This abnormal self-confidence conveyed the idea that this giant in physique and in intellectual power was truly cut out for greatness.

One of his favorite pranks, as a boy, was to amuse himself making faces at his sister; he could frighten her by his queer grimaces.

From early youth, he was accustomed to take himself very seriously, and by his offensive manners conveyed an immediate impression of the ironical indifference in which he held humanity, in the mass.

¶ He was a born aristocrat, in a sense of high, offensive partisanship.

¶ Men shrank from him, cursed him, reviled his name; but they respected his intellect, even in the early days when he used his power in an undisciplined way; yes, was painfully learning the business of mastering human lives.

¶ The brute in the man loomed large; the unreasoning but magnificent audacity of the bulldog expressed itself in scars, wounds, deep-drinking bouts, fisticuffs, and in twenty-eight duels.

¶ But he had another kind of courage, greater in import than that expressed by physical combat.

---

¶ When we say Bismarck's work is a revelation of his will to power, we emphasize again how unnecessary it is to make him either less or more than a human being. There is a school of writers that never mentions his name except with upturned eyes, as though he were a demigod. The tendency of human nature is to idealize such as Bismarck out of all semblance to the original, creating wax figures where once were men of flesh and blood.

¶ Men rise to power largely in uniform ways; that psychic foundation on which they draw is always grossly human, rather dull when you understand it, always conventional;—and the great Bismarck himself is no exception.

¶ In doing his work, Bismarck is following the psychic necessities of his character; is acting in a very personal way, upheld always by the soldier's virtue, ambition. There is also a large element of self-love. His idiomatic lust for control is to be accepted as a root-fact of his peculiar type of being. And while on the whole his ambition is exercised for the good of his country, herein he is acting, in addition, under the ardent appetite, in his case a passion, to dominate millions of lives; urged not perhaps so much from a preconceived desire to dominate as from an inherent call to exercise his innate capacity for leadership.

¶ Making allowance for the idea that Bismarck is a devoted servant of the King of Prussia, it is not necessary to believe that Bismarck poses as the Savior of his country. In fact, he distinctly disavows this sacrifice, has too much sense to regard himself from this absurd point of view.

¶ The words carved on Bismarck's tomb at his own request, "A Faithful German Servant of Emperor William I," show that however much other men were unable to comprehend the baffling Bismarckian character, the Iron Chancellor himself had no vain illusions.

¶ When he was 83 and about to die, the old man taking a final sweep of his long and turbulent life, asked himself solemnly: "How will I be known in time to come?"

¶ Fame replied: "You have been a great Prince; an invincible maker of Empire, you have held in your hand the globe of this earth; call yourself what you will, and I will write a sermon in brass on your tomb."

¶ But the Iron Chancellor, after mature reflection, decided that his entire career, with all its high lights and its deep shadows, could be expressed in four simple words, "A Faithful German Servant." He knew exactly what he was, and how he would ultimately be represented in history.

¶ Think what this means. On those supreme questions of Life and Time involving the interpretation of Destiny—a problem hopelessly obscure to the average man—Bismarck brought a massive mind charged with a peculiar clairvoyance; often, his fore-knowledge seemed well-nigh uncanny in its exact realism; and if you doubt this assertion, all we ask is that you withhold your verdict till you have read Bismarck's story, herein set forth in intimate detail.

¶ How clear the old man's vision to discern behind all his Bismarckian pomp and majesty, in camp, court and combat, only the rôle of faithful servant.

¶ The phrase on his tomb proclaims the man's great mind. His overbrooding silence, as it were, is more eloquent than sermons in brass.

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¶ In studying Bismarck, the man, we merge his identity in the events of his time; but we must sharply differentiate between the events and the man. We incline to the belief that hereditary tendencies explain him more than does environment. It is Bismarck as a human being, and not the tremendous panorama of incidents leading to German sovereignty that always holds our interest. Life is life, and is intensely interesting, for its own sake.

Thus, we are at once freed from a common fallacy of biographical writing—that vicious mental attitude, as vain as it is egotistical on part of the over-partial historian, who would warp some manifest destiny on human life.

¶ Bismarck needs no historical explanation, no reference to hackneyed categories in the card-index of Time. Whether his plan was dedicated to this world or to the glory of some invisible God, you may debate as you will, but Bismarck will be neither greater nor less because of flights of your imagination.

¶ He is a great man in the sense that he did large things, but this does not make him other than he is, nor does his story lose because we know him to be grossly human in his aims. His life does not borrow anything because a certain type of mind professes to see behind Bismarck's history, as indeed behind the careers of all great men, some mysterious purpose apart and beyond human nature's daily needs. It was not necessary for Bismarck to cease to be a human being, to accomplish what he accomplished.

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¶ Also, for the reason that Bismarck was a genius, he is an exception to conventional rules covering the limitations of little men.

¶ Bismarck was a born revolutionist. Look at his terrible jaw, which, like the jaws of the bulldog, when once shut down never lets go till that object is in shreds.

¶ He was a true bulldog in this that, like the thoroughbred bulldog, Bismarck favored one feed a day. He took a light breakfast, no second breakfast, but at night would eat one enormous meal.

The bulldog follows a similar practice, when eating never looks from the plate, and the water fairly runs from his eyes, with animal satisfaction.

¶ Bismarck compelled men to do his bidding—as the wind drives the clouds and asks not when or why. It is enough to know that that is the wind's way!

He knew the coward, the thief, the soldier, the priest, the citizen, the king, and the peasant.

He knew how to betray an enemy with a Judas kiss; how to smite him when he was down; how to dig pitfalls for his feet; how to ply him with champagne and learn his secrets; how to permit him to win money at cards, and then get him to sign papers; how to remember old obligations or to forget new favors; how to read a document in more than one way; how to turn historical parallels upside down; how to urge today what he refused to entertain a year ago; how to put the best face on a losing situation; and how to shuffle, cut and stack the cards, or at times how to play in the open.

¶ He was not a humanitarian with conceptions of world peace or world benevolences. He was for himself and his own ends, which were tied to his political conception of a new Germany.

¶ And all the time he was helped out by his extraordinary vital powers, his ability to work all night like a horse week after week; go to bed at dawn and sleep till afternoon; then drive a staff of secretaries frantic with his insistent demands.

¶ Likewise, he was helped out by his remarkable personality. Actor that he was, he sometimes gained his point by his frankness, knowing that when he told the exact truth he would not be believed.

¶ Also, he could bluff and swagger, or he could speak in the polite accents of the distinguished gentleman; he could gulp a quart of champagne without taking the silver tankard from his lips; in younger years he used to eat from four to eleven eggs at a meal, besides vegetables, cakes, beer, game and three or four kinds of meats; his favorite drink was a mixture of champagne and porter.

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¶ He was a chain-smoker, lighted one cigar with another, often smoked ten or twelve hours at a stretch. His huge pipes, in the drawing room; his beer, in the salons of Berlin; his irritability, his bilious streaks, his flashes of temper; his superstition about the number 13; his strange mixing of God with all his despotic conduct; his fondness for mastiffs; his attacks of jaundice; his volcanic outbursts; his belief in ghosts, in the influence of the moon to make the hair grow; his mystical something about seven and combinations of seven; his incessant repetition of the formula that he was

obeying his God—were but human weaknesses that showed he had a side like an everyday common man.

¶ On top of it all he was great, because he knew how to manage men either with or without their consent; but he always studied to place himself in a strategic position from which he could insist on his demand for his pound of flesh.

¶ Sometimes, it took years before he could lull to sleep, buy, bribe or win over the men he needed; again when the game was short and sharp, he kicked some men out of his path contemptuously, others he parleyed with, still others he thundered against and defied; but always at the right time, won his own way.

¶ Yes, even Bismarck's card-playing is subordinated to the shrewd ends of diplomacy. Dr. Busch, the press-agent of Bismarck during the Franco-Prussian war, tells us that Bismarck once made this frank confession:

¶ “In the summer of 1865 when I concluded the Convention of Gastein with Blome (the Austrian), I went in for quinzé so madly that the rest could not help wondering at me. But I knew what I was about. Blome had heard that this game gave the best possible opportunity for discovering a man's real nature, and wanted to try it on with me. So I thought to myself, here's for you then, and away went a few hundred thalers, which I really might have charged as spent in His Majesty's service. But at least I thus put Blome off the scent, so he thought me a reckless fellow and gave way.”

### 3

Despite vast areas of political bogs, quaking under foot, that one must traverse, our Otto is not inaccessible!

¶ For many years they hate him like hell-fire itself, this Otto von Bismarck. The Prussians hate him, the Austrians, the Bavarians, to say nothing of the intervening rabble; but our tyrant is strong enough, in the end, to win foreign wars, and then the haters veer about, almost in a night, come up on bended knees and kiss the hand that smites—that hand of Bismarck, at once the best-beloved and the most-hated hand of his time. What more pray do you ask of human nature?

¶ Now here is a strange reality: If you look at the general outlines of the German map in 1815, you will see that the frontiers trace in a startling way the scowling outlines of Frederick the Great, “Old Fritz,” who first dreamed this German unity idea.

But mighty Frederick is in the royal tomb these many years; and a new Frederick in spirit is rapidly learning the business of king-maker and empire-builder.

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¶ Behind the name Bismarck is a story extraordinary, compounded of the intrigues, blood and passions of Austria, Russia, Italy, France, Belgium, Bavaria, Spain, and England.

Volumes would not suffice to give you the bewildering details; mountains of diplomatic letters, orders, telegrams, truths, half-truths, shuffling, cutting and stacking; you go confusedly from palace to people, prince to pauper, university to prison pen—all the way from Waterloo to Versailles, where William I received at last his great glory, German Emperor.

¶ Bismarck’s story is best told in flashes of lightning—as you try to picture a bolt from the black skies.

By the patience of the methodical historian who laboriously examines each document in the National archives, one fills soon enough a ten-volume account—with a swamp of cross-references, footnotes to each paragraph, and with notes to the footnotes.

¶ Yet this Bismarck is not inaccessible if we get at his inner side, grasp the man’s essence.

Strong arm and tireless brain Time asked;—a man who could neither be bent, broken nor brow-beaten; a man who would for 40 years follow a plan by no means clear; often had to go out in the dark and find his way, all old landmarks lost, and no pole-star in sight.

¶ I dwell on one outstanding fact, all down through his career: I mean Bismarck’s power to conceal pain. Hurricanes of insulting criticisms swept around his head, year after year, but on the whole Otto’s attitude was that of the mountain that defies the storm. He would never give in that, as it

seemed to onlookers, a shaft of disagreeable truth had struck home; that a soft-nosed bullet, well aimed, had torn his flesh or broken a bone; or that a dagger-thrust, going directly through his coat of the White Cuirassier had pierced his heart.

¶ Even in his bitter defeats, he had a peculiar idiomatic way of making out that the result was exactly what he desired. It was of course only an adroit explanation to protect his pride; the brazen invention of a nature that would not acknowledge itself in error. Here is Bismarck, to the core.

¶ For a long and turbulent life-time Bismarck's soul was tried by the very tortures of the damned!

4

Wherein it is set forth that Otto von Bismarck's massive political genius, combined with his personal foibles, mark him as a heroic figure, side by side with Frederick the Great.

¶ In attempting to depict a consistent Bismarck, we find that his life has been as much misinterpreted through the carping need of envious political critics as through the bad art of historically well-disposed friends.

The perplexing problem is to blend his massive mental grasp, side by side with his strange fits of irritability, his turbulence, his deep-drinking, his gluttony, his wild pranks.

About him at all times, whether expressed or concealed, there floated an ironic derision of the littleness of the average man, whom at heart Bismarck despised.

While the eyes of detractors are everywhere, the voice of hero-worship has likewise conspired to make an impossible idol of a man with very human and oft-times crying frailties; the biographic truth is to be found somewhere between these two extremes; but even with this clear clue in mind, it is often difficult to reconcile amazing personal and diplomatic inconsistencies with which his career abounds.

¶ Then, too, there is something that strikes like the irony of Socrates, only bitter instead of light; and Bismarck reveals now and then a touch remindful

of that Rabelaisian hero whose enormous capacity could only be quenched by draining the river dry. To tell Bismarck's inner life-story, in a large way, one must often deal with a series of pictures akin to the gods and devils in Dore's delineations for Dante's "Inferno."

It often seems as though every important act of this great man's life was charged with the significance of Destiny, stands forth vividly against a background of intrigue, superstition, personal follies, the smoke and flame of battle—a heroic figure side by side with such master-spirits as Frederick the Great.

Like Frederick the Severe, this Bismarck is very human indeed, and has his crying weaknesses, and his enemies, God knows, tried for forty years to get rid of him by intrigue, often by assassination; yet until his great duty is done he must hold firmly to his place, must do the work which brings him no peace, or rest, only trouble year after year.

---

¶ Throughout the amazing story, no matter which way we travel, we always return to a profound sense of this giant's will and his massive knowledge of human life, expressed in his ability to force the shrewdest men in Europe to do his bidding.

His sense of power is so supreme that sometimes it really seems that, as Bismarck himself often sets forth, his authority fell from heaven.

Here, there is a direct harking back to the ancient days in the Alt Mark, to the Circle of Stendal with its little town of Bismarck, on the Biese, where stands the ancient masonry dating from 1203, and known as the "Bismarck Louse."

¶ The strange legend of the Bismarck Louse tells worlds of the ancient Bismarck power, in those far-off times, helps us in the year 1915 to grasp certain obscure phases of the Bismarck racial strength, inherited by Otto von Bismarck.

¶ This medieval Bismarck Tower received its name from a gigantic louse which inhabited this place, and had to be fed and appeased; therefore, every day the superstitious peasants of the district brought huge quantities of meat and drink, for the monster's food. It is needless to add that these visits were

encouraged by the Bismarck lord of the soil, in Alt Mark;—and here you see already the cunning in managing human nature so characteristic of the Bismarck genius.

¶ The purely social application of this gossip may, however, be eyed with suspicion, as a French canard. It was so easy for “Figaro” to libel the Bismarck of 1871, whereupon the whole French press followed and barked at the Iron Chancellor’s heels.

He was caricatured, spit at, reviled, depicted as the beast-man in Europe.

¶ For one thing, Bismarck knew France was the richest nation in Europe, also that she had ambition for the left bank of the Rhine; and to General Sheridan, who chanced to be at Sedan and Gravelotte on official business, Bismarck said, “The only way to keep France from waging war in the near future is to empty her pockets.”

¶ French newspaper editors lashed themselves into insanity trying to invent new names for the man who had brought the downfall of the Empire, at Sedan; the man who at Versailles was arranging the hardest terms of peace ever conceived by a diplomatic Shylock, bent on having his pound of flesh.

¶ Paris journalists called him “the incarnation of the evil spirit,” “the Antichrist,” “the shrewd barbarian,” “crime-stained ogre, who was always thrashing his wife with a dog-whip,” “he kept a harem, from which no Berlin shopkeeper’s daughter was safe;” “once he became enamored of a nun and hired ruffians to kidnap her and bear her away to his castle;” “he is the father of many illegitimate children, in Berlin some say as many as fifty;” “he once lashed one of his Russian mistresses over the bare shoulders because he suspected her of looking at another admirer;” “he uses his confidential diplomatic knowledge to add to his huge private fortune by gambling on every Bourse in Europe.”

¶ How magnificent—if it were indeed only true! What a relief that would be over the tame details of average human life, and what a boon to biographers this grand wickedness! Alas, the tales are only important as specimens of French drawing room gossip of 1871!

¶ The fables never bothered Bismarck a moment. When he was ready, he repaid them in his own splendid coin; and certainly he was past-master of

the gentle art of putting a razor-edge on an insult!

¶ Bismarck had his vituperative side. Egged on by his wife and his son, Bismarck became at times verbally ferocious. His wife, a descendant of those terrible Frankish women-warriors, stemming from barbarian times, could under stress exercise a barbarian's stark freedom of speech; and when Bismarck, furious at some insult, was replying with a political cannonade, she would infuriate him to still greater exertions by suggesting:

¶ "Bismarck, hiss a little! Hiss a little!"

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¶ And after seven hundred years, the Bismarck psychology behind the old Tower's superstitious appeal remains substantially the same. We shall see at times as we sketch for you the life portrait of Otto von Bismarck a mysterious atavism; the self-same mental astuteness that stood his ancestors in such good stead, enabling them to frighten the peasants into providing the corn.

¶ Yes, blood will tell—and the Bismarck blood is rare juice!

## CHAPTER II

### Blood Will Tell

5

Battle-born, Bismarck's genius springs from the very fire and sword of human nature—resembling definitely his iron-headed barbarian ancestry, whose freedom remained unconquered through the centuries.

¶ We cannot hope to trace Bismarck to any complete legal basis—any more than we can defend the complete legitimacy of France, Belgium, or the United States, countries avowedly harking back to revolutionary origin. Bismarck's life, likewise, presents unquestioned elements of anarchistic root. Inherited from battle-born Bismarcks are forces peculiar to himself, free, and individualistic, profoundly expressive wherein Mother Nature

summoning her ultimate powers endows a colossal courage in a colossal mind and body.

¶ As far as the Thirteenth Century, the name Bismarck, then styled Bishofsmarck or Biscopsmarck, is associated with the little river Biese; but whence the original stock is for antiquarians to debate.

Believe the Bismarcks to be of Bohemian, of Frankish or of Jewish origin, or of Slavic if you will, you find bespectacled, scholastic authorities who will open the musty pages and display to you the truth.

¶ Herbort of Biese became in due course Herbort von Bismarck. The “von” was unquestionably a mark of geographical origin, rather than a sign of nobility. The name is borne by other families from Biese; but the important part is not the name but the men behind that name, what that name stood for.

¶ Herbort von Bismarck’s name is enrolled in the guild papers as master of the merchant tailors of Stendal, in the old Mark of Brandenburg; a “Mark” being somewhat equivalent to an English “shire.”

¶ But this fact about the tailor-ancestor must not be pressed too far. Some antiquarian of the year 2700 A. D., let us say, might argue that President Taft was a steam-shoveler, because the name is found recorded among the laborers who helped dig the Panama Canal; whereas, the fact is that the President was enrolled as an honorary member of one of the labor unions.

Also, after Waterloo, when the British nation was running wild trying to imagine some distinction that as yet had not been bestowed on Wellington, the London tailors in a moment of inspiration added the Iron Duke’s name to the great roll of scissor-snippers!

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¶ Beginning with Herbort’s son, four Bismarcks, in three generations, were social lepers.

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¶ Klaus von Bismarck died about the year 1385, outside the holy favor of the church—as his father had died before him, and as did two sons, in their turn. But Klaus, ever shrewd in a worldly way, recommended himself as a

king's fighting man; led the robber gang off with the loot in the name of his merry monarch, the Margrave of Bavaria.

¶ For this most excellent service as a professional man-killer, Klaus was rewarded with a knight's fee of forest land, at Burgstal, an estate that remained in the family for two hundred years. There were deer, wild boar, wolves and bear in the Bismarck forest, and one day Conrad of Hohenzollern came that way on a royal hunting expedition.

¶ Conrad could have stolen the Bismarck petty title outright, but while he confiscated Burgstal forest, he offered Schoenhausen, on the Elbe, in exchange. However, Schoenhausen did not compare with the estate that the envious monarch took by force. The Burgstal forest is to this day one of the great game preserves of the German Emperor.

¶ The Bismarcks also received in the exchange farming land known as Crevisse, lately confiscated by the Hohenzollerns from the nuns; and one of the conditions of the transfer to the Bismarcks was that these nuns should be supported.

## 6

Strong animal basis of Bismarck's rise to Power—The story is always the same, "Fight, or die like a dog!"

¶ Thus, from time immemorial, the fighting Bismarcks wrote their title to a share of this earth with the sword, which in spite of all Hague Conferences remains the best sort of title man has been able to devise.

As time sped and what is called Civilization grew somewhat, men took on chicken-hearted ways; and in every pinch appealed to courts for decisions formerly decided by individual brawn; till finally, as in these latter degenerate days, if a fight becomes necessary, society hires policemen to stop the row.

¶ Klaus von Bismarck preferred to do his own murdering, and consequently, Klaus stood first in the eyes of honest men of his own generation; but in this Twentieth Century, instead of putting incompetents to the test of the sword, society, committed to the soft doctrine that all life is sacred, burdens itself

with lengthening the days of the daft. A far cry that from the ideals of the early Bismarcks! It is well to keep these facts in mind, in contemplating the extraordinary career of the great Otto von Bismarck, king-maker and unifier of Germany.

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¶ Modern timid-hearted folk, reading of the desperate makeshifts of the old Bismarcks to get on in the world, would say off-hand, “There must be a strain of madness in the Bismarck brain?”

¶ Unquestionably! This fighting family in each generation had its born revolutionists, its enormous egotists, its men who lived what orthodox opinion calls “godless lives”—although in their own philosophy the Bismarcks are always preaching that God is on their side. When the Elector decided to steal Burgstal forest, the Bismarcks set up this pious plea: “We wish to remain in the pleasant place assigned to us by the Almighty.” Four hundred years later we find Otto von Bismarck using again and again this peculiar reasoning, to justify, at least to explain, his own career: “If I were not a Christian, I would not continue to serve the King another moment. Did I not obey my God and count on Him, I should certainly take no account of earthly masters.”

¶ In three great wars of ambition in which 80,000 perished, he repeated this solemn formula about God; he repeated it on the blood-drenched field of Koeniggraetz; he repeated it in the Holstein war, and he repeated it again at Sedan and at Gravelotte.

¶ Bismarck persisted in this peculiar conception of life, down to the last. While in retirement, after his downfall, one day the bloody past rose before him like a dream, and he exclaimed to Dr. Busch: “Politics has brought me vexation, anxiety and trouble; made no one happy, me, my family nor anyone else, but many unhappy. Had it not been for me, there would have been three great wars less; the lives of 80,000 would not have been sacrificed; and many parents, brothers, sisters and wives would not now be mourners. That, however, I have settled with my Maker!” Now, once and for all, what we understand this to mean is merely this: a super-abundance of faith. Many great leaders have had it—David, Cromwell, Bismarck.

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¶ In seeking biographic clues, through hereditary influences, we are impressed with the astounding animal-basis of strength behind the Bismarcks, from earliest recorded history. They were a deep-drinking, prolific gormandizing race, and every mother's son had to do battle by brawn backed by the sword, or die like a dog! This bred high tempers, turbulent manners and contempt for the weak.

¶ Soldiers, diplomatists, brow-beaters, characterized the Bismarck clan down through centuries. Stormy and adventurous Bismarcks fought for the sheer delight of doing battle;—it mattered not, whether against the Turks or against some near-by king whose lands the German robber-knights lusted for and wished to annex by appeal to the sword.

¶ There is a story of a garrison brawl in which a Bismarck slew his companion in drink, then fled to Russia, then on to Siberia; soldier of fortune, he fights under any flag that promises a gay life and plenty of loot. Three hundred years later—how the wheel turns round!—Otto von Bismarck, as Russian Ambassador to the King of Prussia, engaged in intrigues for the same old lust of land, the same old nefarious business, but this time sprayed over by the high-sounding name, diplomacy.

¶ Dr. Busch, the Saxon press-agent for Prince Bismarck, repeats the old tale of the winning of Alsace by the French king, through the aid of Otto von Bismarck's great-great-grandfather, a mercenary soldier; adding that while one Bismarck helped take Alsace away, another of that redoubtable family brought it back many years later, with the added joy of the prodigious money-fine of five billions of francs!

7

Boisterous Col. Bismarck, of the Dragoons; "The Wooden Donkey dies today!" French Cavalier Bismarck and his mushy prose-poems.

¶ Burly strength and horse-play, rather than diplomacy, were always distinctive traits of that part of the Bismarck family immediately surrounding Otto von Bismarck; and in Otto's case, although the years gradually taught him that there are more ways of stopping a man's mouth than by cutting off his head, on the whole we seek in vain, among ancestral

Bismarcks, for any striking characteristics in which the point does not turn either on gluttony or on deep-drinking.

¶ They were enormous eaters. Bread and meat were not enough. They must have game, fish, cake, wines, and plenty of each. Hunger put them in a rage. They were iron men, with stomachs of pigs.

¶ They were unbrooked master spirits, followed the hounds, fought duels, had noisy tongues, and gloried in personal independence.

When they loved they loved madly; when they hated it was the same. They drank all night and were out again at dawn.

¶ Yet in their way, they were high-minded gentlemen, devoted themselves industriously to their duties; and it may be that the turbulence of their lives borrowed something from the rude clash of opinion that often divided the best friends, during the stormy periods of history in which they fought as soldiers of fortune.

¶ Otto von Bismarck's great-grandfather, Augustus, calling his cronies of the barracks around him, was wont to add zest to the carousal by introducing the trumpet call after each toast; to heighten the infernal racket, the boisterous colonel of dragoons ordered a volley fired in the drink-hall.

¶ This terrible dragoon, master of the hounds, guzzler, companion and leader in all revels, was generally voted one of the amiable men in army circles. He was a noted shot. In one year of record his score was 154 red deer and 100 stag.

¶ At the Ihna bridge was a ducking stool, for army punishments; it took the amusing style of a wooden donkey, and was so called by the dragoons as a rude joke.

After one of his hard drinking bouts, it was often the colonel's amusing habit to order his men to march to the bridge; on arriving the band struck up and the wooden donkey was thrown into the stream. "All offenders of my regiment are forgiven," Bismarck would bawl, "the donkey dies today!"

Then with all manner of opera bouffe the offending donkey would be put overboard—only to be brought out next morning, ready for official

business.

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¶ But our fun-loving colonel's good times were now over. As commander of the gallant Anspach-Bayreuth dragoons, Augustus fought for Frederick the Great and was severely wounded at Czaslau. Austrian hussars surprised the transport wagons carrying the wounded to the rear, and with brutality common to the soldier-business of that rude day killed the defenseless Prussians, among whom was our Colonel von Bismarck.

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¶ Bismarck's grandfather, Karl Alexander, leaned toward the namby-pamby intellectual rather than to the social and convivial. He is remembered for his affected poetical style. Karl, brave soldier, attracted the eye of no less a judge of valor than the Great Frederick, who appointed this Karl Alexander von Bismarck an attache of the Prussian embassy at Vienna.

¶ Karl, like other Germans of the sentimental period, aped the French poets; but when a German is sentimental, the mush-pots boil over. Karl's writings show that peculiar over-inflated quality, "sentimentality," so much admired in the rococo period.

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¶ Karl William Ferd., Otto's father, and Louise Wilhelmina, Otto's mother, born Mencken, lived at Schoenhausen in troublous French times. Oct. 14th, 1806, the terrible defeat at Jena put Prussia in the hands of the enemy.

Fortresses surrendered without firing a shot, and the panic-stricken king fled to the far eastern side of his domains, near Russia.

All this took place within three months after the marriage of Karl and Louise, who had now set up housekeeping at Schoenhausen.

¶ The Bismarcks tried to escape in a coach, but the French unexpectedly appeared and ordered Karl back to the house. The French ransacked every room; Louise fled to the library and locked the massive oak door; to this day it bears the marks of French bayonets; the Bismarcks then hid in the forest where they remained all night with panic-stricken neighbors; at dawn Karl and Louise ventured out, to find Schoenhausen a scene of destruction.

¶ The one galling fact that Karl could not overlook, in Marshal Soult's raid, was the desecration of the genealogical tree. This huge painting with its shields of the Bismarck descent was slashed from end to end, with bayonets!

¶ Oh, Otto von Bismarck remembered this many, many years later, in making terms with the French after Sedan—do not for a moment forget that! Such is the amazing power of hereditary loves and hates;—and certainly the Bismarcks had no reason to admire the French.

### CHAPTER III

#### The Gothic Cradle

8

Idyl of the child Otto, in his huge Gothic cradle at Schoenhausen; wonders that gather 'round his destiny, a forecast and a reality.

¶ Otto Edward Leopold von Bismarck, the great central figure in our story, was the fourth of six children, three dying in infancy. He was born April 1, 1815, but a few months before the crowning defeat at Waterloo—that year big with the hammer-blows of Destiny!

¶ In lonesome Schoenhausen on the Elbe, the village lately devastated by Marshal Soult and his plundering soldiers, the infant Otto sleeps peacefully in his oak-carved Gothic cradle. A century later, we still see that huge cradle as one of the souvenirs in the famous Bismarck museum at Schoenhausen.

¶ Schoenhausen house is one of those thick-walled monuments of mediæval masonry.

There is, to be sure, something out of drawing about the antiquated three-story house; and we survey with respect for the past the queer courtyard, leaded panes, park with the artificial island, wooded byways, and old forest, and not far away is the village church with the square stone tower; hard by, also, the kattenwinkel, or Katte's corner, at the confluence of the Havel and

the Elbe; and on the house is the Katte's coat-of-arms, a cat watching a mouse, the mark of the sturdy 17th century builder, Katte, who to honor his wife, Dorothea Sophia Katte, added her name to his builder's sign over the lintel.

¶ In this historical 1815, seed-time and harvest strangely blend, yet are years apart.

For, while the child sleeps in his Gothic cradle, the Congress of Vienna meets to redistribute among the hungry kings the old domains stolen as prizes in the long Napoleonic wars; and in turn, after incredible political adventures, running over years, the child before us, grown to be a man, will smash the rulings of Vienna and will build an empire stronger far than that of imperial France, now dying at Waterloo.

¶ All these wonders gather 'round the destiny of the child in the big Gothic cradle, before which we now tiptoe at Schoenhausen, lest we awaken the baby and he cry.

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¶ When the French overrun Prussian territory the old land-owning military aristocracy was reduced to bankruptcy. Mortgages falling due could not be paid; the king extended credit for four years; and in the interim Prussians were forced to use depreciated rag-money; all the gold and silver had been confiscated by the French invaders.

¶ Great dissatisfaction followed. The farms had been tilled by feudal-laborers, practically slaves; these oppressed peasants now flew to arms.

Schoenhausen was a dreary place indeed; while the Bismarcks were better off than their neighbors, still the times were out of joint and ruin fell over the broad acres.

¶ Then came an unexpected change. Along about 1816, Karl inherited Kneiphof, Kuelz and Jarchelin estates from his cousin, moved to Kneiphof, just east of the hamlet of Naugard.

The house was exceeding modest; a brook, the Zampel, ran near by; and there was a carp pond. Karl was fond of hunting in the old beech forest.

Such were the unsettled conditions in the Bismarck family, up to Otto's sixth year.

9

Soft-hearted Karl and Spartan Mother Louise; her rigid character, its good and its bad side; her extreme punctilio and her pistol-shooting, to steady her sight.

¶ Otto von Bismarck inherited his tall form from his father, Karl William. This unusual type of cavalry captain subscribed for French journals and ate off silver plate. Karl's regiment was known as the "White and Blue," and one of his duties was to get up at 4 in the morning and measure corn for horses. At one time the captain lived in Berlin, but he soon tired of the capital and gladly returned to the country where he passed his days as squire. To the end of his life, he was fond of horseback riding and hunting; and he brought his sons up to ride like centaurs.

¶ Bismarck's mother, Louise Wilhelmina Mencken, married at the age of sixteen; her husband Karl was nineteen years her senior.

¶ In the family circle, the father was known as the heart, the mother as the brains; but in Louise's case it might well read "ambition." She wished to see Otto von Bismarck, her youngest son, become a diplomatist—a judgment that in the light of after years seems almost uncanny.

Later, at the full tide of the Chancellor's great glory, frequently his earliest friends used to say, "Bismarck, had your mother only survived to see this day!"

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¶ The wife's leading trait was her inflexible resolution, the will to rulership;—and rule she certainly did, always.

For one thing, she steadied her nerves and schooled her sharp eyes by practising pistol shooting.

There was Spartan courage about her decisions! Frau Bismarck's irritability had been growing of late; Karl was too soft with Otto. She was angered to

think that her husband might spoil Otto, by too much coddling. The domestic climax came.

¶ That day at table, Otto with childish impatience, began swinging his legs like a pendulum. The good-natured Karl hadn't it in his heart to correct the child, but instead began making excuses for Otto's conduct. This aroused Louise's ire. To smooth matters Karl said, "See, Minchen, how the boy is sitting there dangling his little legs!"

¶ Louise then and there read her ultimatum. She would not have her son spoiled by the foolishness of his soft father—not at all! She would send her beloved son away, first. At the time, Otto was only six years old.

And she thereupon proceeded to keep her decision—acting with all the aggressiveness for which in later life Otto von Bismarck was himself celebrated.

## CHAPTER IV

### Sunshine and Shadow

10

Wherein is shown the amazing power of hereditary traits; history repeats itself.

¶ It was from his mother that Prince Bismarck, the future ruler of Germany, received his endowment of dauntless audacity, his gift of trenchant argument, his bursts of ironical laughter, his power of instant decisions, his scolding, and his bitter wrath. All these qualities shone in the parliamentary fight before the Austrian war, when for three years he defied the country, and raised the Prussian war-funds by extortion!

¶ In one sense, he was always stacking the cards! And what chance has the fellow-player against the dealer with the marked deck? Bismarck's life abounds with episodes showing this astonishing readiness. In love, in laughter and in intrigue, it was ever the same. Bismarck's use of human

nature, constructively, at the precise psychological moment, redounding to his self-interest, is supreme.

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¶ At the wedding of his friend Blankenburg to Fraulein Thadden-Triglaff, the bridesmaid was Fraulein Johanna von Puttkammer. Bismarck saw, admired and decided. Soon after in a Hartz journey, with the Blankenburgs, Otto had a brief opportunity to favor energetic measures. He wasted no time, Johanna must become his wife! He wrote direct to the young lady's parents, with whom he was not acquainted. A flying visit followed to the home of his intended father-in-law. The Puttkammers were surprised at the suitor's impetuous love-making, also were shocked by the reputation Bismarck had for fast living.

The moment he saw parents and daughter he forced the situation. Throwing his arms around his sweetheart, Bismarck embraced her, vigorously. And thus he won his bride even before an unwilling father and mother; for Bismarck carried them off their feet by the very audacity of his wooing.

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¶ During the Franco-Prussian war, coming to the Rothschild château, Bismarck found 17,000 bottles of wines in the cellar, under lock and key; and the keeper was determined that Bismarck should not use the master's champagnes.

It took Bismarck only a few minutes to change all that. Soon he was comfortably settled in the Baron's private chambers, reached by a grand winding staircase; here the Chancellor proceeded to make himself at home in dressing gown and slippers.

¶ He rang for the butler, ordered wine for himself and suite. The keeper of the cellar still refused—and Bismarck's black ire rose. In a voice of thunder he cried, "If you do not open that cellar door by the time I count five, you will be trussed on a spit, like a fowl!"

¶ After that, the Prussians had what they wanted, made merry on the rare wines of Baron Rothschild, who was known as a hater of Prussia and an admirer of Austria.

¶ Bismarck now decided to try various gastronomic oddities; ordered his staff to shoot pheasants from the Baron's preserves, and commanded the cook to stew the birds in champagne!

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¶ When Napoleon wrote his famous note, at Sedan, "Not having been able to die in the midst of my troops, there is nothing left for me but to place my troops in your Majesty's hands," Bismarck saw the human nature side at a glance! He urged peace, then and there, with the Prince Imperial on the throne, and "under German influence," which would thus give to Prussia the whip hand. General Sheridan tells the story.

It was an instantaneous look into the far future, and although it did not prevail, for certain important reasons, the Chancellor caught the human side of the combination, with the clarity of a dramatist constructing a plot.

¶ On his mother's side, Otto von Bismarck comes of hunting, fighting and farming stock.

Shrewd, wise, ambitious, and haughty—with these traits she richly endowed her son. His father was handsome, bright, solid, emphatic-looking, but with a yielding disposition; the iron will and sharp tongue of the wife overawed the husband. The shrewish frau had things largely her own way, was able to read a lecture like the wrath of God. However, on the whole, the couple got along passably well—for Karl never took Louise too seriously! When Frau Louise's efforts to make a lackey of him got on his nerves, Karl called his cronies and away they went fox-hunting.

## 11

At the tender age of six, already is Otto forced out of the family circle; the wolf's breed shows its teeth.

¶ Well, the incensed Louise, weary of the softness of Karl, and fearing lest Karl would spoil Otto by too much petting, packed the child off to Plamann Institute, Berlin, a school of the Squeers type.

Otto remained in this Spartan school-prison for nearly six years, and to the end of his life carried unpleasant memories. Plamann Institute idea was to

harden lads, but instead of hardening the practices there embittered.

¶ The half-starved boys were up at 6; breakfast of bread and milk; religious exercises at 7; at 10, luncheon of bread and salt; then, a run in the garden; at noon, dinner from the hands of Frau Plamann; and if a lad wanted a second plate, and couldn't eat it all, he was punished by being sent to the garden, there to remain till he had gulped down the last morsel, even though he fairly choked; at teatime, bread and salt, or warm beer and slices of bread; all day, studies of interminable length and dullness;—but, best of all, fencing exercises wound up the day.

¶ In the school yard was a lone lime-tree, and here the boys came running as a goal for their sports. Using this lime-tree as a pulpit, Otto used to read to his companions chapters from Becker's stories about giants.

¶ There was a pond near Schoenberg where the pupils used to go bathing. Otto's chum was Ernest Kriger.

¶ After six years of this life on salt and potatoes, Otto was transferred to Dr. Bonnell's Frdk-Wm. Gymnasium, Berlin, and in another year to Grey Friars' Gymnasium. Soon after Dr. Schleiermacher confirmed Otto, at Trinity Protestant church.

In the light of subsequent history, it is significant, almost uncanny, to recall the life-text offered to Otto at this solemn moment by his pastor: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." Many years later—just before his death—Bismarck ordered the motto to be carved on his tomb; all his life he had followed the text.

¶ The lad was two years at Grey Friars' school. While there Otto's deep-seated hatred of the French is again visible for a decisive moment.

In 1806 Marshal Soult had slashed the genealogical tree of the Bismarck family; and young Otto, who often heard the story, grew up with the idea that the French were ogres.

The school schedule, among other studies, called for French, or English as an optional selection; although all Otto's chums decided for French, the lad flatly refused to follow and instead stood almost alone in the English class.

¶ He is no longer a child when he says good-bye to Grey Friars; he is a young man of 17—and life is opening before him.

Life! The joyous care-free life of youth and inexperience; with the world and its cares still seemingly far away!

12

At Goettingen, he joined the Hannovera Corps and his record is twenty-eight duels; his face bore many scars, among them a long cut from left jaw to corner of his mouth.

¶ Otto's mother, who had strong social aspirations and held to the rigid exclusiveness of the upper classes, wished to send her son to an aristocratic university. So she selected Goettingen. Her ideas were to make her son a man of dignity and solid social qualities.

Alas, he became but an indifferent student, excelling principally in dueling, beer-bouts in college taverns, dog-fighting, flirting, and general deviltries unnumbered, for which he spent considerable time in the college dungeon. Listen to this:

¶ Many years ago, in his roaring student days, long before Otto von Bismarck was famous, he received an invitation to a ball, and went to the shoemaker to be measured for high-topped military boots, affected by the beaux of that day. Calling some days later, he was told that it would be impossible to get them finished in time; and he would therefore have to wear his old boots to the ball.

¶ Bismarck scowled and going back to his rooms, whistled for his two ferocious dogs with which he was wont to trail around town; returning to the cobbler's the daring rascal said in a loud voice: "Mister bootmaker, at a signal from me the dogs will tear you to pieces! I am here to tell you, in the most friendly way in the world, that it is absolutely necessary to have my boots on time."

¶ Bismarck then went away, but he hired a man to parade up and down in the vicinity of the shop with the two mastiffs; and now and then this man dropped in, and in a voice of sorrow, said to the cobbler: "My master has a

terrible temper and I am sorry for you.” At that, the shoemaker told his wife: “Frau, I am going to work all night, to get Herr Bismarck’s boots finished in time for that ball!”

¶ It is needless to add that young Bismarck had his boots on time.

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¶ In discussing Bismarck’s life and personality many writers will tell you that the man is inconsistency itself; advocating now what in a year he will recant; that for this and other reasons it is baffling to try to make a picture many-sided enough to portray adequately his complex life.

¶ On the contrary, Bismarck, once you get the biographic clue, is as open, free and direct as the light of the noonday sun. And the story of the poor cobbler and the boots is all there is to it!

Repeat this story in a hundred and one forms, and the same man is always behind.

¶ Among his cronies, he early gained the name “The Mad Bismarck.” At Goettingen university, Otto fought 28 duels and his face bore his fighting scars.

¶ To scare the girls and to make them shriek and lift their skirts, a sight that the rascal Otto enjoyed, one night at a dance he let loose a small fox in the ball room! And he had ridden like the devil, some 30-odd miles to be at this dance.

¶ As for drinking, no man could put him under the table. Later in life, he invented his own special draught, a combination of champagne and porter; ordinary men dropped under the deadly compound as from a dose of cyanide of potassium, but Otto could drain his quart without taking the tankard from his lips. He soon had all the company under the chairs, like dead soldiers.

¶ Often, at country houses, he fired pistols to awaken guests in the morning.

¶ His groom fell into the canal, the young giant Bismarck leaped in and dragged the drowning man to safety; for this heroic deed, Bismarck won his first medal.

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¶ Bismarck's student life was tempestuous. He was indeed full of the very devil.

His every-day get-up comprised top boots, long hair flowing over the collar of his velveteen jacket; a big brass ring on the first finger of his left hand; two fierce mastiffs trotted sullenly at his side. He trailed around, smoking a long pipe.

¶ The young man's high animal spirits broke all restraints; he smoked, he drank, he sang, he flirted, and he fought; but as for books, he did as little studying as he could.

He was sent many times to the university "carcer" or prison; an interesting souvenir is still to be seen at Goettingen, the student-prison door, on which Bismarck carved his name in 1832, when he was "doing" ten days for acting as second in a pistol duel.

¶ With a Mecklenburg student, Otto's great chum, a trip was made through the Hartz mountains, and on returning a wine dinner was offered to other students.

All the fellows drank too much brandy. Bismarck made an inflammatory speech, at table, ending by showing his derision of scholasticism by hurling ink bottles out of the window. For this breach of the rules, he was hauled before the university court. Here, he appeared in outlandish get-up, jack boots, tall hat, long pipe, dressing gown—and coolly asked the proctor what 'twas all about. Bismarck's huge dogs, with which he was always accompanied, frightened the proctor half to death! Bismarck was promptly fined five thalers for his absurdities; he paid the fine and began studying up more deviltry.

¶ Joining the Hannovera Corps of fighting men, Otto was soon known as "Achilles," leading the fellows in all sword-play. He fought duel after duel, and finally under the influence of Morley, an American student, decided to switch over from the Hannovera to the Brunswick corps—whereon every Jack in the Hannovera sent Otto a challenge.

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¶ On a trip to Jena, the fellows decided on a riot, and were deep in their cups when the Goettingen proctor arrived to bring the runaway Bismarck back, and put him in the “carcer” till he cooled off. The Jena fellows carried on at a great rate to think that the beloved “Achilles” had to leave so unceremoniously, but at the last moment hitched up six horses and paraded Bismarck around town, as a demonstrative fare thee well!

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¶ The scene of many of his drinking bouts was “Crown” tavern, an ancient Goettingen resort, where the fellows sat on wooden benches in front of a long bar and drank till they felt like fighting cocks. By the way, it is a bit strange that Otto had such amazing capacity; for he was as thin as a knitting needle.

Among the men Bismarck met at this bar was Albrecht von Roon, who many years later was to become the great Prussian military drill-master.

¶ Bismarck finally left Goettingen in August, '33; his last duel was with an Englishman who had made fun of the German peasant, describing that worthy as “a dunce in a night cap, whose night-dress is made of 39 rags.” The 39 rags was an allusion to the 39 petty German states. Bismarck was already becoming imbued with the “national German faith,” as it was called, and could not let the insult go by.

¶ As a rule, Bismarck was lucky in his sword play. The biggest slash he received was made by Biedenweg, whose sword broke and cut Otto from jaw to lip, on the left cheek—a scar that Bismarck carried to his grave.

¶ Giessler, the proctor, gave Bismarck a very doubtful letter of recommendation; the duelist and beer-drinker had asked for a transfer to Berlin university. Otto wanted to hear law lectures by Savigny.

¶ He began his Berlin course in a mocking way. There was an unserved jail sentence hanging over Bismarck’s head at Goettingen; and with sham seriousness, as though he were going to turn over a new leaf, Otto humbly set up that, to be strictly honest with the professors, to jail Otto must go and to jail they sent him! But no sooner was he out than he forgot all his good resolutions, and began his mad existence again.

¶ Finally, in May, 1835, he passed his examination in law, or “advocate assistant,” but not without hiring a professional “crammer” to drill him hours and hours—to make up for wasted weeks in beer cellars and with the pretty girls.

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Deficient in discipline, young Otto makes a fizzle of his first office-holding; his shocking conduct against his superior officer; back to the old estates, he looks after the cattle, dogs and horses.

¶ Harum-scarum days are over—and now for the serious business of life. Years later, in the days of his great renown, Bismarck, thinking of his early preparation, always regretted, he said, that he did not join the army. As a matter of fact, he had no serious plans for years to come—and it would appear that, on the whole, his career was decided by accident. Of this more, at the right time, later.

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¶ When Bismarck was 20, he served several months at Aix-la-Chapelle, in court work, then was transferred to Potsdam, to the administrative side.

He soon showed himself deficient in discipline. An over-officer kept him waiting, and Bismarck took personal offense. At last Bismarck was admitted. The over-officer was sitting there, calmly killing time smoking a cigar. Bismarck leaned over and in his gruff way asked, “Give me a match!” This in itself was highly insolent, a violation of Prussian ideas of discipline. But the astonished over-officer complied. The young clerk thereupon sprawled in a chair and lighted his cigar.

It was, you see, merely to show his independence. Also, it meant that he had to get out of the service.

¶ Bismarck was glad to go; he hated intensely the clock-like regularity of the Prussian bureaucracy.

¶ His mother died in 1839, at which time Otto was 24; and on the young chap now fell the management of the Pomeranian estates.

¶ In 1844, Otto went to live with his father at Schoenhausen; here, Otto and his brother looked after the farms. Otto was later appointed Dyke-captain of the Elbe.

¶ Along about this time, a religious revival swept through Prussia and Otto was carried away on the flood; also, he began showing himself a strong monarchical man.

Always religious and always a King's man, at heart, Otto now seriously studied religion and state affairs. When the call came, he was not found wanting!

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¶ We hasten along. In 1847, Otto's naturally deep religious convictions were strengthened by his wife's uncompromising orthodoxy.

¶ It was in this year, also, that he made his entry into Prussian politics—to the study of which he was to devote his long life and his surprising genius. However, to present a clear idea of the work Bismarck was to do, it is necessary to return, briefly, to an earlier day, and to trace a complex historical movement through the past. We shall summarize, on broad lines, the problem presented by the question of German national unity. The German problem comprised a political, sociological and racial situation toward whose solution hundreds, if not thousands, of notable men and women, for several generations past, had sought in vain.

¶ “Nothing,” says Wilhelm Gorlach, “can more clearly prove Bismarck's historical importance than the fact that we are obliged to go back several centuries to understand the connection of his actions.”

# BOOK THE SECOND

## The German National Problem

### CHAPTER V

#### The Great Sorrow

14

The German crazy-quilt, of many hues and colors, and how this blanket was patched and mended through the years.

