# The Private Life of the Kaiser

FROM THE PAPERS AND DIARIES OF

## THE BARONESS VON LARISCH-REDDERN

**The Kaiser and Kaiserin's Late Major Domo, Chief of the Royal Household at Berlin and Potsdam**

**Baroness von Larisch-Reddern is the TRUE name of the Berlin Court Lady who gave the story of the Kaiser to Henry William Fisher, Ursula, Countess von Eppinghoven being a nom de guerre, heretofore used to shield her**

### How the Inside Story of the Kaiser's and Kaiserin's Life Was Written. The Chance Meeting at Moscow Between the Baroness von Larisch and the American Newspaper Man. Some Interesting Side Lights on Pseudo-biographers. The Story Up to December, 1918. The Kaiser's Birth and What Happened on That Occasion. Kaiser Was Beaten Into Life With a Wet Towel. His Rage When After His Father's Death He Found Queen Victoria's Telegram Asking Whether He "Was a Fine Boy." The Doctors Were Late in Discovering the Royal Baby's Deformed Arm and Hand. Nature of the Deformity, Which Kaiser Tries to Hide. All Sorts of Manuevres. Kaiser's Morbid Fear of Illness. Has Always Been Ailing More or Less. A Grave Trial to His Valets. Hearing of Death in Neighbor's House. He Ran Away From Home and Hid in the Apartments. Haunted by the White Lady. Fear of Illness Causes Him to Maltreat Servants. Even His Lady Loves Suffer When Someone Has a Cold in the Family

NOTE—The real name of the Lady of the Berlin Court who gave the information embodied in these absorbing memoirs, was formerly withheld and a pseudonym, that of URSULA COUNTESS VON EPPINGHOVEN, substituted. **As our informant was killed during the Berlin riots in December last,** we are now at liberty to give the true name, BARONESS VON LARISCH-REDDERN, and her genuine office at court: Chief-of-the-Imperial-Household.

Some notes about the Baroness' personality, how and where Mr. Fisher met her and how these memoirs were written and brought up to December 1918, are appended in the statement below.

### Mr. Fisher's Statement:

**I have been asked how I came to gather the information for the three-volume history of the Kaiser and Kaiserin: "Private Lives of Kaiser William II and His Consort and Secret History of the Court of Berlin." That is quite a story and I will relate it as briefly as possible.**

**I happened to be one of four American correspondents at the Coronation of the late Czar Nicholas at Moscow, in the early summer of 1896. At one of the court balls, to which we were bidden, Lord Li, the son of Li Hung Chang, the famous Chinese Viceroy, called the Bismarck of the East, asked me the name of a tall, distinguished looking lady who appeared to be in the suite of Princess Henry of Prussia. Lord Li said his father wanted to know.**

**Naturally I made haste to find out, and a Russian Chamberlain was good enough to formally introduce me after previously volunteering a short history of the lady. The Baroness von Larisch-Reddern, I learned, had been, for ten years, chief of the Kaiser's household,—that is she had held the most CONFIDENTIAL POST AT THE BERLIN COURT, a position that brought her in daily, almost hourly, contact with Wilhelm, the Empress Agusta Victoria, the Royal children, the courtiers, and all who visited the Kaiser's court, royal relatives and native and foreign royalties, distinguished Germans and ditto visitors to Berlin,—in short with every one worth knowing.**

At the time of our meeting at Moscow, the Baroness was Maid of Honor to Princess Henry, a sister of the Czarina, crowned a day before The Baroness asked me many questions about America, and as, owing to the hubbub around us, it was impossible to talk connectedly, I promised to visit her next afternoon at her lodgings in the Kremlin. But by the time I saw her again, her Ladyship, womanlike, had forgotten all about her interests in the States and during our two hours' chat she talked of nobody and nothing but William Hohenzollern.

I had once spent half a day with the Kaiser when acting as assistant to Mr. Russel, the famous London Photographer, who went to Berlin to take the Kaiser's picture for the Marine Exhibition; as Berlin correspondent for English, French and American newspapers. I had had the Kaiser under less close observation time and again. I had read all the books, magazine and newspaper articles and pamphlets printed about William; I had talked to dozens of people supposed to be in the inner circle of his confidence, masters and mistresses of court gossip; I had a thousand scandals connected with the Berlin court at my fingers' ends—**but the sayings of the Baroness took my breath away.**

Here, at last, was the real William, the William in dressing gown and pajamas; here was an empress, shorn of state and crown—a mere peevish and petty and entirely womanlike woman. I had thought Russel a great photographer; the Baroness was a better one; I had thought Pepys the most wonderful retailer of small talk, but Madame von Larisch beat the famed chronicler of Charles II's Court and times.

"Mercy!" I cried, "if I had a memory as large as the Sphynx's head, I couldn't remember half of what you said."

"Then I will write it for you," quoth the Baroness.

"All you have told me?"

"Yes, and a thousand times more."

"But how can I ask for such a sacrifice of time on your part?"

"Oh! I am not as disinterested as I seem", replied the Baroness, "first of all: I want to let the world know what kind of man William is, and secondly, I want you to do me a service."

