

The Private Life of the Kaiser

FROM THE PAPERS AND DIARIES OF
THE BARONESS VON LARISCH-REDDERN
The Kaiser and Kaiserin's Late Major Domestique, 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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[Continued From Yesterday]

"Why this is not the Court my father and uncles have been telling me about," said the Emperor of Russia, then Czarovitch, to the Duke of Schleswig, when he visited Berlin a year before Czar Alexander's death.

"At home," continued Nicholas, "they talked quite enthusiastically of beauties that basked in the shadow of the Prussian throne, and whom the old Queen and Princesses were generous enough to countenance."

"Yes, yes," laughed His Highness, the tall gunther, "that is one of Dona's weak points. She will not suffer a handsome face within ten miles of her house. It has always been a wonder to me why she keeps Bassewitz."

"Perhaps to prove the rule," suggested Nicholas, and the Kaiserin's big brother, who is not

course, for it was to be kept from the Empress.

Is This German "Kultur?"

This is a sample of the treatment the Kaiser meted out to his wife's ladies. He seemed to take a fiendish delight in teasing the "old guard," and only occasionally had a good word to say to Countess Bassewitz. Fraulein von Geradorff, who grew stouter as she grew older, often served as a target for the Emperor's wit. So he insisted, at the decoration of the Christmas trees, that the Geradorff mount a step-ladder and fasten a paper-mache angel on top of the tree. Naturally, my fat friend offered many excuses with her profoundest courtesies but the Kaiser cut her short with a brusque "I know you are bow-legged; valet climb up."

(We present these episodes only to show the true nature of German "kultur"—they are the strongest exposure of coarseness in disguise of culture. There was no refinement in the German court clique.)

On another occasion (it was before the advent of Countess Bassewitz) the Kaiserin said one evening when the Court was assembled in the Tassen Zimmer that the hours that intervened between the supper and bedtime with the usual dreary conversation: "I wonder why none of my ladies marry. Perhaps they do not go out enough. What do you think, Willie?"

"Pshaw!" answered the Emperor gruffly, "I think these ladies have not the time to get husbands. Why cannot they get husbands? Ask the next best looking lass."

William's Ideals of Womanhood.

(These glimpses into the German Court will reveal to the world the

real Kaiser—he whose army slaughtered women and children through four years of cruel war.)

When I first entered the German Court I found Madame von Kotze was the favorite. William first took her up in the beginning of the eighties, when his marriage to Auguste Victoria "made him hungry for the society of a clever and audacious woman," as Count Herbert Bismarck once expressed himself.

"He has engaged a Marchale de Prusse for his awkward better-half," continued His Excellency with a sneering allusion to the bargain enacted between Du Barri and Madame La Marchale de Miropois (who for a consideration of a hundred thousand francs per annum, taught gorgeous woman the ways of polite society). "The Countess does it all for the love of Christ, or pour le roi de Prusse, which is the same thing. Likewise he wants somebody to make him forget the ennui that reigns in his palace."

It was to Madame von Kotze that Auguste Victoria often referred when she charged His Majesty with a weakness for brunettes. They fought the "Hungarian pork raiser's" as some one had dubbed her, in the salon, the menage, on the slippery parquet of the royal ballroom, whenever she showed her saucy, plump, All that face!

It was not broad and placid; her fine, white shoulders were not quite fleshy enough to suit the Teuton fad, and she had black, curly hair, the Kaiser's favorite. "What! That is almost a crime; for are not Her Majesty and her friends blondes, and was he himself not rather inclined to brunettes?"

This Is Royal Family Life!

However, the royal lady's contemptuous treatment of the object of her jealousy, the scenes the Kaiserin made for William, and the pinkest thrusts of corroded envy were alike powerless to bring about change in the friendship between Madame von Kotze and the sovereign, though the battle raged for ten years or longer.

His Majesty made it plain that he liked Madame von Kotze, and she figure at all entertainments, stately or of a semi-private nature. Being the wife of one of the high Court functionaries, the "pork-raiser's" daughter sat at the same table with crowned heads and the proud possessors of sixteen or thirty-two quarters of nobility.