¶ From the 18th Century, and indeed before that time, to say nothing of years to come as late as 1871, there was in fact no Germany. The term was a mere geographical “designation.” We shall hear more of this, as Bismarck assumes the stupendous task of German unity, in a real sense of the word; but we will never understand what Bismarck and other statesmen who hoped for German unity had to deal with, unless we take a broad survey of conditions in Germany from the year 1750; not only from the political but also from the social and domestic side, as represented in 300-odd German principalities that like a crazy-quilt were thrown helter-skelter from Hamburg on the North to Vienna on the South.

¶ Many of the holdings were gained through musty papers from rulers of the ancient Holy Roman Empire, a nation Voltaire declared “neither holy, nor empire, nor Roman.”

¶ There were free cities, great landlords, and there were great robber-barons—thieves of high or low degree.

¶ At Cologne, Treves and Mayence archbishops held the lower valley of the Moselle, also some of finest parts of the Rhein valley.

¶ Next, came dukes, landgraves, margraves, cities of the Empire, and then still smaller, duchies in duodecimo, down through some 800 minor landlords who as the owners of some borough or village walked this earth genuine game cocks on their own dunghills. Political conditions were distressing; old feuds, old hates prevailed.

There were restrictions on commerce, statute labor, barbarous penal laws, religious persecution and Jew-baiting.

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¶ In short, to make 300-odd jealous princelings join hands in national brotherhood is the complex problem that goes down through the years; generation after generation; till at last the one strong man appears, Otto von Bismarck, who in his supreme rise to power sees clearly that the only hope for Germany is in a complete social and political revolution, in which the changes in the German mind concerning political unity in governmental affairs must be as unusual as the transformations in the German mode of life.

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¶ During the early part of the 18th Century, of which we are now writing, a certain bold political doctrine still stood unchallenged. It had come out of the dim and hoary past, and in effect it proclaimed the power of the fist. For centuries unnumbered the idea prevailed that a state defends itself against foreign foes, and otherwise conserves its existence through the direct will of a strong ruler, preferably a king brought up in arms.

Thus the “genius of the people” meant in effect the wisdom or the ignorance of the line of kings.

Under this theory, Prussia by slow degrees and through many sacrifices of blood and treasure, had become a great power.

¶ Fred: Wm. I., (1713-40), who was indeed a miser and a scoffer, freed little Prussia from debt and rebuilt cities ruined by the wars. He likewise established a system of compulsory education, made schoolmasters state officers, and contributed mightily to a higher standard.

And he went further still: he welcomed religious exiles from other parts of Germany; he settled thousands of immigrants on the raw lands; he saved his

money, economized to the last pfennig, was prudent in a worldly sense, and to the end of his life remained intolerable foe of idleness.

¶ It was from this severe master that the Great Frederick (1740-86) learned the trick of laying his cane over the backs of peasants and crying out in rage: “Get to work!”

¶ Old Fritz continued his line of battle from 1740 to 1763, in various unequal contests with the Allies. He fought Austria, France, Russia, Sweden, Saxony, and Poland, and for a while he fought their allied strength. The upshot was that Prussian enemies at home and abroad were defeated and Prussia won first rank as a military and political power. This idea of military discipline, united with large worldly sagacity in the management of state affairs, marks and explains Prussia’s rise to power.

¶ But the decline was equally manifest under Fr: Wm. II, the Great Frederick’s nephew. Although he inherited a domain of six millions of people, banded under an excellent administrative system, sustained by the disciplined army of “Old Dessauer” (Prince Leopold), and although Fr: Wm. II found the huge sum of 40,000,000 thalers in his fighting uncle’s treasure chest, yet within a few years all these splendid advantages were frittered away in idle dalliance and the weak king found himself twenty millions in debt.

By the time he died, 1797, Prussia was riding to a fall; and disregarding plain measures for her own safety, she had reached the sad place where the sturdy old Prussian spirit of prudence and independence had become so compromised that Prussia almost deemed it unessential to preserve her own political life!

¶ Thus, within three generations, Prussia repeated the old story of human life, wherein the weak descendant eats up the strong sire’s goods. Frederick the Great died Aug. 17th, 1786. Within three years, France struck at the German lands; and within 20 years the old Constitution of the Empire was scoffed at by encircling enemies along the frontiers, led by France, while at home political disputants destroyed National spirit by exciting revolution after revolution. “Everywhere,” says Zimmermann, (Germany, p. 1618), “one felt the morning breeze of the new dispensation.” The cry of the

people had to be answered, and the common man wanted to know not only “Why!” but “When!”

¶ For the ensuing 85 years clamor, disruption and disunion continue often accompanied by bloodshed; till through Bismarck’s great work over which he toiled for 40-odd years, came the final answer of the Imperial democracy, 1871.

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¶ It is to be the labor of years with confusion worse confounded, as we go along. The Feudal system, with which Germany has been for centuries petrified, must be thrown off; the peasant laborers freed in some sort, whether social or political, the absurd restrictions of countless customs houses walling-in each petty principality, must be destroyed. Before a new Germany may emerge, if Germany is to emerge at all, a National faith must be stimulated, fighting blood stirred, wars waged. Then, and then only, may this idea of German Unity, long the puzzling mental preoccupation of the fathers, become a geographical actuality and a political fact.

¶ The German peasants’ sense of respect for vested authority, even when held by hated kings, made the common people of the various German states almost ox-like in their patience under harsh political conditions.

Between the power of petty tyrants and of foreign despots, there was no freedom worthy of the name.

The German lived for himself, aloof, suspicious, not caring particularly to change his condition.

Compromise after compromise, failure after failure, sorrow after sorrow must be recorded in the great story; but do not despair. In amazing manner, through blood and iron, Otto von Bismarck, our blond Pomeranian giant, will face, fight and finally conquer the bewildering cross-forces of his time —till “German national faith” is supreme.

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¶ Paying no attention to its neighbor, each German state stood off by itself; each princeling had his army, in some instances only 25 men; each ruler had his castle, in imitation of Versailles; each state its custom house, its distinct court and rural costumes.

To go ten miles north or south was to find yourself in a new world; you could scarcely understand the mush-talk of the peasants, whereas the various Liliputian courts chattered in mongrel French, aped from Versailles.

¶ The minor courts of Germany imitated the excesses of Versailles; had dancing teachers from Paris, French barbers, French governesses, and French prostitutes.

Every young man of wealth was sent to Paris to acquire what was called “bon ton,” that is to say, familiarity with the vices of the day; the etiquette of the fan and the study of new ways to spend money wrung from over-taxed peasants of German provinces was also regarded as very important.

Even to speak German was held a mark of vulgarity; and what more despicable than to be ashamed of one’s ancestry?

¶ Unmoved by the sufferings of the peasants, Augustus III of Saxony applied himself to grand operas, written by queens of French society. While the peasants were living like beasts, Frederick Augustus, the successor, spent his time hunting red deer. The dukes of Coburg and Hildburghausen were miserable bankrupts. As a result of social excesses, Charles VII of Bavaria left a debt of forty millions. Charles Theodore, in some respects an enlightened monarch, is particularly remembered for three strange facts: That he once gave an opera in German and not in French; that he tried to sell off Bavaria, his inheritance, and move to a more congenial locality; and third, that he hired Rumford, the great chemist, to invent a soup, at low cost, to feed the poor, whose miseries had been growing on account of the bad government.

¶ Nor should we overlook the monarch at Zweibrucken, the Pfalzgraf Charles. His mania took the form of collecting pipes and toys, of which he had innumerable specimens from the ends of the earth. He kept also one thousand five hundred horses and a thousand dogs and cats. Every traveler had to take off his hat and bow at sight of the spire, on pain of being beaten by the Count’s constable.

¶ Charles Eugene, of Wuerttemberg, slave to luxury, played pranks when he was not indulging in vices. He liked to alarm peasants at night with wild cries; and when a woman stuck her head out of the window, the monarch

would throw a hoop and try to drag her outside. In a deep forest he built his castle “Solitude.”

¶ On his 50th birthday, he wrote to his subjects, promising to mend his life; the letter was read in all the churches. The people decided that he was in earnest, promised him more money, of which he was in sore need. His first step was to contract a left-handed marriage with Francisca von Bernedin, whom he raised to the rank of countess.

¶ His next step was to build a queer bird-cage for his new mate. Menzel says of this episode: “Records of every clime and of every age were here collected. A Turkish mosque contrasted its splendid dome with the pillared Roman temple and the steepled Gothic church. The castled turret rose by the massive Roman tower; the low picturesque hut of the modern peasant stood beneath the shelter of the gigantesque remains of antiquity; and imitations of the pyramids of Cestius, of the baths of Diocletian, a Roman senate-house and Roman dungeons, met the astonished eye.”

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¶ Another amiable peculiarity of French-mongering German princelings in their petty monarchies, was man-stealing. Hard-pressed for funds, the practice was to kidnap peasants and sell them into foreign military service. The vile trade was dignified by court authority; followers of the game were known as “man merchants.”

¶ The Wuerttemberg monarch in order to raise funds to complete the absurd castle for his mistress, took it into his head to sell 1,000 peasants to the Dutch, for the war in the Indies; and so deep lay the curse of tyranny that no public protest was raised. It is true that Schiller, the noble poet, who at this time was a student at Charles College, fled in disgust, but Schaubert, another poet, was not so fortunate; he was seized and imprisoned for ten years.

¶ The vile practice of man-stealing from the wretched peasantry long continued as a monarchical privilege. The Landgrave Frederick of Hesse-Cassel, on one occasion sent 12,800 Hessians to the British, to fight in America. English commissioners came over and inspected the captive men as though picking out stock at a cattle show. Should a parent protest, a son, a wife or a widow, the answer was the lash. Hanau furnished 1200 of these

slave-soldiers, Waldeck several hundred. Seume, who was himself a victim to the system, deported to America, tells us in his Memoirs: “No one was safe; every means was resorted to, fraud, cunning, trickery, violence. Foreigners were thrown into prison, and sold.”

“There is a Hessian prince of high distinction,” says Huergelmer. “He has magnificent palaces, pheasant-preserves, at Wilhelmsbad, operas, mistresses, etc. These things cost money. He has, moreover, a hoard of debts, the result of the luxury of his sainted forefathers. What does the prince do in this dilemma? He seizes an unlucky fellow in the street, expends fifty dollars on his equipment, sends him out of the country, and gets a hundred dollars for him in exchange.”

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¶ Frederick of Bayreuth expended all his revenues in building a grand opera house, for giving balls, parties, receptions and official functions to aristocrats. His successor Alexander fell under the sway of Lady Craven, a British adventuress, who led the peasants a merry chase for the cash; man-stealing was the old game; and one order alone from the British government called for 1,500 peasants.

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¶ But why continue the recital of man’s inhumanities?

Charles of Brunswick, a spendthrift, who sold subjects into captivity, paid his ballet-master 30,000 a year. Frederick of Brunswick on one occasion sold 4,000 peasants to Britain, for the army.

¶ The terrible famine of 1770-72 added to the discontent of the common man, throughout Germany; he began to feel that it was the duty of kings to feed the hungry; bark, grass, leaves, carrion were eaten; disease spread; emigrations depopulated the Rheinlands; 20,000 left Bavaria alone; while upwards of 180,000 Bavarians died of hunger; in Saxony, the number that starved to death is placed at 100,000. Other kingdoms suffered heavily.

¶ In many of the provinces were laws to prevent immigration; those who tried to get Bavarians to leave the country were guilty of a crime, punishable by hanging. A similar punishment was exacted for marrying out of one’s native province.

¶ Also, the wretched condition of the roads added to the isolation of the various German provinces. Exacting customs' duties, military espionages, a weak postal system, contributed to keep Germans unacquainted, except with near neighbors. He, indeed, was a bold man who had gone over the mountains or beyond his native valley. Even a journey of two days caused grave anxieties; the carriage was almost certain to be overturned in some deep rut and the travelers injured or killed; robbers lay in wait in the mountains; protection was almost unheard of; life and property were insecure; every traveler had to be his own policeman, and never issued forth on a journey without dagger, pistol and sword.

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¶ Thus, 300 princelings, great or small, were determined to rule in their individual capacities; there was no Germany in fact, and that much of the German Empire that had outlived the gradual ruin of the old Holy Roman Empire, the great-ancestor of Germany, was now approaching complete dissolution.

The power lay no more in states, but in 300-odd local political bureaus, scattered everywhere, dominated often enough by an ambitious French prostitute, or by some lucky ballet-master.

¶ Then, there was August of Saxony, who is said to have been the father of 300 children. This foolish fellow's fetes cost thalers by the wagon-load; one set of Chinese porcelains ran into the millions, and it cost 6,000 thalers to gild the gondolas for a night in June, to say nothing of the fancy ball.

¶ The Baden monarch, Charles William, built Carlsruhe in the deep forest, the better that his orgies be kept from prying eyes.

¶ Eberhardt of Wuerttemberg gave the whole conduct of his government over to women and Jews—and by the way the Jews were the only saving force. As for the Graevenitz woman, she was king in petticoats. She mortgaged crown lands and raised hell generally. One day in church she made a fuss about not being mentioned among royal rulers, and the pastor immediately replied: "Madam, we mention you daily in our prayers when we say: 'O Lord, deliver us from all evil!'" Once, in time of famine, Charles William scattered loaves of bread; the rabble maddened by hunger fought to the death for the dole!

¶ Also, there were Ernest of Hanover and Tony of Brunswick, two precious rascals, with all their retinue of mistresses, mistresses' maids, mothers, hangers-on, and pimps. Carl Magnus had his Grehweiler palace costing 180,000 guelden. He grew so desperate that the Emperor sent him to a fortress for ten years' imprisonment, for forging documents to raise the wind. Count Limburg-Styrum was a princeling whose army consisted of one colonel, six officers and two privates! Count William of Bueckeburg had a fort with 300 guns, defending a cabbage patch. Count Frederick of Salm-Kyrburg swindled the churches; and in tiny Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, only 15 miles square, was a royal palace of 350 rooms with clocks of all sizes, great and small, in each apartment. This count went mad over clocks, but was popular with the working class; often he would take a man off a job in order to laugh and joke.

Also, Frederick had original taste in military affairs; his army comprised 150 soldiers, with 28 guards on horseback. The prince prided himself on being a wrestler, and one day when a yokel threw the prince, the prince set up a great cry, "I slipped on a cherry stone!"—and this regardless of the fact that it was not the time of the year for cherries.

¶ There was another local ruler, Ludwig Guenther, who was fond of painting horses, and on his death 246-odd horse pictures adorned the walls of his palace.

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¶ "Show a German a door and tell him to go through, and he will try to break a hole in the wall."

¶ "Here, every one lives apart in his own narrow corner, with his own opinions; his wife and children round him; ever suspicious of the Government, as of his neighbor; judging everything from his personal point of view, and never from general grounds."

¶ "The sentiment of individualism and the necessity for contradiction are developed to an inconceivable degree in the German."

¶ The problem of directing this intense individualism is the problem of German unity.

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¶ With rough manners, blunders, extravagances, absurdities, the hereditary princes continued to sponge on the peasants, generation after generation, till wretchedness spread far over the German lands. They had their châteaux, their dancing girls, their dogs, horses, cats, mistresses and their royal armies.

¶ The misery of centuries of oppression existed; petty monarchs exercised powers of life and death.

¶ The South German mocked the North German's pronunciation. One set vowed that the "g" in "goose" is hard, the other proclaimed that the "g" is soft. One side went about mumbling with hard "g's," "A well-baked goose is a gracious gift of God," whereupon the other side replied that all the "g's" are "j's," that the "gute ganz" is really "jute janz," and "Gottes" "Jottes." And duels were fought over it.

¶ Nor was this all. An intense local pride expressed itself in grotesque dialects, unsoftened by intercourse with the outer world; also, there were outlandish fashions in dress and other domestic affairs.

¶ In Brunswick the women wore green aprons, curious black caps, the men buff coats, red vests with four rows of buttons, caps with crazy pompons, buckled slippers and gay ribbon garters.

¶ In lower Saxony the women wore flat straw hats, like a dinner plate, hair plastered down, head-dresses of gigantic black ribbons, aprons of gay stripes, and ten petticoats coming only a little below the knee. The men wore farce-comedy costumes, not unlike coachmen.

¶ In Pomerania-Rügen the women admired scarlet petticoats, knee-length, capes like turko-rugs, black veils, green garters and blue stockings. The men wore aprons like butchers, caps and long-tailed coats.

¶ The Hessian women preferred turbans of red, vestees of gay stuffs, blue, green or yellow knee-length skirts.

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¶ The Baden men folk liked reds, greens and yellows, vests adorned with many ribbons, top boots, high white collars and funny-looking black coats. The women had their green aprons, puffed sleeves, and ten short petticoats.

¶ In East Prussia men wore double and triple vests. As for the women, they looked like animals in the zoo.

¶ In Wuerttemberg, a typical landlord wore a blue peajacket with two rows of large silver buttons, two vests of high contrasting colors, a black sash, salmon-colored trousers, polished boots;—and carried a meerschaum pipe.

¶ In Bavaria one saw green vests, yodlers' hats with tiny feathers, green leggings, or military boots; and among the women gay vestees, bright shawls and white kerchiefs.

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¶ Thus, the dead-weight of centuries still lay like a mountain on the various German states.

¶ This dead-weight of olden times kept the German states bickering among themselves.

For long years past, the people were divided by political brawls, altercations, affrays, squabbles, feuds, often with the loss of life. The general disposition was choleric, pugnacious, litigious.

There was bad blood over principles and procedure, policies and plans.

To transform aloofness to neighborliness, tumult to conciliation, quarreling to friendliness, hostility to good will, dissent must give way to assent, distrust to faith, denial to admission, misgiving to conviction, political atheism to political revelation.

Such are some of the peculiarities of the human animal; and in political life human animals are prone to fight for self-interest, like dogs over a bone.

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¶ We are not going to try to tell you of the many efforts by rash reformers, in the half-century of the dead-weight, leading to the rise of Prussia.

Again and again, far-sighted Germans, sick unto death at the way things were going, urged equality for all men before the law, equal taxation, restriction of the power of the nobles.

Strange as it may seem, the peasants themselves stood in the way. They did not care to change their condition, miserable as it was. They dreaded the future, preferred present miseries than to risk new ills. For example, on one occasion, a certain political idealist excited the peasants in revolt, assassinated 120 nobles, destroyed 264 castles. This was in the time of Joseph II, of Austria, the ruler filled with amazing ideas of equality. The peasants themselves were the first to protest, much as they detested the nobles; and the unsupported leaders died on the wheel, while 150 miserable followers were buried alive.

And yet, at that very moment, the idealistic Joseph, who with an excess of zeal, tried for political equality, made enemies of his nobles, enemies of his peasants, likewise. The great reformer was held a fanatic, intent on destroying government. Too far ahead of his time, his plans for political semi-equality failed.

¶ This monarch, thinking to make a lesson, had swindling nobles placed in the stocks, like common thieves.

Joseph was one of the first great democrats, in the modern sense. To him, the cause of the common man was sacred. He believed in genuine equality, but alas, he did not know how to bring about the political Millennium.

¶ He threw open the parks to the people; he proclaimed free speech and free thought; he abolished serfdom; he labored to construct a state-machine with one system of justice and one National plan.

Joseph, though overbrimming with emotions for the common man's political salvation, failed to allow for the ignorance of his people, their stubborn avowal of local self-interests.

¶ And it fell out that his people thought that Joseph was trying to enslave them the more; ingratitude and misapprehensions followed, destroying the liberal reformer's most cherished plans for his beloved Austria-Germany.

The word was passed alone that Joseph was a tyrant. You see, as frequently happens, the people preferred old abuses to new ways. The general population hugged their chains and refused to be delivered.

This singular belief in the past, rather than in the future, is indeed a human weakness and has checked and restrained the rise of intellectual freedom since the world began.

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¶ It might all have been a good lesson to republicans, but the nobility assumed a threatening attitude and the peasants did not understand a monarch like Joseph.

Their idea of a king was a man going upstairs on horseback and eating spiders. A king must have powers of life and death and bags of gold. A citizen king was absurd.

The peasantry, on whom Joseph had endeavored to bestow many large democratic privileges, rose against him. He died Feb. 20, 1790, “a century too early,” says Jellenz, and as Remer adds, “misunderstood by a people unworthy of such a sovereign.”

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¶ Germany, in the sad period between 1750 and 1806 had long been a European political jest; these are hard words, but it is the language of truth.

She had sunk so low that she saw no degradation in going off to fight French or British wars, while at home remaining a mere political nonentity.

She had sunk so low, under French influences, and through her own lack of self-control, that she forgot her great ancestors and her noble traditions.

She had sunk so low that her very children were brought up to despise the language of the Fatherland; the children scoffing at the parents, aped foreign ways rather than support German originality, strength and national genius; young men coming of age preferred to leave the land of their birth, mocked the simple German virtues, and occupied themselves in idle dalliance in Paris, or failing in this, set up imitations of French courts in the petty German monarchies.

Thus, finally Germany became insensible, indifferent and debased by stupid and selfish ideals from beyond the Vosges; till at last Germany became, literally, a land without a people, a people without a land.

¶ Worse still, the time came when, under these false teachings, a sense of shame no longer lived, to arouse great national interests and to recall degenerate sons to their solemn duties to their Fatherland.

Hundreds of noble Germans, at one time or another, during these dark years, tried in vain by voice or pen to restore national consciousness, but failed. The problem of German liberty seemed incapable of solution; and as for the still larger problem of German unity—that became a mere dream.

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¶ We glorify here and now, the genius and the manhood of Bismarck as the one man who had the strength of purpose to recall to Germans the heroic tale of a free and united Fatherland.

It took him thirty years or more, through well-nigh superhuman striving; he preached, he cursed, he vilified, he used the iron rod.

He would have absolutely nothing to do with the political ideas from over the Vosges; he knew too well the curse of olden times, and his one great central emotion was to end that condition—as he hoped forever.

You are to read of the battles of a giant, filled with immense compassion for the follies and weaknesses of his misled countrymen, filled, too, with fanatical zeal to punish, that good might come of it at last.

Bismarck used the strong military arm, the hell fires and the lightnings.

His nature scorned any further mere palliation of the weaknesses of human nature. Like all supermen, Bismarck struck straight from the shoulder; in turn to be misunderstood, cursed and reviled by the very people he would serve; but in the end aroused German manhood to a just comprehension of the power and dignity of a free and united Fatherland.

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¶ For upwards of 100 years before Bismarck's great hour, the French had been accustomed to exploit Germany. To fill the pocketbook, to provide soldiers for wars, or to afford opportunities for buccaneering expeditions, were all the same.

We do not say this to bring up any “moral” issue, but we make the statement merely as one uses the word dung or manure.

That is to say, certain historical facts stink to heaven.

Annexations, concessions, raids, riots at the hands of the French conspired to keep Germany disunited, belligerent and mutinous; and as the years passed Germany, to a large extent, seduced by French ways, lost a sense of her dignity. France had looked to Germany to furnish allies to help fight Prussia, Austria or England; then England turned the trick against France. It is discouraging to add that even the great Goethe was so seduced by the glamour of Napoleon’s genius that he wrote these strange words in praise of the French tyrant:

Doubts that have baffled thousands, he has solved:  
Ideas o’er which centuries have brooded,  
His giant mind intuitively compressed.

¶ Thus, you have before you this spectacle: Germany’s greatest poetical genius forgets the sad reality of his broken, dispirited and disrupted country and leaves her to her wretched fate; passing his time as a sentimental voluptuary in the splendor of the Weimar court, where he concerns himself with such works as “Elective Affinities,” a frank endorsement of adultery.

¶ On the other side, the noble Schiller, poet of the people, recalled to his fellow countrymen the faded glory of Germany. “Schiller stands forth,” says Menzel, “as the champion of liberty, justice and his country.”

In a word, it took Germany 100 years to learn by suffering that if she is ever to regain her fallen prestige as a nation, she must fight her enemies at home and abroad; she must restore the military ideal of ancient times. And here, in a nutshell, is the very root of all this cry about militarism: The man who will not fight for what he regards as his political rights, remains a slave his whole life long; for it is the essential nature of man to exercise tyrannous power over human lives, whenever such practice holds out promise of advantage.

Therefore, Bismarck again trained Germany to be a fighting nation; and if an ideal of a free and united people is no justification, then words have no

meaning.

The French peasant's son, returning from the wars brings his wife a diamond necklace.

¶ The cross-angles of politics, for years, lead as far as one cares to go, in this German family fight. Each petty state has its intrigues and its grievances; you become befuddled; it is all weariness of the flesh.

¶ However, behind all the political jargon, mighty forces are taking form; and little by little, certain outstanding facts come to view, involving every king, knight, bishop, prince and pauper on the German map, from the North Sea to the Black Sea.

After 1789, the German was down with that new disease, French constitutionalism; liberty, fraternity and equality. No human being knew exactly what it meant. It was a political fever that had to be gone through with; and blood-letting was the only cure.

Monarchs seemingly secure on their thrones from the days of old, now shivered like ghosts as the mobs marched the streets of Vienna and Berlin, waiving new flags and crying "Liberty!"

¶ The word "liberty" went to the crook-backed German peasant's brain like wine; he grew mad with the idea of an impossible world, in which he could decree as he desired and all would bow to him, though he in return would bow to nobody; in short, liberty for him, but death to the others; and were it possible to confiscate the property of the princes and redistribute the loot among the peasants, so much the better.

¶ Before we go into this thing, let us remember that as the French armies marched over Europe, the doom of kings had been cracking and rumbling.

The soldiers carried everywhere the idea of French equality, that is to say, to the popular mind an opportunity to share the loot. Napoleon himself, reflecting on his own career and on the follies of the French revolution, said: "Let us now turn ourselves to something practical; the bombastic ideas

of the Revolution have exhausted themselves in grotesque efforts at self-government. All the Revolution means is an opportunity for a man of talents to show what he can do.”

¶ And the French soldiers, returning from the wars, brought their wives and daughters gold rings, bracelets and diamond necklaces, the loot of the capitals of Europe.

¶ As for Napoleon, he, of course, took the lion’s share; but a diamond necklace to a soldier’s wife is indeed a powerful argument on the importance of the new democratic era, in which peasants’ sons wear gold lace and their womankind ride in carriages.

Also, many of the generals of France were sons of peasants; and an account of Napoleon’s marshals would show the humble origin of men of the hour, sons of soap boilers, tavern keepers, stable-bosses.

¶ One may imagine the result of such surprising overturnings of caste, in old-world conditions. Henceforth the peasants of all lands will naturally regard their respective kings as so many dogs, to be shot to death at the first splendid opportunity! And Germany is no exception.

¶ Forward march, ye sons of the soil, there are stormy days ahead for you, through your “new” ideas.

## CHAPTER VI

### Prussia’s De Profundis

16

Humiliations heaped upon her by France; the strange combination, the lash and the kiss!

¶ First, let us quote from Bismarck, who looking backward after his amazing politico-military triumph at Koeniggraetz, (1866), tells a French interviewer for “Le Siecle” this root-fact about Germans, their weakness and their power:

¶ “No government, however it may act, will be popular in Prussia; the majority in the country will always be opposed to it; simply from its being the Government;—and holding authority over the individual, the central authority is always doomed to be constantly opposed by the moderates, and decried and despised by the ultras. This has been the common fate of all successive governments since the beginning of the dynasty. Neither liberal ministers, nor reactionary ministers have found favor with our Prussian politicians.

¶ “Frederick William III, surnamed the Just, had succeeded as little as Frederick William IV in satisfying the Prussian nation.

¶ “They shouted themselves hoarse at the victories of Frederick the Great, but at his death they rubbed their hands at the thought of being delivered from the tyrant! Despite this antagonism, there exists a deep attachment to the royal house. No sovereign or minister, no government, can win the favor of Prussian individualism. Yet all cry from the depths of their hearts, ‘God save the King!’ And they obey when the King commands.”

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¶ With this clue from the master before us, the thing to do is, clearly, to reach out after this German Unity idea in a broad way.

¶ Napoleon’s armies had marched everywhere, during all those victorious years, and each soldier had been a living exemplar of the power of National glory.

This National spirit in his armies had helped Napoleon amazingly, despite his genius as a soldier. The great Prussian patriot, Stein, one of the leading men of his time and an early believer in the high destiny of his country, began studying some of the more obscure but vital forces behind Napoleon’s career of glory. Stein finally read the secret and urged that as Napoleon had won by National spirit, so Napoleon could in the end be defeated by a similar National spirit when properly opposed to him; and Napoleon with one terrifying black look saw that von Stein had divined the real force of French solidarity, a proclamation was out for von Stein’s head, and the patriot who dreamed of his Confederation of Germany, against the French, or any other foreign foe, was obliged to make his escape to the heart of the Bohemian mountains.

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¶ Fr: Wm. II (1797-1840), child of the Revolution, to his dying day remained untouched by the new political principles that had their origin beyond the Rhine. Compound of dreams and realities, William had led a repressed life; for one thing, he did not fight for his opinions; indeed his opinions were literary and artistic; a peculiar pietism bound him; he believed too much in man's natural goodness; being an honest man himself, he did not readily suspect others.

¶ This Frederick was always thinking of a Germany built on the traditional order, with all intervening social grades, from peasant to king upon his throne, each bowing and scraping to the other; and Frederick, as the father of his kingdom, exercising a despotic paternalism.

¶ Nor did he see that the French revolution had been fought and Napoleon's armies had carried afar if not the seeds of political equality, at least the glorious conception that "revolution means opportunity for men of talents, everywhere."

¶ The pressure on the king was found in this: that under duress he had promised a written constitution.

¶ And behold Frederick in these troublous times! For eleven long years, off and on, he tries to find a common ground of religious formulas for the united Lutheran and Reformed churches. He even attacks Rome on the question of mixed marriages. Of course, he failed utterly, this noble-minded Hohenzollern who believed too implicitly in the inherent goodness of mankind.

¶ Repair then to your church windows and read your blackletter Bible, you dreaming Frederick; such is your story, in a few words.

Gabble about your Gothic restorations as you will, and your correct revisions of the liturgy, Frederick, it remains for your Louise to do a man's work against French foes, and thus hasten the slow-coming of United Germany.

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¶ In the meantime, Prussia is falling to pieces for lack of the mailed fist. Everything is going to rack and ruin; beloved Prussia repeatedly humiliated

by French invaders; and had it not been for noble Queen Louise there might well be no Prussian glory at this hour to record.

¶ Her lovely countenance, wreathed in smiles, is immortalized for us through the art of Joseph Grassi; and is to be seen in the Hohenzollern Museum.

The artist depicts her with youthful charm, her fair brow adorned by her slender crown, whose weight, alas, although slight, gave her no rest till death.

Her eyes are gentle, and about her face and form is the indefinable touch of ever-present girliness, never to fade, even in the woman-grown.

¶ It were nearer the truth to say Louise personifies Prussia's ambition to power.

¶ This beautiful woman bore indeed a heavy burden; well she knew the dread and fear of kings and kingly office.

¶ On the one side was the tyrant Napoleon, on the other Fr: Wilhelm, her kingly husband, without an idea outside of cathedral architecture and bishoprics in Jerusalem; yet Louise willed that Prussia should seize the reins of power, shake off the French yoke, and mount the heights of glory.

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¶ As a foil to the ferocious Bismarck—himself a majestic king-maker—here we reveal to you a true creator of National honor, in the form of a frail, fair woman; showing thus how far the pendulum of Time and Chance often rocks in bringing about political changes.

Though poles apart, the brutal Bismarck stands side by side with the lovely Louise; the blood and iron of the man were of no avail without the finesse of the woman.

Thus this singular cross-fertilization, compounded of smiles and frowns—the kiss and the lash—the white jeweled hand and the mailed fist in the end makes it possible for humiliated Prussia to rise again—the late harvest of the years bringing the reality of our United Germany.

¶ Bismarck's amazing story we spread before you in detail, but beside that frowning rock we stoop for a moment to pluck the modest violets clinging all unobserved in a gloomy place where the sun seldom comes; these flowers are Louise and their subtle perfume symbolizes the penetrating yet delicate incense of her pathetic life.

¶ Without Louise, our story were soon ended. Otherwise Bismarck himself could not have come into the illustrious pages of history. Noble Prussian queen, heroine of Prussian glory, mother-consoler in the twilight, your gentle spirit hovers like some evening-star, luminous with hope.

17

Napoleon's hated Continental system of domination causes Prussian downfall—The Queen decides to fight back.

¶ The treaty of Luneville, February, 1801, now seemed to lend color to Napoleon's greatest delusion of grandeur; he would restore the ancient domain of Charlemagne, comprising France, Germany and Italy! Signing with Prussia and Bavaria, Napoleon confiscated broad Papal domains along the Rhine, lands that had been in possession of the church since Roman times. With this bribe for secular princes, as the price of the readjustment, exactly 112 Teutonic domains, petty in size but all-powerful with the prestige of centuries, vanished from the map. The holy Electors of Treves and Cologne, those empire-makers of ancient days, were stripped of their worldly possessions, and expelled from the Papal lands.

¶ There were even rumors of a French-supported Emperor of Prussia—think of that!

Francis of Austria, for reasons of policy, gave up the high-swelling title, "Holy Roman Emperor," and more modestly contented himself with "Emperor of Austria."

¶ And now, when Napoleon's delusion—Charlemagne—seemed on the very point of realization, there came the third Coalition against him; Prussia joined against France; but Napoleon soon gained the most noted of his victories, Austerlitz; 15,000 prisoners, 12,000 dead on the field, represented Austria's loss alone, but this was not all.

The victorious French pressed on to Vienna. By the treaty of Pressburg, Austria was excluded from Germany; Wuerttemberg, Bavaria and the Rhinelands went over to the French, Napoleon setting himself up as Protector of the Rhine country, with his representative President Karl von Dalberg, former archbishop of Mainz.

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¶ Louise was high-spirited, impulsive, courageous, imaginative—the very foil of her slow-going Frederick, with his church restorations forevermore. The Queen, always for an aggressive policy, by her sympathy encouraged the Prussian war party; patriots, restive under the indecision of Frederick, were eager to shake off French domination. The appeal was to Militarism, but what would you? The Hun was not only “at the gate,” but was inside the walls; and if a man will not fight for his fireside, then he must remain a slave. It was a virtuous cause.

¶ The cabal at the Prussian court, secretly in opposition to the easy-going King, was aided by Louise. There were the King’s brothers, the ambitious Hardenburg, the King’s cousin, Ferdinand, the gifted Rahel Levin—and many others.

These plots within the palace gave to Louise’s life strange political aspects.

¶ The Queen desired to strike.

¶ By 1805 Austria, Russia and Great Britain were united, but Russia still wavered.

¶ Louise’s secret influence became a watchword for Prussian patriots, who despised French rule.

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¶ After Austerlitz, Napoleon read Prussia his ultimatum: Shall it be war or peace? Peace and Hanover, or war with me?

¶ A treaty was drawn giving to Napoleon control over Prussia; and this document Fr: William weakly signed. After that Napoleon simply ignored Prussia; made it so hot for Prussian ministers that they resigned when Paris frowned, or danced when Paris smiled. Napoleon set up his new Rhein

Confederation without consulting Prussia; and Prussian patriots felt themselves mortified beyond endurance.

¶ Young men in Berlin, by way of protest, made a demonstration. Going to the doorsteps of the French minister, they there sharpened their swords! Napoleon was furious; he sought out the bookseller circulating an anti-French pamphlet, “The Deepest Humiliation of Prussia,” lured him across the frontier, and had him assassinated.

¶ The Prussian patriotic party, begun as a court cabal secretly headed by Louise, decided on war.

¶ The troops were drilled night and day in preparation for the great war of liberation. Never before had a downtrodden nation worked harder to win liberty through liberation from the French yoke. However, the immediate results were to be disastrous.

¶ The Queen’s dragoons went to the front; the Queen rode near by in her carriage; she wore a smart military coat, colors of her crack regiment; and General Kalkreuth, in a burst of enthusiasm, vowed that the Queen could herself win the war should she remain with the troops.

¶ Yes, Louise was actually going out to fight Napoleon’s veterans, Napoleon’s famous marshals, Berthier, Murat and the others; and even the great Napoleon himself.

The decisive struggle took place at Jena, October 16, 1806; Prussian forces were annihilated.

¶ Napoleon came on to Berlin and housed himself in the Prussian palace. From here he now issued bulletins denouncing Louise as the cause of the war; he attacked her character, accusing her of a liaison with the handsome Alexander of Russia, and of still other intrigues with high army officers; he presented her as a compound of shameless camp-follower and dangerous woman, plotting against her own husband, thus bringing ruin to her native land.

Napoleon even had Louise’s apartments broken into and the Queen’s papers seized, to see if incriminating evidence could not be uncovered. Ah, he knew all the tricks of love as well as of war!

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¶ But Napoleon went too far. His cruel persecution caused Prussians to sympathize with their Queen, instead of reviling her.

Years before the great question is settled Prussia indeed becomes Germany—in moody thoughtfulness—in stubborn determination—in unflinching courage.

¶ Louise now reveals herself a glorious National heroine. In spite of her animosity toward Napoleon for his atrocious slanders, the Queen decided to arrange an interview with the conqueror and beg favorable terms for her beloved Prussia.

¶ The meeting took place July 6, 1807. Napoleon sent his coach, drawn by six white horses, to bring the Queen to the miller's house, where the interview was staged in an upper room. Louise had on her finest court robe, white crepe embroidered with silver, and wore her famous crown of pearls; her loveliness and her woman's wit were to be used in behalf of prostrate Prussia.

¶ Napoleon rode up in great style, surrounded by his brilliant staff—Berthier, Murat and the others. Louise awaited him at the head of the rickety stairs. As he went up in the semi-darkness, he stumbled and fell.

The Queen apologized that she was forced to meet the Emperor in so mean a place; but he immediately replied that to see so lovely a woman was well worth a few minor obstacles.

¶ Louise now began pleading with Napoleon for leniency toward Prussia. What an interview that was!

How eloquently she set forth her people's sufferings in the great French wars; she pictured the sorrows of Prussia so vividly that at last Napoleon became mightily interested. Finally he said:

¶ “Ah, your Majesty asks very much indeed, but I am dreaming!” By this he meant, “I do not hear a word you say; I am looking at your beautiful eyes.”

¶ The clever Louise saw that she was progressing with her arguments, and undoubtedly had the Emperor under the spell of her fatal beauty; to oblige a grand lady in distress, he would be willing to concede much indeed, in his famous rôle of lady-killer and protector of feminine loveliness.

But at that precise moment, who should enter the room but Fr: Wilhelm himself, the Queen's blundering husband!

¶ Always in the way—mentally clumsy—he spoiled everything! The interview ended abruptly.

¶ Louise, heartbroken, retired in utter despair. She had believed that the justice of her cause, her eloquence, her loyalty to her people would go far to soften Napoleon's wrath, but in all this she was cruelly disappointed. Next day the French tyrant announced his terms: Indemnity of 154,000,000 marks; one-third cash; one-third payable in lands; the final third "on time," in the interim he would garrison in five fortified towns 30,000 French troops and 10,000 French cavalry, whose support was at the expense of Prussia, till the debt was paid.

¶ This great Queen, after life's fever, sleeps enshrined in her snowy marble tomb at Charlottenburg.

One day you will stand with uncovered head beside her royal grave, and recall her noble life. She deserves well of her country!

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¶ But mark this well: out of Prussia's humiliations came her ultimate strength; the vanquished, as is often the story of human life, was strengthened more than the victors. Prussia, chastened by her severe lessons, henceforth proceeded to build herself up slowly till at last she was ready, many, many years later, to strike for German Unity that final blow at the palace of the French kings at Versailles.

¶ In the wearisome stretch of time till that distant day of German glory, Prussia henceforth becomes Germany—in spirit—in moody thoughtfulness—in stubborn determination—yes, under God, by blood and iron! There float before us many noble names, poets, prophets, soldiers who aid in stimulating "German national faith"—Fichte, Arndt, Kleist, Roon, Moltke, Scharnhorst, Humboldt—and in the historical twilight big with mutterings and rumblings of the New Time to come with all its glory, taking the place of the Prussian ruin between 1806 and 1813, is Queen Louise, her gentle spirit a veritable evening-star, luminous with hope.

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¶ By 1813, Fr: William III had been induced by the pressure of public opinion to join Russia to fight off the French. May 17, 1813, William's famous decree, "To My People!" called for help to expel invaders, thereby to recover Prussian independence; and Napoleon was totally defeated in the tremendous battle of Leipzig, October 16-19, or "Battle of the Nations," as the Germans call Prussia's return to power and glory.

¶ It was this patriotic appeal "To My People," that made William's troubles; the Prussian Liberals felt that the Government owed the people a Liberal political Constitution, in return for Leipzig.

¶ His Majesty grabbed on it, twice, and was at his wit's end to know how to keep his crown and his declaration of friendship for the people.

In the meantime, twenty-three minor German states having adopted constitutions, more or less liberal, the growing demands of the common people for a share in Prussian government could be no longer denied.

## 19

Kingcraft comes upon evil days—in the rising tide of liberal ideas, monarchies of old are all but swept away.

¶ When the Napoleonic dynasty collapsed, after Waterloo, there were 39 petty principalities in the German-speaking area grouped about Rhein, the Main, Neckar, Elbe; these knights' holdings, ecclesiastical strongholds, and domains of various descriptions became merged by cross-fighting throughout the Napoleonic era.

¶ The Congress of Vienna (1815) deeming it advisable to set up a loose confederacy of the multitude of petty powers, founded a German Confederation, but whether it was geographical, racial or political no human being could say.

The local German princes kept full sovereign powers, but gradually, as a matter of expediency, the various states grouped themselves around Prussia and Austria. As for the Nation, there was no German sovereign, no supreme court, no commercial or political relationship worthy of the name. Instead,

on every hand was intense local hatred, aloofness and suspicion. This condition continued for very many years.

¶ The plain fact was that the various princes did not want German National unity; for the reason that it is not human nature for men to give up an advantage for an uncertainty. Also, at this time, neither Prussia nor Austria was strong enough to impose her hegemony upon Germany. Austria's policy was for delay; and in Prussia the general belief existed for many years that Austrian domination was really essential to put down the rising spirit of Democracy.

¶ The authority of the Congress set up a Bond of Confederation, ruled by a Diet or Bundestag, sitting at Frankfort-on-the-Main.

¶ In the hurly-burly, certain centres, such as Saxony, Bavaria and Wuerttemberg, were raised in rank from duchies to kingdoms, while still others, such as Westphalia, Grand Duchy of Warsaw, were dissolved. The free cities were reduced to four; caste declined in political importance. The Confederation of the Rhine was set aside.

Thus the close of the Napoleonic period found German territory without political unity.

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¶ The last stand of kingly ultra-conservatism is the one great political feature of Europe, from the downfall of Napoleon, 1815, to the popular outbreaks of 1848. During this dark period the cause of constitutional liberty in Prussia made little progress. Old forms as well as new were under suspicion. On the one side were ultra-conservative conceptions of Divine-right, upheld by Metternich, and on the other side was the idea that sovereignty came not from heaven but from earth, making the will of the people the voice of God.

¶ Prussia and Austria, as the representatives of Divine-right, closely watched these revolutionary tendencies, suppressed uprisings, muzzled the press, in an attempt to check the surging tide of liberalism.

However much the kings had feared the wars of Napoleon, kingcraft was now confronted by an enemy more deadly. The babble of the bondsmen

about to break their chains portended far greater disaster to dynasties than ever did bullets on the battlefield of Waterloo.

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¶ With might and main, the monarchs, resisting the demands of the people for constitutional government, stamped out everything that looked like the first signs of National sentiment.

¶ Nor was Germany alone in this reactionary attitude. The kingly side of all Europe stood shoulder to shoulder against new political experiments.

In Italy, Greece, Spain, sovereigns applied the lash the harder, in an endeavor to suppress this new evil against kingcraft; nevertheless, among the common people there continued to grow consciousness of political rights.

¶ “Napoleon in many of the lands he conquered,” says Ffyfe, “set up many revolutionary ideas that sounded the death knell of the Feudal system. It was part of his administrative genius to take the lands from barons and their class, and turn them over to peasants; it happened in France with the lands of the ecclesiastical barons of the church; it happened in North Germany, in 1810, when the decree of administrative following the annexation of the North German Coast swept away with a few strokes of the pen, thirty-six forms of Feudal privileges.”

¶ And these could never be restored, even after the Congress of Vienna spent seven or eight months, after Waterloo, dividing the loot among the old royal houses.

¶ The system of monarchical Absolutism maintained itself in one way or another for years, but the old-line conception of the political legitimacy of despotic rulers had been rudely shattered.

¶ In spite of a brave show of gold cloth, diamonds, laces, jewels, swords, silk stockings, lackeys, grooms, guards and crowns, kingcraft was now placed on the defensive. The cry of the people, “Liberty!” filled many a market-place.

¶ Forces of democracy were working everywhere, ill-directed to be sure, but never despairing of ultimate victory over kingcraft, which indeed had

now come upon evil days. It is an undeniable fact that Bonaparte had purged the political ideas of French Revolution of many excesses, and had turned to practical account certain forms of liberty, for example, ridding captured lands, as Ffyfe tells us, of offensive special privileges, on part of irresponsible rulers of petty degree; but the danger was found in this: that a mere “desire” for political expediency, however surrounded by the halo of popular rights, avails nothing unless ultimately sustained by strong central authority; and it requires no profound knowledge of men’s way to know that at no time in the history of the world has collective rulership been other than a theory. The excesses of the French Revolution were not readily overlooked by the conservative elements in Germany.

20

German hope of National Union gleams like a star.

¶ There gradually grew throughout Germany a spirit of intense longing for country, and many a noble spirit had in a vision seen from afar the common Fatherland. Especially in the universities, the feeling was strong.

The German universities were hotbeds of political excitement. For many years after Napoleon’s downfall all manner of theories of government were strenuously debated, to the accompaniment of duels, beer-drinking, private feuds, and popular agitation, often ending in blood. The Burschenschaft, as the student brothers were called, finally formed themselves into a league comprising sixty schools; and held a famous meeting at Wartburg, 1817.

¶ The patriots took Holy Communion, made impassioned speeches, built bonfires and cast into the flames hated books supporting Metternich’s system of kingcraft. Also the patriots consigned to the fire an illiberal pamphlet by King Fr: Wilhelm III of Prussia.

¶ Metternich became alarmed. Kotzebue, hated as a spy of Russia in Germany, was stabbed to the heart by Karl Sand. This gave to Metternich the desired opportunity, and he proceeded forthwith to impress on Fr: Wilhelm and the Czar the absurdity of toying longer with “Democratic ideas and paper constitutions.”

Then and there the Biblical phrases of democrat-mongering kings, under the Holy Alliance, ceased in the high courts of Russia and Prussia. Metternich got hold of Fr: Wilhelm, also the other political tools of the Frankfort Diet, and at Carlsbad decrees were issued sounding the doom of Liberalism and the return to power of the old-line kings.

By gag-law and intimidation Metternich rushed the decrees through the Diet;—and for a generation “Carlsbad” signified the suppression of Democratic sentiments throughout Germany.

¶ Metternich fought free speech, free parliaments and a free press. His iron laws were aimed to stifle democratic mutterings. Austrian spies were everywhere, searching out revolutionary societies.

¶ The hope that Prussia might be the leader in the new German spirit of nationality now vanished. William III definitely withdrew his promise of a written Constitution, made in 1813, and reiterated in 1815.