I would have promised her the Town and County of Jerusalem, if she had asked for them, and I certainly made it clear to Madame that I would do anything within reason or even a few foolish things, if she insisted.

But what she asked for was quite easy.

"This card," she said, handing me a pasteboard, "will admit you to the banquet of German Princes to be held at the Crown Chambers tonight. At this gathering you shall act as my reporter,—you shall put down for me everything said and done, no, not those cut and dried speeches, court marshalls and secretraies concoct, only the impromptu sayings and actions, things not on the program."

"But suppose nothing happens, suppose they act just like junior princes usually do?"

"They won't," said the Baroness, with a sinister emphasis on the last word. "I am sure there will be trouble of some sort, and you will tell me all about it, won't you?"

"I sure will", I affirmed in true western style, and when, at 1 o'clock in the morning I was ushered into her Ladyship's parlor a second time, the Russian servant, guarding the threshold of her private rooms, seemed to have expected me, for he rushed off into an inner chamber as soon as he heard my name, and the Baroness followed close upon his heels, dragging an enormous court train, partly detached, after her.

"What has happened," she cried. "My princess (referring to Princess Henry of Prussia) is in tears, but won't say a word. 'State secrets,' she vows. And the Prince is writing like mad, keeping our whole cypher brigade going full tilt. He is telegraphing to—whom?"

"To the Kaiser, most likely," I answered her questioning eyes.

"I thought so," cried the Baroness "Now report, sir."

Here is the story I told her; it seemed singularly tame to me at the time.

"At the gathering of the German princes, there was much eating, drinking, coughing, gurgling, and picking of teeth, nothing remarkable or unusual in that. And the speeches were a continuous flow of platitudes, and imbecilities — the Kaiser had set the fashion in that line, you know. The last official address had been entrusted to a distinguished Russian-German of high position in Moscow society. He spoke in German, but not in the choicest and right at the opening of his speech, he put his foot in it.

"Thrice welcome," he shouted, "to the great German Princes that came here in the suite of the Kaiser's brother—"

He didn't get any further for as he pronounced the word "suite," Prince Louis of Bavaria (the heir to the crown who subsequently became king) rose heavily and, smashing the table in front of him with his clenched fist, cried, "To the devil with your suite. We German Princes are not traveling in anybody's suite. We came here on our own account to represent our Kingdoms, Grand Duchies and Principalities, even as Henry came to represent his brother, the Kaiser. Prince Henry is one of us, but no over-lord by any means. As to the Kaiser himself, as Royal Personages we are his equals in all respects. What do your Royal Highnesses say? Am I stating the case correctly?"

Before Louis had half finished, all the guests, save Henry of Prussia, were on their feet, shouting and gesticulating to show their complete agreement with the royal spokesman of Bavaria.

The turmoil lasted five or six minutes and the banquet was as good as broken up, for the Princes were so excited they paid no further attention to the program, talked among themselves and drank each other's health in such quick succession that the majority got tipsy. Poor Prince Henry, the innocent cause of the trouble, sat like a whipped dog, and it was a great relief to him when one of his gentlemen came, bringing him a dispatch. Upon this, he rose abruptly, and bowing all around, hastily left the banquet room.

The Baroness listened with every evidence of excitement. But she didn't seem surprised and my private opinion is that Louis's outburst, aimed at the Kaiser, had been prearranged and that Madame the Baroness was perhaps privy to the plot. As soon as I finished my story, she rose, shook hands with me, thanked me profusely, and said, "I am off to wire the Kaiser. He will have my story hours before Prince Henry's comes limping in. I know the Russian chief censor, and I am afraid Henry won't have much luck with his cypher dispatch. First it will have to be deciphered, and then they will take their time thinking whether it should be sent or not.

Next day I met the Baroness by appointment for the third time, and we agreed upon the plan of the book in embryo. As I was due to return to New York within three months, she promised to begin writing at once and by the time I arrived in the States, she would have sent fifty or sixty thousand words to my New York address. That promise her Ladyship faithfully kept and every two weeks afterwards I received further packets of her Ms. until I had about 200,000 words or more.

I have given you a page of the Baroness, Ms. As you perceive, there is not a break or paragraph in it. Neither was there a break or paragraph in the entire 200,000 words. That was my greatest trouble:—study out and disentangle sentences and chapters and sections in "the awful German tongue," as Mark Twain put it.

For the rest, I was able to verify nearly every one of the statements made by the chief of the imperial and royal household. Where I failed, the failure was due to the fact that her Ladyship had been the sole eyewitness. I made two different trips to Germany to clear up several mysteries in the copy and on these trips gathered much additional evidence as to the Kaiser's private life and life at the German Court.

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Within a week or ten days after the signing of the armistice a courier or King's Messenger attached to one of the minor legations at the Court of St. James, came to see me at my lodgings in London, bringing the first news of the Baroness since July and August 1914.

"Her Ladyship wants you to know that, while not officially connected with the Court, she is a constant visitor at the Schloss and Palace and is keeping a close watch on her old Master and Mistress, and everything and everybody connected with the Court. As soon as it will be permissable to send uncensored mail matter from Germany, you will receive a budget of news from her dealing with the Kaiser during the war".