More than once the Emperor himself took her in to dinner, and at

informal suppers, after musical or similar excuses for organized ennuis, his Majesty failed to "command" Her Excellency to his table. On such occasions the Emperor and Empress invited their friends, and the Kaiserin, to the favored ones, Her Majesty selecting the men, and the Kaiser the ladies most to their liking.

At the Court balls Her Ladyship was likewise much in evidence. Being rich in her own right, and having increased her fortune enormously by marriage, Madame ranked as one of the smartest dressers. She was a good dancer, quick at repartee, and full of Gallic wit.

And This Is Court Refinement!

"Your Royal Highness's inspection des jambes reports for duty." With these words, Madame von Kotze greeted William at the beginning of the second carnival ball as he stood conversing with some dowagers on the steps of the throne in the White Hall.

I should not believe it possible had I not heard the words myself; still I confess the jolly mockery of the woman's voice, the innocent look on her face took away much of the coarseness of the expression.

William had seemingly not been in the happiest of moods until then. At the approach of Madame von Kotze, his face lit up, and, taking the pretty woman's arm, he bowed with a little sneer before the elder ladies as he withdrew with his fair escort.

Intellect of "Divine Ruler"

And so they strolled along, he in his gold-brided Hussar uniform, the fur-edged attila over his shoulder to hide his poor left hand; the woman, who set herself the task of amusing the King, walking briskly by his side, laughing and gesticulating.

"An oriental face," said the Prince von Salin-Hortsmar, and a dozen people seconded His Grace's remarks. It was all over the brilliant hall, with its crystal chandeliers and purple and gold hangings, lit up by thousands of wax candles. "An oriental face—but so was that of Cleopatra." The simile was far-fetched. Where was the Caesar, and where was Antony, not to mention Caesar Junior?

During the war this same Salin-Hortsmar distinguished himself by advocating utter ruin of Belgium and France. Likewise the ruin of England by invasion.

The couple walked through all the rooms quite alone, for His Royal Highness had hired to his adjutants that they were de trop. At supper, in the Koniginen Zimmer, I was seated at the table reserved for the Princess Imperial, who, however, had decided to go home at the last moment. Near by was Prince William's table, at which Madame von Kotze presided, and where all the Princes and "bloods" present enjoyed the heir presumptive's hospitality.

How they laughed and joked! "Why don't you dance?" asked one of the cavaliers.

"Because it gives me palpitations." And then somebody told the anecdote of Marie Antoinette, who, one evening, when waiting at Petit Trianon with Count Dillon, the beautiful Dillon, as he was called, stood still and said: "You should feel my heart."

"Not so loud," said Frau von Kotze, with a side glance to another part of the room, where Baroness von Reischach, nee Princess Ratibor, was supping with the Countess of Hildreg, both stars of many tableaux vivants.

"But your report, Madame Inspecteuse," began Prince of Ratibor, now dead, the same who turned housebreaker for the love of an Emperor's daughter. "We insist upon a report, and a minute one."

"Well," replied Madame von Kotze with comic grandezza, "we were not overpleased with the new fashion, were we, Your Royal Highness?"

William nodded. "Your ladyship will proceed," he said; "do not keep these studious young men waiting." (It is deemed advisable to expurgate the rest of this royal conversation. . . .)

You may be sure Auguste-Victoria learned all about this talk, and perhaps a little more than was actually spoken, but to no other purpose than to instil innocent rage in the unhappy mother, and make her even more suspicious of and disagreeable to good-looking women in and out of the palace.

Low Intrigues

One of the chief agitators against Madame von Kotze, and every other handsome face, for that matter, was the grand-mistress, Countess Brockdorff, who once betrayed her practices to the amusement of the whole Court. Shortly after we had moved from Potsdam to Berlin Schloss, an informal note addressed by the Countess to Her Majesty fell into the hands of one of the house maids. It happened in this way: Her Majesty, as I have explained, was in the habit of writing orders and complaints, intended for the officials, on small bits of paper which she sent to a block. Now Her Excellency's note happened to be written on a similar sheet, and so it got mixed with the rest.

The note contained the names of persons who had handed in requests for audience. Last on the list was the name of Madame von Kotze, and opposite it the remark, three times underlined: "Refused." Then followed this sentence: "All's well that ends well." (Signed) Theresa Brockdorff.

