

# 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.

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Enter the Kaiser's favorites—Four women who in turn captivate his fancy, and who, one by one, were sent into exile by the jealous Kaiserin—Glimpses of vulgarity of court life

This startling testimony against the late Emperor of Germany, given in these pages to-day, was first ruled out by the committee of editors who are weighing the evidence. "Yet, are we not duty bound to give all the facts to the public?" they argued. "Why should we allow Wilhelm II to escape? This is one of the penalties of despotism. William Hohenzollern stands shorn of his 'divine right,' and he must now account to the people for his murderous assault upon civilization. His habits and conduct can not escape relentless public scrutiny. Let the facts be known."

Acting on the aforementioned principle, the records have been digested for publication. The frank testimony of the Chief of Household in the German Court, as transcribed by the publicist, Henry William Fisher, is such that it has required skillful expurgation before it could be presented to the readers of this newspaper.

[Continued From Yesterday]

(What we are now to reveal requires explanation—if not apology. But we are pledged to tell "the truth" about William Hohenzollern—the exiled Kaiser of Germany—and this requires us to reveal phases of his character about which we should prefer to remain silent. This silence, however, would be unjust to the world; it would, in fact, be a deliberate attempt to conceal important facts and thus protect him

from his own conduct. William Hohenzollern is entitled to no such suppression of the truth. He has placed himself before the cold scrutiny of history and must stand the consequences—every detail of his life belongs to the public—thus we are forced to give historical record to the former Emperor's conduct in the Imperial Court; his customs and habits; his interpretation of public morals; his attitude toward and his responsibility to society. The only defense that we can extend to him is that he acted upon the axiom: "The King can do no wrong"—that the King is Law; that laws are only made for the people; and that the King is not subject to either the Law of God or man. This undoubtedly is the Hohenzollern doctrine, and the creed of its morals and religion.

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riod of his early life and reveal nothing of the kind in the last few years, which might incriminate many living personages. Let us begin at the beginning. What was the fundamental conception of moral obligations with which William Hohenzollern began his life? And what was the nature of this moral development?

I was told when I entered the Court that as a young prince among men of his own caste and age, William had but one intimate, the late Rudolf of Austria; but the pleasant relations between the young men, based upon mutual likes and dislikes, upon a mutual respect and four years previous to the Archduke's awful death, discord arising when Prince and Princess William were spending several weeks at their Imperial Highnesses' country-place near Vienna. From this outing the Princess returned all of a sudden and post-haste to Potsdam; her husband went on an impromptu tour of military inspections in the provinces.

And the reason? Princess Philipp of Coburg, sister of the Archduchess Stephanie, told me that William, returning in her brother-in-law's company from a stag party late one evening, proposed a game, which, Her Royal Highness insists, is "quite common" among German officers.

Next morning the young wives got together; but as each charged the devilish plot, the happy family party was bound to break up, and the worthy of each other separated without saying good-bye. Each, at the Court of Empress Augusta in Coblenz, where I happened to be at the time.

As for the rest, it will probably never be known which of the royal gentlemen were drunk and agreed upon the dictum of Prussian army men: "Among pals it's all the same," as a good joke.

Accusations in Diplomatic Record (This testimony of the next episode is related here also with apologies; it becomes essential, however, to give history its correct judgment.) My next experience in the Emperor's court was when the household was upset by the receipt of an anonymous letter, written to the Empress. I will tell more about these anonymous letters and scandals later—but here let me mention this one:

"Madame," wrote the anonymous correspondent, "do you know what is the difference between you and Maria Leczinska? Her children died while Louis the Fifteenth's illegitimate offspring flourished. Today the Kaiser's Vienna baby is dead. I wonder if for the same reason which the physician of His Most Christian Majesty assigned for the demise of the Queen's children?"

That cruel letter, cruel, yet consoling in more than one way, arrived when the anonymous letter scandal was at its height and the little waif was about twelve months old.

Her mother was a beautiful Viennese, Fraulein Caroline Seiffert, one of the late Crown Prince Rudolf's set.

Madame von Kotze insisted that it was a spite baby. (I will tell you more about Madame von Kotze later.) "And what on earth is a spite-baby?" I inquired.

"They had been making fun of Caroline—His Majesty, then Prince William, and the Prince Imperial—as a little idiot, who didn't know enough to have a child; but like the first Napoleon's love, Marguerite Bellisle (the girl General Bonaparte had with him in Egypt, or rather took away from one of his officers there), the Vienna beauty said: 'I will show them who the idiot is.'"

Her child was born, two or three weeks after Eitel Fritz, the Kaiser's second son, saw the light at the Marble Palace.

I remembered the circumstances perfectly, and my question to Madame von Kotze was merely asked to help clear up, if possible, the authorship of the unsigned communications that had kept their Majesties and the Court in a turmoil for two years. I was one of many in the royal service and society generally who did not believe the Kotzes guilty, and have never had occasion to change this opinion. Jealousy was alleged to be the main spring of the scandal.—Madame von Kotze's jealousy of Countess Fritz Hohenzollern's ascendancy over the Kaiser. I put the question to disabuse my mind of any suspicions of that sort. The Man Who Caused the World War To return to William's infatuation for Mademoiselle Seiffert. That story was well known to the intimates of the late Crown Prince's circle. (Afterward Emperor Frederick.) "Unser Fritz" did not mind it much. Having been kept well in hand by his "Vicky" all through his life, I suspect he even took some mischievous delight in his son's escapade, as his visit to the Court of the late Alphonse XII, so rich in adventures, proved.

