The Schemes of the Kaiser eBook

The Schemes of the Kaiser by Juliette Adam

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

More fortunate than the majority of the prophets who cannot speak smooth things, Madame Adam has lived to find honour in her own country: *La grande Francaise* has come into her own. God willing, she should live to see that *revanche* for which, through good and evil report, she has laboured unceasingly these forty-five years, to see the arrogant Prussian humbled to the dust and Alsace-Lorraine restored to France. 1917, she firmly believes will revenge and reverse the tragedy of 1871. More fortunate than the great British soldier who spent his veteran days in warning his countrymen of the ordeal to come, Madame Adam, now in her eighty-first year, may yet hope to see the banners of the Allies crowned with victory, the black wreaths on the statue of Strasburg in the Place de la Concorde changed to garlands of rejoicing.

There have been dark days in these forty-five years, times when, even to herself, the struggle for *la patrie* seemed almost a forlorn hope. It was so at the time of the Berlin Congress in 1878, when, after his visit to Germany, Gambetta abandoned the idea of *la revanche*. It was so in 1891, when she realised that the influence of Paul Deroulede's Ligue des Patriotes had ceased to be a living force in public opinion, when France had become impregnated with false doctrines of international pacifism and homeless cosmopolitanism, when (as she wrote at the time) there were left of the faithful to wear the forget-me-not of Alsace-Lorraine only "a few mothers, a few widows, a few old soldiers, and your humble servant." But never, even in the darkest of dark days, was the flame of her ardent patriotism dimmed. After her breach with Gambetta, determined not to be defeated by the Government's abandonment of a vigorous anti-German policy of preparation, she founded the *Nouvelle Revue*, to wage war with her brain and pen against Bismarck and the ruler of Germany. The objects with which she created that brilliant magazine, as explained by herself to Mr. Gladstone in 1879, were threefold—"to oppose Bismarck, to demand the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, and to lift from the minds of young French writers the shadow of depression cast on them by national defeat." The fortnightly "Letters on Foreign Politics" which she contributed regularly to the *Nouvelle Revue*, for twenty years were not only persistently and violently anti-Teuton: they became a powerful force in educating public opinion in France to the necessity for an effective alliance with Russia, and to the cause of nationalism, in the Balkans, in Egypt, and wherever the liberties of the smaller nations were endangered by the earth-hunger of the great. She disliked and feared the policy of colonial expansion inaugurated by Gambetta and pursued by Jules Ferry, because she felt that it must weaken France in preparing for the great and final struggle with Teutonism which she knew to be inevitable. Thus, when Ferry requested her to cease from attacking Germany, she defied him, assuring him that nothing less than imprisonment would stop her, and that no honour could be greater than to be imprisoned for attacking Bismarck.

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Juliette Adam has always been intensely sure of herself and her opinions. She has the virile fighting spirit of a super-suffragette. "Always out of rank," as Gambetta described her, "Madame Integrale" has displayed throughout her political and literary work a contempt for compromise of every kind, which occasionally leads her into untenable positions and exaggerations. Like her friend George Sand, she has ever been an inveterate optimist and in the clouds, and this defect of her very qualities has tended to make her proficient in the gentle art of making enemies. Thus she broke with Anatole France for espousing the cause of Dreyfus, because, in spite of her keen sense of justice, she identified the Army with France and was instinctively opposed to Jews, because she regarded their "cosmopolitan" influence as incompatible with patriotism. For her, all things and all men have been subordinate to the sacred cause, to her watch-word and battle-cry of *Vive la France*! Nobly has she laboured for France, confident ever in the *renaissance* of *la Grande Nation*, and of her country's final triumph. And to-day her unswerving faith is justified, and her life work has been recognised and crowned with honour in her own land.

With one exception, all the articles collected in this book have been taken from Madame Adam's "Letters on Foreign Politics" in *La Nouvelle Revue*. Together they constitute a remarkable testimony to the political foresight and courage of *la grande Francaise*, and an equally remarkable analysis of the policy and character of Germany's ruler.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Modesty is out of fashion nowadays: what is wanted is the glorification of every kind of courage. That being so, I hold myself entitled to claim a Military Cross, for my forty-five years of hand-to-hand fighting with Bismarck and with William the Second, and to be mentioned in despatches for the past.