Persecutions continued north and south; Prussia hounded Jahn for five long years, this Jahn whose gymnastic societies had been so helpful in hardening young men to Prussian army services; and the poet Arndt, whose impassioned verse intensified the National spirit of Germany, was shamefully treated, his papers scattered and the man driven from his university.

¶ For many a long year the gloomy spirit of “Carlsbad” decrees hung over Germany.

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¶ However, the Germans have an intensely practical side as well as a dreamy poetical side. It is not surprising, therefore, that the earliest steps in the direction of German unity (1818) came through Prussian customs house reforms under the patriot, Maassen.

¶ There had been, as we explained heretofore, no freedom of trade throughout Germany; each of the petty thirty-nine states was surrounded by Chinese walls; for example, to send goods from Hamburg to Vienna, the shipper had to pay ten separate tolls.

¶ Under the old Prussian system there were in vogue at one and the same time no less than sixty-seven conflicting tariff systems. All this tax oppression meant a harvest for smugglers. But Maassen, at a stroke, established a common tariff in Prussia; made the tax so low that smuggling became unprofitable. The other states protested vehemently at first, but one by one entered this new customs union.

¶ And we may understand now certain sarcastic remarks sometimes made about Germany by her historical enemies: “Paper, cheese, sauerkraut, ham, and matches, served to unite German hearts more than political ties!”

¶ This slur is ill-deserved; at best, it simply means that the advantages of the “Zollverein” were economic as well as political; and, in later years, the necessity for a common system of doing business played a deservedly important part in helping along Bismarck’s plans.

¶ The customs league, called the “Zollverein,” is generally held to be the very beginning of practical unity for Germany.

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¶ On the poetical side of German character, earliest appeals for the Fatherland—one and united!—were expressed down through the years; long indeed before actual political union was possible, Germany’s bards, in their impassioned, semi-religious songs awakened in German hearts the spirit of intense longing for the common Fatherland, based on blood-brotherhood and language.

¶ One of the famous types of this patriot-poet was Arndt, son of an emancipated slave. Arndt was a noble democrat; his history of slavery in Pomerania inspired Adolphus to abolish that evil, 1806; the Prussian aristocrats held Arndt a life-long grudge.

“Spirit of the Times,” his patriotic trumpet-call aroused Prussians to fight France. Napoleon tracked the lyric poet out; Arndt fled to Sweden; but continued to write for the cause. He returned to Germany, 1809.

¶ “Was ist des Deutschen Vaterland?” remains one of the great semi-religious songs of nations. Arndt asks what comprises the Fatherland? Surely not Prussia, not Swabia, nor this nor that, but all side by side comprise the German brotherhood of race and language.

Where is the German Fatherland?  
Is't Swabia? Is't Prussia's land?  
Is't where the grape glows on the Rhine,  
Where sea-gulls skim the Baltic's brine?  
Oh, no! more great, more grand  
Must be the German Fatherland!

¶ Here is a spirited verse from “The God That Lets the Iron Grow”:

The God who made earth's iron hoard  
Scorned to create a slave  
Hence, unto man the spear and sword  
In his right hand he gave!  
Hence him with courage he imbued  
Lent wrath to Freedom's voice—  
That death or victory in the feud  
Might be his only choice!

¶ “Der Gott, der Eisen wachsen liess,” “Was blasen die Trompeten,” were on all patriotic lips; at this, William III, mightily offended, had Arndt arrested and sent him into retirement for twenty years.

¶ The old man lived to become a great National hero. He died January 29, 1860, aged 91. It is pleasant to record that on his ninetieth birthday Germany united in good wishes for their national poet of the dark hours.

The people built him a monument at the place of his birth, Schoritz, and another at Bonn, where for many years he had been professor of history.

## 21

It is not time, O William, to go to church but to go to war; yet  
you and your son keep on reading your Gothic Bible.

¶ Now comes the year 1840; William III goes to the tomb of his ancestors, and is succeeded by Fr: William IV, with whom began anew the long battle between the principle of Divine-right of kings and political democracy exercised by the masses. William IV, intensely addicted to Divine-right

theories of government, was in the course of a turbulent reign forced to face great political agitators. However, the King had behind his throne, always, that conservative class (found in every country) that clings tenaciously to the past and dreads the future. The watchword of all William's enemies was "Liberty!" The cry, visionary as it was, served as a rallying point for those who favored some form of French constitutionalism; and while, as a whole, the so-called friends of Liberty were very impracticable, had no definite plan for relief, we find among the political agitators foremost in their discontent many of the brightest minds in Germany, college graduates, professional men, the clergy, and solid middle class merchants. All were zealous for immediate political reforms.

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¶ Consider the position of our Fr: William IV. He was a peculiar man, to begin with—and an irresolute man, to end with. He was not built for times of war. Yet he had to face cannon!

Early in life, in impressionable years, through a court blunder, young William had had a tutor, Delbrueck, who poisoned his charge's mind against the Prussian military and bureaucratic system.

The attitude of Delbrueck was certainly heresy as vile as though your own child's nurse should bring your boy up to fear and despise his own father. Surely, you would not like that?

¶ Delbrueck was quickly given the sack; and it was well that he got off without a broken head!

He was succeeded by a preacher, Ancillon, of renown in church affairs. This Ancillon started young William off on another track; antiques, church history, Bible study, architecture, the brotherhood of man, and the fatherhood of God.

¶ Then William studied art under Rausen, and under Schinkel; and also the future king became absorbed in landscape gardening and in architecture.

¶ William was presumed to be "liberal" in his views, that is to say, he was, in a sense, supposed to be a "democrat."

¶ Of course, the Radicals at this hour knew nothing of Bismarck, who was to be the power behind the throne. They saw instead only a weak king; and history tells over and over again, down through time, what becomes of weak kings when the people are throwing up barricades in the streets and are tossing up their caps and crying “Liberty!”

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¶ Under his royal nose the Liberals kept sticking his father’s pledge of the glorious year, 1813. How about that long-promised Constitution, your Majesty? Thousands of deluded Prussians now believed that they could accurately define the peculiar word “Liberty!” It looked as though the people were bent on casting out a king. As yet there were in Prussia no organized party lines; the general situation was summed up in the growing hopes that the common people placed in French constitutionalism—wherever that might lead.

¶ At any rate, the old régime must go.

Bad business, this promising a written Constitution—The deluge breaks.

¶ The Prussian nobility, always bound to the King by feelings of ardent loyalty, formed a military caste; the peasantry was industrious, thrifty and hard-working; the State officials were devoted to a spirit of discipline at once thorough and pedantic; the Prussian school-system was first in square-headed masters, who ruled with rods of iron. Thus, the Prussian National ideal was based on Discipline military in its severity, self-sacrifice and energy. “Throughout Prussia was a spirit of affirmation, expressive of the vigorous National egotism. As time passed, the machine men of olden Prussia were gradually replaced by free-willed, self-conscious citizens taking an enlightened interest in their country; the old-time tutelage headed by the monarchs underwent a transformation; and the trend was toward enlightened self-government; but many years were to pass before this ideal was reached.”

¶ William did indeed cherish, in a way, an idea of German Unity, and in this respect he was a democrat or a radical, whatever you wish to term him. Here, we must make one fact plain. It will make you smile at William's simplicity, will show you how utterly he was out of touch with the tendencies of the times; how good-natured he was; how honest he was. He believed that German Unity, if ever it came, should historically be an extension of the old Holy Roman Empire, through the illustrious House of Hapsburg!

Which is equivalent to saying that your own family should advance by humbling itself before your own greatest rival; that you should bow to your political enemy and submit to being effaced, to heighten your rival's glory.

Strauss calls William "A romanticist on the throne of the Cæsars!" This Frederick William IV wished to be an absolute monarch, after the traditional Hohenzollern style, yet he had so few soldierly instincts that the army hated him.

¶ This political attitude with William was not a form of romantic idealism bordering on lunacy; it was instead a token of his blundering stupidity; also in a sense his four-square frankness in owning that Prussia was playing second fiddle to Austria, at this interesting moment. And, in truth, all that William thought was logical; the stream was tending that way; few denied it, except politicians interested in advancing their own fortunes by setting Austria back in the great game of grab. However, William, instead of loading cannon and turning them on the Radicals, now swarming around his palace, was much pleased to send a bishop to Jerusalem.

¶ Nicholas of Russia warned William to beware of democrats, and to stand up for Divine-right of kings, but what is the use of advising a coward to be a hero, a fool to be a wise man? In the end, a man must go through life with the sort of head he has—round, square, flat, or mushy—is it not true? You are no exception, yourself; and our church-building William, in turn, was true to his own æsthetic nature, regardless of bayonets poked under his nose.

¶ Bad business this promising the people a written Constitution; ominous for the breed of kings; a situation, in short, not unlike that forced on the

Grand Monarch at an earlier day, that is to say, no money without the States' General.

¶ After 1840, Liberal opinions were directed against the King, personally, charging him with political reactionary tendencies. The course of popular liberty was taken by noted men, among them Arnold Ruge, Karl Marx, Feuerbach, Strauss, Bauer, Fallersleben, Dingelstedt, Meissner, Beck, Kinkel, and others. Also, when Ischech attempted to assassinate William IV, the dastardly act found supporters who gloried in the “patriot’s” effort to rid the country of a “tyrant,” even through cold-blooded murder.

¶ Also, the very memory of the frightful excesses of the French Revolution still shocked the conservative political element of Europe. The land-owning classes of Prussia, backed by the Prussian army, stood shoulder to shoulder for their old titles. The new call of political liberalism was, therefore, in the view of Prussian conservatives, to be put down at all hazards. The position was, of course, largely selfish, but it was very human.

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¶ Matters came to a crisis in '47; King William IV needed money for a little railroad project in East Prussia. In his dilemma, he called his Baby Parliament, or Diet, April 11, 1847, and “deigned” to permit therein the right of petition; there were in truth no privileges of political significance, no real powers; it was a side-show, so far as the “people” were concerned—and for eleven weeks volleys of oratory crackled and thundered.

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¶ Here, we meet Bismarck face to face; and you should now be prepared, from what you have read, to understand the gigantic problem Bismarck was called upon to face—single-handed!

¶ Furthermore, Bismarck’s attitude was not, as has often been recorded, a case of “might is right.” The French Revolution had proven conclusively that there can be no political “right” without a political “might.” We should not forget this fact throughout the Bismarck story of Prussia’s rise to power.

# BOOK THE THIRD

## Bismarck Supports His King

### CHAPTER VII

#### Fighting Fire With Fire

23

The voice in the Wilderness proclaims the God-given glory of Kings, vicegerents of Christ on this earth.

¶ The French Revolution brought to Paris adventurers and patriots from every part of Europe. Among these was a young Corsican who, with his mother and sisters, had been driven out of his native island. This man, Napoleon Bonaparte, was in the course of a few years to become Emperor of France and Master of Europe.

¶ There is a classical picture of young Napoleon, at the time of the early riots in Paris.

Standing on a curbstone, to one side, he watches the passing of liberty-crazed mobs, armed with pikes—the self-same common people on whose shoulders Napoleon himself was later to ride into amazing power.

¶ Thus, likewise, in another time of political crisis, (1847-48) men were flocking to Berlin to debate anew the well-worn theme, “The Rights of Man.”

Quietly looking on was another man of destiny, Otto von Bismarck, burly dyke-captain of the Elbe, up to that time a farmer on his ancestral estates in

Pomerania. What this young blond giant saw before him was somewhat of this extraordinary order:

¶ The universal theme was once more “Liberty,” and the din not only in Berlin but throughout German states, was ear-splitting. Of course, there were patriots who stood on broad National grounds, but the purely personal point of view was still very much in evidence.

Every man had his say, often accompanied by brandishing of fists or the laying on of canes; all dignified by the name “patriotism,” but in truth it exhibited the old struggle of human nature for supremacy.

The masses were fighting to unseat kings, whose dogma of “Divine-right” had by the French Revolution been shown to be only insidious political quackery, in the past sustained largely by the sword. The common people were wrestling to grasp this monarchic sword away, and here and there had already seized the hilt or the blade—it mattered not which!—and the dynasties of Hohenzollern, Hapsburg, Wittelsbach, and all the lesser swarm, were suddenly put on the defensive. Hotly pursued sovereigns kept their heads only by some concession to popular fury; again, by flight. The people were intoxicated with the wine of their newly found power!

¶ And what would they do with their new bauble, liberty, fraternity and equality? The centre of the stage was occupied by a struggling mass of kings, fighting not only for their crowns but for the very clothes on their backs! There were poets in fine frenzy declaiming; grenadiers firing muzzle-loaders; priests invoking the wrath of God; kings shouting out that they were the only accredited earthly representatives of Heaven; historians hotly insisting that all were in error, and that the scroll showed this or that; law-givers pleading for the old forms; lunatics laughing in demoniacal glee; peasants armed with pitchforks jabbing right and left; demagogues calling on Heaven to witness their lofty and disinterested leadership; while around the edges of the scene mountebanks, camp-followers, renegades, whores and political blacklegs, were waiting for their share of the plunder, let victory fall where it may.

¶ What a magnificent scramble for place, pelf and power! It were blasphemy to call this riot the desire for progress for the masses. It were equal blasphemy to call it stupidity and reaction, on the part of the

contending monarchs, as against crushing with iron heel the hopes of the people for political and intellectual life. Either one of these diagonally opposed interpretations of the time is too extreme. The truth is in neither view. As a matter of fact, behind the seething mass of human forms was the age-old motive of human selfishness; and while here and there some lofty soul may have glimpsed in his fervid imagination a United Germany, based on a “German national faith,” in which the rights of each citizen should be no more or no less than the rights of all others, with each man working for all men and all men for each man, this poetical idea was only another evidence of how the noblest minds place the illusion and the dream before the appalling fact of human selfishness in the universal struggle for personal aggrandizement.

¶ The merging of the various German states, or the transference of land from one German monarch to another, in the ensuing political struggle for power, is, after all, as nothing compared with the change in ideas, now close at hand; what may be called the “mind” of Germany was about to undergo a veritable French Revolution! However, it was not to be a French Revolution in the sense of mob-rule. We shall make this clear as we come more especially to tell you, in details, of a certain political millennium which Bismarck scorned, although courageously pressed upon him by leaders of the party of the people.

¶ On the whole, however, the drift of events was toward “German national faith,” bringing in turn some form of representative government, as against the doctrine of Divine-right of kings. The monarchs were placed more and more on the defensive; it was to be their last stand, not only for their crowns but for their very lives!

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¶ And now face to face with the gigantic problem of a United Germany, again we study our last hope of kings—our Prussian Strafford von Bismarck. In some respects he is the historical foil of Strafford of Charles I, whose money-needs compelled the calling of the Long Parliament; and the help Strafford had given to the king in ruling without a parliament had mortally offended the Commons; Strafford was declared guilty of high treason—and despite Charles’ efforts, Strafford went to the block!

¶ Will Bismarck come to a similar end on the scaffold of the Prussian liberals?

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¶ We see before us a giant in form and in mental strength; a monster of will-power, with the iron ambition to compel men to do his individual bidding; a political superman.

¶ He had spent his time more with cattle, horses and dogs than he had with men.

¶ His spirit was high, untrammelled, rebellious. He ironically despised the common people; the burden-bearers in all forms of government were in this giant's opinion not good enough to sit beside kings.

¶ Morose, obstinate, self-opinionated, with an enormous capacity for liquor, Bismarck was an intellectual as well as physical glutton.

¶ Most of all, this strange man, half-beast, half-seer, was to turn out to be the very voice of the old decaying kingcraft. He had an immovable belief in the Feudal right of royalty to rule over its subjects as it pleased; and by his amazing power of intrigue supported by supreme abilities exercised during the ensuing thirty years, Bismarck at last rose to a height that overshadowed the monarchs whom he served—and ruled!

We wish to emphasize, again, that Bismarck's conception of kingcraft was no mere despotic thing. To him, a king was truly a man of great practical as well as moral responsibilities, akin to father, hence should be obeyed.

Our young blond giant appears at Third Estates' Assembly—The King's predicament—Bismarck's opportunity.

¶ Behold Otto Edward Leopold von Bismarck, the country squire, straight from his cow-sheds and his hunting dogs; a young blond German giant, 32 years old, in the very prime of his massive strength and endurance; plentiful hair cropped short, ruddy face, blond beard, bright blue eyes, big fists; high, shrill voice, strangely out of keeping with his physical bulk. For years

afterward, this peculiar voice became the stock in trade of newspaper writers. However, it was what the giant said!

¶ Bismarck wore a broad-brimmed slouch hat, military boots and his dykeman's overcoat. This rough, yellow-colored garment, for which he afterwards became famous, was long, baggy and loose. He used to wear it when floods were high along the River Elbe. In Berlin, at the time were only three notables who wore these yellow overcoats: the first, Bismarck; the second, the immortal Baron von Herteford, the last of his race, hereditary grand huntsman at Cleve, and the third was worn by Geo. Hesekei, the German historian.

¶ Bismarck, who was now to receive his first experience in handling men in political alignments, had inherited a country estate from the old family domains and was living the life of a squire; hunting foxes, with dogs and gay companions, passing nights in taverns, drinking heavily, eating like a glutton, amusing himself as he pleased; a giant in intellect and in stomach; turbulent, tempestuous, rough, a bad man to cross, believe me, but among his cronies voted a prince of good fellows. Such is our German hero as he comes upon the great stage of affairs.

¶ When this burly Bismarck made his first entrance at the Diet, or Assembly of the Three Estates, held in the "White Saloon" of the Royal Palace at Coelin on the Spree, our future empire-maker and throne-overturner knew by practical experience absolutely nothing about the diagonal of political cross-purposes.

However, he was now taking up his great life-study, entering all unknowingly upon a magnificent career leading in after years to his fair renown as Father of the German Empire.

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¶ He had, as we have seen, thus far passed the time as a practical farmer; hale fellow well met, with upper-class leanings.

After taking his doctor's degree at Goettingen, he had made a few journeys, one to Italy, another to the island of Heligoland, on a shooting trip; had crossed the English Channel, and had brought back with him a smattering of Shakespeare, which he afterwards improved by considerable study; and

by the way throughout the crises in his career, Bismarck often found refuge in apt Shakespearian quotations.

Then he had done a little governmental clerical work in the lower courts of his country, but his peculiar ideas of independence and his abruptness in speaking his mind unfitted him for this work. Glad to be rid of his job, he returned to the country. He knew nothing of administrative or executive life, and aside from the fact that he was a student of history, with a penchant for making historical parallels, there was nothing to show the bent of his powerful mind.

¶ Yet, there is a great man before us! And since it is not based on his training, then it must come inherently from his natural endowment.

His master-mind was to unseat and seat princes, kings and emperors, in the fullness of time, rearranging the map of Germany to suit himself; engaging in three wars of ambition, signally victorious in each; and winning for himself imperishable fame during his active career of forty years.

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¶ By a singular turn, Bismarck knew or cared so little for politics, at this time, that his very entry into the “White Saloon,” in which the Liberals decided to settle with this stubborn King Fr: Wm. IV, was wholly by accident.

The Saxon Provincial Diet at Meresburg had chosen Dyke Captain von Brauchitsch of Scharteuke, in the Circle of Jerichow, as Deputy at the United Diet, and had selected Dyke Captain von Bismarck of Schoenhausen as his proxy. As Herr von Brauchitsch was very ill, his substitute was summoned.

¶ Bismarck appeared as representative of the Knight’s Estate of Jerichow, and vassal and chivalric servitor of the King. How go the Fates! If the eminent von Brauchitsch had not had the toothache, that day, there might not have been a United Germany—is it not true?

¶ In the group that gathered in the “White Saloon” at Coelin on the Spree, Bismarck met many men whose opinions were well known to him; his brother, the Landrath, his cousins, the Counts von Bismarck-Bohlen and

von Bismarck-Briest; his future father-in-law, Herr von Puttkammer; von Thadden, von Wedell, and many others. Says Hesekiel:

¶ “Unfortunately these gentlemen in general, as Herr von Thadden once bluntly said of himself, were not even bad orators, but no orators at all. Nor could the two Freiherrs von Manteuffel contend in eloquence with the brilliant rhetorics of the Liberals, such as Freiherr von Vincke, Camphausen, Mevissen, Beckerath, and others.

¶ “Few persons today can read those speeches of the First United Diet, once so celebrated, without a melancholy or satirical smile. Those were the blossom-days of liberal phraseology, causing an enthusiasm of which we cannot now form any adequate idea!”

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¶ Troublous times indeed; and the King an autocrat of autocrats, forced by the liberal ideas of the hour, breaking everywhere. We can imagine William saying angrily:

“Confound the impudence of the Liberals with their crazy liberty, fraternity and equality. We supposed that all this nonsense was blown to bits by the guns at Waterloo!”

¶ The bedeviled King began to show a streak of Prussian stubbornness; in these angry words he incautiously addressed those delegates who had dared to ask for a Constitution:

¶ “I refuse to allow to come between Almighty God in Heaven and this Prussian land so much as a blotted piece of parchment to rule us with paragraphs, and to replace thereby the sacred bond of ancient loyalty!”

¶ The widening gulf between monarchy and French constitutionalism was now manifest to almost any thoughtful Prussian, but, like the ostrich, our timid William continued to hide his head under the sand and believed himself safe.

Democrats.

¶ Now this giant dyke-captain, this lover of dogs, horses and cattle, sat for one whole month, stricken dumb it seemed by the political heresies that he heard. For one solid month, he never opened his mouth! Then he could stand it no longer. He pleaded vigorously for the Middle Ages feudal system, and for the right of his own aristocratic class! In truth, without knowing it, he was expressing the King's sentiments, was a genuine King's Man.

¶ The future prince's first speech swept like a hurricane over a garden in June—withering, blasting, uprooting. He began by denying, absolutely, that the great victory of 1813 which expelled for Prussia the French invaders was based on so low a consideration as the promise of a paper Constitution. Not at all! It was an exhibition of pure patriotism. In his historical reference, Bismarck, in this instance, was in error. In no sense was “the people” to be credited with the great Prussian victory of 1813; it came about largely through military tactics, training and general preparedness, in which “the people” had no part except to do their plain duty.

¶ For his remarkable utterance, Bismarck was promptly hissed down by the Liberal side. Undaunted, Bismarck loaded his heaviest guns against this thing called “Liberalism,” with all its mock-heroics of liberty, fraternity and equality. Would it not endanger our King's sacred throne? That was enough for Herr Bismarck.

¶ Thus the doughty Dyke-captain from the Elbe endeavored to perform a political miracle—new wine in old bottles—and as fast as the bottles popped, he put the wine in still other old bottles. Was there ever more folly? Did a young champion of the Crown ever make greater fool of himself?

¶ And with all Europe bawling for liberty, fraternity and equality; with thrones tottering in every direction; with 23 of the 39 German states already joyously exhibiting their new Constitutions? Here was a voice in the wilderness crying for monarchy and the Divine-right of kings! And what's more, gentlemen, he has before him a 30-years' fight, but in the end will ram it down your throats.

¶ His cry at this moment is that ancient Prussian slogan, “Mitt Gott fuer Koenig und Vaterland!” The question on the proposed Constitution—the right of petition and certain specified control over state finance by the people—simple as all this seems today, created a terrible storm! The nobility, led by the Dyke-captain, felt uneasy; a parliament of the people was indeed a needless concession. And were the people prepared by education for this great change? Was it not hasty?

¶ Meantime, the King was in truth a sort of broken reed, stirred by every blast that swept from the “White Saloon.”

¶ Fr: Wm. IV was a “Hamlet-hesitating monarch,” who had it not been for the burly giant Bismarck would have been swept into oblivion by the first whiff of gunpowder. A stickler for religious dogma, the pietists adored him, but the classes despised him; he was one of those men who discuss trifles with elegant ease, but who have no conception of what is behind this present widespread demand for a constitution. This King Fr.: Wm. IV lived in a mystic mediæval dreamland; he restored the cathedral of Cologne; sent a missionary band to spread his beloved Lutheran doctrines to the Chinese, and established a Protestant bishop at Jerusalem. The political literature of the time is overwhelmingly against William. He did not understand the drift of events. Without Bismarck, the King’s head would soon have rolled into the basket!

## 26

Bellowing his defiance, though the Liberals bring the rope—The new man explains his novel position, not as a politician but as a Prussian in deadly earnest—The Jew, and time’s revenge.

¶ There were three sessions of the Baby Parliament, and Bismarck was soon looked upon as the conservative leader. Perhaps conservative is not the word; reactionary would be closer. There was no Conservative party, nor a Liberal party for that matter. The obstinate fight with Bismarck was not because he wished to prevent the common people from having a share in their Prussian government, but because the change, if ever it came, would set up a peculiar type of Prussian government; a state-government, as it

were, as against the old-time liege-lord master-and-servant conception of Hohenzollern “Divine-right” policy.

¶ The very word “people” threw Herr Bismarck into hysterical frenzy! He determined upon resisting the heresy with all the virile courage of his colossal bulk.

It had been his duty, as Elbe dyke-captain, to protect his country against torrential waters; now he would do similar service against the rising floods of revolution. He set up the historical agreement that the edifice of Prussia, under an aristocratic form of rulership, was firmer toward foreign foes, firmer than was possible under the leader rule of the people.

¶ A conservative deputy from Pomerania, addressing the administration member for West Havelland, said: “We have conquered!”

¶ “Not so!” replied Bismarck, coolly. “We have not conquered, but we have made an attack, which is the principal thing. Victory is yet to come, but it will take years!”

¶ These words accurately convey the nature of the situation. Bismarck was master of short phrases in which complex situations are summed up.

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¶ He had dog-like love for his master, the King: “No word,” he exclaimed, “has been more wrongly used in the past year than the word ‘people.’ Each man has held it to mean just what suits his individual view.”

¶ “We are Prussians,” was his eternal keynote, “and Prussia is all-sufficient. Our hosts follow the Prussian flag and not the tricolor; under the black and white they joyfully die for their country. The tricolor has been, since the March riots, recognized as the color of their opponents. The accents of the Prussian National Anthem, the strains of the Dessau and Hohenfriedberg March are well known and beloved among them; but I have never yet heard a Prussian soldier sing, ‘What is the German Fatherland?’ The nation whence this army has sprung, and of which the army is the truest representative in the happy and accurate words of the president of the First Chamber, Rudolph von Auerswald, does not need to see the Prussian monarchy melt away in the filthy ferment of South German immorality. We are Prussians, and Prussians we desire to remain! I know that in these words

I utter the creed of the Prussian army, the creed of the majority of my fellow-countrymen, and I hope to God that we shall continue Prussians, when this bit of paper is forgotten like the withered leaf of autumn!”

¶ Yes, Bismarck, any day the mob may bring the rope; but you still bellow your defiance, your face of brass unabashed. Man among men—wrong though you be, Bismarck, you will have your say though the Heavens fall.

¶ “I am proud to be a Prussian Junker, and feel honored by the appellation. Whigs and Tories were terms which once also had a very mean signification; and be assured, gentlemen, that we shall on our part bring Junkerdom to be regarded with honor and respect.”

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¶ Aristocrats were delighted; von Thadden exclaimed: “I am enthusiastic over this man Bismarck!” Geo. v. Wincke, the Westphalian high official, short, fat, red-headed, never admired the burly giant Bismarck, smelling of the cow-sheds.

¶ For twenty years, off and on, the testy v. Wincke indulged in invective, his theme ever being “The rule of law.” This George v. Wincke in spite of his medals and his family tree was on the liberal side, bag and baggage.

¶ There was a strain of bitter eloquence about this red-headed champion of the people’s rights. He had read Guizot and talked much of Hampden, the Long Parliament, and all that. George had the legal side of the argument, especially since the French revolution had set liberty bells a-ringing everywhere, even in solemn old Prussia; but the doughty Bismarck would come thundering back with his “unlimited crown” and rulership over the people “by the grace of God,” royal prerogative and general disdain for the masses;—as in the régime of Louis the Magnificent at Versailles, when the convicts worked to build the \$200,000,000 palace to shelter art, wit and pretty women, while the people starved. How out of tune, Bismarck; how hopelessly reactionary!

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¶ Bismarck voted against every new privilege. His speeches read like reports of personal rows! He was frank, fearless and frenzied, and in turn his volleys excited groans and hisses.

¶ Was ever mortal so utterly out of touch with the prevailing French conception of liberty, equality and fraternity? Here is the way he summed up political equality:

¶ “The goosequill arguments of newspaper writers!” “Relics of pot-houses!” “The emancipation of the people does not mean progress!” “A royal word is more than volumes of law!” “The Prussian sovereigns are in possession of a crown by God’s grace!” “The king has said he did not wish to be coerced or driven!” “Let there be a period of four years, at least, before another such stupid meeting as this is held.”

¶ It was a curious situation. Bismarck was both rude and crude!

His style of delivery was lame, his voice improperly placed, his mannerisms grotesque. Despite his hobbling oratory, however, Bismarck was soon a marked man; he held his audience by his sensational ideas and his dogged courage!

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¶ Why did Bismarck vote against every new privilege? This may not be decently answered in a word; you must read on in detail; there was a great principle behind Bismarck’s political attitude. True, it was crudely conceived and expressed, at this period; but he will improve with time.

¶ Bismarck well remembered the excesses of German Jacobins, in the southwest, during the turbulent years of the French Revolution. Alsace and Lorraine had welcomed massacres as signs of political equality; mob leaders destroyed castles and monasteries; Jew-baiters went mad; Schneider, the tyrant of Strassburg, took charge of the guillotine, but not making enough blood flow, was soon aided by professional executioners, straight from Paris.

¶ There was also the lunatic “Feast of Reason.” Stark-mad Germans paraded with Marat’s statue, attacked churches, wrecked altars, heaped up images of saints, crosses, pews, pulpits, and priests’ garments, touched the match, and danced around the fire;—while Schneider harangued the mob on the joys of reason, as against revealed religion; solemnly assuring his thousands of listeners that Christianity was now a thing of the past.

¶ Thus the mad war of liberty burst forth, accompanied by many extraordinary episodes. Nor were the followers confined exclusively to the rabble; we find many noted teachers, scholars and politicians endorsing the French guillotine as a remedy for all political ills—men like Blau, Wedekind, Hoffmann, Foster, Stamm, Dorsch, not overlooking the spectacular John Mueller, who in the cause of the people committed unheard-of follies with his pen, as a necessary support for the sword.

¶ There was also a stark-mad leader named Cloots, who usually signed his bulletins “Cloots, Personal Enemy of Jesus of Nazareth.” His object was the union of all mankind, literally speaking; no halfway measures for him, no long delays; he wanted his political salvation here and now.

¶ So inflamed were the people that the discharge of a tailor’s apprentice, in Breslau, precipitated a riot and the artillery was brought into play.

¶ In Saxony, 18,000 peasants demanded a democratic constitution; but the authorities replied by sending the messenger to a mad-house.

¶ Thus, in various directions, the crack-brained revolutionists played their parts; nor should history overlook the contribution of the learned Dr. Faust, of Buckelburg, whose profound treatise, “Origin of Trousers,” was read in Paris as a sort of historical endorsement of the great democratic party that gloried in the equality, not to say liberty, exhibited by casting trousers aside.

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¶ Now what do you think? This King’s Man, sprung up of a sudden, coming from his fox-hunting and his cow-sheds, hits right and left at the Jews! Yes, as against his “beloved Christians.” Here is a new note indeed—old yet new.

We had not supposed Jew-baiting a thing of the past; but in these tempestuous times it did seem that race-prejudice had no place in a plain attempt to keep a king’s crown.

¶ “I will pass,” Bismarck thundered, “to the question itself. I am no enemy of Jews, and if they are enemies to me, I will forgive them. Under certain circumstances, I even love them. I would grant them every right—save that of holding superior office posts in a Christian country.

¶ “I admit I am full of prejudices, sucked in with my mother’s milk. If I think of a Jew, face to face with me as a representative of the king’s sacred majesty, and have to obey him, I must confess that I should feel myself deeply broken and depressed. The sincere self-respect with which I now attempt to fulfil my duties toward the state would leave me! I share these feelings with the mass of large strata of people, and I am not ashamed of their society.”

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¶ Thus, now at this supreme moment, when with voice of brass our Bismarck is making his entry into the world of affairs with his sharp words on Christians and Jews, and more especially with his uncompromising conception that kings are indeed the personal representatives of God on this earth, we do see that Bismarck stems from a fighting race. All his years, this Bismarck was a frightful hater.

¶ With the sorry figure of the world-oppressed Jew in our eyes and the malignancy of this new Jew-baiter, it is well that at the very outset this be made clear: That whatever Bismarck was or was not, at least he was no hypocrite. His words always fall like the wrath of God.

It is a solemn fact that he changed his point of view many, many times—even as you and I—but there is always the ring of sincerity about it that even the acid test of long time is unable to dissolve.

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¶ It was this tremendous earnestness—this sincerity—that made Bismarck feared, hated and despised.

Against your will, you are forced to believe what this giant says, no matter how mocking, how insolent, how absurd his charges!

Some tell us that Bismarck’s ancestry stems from Bohemia, others trace the Bismarcks to Russia, still others assert Jewish origin.

This much is a fact: from a geographical point, the family name comes from the little river Biese, near Stendal.

¶ Bismarck’s passion and prejudice against Jews was proverbial. It did indeed often turn him, for the time being, into a mad dog!

Near the close of life, in retirement at Friedrichsruh, some candid friend desecrated the great man's retirement by sending him a copy of a book by an anonymous writer, "Bismarck, the Jew."

Ordinarily, Bismarck paid no attention to social lampoons, but on this day as he read the book aloud to guests, his anger became black and terrifying!

¶ "I am determined to have the law on the audacious writer!" Bismarck's guests saw the old man in one of his moods of frightful rage.

But next day something intervened—and Bismarck never brought suit for damages.

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¶ Here is one thing that you must never forget in studying great men: That it is possible, nay inevitable, for a man to be at once very great and very small.

At the very beginning of his career, we find Bismarck ringing the solemn changes on "Christian," and we behold him in a characteristically unamiable mood over "Jews." Yet all the time he was endeavoring to lay down the dogma that the proper aim of the state is the realization of the Christian ideal!

¶ If now you can understand this mental contradiction, you are in a position to grasp one of the strange paradoxes with which Bismarck's life is literally filled.

You see here, at once, why he has been so often accused of double-dealing, of stacking the cards, of changing his mind, of going ahead by going backwards, winning ultimately by fair means or by foul.

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¶ And now for the sequel. Many years later, Bismarck was exceedingly glad to be guided by the advice of Jews, more especially the Jewish banker Bleichroder.

On one side of the table sits Bismarck, the Pomeranian Junker, and on the other side the sallow-faced, undersized Jew, Bleichroder.

Great friends they are today, to be sure; and between them is a mound of treasury reports, telling in minute detail the financial resources of Louis the Little, now a helpless prisoner of war. France is at the Prussian's mercy, and a Jew is called in—a despised Jew!

Bleichroder and Bismarck coolly examined the balance sheets of France, the present state of her debts.

The money cost turns out to be the stupendous sum of five thousand millions of francs.

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¶ Literary and journalistic France, in book, editorial and oration made a great outcry at the moment, declaring dramatically that Prussian barbarians had decided “to bleed France white”—attributing to Bismarck a figure of speech borrowed from the butcher's block! Well and good, but France paid the indemnity in surprisingly short time; and had many millions left to go on her way rejoicing, had it not been for the miserable obsession, “Ravanche!” that kept her in hot water for years.

¶ Bismarck was correctly quoted in this respect: That gold is as necessary in war as gunpowder; and the best way to keep a quarrelsome would-be Napoleon out of war is to empty his pockets.

¶ The Jewish feature, however, shows Bismarck, through and through; and we could not present him without this surprising scene. Make the most of it.

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¶ “I do not much like the piety that proclaims itself,” said Louis XIII. A similar remark may be made concerning Bismarck's life-long belief that the Lord was on Bismarck's side—Jew-baiter and all.

¶ “The longer I work in politics,” he once remarked, summing up his many political difficulties, “the smaller my belief in human calculation. I look at the affair according to my human understanding, but gratitude for God's assistance so far raises in me the confidence that the Lord is able to turn our errors to our own good; that I experience daily, to my wholesale humiliation.”

## CHAPTER VIII

### Bismarck Suffers a Great Shock

27

Wherein it is shown that Bismarck's protest against disrespect for constituted authority was based on certain tragic historical instances he would not repeat.

¶ It is freely granted that ideas of "Liberty!" that many German patriots desired to see come to pass, in 1848, were not those of 1789; but elements of lawlessness, of mob-rule, of marchings to "Ca Ira!" of absurd glorification of the common man, and of snarlings at kings as kings, were largely in the spirit laid down by Robespierre, Danton, Marat and that crew, with their chosen gangsters of the guillotine. Bismarck would have none of it!

True, many of the old-line excesses were no longer used for political purposes, but Bismarck was too well-balanced, had too much common sense, in short was too strongly aligned with landed interests to endorse "popular" government on the old type from over the Vosges. His protests were all in support of authority, discipline, duty, devotion to a deliberately chosen monarch, who ruled by the will of God.

¶ In '48 the talk of the "Rights of Man" really meant the rights of individual men—the tailor, the barber, the shoemaker—each of whom felt that the time had now come to overturn the political system of kings and to bring on the rule of the common people.

Old-line hatred of Napoleon had passed away. The French military despot of the early part of the century was now figured as a "great democrat," whose wars had "all" been in the interest of the people. Could anything have been more absurd? The literary speculations of Rousseau, as to the status of a new society (such, for example, as running naked in the grove and rolling on the grass) were now replaced by loud discussions not on the Rights of Man, as a form of idealism, but the rights of all manner of men,

each of whom felt that, under the new dispensation, hastened if necessary by bomb, dagger and poison-cup, the human race was to rise to nobler political ideals. It is not difficult to see that political theories of this sort have been indulged, in one way or other, by every generation in revolt against the settled ways of the fathers.

¶ Let us, therefore, go back to original sources and see for ourselves just what account the common people had given of themselves, in a political way, in France at the time of her so-called political millennium. We shall then be able to grasp Bismarck's position clearly and be able at least to understand, if we do not support, his attitude of uncompromising severity toward popular rule, as understood at this moment in the political evolution of Germany.

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¶ If it be a mark of progress to call God a superstitious idol and to endeavor by the guillotine to enforce political rights, then the precious French key to the Door of Destiny for this human race should be duplicated and placed in the possession of nations, far and wide, as the final expression of man's best idea of himself, his wife, his child and his country.

This 1789-93 return to National paganism, both political and social, is the mockery that Bismarck decided with all his almighty strength, nay his supreme rage, to set aside; and for him Prussian Militarism, which he so jealously set his heart on, against the rising tides of French constitutionalism, otherwise mob-rule, was at once to prove the sharp cure and the dreadful counter-blow.

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¶ It was only after St. Helena that the Napoleonic legend, presenting Napoleon as the great democrat, was brought forward, to wit, that the Emperor's many brutal campaigns were in the interest of the "common people" instead of gratification of his obsession for wars.

The transition came about in a simple way. The Emperor was dead and gone; his fate on a distant black rock added romantic interest to his lost cause; and the return of the old-line French kings after Waterloo, under the bayonets of Britain and the Allies, had proved a keen disappointment, politically, to France. It is conceded that Napoleon had promised and in

many cases had applied liberal principles in his conquered domains; but now that the man was dead, agitators of many lands, including the 39 distracted German states, began to take literally what the Emperor had said in a sort of huge politico-military satire, to wit, that his blood-letting was truly in the interest of the masses.

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¶ Hence, between 1815 and 1848, agitators of Germany began ringing the changes on the glories of the French Revolution. True, the Emperor had been dead some 20-odd years; a new generation found surprising merits in his military plans, forgetful of the lure of loot that had been the foundation of it all; yes, for one thing the hungry desire of the landless for the lands of the Catholic church.

¶ The exaggerated fact has been falsely set forth again and again that the French peasant of 1789 was down in the very mire of political despond, without a sou to his name; the cock called him to work at dawn, and all for the good of the aristocrats; he was penniless, he was an absurd figure, he was not a man but a beast;—hence his righteous revolt in the sacred name of Liberty.

¶ The fact is that at this time the French peasant was in no worse condition than the working classes of other lands, including Britain, Italy and Germany. That the Revolution first broke out in France and not in the other countries named is to be traced to journalistic and oratorical agitators of the ward-politician type.

¶ The special taxes of which the peasantry complained did not exceed two per cent of the products of the soil; and it is also a fact that France had a large and profitable foreign trade; but French political and journalistic agitators were afield, and the plain truth is that the landless desired to confiscate, and did confiscate, the titles of those in possession.

No sooner was the gigantic confiscation of Catholic church lands, amounting to about one-third of the soil of France, or two billion five hundred million of francs in nominal value, ordered by Mirabeau, backed up by the Revolutionary tribunals, than the supposedly impecunious French peasants came forward and purchased to the extent of millions of francs; and it is a fact today (1915) that one of the secret dreads of the French

peasantry is that some sensational political change may come in the stability of the French Government, a change that will forfeit these old land titles, based on confiscation in Revolutionary days.

¶ The French peasantry wants no great National military hero to emerge from the war of 1915; and it is not unthinkable that should a very strong French general suddenly come forward, he would be removed by assassination; a thing that has happened at least once before, in latter-day French politics.

This confession of politico-social fears on the part of the French peasantry explains why in France, take them as a group, the candidates invested with the honors of the Presidency are timid men, without ambitious political bias, and why, on the whole, the modern French National instinct lives in dread of a military hero, who with a turn of his wrist might on the vote of his soldiers declare himself, let us say, Emperor.

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¶ Loaded down with debts incurred for various reasons, the French of 1789 were on the verge of National bankruptcy.

This condition has usually been charged up against the excesses of the French kings, such, for example, as expending some 200,000,000 francs for pleasure-palaces, for the pretty women around Louis XIV; but this charge will not bear the light of modern research.

It is also a fact, on the practical side, that the much-boasted support given to America by the French in America's Revolutionary War, in a degree helped to bankrupt the French government; but Americans have forgotten or wink at this plain financial obligation.

¶ Also, the French Revolution had promised in its every utterance the dawn of the political millennium, whereas instead it brought an era of blood, idol-worship and free-love. We are not discussing here those poetical French surveys of the Rights of Man. Every ward-politician in Paris had the list at his tongue's end. There was some truth, much truth, in many of these expressions, no doubt, as mere expressions of humane sentiments. That, however, is another story.

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¶ One has but to read the Memoirs of President Bailly of the Revolutionary Assembly to find that mob-rule predominated from the first day of the supposed “Dawn of the political Millennium.” The mob in the gallery hissed or applauded each speech, and deputies were intimidated.

¶ Bismarck in his united Germany wanted no Jacobin Clubs, largely composed of ward-politicians, and Bismarck wanted no Marat with his vile newspaper, “Friend of the People,” setting class against class.

¶ He wanted no guillotine as the German symbol of political liberty. This political method of the guillotine was at best only a cowardly form of assassination, ineffectual, barbarous. First one side used it, then the other; then still another group; each set of French political assassins prating of Liberty had recourse to the guillotine to be well rid of rivals much as in Cæsar’s time the women of Cæsar’s family, that their own might be exalted, in turn proceeded to poison prospective collateral heirs to the Imperial throne.

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¶ Bismarck knew all about this dirty French mess, parading itself as the “voice of the people.” He was a strong man himself and he was guilty of gross ambitions in his rise to power, but on the whole Bismarck stood for self-possession and for manly audacity, certainly not the French Revolution type of audacity. It is a fact that Bismarck, as a human being, was a vast egotist, and had his own, oftentimes unscrupulous, way of gaining his ends, but his conception of Militarism, the force he did eventually use, was at bottom a virtuous effort to support, liberate and unify the Fatherland, not drag it into the mire of idolatry and bestiality.

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¶ We shall frequently say harsh things about Bismarck, in this book; we do not wish to follow French methods and endeavor to make an impossible hero of a man of clay. Bismarck, as a man and in the methods of his rise to great glory, had his gross faults, and we fearlessly point them out.

¶ But here are some of the facts that Bismarck can never stand accused of, in the light of this much-boasted French political “Millennium” of 1789-93, and here, likewise we find the real reasons why he did struggle with all his might against a reluctant people to enforce Militarism throughout the

jealous clashing 39 German states; and if Bismarck's exercise of the strong hand, in the bosom of the German family was a fault, then at least it did not include these French conditions, set up to cause the world to gasp in admiration.

¶ The bull-necked Danton, the Parisian ward-heeler, in control of public opinion, came on with his guillotine; and closed the city's gates against any man that had a dollar to pay his debts or buy a dinner.

¶ The so-called "will of the people" was in short a spurious affair, unnaturally created by a political morphine that gave glorious dreams; and this wretched drug was supplied by the mob-leaders.

All the blood-letting was represented as a harmless affair, tending toward liberty and equality; all the confiscations of church-lands and redistribution among the peasants was declared a "great" political triumph.

Throughout even the loneliest country districts the word was passed that the political millennium was about to break.

¶ The King was represented as a "monster fattening on crime." His wife was called an Austrian "panthress," and vile pamphlets were secretly passed around reflecting on her character. God was represented as judging the King, and the guillotine was awaiting Louis, by Heaven's decree.

¶ The 26,000 priests who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the monstrous political farce were visited with all manner of persecutions; one section of Revolutionary opinion decreed that death was the just due of all offending pastors.

¶ The assertion of kept-historians that there was "political justification" is at once spurious and an insult to common sense.

¶ In justice to the better French element it is granted freely that the dreadful September massacres did not express the real beliefs of the great decent body of the French people; but the Nation was dragged through the mire and the Nation has for years been endeavoring to explain this political Millennium of riots, murders, midnight assassinations, despoilings of land titles.

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¶ Bismarck would have drained the poison cup rather than stand for such French Constitutional nonsense in his beloved Germany, the Germany of his dreams, the Germany for which he labored so many years, the Germany which he would save from itself, so to speak.

He purposed to build up German political opinion, not through blatherskite ward-heelers, in Berlin, Frankfort or Hamburg, but by a manly appeal to German common sense and German sense of respect for authority; and if Bismarck overworked his idea of Divine-right of kings, then at least this may be said: that he issued no appeal to the German people “Who Laughs on Friday, Weeps on Sunday!” (The massacres had come between!) And as to Danton, who glories in being the immediate instigator of the massacres we have these, Danton’s own words: “It was I who caused them. Rivers of blood had to flow between me and our enemies!” Finally, after these rivers of blood, the word was passed, “That the entire Nation will hasten to adopt this (guillotine) most-necessary means of public salvation.”

28

Viewing at closer range the work of the legislators of the great republic of liberty and equality; these facts Bismarck well knew, explaining his belief in militarism.

¶ After reading five hundred pamphlets on the Revolution (as she testified at her trial) Charlotte Corday struck down Marat with a dagger; and her act has been generally condoned by men with a sense of fair-play. It was indeed a bloody murder; but when a mad-dog is running wild, a beast fattening on human blood, one passion feeds on another—and Corday is no exception. (Henderson, Symbol and Satire of the French Revolution).

Heroine or monster, take your choice; at least in her time such was the frenzy of the alleged political Millennium that Marat was soon worshipped as a martyr. This atrocious political quack, with all his daggers and his blackjacks, was likened to Jesus Christ; and among the sentiments of the hour we read, “A perfidious hand has snatched him away from his beloved people”; “To the immortal glory of Marat, the people’s friend”; “Unable to corrupt me, they have assassinated me!” “Marat, rare and sublime soul, we will imitate thee; we swear it on thy bloody corpse.”