I immediately went to the War Office and inquired when the censorship was likely to be raised.

"It has been decided to raise it on January 6, 1919," I was told.

And the Steamship Lapland, on which I had engaged passage after much trouble, was due to sail a day later, January 7th.

So I went to the ——— Legation and told my troubles to the King's Messenger.

"Don't worry," he said, "I just received orders to go North tonight, I am leaving on a British torpedo boat, and will be back in London before Christmas. When I touch land, I will get the Baroness on the long distance, and if you don't grudge the expense, I will get the information you are after from her own lips."

The courier did even better. While waiting at Copenhagen to return to London, he received a thirty page letter from the Baroness, dated Berlin December 1st, which detailed the news I was so anxious to procure.

According to plan, the courier read Madame von Larisch's statement over several times, committing it to memory, for his memory is simply phenominal. So, when his minister of Foreign Affairs ordered him to show the contents of his mail pouch before departing for London, he cheerfully handed over the Larisch documents, as all papers not strictly appertaining to government business were taboo.

Before embarking for England, the courier called up the house near the Puppenbrucke, Berlin, where the Baroness had a flat. The manager of the apartment house answered the call: "I am sorry to announce", he said, "that her Ladyship is no more. Like so many other good people belonging to the court and society, she was killed a few days ago during the bombardment of the Royal Stable buildings and the neighborhood of the Schloss."

Further details are missing, but the courier, upon his arrival in London, detailed the contents of Baroness von Larisch's last letter to me, and knowing her copy as I do, it sounded to me as if he were voicing her very own words. "Mine is a phonograph memory," said the courier promptly.

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It seems scarcely necessary to insist that the Baroness Larisch's Memoirs of the Kaiser's Court contain all and everything of non-political, but personal moment. Since these Memoirs were first published several other books dealing with the Kaiser have seen the light. Most of them were based on the disclosures previously made and published by the Baroness. I might almost say all of them, with the exception of the books dealing chiefly with politics published by the former American Ambassador in Berlin and by the Kaiser's doctor.

That fact was frankly recognized by one English publisher, at least, who offered to give me credit for the chapters, stories and incidents boldly taken from my three volumes—if there was a second edition of the printed book. But there was none, for obvious reasons.

The latest book on the Ex-Kaiser's secret life, just published by Grant Richards, London, makes the usual liberal raids on my literary property, but for originality's sake, I presume, exploits in addition some of the Countess Wedell's ill-balanced vaporings of twenty or more years ago.

Mr. Richards' anonymous author—he has every reason for wishing to be nameless — assumes that the Countess Wedell was not only the Kaiser's mistress, but somebody.

Let me quote Baroness Larisch re this person:

"This Countess Wedell," she told me, "was a ballet girl at the Imperial Opera House like her mother before her. The mother became a chance mistress of the Kaiser's grandfather, William I, and the present Countess Wedell claims to have been the offspring of their temporary liaison. Despite this fact, she sought to ensnare William, when a young prince.

"She succeeded, according to her own uncorroborated story. It happened, I understand, in the Kaiser's student days when, according to his Court Marshall, he never had twenty marks in his pocket, and when all his disbursements were made by the Court Marshall's office. If there had been an attachment, longer than momentary, between the two grand children of the first William, the Court Marshall would have known, and the Court Marshall does not know.

"But in later years the girl had the effrontery to use this more than doubtful episode in her and William's young life as a club. The club was suspended, but not entirely turned away, when the young woman married an impecunious Army Officer, named Count Wedell. Of course, she did not marry him because he was practically without funds. She married him for the title, and once in possession of that title she used it freely to give more momentum to the club she was wielding in the direction of the Kaiser's treasury.

"Time and again, it seems, she succeeded in squeezing a thousand marks, or thereabout, out of her ex-lover, but as the income thus gained was insufficient to support her, she became housekeeper for the Persian Ambassador in Berlin.

"At that juncture the President of the Berlin Police took a hand in the game, her husband divorced her, and she entered more and more on a life of adventure.

"As to her claims regarding her financial successes with the Kaiser, I know nothing. That she ever had the entree at court or was recognized as a lady of station by society, or even by the Police, she herself does not claim.

"As a matter of fact, the Court never heard of this woman, even by name. Her very existence would still be a mystery to me and other members of the Berlin Court if some penny dreadful had not printed extracts from a book of hers published by a small firm in Switzerland."

On another occasion the Baroness Larisch spoke to me about some accounts in French pamphlets, dealing with the secret loves of the Kaiser. "These stories of French girls visiting the Kaiser at Court or at his hunting boxes are as absurd as can be," she said. "I have mentioned by name every woman in whom the Kaiser was ever interested—there were no interlopers of any kind. Nor was William in the habit of assaulting those, that disagreed with him, with fist cuffs. The only bodily assault in which he was ever concerned happened to be forced upon him by a Naval Lieutenant on the man-of-war Iltis, and in that case the Kaiser did not even defend himself".

"What about the affair with painter Pape, whom the Kaiser is said to have kicked in the stomach'?"