JULIETTE ADAM.

CHAPTER I

1890

William II, the "Social Monarch"—What lies beneath his declared pacifism—His journey to Russia—The German Press invites us to forget our defeat and become reconciled while Germany is adding to her army every day.

April 12, 1890. [1]

What an all-pervading nuisance is William!

To think of the burden that this one man has imposed upon the intelligence of humanity and the world's Press! The machiavelism of Bismarck was bad enough, with its constant demands on our vigilance, but this new omniscient German Emperor is worse; he reminds one of some infant prodigy, the pride of the family. Yet his ways are anything but kingly; they resemble rather those of a shopkeeper. He literally fills the earth with his circulars on the art of government, spreads before us the wealth of his intentions, and puffs his own magnanimity. He struggles to get the widest possible market for his ideas: 'tis a petty dealer in imperial sovereignty.

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There is nothing fresh about his wares, but he does his best to persuade us that they are new; one feels instinctively that some day he will throw the whole lot at our heads. I am quite prepared to admit that, if he had any rare or really superior goods to offer, his advertising methods might be profitable, but William's stock-in-trade has for many years been imported, and exported under two labels, namely the principles of '89 and Christian Socialism.

The German Emperor has mixed the two, after the manner of a prentice-hand. His organ, the *Cologne Gazette*, with all the honeyed adulation of a suddenly converted opponent, [2] has called this mixture "Social Monarchism." Therefore, it seems, the German Emperor is neither a constitutional sovereign nor a monarch by divine right. He has restored Caesarism of the Roman type, clinging at the same time to the principle of divine right—and the result is our "Social Monarch"!

Rushing headlong on the path of reform—full steam ahead, as he puts it—he is prepared to change the past, present and future in order to give happiness to his own subjects. But France is likely to pay for all this; sooner or later some new rescript will tell us that the valley of tribulation is our portion and inheritance.

It is one of his ambitions to put an end to class warfare in Germany. To this end he begins, with his usual tact, by denouncing the capitalists (that is to say; the wealth of the middle class) to the workers, and then holds up the scandalous luxury of the aristocracy in the army to the contempt of the bourgeois.

One of his most brilliant and at the same time most futile efforts, is his rescript on the subject of the shortage of officers for the army. As the army itself is steadily increasing every day, it should have been easy in each regiment for him, gradually and quite quietly, to increase the number of officers drawn from the middle-class; indeed, the change would have practically effected itself, for the Minister of War had a hundred-and-one means of bringing it about. But this rescript has put a check on what might otherwise have been a natural process of change, and unless William now settles matters with a high hand, it will cease. In every regiment the aristocracy provides the great majority of officers; bourgeois candidates for admission to the service are liable to be black-balled, just as they might be at any club; it is now safe to predict that they will henceforward be regarded with less favour than ever, and that generals, colonels, majors and the rest will form up into a solid phalanx, to prevent the Emperor's platonic *proteges* from getting in.

William II appeals to the higher ranks of officers, who are tradition personified, to put an end to tradition. It is really wonderful what a genius he has for exciting cupidity in one class and resistance in the other. And he has done the same thing with the working class as with the army.

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What a strange riddle his character presents—this quietist, this worshipper of an angry and a jealous God, with a mania for achieving the happiness of his people in the twinkling of an eye! A strange figure, this Emperor of country squires, who despises the bourgeois and who threatens to despoil the aristocracy of the very privileges which have been the safeguard of the Hohenzollerns' throne for centuries.

These peculiarities are due to an occult influence which weighs on the mind of William II, an influence which, while it points the way to action, blinds him to its consequences. The dead hand is upon him!

Frederick III, that liberal, bourgeois monarch, compels his reactionary, Old-Prussian-school son, to do those things which he would have done himself, had he not been victimised by Bismarck and his pupil.