Such are some of the expressions of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity that followers of French Constitutionalism had years later decreed to re-enact in Germany; but Bismarck stood as a master with a rod of iron to lay over the backs of fanatical German Radicals, who would come on with their drunken calls of "Liberty!"

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¶ All this, however, is only the mild opening chapter of this much glorified French Constitutionalism. The French prisons soon held about all there was of French intelligence and moderation; the brains, the blood and the beauty. It is not necessary to mention names.

If you wish to become hysterical, read your fill of this drunken era of French Constitutionalism.

At the height of the Terror, there were 8,000 political prisoners in French dungeons; and the mobs still came on with their cries for fresh blood. One day, this expression was made: "The town of Lyons shall be destroyed; the name Lyons shall be effaced," etc. All this meant that Lyons, weary of blood, had decided on raising an army to beat back the sons of spurious liberty.

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¶ Any man who, in the Terror, dared disagree with the mob-rulers was called a "conspirator." In a letter from Herbois, we find this plain evidence of political lunacy masquerading as inspiration: "There are 60,000 individuals here who will never make good republicans; we must have them sent away. I have new measures in mind, weighty and effectual,\* \* \* Heads, more heads, heads every day! \* \* \* How you would have enjoyed seeing National justice meted out to two hundred and nine rogues. What cement for the Republic! I say fete, yes, citizen president, fete is the right word. The guillotining and fusillading are not going badly!"

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¶ The Queen, now in her dungeon, was treated with wretched dishonor. Even the petty expenses of bread and salt were begrudged: 15 francs a day for food; three francs and 18 sous for trimming a skirt, 18 sous for a ribbon and shoe-strings; three francs for a tooth wash;—all this was kept track of. Yet in years gone by France had allowed her four million francs of pin

money, and the royal allowance was twenty-five millions of francs per annum.

¶ “Through a small window in her cell comes the light of day. \* \* \* She is accused of being a leech, a scourge, a harpy and a free-lover; she is condemned to death.”

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¶ The political assassins, known as the Mountain, and that known as the Girondists, now began destroying each other; every patriotic action of the Girondists was set forth as having been instigated by love of vulgar applause. After some days, the Jacobin Club petitioned for freer trials, less hindered by legal formalities.

¶ “Long live the Republic!” was the cry. “Perish all traitors!” Executions continued, day by day.

¶ The poor king was long since dead and gone, yet his memory was detested.

On a certain day of horrors, the tombs of his ancestors were broken open by the mob, and the bones scattered. One corpse (or what remained of it) was stood up against a wall and the beard hacked off by a patriot of the new Regime.

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¶ All authority was now overthrown; and as one writer adds, “the most daring enterprise of the Revolution remains to be chronicled: the storming of Heaven!” (Henderson.)

¶ The leaders decided next to attack God on His throne; God was officially declared a superstitious myth.

The altars of France were hurled over; the Christian era was abolished by political decree; the Sabbath day was officially proclaimed done away with; Christ was to be henceforth banished, officially; churches closed, pagan rites substituted.

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¶ Bismarck, the thinker, Bismarck, the builder, with his dream of political responsibility, of vested Authority, stood for no such facts in his protests against the rising tide of Radicalism, in the German states.

He knew his history too well; he knew the satire of the French Revolution, the folly of meeting it in any way except by the sword.

¶ Yes, Bismarck believed strongly in what has since been called Militarism; but his idea was that power was needed for the liberation and the unification of his country; and he hated French Constitutionalism and fought by fair means and by foul all efforts to warp upon Germans the political ideals of the French Revolution. So you must here and now make up your mind whether or not Bismarck was a great statesman or a great fool.

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¶ The French Convention, weary of blood-letting, began maundering in the psychology of religion.

It was officially set forth by one of the Deputies that, after all, the idea was to invent some new form of religion, without which the proposed political Millennium had fallen short.

Marat was turned to, that choice spirit of the height of the era; though in his tomb, he was called upon in this strange language, despite his bringing in the Terror:

¶ “O, heart of Jesus, O heart of Marat, you have an equal right to our homage!”

¶ A New Era was now decreed, taken in the main from the paganism of early France. The four seasons were symbolized by the hunt of the man for his mate: he is afield in Autumn, on horseback; in Winter, he first finds his new mate; in the Spring, the maid watches her sheep feeding on the hills; and in Summertime, the man is seen leading his mate to a couch, his arms already around her waist.

¶ One of the leading symbols was Reason, presented as a lady petting a lion; saints' days were replaced by days for animals, one for the cat, the dog, the sheep, and what you will; but no longer St. John's, St. James, St. Louis.

Certain other days, dedicated to the “Spirit of the Revolution,” were termed “Sans culotte,” or without trousers, to wit, the French version of that great idol of the American yellow editor, who cries for justice in behalf of the man with the seat out of his trousers.

¶ On a certain day, the Cathedral of Notre Dame was used as a background for the great French political drama; a mountain was erected, a figure known as Truth was present. The Goddess Reason was also carried to the Tuileries; and later as a report written at the time says, “The President of the Convention gave the Goddess a fraternal kiss, whereupon his secretaries asked and obtained a similar privilege.”

¶ At Rochefort the orator of the hour began, “Citizens, there is no future life!”

¶ The images of saints were replaced by men of the stripe of Marat, Brutus and other tyrants.

¶ Also, an ass was dressed in pontifical robes at a sort of National fete, and a few days later at a public masquerade, the President replying to praises of the New Era explained himself as follows: “In one single instant you make vanish into nothingness the errors of eighteen centuries”; by which he meant to honor the paganism of the new French political Millennium.

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¶ Now comes that dangerous man, king of political charlatans, Robespierre, who offers a private religion of his own.

¶ The queer thing about this Robespierre, the new dictator, is his belief that he and he alone is the fountain of all political virtues. One must be willing to sacrifice brothers, mother, sister, father to the guillotine—for the good of one’s country.

The Robespierre idea is that the supreme duty of a Nation is to repress “crime,” as well as to uphold “virtue” and “crime” consists largely in not agreeing with the great central authority. He has had many followers since that day.

¶ Robespierre was really a great man gone wrong; he had in many respects a brilliant mind; he was a profound orator; a born leader; but he was

unsound at the core, like a rotten apple; taught bloodshed and violence, as expressions of National honor.

¶ In one picture of the hour, he is represented as the Sun, rising over the Mountain, and Giving Light to the Universe.

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¶ The day dawns when Robespierre has his old friend and rival Danton on the scaffold. This was to be expected. Then followed many executions of Dantonists.

¶ Robespierre now came on with his “new” religion; he boldly announced a Supreme Being and belief in immortality!

¶ He applied the torch to the wooden images set up by his political predecessors. He made a speech that is unintelligible, all wind, sound and bombast, but was cheered to the echo.

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¶ Are you not growing weary of all these absurdities? Perhaps you think the details taken from the records of Bloomingdale Asylum?

No; French Constitutionalism of 1789-93, the sort that the Radicals of Germany had in mind, (with some variations), and often extolled in fiery speeches of the German Liberal party that Bismarck decided to crush down, with a rod of iron. True, the old offensive historical details were kept out of sight and were not fresh in men’s minds;—except reading men and thinking men, like Bismarck; men bold enough to stand out against mob-violence, called by whatever soft name you please.

¶ A French cartoon of the Robespierre Regime made at the time by an admirer shows the earth around the guillotine heaped with heads, and at last the over-weary executioner, failing to find further victims, decides to execute himself! He is therefore seen lying under the axe, his head rolling on the floor.

¶ Robespierre in the end went the way of all the other political fanatics; the day came when he was spat upon, struck, beaten by mobs, pricked with knives.

According to his own theory, he needed no trial (said his new rivals and enemies in their lust for power), for he has by his acts shown himself to be an enemy of his country.

They carried him down the great staircase; he fought back savagely, like the frightful animal that he was.

¶ Eighty-two of his followers died that day, on the guillotine.

¶ “Long live the Republic! Long live Liberty!” was the loud cry of the rabble.

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¶ Such is some of the work of the great legislators of the Republic of Equality as set forth by the various authors of the new French “political Millennium,” during those terrible years 1789-93; we have seen their ideas on a grand scale; and it is for you to judge whether in setting himself squarely in favor of Discipline and respect for constituted Authority, as exemplified by the line of Prussian kings, and the Prussian system of education, Bismarck was to show himself a man or a mouse.

¶ Bismarck, who was a deep reader on politics, knew well the frightful excesses of French mob-rule. He may also have recognized certain general excellent principles, but he would have nothing to do with the fungous growth. And as we follow his career, we see the virtue in his strong reliance on Militarism, as an arm to keep in check the turbulent German masses, also, later, this same Militarism to be used to do battle for the German Empire.

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¶ For many years, all manner of rosy democratic plans had been voiced by the Liberals.

The thing had been done to death. Every manner of political Utopia had been planned by theorists, but Bismarck met them all with his ironical speeches, and bided his time.

¶ Bismarck’s idea was that the only hope for German unity came through accepting the King of Prussia as ordained of heaven.

In his arguments, he ignored the masses, the villagers, the workers, the busy-bees, the regard for individual rights.

His whole programme seemed to the masses to be anti-Christ in conception, that is to say, it harked back to political paganism.

¶ It is very difficult for an American to comprehend this Prussian conception of Divine-right, as a political principle—but it should not be difficult from the point of human experience. Bismarck had no illusions concerning the power of the average man, and he held that the phrase “the people” was used by every political quack in Europe for any one of a thousand selfish motives.

Bismarck had absolutely no faith in the power of the average man to govern himself—much less to govern others!—or faith in the average man doing anything above the average, outside his own small trade or craft.

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¶ Americans are accustomed to make much of an alleged saying of Lincoln: “No man is good enough to govern another without that man’s consent.” It is all a beautiful dream, false in theory and false in fact, belied by every record since the Lord drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden.

Beginning with that stupendous episode, certain it is that this act of government was not carried out with, but against the will of the ruled; and the point at issue was not the supreme goodness of the ruler, but the power to station an angel with a flaming sword at the gates, toward which Adam ever after looked backward with longing eyes—but looked in vain!

¶ In the innumerable dynasties of Babylon, Nineveh, Egypt, Greece, Arabia, Armenia, what man ruled who did not force his leadership?

It is not in the nature of human beings to accept new ideas without hostile objection.

This holds true also in the evolution of governments, for all life is founded on struggle, and the man who would rule must force his leadership or remain unknown.

¶ Lincoln is absolutely in error, and his much-quoted words are folly. It is not a question of goodness, or badness, or fitness, on part of the man who has the ambition to rule, but it is very much a question of his courage, his craft or his cunning in compelling others to do his bidding.

Julius Cæsar was not selected to rule, but he selected himself; and so did Charlemagne, and Bismarck—and so Lincoln, himself.

¶ If some concession to the democratic system is sought on the ground that the voice of the people loudly “called” Lincoln, then it is to be set up that Lincoln on his part was one of the shrewdest political log-rollers this nation has ever seen; and if he did not originate the canvass that busies itself kissing the babies, congratulating the wives and shaking hands with the farmers, then at least Lincoln was an apt pupil.

It is inconceivable that, without his own high ambition, his long and painstaking endeavors to trim sail to every favoring gale (for example his shifting positions on the slavery question), he would have been nominated for President of these United States.

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¶ It is an amiable conceit of human nature, looking backward, to profess to see what it blindly ignored, looking forward; and go to any penitentiary in America, ask the convicts, and you will find that, according to the stories, there are no guilty men behind the bars; invariably a peculiar complication of circumstances enabled the guilty man to escape, and justice was thereupon avenged by a human sacrifice; likewise in the United States Senate or in the House of Representatives, ask whom you please, “How came you to hold your seat?” and you will find no ambitious man. Some were forced to stand against their protests; others were away traveling when word was received, by telegraph, “You have been elected!” Still others appealed to the nominating committee, “For the love of God desist!”—but in vain.

Thus, without raising a finger to direct the movement of events, our leaders were selected by an omnipotent democracy to occupy the seats of the mighty.

¶ Truly, no man is good enough to rule another without that other man's consent! Recast in terms of human experience, it would mean that we would go unrul'd; for no man yet has willingly selected his ruler, but has had dominion over him thrust upon him—even as Bismarck expressed his right to rule, backed by blood and iron.

Such is human nature since the world began; otherwise why was Christ, the gentlest ruler of all time, brought to the tree; Socrates forced to drink the hemlock by the very wise justice of his day; and Columbus called a madman because he wished to rule men's minds with a new truth, showing clearly that the world is not square or flat, but round like a ball?

¶ Bismarck had the real clue—and forced his purpose through the power of his commanding personality.

29

In spite of the dyke-captain's denunciation of French Constitutionalism, King Fr: Wm. IV marches with the Democrats!

¶ The uprising of '48 was primarily a students' demonstration; the hot-bloods of the universities, aided by various political enthusiasts, were intent on doing something—and doing it right away. There had been a preliminary meeting at Heidelberg, and this led to the Frankfort Convention; 600 disputatious delegates were going to build a liberal German constitution—at last!

¶ Thus, between 1815 and 1848 German Unity had been stimulated by a dozen causes, religious, commercial, literary, social—but the political lagged, for the fact is that about the last thing a man learns is to govern himself.

There was a rising sense of National faith, as predicted by Arndt, the poet of German brotherhood; also the call of blood, based on language; likewise a deep yearning, as yet unsatisfied, for a constitutional form of government, as against the warring, insolent 39 states.

¶ By 1848 there were Constitutions in 23 of the states; many of these documents illiberal to be sure; but nevertheless a step in representative government.

¶ But the Germans are a peculiar people. They wish to refer everything to ultimate philosophical causes; hence the fruitless debates of the Frankfort Convention, in which all manner of prospective Constitutions were tried by the formal rules of philosophy and ethics. Such questions as “What is a Federal state?” were angrily debated, and the changes rung on “federation of states.”

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¶ After worlds of talking, unseen hands decided to offer to some powerful prince the German crown. How is that for democrats? William IV was the man selected.

¶ Prodded by Bismarck, who was always explosive and satirical about democratic crowns, William spunkily refused to “pick a crown out of the gutter!” His dignity, as a Hohenzollern was offended; but Bismarck was playing for larger stakes. William now went about canvassing the German princes for a crown; twenty-eight replied, one way or another; others, sticking to selfish interests, made no acknowledgment.

¶ Now Bismarck, bellowing like a mastiff, set up the cry that if William accepted that democratic crown out of the Frankfort gutter, Prussia would become involved in civil war. And it was a fact! The old-line Prussian military aristocracy wanted no “democratic gold, from the gutter, melted down with their old aristocratic gold of Frederick the Great”—and as a matter of fact, could you blame them? Were you there, at the time, and of the land-holding privileged class, you too would have been up in arms.

¶ Get this straight: William’s idea of “United Germany” simply meant that there should be a United Germany compounded of the thirty-nine clashing states, provided William’s beloved Prussia and not the detested Austria could front the movement.

¶ Despite all the noble souls who write poetry on brotherhood (and Germany has her patriots, God knows!), the irony of fate is such that all

human alignments of a political nature must at some stage be spattered with mud.

¶ You see, henceforth for a quarter of a century, the realization of this much-prized but elusive and seemingly impossible Unity was to become more and more a game of politics in which the stakes were kingdoms, principalities, riches and honors unnumbered. In all card-games the result is not known till the last card is played; and in the present case the game was to be protracted twenty-four years. Chips were flung about in huge stacks, now piled on the Austrian side, now on the Prussian; and finally, it was to break up in a fight, in which Prussia had to tip over the table, violently seize the spoils, batter heads right and left, and beat off rival players with needle-guns.

¶ Come, come, there is no need of claiming too much for human nature. The grand prize was to be gained, ultimately, by seizure! Even the sober, common-sense William I, to whom it finally fell to be crowned German Emperor, saw the true situation early, after the church-building William IV had been gathered to his fathers. You will hear more of that as we go along.

When all intriguing, all card-stacking, all smiling, all smooth speeches no longer serve to conceal the real end of this amazing game of international politics, as between Prussia and Austria, then the thing to do is to bring on “blood and iron.” The very human end that Bismarck always had in mind was German liberation and Unity, by driving the Nation’s enemies beyond the borders.

¶ The best title to lands, the surest, the most incontrovertible—let purists and pietists rage as they may—is the sharp edge of the sword.

We shall see all that more clearly as the bloody years go by.

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¶ In the critical year '48, democratic mobs chased that old aristocrat and king-maker Metternich out of Vienna. Hungary, Bohemia and other intervening principalities went mad with excitement about “Liberty!” South Germany was in a turmoil.

William IV had again practically promised a Constitution, and had ordered the troops from Berlin; he placed a sign on his castle “National Property.” At this time the king let slip these fateful words, “Prussia is to be dissolved

in Germany!” Bismarck, pained beyond expression, sent a letter to the King, full of expressions of loyalty. The King kept the letter on his desk all summer.

¶ The giant continued to protest. He now first used a subsidized press, called well-known men to write for the “North Prussian Gazette.”

For all this, he was dubbed “Junker,” “Hot Head,” “Reactionary,” but he thundered away like a battleship in action.

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¶ The King was in the hands of the Liberals. Bismarck regarded this as a frightful situation. Bismarck, of the Old Regime, stood by the landlords and the titled folk. He had prodigious pride of station, hated to see the King make a fool of himself about paper Constitutions.

¶ In Berlin, along in March, there were amazing scenes. The democrats were crazy for blood; William shrank with horror against fighting his beloved Berliners. But this son, the future William I, who twenty-four years later was to gain the imperial German crown, was not so squeamish. The young prince gained the popular title “Cartridge-box prince,” equivalent to saying that he was willing to blaze away at “beloved Berliners,” or at any other citizens insane with political excitements hazardous to “Divine-right.”

¶ It is true that on March 18th this romantic William IV did indeed enter into negotiations with the insurgents; and—think of the mortification to one of Bismarck’s upper-class leanings!—did indeed do no less than wrap the German tricolor around his body and heading a democratic procession march around the streets, even going so far as to make a foolish speech in which he extolled the glories of the German democratic revolution.

¶ Here we might as well close the book, were it not for Bismarck. The surly dog of a king’s man flatly refused to vote “Aye!” in the Diet, where the hot-heads were intent on passing resolutions “commending the King for his loyalty to democratic principles,” in marching ’round town with the mob. Bismarck for the time being stood like a great mastiff at bay before wolves.

His terrific speech upholding royal prerogative made his early and sudden fame.

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¶ It is a fact that with all their political ambitions, and their solemn belief that Germany's political future was an open book, the Radicals in Prussia never guessed the way events were to turn out; nor for that matter the Radicals never desired the conquest of Germany by Prussia; therefore the subsequent astonishing rise of German Imperialism through Prussian domination, would have proved a most surprising revelation had the patriots of 1806 to 1848 returned from the other world, say in 1870, to view Prussia's rise to glory.

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¶ The political uprisings of 1848 had parallels in Italy, France, Spain, and Germany; and the excesses cleared the way for wiser action, in years to come.

¶ "The frenzy was a sort of tottering bridge between the French 1789-93 idea of democracy (that has to do with bloodshed and violence) and the purified conception expressed in modern constitutional democracy."

¶ The German democratic uprisings of 1820, '30 and '48 were planned to win a certain type of civil liberty. They failed. The question was "equality," as well as popular "machinery" of representation. How was it to be brought about? Modern "parliamentarism" had not as yet been involved.

¶ The patriots of '48 had their Jacobin clubs in mild imitation of the French Revolution. Baden alone had 400, with a membership of 20,000. "Every tavern and brewery, (Dahlinger, German Revolution of '49, p. 33), became a seat of democratic propaganda."

See, there stands the mighty Hecker,  
A feather in his hat,  
There stands the friend of the people,  
Yearning for the tyrants' blood;  
Big boots with thick soles,  
Sword and pistol by his side.

¶ Copied from French models was the word "Citizen." We hear of Citizen Brentano, Citizen Franz Sigel, Citizen Ostenhaus, Citizen Schimmelpfennig; some of these leaders were extremely radical; but

Brentano endeavored to keep the Revolution from becoming a record of lawlessness after the French Revolution type. (Dahlinger, p. 100).

We cannot go into the various battles fought and lost. Many of the leaders were exiled, others shot. The patriots were as a rule young collegians, ambitious to rise in life, but sincerely holding to modified conceptions of French Constitutionalism. There were a large number of journalists in the thick of the struggle, also professors in high schools. These chosen leaders, by various oratorical tricks, drew political and social malcontents from every walk of life.

¶ In the end, Prussian troops put down the patriots.

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¶ In '48, all kings were under suspicion; it made no difference whether the king was a good king or a bad king; a king was a king, and all kings were bad.

The younger generation, especially became morbid over the word "Liberty!" What it really meant, in '48, was that human nature should restrain itself, in order that all men might, immediately, enter into so-called God-given political rights.

The situation was somewhat analogous to that created after the Civil War, in the United States. Certain political fanatics, weeping over the Negroes, now demanded universal suffrage, literally, for the slaves, and in secret saw that by controlling the South, a "Black Republic" might be set up, side by side with our "White Republic."

¶ Fraternity and equality—that was the cry in '48—glossed over by politico-religious glamour, expressed in the idea that men "ought" do thus and so, and therefore "a people's king" was in order. The people were to crown themselves.

For a thousand years the accepted political doctrine had been that kings held office by Divine-right, but now orators of the day harangued mobs proclaiming the literal belief that the voice of the people is the voice of God.

While, thus, the new apostles ridiculed the old idea of Divine-right, as attached to the acts of monarch, leaders of the people saw no inconsistency in asserting attributes of political divinity in the doings of the common people. Thus, a species of nebulous politico-religious humanism was pictured as the highest expression of political philosophy.

The individual wished to come into his own and the quicker the better. Reformers shocked landed proprietors, titled folk and office-holders under kings, by demanding unconditional surrender of the machinery of government; zealots urged revolts against all manner of constituted authority. The point was to gain for the barber, the tailor, the shoemaker and the blacksmith more life, more political experience, more freedom of choice—and right on the next tick of the clock!

¶ There is this about it: that the Frankfort Convention offered to William IV the “People’s Crown” as a direct symbol of belief in political idealism, not necessarily, however, the political idealism that tolerates a king but instead uses him as a popular signboard.

The Convention held that German unity “ought by right” to be established; therefore “once the grand Idea was set afloat” the cause “must by moral right come to pass.”

¶ Probably never before in the world was there formulated an outright, widespread expression of greater political idealism by men who called themselves patriots. There is a noble side to the sentiment, heightened the more as we realize the inevitable delusion of it all, translated into terms of human selfishness.

Germany, so the zealots proclaimed, should by blood and language be united; and in this respect orators of the hour were correct.

Germany had a manifest destiny, the speakers continued, but in this respect they were guided by faith rather than by experience. At least, the momentary end of “manifest destiny” was clearly the political function; to be one and united.

¶ So far good.

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¶ Then why “should not” this noble German Idea be “accepted”? The word Idea was usually presented with a capital letter, in form of personification, so real had the thing become to German political orators.

Certainly every German was ready to testify that National Unity had been the one political dream of generations past and gone.

Had not the old wandering minstrels sung of the Fatherland, alas, too long delayed by miserable human selfishness! German bull-headedness insisted on insularity, on individualism, on particularism, on standing each petty monarch in his corner, with farce-comedy courtiers bowing and scraping while the rights of the peasant were forgotten. Assuredly, the day had come for this folly to cease. Then in Heaven’s name, why not a United Germany—here and now?

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¶ The petty passions of rival princes acted as a bar to the acceptance of the glorious National Idea, spelled with the big “I.”

Intense particularisms preferred loyalty to local princes, fashions, customs, dialects rather than to lose the old ways in the larger life of the German Nation.

¶ But Bismarck did not lose heart.

## CHAPTER IX

### So Much the Worse for Zeitgeist

30

We will never get at Bismarck through a study of the interplay of politics; suppose we state his case in terms of human nature?

¶ From this time on, the shelves are freighted with volume after volume of German political jargon, forming a bewildering diagonal of forces crossing and recrossing in thousands the tangled threads. Bismarck’s presence runs

throughout, but it is a long and complex story, hard to comprehend and difficult to compress without sacrificing important details.

¶ We find “Grand Germans” against “Petty Germans”; Grimm, the philologist, has his say against Simson, the jurist; Arndt, the poet, against Welcker, the publicist; the Frankfort parliament offering its paper crown to the King of Prussia, imploring him to become a democratic liberator and unifier; and on the other hand we hear Bismarck in the Berlin Diet, urging the king to stand firm for the Old Regime; arks of free-speech from Polish insurgents, also ill-advised youth waving banners of blood; mobs in the Berlin streets, whiffs of grapeshot here and there to clear the air; John of Austria urging something and the Prince Consort of England advising, post-haste, the kings of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Wuerttemberg; the Assembly manufacturing Magna Chartas, after noisy clashes of opinion.

¶ “There is not enough practical sense behind all,” says Bismarck, “to build a political chicken-coop, to say nothing of an empire.” Then, the patriots, so-called, leave for America, worn out with waiting for some new freedom set down on paper; and of the motley crew, not one is sufficiently wise, or strong enough to make head or tail of the complex situation. Barricades are thrown up, artillery plays upon the mobs, and general blood-letting follows; thousands of lives are snuffed out, to be charged up as advance sacrifices for political cohesion. Hapsburger against Hohenzollern, Protestant against Catholic, Ultramontanes beholding the reign of Anti-Christ; Guelphs and Wittelsbachs, protesting their own peculiar and ancient lineage against self-seeking latter-day upstart aristocrats!

¶ And the problem grew darker as the months went by.

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¶ You may read till you are dizzy and then stand back and try to get a bird’s-eye view of the complicated quarrels of the Diet; the vagaries of Frankfort or Berlin; the brawls of this poet, that student, editor, publicist, or princeling; with soldiers of fortune hovering around waiting, like vultures that have already a whiff of the carrion, from afar. Instead of a bird’s-eye, the incoherent mass of details comes piecemeal, and you get the toad’s-eye view;—till we apply the simple idea that behind it all is elemental human nature, with politics as a mere frame to the picture.

¶ Look on Bismarck at this moment as one dealing with forces of human nature, the clash of many minds, ending by dominating over one and all, years hence, through his own inherent sagacity as a human being against other and weaker members of his kind—and we get at once a significant conception of the greatness of Bismarck’s mentality, also of his innate craft, enabling him to triumph over a thousand oblique forces, many of them firmly entrenched, and from a logical point fully as defensible as were his own peculiar conceptions.

¶ It was not, after all, what this man or that prince or some other ruler thought, but what Bismarck thought, that turned the balance.

A hundred instances could be offered to show that the men Bismarck was fighting had the better part of the argument, as mere argument; but between opinion and making that opinion stick is a wide gulf—however logical may be the argument.

¶ Bismarck was for the ensuing twenty years pictured as a noisy disturber, but he was shrewd, very shrewd. He could call a man “liar,” “thief,” “scoundrel,” “impostor,” in virile speechmaking, or could pass him up with a shrug, all the while keeping a cold eye on the main chance, and in the end getting his own way because he was strong enough to get his way—and that is all the logic there is in the situation.

### 31

This miracle he did indeed perform; he turned back the political clock to feudal days and gloriously set up “Divine-right,” in the face of the intensely modern cry, “Let the People Rule!”

¶ Bismarck’s amazing career affords a classical instance of what a strong man can do, even against the very spirit of his time!

So much the worse for that Zeitgeist! The jade had to come to him, at last, completely subdued, as in the “Taming of the Shrew.”

¶ As King’s Man, Bismarck now preached “Divine-right” in an age of democratic ideas.

Thrones were falling everywhere; the inflammatory ideas of the French Revolution had wrested from monarchs the form, if not the substance, of constitutional liberties for the masses.

The people were clamoring for they knew not what; at any rate for some new experiment in the quest for happiness, which they believed could be attained through new forms of government. Bismarck fought the new order, and as late as A. D. 1870, restated the seemingly worn-out doctrine of “Divine-right.” How did he accomplish this political miracle?

¶ A strong leader, by tireless repetition of some idea, finally brings about faith in that idea. It does not follow that this leader must necessarily be wiser than the masses. It is always his will to power, rather than the inherent validity of his ideas.

¶ First, he stands alone with his idea, whatever it may be. Finally, one person is convinced? This is the beginning. Well, if one, why not two, then ten, then a hundred, or a thousand, or ten thousand?

¶ And so the wonder grows.

¶ At last, our stubborn man with the idea is believed! He now has his long-awaited day to prove the force of his contribution to human welfare.

¶ There is a species of religious glamour over the old man’s basic conception of respect for kings. The word king, for Bismarck, spells faith in discipline, obedience, loyalty to chosen leader—as against excesses sure to follow in turning over the Government to the rabble, according to the idea of the French Revolution. There is this condition to be made here: that Bismarck undoubtedly leaned as far in one direction as the old-line French Revolutionists did in another; Bismarck was an extremist no less than Danton, Marat, Robespierre. But there is also this distinction, in Bismarck’s favor: He was a great constructive statesman and the French agitators turned out to be but assassins and political fools.

¶ We spare no one in this analysis, neither Bismarck nor Robespierre. Therefore, we boldly, here and now, call your attention to a certain strange fallacy in all political ideals.

¶ The people expect some new form, or change of government, to make them happy and free. The machinery of legislation is the thing. It is proclaimed the great leveler.

¶ Thus men eagerly try all manner of political enterprises, believing that ultimately in some plan of government, social equality will result. In the light of the anomaly that in spite of our efforts, we persist in reverence for “the good old” days, as against the iniquities of the moment, it is clear that either we deceive ourselves, or are forever wandering about in a fool’s paradise.

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¶ Bismarck at least does not justify cynical damnation. He was intensely human, and so was the King of Prussia. It is playing with race prejudice to call Prussia, after the French fashion, “That robber Prussia.”

¶ Nations act as do men individually, are swayed by forms of pride, passion and prejudice. If every nation that robbed or stole should return its loot of land, to whom would it ultimately go?

¶ The United States would not, at least, now be in possession of California. But for that matter, the Spaniards stole her from the Indians, and the Indians from the Aztecs, and the Aztecs from we know not whom. Always then, history justifies herself with the will to power—as manifested by the strongest!

¶ Take it by and large, this miracle he did indeed perform: He turned back the political clock of Time to Feudal days, and gloriously set up “Divine-right,” in the face of the intensely modern cry, “Let the people rule!”

Secret chamber in this strange man’s heart; the master at work  
for United Germany.

¶ The great Bismarck, during his long and turbulent career, as a rule refused to remain loyal to party affiliations.

The moment a party-theory no longer seemed expedient, the Prussian Junker reckoned neither on political friendship nor on political antipathy.

His whole life, he was engaged in endeavoring to persuade others to adopt his policies, regardless of the fact that opposed policies might be supported by as much if not even by more logic. Bismarck always justified his opportunism by saying that his sense of duty was superior to his private feelings of love or hate; however, his attitude was uniformly directed for or against conditions in proportion as, to his mind, they were charged with good or evil for his beloved Prussia.

Although one of the world's greatest among amiable despots, Bismarck always held himself to be at once free from prejudice and under the hand of God. Even on this high ground, it would still be easy to show (by many startling episodes in Bismarck's career) well-nigh innumerable changes of front that, to the average mind, must pass as inconsistencies.

¶ Get clearly in mind, then, this giant's political attitudes of gross contradiction, as between promise and performance—otherwise we will miss the essence of Bismarck's genius as a statesman and his peculiar glory as a man large enough to stand beside Cæsar.

¶ Now here is the master-key, unlocking every door in the secret chambers of his heart: Bismarck, all his long life, kept himself in power by his consummate knowledge of human nature.

Shakespeare dealt with men, on paper, making them march this way or that at the behest of his immortal genius.

Bismarck dealt with men in the open arena of life, had no way of controlling their actions except by the inspiration of his own practical, constructive genius.

It is one thing to control a man's actions, on paper; wholly another—and a greater triumph, is it not?—to master man's ways in the market place, making those around you do not necessarily what they think they ought, but do what you wish.

Thus in some senses Bismarck appears in the figure of the superman; for there is absolutely no question that on many occasions he forced strong men to do his bidding, squarely against their individual preferences!

¶ This huge bulk, this deep-drinking, gluttonous Bismarck, this world-defying voice, raged and stormed through his eighty-three years of life—making little men’s souls shrink in fear—and ever the essence of his genius was for alignments with men, or against them, using this human clay ultimately for his own peculiar ends, as the potter molds the mud. He knew too that despite the old German family and tribal feuds, the Germans are brothers; standing apart it is true at this hour, fighting each other; yet the day is to come when Bismarck will triumph in his Germany, one and united. It mattered not, he would make friends with his deadly enemy, if such a step seemed advisable to carry out that cherished plan for a free and united Germany.

If he could not bend men to his will by logic, he tried flattery, and if that failed he threatened war, and the war came, too, but not till Bismarck was good and ready. He took his own time, made preparations that defied disaster, then moved forward and swept his enemies off the face of the earth.

¶ Thus, there was always evidences of peculiar precaution, even in Bismarck’s boldest strokes. He never forgot himself, never did things by halves. It might take a week or a year, or ten years, that mattered not to Bismarck; in the end, he would bring his wishes to pass. He never courted failure by hastening with some incomplete plan; but with the certainty of Fate, Bismarck abided his time. Obligated to surmount tremendous obstacles, often set back, in the end he carried everything by force before him.

¶ We are here reminded of those vast fields of snow seemingly in a state of dead rest, in the higher Alps, through many winters still secretly gaining bulk and encroaching inch by inch all unobserved upon the doomed valley below; then, at the dropping of a mere pebble, the ice begins to slide, nor does the dread avalanche pause for the sobs of the dying. So behind Bismarck’s amazing preparedness his oft-times long deferred but inevitable destruction of his enemies seems to be something that he borrows from the avalanche. It is at once massive and inexorable, the power given to but few master-spirits in the history of the world.

¶ In political acumen, in administrative and executive capacity Bismarck measures up with Cæsar. The smallest facts about such as Bismarck are of

more than ordinary interest. Too much time cannot be spent on this great character, in an endeavor to understand the secret springs of his mighty powers.

Aside from the mere biographic outlines of his career, the man presents, in himself, a study that deserves all the thought that can be put on it—in an effort to set forth the realism of his mighty life.

33

Bismarck shows himself master at quelling a meeting, checking a mob, stamping out a rebellion, and heading off a king.

¶ And after the Frankfort radicals found themselves unable to make Bismarck pick the German crown “out of the gutter,” they turned and tried to establish—what do you think?—a republic!

By Autumn, the forces of Revolution spent themselves and Metternich drove the rebels before him, as the hurricane blows chaff. Order was re-established in Vienna and in the Italian states.

The uncompromising Metternich restored the “Old Diet,” originally ordered by the Congress of Vienna, 1815, as the one authentic source of political legitimacy for the clashing German states. It was a clever Austrian by-play.

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¶ We now return to Berlin. In May, the blood-letting was over, but no prospect of political reform seemed immediately possible.

Bismarck began using what might be called underground methods to head off the demand for that long-promised democratic Constitution.

¶ Already the King began to see more clearly. It struck him that this brazen-faced giant might be useful, later on. Had not Bismarck said in his now widely quoted speech: “Soon or late, the God who directs the battle will cast his iron dice!” It gave His Majesty courage!

¶ The King looked to right and left, dissolved one Diet after the other, till he had one to suit him. Otto nudged his King. That momentary weakness of marching with the democrats was something His Majesty wished to forget!

¶ Bismarck's position must be clearly set forth. He was no mere reactionary, brandishing his fists at new leaders, who favored the common people. He knew all about this liberty, equality and fraternity business, from across the Vosges—and he despised the cure-all.

Here is the idea in a few words: Bismarck was not fighting political liberalism, as an end; instead, he protested with his giant's strength at the implied destruction of the Old Regime.

¶ He laid the revolt largely to the bureaucratic system, which he characterized as “The animal with the pen!”

He stood fast by his good old Prussian dogma, as outlined in “I am a Prussian!” paralleling “Rule Britannia,” and other national hymns.

The song is sung with wild martial vigor, akin to the furious appeal of ancient Polish melodies:

I am a Prussian! see my colors gleaming—  
The black-white standard floats before me free;  
For Freedom's rights, my fathers' heart-blood streaming,  
Such, mark ye, mean the black and white to me!  
Shall I then prove a coward? I'll e'er be marching forward!  
Though day be dull, though sun shine bright on me,  
I am a Prussian, will a Prussian be!

Sixteen years later, when endeavoring with all his strength to bring about German National unity, his “Prussians we are and Prussians we will remain” was used against him with mocking effect.

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¶ By October, nerves were steadied. The King sent Gen. Wangrel to occupy Berlin and disperse the radicals—with cannon, if necessary.

That speech has the right sound; but William has before this veered around many times, like a weather-vane, and may he not shift again?

For the instant, he stood for the Old Regime and Divine-right.

¶ The following month William appointed Brandenburg, an old-line Prussian aristocrat, Prime Minister. The siege of Berlin was declared; the Assembly protested but finally gave in. Along in December, without consulting the Assembly, William invited the states to send delegates to Berlin and made an alliance of three kings—Prussia, Saxony and Hanover.

¶ What is going to happen next?

34

At last the people have a share in their government, but Bismarck sees to it that the radicals are not favored.

¶ William's "Tri-regal alliance" failed as fail it must on account of jealousies. Then Wuerttemberg replied with a "quadruple" affair, composed of herself, Hanover, Bavaria and Saxony, side by side, under a constitution acceptable to Austria. Quite a stroke, that.

In turn, William set up his Erfurt parliament, March 20, 1850. Bismarck was fast becoming a "practical politician." Through deft stacking of the cards, the radical delegates drew only the low cards, and the Kreuz-Zeitung crowd and other ultra-conservatives were well supplied with aces and kings.

Bismarck naturally urged more concessions to the Prussian spirit; he tried also to muzzle the press gallery, calling newspapers "fire-bellows of democracy."

Later, he even started newspapers for his political purposes. In this he was not inconsistent, merely logical; his attitude was based on the fact that, at this particular time, he felt called on to fight hostile editors; but made terms wherever it seemed worth while. Such was the man's discriminating glance.

¶ The Erfurt "tongue tournament" Bismarck called the whole affair. He did not oppose the King's position in this matter, because, as Bismarck said, "it makes no difference." He spoke contemptuously of the mystical high-flown speeches. Its "Constitution" was quickly forgotten!

¶ Bismarck's course would have been made somewhat easier had he not openly refused to sit with President Simpson, at the Erfurt convention,

denouncing the President as “a converted Jew!”

¶ The convention broke up, to meet again in Berlin, where a Prussian Constitution was drawn up.

¶ Events moved rapidly. Austria now stood forth for resumption of authority by the Old Diet, established by the Congress of Vienna, while from Berlin one heard of a plan for a “restricted union.”

Talk, talk, talk. Finally, in September, 1850, Austria invited Prussia to a seat in the Old Diet. Prussia refused, and the cat was out of the bag.

It meant that German Unity must come through Prussian supremacy and Austrian humiliation—otherwise all might well be forgotten.

But Austria was by no means so easily disposed of. There was much life and fighting blood in her yet!

¶ Bismarck’s opinions during his years of preparation were, on the whole, unchanging, though often presented in different dress. In 1848, he bitterly objected to the King’s softness in recalling his troops from Berlin, instead of definitely crushing the March rebellions; in ’49, he stood steadily beside the King in refusing the people’s crown, from Frankfort; in 1850, he deplored the Prussian diplomatic defeat at Olmuetz, but swallowed his mortification because he saw that Prussia was not ready to strike; “and he thereon assisted in reconciling his party to a policy which he deplored.”

This situation convinced Bismarck that the first duty of a Prussian statesman is to strengthen the army, “that the King’s opinions can be upheld at home; likewise backed by the mailed fist, Prussian authority will be respected abroad.”

¶ “My idea,” he says in his Memoirs, “was that we ought to prepare for war, but at the same time to send an ultimatum to Austria, either to accept our conditions in the German question, or to look out for our attack.”

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¶ Thus out of the Revolution of 1848, Prussia emerged with a written Constitution, establishing a legislative assembly and giving the people a share in their government.

¶ Bismarck's inconsistencies? Yes, by the score, but he was playing a deep game of politics, for his King, and for his beloved German Unity. Always, you must understand that Bismarck scorned the political Millennium alleged to have been brought in by the French Revolution; with the political ideas from over the Vosges Bismarck would have nothing to do. That old war-cry "the people" made him sick! He believed in discipline and not in mob-rule. But he would not rush unprepared into the war.

¶ It is a fact that, in 1850, Prussia had cause for war far more just than that on which she seized in 1866. But Bismarck made his famous anti-war speech!

¶ "Woe to the statesman who does not look about for a reason for the war that will be valid, when the war is over!" were his astonishing sentiments.

¶ What he really meant was that Prussia was not just then ready to fight; hence, he painted war as detestable; later on, however, we shall see how he looks upon war, when Prussia is ready!

¶ Prussia, through her political endorsement of the people (1850) did not suddenly become a Parliamentary state, despite William's new Constitution. Broad privileges were granted, but Prussia remained an absolute monarchy. While there was henceforth to be a certain restricted cooperation between Crown and Crowd, the Divine-right theory that had come down through the ages was not weakened or its authority compromised; in short, by conciliating certain hostile popular elements, led by fire-breathing first-cousins of the French Revolutionists, a large part of the hated Liberal programme was done away with, in turn consolidating the power of the Prussian kings.

¶ This situation also defines the political evolution essential before Germany could become a Nation. Despite various historians, Germany could not at this hour have proclaimed herself a Republic.

¶ Bismarck realized more and more, as he grew in experience and power, that the Germans were sick unto death of political experiments; they wanted unity, as a matter of course, but by unity they really meant a head to the National house; a strong father, to advise, protect and punish his children. The parallel extends to the German idea of National rule; thoroughness,

efficiency, discipline take the place of political expediency, job-holding for the mere sake of job-holding; in church, in state and in family life the idea of a great central Authority alone satisfies the German mind.

¶ Thus, the German conception of a Nation is intensely practical; the state is not merely an aggregation of office-holders, but the state is primarily a vast institution, efficiently administered by the best minds, and these servants of the people are instantly responsible to the great central authority, whose power of removal for cause may be exercised as the father corrects his children, for the good of the family.

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¶ To these fundamental ideas, based on the soul of the German people, Bismarck now addressed himself for many years to come. He knew what the German race demands; his analysis was psychologically correct, although few patriots of '48 could see it that way.

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¶ As his years of apprenticeship pass, Bismarck carries on his mission in a new way: is decided to lead Prussia to the conquest of Germany; is done with political platform-making except in so far as the alignments of politics lend themselves to his final purpose.

¶ With political instinct for gigantic projects carried out with realism, the King's Man now determined the bold outlines of his National policy.

He did not worry about details: these he would fill in, as time passed; but he would on one side hold fast to German National unity and on the other side would sustain Prussian kingcraft as the very voice of God for Germany; one of Bismarck's strongest ideas was that the King of Prussia was the vicegerent of Christ on this earth. In short, Germany must come through Prussian supremacy, and incidentally exalt Prussian supremacy, otherwise it might not come at all.

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¶ To clear William's Divine-right once for all, so far as our story goes, let it be known that German historians have always laid stress on the respect of Teutonic tribesmen, from ancient days, for the leadership of a strong fighting man. Tacitus, the earliest writer of importance, detailing the lives of

Teutonic tribes, sets forth that it was the custom of the German warriors in times of crises to select their strong man and endow him with the power of rulership; looking to him in turn to lead the tribe to war against the common enemy. This reliance upon kings who were also powerful war lords continuing through the centuries, satisfied the fundamental aspirations of the Germans in their will to military power; but as the generations passed the old story of human nature was proved anew, that is to say, what begins as a “privilege” ends as a “demanded right.” On the side of the kings, was now proclaimed more loftily than ever that monarchy is the voice of God.

# **BOOK THE FOURTH**

## **Blood is Thicker than Water**

### **CHAPTER X**

#### **Socrates in Politics**

Perfecting himself in political intrigue and in vituperative debating, also in caustic letter-writing; all is necessary grist for the Bismarck mill.

¶ We come now to the year 1851.

¶ The entrance of Emperor Francis Joseph, at this time, on the politico-military stage of Austria was followed by still another era of political reaction; the Liberal Austrian constitution, wrested during the riots, was revoked; as were also those Democratic constitutions pledged for almost every German state.

¶ The Germanic Confederation, with political legitimacy vested in the curious Frankfort Parliament, again took the field. It was an Austrian plan to get the advantage of Prussia.

¶ “If I do not do well, you can recall me,” Bismarck told William. The King decided in his extremity to hazard the appointment of the unknown Bismarck, as Prussian delegate to Frankfort. William remembered those bold “White Saloon” speeches.

¶ Now get this straight: Bismarck was a land-owner of ancient days; estates won by the sword had been in the Bismarck family for 600 years; nay, the Bismarcks traced their knighthood to the far-distant year 1200. The force of this appeal in the blood was at once profound and irresistible.

¶ Bismarck to the day he died was always an Alt Mark vassal to his liege lord and master, the Margrave of Brandenburg, the King of Prussia. So much is clear.

Bismarck was also much more than this. We repeat, he was a leader of men. The King of Prussia could command old families in scores if not in hundreds, to support the Ancient Regime, socially and politically, but where find that rare man, a born leader for the cause?

¶ Duty and self-interest prompted Bismarck to hold up the royal hand, but after all is said, the vital force of Bismarck’s endorsement was found in the man’s genius for leadership. It was not so much the cause as it was the man. For had Bismarck gone over to the other side the history of Germany would have been vastly different.

¶ This Frankfort parliament, a hydra-headed political creation dedicated to liberty, was in secret doing the purposes of Austrian plutocracy and reaction; it was to be the last stand of the Old Regime, against Democracy.

But it was necessary to move with cautious foot. The sappers were at work under the thrones, and at any instant the mines might be touched off.

¶ Bismarck thus, quite by accident, finds himself the representative of William IV, in Frankfort Diet or Bundestag, the political Punch and Judy show originally set up by Metternich, in 1815, to rule the quarreling thirty-nine German states. Their intense individualism was such that Metternich, who dominated at the Congress of Vienna, after the downfall of Napoleon, did not know what was best.

All other parts of Europe, and even the islands of the seas had been reassigned, but no human being could tell what to do with the turbulent thirty-nine German states.

¶ “Here, then, was a mysterious ‘Court of Chance,’ where things dragged on for years, a political circumlocution office, hopelessly bound by its own interminable seals, parchments and red tape.”

The secret object was to do nothing that would not favor Austria; with the idea that, in the end, the devious course of politics would bring Austria final control of the German lands, everywhere.

¶ It was in this absurd Parliament that Bismarck was to perfect himself in political intrigue. Frankfort made no organic laws; these were mysteriously settled at Vienna; the meetings of the Diet were held in secret; at best, the voting was along lines that gave to Austria and not to Prussia the deciding voice.

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¶ It did not take Bismarck long to find that at Frankfort the King of Prussia was but a cipher. Furthermore, what raised Bismarck’s ire was the impotence of the Parliament. Frankfort had been unable to put down the blood-letting of ’48, and Bismarck detested weakness of any kind, mental, physical or spiritual.