Of course, this note, indicating exactly how the wind was blowing in the upper regions, had no sooner been read in the marshal's office than its contents were on everybody's lips. Most of the courtiers were honest enough to see the point of the attack (for, after all, the mixing up of papers was not wholly accidental); but the Schrader faction, that is, the friends of Master of Ceremony von Schrader, the same who was afterwards shot and killed by von Kotze, would not have it so. They insisted that there was some mysterious connection between the refusal of an audience and the anonymous letters.

Kaiser's Favorites Not Intellectual

It took the camarilla ten years to dislodge Madame von Kotze, a long space of time even for Germany, but it may be remembered that Her Ladyship was not the only favorite. There were more thorns, so that the efforts of Auguste Victoria's champions were necessarily divided.

Charlotte, Countess von Hohenhausen was second on the list of charmers who boasted of William's friendship without fear of compromising her position.

(This next escapade is but another witness to the chimeric of German upper-class "kultur"—and the type of unrefined social aspirants, who gazed about the Kaiser—from his own choice.)

Royal Soundly Thrashed

The young noblewoman, the daughter of a rich land-owner, Her von der Decken, became the Kaiser's cousin-german by her marriage to the son of a great noble, Prince Albert of Prussia. Prince Albert's

first wife was Marianne of the Netherlands, who brought him an enormous fortune, and whom he divorced because of her riding master. When at last he succumbed, poor Marianne took another lease of life. Four years after his divorce, Prince Albert married Rosalie de Rauch, by whom he had two sons, William and Fritz, who were created Counts von Hohenau, and entered Berlin high life.

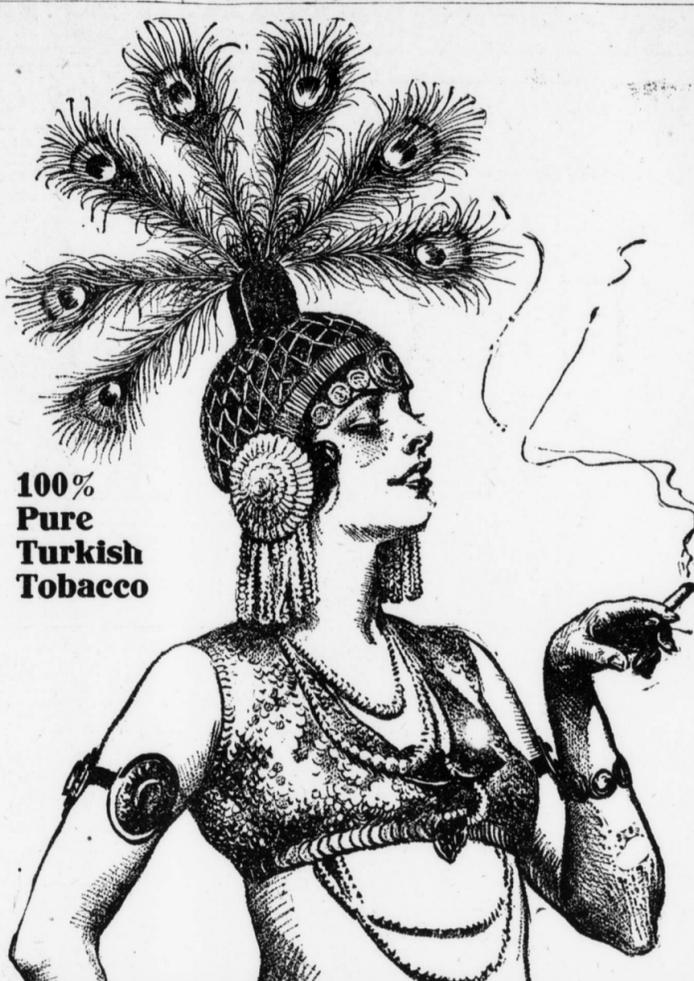
[To be Continued To-morrow.]

Use McNeill's Cold Tablets. — Ad

ness's Castle, Kamentz, in Silesia, and the ex-hostler used to whip his royal mistress mercilessly, while she fed him on the fat of the land. When at last he succumbed, poor Marianne took another lease of life. Four years after his divorce, Prince Albert married Rosalie de Rauch, by whom he had two sons, William and Fritz, who were created Counts von Hohenau, and entered Berlin high life.

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