

The Private Life of the Kaiser

FROM THE PAPERS AND DIARIES OF
THE BARONESS VON LARISCH-REDDERN
 The Kaiser and Kaiserin's Late Major Dome, Chief of the Royal Household at Berlin and Potsdam.

Baroness von Larisch-Reddern is the TRUE name of the Berlin Countess who gave the story of the Kaiser to Henry William Fisher, U.S. Consul at Berlin, the Kaiser's friend, and who, therefore, used to shield her.

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[Continued from Yesterday.]

If he was to get those Belgian or French coal fields and iron mines which the Kaiser had promised him for his life's support, financial and otherwise, why, "THE DAY" must not be "cake to-morrow."

Count Zeppelin, since dead, played on the same string. He was getting on in years, and before he "kicked the bucket" he wanted to "lay London and Paris and possibly, New York in ashes" by his latest machine—always his latest.

And there was Gwinner and Rathenau and a hundred and one other industrial and financial barons with or without handles to their name.

Cecil's fortune, as William Jr.'s savings (what there was of such), were bound up with those of the Fatherland's merchant princes.

If war meant larger dividends, as the Frankfurt Nabobs predicted, why, the Kaiser must be prodded to say "go" now, particularly, as Little Willie was building a new home for himself at Potsdam—one of those enormous hideous German palaces, which Thackeray was wont to shed tears over.

The spoils of war, I heard the Crown

couldn't fetch the pad of telegraph blanks quickly enough.

When Francis Ferdinand had been a doomed man for a week or ten days (of course he didn't know it, poor chap), the Crown Prince on evening interrupted a poker game in his bachelor quarters at the Marble Palace. "Get me Huelsen, on the double quick," he said to his adjutant, throwing down his cards.

"Huelsen," he ordered in his most imperious style after the connection had been effected, "I want you to be put on 'Diplomacy' on Wednesday at the very latest."

There was considerable buzzing, Huelsen replying no doubt, but Willie hung up the receiver. The director of the royal playhouse had his orders and the Crown Prince wasn't interested in what the director might have to say on the subject.

Hohenzollerns Big Eaters

Not to miss one of their five constitutional meals a day—five, count 'em!—the imperial family had tea and sandwiches served to them between acts at the theater. During the first act of "Diplomacy," William, Jr., had talked to the Kaiser off and on, commenting particularly on the woman spy, and during the repeat he continued his "illuminating talk," as he termed his vapors.

The Kaiser seemed to pay more attention to Willie than usual, affecting the thoughtful mien which characterizes most of his portraits. Suddenly he put down his cup and beckoned to me.

"Baroness," he whispered, as, standing behind his chair, I bent over him, "make haste and call up Daisy. Tell her to start for Berlin instantly. No, the midnight train will do." (It was then 9 o'clock.) "I have got a mission for her; special ambassador. Make her hurry."

"But," I boldly suggested, "wouldn't the Princess be more eager still if Majesty in person did the talking?"

"Of course she would, any pretty woman would,—I was being backed by William, Jr., who probably had a favor to ask of papa. Call her yourself, father," he added.

"And have the whole castle know what's what?" demanded the Kaiser. "Mind your own business, Willie, and you Baroness." He was going to say something rude, but at that moment the operator signalled that the line to Pless was clear. I hurriedly left the table to go to the booth. (All wires and lines, favored by the Kaiser, had to be abandoned by operators and officials the moment the Kaiser indicated he desired to speak himself or by deputy.)

I was explaining his Majesty's orders to the Princess Pless for the second time, when William, Jr., burst in. "Tell her never mind dress—traveling outfit, tailor-made and half a dozen semi-evening gowns will do."

"But what does it all mean?" asked Daisy, when I had transcribed the order to her.

"A hurried trip to her old country," whispered William, Jr., into my ear. "But secrecy, dead secrecy, Kaiser's most stringent orders. We will have her care, tell her, if she breathes a word even to her lap dog."

Daisy, Princess Pless, born Mary Theresa Olivia Cornwallis West, of Berlin Castle, England, was then forty-one years old and no longer the great beauty over whom the illustrated papers raved when she was a girl at home. And though her husband's royal estate at Pless is one of the finest on the continent and though the castle is set in romantic and even poetic environment, more than twenty years of German life had coarsened her in looks as well as in manner. German royalty, after which she patterned, is rough-shod, over-feeding and over-weening. Titled attendants, like myself, are treated with sarcasm at court; the ordinary run of servants is used worse than beasts of burden.

"Why shout at the man," asked the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward, when on a visit to Berlin, "I heard his imperial nephew yawning at a lackey; 'he isn't deaf, is he?'"

"You don't understand, uncle! It's customary here to rave at servants, so they know who is the master."

Wilhelm's Special Ambassador in London

In May, 1914, we find Wilhelm's special

ambassador in London town. He had asked Princess Pless to try to persuade Lord Kitchener and Lord Roberts to come to Germany for a stay at her house and she did his bidding right or wrong, giving no thought to possible consequences. I dare say.