He was, and always remained, a profound extremist; but his position was tempered by massive common sense.

¶ The world dearly loves a flunkey—and flunkeyism was universal at Frankfort.

The many members fluttered about in gay military dress, wore stars of sham authority, gold crosses, medals dangling from bright ribbons.

Names prefixed by count, duke, margrave—crests on the coach door and Latin mottoes—hyphenated family names, indicated all manner of political marriages de convenience. Bestarred gentlemen, one and all, if you please!

¶ Bismarck wrote home soon enough, for he was choking with anger, not on account of the aristocratic airs of Frankfort (for Bismarck dearly loved a title), but choking with anger because his beloved King of Prussia was a Nobody in this crazy Parliament. “I find them a drowsy, insipid set of creatures, only endurable when I appear among them as so much pepper,” are his sarcastic words.

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¶ Had Bismarck not been a diplomat, he might have made his mark as a radical writer. His letters very often show almost anarchistic dissent. At vulgar characterization, no man could outsnarl Bismarck.

Also this Pomeranian giant’s correspondence at times fairly stinks with frightful smells. When in these black moods, he released nasty fumes around the heads of rivals.

We are surprised, likewise, to find growing in the mire of his thoughts, here and there, violets worthy of the poet Freiligrath. The man’s power to be poetical or insulting, as he willed, is indeed as strange as it is rare.

¶ Bismarck’s pen pictures of fellow ambassadors—how they flirted, danced, drank to excess, their maudlin ideas of government, although regarding themselves as veritable political seers—show the powerful satirical and analytical side of Bismarck’s brain.

And although Bismarck mocked with sardonic immensity his colleagues, yet with an under-play worthy of the Devil, our Otto proceeded to make

these owlish and absurd gentlemen puppets in the hands of Prussia.

¶ Alas, time does not permit us to set forth the charming letters Bismarck writes home. There is that moonlight swim in the Danube; the interview with Metternich, the old war-horse of kings; the gypsy ball and the weird fiddling gypsies; his visits to robber-infested parts of Hungary, making the trip in part in a peasant's cart, "loaded pistols in the straw at our feet, and near by a company of lanciers carrying cocked carbines, against the imminent visits of robber bands."

He describes how he visited Ostend, going sea-bathing at that famous resort; rambling on through Holland, smoking a long clay pipe; then on to Sweden for the shooting; next to Russia for wild boars.

¶ His letters often have a lyrical quality, telling of waterfalls of the Pyrenees, the fascinating fairyland of Mendelssohn, dark-eyed Spanish beauties, open-air concerts, London garroters, old musty houses with peculiar smells, or what you will. Bismarck dwells often on eating and drinking; and in one letter from Paris speaks of a dinner at which he drank St. Julien, Lafitte Branne, Mouton, Pichon, Larose, Latour, Margaux, and Arneillac!

¶ These, and hundreds of other letters comprise charming interludes between black moods of political intrigue, wherein he used his vitriolic pen to lampoon his beribboned, bejeweled farce-comedy fellow-ambassadors.

¶ "Germany is tied together with red tape," writes Bismarck at this stage of his political apprenticeship, at Frankfort; and he hit the nail on the head.

¶ Promise yourself a delightful month reading Bismarck's four octavo volumes telling of his change of heart toward Austria, as shown little by little in Frankfort dispatches, documents and proceedings, interspersed with satirical stories in Bismarck's extremely individualistic style. Throughout, you receive glimpses of the man's great mind. No less an authority than the Herr Prof. von Sybel tells us of these Bismarck writings, bearing on the formation of the German Empire: "They possess a classic worth, unsurpassed by the best German prose writers of any age."

Applying Socratic methods to game of politics; Bismarck's bold and masterful preparations for German unity.

¶ Now then, during these years 1851-'61, Bismarck was doing two things: Perfecting himself in the dastardly art of political intrigue; likewise, he was going about like a modern Socrates, talking with men of high or low degree everywhere; studying what might be called the human nature side of the German problem of unity and nationality; studying it, not in an aimless way, but to mould men to his own gigantic political ends, when the right time arrived.

¶ Thus, with the stiff wind of adverse political affairs straight in his teeth, remember that Bismarck's great strength was always his knowledge of men.

During the years of which we now write he made it his business to visit the various petty German courts, to gaze on princelings who would be kings; busied himself with court gossip till he found out the inner political jealousies.

Thus fortified, Bismarck knew the one man or woman to touch in the various parts of Germany, to help along Prussian ambition—when the supreme moment to strike had come at last.

¶ This supreme moment he awaited with diabolical patience through the slow-going years.

No human being could hasten or retard Bismarck's ultimate victory; for he remained the one truly masterful man in Europe.

He sat at gambling tables, he wheedled secrets from the prostitutes of princes; he stood by and egged on human dog-fights; he took part in church-rows about doctrines; he had inside glimpses of the venality of Austrian kept-press-writers, "the scum of the earth," he calls them, "who sell opinions as the petty merchant sells butter and eggs." Bismarck seemed to be the only man in Europe who really was able to grasp the solution of the German problem.

¶ Also, the granite soil of his heart is shown again and again. What a hater he was!

For example, refusing to go to Mass for the repose of Schwarzenberg's soul, Bismarck gave the reason: "He is the man who said: 'I will abuse Prussia and then abolish her.'"

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¶ You see, our Otto is one of those uncomfortable Germans who in his own amazing personality expresses the National ideal of earnestness; Otto is frightfully in earnest in his cups, or over his half dozen eggs for breakfast—as you please. He frightens timid souls.

¶ His temper few men could curb, much less sit calmly by and receive without retiring in bad order. Incident after incident at Frankfort might be cited, but what is the use?

¶ With fiendish earnestness Bismarck plotted to break the bones of two democratic editors whose writings threw the Prussian mastiff into periodical black rages. Bismarck justified his cruelty by insisting that "bounds must be set for these infamous press scribblings." He means that attacks on the Divine-right of kings must at all hazards be choked off. He always hated journalists, called the press "a poisoned well," and as for himself he is on record to this effect: "I always approached the ink-bottle with great caution."

¶ But mark this well: Our Otto, in his turn, craftily used the press to present the smooth side of his own political intriguing; indeed he had his very valuable Prussian press bureau; and we have authority for the statement that the Bismarckian idea of journalism was to have "hireling scribes well in hand, men who stabbed like masked assassins and mined like mobs."

¶ During the decade we call Bismarck's apprenticeship, 1851-'61, he was thus engaged: 1851, envoy at Frankfort Diet; 1852, Prussian ambassador at Vienna, during the illness of Count Arnim; St. Petersburg, 1859; Paris, 1862.

Thus, he had an opportunity to get acquainted with all the leading diplomatists on the European chessboard, to study them in their own haunts, and to perfect himself in playing with pitch without blackening his hands.

¶ Bismarck told Francis Joseph, "I am firm to put an end to the attacks on Prussia in the Austrian press!"

This boldness won the Emperor, and in confidence he remarked to a friend: “Ah, that I had a man of Bismarck’s audacity.”

¶ Also, he told Joseph, “Prussia will never yield in the matter of the commercial union, with Austria.”

The Emperor remarked on Bismarck’s youth—37 years—and was much impressed. “Bismarck had the wisdom of a man of 70!” was Joseph’s comment.

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¶ You begin to get a clearer idea of what this thing called patriotism means? Nay, do not scoff at our Otto; he is only carrying on the old, old game called reaching out after place and power; is doing exactly what you would do yourself, if you had the will to rise to the mountain-tops where live the Bismarcks and the Cæsars.

Mask after mask Bismarck used to cover his real intent, from 1847 to 1870, the long years he was scheming to establish a German Empire; and he did his work well; more than that cannot be said of any man. Therefore, his fame is secure in the Valhalla of Mankind.

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¶ Here is an amusing bit, showing the craft and cunning of our master: When Napoleon the Little, through his coup d’etat made himself Emperor of France, December 2, 1851, and while Frankfort’s Parliament was trying to decide “what” to say about it, officially, a French journal in Frankfort printed an enthusiastic endorsement of the new Emperor.

Bismarck suspected that it came straight from Prussia’s hated rival. Seeking out the proprietor of the newspaper Bismarck congratulated him “on close relations with Napoleon.” The owner, taken off his guard, replied: “You are wrong; it came from Vienna!” This was exactly what Bismarck wished to ascertain, and his suspicions were verified.

To make assurance doubly sure, Bismarck leaving the journalist, did a little detective work. In the garden, from a secret place, he could see the French minister’s house. In half an hour, he spied the journalist ringing the French minister’s doorbell.

“Ah, ha!” was Bismarck’s comment.

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¶ What did this giant not do to help his beloved Prussia, and to humiliate his detested Austria?

One day, he found a fiery anti-Prussian review in an Austrian member’s desk. He thought nothing of ransacking a desk. Richelieu had a system of espionage unrivaled in history. Bismarck in this respect is the Cardinal’s close second. Each man regarded himself as a patriot. Bismarck was obstinately loyal to Prussia. Her aggrandizement became henceforth his life’s passion. Nay, Bismarck did not ask that the member be dismissed! That would be punishment too coarse. Instead, Bismarck decided that the best revenge would be to print the address piecemeal and thus keep the member in suspense;—something like twisting the cords a little each day till the victim meets strangulation in frightful form.

¶ During the eight years that Bismarck was a member of the freakish Frankfort Diet set up by Austria to “rule” the quarreling thirty-nine German states, Bismarck, the Prussian giant, came to see the necessity of controlling the press.

¶ Frankfort stupidities decided Bismarck to appeal directly to the common people (whom also he politically despised!) and hence we find that he now meets Austria’s hired journalists by urging the utmost press-freedom. “In this,” says Lowe, “Bismarck was an opportunist,” as he often was. “I learned something,” he used to say when his enemies accused him of shifting ground.

¶ Bismarck now demanded “open discussion” of German policies; saw that hired press agents vigorously set forth the Prussian side. In this connection it is interesting to draw a parallel between Bismarck’s ideas of journalism, in 1852, and the American conception (1915).

¶ “In the press, truth will not come to light through the mists conjured into life by the mendacity of subsidized newspapers, until the material wherewith to oppose all the mysteries of the Bund (Frankfort) shall be supplied to the Prussian press, with unrestricted liberty to use it.”

¶ This idea is precisely what extremists like Roosevelt set up (1915), battling against “trusts,” endeavoring to make them audit their books on the curbstone! So, what is new under the sun?

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Ox-like patience of Prussian peasantry sorely tried—The incessant call for the strong man to end political miseries.

¶ As the result of all this deep study, Bismarck came to the conclusion that Prussia in the great moral idea of a United Germany could win, only by fighting Austria. We might as well get at the core of this thing, in short order. The complications are amazing; but the more we probe into Bismarck’s gigantic problem, the larger grows the stature of our modern German giant.

¶ From this time till the hour of his death, many years later, Bismarck remains the one great central will power of Germany, the source of political legitimacy, dealing out with his brawny hands favors where they would do the most good, setting men up or casting them down; and in the end, through a series of profound political combinations the inner currents of which to this hour no human being has been able to chart and classify, our strong man at last is to set up his United Germany, placing the imperial crown on William’s head in the palace of the French kings, at Versailles.

¶ Oh, how unforgivable all this is to the French. Not only that defeat should come in ’70, but that the palace of the Bourbons, costing some \$200,000,000, should be used in solemn mockery by the super-man Bismarck, as the stage-setting whereby to complete the imperial German holiday! Centuries must pass before this, the profound mortification to French feelings, is forgotten. That is to say, the worst thing you can do to a man is to hurt his pride. Had the German Empire come to pass without wounding French pride (not to add the French pocketbook) the French would long since have gone on their way in peace, rejoicing in German prosperity. Why not? The French are Christians, not the slightest doubt of that; and as Christians do not envy the German ox, ass or maid-servant. Indeed, that is as it should be in a Christian world.

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¶ At home, up in Prussia, Bismarck's sullen glances surveyed Europe afar, and in the '50's, of which we are writing, this is his problem:

He sees Germany still a mere crazy-quilt of clashing states. There are warring ecclesiastical barons, free cities, petty princelings; Catholic Bavaria against Protestant Prussia; nobles against the people; the people against themselves, divided by God knows what controversies, sane or insane; poets writing their hymns of liberty then dying unheroically by a brickbat flung wildly in some street brawl; jurists trying to hammer together some constitution that will not be blown to pieces by the first explosion of gunpowder;—and all failing! With pugnacious Prussia on the North, with rapacious Austria on the South, with insolent Bavaria hanging off on the Southwest, and the others fighting tooth and nail for the land, that will eventually fall to the strongest—the German problem became an exhibition over many years of the noblest, likewise of the darkest, passions of the human breast.

Three dreadful wars were to be fought, 80,000 lives were to be sacrificed, during twenty years of turbulence; and in the blood-drenched interim various monarchs are to make a plaything of the thirty-nine disunited German states.

¶ But the thing had to be gone through with. The historical evolution could not be hastened, although it was often set back. Sick Germany had many a hideous nightmare before the fever passed.

Convention after convention, diet after diet, contending monarchs using any plea that will give the upper hand to Prussia or to Austria, or over princes and whimsical knights, from the one who holds his sovereignty because his ancestor had been a king's barber, to another who in a lucky moment had found the queen's lace handkerchief, and after that lived like a parasite on the land;—all these high contracting parties must be sent to the dump heap and the soil sprinkled with precious German brothers' blood, mingling freely with vile blood, before the new political crop can grow.

¶ Between 1750 and 1870 the German problem had been settled over and over again, but was not finally settled till by Bismarck's blood and iron. This means in Frederick the Great's own obstinate way!

¶ We have heard from political fanatics, poets, lawyers, kings, thieves, church-people; all manner of men and not a few women have babbled and cackled; and there has been blood-letting, generation after generation, all up and down the Rhine, the Main, the Spree and the Elbe; then there would follow a lull brought about by some great Charter of Liberty framed by the Liberals, at their latest conference; and when it all went up in smoke, we would hear again that the Prussian government had its own plan, which, quite naturally Austria would never consent to advance.

¶ Indeed, the ox-like patience of the German people, with their great moral dream of “German National faith,” was strongly tried.

¶ It remained for the obstinate spirit of Frederick, through Bismarck, to find the only way, by blood and iron. Sentimentalists should not shed tears. It is no less an authority than Marshal Davout, the great French soldier who had for his watchword, “The world belongs to the obstinate.”

Was not the Great Frederick, in his youth, an idealist, and did he not write a touching essay on the evils of absolutism? But he ended by embracing the tyranny of kings—even as you and I, if we have the power.

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¶ At the very outset, then, let it be made clear that it is short-sighted to call Bismarck Prussian tyrant. What would you, please? Cakes for the child, when the child cries? That has often been tried, and always in vain.

Next time, the child wants two cakes instead of one. It will not do.

Frederick was dubbed the “last of the tyrants.” We are sorry if this were true.

Tyrants are exceedingly useful. Nay, we are glad to report that Frederick is not the last.

They still exist in every family, village, city, state, and nation.

For the most part, they exercise their tyranny in petty exactions, with no big plan such as distinguishes the dominating man from the little fellow with the mean temper and his childish ambition to rule, let us say, his dog or his wife.

¶ There is something pathetic in the incessant call this earth has for a strong man. It was so in Germany, and Bismarck was that man.

Cæsar was assassinated because he was said to be a tyrant, yet after his death for 400 years Rome sought in vain for a man strong enough to hold the Empire from going to pieces.

¶ Is there not something puzzling in the devotion of a people to their amiable oppressor? They may rebel against absolutism, as Bavarian hates Prussian, but if the political despot is strong enough to win against foreign foes, as Bismarck did at Koeniggraetz, Sedan and Gravelotte, the people kiss the hand that smites. What greater tests of loyalty do you ask of human nature?

¶ Before 1866, he was without doubt the “best-hated” man in Europe, lampooned, ridiculed, even the victim of attempted assassinations.

At Frankfort mothers sang their children to sleep by the following ditty:

Sleep, darling, sleep,  
Be always gentle and good,  
Or Vogel von Falkenstein will come  
And carry you away in a sack;  
Bismarck too will come after him,  
And he eats up little children.

¶ Yet within a few years, in his character as Prussian Prime Minister, who against the will of the people achieved the greatness of Prussia, and thereby made possible United Germany, no adulation was too great for our self-same Bismarck, formerly sneered at, despised, vilified, and stoned.

So much for the value of public opinion. What then does it all mean?

Bismarck made his 30-years’ battle against the people and won; and the people, strange to say, turned a mental somersault and now saw no inconsistency in cheering Bismarck, as liberator.

¶ How strange this sounds!

Here is the Man of the Hour, depicted in all his naked realism.

¶ This amazing German problem called for a wise despot, to confront and overawe weak men, gathered in German parliaments in which there were worlds of cackling, but no wisdom.

The curse of Germany had been too much speechmaking, too much poetry, too much dreaming. The babble went on from 1815 to 1866, at least—fifty years!

¶ The times called for a hard-headed, dogmatic, tyrannical man with a plan large enough to subdue the thirty-nine warring parts, and weld the whole into a mighty Empire.

This meant a tyrant of the massive Frederick the Great type. It called for a man erect and proud, keen of speech, with absolute self-confidence, who in a pinch was master at underhand dealing, and who could deliberately use harshness and malice.

The man had to understand the delicate art of flattery, and at other times be blustering and outspoken.

The roar of cannon should make him as cold as ice, but underneath his frozen exterior he should have a fiery nature, full of craft and guile, like a Gascon.

He should have a torrent of cutting words, his eyes should flash and his blood should boil, yet he should be able to wage a secret war, masked under compliments, or draw his dagger and strike for the heart.

He should have thousands of enemies and prevail over them all.

He should have boundless ambition; action should be the zest of his life, and at crucial times he should display an uncontrollable temper.

He should seek the path of glory; a man of fiery enthusiasm, who never forgives an enemy; has fits of rage; is jealous; a great swordsman, fights duels; a master horseman, able to ride day and night without fatigue.

He should be at once cautious and headlong, realizing that in the end it is the bold play that wins. He should be able to live down public utterances

that would cause other men years of disgrace. He should be able to quell a mutiny, check a mob or stamp out a rebellion. And, above all, whether admired or detested, he should justify his career by succeeding in what he started to do.

¶ In other words, he must be Bismarck, the greatest empire-builder since Cæsar's day—yes, not even barring Napoleon, for Napoleon's empire crumbled to dust, yet Bismarck's, fresh with youth, still lives on!

## CHAPTER XI

### The Mailed Fist

39

Supporting Bismarck's idea of the mailed fist; Democracy stems from and is supported by aristocracy.

¶ Why is it that, in the American Republic, there is aversion to acknowledging the services of men sprung from aristocracy, like Bismarck? Are the facts unrecognized, or is the silence only another form of political quackery?

¶ To bring the matter home, let us ask, "How is it in the United States?" Washington was an aristocrat of fortune, one of the richest men of his time, dispassionate, cold, aloof; Hamilton, an aristocrat of breeding, contributing his quota to democracy, as he saw it; Lafayette, an aristocrat of birth, helped us gain our liberty; and certainly Jefferson, an aristocrat of intellect as well as of fortune, the owner of 185 slaves, and the gifted author of the Declaration of Independence, offered inestimable services to the common people.

¶ Off-hand, the average biographer records this: "Bismarck had no confidence in the common people. He fought a written Constitution. He did not wish to see his King yield an inch to the masses. It was the Crown against the Crowd. Violently reactionary, he blocked progress—for there

can be no progress without change. He was trying to force the stream of time backward, instead of going with the tide.”

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¶ An American who for the first time follows the history of the Unifier of Germany begins very early in the investigation to have a feeling of apprehension. He is sure that Bismarck is a reactionary; his ideas are so out of “harmony” with the spirit of the times, the air full of the “liberty, equality and fraternity.”

Bismarck’s attempt to sustain the monarchical system, especially the idiotic conception of “Divine-right” of kings, as against the rising tide of “confidence in the people,” has about as much chance for success as that the slavery system could be re-introduced into the United States, after that question had been settled by five years’ war. Thus you conclude, from the American view!

¶ As you read on and on, you feel that on the very next page, Bismarck will surely go to the scaffold, or will fall by the dagger of some “friend of the people,” a thug ever after regarded as the veritable Savior of his country for the assassination of the enemy of the common people.

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¶ The much ridiculed “Divine-right” of kings is cognizable as a right based on the survival of the fittest, backed by the sword; filled with human weaknesses and shortcomings, but defensible as a system, withal; just as the real intent of the words “captain of industry” should mean one whose fatherly care over his laborers, his judgment, his risk of capital, his foresight in weathering bad times—redounds to the immediate prosperity of the workers with whom he can have no quarrel.

¶ To those who make light of Bismarck’s theory of blood and iron, in government, it should be pointed out that all governments that endure, regardless of what theory you may work under, in the end fall to the strongest;—just as in a family fight the estate goes to the strongest, or in a partnership fight, or in religion, science, social affairs, love or war, the strong man has his way over the weak; and it is still to be proven that the American democracy, which at best is only another of manifold

experiments in self-government, is to survive as long as have in the past royalist ideas—already that have persisted for thousands of years.

¶ So, we have invented Democracy out of a thousand costly expenditures of blood and treasure. We protest that this latest experiment in government is to endure forever more, but not one man in a thousand has any real conception of the Democracy in which all men shall work for a common National end.

Thus, Democracy is fully as large an experiment as any other in the Halls of Time; and today we are still nursing childish ideals, attempting to level men by legislation, and incidentally taking satisfaction in stoning our public servants, decrying wealth, and robbing the individual of any broad conception of responsibility.

40

Parallel elements that make for power in America and Germany.

¶ It is difficult for a certain type of American mind to get Bismarck's point of view. This is because of the failure to recognize that in whatever respect Absolutism and Republicanism may differ, as forms of government, the fact remains that it is society, and not human nature, that has been transformed. The old motives, ambition, love, war, marriage, pride, prejudice, still sum up underlying conditions, however firmly any government may seem to be established, called by whatever name, and led by Crown or Crowd. In addition, all history forecasts the ultimate ruin of any régime founded on human nature.

¶ As between the share which belongs to each man, and the share which does not belong to him but to the body politic, expressed in a reciprocal concession, upon each side, for the good of the state—that dream of governmental idealism has never yet been attained, even in free America, to say nothing of Germany, France, England or Russia, and men will continue to annex the spoils to their private estates as long as men are what they are, at heart.

¶ The elements that make for a desire to grasp power, in free America, are essentially the same, though in a different dress, as they were in Prussia, in Bismarck's day.

We are wont to dismiss this matter with a shrug and charge all the turmoil up to a senseless desire on the part of the King of Prussia to force, for his own aggrandizement, his rule on an unwilling people, and we therefore call Bismarck a tyrant, as though in this conclusion we thus elevated our own virtues by a shuddering "May-God-forbid!" sort of recognition of Bismarck's political vices.

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¶ The old man had a grand idea just the same; he devoted his life to building up a free and united Germany. His intense belief in German virtues made his task sacred. He met the desire for a National cause and for greater freedom. He had to carry men by storm.

¶ However offensive, politically speaking, may seem in democratic America Prussia's "Divine-right" theory, it is a fact that we, also, appeal to the god of battles just as Bismarck did. We open our Congress with prayers often couched in conceited belief that God is on our side; while our historians have repeatedly dwelt on the fact that America has a "manifest destiny," a phrase reiterated by editors the land over till it has sunk deep into the public conscience. Therefore, in democratic America, we avow that we are in the hands of the Lord; an idea secretly nourished by millions of Americans who would publicly deny that any such Feudal conception as Divine-right of kings could possibly exist in related form, in the United States.

Surely we cannot mean that Divinity has anything to do with the majorities in an American election?

¶ Then this "manifest destiny" must refer to the ultimate fact that, however we may blunder along, in times of crisis the Lord comes forth, to lead us out of the wilderness.

It is a familiar line of thought to find Grant, Sherman, and Lincoln and others, deified in the American press, as men "miraculously risen" in storm and stress to preserve the "manifest destiny" of our Nation.

If there be any logical distinction between this hope on the part of millions of loyal Americans, expressing their patriotism in terms of Heaven's protective policy, and the attitude of Bismarck in regard to his King, as ordained of God, to rule over the Prussian people, then it would require a high-power microscope to detect any essential variation.

¶ Meantime, we go on building dreadnaughts and inscribe on our coins, "In God We Trust."

King William in Bismarck's day refused the people's paper crown of the Frankfort assembly, but plotted to have one offered to him by the princes of Germany. Was he, logically, any more inconsistent than is our own "manifest destiny" conception of America?

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¶ For it is ever the way with strong men to believe themselves the Lord's anointed, likewise with strong nations—and democratic America is no exception.

"Chinese" Gordon carried with him wood of the real Cross, as he believed, and read his Bible day by day, up to the last, confident that he was in the charge of some unseen power for good, as against the destroying African tribes around Khartum.

Henry M. Stanley's books are honeycombed with appeals to God as his guide and protector; he believed that God was with him in "Darkest Africa," would see him through at the price of how many negro murders it mattered not, warding off fever, discouragement, starvation, and standing ever on the white man's side.

In America, where the "Divine-right" of kings is a subject of political ridicule, it is a fact that in the courts we raise our right hand and swear to tell the whole truth; our marriage ceremonies are consecrated; and the last word at the grave is that God is our refuge; we have our chaplains who speak of God on our battleships, and in our armies; in the Autumn the President of the United States invokes a blessing for bountiful crops, and returns the Nation's thanks to God for these favors.

¶ All this is no more illogical than that Bismarck should insist that the Hohenzollerns, his masters, obtained their right to rule as a direct

dispensation from high heaven, as against the Hapsburgs, who were Prussia's rivals. Bismarck preached his theological-political dogma with intense earnestness during his long life; and at last the people must have been impressed with his arguments—or was it that he forced them to his way of thinking?

## CHAPTER XII

### By Blood and Iron

41

William I writes his abdication, and is about to quit in disgust; Bismarck says, "Tear that letter up!"

¶ Along about 1857, our poor William IV lost his mind; for four years he continued a nervous wreck; his brother, William I, was the sick man's representative as Prussian king; and in '61, when William IV died, William I became sovereign ruler of pugnacious Prussia.

¶ The common people welcomed William I with open arms, that is to say, adoring a fighting man, and long disappointed by the timidity and vacillation of kind-hearted William IV, with his church-building plans and his Jerusalem bishoprics, it seemed as though the reactionary character of Prussian political life might now come to an end.

Frederick's many-sidedness was in sharp contrast to William's one-sidedness; Frederick's unfixed decision is now expressed by William's unvarying will. Where Frederick had been brilliant and imaginative, William was cold and solid.

¶ William was now over sixty, at which age men's lives, as a rule, are in eclipse.

Yet this man of destiny had still in store the making of a modern Cæsar. He was to become king of kings, ruler of an empire whose individual units

were commanded not by democrats trying new ambitions; but instead, many monarchs were to proclaim, “William, Emperor of United Germany!”

¶ This son of Queen Louise, mother of Prussia, was now to justify the sacrifices of the great German foster-mother; for as she had labored with Scharnhorst to perfect the Prussian military, and in the hour of Prussia’s extremity dared to confront even the great Napoleon himself, likewise her son William was now to complete, years later, the mother’s ideals.

Where she scattered seed on fallow ground, the son was to reap his abundant harvest of Prussian glory.

¶ “Whoever wishes to rule Germany must conquer it; and that cannot be done with phrases,” wrote William, 22 years before he was crowned at Versailles.

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¶ We have seen all manner of Hohenzollerns—robber-knight Hohenzollerns—landscape-gardening Hohenzollerns—church-building Hohenzollerns—and Hohenzollerns tied to a woman’s apron string.

A brave, practical, common-sense Hohenzollern is now head of the distinguished Prussian house.

William I is flatly opposed to Liberalism, but is shrewd enough to have a moderate Liberal among his kingly advisers; for William realizes the political weakness of further constitution-tinkering.

¶ Finally, we have before us a man as obstinate as Bismarck, but without Bismarck’s creative imagination; a Prussian King reared in the army, who loved the army, who understood the army;—even as Bismarck understood political intrigue. The combination was unique!

Also, we have here a William of enormous ambition, little suspected under his rather conventional innocent-appearing German mask.

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¶ We come now to a place where furious political torrents begin beating down the ancestral forests of Germany; torn by flashes of lightning and the

ominous roll of thunders, the air is filled with broken boughs, flying leaves and clouds of dust.

Bismarck, god of thunder, rides upon the furious storm.

Let us closely follow the general track of the hurricane now raging in Prussia, more especially in the Prussian Chamber.

¶ In '59, William had appointed von Roon Minister of War; the people objected, declaring it another evidence of William's reactionary principles. The plan was to increase the army from 130,000 in peace and 215,000 in war to 190,000 in peace and 450,000 in war.

It really meant universal military service for Prussia, with 63,000 recruits each year, practically doubling the service, making it possible within a decade to call possibly 1,200,000 soldiers!

¶ The Chamber of Deputies opposed the plan, vigorously. However, the Chamber in a patriotic moment had voted army money on condition that the increase was only incidental, but William while saying little of his plans acted as though his army appropriations were to be permanent, henceforth.

¶ Over this question, a bitter controversy! The King took the ground that it was the duty of the Deputies to raise the cash in such sums as were required for state purposes—whatever these might be, in the opinion of the King.

It was conceded that, in military matters, William's judgment was good, but the Liberals did not much like these great military expenses.

William even thought of breaking the deadlock by abolishing parliament and ruling alone, or abdicating his throne!

He had already written out his abdication, so the story goes, and it was lying on his desk, all signed, awaiting the moment of proclamation.

¶ At the eleventh hour, William bethought himself of an invincible fighting man, Otto von Bismarck, widely known for boldness and independence.

¶ "I am willing to carry out your policy, whether Parliament is agreed or not! I will rather perish with my King than forsake Your Majesty in the contest with Parliamentary government!"

¶ And William tore up the abdication paper and replied, “Let’s get down to business!”

42

The four years’ conflict era—Here Bismarck is at last revealed in his true character—King’s Man supreme!

¶ Ten years of rough-and-tumble fighting in the blind alleys of political intrigue have now prepared Otto von Bismarck for great things. In the solemn years to come, all is yet to be dignified by the formation of an Empire, through blood and iron.

¶ The King’s ambition grew on what it fed upon—a desire for Prussian aggrandizement, at all hazards, and the ultimate solution of the German problem through Prussian power of arms. He made up his mind, accordingly, that he ought to reorganize the army; for this purpose he had asked the Chamber for 12,000,000 thalers.

The cat slipped out of the bag, in spite of precautions. This 12,000,000 thalers was to be used to buy needle-guns and powder, in the oncoming War of the Brothers.

¶ Our William I, whatever he might be, was at least no namby-pamby sentimentalist. That honest German face, those kindly blue eyes, his high complexion, made him look as guileless as a happy school boy; but he had his deep desire for place and power, side by side with Bismarck.

¶ It was a most fortunate day for this hard-headed unimaginative William that Otto von Bismarck, in the Autumn of 1862, accepted the Portfolio of Prussian Minister. William wanted a strong man to fight the hostile radical deputies for that 12,000,000 thalers, for the war-chest.

There is no use casting about for fair words to butter parsnips. The long-deferred irrepressible War of the Brothers was determined upon; and the Prussian dynasty was to wade through seas of blood to the heights of glory; and the purpose was ever to end this age-old German family strife.

¶ William I is deservedly a great German national hero. He is the true father of his country.

¶ We see nothing to criticise. The situation is very human; and the leading actors play their difficult parts with discrimination. In your own life's conquests, do you do any more, and often do you not do less? Is it not true in your own life that you have to fight for what you achieve? Truly, the world belongs to him who seizes it. William knew this; Bismarck certainly knew it; and in this respect the two great men were agreed. So far, good. In broad outline the plan was to make the Prussian dynastic government rule over territorial United Germany; but it must come with the consent of the rulers of the independent German states and not through decrees of people's parliaments or the howlings of mobs.

¶ As for Bismarck, he was the one man of the hour for black situations. His schooling in human nature had progressed amazingly. For the past ten years, at Frankfort, at St. Petersburg, at Paris, at Vienna, Bismarck had fallen afoul of all leading political strategists of Europe, men gloating over the problem of annexing to their private estates the divided German thirty-nine states: Bismarck had studied the individual line of battle of Frenchman, Russian, Italian, Dane, Briton, to say nothing of the ambitions of princelings, counts, deputies, margraves, prelates, poets, and political hen-coop makers;—knew too, how at the critical moment to block their individual games and just when to give his own deadly knockout—either above or below the belt!

¶ During his period of preparation, as we have seen, for twenty years Bismarck had consistently preached “Divine-right,” stood for what he called “Christian monarchy.”

For years, also, it appeared that the thing was for Prussia to enter into a close political union with Austria, but now Bismarck was convinced that he must fight Austria. Fight or shake hands were the same to the giant Otto; the thing was to win, if not in one way then in another! Otto, after his Frankfort experiences saw clearly Austria's under-play to dominate the political situation; and in turn felt himself called upon to check Austrian ambition in favor of his liege lord, the Margrave of Brandenburg, the King of Prussia.

¶ Finally, Bismarck's great chance came. William asked Bismarck to force the army bill.

Now indeed will the giant rage, snapping his teeth in the face of the hurricane,—yes, four long years he is to rule without color of law.

43

On comes the storm—Not by speechmaking but by blood and iron are the great questions to be decided, says Bismarck!

¶ At least, we admit that William I was a thoroughbred Hohenzollern in innate admiration of the iron fist!

Now this was the situation: The secret war-chest against Austria had to be filled in one way or another; but the difficulty was found in the fact that the common people, acting under a mysterious instinct not to be explained but very real withal, had already begun to show unrest about an approaching War of the Brothers, as the sentimentalists called the irrepressible conflict between Austria and Prussia. The upshot was that Bismarck's political secrets while not definitely understood in detail, were quite generally divined by close students of the German problem. The Liberals were intent on their own interests, in Prussia, and believed that their political solution depended on hampering the King, regardless of his cause. Hence the Liberal deputies of the Chamber spunkily stood out against William's heavy demands for cannon and gunpowder.

¶ Bismarck, as King's Minister, had to face the political storm. He did not dare to say that he wanted the money for war; he wanted the money—was not that enough?

Thereupon, Bismarck proceeded to domineer over the delegates.

The Chamber was willing to do something, but how about the rumor that these huge appropriations are to be hereafter a permanent item in the budget? Bismarck would not make the delegates' minds easy; he wanted money, much money, 12,000,000 thalers in fact, for the army—and the least the delegates could do was to vote the funds. If they did not give the cash gracefully, why he would coerce the deputies—that was all!

¶ “It is not by speechifying and majorities,” he thundered, “that the great questions of the time will be decided—that was the great mistake in ’48 and in ’49,—BUT BY BLOOD AND IRON.”

¶ Members of the Chamber shrank in horror.

There were extremely powerful and learned men there, to combat Bismarck’s point of view, and our political conspirator on his emperor-hunt had to listen to some of the most merciless rebukes he was ever to hear, during his long and highly exciting career. But he took them all, without a whimper.

¶ “We have too many Catalines existing among us that have an interest in social uprisings,” Bismarck thundered. “Germany considers not the Liberalists of Prussia, but her own power. Bavaria, Wuerttemberg and Baden may flirt with liberalism, but no German would think on that account of asking them to assume the rôle of Prussia. Prussia must brace herself, for the fitter moment. Prussia’s borders are not favorable to the development of a healthy state.”

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¶ The giant Pomeranian King’s Man with his turbulent support of his monarch, now advanced reasons to show his side, and concluded by mocking his hearers to do their worst.

¶ “What matter if they hang me, provided the rope binds this new Germany more firmly to the throne?”

¶ A few days after this sensational defiance of Democratic leaders, Bismarck announced his decision: “We shall carry on the finances of the state without the conditions provided for in the Constitution.”

¶ Bismarck was not surprised at the storms of protest. “Some progressive journals hope to see me picking oakum for the benefit of the state.” The comic newspapers pictured Bismarck as a ballet dancer, pirouetting over eggs marked Right, Law, Order, Reform, Constitution.

¶ The King became alarmed.

¶ “I see how this will end,” said the King. “Over there, near the opera house, in front of my windows, they will cut off your head, and mine a little afterwards.”

¶ “And after that, sire?” asked Bismarck spunkily.

¶ “After that, why we shall be dead!”

¶ “Oh, well, all must die,” cut in Bismarck indifferently, “and the question is can a man die more honorably than for his country? I am fighting for your cause, and you are sealing with your own blood your rights as King, by the grace of God.

¶ “Your Majesty is bound to fight! You cannot capitulate! You must, even at the risk of bodily danger, go forth to meet any attempt at coercion!”

¶ As Bismarck spoke, the King grew more and more animated. “He began to assume the part of one fighting for kingdom and fatherland,” wrote Bismarck, in explaining the situation.

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¶ The giant’s very soul glowed with fiery indignation. It was not in his nature to hesitate, as to means. He wanted these 12,000,000 thalers for the army—and was not that enough? True, he could not say in the open that he wished to expel Austria—but must an elephant step on your foot?

¶ He had no scruples, moral or material; such are for lesser men. Hamlet-questioning princes, if you please, may soliloquize on life and its inner meaning; but not your Otto von Bismarck, with his clear view of the little lives of men and with his correct conviction that if the intervening thirty-nine German states are to be made a unit in a German Empire, then under Heaven or under Hell, the thirty-nine states must be seized, even in a hurricane of bullets if necessary. Could anything be simpler? Had not the “German problem,” as it was called, been talked to death generation after generation, and had not lawyers, poets, preachers, philosophers and petty princes unnumbered come and gone with their impossible enterprises looking to National glory and political legitimacy?

¶ Bismarck was, as usual, everlastingly correct in his political instincts; and furthermore he had the iron will to power to support him in this great

Prussian conflict; yes, and the wizardry in manipulating human nature that, in the end, would cause even obstinate, opposed political leaders to do our giant's bidding.

¶ What he demanded was absolute, blind, unquestioning obedience from this Assembly; then, the Prussian army must fight like fiends; and lastly, he would take personal responsibility for the issue. Mahomet himself never urged war on Christian dogs with more zeal than did this fiery Bismarck, battling with his own German kind. To shame them, to beat them over their backs with hot irons if necessary—anything would he do to force Prussia to fight Austria, and arouse thus with a sense of blood-brotherhood the thirty-nine states, for Germany's great glory. This was his religion—and do you now get the man behind it?

¶ Of course, it was all cleverly masked under the plea of Prussian army reforms, pure and simple, and in general the fight between Bismarck and the Chamber seemed to turn on the right of a Minister to force appropriations for the support of the government, regardless of parliamentary unwillingness. Bismarck held to his general principle that the Deputies had no authority to refuse the King funds to enlarge the army. The deputies were pledged to support the government, not to starve or ignore it, was Bismarck's contention.

¶ The Liberals raged and stormed, called him "demented Bismarck," "Napoleon worshiper," "hollow braggart," "a country gentleman of moderate political training, inconsistent, nonchalant, insolent to a degree;—pray when did Bismarck ever express a political thought?"

King William's choice was exceedingly unpopular, but between Von Roon and Bismarck there was now to be set up the most efficient military instrument known to history; that is to say, an all-powerful Prussian army of gigantic proportions, armed with the newly-invented needle-guns. Such was to be Von Roon's contribution. Bismarck's was to arouse at home the slumbering great "German National sentiment" that made failure impossible, at the front. Under God, Bismarck believed in the justness of his cause.

¶ In the interim, before the first cannon was to roar, Bismarck, the political wizard, was to tie the hands of every other European monarch—either by

bribes, idle promises or what you will—that the war might be fought to a finish without hazard of Allies coming to the rescue of the Emperor on the South.

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¶ The parliamentary debaters who thundered against Bismarck came on with all manner of attacks. The learned v. Sybel, the great authority on the French revolution, cried out his many historical warnings; Dr. Virchow, known for his work on skeletons of the mammoth, battled along other historical lines; Dr. Gneist, the very learned member, exclaimed in a burst of moral indignation, “This army reorganization of yours has the marks of Cain on its brow!” And to this insulting speech, von Roon immediately replied, “That speech of yours bears the stamp of arrogance and impudence!” Virchow challenged Bismarck to a duel, for defamatory remarks on the doctor’s scientific attainments. To this Bismarck replied:

¶ “I am past the time of life when one takes advice from flesh and blood, in such things as now confront us. When I stake my life for a matter, I do so in that faith which I have strengthened by long and severe struggling—but also in honest and humble prayer to God, a faith which no word of man, even that of friend in Christ and servant of his church, can overthrow!”

¶ Magnificent, magnificent you are, at this supreme moment, you big bulldog Bismarck, and you can whip them three to one, when the great day comes.

¶ Bismarck gained in power as he exercised his strength. He kept Prussia steady during the perilous times of the Crimean war; even urged an alliance with the French—think of that!—to gain secret ends for Prussia; but the Prussian king, who hated rulers of revolutionary origin, was opposed to Bismarck’s master-scheme; that is to say, William held in contempt Napoleon III, hero of the trick, known as the coup d’etat, which won a crown. But Bismarck had no such scruples.

At St. Petersburg, Bismarck won the Czar—for which the liberals hated Otto the more. His arts of diplomacy were expanding in all directions.

Foreshadowing the war with Austria, Bismarck planned to keep Italy, France, Russia, England and Belgium quiet by various intrigues of politics

—and how well he succeeded we shall learn later on.

The storm increases—Bismarck decides to defy the Chamber and rule alone!

¶ In the general turmoil, along comes a fanatic named Cohen, who attempts to kill Bismarck.

This was in May, 1866. The war broke within thirty days! Cohen fired point-blank three shots, and there was a personal struggle. The giant coolly handed the would-be murderer over to the guards, then went home. His greeting to his wife was characteristic. “They have tried even to kill me, my dear, but do not mind, no harm has been done. Let us go out to dinner.”

It was a time of assassins and their plots follow. Struck down by the police, Ferd Cohen, step-son of Karl Blind, meets in the eyes of the Democrats a martyr’s death; his body is crowned with flowers, as though the corpse were a consecration of Prussian Liberalism on the altar of liberty.

The frenzy takes still other forms; suicide cults become notorious; here and there, we read that some lunatic patriot “seeks voluntary death, for the sacred cause of the people.”

¶ And as for Cohen, ladies of high degree bring flowers, soldiers of the common cause wear on their coats his picture crowned with oak leaves. The cult of murder, with Bismarck as the arch enemy in the centre of the picture, was indulged to prevent what was termed the War of the Brothers.

¶ “I believe,” rumbled the granite rock Bismarck, with frowning clouds around his brow, “I do solemnly believe in victory—whether or not I shall live to see it!” This speech was regarded as little short of blasphemy!

¶ Bismarck now spoke more than ever of God, and of high German convictions. There was always grave danger of ingratitude, of insufficiency of time and place, but he certainly thought God on his side.

¶ What lashed Bismarck into fury was the contention that the Crown and the two Chambers were equal, in political legitimacy.

¶ “All constitutional life,” roared Bismarck, “is based on constitutional compromises.”

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¶ Day after day, Bismarck, the Prussian bull-dog, and von Roon, the terrifying drill-master, would appear at the Chamber, on the oak bench in full view of the angry deputies. Time and again, through political jugglery, angry members attempted to oust the Minister, but Bismarck was equal to every occasion. He actually ruled for four years without a legal budget. He conceded that point, too. He set up that it was his solemn sworn duty to support his King, and since the Chamber refused to vote the 12,000,000 thalers, why, it became the Minister’s duty to get the money, by fair means or by foul.

¶ And get it, he did!

It was all wretchedly unconstitutional—of this there is no doubt. Bismarck never made any pretenses on that score. After the Austrian war, an act of “immunity” was passed, in his behalf.

¶ From quarreling about the secret war-chest, the disputants next began a mighty wrangling about rules. Bismarck’s points were always ingenious. He averred that, as King’s Minister, he was “in” the parliament but not “of” it. “Ministers must always be listened to with respect,” he contended. Thus, he forced the unwilling Radicals to listen to his bellowing, in behalf of the Brothers’ War.

¶ Bismarck construed in his own favor every blessed rule brought up to oust him. The Minister was exempt from the Chamber’s dominations, he insisted in a hundred ways.

Violent scenes followed. The King sent long messages endorsing his fighting man; the Liberal press took up the cry, in support of Parliament; and thereupon Bismarck promptly muzzled the press.

¶ Our Otto is now becoming the best-hated man not only in Prussia but in all Europe.

The deputies were brow-beaten, legislative officials intimidated with threats.

¶ The climax came on that day of hubbub when angry members, swarming around Bismarck and von Roon, were sent back by von Roon's thunderous defiance. Pointing to the gangway before his bench, he hissed, "Thus far and no farther!"

¶ The real reason why Bismarck fought the Chamber for four long years so desperately for the 12,000,000 thalers, to be used against Austria, was this: On one hand he wished to nullify the importance of the Prussian Parliament, and especially in the matter of dictation to the King, either under the Constitution or not; also, to thrust at the same time, Austria out of the German body of the nation.

¶ He became a fanatic on the subject of expelling Austria from Germany! He had no scruples, stopped at nothing, paused at nothing; and at the right moment defied the Chamber, smashed the Prussian Constitution that would restrain the King's action in peace or war—and ruled alone!

¶ There are few parallels in history of a stronger man.

¶ Looked at in a large way, we are forced to conclude that the German masses were not ready to believe, at this moment, in Bismarck's Old Testament faith in a God of Battles. To fulfil the Bismarckian political ideal, there was essential an implied humility on part of the people; and this attitude of submission and renunciation was a sin against the spirit of '48. Bismarck's idea of political efficiency was also by no means worked out in detail; it had yet to find a place for the tailor, the shoemaker and the barber, side by side with the King of Prussia; even that miracle was ultimately accomplished, but at the present hour the street-bred people felt it their solemn duty to get up and howl, and to profess to know nothing of political efficiency, wherever kings were concerned.

¶ At all times, the speeches of the crowd in the market-place were blatant enough, but there was also an unrecognized undercurrent of courage and patriotism passing with the flood that was to mean much to Germany, in days to come. The cause of the crowd was really an early form of our vital modernist democratic movement, not to be put down nor yet shut out; all political life was to be revalued, also all new ideas of political happiness were to be henceforth tested by their virility and actuality, cutting away completely bookish ideals.

¶ The part that lagged was this: leaders of the people were soon over-engaged, so to say, with the many-sided aspects and problems of the new political leadership; the German compatriots failed at this time to realize their obligations to a German Empire, to be; the people's politicians were still insular with little or no consciousness of the great German National destiny just around the bend of the road. Thus, Bismarck's function was to force the people to join the National movement—do so as it were in spite of themselves; and when Bismarck fought back and called the people fools, he did not pause there, but stopped at nothing to lead a hitherto indifferent people to warlike patriotism over the Austrian question—over which they had gabbled and slept for years. Bismarck's unity of purpose for the Fatherland deftly combined sordid as well as exalted motives.

¶ And the demands Bismarck finally made on German character were not in vain. For years, however, he was looked upon as an ogre in the eyes of the masses, who misread his patriotism for jingoism in behalf of the King of Prussia.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Dream of Empire

45

Bismarck tricks them all—and by under-play matches King against King.

