

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 Eppinghova being a *som de guerre*, heretofore used to shield her.

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(Continued From Yesterday)
The elder, William, a major of the Garde du Corps, married a daughter of the Duke d'Ujez, whereupon he improved upon his relationship to the Kaiser by becoming a Prussian nobleman, too. However, by the grace of his wife's beauty, Fritz was the best known of the brothers, and his fortune, augmented by the von der Decken millions, was the amplest.
The Hohenzollerns, all of them, men and women, were much befriended by the old Emperor, and Count William came near inveigling Frederick III to revive in his favor the name and title borne by the morganatic wife of Frederick William III, the Countess Harrach. He would be Prince of Liegnitz today, had the late Emperor been able to sign the piece of parchment setting forth the creation during the last days of his illness.

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Great's motto was true, viz: that a "dash of plebeian blood here and there improves a royal race." "Of whom are you talking, pray," asked the Empress, across the table, moving uncomfortably in her seat. "I did not know any of our set were in the room." "I had the pleasure of referring to Fritz Hohenzollern's wife." "Oh, that woman. She is a gamekeeper's daughter, or something of that sort—is she not?" The Emperor paid no attention to this sally. "Eulenburg," he addressed the grand-master, "I will go over the list of the season's guests with you presently." And from that day on Countess Fritz had to be treated as persona grataissima by everybody in the royal service for two years to come.

The vivacious woman introduced her pleasing presence on every occasion when the Emperor personally or the Court played a part. She rode, hunted, and skated with us; she played tennis, and went to the riding school, where she had gone for exercise, with red eyes. "That woman was there—on a horse ten times more graceful than my own." At state dinners the newly-found cousin's place was near enough to the royal arm chair to throw old goldsticks into convulsions, and on lesser occasions William often conducted Her Ladyship to table, while his Queen yawned herself to death at the side of some crusty General or doltish relative. And now Charlotte's laughter rang out above the clatter of silver plate and the tinkling of bumpers! Wit, joy, enthusiasm, success, all crystallized in the tones of that voice, which the Emperor admitted so much, and which Her Majesty likened to a chassonnette singer's.

There were sycophants, with and without their royal endorser. This latter notion—a Queen can find people to believe with her in the quadrature of the circle—had so generally continued its good opinion of Countess Hohenzollern in the face of calumnies of all sorts. Indeed, the clever woman was a favorite everywhere, and that with her youth and beauty didn't capture the Kaiser's eye before it remained. Maybe he avoided her on account of the Hohenzollern-Emperor-Frederick entente cordiale. Her Kaiser's Cousin Charlotte. One of the blue-blooded participants of the battle in Pless tells how the Kaiser first became interested in Cousin Charlotte. "We were awaiting him in the court yard of the palace, which was in a semi-circle. My immediate neighbor on one side, was the only she rode a long-legged hunter of a peculiar red color, straddling the animal. Her costume was appropriate to this maneuver: short Russian trousers, reaching to the knee, a close fitting cut-away velvet coat over a red vest and shirt, the latter partly hidden by a green tie, a jaunty Calabrese hat, and high patent-leather boots reaching a little over the knees in front, but cut out in the back. As the Kaiser appeared in the door and stood still a moment to acknowledge our greetings, his eye caught the parcel of loveliness at my side. Scarcely was he in, when he cried out: 'Cousin Charlotte, a word with you.' 'I will bet my best pointer the Countess had expected the invitation to contain no information, but women will be actresses you know. She played the surprised, the bewildered. Perfect horsewoman that she is and capable of subduing the most stubborn beast, the fox-hunter got away with her—apparently. She reared, pawed the air, and seemed altogether unmanageable. Never saw anything better done at Renz's. Renz was then the foremost circus of Germany." "Suddenly a blow from Madame's gold-headed whip between the horse's ears, and with one leap the amazon was at His Majesty's side. 'Well done, cousin,' we heard His Majesty say. They galloped ahead, the rest of us following at a respectful distance, dog-trot pace."