Wilhelm's Spies

People have exaggerated the Kaiser's reputation for gallantry. In the early years of his reign, when at last free to lay his hands on millions, he indulged in a succession of mistresses, it is true, but the anonymous letter scandal and his growing intimacy with the Eulenburg caterer cured him of that weakness. For the last ten years and more women have merely served him as so many "Countesses Castigliones." Their ladyships were made to believe that the king's crust was better than their Lord's dainties and were flattered into the conviction that special privileges had been conferred upon them and that under "Ah Highest" guidance, diplomacy was to be their oyster.

The acts of "diplomacy" assigned to them were spying at home or abroad, and the dirtier the work for the Kaiser's greater glory, the nobler it was in the eyes of true patriots! And the lady's reward? If successful: Royal decorations for herself, titles, advancement for husband, cousins, uncles or sons; if not: Banishment from court and society.

What Wilhelm's Special Ambassador Did In London

Wilhelm's idea, superinduced by the play of Diplomacy, was to make Kitchener and Roberts, England's leading military men, prisoners of war in the midst of peace! He intended to lure them to a hunting trip into East Prussia, the heart of the Central Empire, midway between Berlin and Vienna; there to sequester them in the lonely castle of Pless, without reach of post, telegraph or phone.

"Impossible," you say, "there are no such wild and woolly places in Germany." Yes, there are: KAISERMADE, for when Wilhelm stays at a country house, the entire postal and telegraph services are suspended for other inmates, and nothing short of the All-Highest "I command," makes the post come forward and sets the "phone wires working. There can be no manner of doubt that if Lord Kitchener had accepted the Kaiser's invitation to meet him at Pless in the last weeks of July, 1914, Wilhelm would have made a hunting trip into the very heart of the British Embassy in Berlin, for the time he wanted him isolated, as thoroughly as if the future British Minister of War had been on a visit to Mars.

Wilhelm's special ambassador in London, and Lord Roberts, who was also invited "as a surprise" for Lord Kitchener.

End of May, 1914

Expecting many callers on the Kaiser's business, Daisy, after a short stay at the Savoy, leased a furnished flat in Jermyn street, Piccadilly, a unique establishment for none of the servants spoke a word of English. Perhaps the circumstance that the same apartment was frequently housed William Jr., when in London incognito, accounts for that.

Such were the London safeguards. But what about the proposed victims? The Kaiser intended to decree a "real rest" for his friends; "absolutely nothing to worry them!" The chase, agreeable company, lordly splendor and his (Wilhelm's) boon companionship would make their days and evenings a delight. And there would be new war inventions, shown by special favor, to interest them: Krupp would send cannon and Wilhelmshaven models of submarines. There would be professors to talk economics, old sabre-tasches, great nobles, industrial barons and pretty women.

The Plot


At the same time, unknown to his British guests, the Kaiser would continue his mischief-making activities through a thousand and one channels: royal scamps like Tino, over-rated popinjays like Duelow, pleaders for organized dishonesty like Bethmann-Hollweg, and through diplomatic devils of the John Bernstorff sort; through his paid and voluntary press agents in all parts of the world besides. And he would be at it until the time was ripe for his war provoking ultimata to Belgrade, Petrograd and Paris. Then, after creating "a military necessity that

knows no law," his English guests would become his prisoners, "prisoners of war," and Wilhelm could snap his fingers at Downing Street. For England, moreover, both he and the Princess German. Therefore I did not understand what they were saying, except that they referred to the letters. Also there was a large amount of "Kaiser" mixed in their lingo. The Baron noded approvingly while he read the letter to Lord Roberts. Then he addressed me directly in English: "Of course, you can get me a typewritten copy from your notes, can't you?" Noticing that the Princess nodded assent, I did likewise. "Send it to 9 Carlton House Terrace, marking a 'K' in the corner of the envelope," said the stranger, handing me half a crown. "Unconsciously, no doubt, he continued to speak English when he turned to the Princess, saying: 'I'll send the copy to Majesty—a little masterpiece this. I always maintained when a smart woman, like your Highness, turns to diplomacy, she beats us poor professionals hollow.'"

"Now I recognized him: Baron Kuhlmann of the German Embassy, the most consummate liar of the diplomatic corps. A newspaper girl friend had once pointed him out to me: 'Always good though the title of Baron, twice repeated, sounded familiar enough. His Lordship was in elaborate evening dress—too elaborate for an Englishman and moreover, both he and the Princess spoke in German. Therefore I did not understand what they were saying, except that they referred to the letters. Also there was a large amount of 'Kaiser' mixed in their lingo. The Baron noded approvingly while he read the letter to Lord Roberts. Then he addressed me directly in English: 'Of course, you can get me a typewritten copy from your notes, can't you?' Noticing that the Princess nodded assent, I did likewise. 'Send it to 9 Carlton House Terrace, marking a 'K' in the corner of the envelope,' said the stranger, handing me half a crown. 'Unconsciously, no doubt, he continued to speak English when he turned to the Princess, saying: 'I'll send the copy to Majesty—a little masterpiece this. I always maintained when a smart woman, like your Highness, turns to diplomacy, she beats us poor professionals hollow.'"

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