¶ Von Roon had the soldiers up at 4 o'clock in the morning, incessantly drilling for the oncoming War of the Brothers. The deadly needle-guns—von Roon's secret—were relied on to do superior work in the impending great crisis.

¶ Blood and iron—yes, that is the thing!

¶ About this time, Bismarck executes another master-stroke. He decides to intervene in Poland, in favor of Russia; and certainly he has now to face a “word of wrath.”

England sets up a cry, “Stop thief!” Exeter Hall statesmen, “brotherhood of man” type, begin tearful whinings.

¶ Louis Napoleon tries to form an alliance between England and Austria, and England offers gold for a copy of the Russo-Prussian agreement, affecting Poland. Spies were everywhere.

¶ Well, 10,000 Poles perish in the sacred cause of liberty, but mark: That in helping Russia Bismarck is laying the foundation for Russia’s neutrality in the coming master-stroke against Austria. What do the lives of 10,000 Poles weigh in the balance beside the great strategic necessities to encompass Bismarck’s idea of a United Germany? We do believe that Bismarck has the only practical solution, let nominal Christians say what they will.

¶ The next step, to bribe France, is brought about craftily, through a customs’ arrangement; and when some of the German states object, Bismarck replies: “You go my way or go your own way, alone!”

Also, Italy has to be quieted by soothing promises!

¶ Austria now sets up more wind-baggery and gold lace, in the form of a new parliament, but Bismarck counters with a “proposed German parliament”—a spurious affair to be sure, but the scare has its weight.

¶ Dark and intricate diplomacy here passes before the eyes. Austria fails in her Congress of Sovereigns, and is anxious likewise to retrieve her losses in the Italian war. Bismarck at least knows that Austria henceforth is powerless to inflame German states against Prussia, also that the growth of Liberalism, within Austria’s own domains, is again keeping her very busy.

¶ Cast your eyes toward Paris. Louis the Little is secretly plotting with both sides—Bismarck’s spies tell all to the old man up in Berlin! Secretly, Louis feels that Prussia will be defeated; the French Emperor aims at what he calls the balance of power—by which he means that while the two big dogs are fighting, he will slip in and steal the bone? Exactly that!

¶ Many years later, Bismarck writing of this period, makes this confession:

¶ “Napoleon secretly thought that if Austria and Prussia clashed, Austria would win and then France would step in and ‘protect’ Prussia; later on, in

return for the price of her French favor, Napoleon III believed he could make such terms as he wished with our Prussia.”

¶ Thus, up to the decisive battle of Sadowa, or Koeniggraetz, France remains politely bowing and scraping to both sides—while having her understanding with each side.

Napoleon feels that he will in time be asked to intervene, and for his help he will take a slice of the Rhineland.

Bismarck did not undeceive France—mark that well! Later in life, the Man of Blood and Iron, taunted with the charge of attempting to give away German territory, made a strong “diplomatic” defense. He fearlessly produced the draft of a proposed treaty showing that France was conniving to acquire Belgium, through the under-play of politics, aided by Bismarck.

The amusing part was Bismarck’s solemn reply, “The treaty was drawn up by Napoleon himself, and was offered to me for signature!”

Also, to show that he is disinterested, Napoleon now proposes that the “differences” between Prussia and Austria be settled by a European congress. Austria hangs back, although England and Russia join to ask for the Congress of Settlement.

#### 46

1864-1866—Prussian domination essential in all Bismarck’s plans—Consistent in his inconsistencies.

¶ The difficulties of Bismarck’s position are not to be ascribed to the fact that, first and foremost, he desired to re-establish confidence in the Feudal theory of Divine-right of kings. His life-long plans had to do with increasing the power of Prussia and he preached the legitimacy of his loyal master’s house as an American politician is wont to eulogize the services of the “grand old Republican party,” or “the great principles of Jefferson,” or boasts that he is “progressive and independent,” whatever that may mean.

In each case, the appeal is to a given audience, with the hope of adding to the following.

¶ The logic of hereditary influences placed Bismarck squarely in line as King's Man; and to his credit be it said that he consistently preached one gospel throughout his long political life.

But his alignment with kings was more than mere opportunism, as too often is the case in America, among the "people's" leaders.

Bismarck honestly believed that the logic of events precluded any change in rulership over the Prussian people; and in his larger view Prussian domination must eventually spread over the German states, uniting them in one country—as they were already united by blood and by languages.

¶ That he battled with Austria, the rival for the good will of the German states, is easily explained. It is not human nature for any man to yield what to him promises to turn out an advantage.

That the sovereigns of Prussia held their crown upon the principle of Divine-right, was construed also to impose obligations; and it was part of the theory that the King and his advisers must see to it that the land is used for the common good. The King of Prussia swore to "Divine-right to the soil; swore to defend it; swore to improve it, for the benefit of all."

¶ Furthermore, the old-time German political idealism in which brother was supposed to shake hands with brother, sung by the poet Arndt, in his romantic semi-religious lyrics of liberty, was through the recent German revolution (1848) replaced by a new type of positivist German, intent on money-success, business affairs, economic achievements.

The century-long dreams of National unity based on idealistic speeches, poetry, romantic phrase-mongering, was now slowly to yield to a new spirit; and believers in German Unity came to see that Prussian supremacy held all there was, in a practical way, of possible German centralization. Bismarck certainly saw it very clearly and acted accordingly in his future political appeals and alignments.

¶ Prussia had early led in the practical business of clearing the Chinese-walls that had bound many of the petty states; the Zollverein or customs' union, begun in 1818, as heretofore explained, grew in power with the extension of Prussian railroads and telegraphs; the Prussian capitalistic middle-classes, intent on building up the family fortunes, had prospered in

proportion as the customs' union had been extended, under Prussian domination; and accordingly in 1849 Bismarck, as soon as Prussia had been placed herself at the head of this Business Union, began scheming as never before to win German Unity through economic as well as patriotic arguments.

For one thing, Bismarck henceforth studied to put himself on even terms with the commercial interests in the 39 jealous states. The leaders of Liberalism were, as a rule, men of theoretical rather than practical ideas; essentially a cultured élite, as it were, engaged in babbling about German Constitutions, German fraternal alignments and impossible German peace-parliaments.

¶ True, the good faith of patriots opposed to Bismarck is undisputed; but the King's Man was a man with an exceedingly strong will and with immense practical common sense to support his own ideas; a man who to bring about his beneficent plan of German Unity followed his flag even through three great wars.

This will of iron was exercised for the National good; and on the whole exercised wisely. He went on with his schemings for many years, from day to day making the best use of the material at hand; with well-nigh infallible instinct seizing on the very forces that were essential in years to come to the realization of his ultimate dream.

¶ Little by little he set aside the professorial class, and the cultured élite politicians, and the theoretical constitution-makers; in their places he brought forward hard-headed middle-class capitalists, on one side, and the supreme military and landed Prussian aristocracy, on the other side; and after overcoming gigantic obstacles made clear to the average German peasant that both wealth and authority were to be properly sustained in the old thorough-going German fashion only by having no more to do with semi-spiritual, politico-idealistic aims and purposes; also, that through Bismarck's proposed new type of Unity the peasant on one side and the King on the other could rise to even higher worldly positions without setting aside safe old lines of respect for authority through a Divine-right king, at the same time sharing the royal power with a great and essentially democratic public opinion. Thus, Bismarck's German National enterprise,

although not thoroughly understood for many years, was found at last to support in every particular the ancient German tradition of a strong fighting man, as leader of a free people.

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¶ That Bismarck was proud and old-fashioned he made his boast, his joy, his strength.

Opponents held him up to obloquy, picturing his ideas as prehistoric, even antediluvian; but Bismarck stood the prick of honor; as King's Man he insisted in numberless arguments, far and wide, that behind the Divine-right idea was not only a sentimental but a practical side. At any rate, the King's Man was everlastingly against any movement that looked like French mob-rule.

¶ As time passed, Bismarck learned gradually that he need not hesitate to throw himself fearlessly forward, with this Divine-right as a leverage, to express the legitimacy of the royal house for which he battled.

In the final analysis he was secretly fortified by his instinctive knowledge of the peculiar political idiosyncrasies of Prussians; how dog-like in the final analysis is their submission to the political conception of the Overman who rules by Divine-right.

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¶ It was to this National faith that Bismarck was constantly addressing himself—this loyalty to a paternalistic idea—and his attitude was much the same as that of the Chinese in their worship of ancestors, or of an American who preserves his family record.

Bismarck was urging family unity among quarreling German sons and daughters; and as is the case in all family feuds, the intrinsic merits of the controversy were often overlooked and the time taken in an endeavor to inflict personal humiliations.

¶ Bismarck was essentially appealing to National honor, which he placed higher than absolutism or republicanism, tyranny or democracy. By National honor, he meant the German conception of an over-lord for a ruler, preferably one with a strong military record.

Herein, we touch the core of Bismarck's strength, the measure of his greatness.

When a man fights, on honor, for institutions which his forefathers slowly fostered and sustained through six hundred years of strife, the question of his rights or his wrongs is merged into the larger question of chivalry.

¶ If there were no other gift which might be set up to justify for Bismarck a commanding position among the world's great figures, his conception of National honor, based on powerful personal convictions, his inheritance, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh—utterly apart from the French mob-rule idea of liberty expressed in license—Bismarck's plea for the National honor of Prussia, as the custodian of ancient German traditions, suffices to stamp Bismarck as the true custodian of German political tradition of his age.

¶ To this might reasonably be added another claim which in our broad view of Bismarck's character we here demand for him as one of the world's great men—courage of the bull-dog type, not altogether unselfish, but courage and remarkable consistency; standing the acid test of self-sacrifice during thirty-odd years' vexatious delays in attaining his goal; a period of probation certainly long enough to try the stoutest heart.

¶ With qualities of this supreme order, far outside average human nature, Bismarck at last prepared himself to win his surprising fight for a United Germany; incidentally stamping himself, his power and his purpose high among the great Germans of all time, from Charlemagne down.

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¶ To understand these ideas, let us for the moment look forward as well as backward. Let us speak in general terms, along the lines of the realistic politics, that Bismarck was maturing, as against the old-time German sentimental idealism, once the political hope of Unity.

¶ Bismarck had the well-nigh impossible task of organizing and inspiring a common political faith in 25,000,000 people, divided by religious, climatic and personal differences. That at times he utterly failed to meet the situation except by political hypocrisy, is merely to say that in addition to being a warrior and ultimately the conqueror of a continent, he always kept within hailing distance of human nature; for when he could not win his way with a kiss, he gained it with a curse.

¶ In the final analysis he won, largely because of stirring faith in the German states.

With faith, what can a nation not do: If the United States, today, had deathless belief in the destiny of the Republic that Americans emphasize in their worship of the Golden Calf, a bloodless revolution for a higher standard of political thought would take place over night.

The difficulty is that with the average American National faith is dead.

He has come to the conclusion that he has no stake in the Government, that in short he is a victim to the machinations of plutocrats.

To read the American point of view, (1915) we, today, no less than the Prussians and the Austrians, in Bismarck's time, are also about to spring at each other's throats! There is little sentiment for National unity; it is the East against the West, in Congress, and in the newspapers it is the people against the plutocrats.

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¶ Bismarck's career affords a classical instance, in these poor times, of what a strong man, with faith in himself and his cause, can do against all manner of obstacles.

Faith in himself was the essence of his power. Over and over, he made clear that he regarded himself in God's hands, doing God's work, but on what specific evidence he based this profound conclusion no human being knows beyond Bismarck's own assertion. However, that power urged him on. Naturally, in turn, the fire kindled by faith in himself at last stimulated faith in a people, numbering some twenty-five millions; a people who in the main had up to this time been political atheists to Bismarck's dogma of a

United Germany. This idea of faith is a fact of such vast import that we dare not pass it lightly by.

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¶ By an almighty wave of faith in themselves the German people ceased playing the political craven; came out boldly for what they hold to be their too long deferred birthright!

Here, the mental attitude of the German people passes beyond the dogmas of politics or social intercourse whatsoever; it merges into a mysterious world of reality, close and near yet baffling to describe; expressing itself in an invincible National faith, now about to burst forth, at last, and sweep all before it!

¶ This mental phenomenon exists in various forms, but the animating impulse is ever the same.

The hymn-singing of Charles and John Wesley, whose appeals to religious emotionalism filled the fields of England with tens of thousands of weeping, shouting men and women, vastly excited as to the state of their souls, is a type of faith beginning in a small way and attaining National proportions. No historian could write adequately the history of England without crediting great changes to the work of the Wesley psalm-singers; women tearing off their jewels; men rising in the multitude and calling on God to witness that henceforth their lives would be pure and unsullied by sin; while under the excitement murderers came forward and confessed crimes known only to themselves.

¶ Oh, this German National faith that Frederick the Great so gloriously began; that Louise fostered and sustained; that the poet Arndt set to hymns; that the great von Humboldt in his own peculiar way saw from afar; that the German students apostrophied; that William III figured to himself in his church-building; that von Stein discerned vaguely; that William I emphasized in his cold-blooded, clear-eyed manner of the soldier; that von Sybel fought for; that scores, nay, hundreds and thousands of noble men and women, utterly apart from political chicanery, did indeed long for with all the fervor of their earnest God-fearing German nature; Bismarck stands in the centre, here and now!

¶ It is true that he is not as yet accepted, but he is biding his time; he is looked on with suspicion, but he fronts the scorn of the rabble, in the end to beat the doubters into submission, against their own will.

¶ This newly awakened German National faith was really a very old German faith that had never died, although for years forgotten; the longing for the Fatherland was always there.

¶ Through love of home, through worship of ancestry and through respect for constituted authority in church and state, that is by “German national faith,” Bismarck touched the chord that made his life-work possible. The stimulus of three great wars, presented by Bismarck as sanctified by God, finally did the business.

¶ He knew that in all Germans is a certain generosity of character which when appealed to in the right way made them eager to take the chance of death on the battlefield.

¶ Bismarck played the positive as well as the negative side of this psychological fact. On the negative side, he stirred men with the idea that social ostracism rests on the man who in times of National danger tries to avoid the draft.

¶ Bismarck’s work thus shows him to be the great constructive poet of his time. He placed war before his fellow man in such a way that it was held a sweet privilege to die for one’s land, which interpreted means Bismarck’s idea of a new territorial arrangement of the map of Europe.

¶ There was race prejudice behind his deeper plans. He made much of the fact that within a given area the German language was spoken, whereas while there were millions of German-speaking people in Austria there were also Slavs, Czechs, Bohemians and mongrel races.

¶ The idea of brotherhood based on blood and language finally prevailed over the idea of the confraternity of races. Make as much out of this as you will, but the basic fact is incontestible.

¶ Some 80,000 men perished to sustain Bismarck’s peculiar conception of United Germany. Through the turmoil and misery of these three wars he had his way, and being at last successful, he suddenly became the most

popular man in Europe, idolized by the millions who a little while before had reviled his name as the enemy of the Democrats.

¶ Such is human nature.

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¶ Perhaps, after all, German National faith is only another name for the tremendous earnestness that set the whole land ablaze with singleness of purpose, consecrated to a high cause.

Bismarck in a very real sense because of faith in himself and in his ultimate cause, directed this National faith in the Fatherland and won thereby a magnificent United Germany. If we do not grasp the significance of this unseen but gigantic National German faith, as expressed in the increasing unity of will of the whole people, harked on by Prussia, we might as well close the book on Bismarck—and know him not.

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¶ To comprehend, somewhat, the firm roots of racial strength, as expressed by German National faith, let us for the moment pass from the 1840's, '50's and '60's, which we are now endeavoring to present with their psychological message of faith, and turn our eyes to the year 1914, when Germany and Austria, no longer enemies, now battle side by side, against armed forces of the world—British, Russian, Italian, Servian, French, Australian, East Indian, African, Belgian, Canadian, and Japanese!

The sustaining spirit in this life-and-death struggle, as in the wars that made Germany an empire, is bulwarked on German National faith.

¶ For Germans are no longer soft-hearted heroes of lyrical poetry, as depicted by Arndt! They are men of blood and iron.

¶ Bismarck's mother threw her wedding ring into the public melting pot for the benefit of the War Fund of 1813 and received in exchange a ring of iron; and thousands of German women did the same; and Bismarck's wife exchanged her gold ring for one of iron, for the War Fund of '66. Tens of thousands of German women did likewise, not only in Germany, but in foreign lands, wherever hearts beat for the Fatherland.

They did it in 1813, and in 1864, and in 1866, and in 1870;—and again in 1914!

¶ For example, in the great war of 1914, Baroness von Ropp, granddaughter of Geo. Ebers, Germany's most foremost woman novelist, cries out for her country in the accents of true German nationality, the self-same spirit which Arndt stimulated in days of French and Austrian domination. And since it is this elusive spirit that we are endeavoring to bring home to you, in grasping the higher significance of Bismarck's work, and its true inner meaning, we quote freely from a private letter penned by the Baroness, from Magdeburg, August, 1914.

Ilse Hahn-Ropp did not write for publication, and therefore her words have the more weight.

¶ “On the first day of mobilization I traveled to Magdeburg to say farewell to my husband, who was leaving for France. I had three hours; then I had to take the last train out of town. From that time only military trains were running. Shall I ever forget that ride? It was as though we were living in another world. People were standing in the cars closely packed together; but not a word of complaint. Each one felt he was no longer an individual—but a German! Rich and poor, nobles and peasants, talked together as brothers. Each had the deep conviction that this war had been forced upon us, and that every one must throw his whole strength into the scales, for victory.

¶ “Ceaselessly, military trains roll by, crowded with soldiers in gala uniforms, burning to reach the enemy. I hear them all night long from my parents' home—those wheels rolling, rolling westward; no hurry, no confusion; the mighty machine moves majestically on its way. Show us another nation which could duplicate that spectacle!

¶ “And then, from a thousand throats, rose ‘Die Wacht am Rhein.’ It was overpowering—irresistible. This mighty anthem, from the lips of soldiers going out to battle!

¶ “It was thus that both my brothers left us. I shall never, never forget. Every one gives his all gladly. I could not keep my husband with me, although exempt through his profession from military duty. He went as a

volunteer, and I would not have held him if I could, though you can guess the cost of that parting!

¶ “One hears not a single complaint from the women of the Fatherland. We are all too thoroughly roused over the insults offered our loved country. Working each waiting moment for our wounded—for our soldiers—we have no time for tears.

¶ “We will not give in until all are defeated, even though we women should have to take up the sword to defend the Fatherland. Were it not for my baby daughter I should be with my husband, as a nurse.

¶ “You cannot picture how great, how noble, how grave this time is. Human nature is transfigured. Individual fate is lost, in the fate of the Nation.

¶ “I am at home with my parents. Scarcely a year has passed since my happy, peaceful wedding day. And now my home is bare and desolate, and I am again the daughter of my father—I can write no more. My feelings are stifling me. The bells are ringing a new victory. Unfurl the black-white-red banner. Always lovingly yours,

ILSE.”

A postscript reads:

“Oct. 6.—For six weeks I have been trying to send this letter—in vain. In the meantime both my brothers have died fighting for the Fatherland. My husband still lives, but—we must, we shall and must win!”

Bismarck balances between tempestuous outbursts and inscrutable silence; biding his time in the great game of German Unity.

¶ In the gigantic project of creating an Empire for a king who solemnly protested that he was directly accountable to God for the throne, “and would never consent to have so much as a sheet of paper (constitution) between my people and my Maker.” Bismarck was under tremendous nervous pressure for years; and he meant that his political secrets for United

Germany should not become too early known. Not only were the people as yet unwilling to help, but Austria was watching with jealous eyes the possibility of plunder for herself;—for where the carrion is there will the vultures wheel.

¶ Bismarck’s ambition bit him by day and by night, and there was for him no rest; he required a continent to turn ’round in, and nothing less would suffice. It was now only a question of waiting for the psychological moment to electrify the inert mass of the people to rally to his cause.

¶ Naturally you ask, “Was this Bismarck then a beast?” Not at all. He was merely a human being who wanted a continent to turn around in.

In the gigantic project, Bismarck was exercising his own peculiar gifts in his own way—for none stood ready to give him what he wanted, without fighting for it—even as you or I lay out lesser plans to beg, or coax, or force the world to give us not what we think we need but what we are strong enough to obtain.

¶ In this attitude, Bismarck needs neither apology nor defense—for, after all, he is Bismarck.

Through thirty-odd years of din and roar and battle largely of his own making Bismarck knew neither rest nor peace; returning again and again to the attack and wearing down his enemies by the sheer brute force of courage. His idea was United Germany, through Prussian military power; at the same time, Prussia must hold her dynastic over-lordship, and must yield it finally only in a territorial German Empire.

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¶ Unquestionably there was, incidentally, a large element of injustice in his plans and purposes, but what of it? Is there not such in your own life, and do you know any man whose career is not based on injustice either in some coarse, obvious or in some subtle way?

The world belongs only to those who do battle, and there is absolutely no chance for the man who will not fight!

All government is based on some form of injustice, all land tenure is stained with the sword, all “putting up” of one family, or individual, is based on

“taking” something from some other family or individual.

Nor am I excepting the conquests of love itself, from time immemorial presented as a token of man’s romantic, softer side. For, if the hero does not “save” the heroine from the villain, to take her for himself, then for whom does he save her?

¶ The Bismarck struggle and the Bismarck triumph are as old as history—and as new as the career of the man of today who has achieved his heart’s desire.

The empire-maker Bismarck had his way because he was strong enough to have his way, and while cruelties in various forms, for the ends of statecraft, coexisted in him with many fine qualities, after all that simply means that he was a human being with impulses of various kinds—good and less good—in one heart. It is also an undeniable fact that as late as 1862 Bismarck was by the common crowd in Prussia hated and feared, regarded as Germany’s ogre of disaster.

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¶ Here then is the whole thing in a nutshell: His strong conservative, not to say reactionary, sentiments did not blind him to the fact that he could do nothing without the “people,” whom politically he ignored in so far as their fitness for constructive government was concerned; but it was the “people,” and the “people” only, who could bring United Germany.

He realized the present impracticability of such a Union as he had in mind for his master, the King of Prussia; that to urge it too soon would simply bring a new revolution, and God knows there had been enough blood-letting for the sake of power in and around Prussia for lo! these one hundred years gone by.

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¶ The only thing for him to do, then, was to keep his ambition to himself and his own crowd, and to bide his time to strike—for time makes all things right for him who can wait.

And at waiting and at concealing Bismarck was past master. While usually figured as a blunt, bold, tyrannical man, there was also a side of inscrutable reticence.

¶ Thus finally between outbursts of temper in which he attacked his enemies with the power of a battleship in action, followed by periods of silence after the storm, Bismarck remained master of the diplomatic situation, playing his waiting game.

¶ And did his stern face never break into an ironical smile? Did he never betray himself?

It was impossible to preserve his great political secret from the intuitions of other and lesser minds.

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¶ You see, men have various ways of getting their will. Some fight, others play, still others threaten suicide if the money is not forthcoming. It is all a matter of temperament and peculiar style of doing battle.

With some, a curse will bring what a kiss will not; with others a club is more useful than a loving word. With Bismarck, the first instinct was to do battle by fire and sword, and this explains why his career is filled with broken wine bottles, fist cuffs, sword thrusts, and his “sic ’em!” to the big dogs that trailed around with him.

¶ Once, during the crisis of which we now write, on going into a saloon for a glass of beer, some table talk on politics offended him. He ordered the man to stop, then and there, “or I will smash a beer glass over your head!”

The man went on talking; Bismarck drank, turned around and said, “That for you!” smashed the tankard on the offending head, and coolly walked out!

# BOOK THE FIFTH

## The German People Are One and United

### CHAPTER XIV

#### Windrows of Corpses

49

He is no longer the roaring delegate of the "White Saloon," but has developed the astuteness of the devil, the open sincerity of a saint.

¶ Fight, fight, fight! Nothing but fight! And all this trying time, Bismarck suffered excruciating pains from his old rheumatic complaint.

He was irritable, melancholy and jaundiced; sat up all night half-buried in his mounds of state papers; dictating telegrams, quarreling with callers, denouncing, adjusting, scheming; four o'clock found him in bed; he tossed about till seven, when he managed to get to sleep; and was not seen again till late in the afternoon. The situation was getting on the master's nerves.

¶ Enemies in the house of his friends spied on Bismarck, endeavored to poison the King against the doughty Minister. The Crown Prince, especially, who always had an aversion to Bismarck, despite the war-dog's inestimable services to the House of Hohenzollern, now tried to pull the Pomeranian giant down.

To this end, the Prince dissassociated himself from Bismarck's policy, avoided the great man at court. The situation passed rapidly from political to social objections on part of the Prince, who spread before the King the ruin of Hohenzollern if Bismarckian policies were longer pursued.

¶ But the King would not give Bismarck up. In this regard, William was as cold as ice. He saw that should Bismarck be asked to go, at that time, the Liberals would be irresistibly strengthened. The recoil of the mighty wave against kingcraft might even end by forcing abdication for the Prussian monarch.

¶ Instead of fearing the Liberal leaders, Bismarck despised their plots. The master knew enough of human nature to see clearly one great central fact. The fire-breathing Democrats would, at the hour of Prussia's peril, join with the hated system of Bismarck and march to glory. In defense of Prussia, Liberals, Socialists and political nonconformists of every description, would be carried off their feet. Then, Bismarck would be able to call on his very enemies to come forward and help him win the day.

¶ And the old man, as usual, was absolutely correct. In the hour of danger how the Prussian Liberals fought! Like fiends they stood, took the murderous fire and went to their death singing, "I am a Prussian, will a Prussian be!"

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¶ The opportunity to test German National faith first came through the Holstein war, precipitated by Bismarck's clever manipulation of events.

¶ As well ask from what quarters of the globe the hurricane came which last night tore up the old oak tree. You can read a dozen fat volumes on the Holstein problem, and still you will not be convinced. Schleswig-Holsteiners in their rock-grit lands on the North Sea had their political troubles about the right of succession, and that sort of thing; the spit of land up there was aflame with war talk.

¶ The Germans, as a people, wished Schleswig attached as a principality of the German Confederation, but Bismarck's secret plan was to seize the territory for the gain of Prussia, a clean political theft of a huge estate. By pushing the Danes out of the Frankfort Diet—that antiquated political stuffed-club of Austria—the Emperor of the South would also be forced out of German affairs. In a few words, that was the play.

¶ Opposition? Why, Bismarck lived by opposition, grew fat on opposition. He is no longer the old roaring delegate of the "White Saloon," in his

blossom time. He has developed the astuteness of the devil, the open sincerity of a saint. As a matter of fact, he now invited Austria “to cooperate,” in settling the complex Danish question; and the unsuspecting Emperor of the South, who was also playing a deep game of his own, decided to take a hand.

¶ Throughout his long career, Bismarck was everlastingly trading in political advantages. Often there was a large element of imagination in his promises to pay, but he gained his point in the Holstein problem. He had to face: Dissension between the Prussian Chamber and the Government; the feeling in rival German states; the general distrust of Prussia and the hostility of Austria; finally, the jealousy of other powers.

¶ Volumes have been written, learned decisions handed down on the complex rights of the warring houses of Schleswig-Holstein. There were mountains of precedents on this side or that, as you pleased. Bismarck’s plan was to annex the domain to Prussia and seize the harbor of Kiel, with all the accrued advantages to the Prussian monarch; and while the talk went on Bismarck manœvered to enlist his old enemy, Austria, to make common cause in a clear way of plunder, if ever there was one. Then, they swept the country with fire and sword, took it by the “divine right” of the strongest; and it fell out that Bismarck stacked the cards against Austria, as a gambler stacks them against the man on the other side of the table who is supposed to be his friend, in a gentleman’s game. Bismarck at a stroke thus won away Austria’s share.

¶ After the conquest of the Holstein duchies, King William became more ambitious; henceforth the object of his life was the aggrandizement of Prussia, in Germany. Bismarck had given the King the taste of blood. The Iron Chancellor admits the fact. Here are Bismarck’s exact words, from his interviews with Dr. Busch: “The King’s frame of mind underwent a psychological change; he developed a taste for conquest.”

¶ Bismarck laid the foundation in this way: He reminded the reluctant William of the glories of Hohenzollern; how each Hohenzollern had added to the common family fortunes, ever-widening estates and power. He told William how King Fr: Wm. IV had acquired Hohenzollern and the Jande District; Fr: Wm. III, the Rhine Province; Fr: Wm. II, Poland; Fr: II, Silesia;

Fr: Wm. I, Old Hinter Pomerania; the Great Elector, Further Pomerania, etc.; “and I encouraged the King to do likewise.”

¶ Is it too much to say that in this great National crisis, Bismarck was more than servant of the King? In many respects Bismarck was the King’s master. “If you only knew how I had to struggle to make the King go to war with Austria!” is a significant comment Bismarck once made in a moment of confidence.

It is a question whether he loved the King more, or himself less.

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¶ “My party consisted solely of the King and myself,” wrote Bismarck many years later, “and my only aim was the restoration and aggrandizement of the German Empire and the defense of monarchial authority.”

¶ He always had a contempt for parliaments and for parties. This fact is so clear that we pass it without further comment. In short, Bismarck measures up to these lines in Tennyson:

“Ah, God! for a man with heart, head, hand  
Like some of the simple great ones gone  
Forever and ever by;  
One still strong man in a blatant land,  
Whatever they call him, what care I,  
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat—”

¶ However, in this world all things are relative; the finest coat has its reverse side, where the ugly seams show; and Bismarck is no exception. He has all the strong man’s virtues, and vices. Make the most of it.

It is a solemn fact that, in his unfailing loyalty to his country, Bismarck showed little consideration for men who chanced to oppose his own principles—but what would you, pray?

Man at best is a curious animal; he indulges in great wars and he is capable of great mercies; he is all things by turn and nothing long; on the same day he loves and he hates, he commits crimes and he goes to church; he has his way and having it, is still dissatisfied.

¶ And Bismarck was no exception.

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¶ He always expected absolute obedience. “My ambassadors,” he once said to one of them, “must wheel round like non-commissioned officers, at a word of command, without knowing why.”

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¶ “There are indeed,” says Sir Spencer Walpole, “few things more remarkable in modern history than Bismarck’s determined disregard, from 1863 to 1866 of the decisions of Parliament and his readiness to stake his own life and that of his sovereign on the issue of the contest.”

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¶ This Holstein raid was justified as “statecraft,” but the gambler’s nerve and the gambler’s methods were behind it, from end to end; and Bismarck shuffled and cut and stacked, and if now and then some shrewd player caught the sleight of hand and protested, Bismarck coolly banged him over the head with a chair or flung a wine bottle at his head and threw him into the street to make off as best he might, smarting for revenge but not daring to raise a hand; for in his heart the defeated player realized that in a game of this kind the only thing to do is to take one’s medicine, “put up, pay up and shut up”—like the lesser known but equally discerning gamblers of old Mississippi steamboat days.

¶ What were they fighting about in Holstein? Alas, who knows, except that Bismarck had his great German enterprise well under way. It was said, at the time, that Disraeli was “the only man in Europe who really understood the Holstein question,” but Disraeli was a British cynic on all things German, and his explanations must be taken with a grain of salt. However, Disraeli used Bismarck as “Count Ferroll” in “Endymion.”

Bismarck sleeps surrounded by windrows of the dead; it was the moment he had awaited, all these years.

¶ One fact should never be overlooked. Whether Bismarck talks to his countrymen of patriotism or of religious duties, through it all and behind it

all, while framing constitutions and putting the ballot in every man's hand, Bismarck always had something to draw to—and this something was the invincible Prussian army.

This Prussian army, together with Prussian dog-like discipline, made Bismarck's plans possible.

¶ Also, he everlastingly kept the substance of power for himself and his King; for, however much Bismarck from time to time made concessions to the Liberal side, Bismarck always nourished sentiments of royalty, in the end deftly substituted the mailed fist for his talks on religious faith.

¶ His war-dramas are always rich in strife; but somehow, he makes them conclude in joy.

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¶ Realizing that the Austrian war could not much longer be put off, Bismarck's great care was that there should be no powerful coalitions against Prussia.

¶ We have spoken before of his closeness to Russia, and the means whereby Bismarck secured the Czar's neutrality in the oncoming Austrian war. The King's man next settled with Italy, behind the screen. He knew that she longed to come into possession of Venetian powers, held by Austria; Bismarck got after the Italian minister, Lamarmora; the bargain was this: A secret treaty promising Venetia to Italy; no separate peace to be made with Austria; the treaty not to be binding unless Prussia declared war within three months.

¶ Then Bismarck crossed over and proposed to Austria that Frankfort "reform" the Confederation. The lure to the Liberals was the promise of a National Convention elected by the people, to decide on a new Constitution; the solution carried the Holstein question, Bismarck averred, "not as a piece of monarchial greed but as a National affair."

¶ Bavaria agreed provided Austria and Prussia would not attack each other.

¶ At this, Bismarck promised to give to Italy the Venetian provinces, by peaceful arrangement—war or no war. But Italy wavered; she was afraid of Bismarck's behind-the-screen policies.

Austria decided to increase her Venetian armaments, and Bismarck, quick as a cat, seized on this move of his old enemy as an act of “insincerity” in regard to peace.

¶ Austria now replied by urging that the Holstein question be left to the Diet, despite the fact that Prussia had expressly denied the competency of Frankfort to settle questions affecting Prussia.

¶ From this point events moved with rapidity toward war. Troops under Manteuffel marched into Holstein, alleging the Gastein treaty broken; Austrians retired, but under protest, alleging that Prussia had violated Section 11 of the Acts of Confederation, which provided that members could not make war against each other; and Austria moved that the Confederation be mobilized, except Prussia. Bismarck thereupon played his trump card. “The Confederation is dissolved!” he thundered, and submitted a new draft of articles, leaving Austria out.

¶ Germany was now in two hostile camps; on came the war.

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¶ Thus stood matters on the fateful June 1st, 1866, when the critical situation in the Danish country offered the match to touch off the powder magazines against Austria; startled Austria immediately called upon her beribboned, bejeweled Frankfort Parliament to declare war on Prussia for insolence; and this is exactly what Bismarck wished to bring to pass; it was the moment he had awaited all these long years.

¶ Hanover and two other states were asked by telegraph to declare their intentions. The replies being unsatisfactory, Bismarck, with supreme daring worthy of Frederick the Great, orders von Roon and Moltke’s iron men forward. They poured like fiends into the surprised territories, overran them in a night, compelling the flight or capture of three kings.

¶ “With God for King and Fatherland!” That old cry is again heard throughout the Prussian North country. Austria reckoned stupidly; she had thought Bismarck’s internal political dissensions would make it impossible for Prussia to rally her iron men in good order; but Bismarck knew that while Liberal leaders quarreled like dogs and cats over Prussian policies,

still when beloved Prussia was in danger, all differences would be forgotten—and Prussia in a night would become an armed camp.

¶ Bismarck, that memorable Thursday night, June 14th, 1866, spent the long hours pacing up and down under the oaks in the beautiful garden of the Minister of Foreign Affairs; in deep thought, he awaited the mobilization order from the King.

Von Moltke, old Roon and Bismarck hold whispered consultations in which Bismarck is so sure of himself that his mind at times wanders off war to chatty anecdotes. “This afternoon, in the antechamber of the King,” says Bismarck, “I was so weary I fell asleep on the sofa. Is not this garden fine? Suppose we take a look at the old trees in the park, behind the palace?”

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¶ Berlin rang with the patriotic “I am a Prussian, know’st thou not my colors?” and in unnumbered thousands the multitudes pressed around the palace. On the night of the 29th came the news by telegraph—“First blood for Prussia!” Berlin goes fairly insane with patriotic joy.

Bismarck leaves the palace at two in the morning; his stern expression contrasts strangely with the frenzied faces in the crowd; never did the great man’s inherent poise show more clearly, by contrast. The crowds are singing Luther’s hymn, “Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott”—“A fortress firm in our God.” The King comes out on the balcony and returns thanks. Never-ending cries of triumph force Bismarck to say a few words from the window of his hotel in the Wilhelms-strasse. It is a squally, rain-bespattered night, with the tempest near at hand, but the mobs will not go home. Suddenly, Bismarck raises his hand, shouts congratulations, ends by inviting a salute for the King and Prussia.

That very instant a peal of thunder rumbles over the city, and a trail of forked lightning splits the midnight skies. “The very heavens salute Prussia!” cries Bismarck—and the mobs go wild again.

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¶ Bismarck and his King are off to the front. At Sichrow they see the corpse-strewn field of glory; 5,000 bodies in all the agonizing attitudes of sudden death are there before the master.

William and Otto pass to the field hospital. The wounded beg for cigars, and Bismarck writes his wife, "Send cigars by the thousand, by each courier; also forward copies of the 'Kreutzzeitung.'" This is the official Bismarckian political organ. So you see, he spreads his political propaganda, even in the face of death.

¶ Otto winds up his letter with this surprising request, under date, July 2, Jitschen, "Send me a French novel to read, but only one at a time."

¶ Then came Sadowa, July 3d. The "Red" Prince Charles assigns his troops to battle line at dawn, amidst fog and rain. At 9, the King and Bismarck appear on the bloody field. Bismarck rides his tall roan mare "Verada," rechristened "Sadowa."

In thunder and smoke the battle goes burning on. For hours the result is in doubt. All depends on the second battle line, but where is the Crown Prince? Will he arrive in time?

¶ The vast artillery duel began early and lasted many hours. At the height of the battle, old King William asked for a cigar, and when the box was brought took a long time to select one, to his fancy. Bismarck regarded it as a good sign! "If he can bother about the best cigar, the battle cannot be lost," was Bismarck's mental comment.

¶ At last, the Austrians began giving way.

¶ In joy, the King took from his neck his own Iron Cross and hung it on Bismarck's neck.

¶ Moltke came up, bright and happy, with these words: "Your Majesty has not only won the battle, but the whole campaign."

¶ It was true; the great Austrian war was practically now won, and in three short weeks!

¶ Sadowa, or Koeniggraetz as the Germans call it, is one of the great battles of history. There were 445,000 men engaged; Austria lost 30,000 and 1,147 officers.

¶ Bismarck, on his tall roan, was eighteen hours in the saddle; neither man nor faithful beast had food or drink, except that the horse, standing now and

again among the windrows of corpses, ate corn-tops and nibbled at leaves. That night, Bismarck slept by the roadside, without straw, a carriage cushion under his head. The rain beat down in a drizzle, and for miles the smoke hung like a pall. Bismarck's rheumatic pains, his weakness from loss of food, wore him down.

¶ At last, the course of nature can no farther go; and the master falls into a deep sleep—surrounded by windrows of the dead.

¶ At dawn, as he stood up, half-dead from exhaustion, against the lowering skies he saw the vultures ready to pick the bones that Glory had provided in this phase of the terrifying story of German Unity.

¶ The hour of victory again proved Bismarck's astuteness. The fire-breathers around the King urged that the Prussians march on Vienna and lay the city in waste; Austria could not prevent; she was prostrate; but Bismarck said no; and as usual, he had an object. Part of his far-seeing plan was to take advantage of this psychological moment to conclude secret treaties with the smaller states, as allies of Prussia, in case of future wars. It was the forerunner of his last great work, many years later, the Triple Alliance.

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Alas, poor human nature! The rejected stone now becomes the foundation of the palace wall! Otto von Bismarck is justified at last.

¶ It goes to show that the right man can bring about any idea, whether to do it makes it necessary to turn Time's clock backward or forward.

Bismarck is magnificent because his extraordinary political work inspired and carried a new National faith that forced men to bow, often against their will, to the logic of his own gigantic mind.

Bismarck is magnificent because, too, when the tiger strife was ended, he who had been despised as the arch tyrant of his time, was now seen to be the one strong man of his land, who had brought an unwilling people peace, happiness and prosperity.

¶ After the Austrian war the deputies whom Bismarck had fought granted immunity to Bismarck for those four turbulent years of unconstitutional rule; the overjoyed people readily forgave him for exacting 12,000,000 thalers for the secret war chest.

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¶ The millions who had looked on him as a madman now hailed him as little under the stature of a demigod, loaded him with estates, gold, diamonds, medals, stocked his cellars with the choicest vintages, sent him train-loads of presents, thousands of felicitations on parchments done up with blue ribbons, threw up their hats in frenzy only to see his rattling old coach pass along the streets of Berlin; and in the National excitement to do something or say something that nobody had ever thought of, became as children to the extent of offering presents to Bismarck's dogs.

Also, in the grand distribution of Austrian prize money, Bismarck was awarded \$300,000. With this unexpected good fortune he bought Varzin estate in Pomerania.

¶ Of late years, his unpopularity has been made clear in a thousand ways, some harmless, others bloodthirsty; his very life was demanded more than once, by assassins. But now all had changed.

¶ It is related that a German professor, in Greece, caught out after dark was beset by bandits.

¶ "Who are you?" they inquired menacingly.

¶ "I am a German."

¶ "Who is your king?"

¶ "The King of Prussia!"

¶ "Ah! Then you are Bismarck!"

¶ And the robbers pulled off their hats and ran headlong in the night.

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¶ In America, shops sold Bismarck pipes, Bismarck cravats, Bismarck hairbrushes, and one came across such advertisements as this: "What is the

difference between Jones' paste and Prince Bismarck? Answer, there is no difference, because each sticks so fast that once either gets a hold it is impossible to get away from it."

¶ After Koeniggratz, the growing sense of German nationality impressed itself in a thousand joyful ways.

In Spain, lucifer matches bore on the boxes this doggerel:

Als Wilhelm wirkt und Bismarck span  
Gott hatte seine Freude dran.

Or, "As William worked and Bismarck spun, God had his joy thereon."

The fashionable world dressed in Bismarck brown; ironclads bore his name; in Paraguay the "Citizen Bismarck" ran up and down the river; Bismarck, South Dakota; Bismarck and von Moltke streets; huge Bismarck strawberries—and what more you please.

¶ The Brandenburg Cuirassiers made him drink out of a silver tankard, holding a level quart of champagne; Bismarck, at the officers' revel, put the goblet to his lips and drained the draught in a few long gulps.

¶ "Another!" cried the National hero.

¶ "Alas," sighed a dyspeptic Frenchman, who heard of it, "champagne and smoke agree with him—happy man!"

¶ Whenever the Chancellor was out, on foot or on horseback, the news ran like wildfire through Berlin! Offices were emptied, clerks stood in windows, the public uncovered and cheered.

¶ The German colony of Constantinople sent him a sword of honor; thousands begged his photograph, autograph, or lock of his hair; brewer George Pschorr, at great cost, sent thirty-three gallons of beer in a carved cask weighing 500 pounds, with solid silver tankards—veritable gems of art.

¶ Carried away by the general excitement, an inmate of the almshouse put his name down for \$5, on a public list, and when confronted with his utter

inability to pay, replied:

¶ “When the time comes for paying I shall ask them to let me off with so many days in jail! So many marks, so many days!”

¶ A little town in the Black Forest offered a huge patriotic scroll composed of bottles of raspberry brandy, with handsome labels, bordered with the German colors, red, white and black; a Bavarian organ builder forwarded a huge organ; the inhabitants of Stanaitschen, a gigantic whip; plovers’ eggs came from the people of Jever; the King of Prussia made Bismarck a Count, presented him with a rich domain; and in the general excitement, the Chancellor’s famous dog Tyras was honored with a magnificent blanket with his initials worked in gold, in the four corners, costly collars to match—and a sofa;—also this explanatory poem:

“Tyras, sei huebsch, artig und gut,  
Sei es by Tag, sei es by Nacht!  
Bewache unsern Kanzler gut:  
Dan wird als Praeset dir dies Kanapé gebracht.”

Or, “Tyras, be good, gentle and kind; all day long and through the night watch over our Chancellor faithfully;—and this gift of a sofa you’ll receive.”

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¶ But this was only the beginning. At the Universal Exposition in the jewelers’ section, one day a tall stranger was inspecting the beautiful display, and one of the exhibitors, bowing politely, asked the stranger to accept a magnificent diamond ring. “Your Highness knows very well that he cannot deceive me! I respect your Highness’ desire to remain incognito, but your fame has preceded you!”

In vain the stranger protested. The ring was passed, the exhibitor was highly pleased, the stranger offered a card, “Alexander Schnabel, Bavaria.” The exhibitor still smiled, saying, “I respect your Highness’ incognito!” The stranger then quickly disappeared in the crowd. What is that shouting over yonder? “Hurrah for Count Bismarck! He comes! He comes!” In a moment, the diamond merchant saw it all. He had been cruelly deceived, and furthermore had deceived himself!

Strange superstition ingrained in this Bismarck mind; what ikon  
do you believe in, as you urge to duty and glory?

¶ In this life, each man has, secretly or openly, some ikon against which to charge, by way of explanation, his personal history.

In the story of Bismarck many ikons have been used by many writers, to account for the puzzle of this great man's complex career.

Some call it ambition; others will power; others destiny. Certainly, in his long and adventurous career Bismarck was often close to death.

¶ Now Bismarck himself always had his own peculiar ikon. He called it God. His speeches for many years before Sadowa, his protests in behalf of his King, as against the rising tide of Liberalism, always contained amidst thunders of political consequence, the name God as the one explanation of Bismarck's history and Bismarck's ultimate victory.

¶ If that be true—and it is not for us to say yes or no, for we are reporting the man as he is and not the way we think he should be—then God was at the bloody field of Sadowa, on the side of the 221,000 Germans, armed with needle-guns, and not on the side of the 224,000 Austrians, armed with old-fashioned muzzle-loaders;—and the clash of 445,000 men with tens of thousands left dead on the field, was the final expression of the will of God.

¶ Thus reasoned Bismarck, and surely he should be the best authority on the conclusions of his own mind? As a matter of fact, Bismarck's profound belief that God was on his side but shows Bismarck's excess of faith—the faith that moves mountains.

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¶ It has been said by eminent historians that Bismarck as the Unifier of Germany had in his mind's eye, for many years, the dream of Empire; and the statement is either true or false.

¶ These writers call Bismarck the man with the vision, the seer, the German patriot who saw in an early dream the stirring plan to which he was to devote his long and arduous life.

¶ You are familiar with the painting by LaFarge, depicting the boy Napoleon, in the school yard at Brien, walking to one side, by himself? On his youthful brow is already an air of strange preoccupation, that cloud of ambition, as an outward sign that the boy's imagination is bodying forth the heroic deeds of the man, many years hence.

¶ Do not believe it! It is only a poetic fancy, not human life. Plans such as Bismarck met and carried forth, empires such as Napoleon founded are not placed constructively before one in a vision, nor are the complex ramifications attendant upon their ultimate achievement a matter of pre-vision.

It is only the small mind that plans down to the hair's breadth. Your truly great man, like Bismarck or Napoleon, takes up life as he finds it, and little by little learns the business of compelling other men to do his bidding; and always in this there is a large element left to the hazard of the die; or to use Bismarck's own phrase just before Sadowa, "Now we shall see how the god of battle rolls the iron dice!" Your great man rides forth to the battle, prepared to take instant advantage of circumstances as they may rise.

¶ Bismarck's idea of United Germany, at least the idea he always gave to the public, was that the thing might be done, with and through the power of God.

The word God appears and reappears in connection with his plan; in his messages, speeches, dispatches, and in his private letters, he calls on God. I am not here to say that Bismarck had religious visions. I take it that he never heard mysterious voices or saw ghostly forms, but instead was an intensely human man who fought out his life even as you fight out yours—with the powers with which you are endowed, and for such ends as seem worth the price, to you. The religious faith learned at his mother's knee, made Bismarck's life-work a sacred vocation. He believed that he was chosen by God to educate, guide and discipline the German people.