"Penny-a-liner nonsense," the invention of some French Pamphleteer," said her Ladyship. "William was vulgar enough, God knows, but his vulgarity did not go such lengths Pape is still our Court painter and has a studio, by the Kaiser's grace, in the German Reichstag building."

Henry William Fisher.

## THE LIFE OF THE KAISER

I

### "Is It a Fine Boy?" "Victoria."

But one person, Major von Normann, of the First Guards, was present, when, on June 15, 1888, at noon scarcely an hour after Emperor Frederick had breathed his last, Kaiser Wilhelm II drew the above dispatch from his father's papers.

"What did His Majesty say on discovering the Queen's telegram?" I asked Normann at the late Emperor's funeral.

"Not a word; yet he turned a shade paler, while his left hand convulsively closed around the hilt of his sabre."

### When a Prussian King Dies

Every time a Prussian King dies, a spirit of unspeakable savagry takes hold of his lawful successor.

The Empress Frederick, her daughters, the members of her Court, her physician, friends, and servants, were prisoners for many hours, beginning at five minutes past eleven o'clock, on June 15, 1888. Until her son and heir had concluded his investigations and made all arrangements he intended to effect, no living soul was allowed to leave Castle Friedrichskron; sentinels with loaded rifles stood over the telegraph operators to prevent communication with the outer world, and the telephone was similarly guarded.

That upon the heel of these measures the newly-made Kaiser invited Normann to attend him in his search for state papers and other documents, of which the one mentioned, while not the most valuable, was certainly not the least interesting shows the extent of his confidence in this man, then esteemed as a strict disciplinarian, but in no other way distinguished.

I would not like to assert that the imperial proclamations to the army and navy, dated June 15, 1888, were composed with von Normann's assistance while impatient crowds surrounded the palace, demanding news of the king whom they vaguely supposed to be dead;—but these papers are so full of barrack bravado and contempt for everything not military as to strongly suggest some such influence.

**"Thus we belong to each other,—I and the army,—thus we were born for each other, and thus we will stick to each other forever, be there peace or storm, as God wills it."**

And while the army was honored and exalted, the loyal taxpayers had to wait for the customary royal greeting and a word of information on the issues of the day, until the 18th of the month.

### Details of the Kaiser's Birth

But to return to Queen Victoria's telegram.

It was dated January 28, 1859, twenty-four hours after the eldest son of Crown Prince and Crown Princess Frederick-William had seen the light.

William was born quite economically, a midwife receiving him, and a Court physician, assisted by the then highly-reputed Berlin specialist for woman's diseases, the late Dr. Martin, looking gravely on after the manner of his kind.

In Germany, you must know, a doctor thinks it beneath himself to take the child, and is supposed to act only in case grave complications arise; ine times out of ten he contents himself by superintending the arrangements and in seeing that the sanitary laws are complied with in all minuteness; the midwife does the work.

In the case of the Crown Princess of Prussia, a Miss Stahl acted as midwife; at the time of this writing she was a motherly woman, and still continued her visits to the palace; so I often had occasion to talk with her about the great event in her life.

"Her poor Royal Highness," said the old woman, "was only two months past eighteen years, and very weak and nervous. You see, with her it was not an ordinary case of first motherhood; politics were mixed up in it to a frightful degree, and the poor young thing felt the fate of Europe trembling in her lap, for our king Frederick William IV was as crazy as a March hare, and twenty-one years had passed since a midwife was called to the Prince Regent's house to bring into the world little Louise, now Grand Duchess of Baden.

"Our work had been divided as follows. Dr. Martin was to have special care of Her Royal Highness, inasmuch as he was treating her for a nervous malady; the Court physician had his ordinary duties, while I was commanded to take the child. But the moment the little one was born a despairing moan from the mother overthrew all these fine dispositions.

### "Still Born, by Heaven"

" 'The Crown Princess is dying' whispered the doctors, while working with blanched faces over Victoria's prostrate body. Of course, I had to abandon the child momentarily to help them, and when—the Crown Princess having revived after a while—I knelt down before the couch on which our heir rested, imagine my fright: he had not yet uttered a cry, nor did he move a muscle. 'Still-born, by Heaven!' I thought. A gesture brought Dr. Martin to my side, and together we labored over the newly-born, I do not know how long, exhausting successively every means ordained by medical books, or practiced in the nursery, to bring the child to life."

I will state here, that Miss Stahl was a very dignified woman, broad and short, and, of an excessively grumpy disposition. Very seldom did she smile. The old dame recounted her story to the point given, always with the dignity becoming to a person of her worth; but, as she continued, her face broadened with merriment, and her famous basso resounded through the room with a break here and there that came very near a laugh.

### Spanked into Life

"When everything had been done that in decency could be done," so ran her narrative, "I took that royal youngster under my left arm, and, grabbing a wet towel in my right began to belabor him in good homely fashion, though the doctors groaned and everybody in the room looked horrified.

" 'To the devil with etiquette,' I thought, seeing their grimaces; 'this is a matter of life or death.' So I spanked away, now lighter, now harder, slap, slap, slap, until — the cannons announcing the birth had half finished their official quota of a hundred and one shots—until at last a faint cry broke from the young one's lips.