I wonder whether the ever-mystical William II sometimes reflects on the ways by which God leads men into His appointed ways? Such thoughts might do more to enlighten him than his way of gazing at the heavens in the belief that all the stars are his.

There is one piece of advice that William's friends should give him—not to restore the sixty millions of Guelph money to the Duke of Cumberland. This ultra-modern young Emperor will very soon have greater need of the services of the reptile Press than even Bismarck himself; for every one of his latest rescripts adds new public difficulties to the number of those secret ones which the ex-Chancellor, with his infinite capacity for intrigue, will hatch for him.

Bismarck, of the biting wit, who accepts the title of Duke of Lauenburg, because, as he says, "it will enable him to travel incognito," sends forth from Friedrichsruhe winged words which sink deep into the mind of the people. This phrase, for example, which sums up the whole of William's policy: "The Emperor has selected his best general to be Chancellor and made of his Chancellor a field marshal." And Bismarck begs his readers to insert the adjectives, good and bad, where they rightly belong.

April 28, 1890. [3]

Emperor William continues to increase the list of his excursions into every field of mental activity. Intellectually divided between the Middle Ages and the late nineteenth century, it would seem as if he were trying to forget the infirmity of his one useless arm by assuming a prominent role modelled on men of action. He tries to combine in his person the effects of extreme modernism with those of the days of Charlemagne. Because of his very impotence, his desire to grasp and clasp all history is the fiercer, and this emphasises and aggravates the cruelty he showed in relegating Bismarck to compulsory inaction. Just imagine if some power stronger than himself were to compel this ever restless monarch to quiescence! What would be the cumulative effect of want of exercise at the end of a year?

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And just because the German Emperor is pleased, amongst the innumerable costumes of his wardrobe, to don that of a socialist sovereign, the same people who before 1870 believed in the liberalism of Bismarck, now believe in the socialism of William II. They go on saying the same old things. In different words they ask: "Isn't the young Emperor amusing?" (tis' a great word with us French people), and before long, they will be appealing to the gullible weaklings among us by suggesting "After all, why shouldn't he give us back Alsace-Lorraine?" And thus are being sown the seeds of our national enervation.

The dangers that threaten us from the hatred that the Prussian bears us are all the greater now that Germany is ruled by this man-chameleon. Let William do what he will, let him change colour as he likes, our hatred for Prussia remains unshaken and immutable. But acquiescence in his performances will draw us into his orbit and expose us to those same dangers which he incurs, dangers which, were we wise, we should know how to turn to our own profit.

May 12, 1890. [4]

Amidst the ruins of his fallen fortunes, Bismarck can still erect a magnificent monument to his pride. If the results pursued by his once-beloved pupil stultify the old man's immediate intentions, they constitute nevertheless a testimonial to the Bismarckian doctrine in its purest form, to those immortal principles based on lies and the exploitation of "human stupidity," which the ex-Chancellor raised to such heights in German policy, from the commencement of his career to the date of his fall.

Let us, in the first place, inquire how it has come to pass that William II has been able to convince a certain number of people, either through their "human stupidity" or their cowardice, that he is striving for and towards peace, when every single act of his proves the opposite. Is it enough that, because he declares himself a pacifist, men should go about saying "Thank God that he, who seemed most eager for war, now sings the praises of peace"? And there are others who earnestly implore us to think no more or war "now that William of Germany no longer dreams of it."

Now I ask, is there a single reason to be found, either in the tradition of his race, or in his own character, or in the logic of Prussian militarism, which can justify any clear-thinking mind in believing that William is a pacifist?

During the past fortnight a pamphlet has been published in Germany under the title *Videant Consules* (a pamphlet having all the appearance of a Berlin semi-official, or officious, document) which gives us the key (my readers will agree that I have already placed it in the lock) of William II's sudden affection for paths of peace.