“My dear professor, whoever has once looked into the breaking eye of a dying warrior on the battlefield, will pause ere he begins war.”

¶ And now we meet Bismarck back in Berlin wearing his Koeniggraetz military cross, suspended by a ribbon around the collar of his plain blue Prussian uniform. But the great strain of the years is beginning to show. For one thing Bismarck’s eyes are failing; he uses a glass as he muses over his mounds of state papers; his face is lined with deep marks; care has done its work; our Otto is now bald, obese and stiff-jointed, much more so than his 54 years might seem to call for. In making speeches he does not speak as boldly, as directly as in days of yore. He stops, hesitates, stammers, but manages to hold the crowd.

¶ You see he has a world of things on his mind; the under-play of the great political game absorbs his very life. What, pray, about this subconscious impression, that everybody has about an impending war with France? Bismarck, as deep as the sea, is still seemingly as open as a child.

One day, a famous professor made the fateful inquiry as had hundreds of journalists—and this time Bismarck replied, “My dear professor, whoever has once looked into the breaking eye of a dying warrior on the battlefield, will pause ere he begins a war.”

¶ So much for the astuteness of the man with the iron cross. He is indeed no longer learning the game.

¶ Already Bismarck was thinking of great armaments against France; for she was now demanding territorial compensations, as between Prussia and Austria. We find in the “Revue Modern,” August, 1865, this striking interview with Bismarck, by the French writer, Vilbort:

¶ “About 10 p. m. we were in the study of the Premier, when M. Benedette, the French Ambassador, is announced. ‘Will you take a cup of tea in the salon?’ M. de Bismarck said to me, ‘I will be yours in a moment.’ Two hours passed away; midnight struck; one o’clock. Some twenty persons, his family and intimate friends, awaited their host.

¶ “The tiny cloud on the horizon as yet had no name, but this cloud hung to the west across the Rhine.

¶ “At last he appeared, with a cheerful face and a smile upon his lips. Tea was taken; there was smoking and beer, in German fashion. Conversation turned, pleasantly or seriously, on Germany, Italy and France. Rumors of a war with France were then current for the tenth time in Berlin. At the moment of my departure, I said: ‘M. le Ministre, will you pardon me a very indiscreet question? Do I take war or peace with me back to Paris?’ M. de Bismarck replied, with animation: ‘Friendship, a lasting friendship with France! I entertain the firmest hope that France and Prussia, in the future, will represent the dualism of intelligence and progress.’ Nevertheless, it seemed to us that at these words we surprised a singular smile on the lips of a man who is destined to play a distinguished part in Prussian politics, the Privy Councillor Baron von ——. We visited him the next morning, and admitted to him how much reflection this smile had caused us. ‘You leave for France tonight,’ he replied; ‘well, give me your word of honor to preserve the secret I am about to confide to you until you reach Paris? Ere a fortnight is past we shall have war on the Rhine, if France insists upon her territorial demands. She asks of us what we neither will nor can give. Prussia will not cede an inch of German soil; we cannot do so without raising the whole of Germany against us, and, if it be necessary, let it rise against France rather than ourselves.’”

¶ The treasonable speech of the Baron did not, however, bear fruit “in a fortnight,” but Bismarck knew the great political game well, and everything served him in his German undertakings. We shall see.

The curtain falls in triumph on another spirited act in the great drama “Germania.”

¶ The political fruits of Sadowa may be summed up in a few sentences. We clear the air for the grand finale, at the palace of the French kings at Versailles, four years later.

¶ By the Prague treaty, August 23, 1866, Austria consented to the reconstruction of the Federation and retired from the scene.

Bismarck saw that the large states beyond the River Main,—Bavaria, Wuerttemberg, Baden and South-Hesse, were not yet ready for his new North German Confederation; but he would bring them in—somehow—later! As for Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Frankfort, and Schleswig-Holstein, they were now mapped with Prussia, their crime being this, that they had opposed Prussia in a half-hearted way, before Sadowa.

¶ Bismarck now set up his popular Prussian Constitution. Wonder of wonders! Really, it differed not in essentials from the hated Liberal Constitution that he had assailed so vigorously in 1848. Also, up to 1866, the Unifier of Germany had as we have seen always appeared as an opponent of the National German party. When, however, he had become its leader, through the great politico-military struggle, he brought about the results vainly fought for by the patriots in the revolution of 1848. The distinction was that in the Revolutionary days, the King would have been obliged to stoop to the gutter for a “people’s crown,” whereas now he need do no such humiliating thing. The two wars had proven William monarch “by Divine right.”

¶ However, a blaze of aristocratic honors at the hands of King William pleased Bismarck more than he was willing to admit. Count Bismarck, one night, when the people came with the torchlights, sounded the old German keynote in a new way, as follows:

¶ “We have always belonged to each other as Germans—we have ever been brothers—but we were unconscious of it. In this country, too, there were different races: Schleswigers, Holsteiners, and Lauenburgers; as, also, Mecklenburgers, Hanoverians, Luebeckers, and Hamburgers exist, and they are free to remain what they are, in the knowledge that they are Germans—that they are brothers. And here in the North we should be doubly aware of it, with our Platt Deutsch, which stretches from Holland to the Polish frontier; we were also conscious of it, but have not proclaimed it until now. But that we have again so joyfully and vividly been able to recognize our German descent and solidarity—for that we must thank the man whose wisdom and energy have rendered this consciousness a truth and a fact, in

bringing our King and Lord a hearty cheer. Long live His Majesty, our most gracious King and Sovereign, William the First!”

¶ A cheer resounded throughout the castle-yard.

¶ The new Constitution gave to the people manhood suffrage and a popular Assembly. The King of Prussia was made President of the new Federation, but not its sovereign. Prussia ruled in her own way, henceforth, but the fiction of the King, as President, served to steady the minor disgruntled German princelings, who were led to believe that their councils were still reckoned with in great affairs. However, the voting was so arranged that Prussia controlled, off-hand, 17 out of 48 units in the new political Confederation—and in a pinch Bismarck could rely on having the desired majority.

¶ Some say that Bismarck was influenced by the socialist Lasalle to make concessions to the people, of a piece with the concessions which in '48 Bismarck had fought because they sprang from revolutionists; but the liberal aspects of the new Constitution served to place the great dream of German Unity on a firmer basis than would otherwise have been possible. Bismarck was learning this: To try to choke the current of public opinion is folly; the wise man, instead, aims to direct the waters to his own advantage.

¶ The North German Confederation comprised 22 states and Bismarck was made Chancellor. The Constitution was adopted February 24th, 1867. For all practical purposes, the German Empire was now a fact.

¶ But more work was still to be done, by way of bloody Gravelotte, Metz, Mar-la-Tour, St. Privat, Woerth, Spichern Heights, Sedan, and the Siege of Paris.

¶ Corpses, corpses everywhere, lying in windrows miles long!

¶ Bismarck knows that to demand in an emphatic way is the surest way of receiving. He is always studying men, looking ahead to the time of the inevitable French war. He is asking himself, concerning various monarchs of adjacent nations, opposed to Prussia: “On which side will he be?” “Is he weak?” “Can he be relied on to stand on my side?” “Is he dangerous?” “Will he take a bribe?” “At any rate, give him what he wants—but let me do it in such a way that he thinks he is forcing us to do what he wants, whereas we know how to make him actually demand our own terms!”

¶ Thus Bismarck without histrionic talent, with his piping voice and his prohibitory bulk for heroic theater-roles, is at heart the great actor-manager of his time. Instead of creating parts, he deals them out.

¶ He goes through this world during these trying times finding the best men to do his own bidding in the coming war. And when he is hissed down by those who will not acknowledge his right he breaks their power by defying them—as the hurricane scatters the clouds, nor asks permission.

¶ They say that had he lost the Austrian war, he would have gone to the gallows. Can a Man of Destiny lose?

¶ A new era is dawning. The old worn-out system for a disunited Germany of 39 jealous states is to be swept away.

¶ For thirty years he dreamed of the inevitable German Union, had his visions of that glory. He was greater than himself in those black hours before the Parliament, for four long years thundering for his side;—with public opinion flat against him, and with mutterings on part of angry mobs that would bring the rope and hang Bismarck to the highest tree.

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¶ Throughout Germany, distressed as her people had been for years past by political and social miseries, a growing consciousness of brotherhood, blood and language was at last about to be politically realized.

Even Napoleon the Little, political fool that he was in many respects, at least had one idea that showed his common sense. However, in his day he was laughed out of court for his “theory of nationality,” that is to say, he believed that people speaking a common language and living in contiguous territory, have an inalienable right to a common flag.

¶ Now that is precisely what German poets had in mind, in their romantic way, when for well-nigh 100 years past they had been dreaming of a united Fatherland—

Fuer Heim und Herd, fuer Weib und Kind  
Fuer jedes treue Gut—

Or, in other words, a man's house is his castle and if men will not fight for their hearthstones, then they will soon have no hearthstones.

For home and hearth, for wife and child—  
These things we prize the most;  
And fight to keep them undefiled  
By foreign ruffian host.  
For German Right, for German Speech,  
For German household ways,  
For German homesteads, all and each  
Strike men, through battle's blaze!  
Hurrah! Hurrah!  
Hurrah, Germania!

¶ The words, “Auf, Deutschland, auf, und Gott mit dir!”—“To arms, Germany, and God be with thee!” is a National hymn breathing the solemn thought that Germans are not slaves—

Old feuds, old hates are dashed aside  
All Germany is one!

¶ Bismarck's work, raw as it may seem in many respects, was consecrated to the great central idea that the German race is one, or as the poet Freiligrath puts it in one of his stirring lines, “Das deutsche Volk ist Eins!”

¶ The whole thing comes down to the inner meaning of the word “patriotism.” Tolstoi calls patriotism a frightful vice; Washington regarded patriotism as a virtue of virtues.

¶ Take your choice.

¶ He is even now brooding over the element necessary for the perpetuation of a free and United Germany. He reads his Bible and prepares for the French war.

¶ Bismarck used the masses as the gardener uses manure. The blood of the peasantry manured the ground, out of which was to grow the harvest.

## CHAPTER XV

### The Great Year, 1870

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Bismarck and Von Moltke, over a bowl of sherry punch, discuss “these poor times”—The Emperor-hunt begins.

¶ Volumes have been written to explain the origin of the Franco-Prussian war, and the intricate and inter-related facts are gone over again and again, now with emphasis here, again on the other side.

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¶ It is trite to say that Bismarck foresaw that a war with France was inevitable. Behind this simple statement is a world of intrigue and ambition. The French still hold that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine was the price not of war but of Bismarck’s brigandage. The French also believe that the candidacy of Prince Leopold Hohenzollern for the Spanish throne was a Prussian intrigue against France. The controversy on these points will never be settled, till the Doomsday Book is opened.

¶ When Bismarck sees that his work of unifying Germany cannot be completed without another war, the war comes!

His amazing insight into complex political, military and historical situations, in which with a few words he is able to divert public opinion to his own peculiar view, has been shown never with more diabolical cunning than at the time of the breaking out of the Franco-Prussian war. We refer

here to the “Ems dispatch,” that played a startling part in bringing on the war; but the telegram, in itself, was really a simple thing.

¶ For four years, Germany had been increasing her military power by ten-fold. The greatest military martinet of all time, Von Roon, had the men up at three and four in the morning drilling them as human beings were never drilled before. Von Moltke, “with the battle pictures in his brain,” was planning every detail against France.

¶ The preparations were now complete. The Germans were thoroughly organized, led by generals guided by a single brain, von Moltke, master of tactics and strategy.

¶ Just the day the war broke out von Moltke, who was always as taciturn as the Sphinx, “and in times of peace ugly and crabbed,” was sitting in his garden moodily declaiming against these poor times—with no war in sight!

Bismarck greeted his compatriot, bravely. Von Moltke ordered sherry punch and the two cronies began drinking each other’s health.

¶ “You are not looking well, Chief?” began Bismarck.

¶ “No, I have not been well, lately!”

¶ “But you must cheer up. War is your business and you will now quickly mend. I remember when the Spanish war was the burning question you looked at least ten years younger. When I told you that the Hohenzollern prince gave the thing up, you became at once ten years older. This time, the French have made difficulties, and you look fresh and younger by ten years.”

¶ In this light-hearted way Bismarck spoke of the oncoming strife—up to the year 1914 the bloodiest in the history of the world.

¶ Up to 1914, there never was such a disciplined army since the world began! Neither Napoleon, Cæsar nor Alexander ever had a power like the United German swarm, now numbering 1,200,000 men, counting advance and reserve; however, the total strength was never called, as the war was practically over in seven weeks.

The hosts of Germany, 800,000 strong, helmeted, machine-like, moved silently and swiftly toward the Rhine, carrying their trusty needle-guns which had done such destruction at Koeniggraetz. As they marched they sang the war songs of their race, and swore to guard the Rhine.

Zum Rhine, zum Rhine, zum Deutchen Rhine,  
Wir alle wollen Hueter sein;  
Lieb Vaterland magst ruhig sein,  
Fest steht und treu die Wacht am Rhine!

¶ The King immediately left for the seat of war, Mayence being the first headquarters of the royal party. Bismarck was always close to the King.

¶ Bismarck had been only a few days in the field when his health began to improve. Like von Moltke, Bismarck looked ten years younger.

The old-time biliousness and vein-swelling from which he suffered, now passed away; the irritability vanished; he was cool and collected.

¶ He was attended throughout the war by a corps of cipherers, decipherers, cooks, privy counsellors, secretaries, and couriers. Faithful Dr. Busch, head of the Bismarck press-agency, was one of the busiest men of the hour. Bismarck, who learned the power of the press in shaping public opinion, kept Busch constantly employed sending out telegrams, giving the German side of the war.

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¶ The Chancellor wore the white uniform of Heavy Landwehr Cavalry, with white cap and top boots.

¶ Bismarck and his staff camped along the line of advance, wherever night fell—sometimes in the château of a French nobleman, again in the hut of a French peasant. The company ate at a common table, and had the same fare. Bismarck was called “Chief.”

¶ Often the table was made by taking doors off their hinges and placing them on barrels or boxes; then waiters spread the cloth and brought out pewter plates and huge tumblers of a silver-like metal, lined with gilt.

Candles were stuck in empty wine bottles. Thus the great man worked during the war, week after week.

Dr. Busch, although a very busy man, managed to gather two volumes of table talk, minute details of what Bismarck said, ate, drank, preached, the whole set forth in spirited style, affording an intimate picture of the Iron Chancellor to which all historians are henceforth under obligations.

¶ Firing was going on around the royal party, often dangerously near by, and now and then a battle would take place close to where the King was encamped, with his faithful minister. They would ride out, to see the fight. Bismarck read dispatches, made notes, talked to His Majesty, gave instructions on state matters, counseled with von Moltke on military matters, received visits, and studied maps. This continued all day and sometimes all night.

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Germans drink 2,500,000 bottles of champagne at Rheims—  
Bismarck's ironical revenge!

¶ The high tension of war was relieved by amusing episodes, from day to day. In the evening of the arrival at Rheims, Bismarck humored himself trying various brands of champagne. Word was brought that the day before a squadron of Prussian hussars had been fired on from a leading hotel. Bismarck ordered that the house should at once be torn down and the landlord sent to prison; but when it was explained that none had been injured, Bismarck waggishly decided to let the landlord off if he would give 2,500 bottles of champagne to the squadron—an obligation which the man quickly proceeded to settle.

¶ The Prussians drank, in and around Rheims, some 2,500,000 bottles of champagne; and, for that matter, the highways all the way to Paris were marked with long lines of empty bottles!

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¶ Thus Bismarck had his ironical revenge on France; took his cherry brandy or his champagne as he pleased, while the great war waged.

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¶ “Verily, in all history,” wrote Carlyle to the London Times, “there is no instance of an insolent unjust neighbor that ever got so complete, instantaneous and ignominious a smashing down, as France now got from Germany.” The whole civilized world looked on in amazement.

¶ France had declared war July 15th, and the crushing defeat at Sedan came September 1.

However, it took seven months before Bismarck was satisfied that the final papers were drawn to his satisfaction.

Louis Napoleon being a prisoner of war, had lost his throne; and consequently Bismarck insisted that any peace made with France would have to be ratified by some central authority. It is a long, interesting story, but Bismarck finally won his point.

## 59

Sedan and the Belgian weaver’s hut; the highways to Paris are strewn with wine bottles; death drinks a toast to “German Unity.”

¶ As it had been the Iron Chancellor’s fortune to be present at the crowning victory of Koeniggraetz, in the Austrian war, likewise it was now his destiny to be a spectator at the two battles that decided the issue of the French war, Gravelotte and Sedan.

The spoils were immense, the glory set Germany in flames. Bismarck, von Roon and von Moltke were held to be the greatest men of all time.

¶ Gravelotte, the bloodiest battle of the campaign, engaged 333,000 men and 1,362 cannon. The King commanded in person, on the right, and Bismarck was with him.

The carnage was frightful. Bismarck busied himself carrying water to the wounded. When the sun went down, German victory was complete, at the

loss of every tenth man!

¶ That night, Bismarck bivouacked on the battlefield, amidst serried ranks of the dead. Says one who saw the terrifying scene: “Anon, the watchfires of the Prussians blazed round about; and worn out by incredible exertions at last Bismarck fell asleep, among the living and the dead. He was now to have evidence of the result of his life-long ambition; he had plunged his country into three great wars, with all their dreadful toll of human life; but he slept that night the sleep of the just—because he saw, in the complex blending of his ideas, no inconsistency in paying any price for the glory of his country.”

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¶ The whole bloody day at Gravelotte Bismarck had nothing to eat. Finally, he found a hen’s nest with five eggs; giving three to half-starving soldiers near by, Bismarck with his sword broke the shells of the two remaining and sucked the eggs.

Next morning he had some sausage soup, the first warm food that had passed his lips for 36 hours.

¶ While he was standing dismounted, a concealed French battery began a tremendous cannonade; the shells dropping all around, exploded, and plowed up the ground.

¶ Night again. Nothing to eat. A sutler had some miserable rum and wine. Bismarck took that, at once, but there was not a morsel to eat. In the village, a few cutlets were found after a hard search, just enough for the King.

His Majesty decided not to bivouac among the dead again, but took shelter at a little public house.

¶ Bismarck with General Sheridan set off to find a sleeping place. House after house was filled with the wounded.

Finally they found three empty beds with straw mattresses. Here Bismarck and General Sheridan took up their quarters and slept capitally.

Sheridan was present as official observer for the United States Army. In his life, he had seen many great battles, including Gettysburg and Sedan.

¶ Bismarck talked to Sheridan in English; and at dinner they drank champagne and porter, Bismarck's favorite beverage.

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¶ With tens of thousands of Cuirassiers as companions the King and Bismarck rode down the broad highways, toward Paris; Bismarck wore his famous big top-boots.

What a picture the King, Bismarck and von Moltke marching down the highways of France, at their back their almighty army, up to 1914 the greatest in all history, its fighting strength 600,000 men, perfectly drilled and armed with deadly needle-guns. In puffs of smoke the reign of Napoleon the Little was ending; and it is now curious to recall that, 50 years before, as a young lieutenant, the present King of Prussia had traversed almost the identical route with the Allies, to help defeat Napoleon the Great!

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¶ The iron heel of war was grinding men's lives into the dust, setting fire to the country, and leaving a trail of destruction.

France looked along the German route as though a cyclone had devastated the face of nature.

¶ Past cities, towns, vineyards, châteaux, the tramp, tramp, tramp; the roll of the war drums; the rumbling of wheels—so the terrible Prussians marched on!

¶ "Summer was passing," says Lowe, "Autumn was coming fast; France had turned from the sap green of the vineyards to the golden hues of the harvest; but it was the harvest of Death."

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¶ Now came a gigantic cavalry movement, to the right, a prodigious wheel, to round-up the French MacMahon, who had dodged and doubled in the basin of the Meuse. "The chase," said Bismarck, "reminds me of a wolf hunt in the Ardennes, but when we arrived, the wolf had vanished!"

To make common ground with Bazaine, MacMahon concentrated his troops, with the idea of breaking the siege of Metz, where 175,000 French

soldiers were undergoing the horrors of starvation.

The Germans outwitted MacMahon, who finally decided to make a last stand around the frontier fortress of Sedan.

¶ On the night of August 31, the Germans closed in on him, in what proved to be one of the momentous battles in the world's history.

Von Roon and Moltke had 121,000 infantry and 618 cannon, the French 70,000 of all arms, 320 cannon and 70 Mitrailleuses.

On the slopes of Frenois, the Prussian King, Bismarck and a brilliant retinue witnessed for ten hours the dreadful carnage reddening the fields.

¶ "More artillery!" cried the King, surprised that the French would not yield.

In the King's retinue stood Bismarck, a crowd of princes, dukes, aide-de-camps, marshals, besides army attaches of Russia, England and America.

¶ On the King's order, 600 German guns began drawing the most terrific artillery fire in the history of battles, concentrating an ever-narrowing circle of flame and shell around the doomed place. It was too much for flesh and blood; a white flag was hoisted.

The Prussian flag of truce to inquire for the commander, was led into the presence of Napoleon, trapped at Sedan!

¶ Moltke's terms were short; the whole French army was to surrender as prisoners of war.

The French regarded this as too severe after their heroism, but the Prussians were inexorable; an armistice left the final decision till daylight.

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¶ Bismarck passed the night at the house of Dr. Jeanpot, at Donchery, a few miles from the bloody field of Sedan.

Along about daybreak, a servant awakened Bismarck, telling him a French general was at the door. It was Reille, Napoleon's messenger, saying "Napoleon is on the way over to see the King of Prussia!"

¶ What a moment! How Bismarck's pride must have risen; how he must have gritted his wolf's teeth and felt his gorge rise as he realized that the hour of his life-long revenge was at hand, against his old enemy.

¶ And yet, that night, he had been reading in his room after the dreadful Sedan carnage—what do you think? Human inconsistency! “Daily Refreshment for Believing Christians,” by the Moravian brotherhood.

¶ Unwashed, breakfastless, Bismarck immediately set out, his revolver in his belt; down the road Napoleon's carriage, “evidently a hired one,” said Bismarck afterwards, recounting the scene, “came into view; the Emperor was escorted by a handful of officers; Napoleon had on his military uniform, wore white kid gloves, and was smoking a cigarette!”

¶ Bowing and asking His Majesty's pleasure, Napoleon asks Bismarck, “I wish to meet the King of Prussia.” Bismarck replies, “Unfortunately impossible; the King is quartered some fifteen miles away.” However, it is only a trick to gain time. Bismarck has certain powerful reasons why he does not desire, just then, that Napoleon and William should meet. We shall see, presently.

¶ Napoleon drives slowly onward, but nearing Donchery hesitates on account of the crowd; and spying a solitary cottage near by, asks if he could not remain there.

¶ It is the hut of a weaver of Donchery—a mean, dirty place—and stands about fifteen paces from the high-road, which is lined with poplars; the house is one-story, yellow, with four windows, and has a slate roof.

¶ Bismarck and Napoleon ascend a rickety, narrow staircase giving entrance to a gloomy chamber, in which are a deal table and two rush-bottomed chairs. Here the two men sit alone for an hour. What a moment in history!

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¶ Only a few years before, that is to say, in October, 1865, Bismarck had sought out Napoleon III, or “Napoleon the Little,” and had held a famous political interview; the meeting at Biarritz found Napoleon filled with ambitions to emulate the illustrious career of his uncle, Napoleon Bonaparte; but the secret although well kept did not escape the vision of Bismarck.

¶ The Iron Chancellor came as a friend, on a pleasant exchange of diplomatic courtesies, but in secret he was sounding Napoleon's possible attitude in the oncoming Prussian war, against Austria. The Emperor was completely tricked. Bismarck talked frankly of the necessity of "reform" in the German Confederation, and Napoleon, whose hobby was that peoples speaking the same language should be under one rule, fell in quite naturally with the plan to "reform" Prussia. The Emperor thought that Bismarck had in mind only certain constitutional changes in Prussia, not dynastic changes, destroying the European balance of power and preparing the way for German Unity.

¶ Bismarck made clear to the Emperor that, in return for keeping out of any impending Austrian clash, France would be rewarded by enlarged boundaries. As an enlightened egotist, Bismarck felt that it was "only fair" to acknowledge French help with the left bank of the Rhine. It was all a bluff. But Napoleon, with his hunger to enlarge French territory, and to appear before France as a sort of second Napoleon the Great, fell in with the conspiracy. Herein, the Bismarckian skill at stacking the cards reaches its height.

¶ And now to think that the next meeting of the French lamb and the Prussian wolf should take place in a weaver's hut, Napoleon stripped of glory and power by the man who was to "give" great lands to France.

¶ The Emperor had been caught in his own trap; his armies had been crushed; his government destroyed by Bismarck's genius for political intrigue. The rise to power of Prussia over Austria, against which Napoleon had been tricked not to protest, was a turning point in the history of modern Europe. Hence we say that these two contrasted interviews, the one of glory, the other of the downfall, Biarritz and the Weaver's Hut, show our Otto von Bismarck as the supreme politico-military genius of his time.

¶ A curious sidelight on the famous interview at Biarritz is supplied by Bismarck's writings. "Napoleon said things could not go on as they had been doing, in Prussia," wrote Bismarck, "otherwise there would soon be an uprising in Berlin and a revolution in the whole country. I told him that the people of our country were not barricade-builders, and that in Prussia revolutions were made only by the kings. If the King could stand the strain

on him for three or four years he would certainly win the game. Unless he got tired and left me, I would not fail him. The Emperor at that time said of me, ‘Ce n’est pas un homme sérieux,’ (Bismarck is not a serious man), a mot of which I did not think myself at liberty to remind him, in the weaver’s hut, at Donchery.”

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¶ Bismarck exercised all his mighty ingenuity to keep Napoleon from urging too far that the King of Prussia be brought forward. Bismarck knew that King William was tender-hearted, and, tempted by the disaster that had come to Napoleon, would in consequence be inclined to deal leniently with the Emperor.

¶ Bismarck, setting his iron jaws hard, determined then and there to keep the Prussian King out of it till the terms of peace had been arranged.

¶ Come, come, are we not justified in our character study of Bismarck? Who now is master, who now servant? Who now is shown to be the real power behind the throne? And if Bismarck did not actually bring on this awful war, then he well knew the art of making other nations declare war. Oh, he has learned a thing or two in his long and eventful life; and he is now about to create his diplomatic masterpiece—in the Belgian weaver’s hut.

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¶ Sedan surrendered 40 generals, 2,825 various other officers, 83,000 prisoners of war, 184 pieces of artillery, 350 field guns, 70 Mitrailleuses, 12,000 horses, and enormous quantities of military stores.

¶ The broken-hearted Emperor was sent away to the castle at Wilhelmshoehe, near Cassel.

And the King of Prussia opened the champagne at his royal headquarters at Vendresse, and toasted von Roon, Moltke and Bismarck: “You, General von Roon, whetted our sword; you General von Moltke, wielded it; and you, Count Bismarck, have brought Prussia to its present prominence by the way in which you have directed its policy for several years.”

In which Bismarck reaches the zenith of his stupendous career;  
diplomatist, ministerial Cæsar, unifier of his country.

¶ The Iron Chancellor held firmly to his plan to strip France of her last franc.

The siege of Paris continued, with Bismarck and the King of Prussia installed at Versailles, within the shadow of the stately palace of the Kings of France.

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¶ It is a long, vivid story leading to the 5,000,000,000 francs indemnity, and the cessation of Alsace-Lorraine.

M. Thiers treated in vain to get softer terms; but Bismarck kept the King out of it and stuck to his hard bargaining.

¶ “This is not war, it is confiscation!” Thiers exclaimed one day in terrible anger, and eloquently he parleyed to have the amount reduced.

¶ Bismarck thereupon began to talk in German!

¶ “I have not enough French to answer such a charge as you have just made!” he thundered. “Henceforth, we carry on our affairs in German.”

¶ M. Thiers threatened to appeal to Europe to intervene, but at this Bismarck broke into a hoarse laugh.

He knew that he had in his pocket a secret quit-claim from Russia and Italy, Denmark and Belgium were tied in another way, Spain was hostile to the French, and as for England—he snapped his fingers!

¶ “Defy me, and I tell you what I will do! We have in Germany about 100,000 excellent French troops, captured at Metz, who are still wholly devoted to the old Imperial cause. I will release them and bring back the Bonapartists! I care not who is in power so long as the proper sovereign government of France signs our peace demands for indemnity. Napoleon cannot do it, as his throne is in ruins; and even if he did, the next party in power would probably set it aside. So part of my duty is not only to demand for my King the just rewards of our victory, but to start France again with some new form of government.”

¶ Going behind this stern diplomatic language, what Bismarck really meant was this: “The longer the French Assembly hesitates to call an election the more we will starve the city into submission. Live on horseflesh, stale bread, cats and dogs!—die of fever and pestilence!—the sooner it is over! Our siege guns will continue to bark night and day, Paris will be reduced to ashes, crumble to ruins, but the demands of the Prussian King must be obeyed. No power on this earth can turn me from my project. I am resolved to wage a war of extermination—and I have spoken!”

¶ “Very well, then!” exclaimed M. Thiers, “M. le Comte, as you will! Rob us of our homes!—provinces!—burn down our homes!—strangle our peaceful inhabitants!—in a word, complete your work! We shall fight you as long as our breath remains. Perhaps we shall die—but we shall never be dishonored.”

¶ Bismarck seemed touched, but said all he had to do was to obey the orders of the King.

Meantime he went out and was closeted again with Moltke and His Majesty.

¶ “I do not believe,” said M. Favre, “that any criminal ever waited for the judgment with more feverish anxiety. Motionless, we followed with bewildered gaze the hands of the clock.

¶ “The door opened; Bismarck stood on the threshold, announcing that he would not insist on the German troops entering Paris—provided we gave up Belfort!

¶ “There was a moment of inexpressible agony, but an exchange of glances sufficed. ‘We should be wanting in patriotism if we accepted!’ exclaimed M. Thiers. The door closed and Bismarck disappeared again.

¶ “At eight o’clock, M. Thiers had reaped the reward of his heroic endeavors. He had saved Belfort, but in all other respects he had absolutely failed to move the man of blood and iron. For five fearful days they had wrestled with the problem of the 5,000,000,000—and had lost! Bismarck had his own banker, the Jew Bleichroder, to show that after all the indemnity would be adding ‘only about one-fourth’ to France’s national debt.”

¶ On Sunday, February 26, the preliminaries of peace were signed. As Thiers signed, Bismarck took him by the hand, saying, “You are the last who ought to have been burdened by France with this sorrow—for of all Frenchmen you have the least deserved it!”

¶ Bismarck, radiant with joy, signed the papers with a new golden pen sent him for this express purpose by the ladies of the German town of Pforsheim.

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¶ Said M. Favre: “The countenance of M. de Bismarck was most happy. With theatrical pomp, he sent for a golden pen.... M. Thiers approached the little table on which lay the documents; he wrote his name without betraying the feelings that tortured him. I tried to imitate him, and we withdrew. The sacrifice was accomplished.

¶ “As a special understanding, it was agreed that the siege should be lifted that morning at four o’clock and that France should fire the last shot.

¶ “What sentiment in this, for Paris! Along then, in the deep night that precedes the dawn, with the sky illuminated by occasional flashes of the siege guns, at last the fire lessened, slackened gradually, and then solemn silence fell. Suddenly, through the night, a loud report was heard from the Paris ramparts, followed by a path of fire through the sky; this immediately died away, and deep silence, now unbroken, continued.

¶ “The long siege was over!”

¶ On the third day after signing the hard conditions, 30,000 German troops made their triumphal entry into Paris, after being reviewed on the plain of Longchamps.

With the victorious Prussians, Bismarck rode as far as the Arc de Triomphe.

¶ It was one of the greatest incidents of his eventful life.

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We have transposed to the last an episode that took place January 18th, 1871, the anniversary of the day on which the first King of Prussia had himself crowned at Koenigsberg, 1701.

In the Hall of Mirrors, at Versailles, King William I of Prussia was crowned German Emperor, amidst a clash of arms, martial music, hymns of praise, and the felicitations of a brilliant throng.

In the semi-circle stood princes, grand dukes, dukes, crown princes, hereditary princes, generals, ministers, military and political figures, against a background of Prussian hussars.

¶ The Hall of Mirrors at Versailles had seen many astonishing sights in the centuries gone by; and doubtless that night the shades of Richelieu, Louis XIV, Napoleon, Marie Antoinette, Marie Theresa, Madam Pompadour, looked down on one of the strangest incidents in all history, a German Emperor receiving his crown in the very palace of the old French kings, who in their turn, had waged some twenty hard wars upon Germany, and more than once had placed some part of German soil in pawn. Who read the proclamation to the assembled company expressing the new dignity of the sovereign over United Germany?

¶ The Man of Blood and Iron, Otto von Bismarck, at last had demonstrated the dream of his life, that is to say, he had in truth not only long been King's Man, but also long had upheld the King his master; had unified Germany;—and now had made his master more than king, as William I, German Emperor.

¶ Bismarck's life work was now practically over; however, he was a busy man for twenty years to come, trying to settle Germany's perplexing internal problems; but in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles he reached the zenith of his stupendous career as unifier of his country.

¶ In this magnificent state apartment of Louis XIV are seventeen arcades of looking-glass, corresponding to the seventeen large windows; the ceiling by Lebrun shows thirty incidents in the life of Louis the Magnificent, each painting bordered by rich gilded sculptures.

The entire gallery is decorated with marbles and grand trophies of gilded copper, by Coysevox.

In Louis's time, the gallery was hung in white damask brocaded with gold; there were orange trees in rare boxes; the great central chandelier of gilded silver was by famous smiths; priceless Savonnerie carpets muffled the

lightest foot-fall; round about were silver stools, with green velvet coverings surrounded by bands of gold brocade. Later, the silver was melted down, on Louis's order, and the money squandered.

¶ These great artists worked in the Hall of Mirrors and neighboring apartments: Berain, Monsart, Lebrun, Lenotre, Grisse, Vigarani, Audran, Baptiste, Coustau, Coypel, Van Cleve, Taffieri, Taupin, Tempore, Temporiti, numbering among them painters, sculptors, designers, architects, wood carvers, silversmiths and locksmiths extraordinary.

¶ Here, Louis, surrounded by some 1,500 flatterers of all degree, high and low, kept his court of pleasure bestowing ribbons, favors, dinners, golden swords for the men, diamond necklaces for the women.

¶ However, 1789 ended all that; the mob stormed into imperial chambers and through the apartments of the old aristocratic French courtesans; and with clubs, axes and fires laid in ruin art treasures that stood unmatched through centuries.

¶ To this Versailles come now the Prussian soldiers to proclaim their German Emperor; in this palace, where the Bourbons had expended some 200,000,000 francs, as money is reckoned today; to say nothing of the free labor of thousands of convicts.

No record tells what Louis spent on the place, but in August, 1684, 8,000 horses and 20,000 convicts were working there, and in 1685 at one time as many as 36,000 convicts, in charge of soldiers, added their vast free labor to heighten the peculiar glory of the great French monarchs, as the sublime representatives of kingcraft—in its splendor and in its downfall.

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¶ All hail, William I, German Emperor! All hail, Bismarck! All hail, United Germany!

## CHAPTER XVI

### The Versailles Masterpiece

The Kaiser's crown at last, and how and why; herein, we sum up the very flower of our great man's genius; and mark it well!

¶ The very name "Kaiser" brings up memories of the Middle Ages, thence backward to the days of imperial Cæsar. Kaiser, at best, is but Cæsar, rewritten.

Yet Bismarck was at great pains to make clear that the substitution of Kaiser for King of Prussia involved no restoration of ancient imperial institutions.

¶ The use of Kaiser, as the title for the new monarch, had behind it a deep, almost religious purpose, in conformity with the sense of nationality and brotherhood to which through long and painful development the German states had at last attained. Bismarck calls the return of the title "a political necessity, making for unity and centralization."

¶ "I was convinced," he says, "that the pressure solidifying our imperial institutions would be more permanent the more the Prussian wearer of the imperial title should himself avoid that dangerous striving on the part of our dynasty to flaunt its own pre-eminence in the face of other dynasties. King William I was not free from this inclination ... to call forth a recognition of the superior prestige of Prussia's crown, over the Kaiser's title."

¶ The Kaiser idea is simple: He is the sworn servant "of" the people, but his terms are his own, viz., all is "for" the people, but not "through" the people.

Such in a few words is the Bismarckian conception of a strong ruler.

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¶ It was not, then, to be "an expanded Prussia," but a German Empire. And the Kaiser's powers are hence the legal functions of an imperial organ, attached by the organic law of the Empire to the Prussian crown.

Thus Germany is a true state, but not a monarchy; sovereignty does not rest with the Kaiser, but with the totality of the allied governments. And in turn the old states became provinces of the Empire; and the Kaiser exercises his powers in the name of the Empire.

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¶ However, it must be recalled that Bismarck always detested political and social conformity, trampled conformity under foot, and with wild voice ridiculed conformity—especially when conformity meant to yield to the peasants a constructive share in the governments of the thirty-nine clashing German states. That is to say, his idea of freedom was to make the State paramount, guiding, directing and if need be disciplining the people.

¶ Memories fasten themselves on us, at this moment, memories of the old days of struggle for nationality.

It was on Bismarck's advice that, although Frederick William IV was bitten by the ambition to become ruler of United Germany, yet when the democratic Frankfort Diet offered him the crown, he did indignantly refuse; and many years later, his successor—that old man with the wonderful history!—William I, after the victories of Sedan and Gravelotte, was mightily afraid that the Berlin Parliament, representing democratic conformity, would offer him the honor of Emperor before that gift could be bestowed by the princes themselves.

¶ Ludwig of Bavaria in his letter to William, urging the imperial title, Kaiser, or German Emperor, uses these words: "I have proposed to the German princes to join me in urging Your Majesty to assume the title, German Emperor, in connection with the exercise of the prædial rights of the Federation." But it was Bismarck's masterpiece of politics, equal to his stroke of Holstein, that sent to the King of Bavaria the proper diplomatic advices, to be acted upon by the South German princes and returned to the supposedly surprised William, urging on him to become German Emperor.

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¶ In spite of Bismarck's fine hand, Bavaria at first refused to accept the Iron Chancellor's advices. There is light on this topic in Herr Ottokar Lorenz's "Foundation of the German Empire," making clear among other facts that "the German eagle had a narrow escape from dying in the egg." Twice negotiations were broken off; finally, when the King of Bavaria tried to get his countrymen behind him in the plan to proclaim William of Prussia, German Emperor, at Versailles, "it was only after some hesitation and much regret."

It took the Bavarian Landtag a month to make up its mind! To read the heated discussions is to destroy the legend that the proclamation of the Kaiser was by spontaneous demand.

¶ But we must not press these things too far. The fact that King William had to fight for the magnificent honor he had won for himself and his country, is merely to say that men are men; nor should we ever forget that nothing creates so much jealousy as prosperity.

¶ Herr Bismarck had the cleverness to win, at last, and after that there is little to be added.

For that matter, the much-lauded revolt of the American colonists against Britain was originally not endorsed by over one-third of the inhabitants. Yet, with the final victory, like a pack the colonists went over to the winning side, saying, "We told you so."

¶ We have nothing but praise for the way in which Bismarck created his Versailles masterpiece. That there was a political squabble behind the curtain, in Bavaria, was to be expected.

¶ Tell me, did you ever achieve any success that you did not have to go out and fight for?

It is an amiable fiction that men "recognize" each other's work, in politics, and "urge" on them rulership over nations. They, too, have to get out and fight for it!

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¶ This necessity for turbulent striving to carry out political ideas was especially true of Germany during the period of which we write. Complex conditions long made National Unity a profound problem, not only in politics but in human nature.

¶ All manner of blacklegs were at work with here and there an honest man; national oratory was at once visionary, ludicrous and tragical; fanatics of the bomb, the knife and the poison-cup for years were abroad in the land. These situations, growing from times past, compel you to hold with Bismarck that ultimate appeal to the sword was after all the only hope for a new Germany.

¶ Bismarck did it grossly, but at least he went through with it—call it militarism or what you please.

¶ For that matter, neither Britain, France, Belgium, (nor the United States with her 186-odd variants of Christianity in her 186-odd religious sects), grew out of political cynicism, least of all out of some aloof system of esoteric idealism.

¶ The King of Britain owes his crown to the sword; the President of France his high office to the sword; the Belgian King traces his legitimacy to revolution; likewise, to revolution the President of the United States owes his right to rule during his brief hour of official authority.

¶ But what would you in this imperfect world?

German Unity sprang from the needs of human hearts—fighting bravely for what they hold important!—even as you fight for your rights, or consent to remain a slave. And Germans never will be slaves.

¶ Therefore, know it now and be done with it, or make the most of it if you are inclined to snarl at realities: The Kaiser's crown came by the sword. Surely, you did not expect that it fell from Heaven? As long as men are men, they must fight for what they achieve; and the German Empire is no exception;—nor is there any good reason to expect that history can possibly be other than the record of human nature, in action.

¶ Up to his downfall in 1890, Bismarck was an uncompromising Royalist, scoffed at the common people as a source of political sovereignty.

¶ No man knows what is, ultimately, for the glory of God; but when in bitter retirement, thrown off by the grandson of William I, Bismarck, replying to the old dispute about the interior causes of the Franco-Prussian war, to which William owes his title German Emperor, it is a fact that Bismarck proceeded to weaken the royalist tradition by forcing the government to produce the Ems dispatch; and it was then made clear to the common people that there was behind it all the under-play of politics, thus dispelling the religious and patriotic glamour that the war had been entered upon to protect the Fatherland against the land-lust of Napoleon the Little.

Had now the military right been used not to express the will of God, but the ends of human expediency?

¶ Bismarck certainly knew all this before the great war, but for reasons of political expediency suppressed the facts till in a moment of indignation he dropped the mask and called on all honest men to know the truth.

Bismarck, twenty years before, had with equal indignation set up before the Prussians that their King had been grossly insulted, and that Napoleon wanted the left bank of the Rhine.

¶ But let us forget all this, in a broad acknowledgment of the fact that human beings at various times, for their own ends, do indeed wear various masks; and let us not keep up the fight forevermore;—but here and now let us grant to Bismarck final absolution, not claiming for him the perfection of the demigod.

¶ After all is said, history is not the record of some far-off manifest destiny, but instead is merely the sordid story of human nature in action, reciting at best the littleness that appertains to men's ways, with now and then the unrealized expression of some fleeting larger hope.

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His Versailles masterpiece reduced to its final analysis, in terms of human nature; wherein it is made clear that Bismarck knew his German peasant as well as his Prussian King.

¶ The core of human interest around which Bismarck shaped his stupendous politico-military drama, in order that, in the end, William might become German Emperor, was neither an appeal to parliaments nor to armies, but a reply to a peculiar psychological something in the Teuton character that makes respect for the strong hand.

It is only in the largest way that this fact may be made clear. It escapes categorical statement;—and can best be glimpsed behind the history of events, from the psychological rather than the physical side.

¶ Bismarck manipulated an invisible but very real human force, made it the breath of life for his plans!

¶ That he warped on the Nineteenth Century the old Holy Roman Empire conception of Divine-right is an amazing politico-military fact.

It was only after many brilliant achievements that, at the height of his power, Cæsar linked himself with the gods. Cæsar's earlier life knew no such pretensions, but as he climbed the dizzy heights of fame, at last the day came when his kinship with the immortal gods themselves alone satisfied his inordinate ambitions; and from that time forth Divine-right became an established fact in the theological-political code of kings; and thus on, down through the Middle Ages, until the French Revolution destroyed confidence in the old-line absolute monarch, as vicegerent of Christ on this earth.

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¶ However, that Otto von Bismarck, the blond Pomeranian giant, warped on the Nineteenth Century the Imperial Cæsarian idea of the Divine-right of kings is not the final fact of his work. The inner fact is that he urged the King's authority as a foil against the mob-idea of the French Revolution. The liberty-crazed masses needed a strong hand at this time.

¶ What made possible the coming of the Empire was not, after all, traceable entirely to the political side of Bismarck's hotly contested struggles.

The innate craving of the German people for a strong ruler has a subtle inner meaning, too easily overlooked.

¶ In the final analysis, Bismarck's position expresses Prussian sense of National security in a powerful war lord, rather than supports the conception of master and man. His was not the position of lord and servant; rather it means a manly, intelligent admission of the necessity of a strong central authority in the nation.

¶ By the force of years of tedious repetitions, building on the plain laws of mental suggestion, Bismarck at last created certain dominating ideas; but the germ of these ideas already existed in Prussia's consciousness.

The Prussian character supporting Divine-right represents a singular compound of cadet, blind confidence in aristocratic leadership, religious radicalism, worship of ancestors approximating the Chinese sentiment, and finally, a racial psychology of rulership, based on the rattan of Frederick the

Great. On this total combination, the astute Bismarck played for thirty long years, warring for his lord and master, the Hohenzollerns.

A careful reading of Bismarck's speeches, letters, dispatches, will show that whatever political expediency he may at various times have followed, and however often he may have changed front, there is still in his great labor a tireless repetition of ideas commanding respect for vested authority, for ancestry, for a ruling class as against the ruled, and always for absolute dog-like obedience to some central commanding power.

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¶ The psychological something on which Bismarck builded his German Empire is Bismarck's recognition of the peculiarities of his German peasant, as well as of his Prussian King. We come now to some great central racial facts.

Bismarck's unending eulogies of military glory, now extolled in the high language of a victorious commander-in-chief, again as a drill-sergeant sharply criticising the squad, are not to be dismissed as the expressions of one in large authority, speaking from the steps of the throne.

Bismarck's work would have failed had he not linked it to some secret craving of the Teutonic heart, far deeper than conquering the jealousies, intrigues and selfishness that compose the long story of the rise of the German Empire.

¶ Historians may talk as much as they please about Bismarck's executive and administrative genius, but these, great as they are, are overshadowed by his power of political spirit-healing, as it were; through practice of his peculiar psychotherapy he cured sick Germany of many of her ills; at the same time bringing about German brotherhood in a way that added to the great glory of Prussia.

¶ Appealing to the solemn religious side of Prussian character that expresses itself in upholding authority, in church or state, Bismarck incessantly lauds the descendants of noble families, and sets up that Prussian military aristocracy alone reared up Prussian political legitimacy.

He presents likewise the idea that the supreme quality of German manhood is courage; and to Bismarck's mind the sovereign German virtue is revealed

in strong-willed eager soldiers.

While in these lofty moods, Bismarck displays enormous family pride for his beloved aristocrats of Brandenburg, is never weary of telling of their military prowess.

He avows on many occasions his life-long regret that he did not enter the army as a career, instead of taking up the civil service; he digs into his family records and proudly numbers each Bismarck who carried arms, even down to distant cousins, and is never so happy as when telling of Bismarcks on many blood-drenched fields.

Above all else, he everlastingly insists that behind his demands for his King is the direct will of God.

¶ There is not the slightest doubt that as time passed and Bismarck kept telling over and over for years that the King represented God's will on this earth, true Prussians came at last to believe it more and more; for the reason that it was in their blood to believe, as it is the nature of a bull-dog to fight, a glutton to eat, a thief to steal, the sun to shine.