"He was alive! I had snatched our Prince from the grave for which he seemed destined. The rest was easy sailing; the doctors again had their innings, and the simple midwife was shoved aside."

### Discovery of the Withered Arm

"But what about the deformed hand and arm?"

"That was discovered only the third or fourth day after,'" replied Miss Stahl; "you see, at first we were all so busy keeping life in the Prince, after I put it there, that no one thought of examining his limbs. Even when, on January 28, the late Crown Prince showed his son to his relatives, friends, and the household, no one observed that anything was wrong. But on the last, or the last but one day of the month, it was noticed that the child did not move his left arm; an investigation was made, and, in the course of it, the surgeons discovered that the elbow joint was dislocated. That is nothing serious in a healthy child. However, in the case of our Prince, the surrounding soft parts were so injured, and the muscles attached in such a condition, that no one dared attempt to set the bone then and there, as should be done in all cases."

Miss Stahl concluded her remarks with the statement: "I am well aware that the present condition of the Kaiser's arm is attributed to a mistake made by the persons officiating at the birth; but," and saying this, the old maid's face assumed its most determined look, "if that were not a falsehood, agreeable to the Kaiser, do you suppose for one moment that I should be in this palace now to cripple more Hohenzollerns? Saying this, Miss Stahl used to bring down her fist forcibly and concluded: "My opinion has always been that the child's left forearm was not properly **made up by nature, as, indeed, his whole left side was weak, and is weak to this day.**

"Everyone in the palace knows that, though his walk is brisk, it is his ever alert exertion that makes it so; if, at any time, the Kaiser ceased thinking of his shortcomings **for only a moment**, you would see his left leg drag. All his aches and pains, too, locate in his left ear and the whole left side of his head. Now remember what I told you about the Crown Princess's condition. She was agitated by fears and depressed in spirits; great responsibilities weighed upon her mind. Is it to be wondered at, that her child was affected?

The mother, poor girl! transfused her nervous ailments into the child she was carrying, and all concentrated in its left side. That myself and the doctors were unable to prevent or forsee; besides we were, as stated, far too busy completing nature's handiwork by inflating and keeping the Prince's respiratory organs going, to test the inferior parts of his body separately. If, on the other hand, the Prince had been a lusty boy, the dislocated joint would, undoubtedly, have been promptly discovered and nothing would have stood in the way of its immediate correction."

So the chances are that Queen Victoria's telegram was answered in the affirmative.

### The Doctor Lied

In the Babel of contradictory statements Miss Stahl's observations have the grateful ring of veracity. Surely, Miss Stahl was not to blame, if it were otherwise, would the Kaiser have tolerated her in the Palace?

William was a hard master, and as for suffering in his service a person having blasted his life by cruel neglect, that is as entirely out of the question as the idea I heard advanced off and on, that he is insensitive to his disablement.

That incubus, on the contrary, was forever in his thoughts, and his apparent unmindfulness of the fact a clever affectation. He wanted others to forget that he is a cripple, and therefore ignored his short comings.

But, with all that, he was sure to be found napping occasionally; I can very well imagine the Kaiser closing his hand nervously round the hilt of his sabre as he read that tell-tale despatch!

### Origin of Hatred of England

"Is it a fine boy?" Ah, his grandmother had good reason for feeling anxious about this infant in whose veins coursed the blood of the four Georges! It was that English consanguinity which he loathed and abhorred not the little woman who received him in her arms already tainted and marked for life.

That, despite his perfect understanding of the case, he allowed his historians to abuse Stahl, was but an instance of royal ingratitude dictated by the same policy that, from the summer of 1887 to the close of the reign of one hundred days, branded certain of his father's physicians liars and incompetents.

In this particular instance it happened, however, that the biter was bitten; at the time indicated, Prince William would have gladly seen Mackenzie go to the devil; and the findings of his German colleagues, that Frederick III suffered from cancer, a malady said to exclude its victim from the throne, proclaimed from the housetops—but when he himself was king it was quite another matter. The world's eye, instead of compassionately regarding the sickroom at San Remo, was riveted upon the stationary or floating or rolling hospitals in which he dwelled as in a glass house—hence the "remaking" of history, the dissemination of historical untruths at all hazards!

But they must not be too replete with details. Thus I once heard the Kaiser, in conversation with his wife, roundly abuse Hinzpeter for saying in his book: **"The Prussian army never admitted a young man physically so little fit to become a brilliant and dashing cavalry officer as William."**

The criticism was passed shortly after the appearance of Hinzpeter's "Kaiser William II, a Sketch from Life," and the Emperor, after warning his Augusta against letting the volume fall into the children's hands, meaning the elder boys, continued: "Our German philosophers never know where to stop; whether they write truths or lies, they are bound to compromise and expose their betters without ever realizing it."