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The illuminating pages of this work are written with the object of preparing the honorable members of the Reichstag to vote an annual credit of twenty millions (it is said that the Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff originally asked for fifty). This money will be asked for to provide 474 new batteries, to bring up to 700 the number of the German battalions on the Vosges frontier and to increase the peace footing strength of the army. According to a statement made by William II, in his speech at the opening of the Reichstag, the special object of those twenty millions is to strengthen the defences of the eastern and western frontiers.

Videant Consules tells us that Bismarck created the Empire by war, but that his later policy threatened to destroy it by peace; for this reason the young Emperor deprived him of power. According to this pamphlet, the ex-chancellor allowed France to recover and Russia to prepare her defences, whereas he should have crushed us a second time in order to have only one enemy—Russia—to deal with later on.

Therefore, Germany's present task is to prepare in haste for the struggle against Russia and France united, and for this reason it behoves her (says *Videant Consules*) to increase her forces by a superhuman effort. As matters stand, in spite of the Triple Alliance, in spite of the sympathy and support of Austria and Italy (ruinous for them) William II is by no means confident in the future success of his arms.

Now this hero is not taking any chances. In order that might may overcome right, he wants to be quite sure of superior numbers. And this explains why the Emperor of Germany is a "pacifist" to-day!

But things are likely to be different by October 1. I would have the dupes of pacifism read carefully the following extract from his speech; if they remain deaf to its meaning, it can only be because, like the man in the fable, they do not wish to hear.

"It is true," says the German Emperor, "that we have neglected none of the measures by which our military strength may be increased within the limits prescribed by the law, but what we have been able to effect in this direction has not been sufficient to prevent the changes which have taken place in the general situation from being unfavourable to us. We can no longer postpone making additions to the peace footing of the army and to effective units, more especially the field artillery. A Bill will be brought before you which will provide for the necessary increase of the army to take place on the first of October of this year."

According to *Videant Consules*, the last *favourable* date for attacking France would have been in 1887. Bismarck sinned beyond forgiveness in not provoking a war at that time. More than that, his manoeuvres to undermine the credit of Russia and his policy of intimidation towards France, by exciting the hatred of both countries against Germany, only served to unite them.

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In the position in which he finds himself, William II has therefore no alternative; he must vastly increase his forces, while assuming the pacifist role. He must pretend to be severe with the aristocracy of his army—the apple of his eye—and to be full of sympathetic concern for the welfare of the working classes and peasantry, whom he fears or despises, and who are nothing but cannon fodder to him. And he does these things in order to sow seeds of mutual distrust between France and Russia.

He will use every possible expedient of trickery and guile, and, even more confident than his teacher Bismarck in the eternal gullibility of human nature, he will exploit it for all it is worth.

Take this example of our gullibility, as displayed in the question of passports for Alsace-Lorraine. A section of the European Press, well primed for the purpose (the Guelph funds not having been restored, so far as we know, to their proper owner), continues unceasingly to implore William II to consent to a relaxation of the regulations in regard to these passports. The idea is, that when our credulous fools come to learn that this relaxation has been granted, there will be absolutely no limit to their enthusiasm for him. Already they speak of him good-naturedly as “this young Emperor.”

(Is it not so, that, every day, old friends whose rugged patriotism we thought unshakable, meet us with the inquiry, “Well, and what have you got to say now of this young Emperor?”)

This young Emperor piles falsehood upon falsehood. If he permits any relaxation of the passport regulations, you may be perfectly certain that he will give orders that the *permis de sejour* are to be more severely restricted than before. Once a passport is issued, it is of some value; but the *permis de sejour* is a weapon in the hands of the lower ranks of German officialdom, which they use with Pomeranian cruelty. Every German bureaucrat in Alsace-Lorraine aims at preventing Frenchmen from residing there, at getting them out of the country; and nothing earns them greater favour in the eyes of their chiefs. Therefore, if this “young Emperor” is to be asked to grant anything, let it be a relaxation of the *permis de sejour*.

To be allowed to *travel* amongst the brothers from whom we are separated, can only serve to aggravate the grief we feel at not being allowed to *live* amongst them.