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¶ Bismarck called on heaven to send its avenging lightnings on the heads of those who deserted their monarch, to their perpetual dishonor; could think of no crime more monstrous than ingratitude to his King, especially to a king by the grace of God.

And Bismarck declared again and again, as his deepest conviction, that the Prussian crown was encircled by a heavenly aureole. In short, Bismarck revived in its purest and most uncompromising form the doctrine of Divine-right.

¶ In an age seemingly out of touch with this iron-bound mold of the Feudal past, Bismarck would have failed miserably were it not that he touched a responsive side of Prussian character—dog-like loyalty to authority, compounded of military glory and a pale shimmering ghost of religious aspiration.

The governing fact of the whole situation was psychological rather than physical; and all this stupendous cannonading at Gravelotte, Sedan,

Koeniggraetz, and the magnificent drama in the Hall of Mirrors, were after all merely so many evidences that Bismarck better than all the tribe of his objectors knew the psychological core of Prussian character.

¶ Bismarck brought down the wrath of God on those rival leaders who dared to be disloyal to his Divine-right King, and flew into frenzy at the very thought that a genuine Prussian should expect wisdom from the common people. Behind all this, was always the solid appeal to Prussian military-cadet idea of loyalty and strong politico-religious instincts.

¶ Manipulating this psychological side, invisible yet very real, Bismarck shows his genius as a constructive statesman. Without this intuitive touch of Prussian consciousness, all the lustre that Bismarck ultimately shed on the Imperial crown would have been impossible.

¶ Thus, we behold Otto von Bismarck, the rude, blond, Pomeranian giant—in spite of his coarse speeches, his brawls, his political card-stacking, his enormous egotism, his passionate seeking after power—play with Shakespearian subtlety on the strings of human passion.

There is no larger character-side to our Bismarck; so study it well and reflect on its wide meaning.

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¶ We are not here to say what Bismarck should or should not have done, but we make up our mind about him by what he did do.

¶ He had peculiar ideas of religion, pleasure, duty, and certainly he had his own idea of what was best for Prussia, and finally for Germany.

¶ He bartered his immortal time for a King's crown and an Emperor's glory, guns, swords, forts, marchings up and down the land.

¶ He bartered his time in angry disputes with his fellow-man, for prisons, broken homes, murders, tears for 80,000 widows and orphans.

¶ He bartered his time for magnificent spectacles such as the coronation of William I in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, a palace outrivaling any creation of man since the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

¶ He bartered his time for grand balls for aristocrats in silk coats and ladies in diamonds and satin gowns.

¶ He bartered his time that a certain space in Europe be made over to his own liking. Other kings and emperors with equal logic wished to have this space made over in a way that seemed as good as the one Bismarck had in mind, but Bismarck regarding it as a calamity that other plans should come to pass, fought bitterly with sword and cannon to back his individual opinion against all who disputed with him.

¶ He bartered his time that a certain part of the map be marked with one name instead of thirty-nine names, as had been the case when he came to power as a young man in the politics of Prussia.

¶ And finally he bartered his immortal time in a thirty-years' gladiatorial fight that in the end millions of Germans might feel the tingle of blood-brotherhood. How he faced the long, heart-breaking battle, therein we find the true measure of our great Bismarck! Thus his work, as an individual, is absorbed in the larger life of the German Empire. These National services make Bismarck one of the immortals; and his name will be remembered affectionately by Germans for thousands of years.

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¶ The present review of German origins, through Bismarckian genius, is concerned largely with the form of government established.

The collective efficiency of the Bismarckian idea, as worked out in the German Constitution, promptly ascertains the will of the people, and carries out that will.

¶ The Kaiser, through the Chancellor, has the selection of all important public officials, and as King of Prussia appoints Prussian administrative officials; and in turn, the various kings choose the various public servants in their respective kingdoms. All hold office during good behavior, or for life; instantly responsive to the will of the Kaiser, or to the Bundesrath. The state officials are thus "the fingers of the Kaiser," working the duties of the Empire, free from the petty molestations that assail even the most trustworthy and patriotic American office-holders.

¶ In simple terms of parallel, the much-lauded American Commission System, for the government of cities, was borrowed from the Kaiser.

The Commission System delegates the power to a committee of five, who pass and execute the laws.

This is precisely the principle laid down by the Bundesrath, in which body is united executive, legislative and judicial functions. It is a fact that the cities most efficiently managed, in the United States (1915), are under the Commission System, that is to say, the German conception of responsible politico-civic authority.

¶ German thoroughness, as well as German discipline, unite to make the German system a brilliant success; but in America the German collective idea is politically offensive because of our superstition that the way of Liberty lies through incessant political changes. The American has confidence in the wisdom of large numbers, believes that by dividing the functions of government the people may be saved from themselves. One-man power is (theoretically) greatly feared, in America. Despite the fact that in all great industrial undertakings Americans appreciate the part played by personal responsibility, they are loath to admit that the principle makes for National political efficiency.

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¶ One final word: Revolution means change; and in this sense the French Revolution is important. In some respects, it is still going forward. However, in 1848 the practical side of the Revolution was not understood, was therefore decried by conservative thinkers who saw in the excesses of the Commune little that heralded a better day.

¶ In France, thousands of men misinterpreted emotional zeal for human brotherhood for fitness to govern. It is the old, old story.

To come at once to the point: You must judge a nation as you do a man, not by what that man says, but by what he does. Hence, from Bismarck's point of view, it was time to be done with the bursting of blood vessels in a frenzy about equality, and to come down to the essential facts of human nature; or if you like the words better, human ways.

It is not necessarily a mark of wisdom to issue “manifestoes against special privileges” and to set up that “all” the people are fit to rule an empire.

The very reverse is the proof of history; few men indeed there are who have the patience, the discretion and the prudence to rule over other lives.

Also, the German race asks no upstart rulers; the idea of father and child, duty, discipline and personal responsibility is deeply grounded in the German conception of an adequate State.

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¶ There is small profit in using precious time denouncing Bismarck’s protest against French Constitutionalism. Let us, instead, try to understand why the old ways were cherished. And always bear in mind that the Past holds mankind in a tighter grip than the Radicals are willing to concede! There is no such thing as wiping off the slate and starting with a “new” set of ideas. The wisest man in the world cannot do that. At best, he recognizes the past, with here and there a slight variation.

Such, in short, was Bismarck’s broad and true idea of human necessity. And he planned his German Empire accordingly.

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¶ Bismarck was faced by these facts: the idiomatic ways in which German people thought and acted; their tastes and ideals, not only in politics but in society, law, religion;—nay, their very dreams. Throughout, there is always a profound sense of personal responsibility to the State. The State is not to be forgotten for some spurious personal individuality.

And mark this: that for generations “events” in Germany all gave expression to certain racial habits of thought, against which all manner of Communistic uprisings were anathema.

German sense of discipline, duty and personal responsibility, in State affairs, is grounded on a high consciousness that is not satisfied with half-measures, bungling, waste, cheap politicians, and freakish legislation. The German takes himself too seriously to permit a bunko-politician to come on with faking, as a substitute for the National ideal of government.

¶ Hence, Bismarck’s Imperial democracy, with the Kaiser at its head.

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¶ As between the inevitable contest between the Crowd and the Crown, springing from the inflammatory ideas of French Constitutionalism, Bismarck did not shrink; but fought it out in his own way. Our Man of Blood and Iron desired the blessings of liberty for Germany with all the strength of his powerful being; but he could not stultify his common sense by meekly conceding no essential distinction between men, in their capacity for leadership. He was, then, intent on bringing out of the German political chaos a type of democracy that may be termed Imperial as well as representative, in which the people are accorded their share, as he saw it, but always under the guidance of a strong central authority.

¶ And after all said in glorification of any special type of government, the stubborn fact remains that absolute equality, from a representative point of view, is a fiction unsupported by fact. The notorious incapacity and apathy of the masses is always, in the end, directed by central powers, exercised insidiously or openly as you please, but exercised nevertheless. In every political party we find a coterie, men of little wisdom it may be but leaders of the crowd; in every city commission is always one masterful man to whom the other members defer; in every banking house, one deciding voice; every religious organization must have a head, regardless of the number of counsellors; every ship a captain; every army a general; and, finally, in every family there should be the guidance and direction of a strong father.

¶ Is there not a ring of sincerity in Bismarck's manly acknowledgment of the inevitable equalities in the human stuff of which governments are composed? He saw only common sense in openly protesting that in any German government big enough and enduring enough to satisfy the German conception of responsibility, in a word German thoroughness, there must be, somewhere, a master-mind.

¶ For many years, and even today, Bismarck is in some quarters regarded as the arch-enemy of the common people, but his great work has stood the acid test of time. The German Empire, builded under Bismarck's broad ideas may be likened unto a wonderful watch, in which each part does its peculiar work without even a gambler's chance of going wrong.

# BOOK THE SIXTH

## Once a Man and Twice a Child

### CHAPTER XVII

#### The Downfall

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The secret discontent of the man who believed himself sole founder of the German Empire.

¶ When the Kaiser, on that eventful day in March, 1890, turned and told the old man to go, Bismarck received the heart-breaking sentence without a sign of protest.

¶ To a friend who called he told the news in a calm voice, a smile on his lips, congratulating himself on being able to resume his country life, of which he was so fond, of visiting again the forests on his estates, and “belonging to himself” in the few years that were yet left.

¶ “I’ll soon be gone,” he said, “and it is time I should take a rest.”

¶ The story is long and complex, but we will give you the large details, only. The day comes when Bismarck’s old friend, Emperor William I, passes from this earthly scene; his son, Frederick III, reigns three months and is carried off by cancer of the throat. The doom of Bismarck is now sealed! Emperor William I was the firm foundation of Bismarck’s strength, but the son did not like the Iron Chancellor, and within the three brief months of power before death called, Frederick III let it be known that Bismarck was marked for retirement. Frederick’s one act leveled against the

Bismarck family-dynasty was to dismiss von Puttkammer, Minister of the Interior.

¶ Now enters William II, aged 29, a mighty man in the making, a sleepless man, one who in his time was to become the standard by which henceforth all German institutions are to be measured. His first address to the army; his second, to the navy; his third, three days later, to the citizens.

¶ Did he not ask old von Moltke to resign? Yes, and others. It was not, as many historians set up, that Emperor William II was jealous of Bismarck, nor was it a case of “crabbed age and youth cannot live together.”

¶ The Emperor, with firm feeling in his will to Imperial power, wishes to develop Germany along lines of world-wide importance. Bismarck was of the past; William of the future. The blow fell March 28th, 1890.

¶ The world gave a gasp of astonishment; it seemed impossible that Bismarck, the master-mind of United Germany, should be unceremoniously shuffled out of sight.

Political writers the world around become involved in spirited controversies, on the whole supporting the old man and denouncing what seemed like ingratitude on the part of the new Emperor. It was pointed out that Bismarck himself, speaking to the Czar, had only a short time before declared, “I hope to die in office, always a good friend of Russia.” Also that William II had on New Year’s telegraphed to Bismarck, “That I may long be permitted to work with you, for the welfare and greatness of the Fatherland!”

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¶ If Bismarck was not made by a King’s breath, at least a breath destroyed Bismarck’s control of the situation.

Bismarck had long ruled the lives of millions; but when Wm. II snapped his fingers and said “Finis!” the old Chancellor had to go. The loss of Bismarck’s influence was as complete as though instead of being the foremost man of his time in the diplomatic world, he was instead only a clerk discharged by his superior.

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¶ In listing the elements on which Bismarck builded there is always one often overlooked, yet at the very foundation, the bottom stone in the wall. That one was the favorable attitude of King William I. Without the King's consent, Bismarck's career would have been impossible! Herein, we find a classic illustration of how interdependent are men's lives; what small causes sustain or defeat great careers.

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¶ But first we wish to tell you something of his honors during the past few years, also of the munificent patronage of the Kaiser, going far to refute the libel that the Kaiser was ungrateful. The patient Kaiser in truth dealt nobly with the moody old man.

On the old man's 70th birthday (1885), the people of Germany offered a gift of \$1,350,000, one-half of which Bismarck used to repurchase the ancestral estate, Schoenhausen, which he had sold in his impecunious years; and now, thanks to the gratitude of the German nation, the old place, mightily enlarged and improved, passed again into Bismarck's hands.

The other half of the \$1,350,000 Bismarck set aside as an endowment fund for school teachers.

¶ Even Victor Hugo added his hero-worship, in this curious letter: "The giant salutes the giant! The enemy salutes the enemy! The friend sends the greeting of a friend!"

¶ "I hate you, cruelly, for you have humiliated France; I love you because I am greater than you.

¶ "You kept silence when my eighty years sounded from the belfry of my glory; but I speak now because the stolen clock which stands upon your desk, refuses to announce to you that your 70th birthday has come.

¶ "If you and I were united in one person, the history of the world would have been ended.... But you are great because you know not what fear is. Therefore, I, the poet, offer my hand to you, the great man."

¶ The Prince, thunderstruck, wrote in reply two words, "Otto—Adieu!"

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¶ Nor was this all. The Pope bestowed upon Bismarck the Order of Christ, for ameliorating the last of certain hard conditions against the Church, dating from the culture-struggle of years gone by.

¶ In 1871, Emperor William I had invested Bismarck with the hereditary dignity of Prince, and William II conferred on Bismarck, at the time of dismissal (1890), the title Duke of Lauenburg, together with a larger share of the Duchy of Lauenburg, an estate on which the Emperor expended \$1,000,000.

¶ The old man's income was now said to be in excess of \$100,000 a year; in addition he received unnumbered gifts of a princely nature, as well as priceless tokens of sentimental esteem, from patriotic Germans the world around.

¶ It was a relief to Bismarck, in his old age, to know that his family would be rich and famous. He had been deeply engrossed in politics for years, and all his ambitions had been exhausted on his beloved Germany; he not only had no time to make money, but was heavily in debt; his interest account, for loans, was said to have been, for many years, \$30,000 per annum.

How he managed to keep his head above water (with all the distractions of statesmanship, to say nothing of the burdens of three great wars, and the embarrassments of his private finances) shows the man's iron constitution as well as his sagacity in practical affairs.

¶ In all, Bismarck received forty-eight orders of distinction, at the hands of monarchs; also a long list of university degrees, medals and golden keys bestowing the freedom of German cities.

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¶ The immediate cause of Bismarck's dismissal had to do with an old "Order in Council," 1852, to the effect that the Prime Minister, as head of the Prussian Cabinet, had autocratic powers.

This order the Kaiser now abruptly countermanded. The decision was made following an interview between Bismarck and Dr. Windhorst, at Bismarck's house.

William II did not much like this political jockeying on the part of Bismarck; Windhorst was an enemy of the established order; therefore, that the Prussian Chancellor should hold a secret caucus with a politician objectionable to the Emperor created a crisis.

The Kaiser, who lived in a wire-hung whispering gallery, knew at once that Bismarck and Windhorst had been in conference; and early on the day following, William abruptly appeared at Bismarck's and asked to see the Chancellor.

Bismarck came down in morning gown and slippers, for he had been summoned from his bed!

¶ “What is the meaning of this Windhorst interview?” inquired the Kaiser sharply.

Bismarck replied with spirit. The breach widened. Bismarck took the ground that it was none of the Kaiser's business who called at the Bismarck house.

¶ The Kaiser then insisted that in the future he should be notified in advance of prospective political interviews, that, if he so desired, he might send a personal representative, to report the drift of the talk.

This made Bismarck furious; the old man rebelled, flatly!

¶ It was a sharp, short, painful scene; by no means a ceremonious discussion of constitutional prerogatives, or the amicable rearrangement of methods of transacting state business. Instead, it was the parting of the ways, the breaking of old ties;—and after all these long years!

¶ “Then I understand, Your Majesty, that I am in your way?”

¶ “Yes!”

¶ “Enough!”

¶ “Haste!” rejoined the Kaiser; and thus, in few words, the celebrated interview came to an end.

¶ In parting with the Chancellor, the Kaiser made Bismarck Prince of Lauenburg and gave him a very valuable country estate, and added also the rank of Field Marshal. The princes of Germany joined in good wishes for the old man's peace and happiness, for his declining days.

¶ Peace and happiness—what a satire!

64

And Bismarck was intensely human! "Who made United Germany?" is his question.

¶ The women of his household did not take the news quietly.

¶ The imperial messenger arrived with the Kaiser's portrait, as a farewell souvenir to Prince Bismarck. His wife exclaimed: "Take it to Friedrichsruh and let it be placed in the stable!"

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¶ At the depot, a great crowd came to see the old man depart for the country, but the Kaiser was not there.

Bismarck's hoary age, his great dignity, his known services to Germany, were now dear to the heart of Germans; thousands gathered, in spontaneous farewell, crowding around the old man and kissing his hand.

¶ Now let us face the facts.

To a man of Bismarck's iron mold, the exercise of power is the breath of life; this made it a tragedy for the aged Bismarck to withdraw.

It was but natural for him, as time passed and his ambition grew, that he should believe himself the sole founder of the German Empire. His constant utterances after his downfall bear out this idea. The composite victory of scores of minds merged in his imagination and now crystallized in his own soul victory. Such is human nature, and so we say "Wellington won the Battle of Waterloo," but is this strictly true? True or false, such is human habit of thought, and Bismarck was also now shown to be human enough to claim it all for himself.

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¶ The story of Wolsey over again; our old counsellor of state thrown off in his declining years; and we can almost hear Bismarck in his great bitterness repeat the tragic words:

Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal  
I serv'd my King, he would not in my age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies!

¶ Bismarck's further official presence was irksome to the new master. With the iron decision characteristic of Hohenzollern, William II ended the situation, with a stroke of his imperial will. In this attitude William not only acted wisely, but showed himself every inch a Kaiser.

¶ Besides, Bismarck was plotting in a very human way to support and advance the rising fortunes of the Bismarck family. Would you not have done as much, or even more?

In his princely office, Bismarck thought to found a diplomatic dynasty of his own, wherein the servant becomes the master; he made his son, young Count Herbert, Minister of Foreign Affairs, a rise in life prodigiously fast for one who used to fill the function of holding his father's dispatch bag in the Parliament, when the old man made speeches, supported by incessant drinking of brandy.

Bismarck, himself, was Chancellor, Minister-President, Foreign Minister; his cousin, Minister of the Interior; and there were many other Bismarcks in state service, trained to know the old man's policy. Constructive governmental work was all in Bismarck's power;—and he meant to keep it there.

¶ These many acts of family favoritism, arousing the indignation of the new Emperor, played an important part in determining the old man's dismissal. The King was offended by Bismarck's many acts of nepotism, "the greatest," he secretly declared, "which politics have ever recorded."

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¶ A high official said to Bismarck after Koeniggraetz: "You should be well satisfied;—it made you a Prince!"

¶ “It made me a Prince,” mused Bismarck, with a sudden and unaccountable show of irony. Then, pointing to the map of United Germany, he replied with deep-rooted conviction that revealed how the fires of ambition were consuming his very soul: “A Prince, did you say? Yes, there is my principality!”

¶ From that hour, the suspicious and irascible side of Bismarck’s mind continued to expand. Some of us quarrel with our family, our partners, or our political party, asking who was responsible for the disaster, but the most deadly disputes are those called forth by ambition to decide not who was responsible for the loss, but who made the success.

¶ Small cause; great effect.

¶ And Bismarck was intensely human!

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The elements of his greatness number three—Here read two, but the third and greatest is yet to come.

¶ Now you ought to begin to understand the man in his naked reality; his elements of greatness compounded with crying frailties—but his very faults endear him to us the more, because they show him brother to the weak.

¶ Threefold a great man, great in ambition and courage; greater in compelling victory through years of patient and moody planning; but greatest of all in his downfall, when turning his back upon the blaze of glory, he retires to the country to view the mighty forests, and to take long walks with his dogs over the fields, communing with himself, the winds of heaven, and the immortal stars.

¶ His time is now very short; the sands have all but run out of the glass. For the first time in many, many years, he now belongs to himself once more—on the very edge of the tomb—before the sun is to go out forever—and the long night settles down.

¶ Does he still believe in his old ikon? In the secret chamber of his heart does he still believe that God was behind it all, on the side of the needle-

guns of Sadowa?

¶ The justifications of earth oftentimes betray themselves in strange superstitions, and there always was a large strain of superstition compounded in the great mind of this great man; not unlike the superstitions of a brother conqueror, Julius Cæsar, who was wont to crawl on his belly to the Temple, there to return thanks to the immortal gods for success in battle.

¶ To his dying day, Otto von Bismarck held fast that he was the instrument of God, and that God did it all, through him. Flesh and blood needs some explanation for its ways—and it may be that one interpretation is on the whole as good as another. With Bismarck the ikon was God.

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¶ On his part, as a human being, for many years Bismarck nursed his seemingly impossible dream of expelling Austria from the German states and binding up thirty-nine principalities in one grand Empire. This ambition he pursued incessantly, and ultimately succeeded in reaching by his genius in manipulating the human nature side of the men around him. He worked for himself, for his King and for his ideal of a United Germany. He gave to the seemingly hopeless cause all his time, strength, nay, his very soul.

¶ His was also now the secret discontent of a man who thought himself the sole founder of the German Empire. It was so understood by Kaiser William. For the time being, then, the patient Kaiser, averse to wounding the pride of a true German servant of the Empire, permitted the overleaping ambition of his great Minister of State to have sway; but William knew that, soon or late, the break must come; and in his own mind had already decided on the man who was to take Bismarck's place.

¶ Little by little threats came; men in high office secretly inveighed against Bismarck's new ambitions; it did not escape the attention of the Emperor's intriguers, who now worked against the old man's family aspirations; then came more resolute attitudes on Bismarck's part, egged on by his wife and by his son, who each had grown prodigiously ambitious.

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¶ Enter General Caprivi!

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¶ Before the will of the Kaiser, Bismarck must bow; and now behold how the mighty has fallen! We must henceforth seek him not in the splendid halls of state, but among simple rural scenes in Schoenhausen, where he was born, where he lived as a child; and to these quiet shades under the oaks and elms he now returns at the last remove of life; a broken, world-weary man, full of honors it is true, but by the irony of fate come back to die stripped of worldly grandeur, and to ponder the vanity of all earthly ambitions.

Bismarck inveighs against the ingratitude of kings—A fighter to the end.

¶ Did he take kindly to his enforced retirement? Far from it. With all the querulous impatience of an octogenarian, full of whims, sick in soul and body, suspicious, irritable, dying inch by inch, a prey to insomnia, his neuralgic pains, his swollen veins, in short, a crabbed old man, awaiting the call—behold now our great Otto von Bismarck, and mark well to what narrow limits his power has shrunk.

¶ On one occasion he moodily replied to a question: “Who are the Hohenzollerns? My family is as good as theirs!” And the old man meant it, every word of it.

¶ He began bombarding the newspapers with bitter reviews, criticising the Government, the affairs of the day. The African treaty he dissected, to Caprivi’s disadvantage. “I never would have signed it!” wrote Bismarck, and the press took up the cry. Any utterance from the old political sage was welcomed, the more caustic the criticism the better it read, all to the disadvantage of the Emperor and the new advisers.

¶ Many newspaper reporters called at Bismarck’s country retreat; the old man would tell them strong truths against the Government. Here and there, a newspaper came out as Bismarck’s official spokesman!

¶ It did seem as though nothing Caprivi did ever pleased the old man.

The curious fact was this: that Bismarck in his own time had always held as an inviolable principle, “No criticism of the Government in foreign affairs,” but now he claimed a privilege he had never granted to another.

¶ One of his many startling confessions of state secrets was that the Franco-Prussian war never would have taken place but for the garbled Ems dispatch. Instead of being a “holy war,” to support the very life of the Fatherland, it was now made clear that the old Divine-right idea had been but the stage-play of a political minister, for his imperial sovereign’s march to glory.

¶ The last illusion was now dispelled.

Caprivi was obliged to issue a circular-letter to Germany’s diplomatic corps, everywhere, “Do not mind Bismarck’s utterances; take no stock in them!”

¶ Even when Bismarck’s old friend, von Moltke, died, the Man of Iron refused to go to the funeral; he did not care to take a chance of meeting the Emperor, there!

¶ Querulous, iron-willed—such he is to remain. No giving up, no softening, no forgiveness; but blood and iron to the end. We must present him thus, our sad-hearted, irritable old master, proclaiming against the vanity of earthly glories, and like Wolsey wondering on the frailties and ingratitude of kings, whose memories are indeed no longer than the going down of the sun.

¶ Thus for two long weary years the bitter fight went on.

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¶ The old man now went on a trip to Vienna, to see his son Herbert married, but ahead of him the Government had telegraphed, “No official welcome for Bismarck!”

The German ambassador, under instructions from Berlin, did not dare attend the wedding, refused to notice Bismarck’s presence in Vienna, officially.

¶ This was the last straw; it worked revulsion of popular feeling; the common people of Germany, the self-same people that Bismarck had so long doubted, now took up arms for fair play for the old man; and Caprivi, made the scapegoat, was forced to resign. He was succeeded by Hohenlohe, Bismarck's friend, and leader in the Bavarian National party.

¶ On Bismarck's eightieth birthday, the Emperor came in person, and with military honors presented the old man with a magnificent sword; but on Bismarck's part the reconciliation was not sincere, you may well imagine that.

67

Wherein, at last, abandoned by his King, the plain people, whom the great Bismarck so long politically ignored, now do indeed bind up the old man's wounds.

¶ Bismarck's mighty nature never softened, but remained bitter to the day of his death, with fire and sword pursuing his enemies; broken by Fate, his power gone, Bismarck still continued consistent to the last; true to his iron nature, he returned the hatred of enemies with his own arrogant contempt.

¶ As the years of his downfall passed and men came to comprehend somewhat his extraordinary combination of overshadowing political genius in administrative and executive life, side by side with his strange superstitions and his many weaknesses of a grand order, this awe-inspiring man became beloved for his frailties by the very common people whom all his life long he had held under suspicion. The people rallied to his defense when kings quitted his side; they took up his cause because the old man had been outraged in his sensibilities, rather than because he was right; they sent him thousands of sympathetic letters, telegrams, presents; thousands of students, business men, women and children, visited him in his retirement; and by that touch of human nature that proves the world kin, took the embittered old man to their hearts in the name of the United Germany that he had created with toil so infinite and battlings so long and blood-stained;—and they disarmed Bismarck by honoring the name of their old enemy.

¶ It is a wonderful story of human nature, this story of how the German people rallied to Bismarck's side; a story that reaffirms how slender after all

is the space between the pomp of kings and the obscure destiny of the shepherd on the hills.

The proud figure of the grand old man who was not too high to fall from power stands side by side with Marius at the ruins of Carthage.

¶ Finally, as between the kings whom Bismarck served so faithfully and who abandoned him at last, and the people whom he despised but who rallied to his side and bound up his wounds, this courageous giant, who during the long years in which he fronted the seemingly forlorn struggle for United Germany, had been so conscientious in the discharge of his unpleasant duties, came at last to his peculiar eminence as one of the world's greatest characters.

¶ When he came to die, full of years and honors, although he had no National funeral like the magnificent outpouring that marked the return of Napoleon's body to the banks of the River Seine, yet in the hearts of the German people Otto von Bismarck was accorded the grandest funeral of modern times, if not of all time.

That was many years ago; but his unapproachable memory still lives, as Father of United Germany—and his fame goes marching on.

## 68

The old man's strange fancies as he passes the time awaiting his final call.

¶ Behold our old master in retirement, as obscure as a simple country squire; and he reads again—what do you think? The Book of Job, Bismarck's last reading, reminds him of the evanescence of all earthly glory, which passes away like the grass that is cut down by the mower.

¶ Brave old fighter, with your show of dauntless spirit, down to the very end, we know that you are grown weary of it all, and in truth, in silent moments of self-communion, you do not care when the end may come, nor may it come too soon for you.

¶ He is worried all the time, now; worried about his son's health; worried about the death of his brother; broken over the death of his wife; distressed by the death of favorite dogs and horses. Also, he recalls a gypsy saying having to do with the end of the Bismarck family, under strange conditions, in these mystical words:

Dem Grafen von Bismarck soll es verleiber  
So Lang sie vom Horste die Reiher nicht trieben—

Or, "The Counts Bismarck shall reign at Varzin as long as the herons are not driven from their ancient haunts"; in rude rhyme:

"The Bismarcks shall hold their domain till the day  
When they from their haunts drive the herons away."

¶ You see, the old man's mind was wandering, and now and then he saw the future, as in a strange dream.

¶ He watched the crows and jackdaws gather over the fields and at the rookeries, and he said one day, "They have their joys and sorrows like human beings."

¶ He recited Shakespeare, thinking of the olden times when he went roaring up and down the land! "Let me play the lion, too! I will roar that it will do any man's heart good to hear me. I will that I can make the Duke say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again!'"

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¶ Trifles annoyed the aged Bismarck, as might be expected; such things as changing the clocks to introduce "standard time," as it is called. "I do not like this 'standard time'; here I get up half an hour too early and go to bed half an hour too soon," was the octogenarian's crabbed comment.

¶ Day by day, crowds came to see him—children, students, laborers, artists, musicians, politicians, writers—all visited the sage in his retirement.

Levi, the Wagnerian Kappelmeister, journeyed from Munich to Friedrichsruh to beg the honor of owning, as a souvenir, one of Bismarck's old hats.

¶ Lenbach, the renowned artist, came to paint Bismarck's picture; and noted the curious fact that although Mecklenburgers have the largest German skulls, "Bismarck's is larger still."

¶ Bad nights, neuralgia, insomnia became his companions; but still ambition, the one supreme infirmity of his majestic mind, gives him no peace.

What would future generations say of Bismarck's work? And of the immediate present, has Caprivi helped it any? Was the repeal of my Iron Laws against Socialism wise? Why did not Caprivi follow my plan of making the Government the arbiter of German conscience? Why did not Caprivi carry the Army Bill? I fought for four years, once, to get army money for King William—and won over all obstacles!

¶ Schaffer came to make the Bismarck bust; it shows the Chancellor with high-cut nostrils, heavy jaws, scowling brows.

The old man likes it, because it presents him as a soldier; he is proud that he is a Field Marshal, prouder still of the Bismarcks in the old wars, proud also that he is a Prussian General of Cavalry.

¶ Then he scolds again about Caprivi's treaty with Austria, says it will cost fifty million marks a year and nothing gained.

¶ Often in deep fits of melancholy, Bismarck thinks that Germany is ungrateful. For one thing, the Government ought to recognize my son Herbert; why, England saw in Pitt the son of his father, a chip of the old block; and why not one Bismarck after another, eh?

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¶ Maybe Dr. Schweningen could do me some good, what do you think? This doctor is from South Germany—and a very determined fellow with a jet black, piratical beard; he gives orders like a military man, is a believer in diet, and all that sort of thing.

Twenty years before, when Bismarck's weight was 247, this South German Dr. Schweningen put Bismarck through a course of "banting," and the Chancellor rewarded the doctor with a chair in Berlin, against the united

protests of the faculty! Why, yes, bring up Dr. Schweninger; he can make me well, I am sure.

¶ “I can make you live to be ninety, Prince!”

¶ “Then get to work; spare no time; I am in bad shape!”

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¶ Letters, telegrams, felicitations in the form of magnificently embossed diplomas, continue to come, day after day; Bismarck is given the freedom of cities; he is enrolled among engineers, carpenters, brewers, ship-masters, tailors; each guild demands that the Iron Chancellor’s name head the list of honorary officers of the Grand Lodge.

In one year the record shows 650,000 letters and 10,000 telegrams; and among these are begging letters asking a total of \$2,500,000!

¶ Bismarck often grows tired of seeing visitors; he has built himself a secret spiral staircase, hidden in an unexpected place; and uses it against unwelcome callers.

Now and then, when his health permits, he is at his editorial work again, laboriously issuing his proclamations to the German people; he writes with a quill pen, and for a blotter prefers the old-time box of blue sand.

For scribbling hasty notes, he prefers huge lead pencils, such as he favored in parliamentary days; pencils 15 inches long, similar to those used by German carpenters.

He sits at an immense oak table, and his chair seems uncomfortable; it has no back.

At his side is his porcelain tobacco jar, two feet tall, and on the stand are innumerable pipes, which in turn are filled and smoked, all day long. He holds a sort of tobacco parliament every day. Visitors must smoke a pipe or cigars, drink wine, meet the dogs, and hear the old man inveigh against these degenerate times.

¶ Those big Ulmar dogs are always around him. At meal times, no matter how fashionable the company, Bismarck pauses at the end of the dinner to throw “Sultana” or “Cyrus” a biscuit!

Sometimes he wears his Cuirassier's uniform, this broad-shouldered giant with the thick neck and the grizzled mustache; his eyes glower under his thick white brows, and in the depths of his faded blue eyes is the old look of determination.

The old man's face is ashen grey, but he still has the stamp of immense dignity, a colossal personality, unquestionably representing the first public man of his time.

Folks bow to him, and he is master to the end; men are his servants, not his companions.

¶ He is always very deliberate; he has a peculiar way of stopping in the middle of a sentence to seek out in a moment of silence the exact word he needs.

¶ In the morning, he usually takes a stroll with his big dogs. It was a shock when "Old William" died, and the Emperor then gave Bismarck "Cyrus"; the Prince also had "Rebecca" and "Sultana."

The Ulmar dogs, following the old giant, resemble tigers in their powerful slouching gait.

At night they sleep in his bedroom.

## 69

Bismarck refuses to pass under the yoke—the octogenarian's last struggle of ambition.

¶ He has his superstitions to the end; about the number 13, about the number 7; and he believes that the moon has power to make human hair grow. "It is best," he says, "not to make scoff of such matters."

¶ Sometimes he goes over his orders of honor, forty-eight in all, and of great distinction; also, his learned degrees. University of Halle made him Doctor of Philosophy; Erlangen, Doctor of Law; Tuebingen, Doctor of Political Science; Giessen, Doctor of Theology, and Jena, Six-fold Doctor, that is to say Doctor of Medicine; and Goettingen, Doctor of Law.

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¶ They bring him a joint of wild boar, shot in Varzin forest, and he has a feast. His fondness for game he never gives up. Also, to the last he has his champagne. After the Franco-Prussian war Bismarck refused to drink German champagne, and told the Emperor, quite plainly, “Your Majesty, my patriotism stops with my stomach; I simply must stick to French champagnes.”

¶ He tells how he used to drink Affenthaler and Merkgraefler, years before at Frankfort; these were first-rate, at one florin a bottle, or wholesale, the old man explains; by the 100 liters, only 14 kreutzers (8 cents) a bottle.

¶ “Red wine is for children, champagne for ladies, and schnapps for generals,” is one of his drinking mottoes, but he tells that he himself prefers his old-line invention, the Bismarck champagne and porter, a most powerful decoction, putting ordinary mortals under the table very early in the evening—but not the Iron Chancellor, not at all!

¶ He recalls amusing stories of his ancestors. “One ancestor put pigs’ ears in pea soup and made a gastronomic hit.”

¶ Bismarck’s eyes water one day and he explains, “The wine my ancestors drank to excess comes back in punishment for their sins.”

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¶ What do you think? Bismarck’s old enemy, Herr von Sybel, the eminent author of the ponderous “History of Prussia,” called today, and Bismarck was glad to see Sybel, and they chatted a long time. As he and Sybel talked of history, Bismarck had moments when he held himself the one authentic builder of the German Empire.

¶ Gradually, he came to think that he alone of his own unaided might did the work.

¶ Last scene of all in this great drama of Bismarck! The octogenarian, in his downfall, is bitterly storming against his enemies.

Consistent to the end, he never weakened. He did not pass under the yoke of defeat by revealing any of those soft virtues that writers who make a wax doll of this mighty man would have us believe.

He raged and stormed impotently in his retirement at Friedrichsruh, and by every loud and insulting means in his power—by voice, pen, by special interviews, in his private letters, in his telegraphic dispatches, in his talks with the old friends or new callers, and to the last scratch of his Memoirs—Bismarck remains unrepentant, turbulent, to the end fighting bitterly against the Fate to which he could not and would not submit.

Temperamentally and psychologically, it was impossible for him to act in any way other than that in which he did act—even as you, in your own life, are true to yourself in storm and sunshine, following some unformulated but idiomatic law of your being.

Bismarck believed himself a chosen instrument in the hands of God and tenaciously clung to the dominant idea that the Bismarck work comprised all the raw materials of German history, affecting the German Empire.

## 70

His face is ashen, his grizzled mustache, eyebrows and hair white as the driven snow.

¶ On the whole, the old man is interested in events not in persons; he does not keep track of individuals; but he studies their work and its effects.

So, in his retirement he talks of big events, mostly; all the while suffers from fits of depression and exhibits a growing moroseness, a peculiar characteristic of highly developed German character.

He calls for Kant, Hegel, Christ; and reads them, deeply. He likes Hegel's idea that the history of the world shows "rational order," conceals a "manifest destiny."

¶ But the old man's one consolation is the Book of Job.

He lays awake o' nights, unable to sleep, he says, "and it seems as though there were a mountain on my chest."

¶ He does not think much of Gladstone's "Home Rule" ideas; this "let the people" rule is bad business, is the old man's comment.

¶ He is invited out a great deal, but always makes the same excuse, “I do not sleep well anywhere except in my own four-post bed. My traveling days are over, thank you.”

¶ One day in the park, the ladies kissed his hand, but he replied by kissing their cheeks, and he made a little speech as though he were in parliament.

¶ He studies the thick walls of Schoenhausen mansion and examines the old French cannon of '71 scattered around the yard, as souvenirs.

¶ He superintends the planting of trees; and rules over his estate with all the old family dignity and unshaken firmness of soul. He asks his secretary to count the telegrams that came this past year and in round numbers there are 10,000. The old man takes a notion to send each inquirer after his health a Bismarck autograph. So each day, from April to August, he spends part of his time writing over and over in great scrawling letters, at the bottom of a printed card of thanks, the huge signature, “Bismarck.”

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¶ Little things are beginning to bother the old man. He comes in today from a short walk and says he hates crows, because they are the enemy of the singing birds.

¶ Neuralgia is tormenting him, day and night, and he is very irritable.

School children come with teachers and after the children sing the old man bows and says, “Children, I thank you.”

¶ And this Dr. Schweningen, who promised Bismarck ninety years of life, is always hovering about, like a military doctor, giving express orders to eat this, to get up at such an hour, to go to bed at such an hour, and to take a nap at such an hour.

The old man obeys like a child.

¶ Strangers wait at the village bridge to see Bismarck and his dogs pass by; week after week delegations of working-men, lawyers, students, come to the house.

Schweningen orders him to take longer naps, not worry about politics and not to meet strangers. The old saying, “Once a man and twice a child” is

coming to pass; Otto von Bismarck is no longer the stubborn, dogmatic fellow that he was, even a few years ago. But he still scolds, fights and has his way with all—except the doctor.

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¶ Tomorrow, April 1, 1898, Bismarck will be 83; however, he does not seem to be failing much; but his face is ashen, his grizzled mustache, eyebrows and hair are as white as the driven snow.

¶ Gardeners write to him that they have named their choicest new variety of rose, the Bismarck; and cigarmakers have the Bismarck shape, cutlers the Bismarck dinner knife, a thick, sharp blade that will carve a duck's neck in a twinkling.

¶ However, the old man is growing weary of it all; and he hears with no great show of interest that the people are planning monuments everywhere. There is going to be an equestrian, helmeted statue in the market place at Leipzig; at Weringrode, a heroic-sized Bismarck will lean upon a sword; there will be a column in Hartzburg, Victory with a lyre and another Victory with a wreath; there is to be a statue at Kissingen; a helmeted-heroic figure at Freiberg; a column at Charlotte-springs; a column at Meiszen; at Cologne, a heroic figure with a sword; a heroic "Tyra and Bismarck," dog and man, at Leipzig; allegorical figures, "Glory and War," for Berlin; at Wiesbaden, a statue symbolizing the Bismarck National victory; a bust at Heidelberg; at Kreuznach; a heroic figure with helmet and sword, with "Glory" at his feet; at Zwickau, an allegorical memorial of noble proportions; a tower in the Black Forest; and still another at Altona.

¶ No; it is no use! As we said before, the old man is growing very weary of it all; and now along comes Arthur Mendell, who paints for posterity that remarkable Bismarck in which you see only the blazing eyes and the shining silver helmet—the Bismarck of the brave days of '66 and '70, when the German hosts carrying their deadly needle-guns, marched over the Rhine—at Bismarck's word!

¶ Dear Old Bismarck, these wreaths of immortelles come to you in your retirement, but you have reached the time when the grasshopper has become a burden, and when you have but one wish left in this world—and that wish is to go in peace to your long sleep.

¶ Coming, Bismarck—coming very soon now, Old Soldier; and we know well how courageously you will answer up, when the invisible Skeleton in Armor calls your imperial name!

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Hail and Farewell

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Prince Otto V. Bismarck receives his final and his one glorious decoration; and here we leave him, his fame secure among Germany's immortals.

¶ The game is now all but played out. The last phase is to be the noblest expression.

In his prime, Bismarck was of massive proportions in mind and body; but of his moral nature both friends and enemies had often been in doubt for many years. Now, even that was revealed to be in concord with his herculean bulk.

¶ The old glory passed from him, like a dream. He committed his soul to his God; and he heard again voices of Nature that had been inaudible to him, during his many years of intriguing diplomacy.

These voices spoke to him of the vanity and emptiness of human life, of the worthless baubles for which men exchange all they have, that is to say, their immortal gift of time, which soon passes away and is no more.

The musings of the Prince on the follies, inconsistencies and ambitions of life conspire to create a heroic figure like King Solomon. All is vanity! The conqueror of a continent has so declared. He had held the world in his hand, and had found that the sphere is hollow.

So go the fates of men.

¶ The great Prince Bismarck has now become as a beggar at the city's gates.

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¶ Over his grand spectacle of human pomp and power, contrasted with his final self-abnegation, shining forth we see the heights and depths of human life; but in this case the end was greater than the beginning; the defeat than the victory; the downfall than the glory; and the disillusion than the dream.

¶ Prince Bismarck in his long career as friend and confidant of the kings of this earth, had been honored with forty-eight orders of distinction. It is needless to mention them all, but they included the Iron Cross and the Order of Merit, the one entitling him to sit with kings, the other to command an army corps.

¶ But the greatest decoration of all was the one he now wore, his high tide of glory gone.

It is the Decoration of the Order of the Disillusioned, bestowed upon himself by his own soul.

Soon or late, prince or pauper, and you and I, wear this Order as at last we sit and wonder at the years gone by.

¶ Let us silently pass on, leaving Bismarck here, in the one solemn moment of his life; when he attains to real grandeur, stamps himself as greater than when he sat before kings.

For now he possesses his own soul, in peace.

And in this last picture, the end is greater than the beginning; the defeat than the victory; the downfall than the glory; and the disillusion than the dream.

¶ His final consolation was the Book of Job; and he read therein these strange and solemn words:

¶ What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?

Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh of brass?

¶ So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

When I lie down, I say, when shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day.

My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.

¶ Yea, man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. I would seek unto God and unto God would I commit my cause;

Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number;

Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields;

To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.

¶ Behold happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty;

For he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth and his hands make whole.

He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall be no evil touch thee.

In famine, he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword ... neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

“As One Asleep”

¶ On July 30, 1898, just before midnight, Otto Edward Leopold von Bismarck, Prince of Lauenburg and former Imperial Chancellor of the German Empire, died peacefully in the old homestead of his ancestors.

The immediate cause of death was congestion of the lungs.

¶ “Ich danke Dir, mein Kind,” were his last words, addressed to his daughter, who had stooped to wipe the moisture from his pale brow.

¶ As late as the day he died, he had read the newspapers and talked politics.

His final remarks were on the relations of Germany and Russia, at all times a subject of deep concern to him.

¶ Dr. Schweningen had promised to bring him to 90—and was seven years short.

But the Bismarck of retirement was not unhappy in the taking off; he had grown tired of it all; and it is pleasant to record that his last hours were without pain.

¶ A few days before, he had had his champagne, and had smoked five pipes in succession; also the day before he died, he had asked an attendant to “color” two new meerschaums, gifts of friends. Toward the last, he had used an invalid’s chair for breakfast, but otherwise he seemed as well as could be expected.

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¶ The windows looking upon the garden were opened, early next morning, and the servants of the household gathered there to look at the master, at rest.

He was seemingly asleep in his four-poster bed, his head slightly inclined to the left; his expression was that of one gently dreaming; his arms were resting over the coverlet, and in his left hand he held one white and three red roses, a last love-token from an Austrian lady.

¶ The expression of his features was, at the end, proud and noble; but the face was as grey as ashes; for the fire of life was out at last!

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¶ Later, came two Cuirassiers, in white, with drawn swords; and these massive figures stood there by the bedside, and by and by kept solemn guard beside the coffin; also, near by were two Foresters, in green.

¶ Books, papers, telegrams and a laurel wreath were in the death chamber, where the master had worked to the end.

Not far away was his favorite chessboard, also, within touch the Emperor's last present, a fac-simile of Frederick the Great's great crook-headed gold cane; a step the other way the globe of the earth that Bismarck used to roll over with his big hand, when he studied his endless foreign political combinations.

¶ Later, came the magnificent funeral with the high military, and all the rest; but we think we shall take leave of him in his old room with these simple objects around him, his tools of work, his big oak desk, his mounds of state papers, his writings, his quill pens, his box of blue sand, his pipes, steins and champagne glasses, his letters, his telegrams, his great heaps of books, his immense correspondence on the affairs of nations, his diplomas from universities, his degrees of law, philosophy and letters, and finally, his big Ulmar dogs.

¶ Here we leave him as one asleep, reminded of his final words, uttered when the master was breaking fast with the infirmities of his eighty-three years:

¶ "There is only one happy day left for me. It is the one on which I shall not wake again."

---

¶ His son refused the request that a death-mask be made of the noble old face, but Lenbach's famous painting will recall the stern head for years to come.

¶ Bismarck's coffin was of polished dark oak, with eight silver handles in the shape of lion's paws; candles burned around his coffin, the pale lights softened by veils of black and silver gauze that ornamented the silver candelabra. The floor was literally covered with wreaths, many bearing cards of sympathy in gold letters, from various eminent personages throughout the world.

¶ The Kaiser heard the funeral services.

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¶ Bismarck's mausoleum rests on a spot Bismarck selected for himself; a plain Romanesque House of Death against a background of trees; and to the

right still may be seen his favorite bench where he used to sit, under the shade of spreading oaks.

The sarcophagus of yellow marble bears this inscription, selected by Bismarck himself:

Here Lies  
PRINCE BISMARCK  
A Faithful German Servant  
of Emperor William I.

¶ Hostile critics of Germany, brought forth by the great war of 1914, profess to believe that this inscription on Bismarck's tomb shows that Bismarck did not wish his work to be associated with the future of the Empire, but with its past.

Instead, it really proclaims the man's great mind, his clairvoyant historical vision. He could have said many things about himself, touching the great part he played in sustaining the pomp and majesty of kings; but his simple acknowledgment of the rôle of faithful servant, is more eloquent than sermons in brass.

¶ Finally, a small altar to the right of the porch carries this text from Colossians iii:23, the motto given to Bismarck many, many years before by Rev. Schliermacher, the pastor who confirmed the boy Otto; and that motto became indeed Bismarck's guiding star through life, as now well you do know, balancing his record with the solemn Biblical injunction you read here beside the master's tomb:

¶ "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

THE END

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