### Devices For Concealing Deformity

His fateful left arm the Kaiser hugs closely to his body, allowing the hand which is not deformed, but puny, like a child's, to rest against his waist, or upon his hip, if on horseback. The German papers issued ballons d'essai from time to time to ascertain sentiment in respect to the introduction of a belt for army officers. As the Empress Eugenie re-established the crinoline in the sixties to hide her interesting condition, so William desires to change military dress to find a convenient resting place for his poor left hand and arm, which, being about six inches shorter than the right, would attach to a belt unostentatiously. But, alas; the General Staff feigned to regard those recurring proposals as maneuvers of army contractors, and treated them with fine scorn, so that William, unwilling to own his secret reason for the innovation sought for, had to go without relief.

### "Smashing Things"

Those were gloomy days in the palace when the pros and cons of opinion on the subject were read by the Emperor. They put him into the mood for smashing things, and his famous speech to the Brandenburgers was made under just such circumstances: **"Those who will support me are heartily welcome, whoever they are, but those obstructing my policy I will smash to pieces."**

As intimated, the fingers of the crippled hand are movable, for, although the head of the radius of the forearm does not set properly into the condyles of the humerus, the limb is not altogether inert. There is consequently no reason for doubting Major von Normann's assertion that the Kaiser clutched his sword with the left hand. I have seen him do the same thing quite often when angry. But while he can take hold of an article, he cannot for the life of him lift it. For instance, he holds the reins in his left hand, but is powerless to direct the horse except with his right or with his knees.

Without exaggeration it may be said that, next to the stricken man, the five imperial valets, always on duty to dress, undress, and reuniform their master, suffer most on account of this infirmity. One of them, Her Majesty's valet Nolte, made my maid the confident of his troubles.

"We would not mind the work," I heard him say once, "would not care if the Emperor changed his uniform ten, instead of three or four times per day, it's the fear of injuring his lame hand that makes us nervous and gradually wears away our usefulness. And, besides, we must always be prepared to forestall the collapse of the All-highest when he balances himself on his left foot, as is his wont sometimes when he is in a hurry to put on a different pair of trousers." And, after thinking awhile, the man added: "If they would only introduce for all troops, horse, foot, and artillery, not excepting the navy, a uniform pair of pantaloons, one-half of our cares would be removed, but this endless variety is killing us."

### Kaiser's Pride in His Strength

William's right hand is massive and ugly in appearance, ugly, too, when clasping that of a friend. Before I was presented to him, Court-marshal von Liebenau warned me against his mighty grip; but; though I went through the ordeal with teeth set, I could hardly suppress an outcry, which amused the Prince exceedingly.

How proud the Emperor used to be of his personal strength was evident from the fact that he promptly adopted the simile suggested to him several years ago, when a foreign correspondent likened his fist to the "terrible right" of the then champion of the world, John L. Sullivan, whereupon his sister of Meiningen, who adores strong men, remarked: "I hope Sullivan has not the bad taste to wear as many rings as my big brother."

This weakness is, however, to some extent excusable, as it is thus the Kaiser tries to hide a number of nasty moles which disfigure his hand. In this he partly succeeds, while in spots the glittering diamonds and rubies only tend to emphasize the blemishes.

I dare say very few people have a correct notion of the Emperor's height, for, as he is seldom seen without a helmet terminating in a point, the public is mystified, and even close observers are apt to be deceived. In the palace this question is never openly discussed, but I heard the Kaiserin tell overinquisitive Prince Eitel Fritz once or twice that his father measured five feet eight inches. That, I am sure, is a mistake; five feet five or six inches is the highest that, even Adjutant Count Moltke, who has a very sure eye in such matters allows [illegible] respectable enough figure, holding himself as straight as an arrow.

### His Constant Fear of Cancer

The numerous newspaper persons who talk glibly about the Kaiser's "cancerous" ear trouble have, I imagine, information on the point that was inaccessible to those in daily attendance upon His Majesty, for whether the dread malady has settled in that organ or not, is an open question even with William's own physicians. Improbable it is not.

It was Queen Louise of Strelitz, "sharing with Marie Antoinette the sad pre-eminence of beauty and misfortune," who carried carcinoma into the Prussian camp; the English escaped the doom only because economical George III preferred Caroline of Brunswick for his son, her dowry being larger by a few thousand Thalers than the Mecklenburger's.

The English Royal family escaped with a budget of vile scandal—the Prussians got the lesser dowry and the most awful disease to boot—hardluck or fate? After the Four Georges, England had a succession of honest, decent, peaceful kings.

All Queen Louise's portraits are remarkable for a scarf the lady invariably wears under her chin; even her oldest portraits and busts exhibited in the Berlin Hohenzollern Museum, no matter whether the Queen is in Court dress or ordinarily gowned have this distinction.

This ornamented scarf was worn to conceal the marks of an operation for swelling of the glands.

That is undoubtedly authentic, but it is also true that in this very spot the cancer that killed her, eventually developed. I have this information from descendants of old-time royal servants in the employ of the late Emperor William, Louise's last surviving son.

That Emperor Frederick perished of cancer of the throat even Dr. MacKenzie had to admit. Therefore, if one may say so without offense, it would be in the line of natural development if William II, supposing he inherited the malady, were attacked by it in the neighborhood of his throat. But it must not be forgotten that cancer is thought by some authorities to be untransmissible.