But in the Princess Imperial's eyes a liaison was little short of a crime. Pictures of the fourth George and Mrs. Fitz-Herbert, she told me once, arose before her mental eyes every time she thought of the matter. At that period, be it remembered, the history of Prince and Princess William's marriage was as fresh in everybody's memory as it is now obscure,—as fresh as were the incidents attending George's courtship with Caroline of Brunswick during the first ten years after Europe's gentleman par excellence had reeled into the Chapel Royal and hiccupped out his vows of fidelity.

Auguste Victoria was a much-abused woman then, though carrying out her part of the marriage agreement—to provide new Hohenzollerns—with the utmost loyalty. Indeed, so frequent were the stork's visit in the household that the wife was unable to appear at the great Court festivals for three winters in succession, while her husband, full of resentment for his consort-by-stateright, shamefully ignored her. And to crown it all—this Vienna scandal!

True Character of German and Austrian Courts. Primarily it was the outcome of the friendship between the two heirs destined to wear the most ancient and the newest imperial diadems (Germany and Austria)—allied for the great war which was to upset the world. Being of the same age, and possessed of temperaments whose selfishness was only equalled by thirst for power, both commanded, if not much ready money, unlimited credit for certain extravagances. Rudolf, however, was far ahead of William in the knowledge of fashionable vice.

In the Potsdam archives I came upon a stack of letters from the representatives of Prussia at the Vienna Congress, denouncing a state of morals that permitted the sons of the great Austrian nobles to keep mistresses at the age of thirteen or

fourteen years. Similar observations might be made of the Vienna of the nineties—and Rudolf was more than a noble!

The two young Princes, then twenty-four and twenty-five years old, considered it fun to revel in debauches with the official world and society looking on, and the possibility of both consequences was invited rather than dreaded by these hopeful rousers.

Yet, when Mademoiselle Seiffert's telegram arrived in Berlin, Prince William did not feel in the devil-may-care mood that had led him into the adventure, and his first serious misunderstanding with his sister Charlotte arose on account of a clever bit of poetry cited by Her Royal Highness "in honor of the occasion," as she expressed herself. "Vater werden ist nicht schwer. Aber's sein un desto mehr." Translated: To become a father is easy enough, but to be one is different.

Some Inside Diplomatic Secrets. Caroline was not sentimental about the affair. Unlike Marie Vecsera, she had never dreamed of a diadem, or even a coronet to gloss over her fall. Only by a short telegram sought to reopen communication with the father; her next step was to formulate her demands at the German Embassy in her native city.

There were frantic messages from Prince Reuss, husband of the catty and imperious Marie: "I am neither a Beauharnais, nor a Talleyrand," he wrote. "What have I to do with this affair?"

However, Prince Bismarck, who was friendly to both Reuss and William, at last persuaded the Ambassador to look into the case. "A hundred thousand florins," said Mademoiselle Seiffert, according to diplomatic correspondence relating to the case.

Noble Ladies Eager to Be Royal Mistresses (This evidence at least gives an historical insight into the moral codes of the Imperial Governments of Germany and Austria.) Every time His Majesty visited

thought their nose too finely modeled, or their hair too luxurious.

All the unhappy traits Thackeray ascribes to Queen Charlotte were brought in to play when Auguste Victoria's jealousy was aroused. She became invincible in matters of etiquette and angry with her people who, in the service, suffered ill-health. A pin out of place, or a moment's absence from duty, threw her into a towering passion on such occasions. She was unkind, unjust, and not above excusing her hatred of poor sinners, such as we all are, by religious scruples. At all times the Kaiserin was a much more gracious mistress to homely dependents of her own sex than to good-looking ones; and when they were old, into the bargain, she could be really delightful to them.

What Ozar of Russia Said: This is the late Nicholas, who lost

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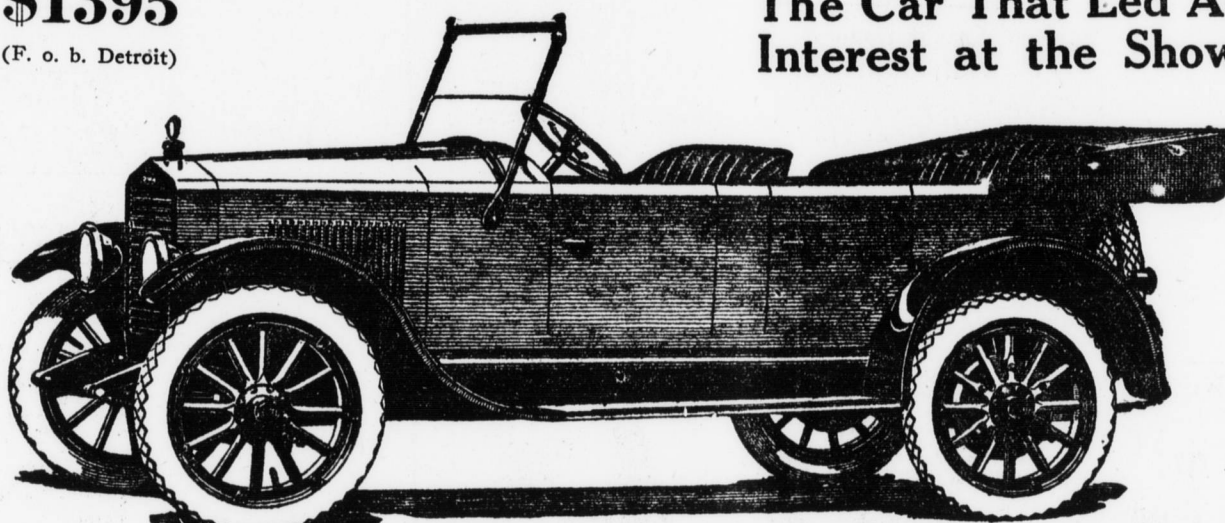
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