How the German Empire Was Governed
Of course Madame von Kotze was far from pleased at the advent of this new star. Rivalries were inevitable between the royal favorites, though His Majesty did nothing to provoke them, as far as I could observe. Possibly he treated the Countess with a little more freedom than he did her rival, but the former's formerly disputed relationship to a pretence, but in all other respects Madame von Kotze's position was unshaken. She continued her visits at Court whenever the Kaiser was at home, and her beauty and style caused Her Majesty's ladies most exquisite heart-burnings. Indeed, Her Ladyship angered the Kaiser more than ever because of the increasing luxury of her toilettes, for, woman like, she meant to surpass Countess Fritz by new creations of the milliner and tailor as well as by the mental and physical graces. In this endeavor to out-Eugenie Eugenie the tongue of the balance inclined now to one side, now to the other. I remember Countess Fritz cutting out Her Excellency at the Schloepfen Cour (drawing room) by a superb gown of white gold brocade, edged with blue fox; but things were evened up when Master of Ceremony von Kotze conducted Prince Albert's daughter to a fauteuil in the rear of the orchestra at the gala opera, performed a few weeks later, when she had to sit among army officers' wives and ordinary privy councillors.

The Kaiserin Has Her Revenge
My seat was opposite the royal box on that occasion, and if I live a hundred years I shall not forget the smile of satisfaction that overspread Auguste Victoria's countenance as she perceived her cousin in semi-obscure. The Kaiser himself had only a malicious grin for his uncomfortable favorite. However, next day we experienced one of those intermittent upheavals for which the reign of William II was notorious. This erratic monarch could not get along without rows; in his ministries, in parliament, or at home somewhere there were always axes to grind. William had enjoyed his cousin's discomfort in the theatre; he had thought it funny "to set the two women by the ears" (the satisfaction with which Her Majesty viewed the spectacle was likewise not to be underestimated); but after Countess Fritz, in a private audience, sought twelve hours later, had unhesitatingly herself to His Majesty, all this was changed.

The master of ceremony was ordered to explain the reason for the unheard-of breach of etiquette; and his excuse, that Her Ladyship had arrived too late to be ranged according to her rank, was assiduously published in the palace, in the salons and clubs. Then it was given out that His Majesty intended to rehabilitate Countess Fritz, and a banquet was forthwith held where Her Ladyship

do uncommon things all the time, and where his lion's skin fails to reach, he is content to piece it out with the fox's; in other words, when he finds it impossible to startle his friends and acquaintances by grand schemes, by criticisms of this, that, or the other thing, by compositions in verse, or prose, or of musical character, he likes to give proofs of his ever-ready alertness by proposing riddles or charades, which the person who happens to be on the rack, must assume to be unable to solve, otherwise the imperial oracle would have to forego the very pleasure for which the comedy was arranged. Frau von Leipzig was probably the first to abet a master's disposition to drive his subjects to despair by more or less senseless riddles.

It seemed to Madame von Leipzig's real object in life to foster this weakness. Ever since the king's dignity has sprung into existence, there have been royal favorites, utilizing their way in various manners. Some inspired their lords with good or evil ambitions, made them better or worse men, encouraged or discouraged their inclination for mercy or cruelty, for art, the sciences, or literature. Frau von Leipzig was probably the first to abet a master's disposition to drive his subjects to despair by more or less senseless riddles.

How Noble Is the "Nobility"
It cannot be my purpose to weary the reader by picturing the gloom of the puzzle-headed hydra at times cast over the Court. The reptile of mythology, we learned at school, had nine heads, each of which, when cut off, shot up into two new ones. In similar style Her Ladyship and the Emperor used to launch forth new attacks upon our ears, as soon as we had disposed of one ambiguous proposition. But even though Madame von Leipzig's relations to her husband were of the most innocent character, Her Majesty disapproved of them. So the news gazetted one fine day, that Herr von Leipzig had resigned from the army, surprised no one, and Prince Dolph of Lippe voiced general opinion as follows: "My sister-in-law would not have any woman under fifty amuse the Kaiser."

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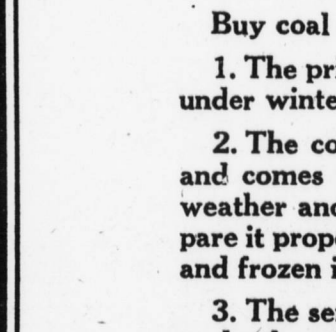
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