The only time that His Majesty's ear trouble was mentioned in the palace was, as far as I can remember, at the death of Henry XI of Reuss-Gera. The little one died of scarlet fever, we thought, and the Empress remarked: "I trust the Kaiser will not hear of the cause of death, for it always makes him uneasy."

### The Scarlet Fever Myth

"Why, has His Majesty not had scarlet fever?" I inquired.

"Of course," said the Kaiserin rather hesitatingly, "and in its most malignant form, too. How could you live here several years without hearing of it?"

As Her Majesty's manner convinced me that it would not be agreeable to her to go into details, I curbed my curiosity until some time after I met Count Seckendorf, for many years chamberlain to the Empress Frederick.

"Your Ladyship did well not to press the point," he said, "for the Kaiser would be very angry if he heard of any such discussion. As a matter of fact, that scarlet-fever story is reserved for use in a contingency that has not yet arisen, I am happy to say."

"You put me on the rack, Count."

"Others are there already and dare not complain," replied the chamberlain," on the rack of public opinion, of the most cold-blooded insinuation and of reproof direct.

"Do you remember," he continued, "when a certain august person snubbed Emperor Frederick's English physician because that gentleman had refused to take his cue from the seditious Bismarck and junker clique when reporting upon a disease that played such a part in a state tragedy, then on the boards? To-day, opposite views are trumps, and persons insisting that a specified malady involves the loss of the crown of Prussia are publicly disowned and officially guillotined."

"I know, I know, but the scarlet fever story?"

"As I have had the honor of already intimating: if the condition of Frederick's successor becomes alarming at any time in consequence of his ear trouble. Your Ladyship will see it in all the official papers."

And it will read after this style: "When His Majesty, as a child was stricken with scarlet fever, his mother, the Empress Frederick, insisted upon treating the patient after a custom prevailing in some parts of England. The feverish boy was subjected many times daily to ice-cold ablutions, while his body and bed linen were continually changed, in consequence of which an acute cold settled in the left ear, which has ever since irritated the youth and man."

"Then," concluded the Count, "will follow a learned treatise showing that the Kaiser has water, not tumors, on the brain."

### Apparatus For Care of the Ear

There is, I repeat it, as yet no evidence to justify the worst suspicions regarding the Emperor's ear trouble, but the fact that **the organ is regularly treated with antoseptics to arrest putrefaction indicates the presence of gangrenous inflammation.** Quite frequently the Kaiser attends to this himself, and if he has had a particularly bad day, the physician on duty or the body physician operates on him. But in the course of years the Empress, likewise, has become an adept at bringing relief to her husband by these means; she also handles an apparatus for pumping air out of the sick ear, or clearing its passages by blowing air through them. This instrument, which is fitted with a long rubber tube and a spiral trumpet, hangs at the side of the bedstead in their Majesties' joint chamber and a duplicate is in the Kaiser's own toilet-room while a third forms part of the traveling equipage. The bedrooms on the yacht Hohenzollern and on the imperial salon trains are also fitted with ear-pumps.

Harrassed in this wise by maladies of the most serious character, the Emperor could not be blamed for taking excessive precautions against contagion. That he lives the greater part of the year in the inconveniently situated Neues Palais, which, moreover, will never be a thoroughly modern residence for reasons that will be explained in another chapter, is mainly due to its solitary position at the end of the town. At the Marble Palace, where the imperial couple used to spend the summer while waiting for William's patent of general and finally for the crown, it was quite different. There they had neighbors, one of them the Hereditary Prince of Schoenburg, of the Guard Hussars.

Coming down to breakfast one morning, the Kaiser learned that His Grace had died of diphtheria a few hours before.

### Kaiser Flees From Disease

"Diphtheria," cried William, turning a shade paler than is his wont in the morning,—"there seems to be something unhealthy in the air hereabouts. Order the chamberlain on duty that my things must be packed and sent to Berlin at once."

"But the residential quarters in the Schloss are far from finished," interposed Herr von Liebenau.

"Never mind, there will be some corner where I can sleep and eat without running the risk of infection. And seeing that the adjutant still waited, he added, anticipating a question which etiquette forbade to be asked: **"All my things—I am going to move."**

That settled, His Majesty quieted down, and when, shortly afterward, the Empress arrived, he simply said: "Dona, I am going to Berlin and this house will see me no more." Auguste Victoria was thunderstruck, but seeing the husband determined, she dared not question him. So their meal passed in silence while visions of domestic storms, of irreparable displeasure, even of a maitresse en titre, perhaps, chased through Her Majesty's brain. And when, half an hour later, I entered her room to ask if the valets might go to the bed-chamber and remove the Kaiser's clothes—I found my mistress in tears, bewailing a fate that was as yet a mystery.

"Do you know why the Kaiser is going?" she said. I could not understand it at first. "Of course," I replied, "His Majesty has heard of the death across the way, and, being so near the Schoenburgs, he is afraid that diphtheria might break out in the palace."

A sigh of relief escaped the imperial lady. She scarcely allowed me to finish. "Is the Hereditary Prince dead?" she exclaimed, with almost a joyful ring in her voice. Then changing her attitude, she added: "Why have I not been informed of this? I might have been spared an unhappy half-hour, and, besides, I should have sent my condolences to Princess Lucie."

**William was as good as his word; his state papers published that very day were dated "Schloss, Berlin," etc., and ever since the Marble Palace has ceased, as it were, to figure in contemporary history.**

### No Sanitary Arrangements

The Kaiser was right in surmising that his thousand-windowed palace in the capital would afford him lodgings of some sort; but as his own apartments, as well as the majority of the other suites, were undergoing alterations, he was obliged to make his quarters in the so-called von Kleist chambers, said to have been once inhabited by Princess Amalia's first lady-in waiting, companion and confidante, the Baroness von Kleist. They are exceedingly beautiful, far more so than any of the gilded modern rooms that latter-day Berlin taste has furnished, yet at the same time lack even the most ordinary conveniences.

### The White Lady—"No Lady"

I was at the Meiningen Villa, in the Thiergarten, on some business of Her Majesty's, when the Princess brought the news. "I have just come from my big brother,"—she always speaks of the Kaiser thus,—"and what do you think? I found him installed in the Kleist apartments,—at the Kleist rooms, which the White Lady is said to haunt."

" 'I am glad Auguste had her baby' I told the Kaiser," continued Princess Charlotte, "for, as you know, von Kleist's child born in this apartment was disfigured by a terrible birth-mark on the nose, the broom of 'The Sweeper'."

"And what may that be. Your Royal Highness?"

"The White Lady, of course, who used to announce her coming by vigorously sweeping the corridors. On that account, Frederick the Great dubbed her 'the sweeper,' or, in his beloved French, La Balayeuse. And that," continued the Princess with a loud laugh, as if some hilarious bon mot had just seen the light in her luminous brain,—"that was, after all, a fitting designation, for, sub rosa, the White Lady of the Hohenzollerns is no lady at all. I have just inspected her favorite abode, and, I assure you, there is neither a bath-tub nor a toilet to be found there."

Although the Empress knew of the objectionable features of her husband's temporary abode, she insisted upon following William within twice twenty-four hours. But the Emperor, pretending to be very busy with his speech for the opening of the Reichstag on November 22, would not see her until the following day. Now everybody knows that speeches from the throne are composed by the Chancellor—hence it was clear that William had some other reason for absenting himself. As a matter of fact, he had heard that Fraulein von Gersdorff, Dame of the Court, was suffering from a sore throat, and though her quarters were not in the Marble Palace, but in the gentlewomen's pavilion, situated in the park, he evidently feared that Her Majesty might have come in contact with her. And not until he was reassured by myself, did he emerge from his seclusion.

After I had withdrawn, Court-marshal von Liebeau was summoned.

### Kaiser's Indifference to Others

"No more cases of diphtheria in Potsdam, I hope?" said the Kaiser, in his most imperious style.

"None that I know of, Your Majesty."

**"That you know of? My dear sir, that means either that you are out of touch with your department or that cases of illness are secreted.** At any rate, you will be good enough to telegraph to the Marble Palace that all persons of the suite, or in the royal service, who show any signs of throat trouble must be removed to a hospital at once, without the slightest delay. These are my strictest orders."

One of the Empress's favorite wardrobewomen, Mrs. Schnase, fell a victim to William's relentless anxiety on that occasion. Not being on duty, for several days, she had remained in Potsdam, and, by the Court physician's advice, had taken a perspiratory treatment to reduce a swelling of the glands, very common among certain classes in Germany, so that at 11 o'clock that night she was in the midst of a healthy sweat and sound sleep, when the Major-domo awakened her to say that by "all-highest order" she must leave.

Protest being out of the question, a four-wheeler was procured, and the shivering patient was rolled off to the nearest hospital through the wintry streets.

"No room," reported the night-watch, when the driver summoned him.

"But she is one of Her Majesty's personal attendants."

Of course that made a difference, and, after some more discussion, Mrs. Schnase was given a cot in the pauper's ward, third class, next to one in which a poor creature was just receiving extreme unction.

The Queen's wardrobewoman was a healthy girl, and recovered not only from the horrors of her unusual experience, but likewise from an illness she caught while exposed to the deadly exhalations of the sorry environment forced upon her. After a month or so, she was back at the Schloss; but, daring to complain of the treatment that had been meted out to her, such biting sarcasm and contempt were heaped upon poor Schnase that she preferred to resign.

Assuredly, no one blamed the Kaiser for postponing maneuvers when cholera was raging. On such and similar occasions all royal servants were treated to unsugared tea as the standing beverage, which caused not a little indignation in the palace, the flunkies and maids insisting that the Emperor should make the tea palatable, if he forbade them to drink anything else.

### Kaiserin Imitates Husband's Fads

The Empress, who faithfully copies all her husband's fads, either because she admires them or because she fears his displeasure, is as bad as he. Her Majesty frequently causes the discharge of servants for neglecting to report some trifling sickness in the family; and members of the royal household not living in the castle can enjoy a holiday at any time by simply furnishing a doctor's certificate stating that somebody with whom they are domiciled in the city is ill. This applies

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