William’s socialism is all of the same brand. His first display of affection for the tyrant lower down was due to the fact that he used him to overthrow a tyrant higher up: it was the socialist voter who broke the power of Bismarck. When we see William embarking upon so many schemes of social reform all at once, we may be sure that he has no serious intention of carrying out any one of them. After having made all sorts of lavish promises to the industrial workers, he is now busy giving undertakings to make the welfare of the peasantry his special care!

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In his speech to the Reichstag there is no mention even of the one definite benefit that the workers had a right to expect—namely, a reduction of the hours of labour; but the threat of shooting “them in the back” reappears in a new guise. William II warns the working classes of “the dangers which they will incur in the event of their doing anything to disturb the order of government.”

“My august confederates and I,” adds the Emperor, “are determined to defend this order with unshakable energy.”

Delicious to my way of thinking, this expression “my august confederates.” Is there not something astounding about the use of the possessive pronoun in connection with the word “august,” implying sovereignty? One wonders what part can they have to play, these confederates, led and dominated by a personality as jealous and self-centred as this “young Emperor.”

There is only one thing about which William II really concerns himself, over and above his blind passion for increasing the forces of Germany, and that is, other people’s morals—the morals of working men or officers. The devil has always had his days for playing the monk.

May 20, 1890. [5]

Do my readers remember my last article but one, written at a moment when the whole Press was singing the praises of William the Pacifist, on the eve of the day when *The Times* published its despatch, proclaiming the complete agreement between Tzar and Kaiser, the *entente* that assures the world of the peace that shall come down from William’s starry heavens? It was then that I wrote—

“Is there a single reason to be found, either in the traditions of his race, or in his own character, or in the logic of Prussian militarism, which can justify, any clear-thinking mind in believing that William is a Pacifist?”

Hardly had that number of May 1 appeared when the German Emperor made his speech at Koenigsberg! In his cups, the King of Prussia reveals his true nature, just as a champagne cork flies from a badly wired bottle. After giving expression once again to his animosity towards France, he borrows from us one of the famous dicta of Monsieur Prudhomme—

“The duty of an Emperor,” he declared, “is to keep the peace, and I am determined to do it; but should I be compelled to draw the sword to preserve peace, Germany’s blows will fall like hail upon those who have dared to disturb it.”

Next, in the neighbourhood of the Russian frontier, he used the following provocative language: “I will not permit that any one should touch my eastern provinces and he who tries to do so, will find that my power and my might are as rocks of bronze.”

Sire, beware! The God of the Hohenzollern will prove to you before long that your power and your might, those rocks of bronze, are no more in His hands than a feather tossed in the wind; He will show you that a tricky horse can unseat you, regardless of your dignity, when you take your favourite ride, the road to Peacock island, with your august brother-in-law.

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Say what you will, the Prussians have not yet acquired either wit or good taste! There is proof of this not only in the speeches of William II at Konigsberg, but even more convincing, in that which was delivered before the Reichstag by that famous strategist, our conqueror de Moltke, on the subject of the proposed increase in the peace-footing effectives.

One must read the whole speech to get an idea of the sort of nonsense that “honorable” Germans are prepared to listen to. In urging the vote of credit, “the Victor” said: “Confronted with the fundamental problem of the army, the question of money is of secondary importance; for what becomes of your prosperous finances in war-time?”

Having proved that conquerors are the greatest benefactors of the human race, M. de Moltke goes on to declare that it is not the rulers, but the peoples, who want war to-day. In Germany, it is “the cupidity of the classes whom fate has neglected”; it is also the socialists who decline to vote more soldiers because they desire to trouble the world’s peace and expect “to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives in the next war and to threaten the existence of morality and civilisation.”

I do not know whether my readers can make head or tail of this speech—I certainly cannot—but its intention is plain enough. William II has been careful to emphasise it, by declaring that the increase in the peace strength of the army is intended to reinforce the eastern and western frontiers. Several officious newspapers (we no longer call them reptile, but to do so would make them more authoritative) sum up the matter in these words—

“The nearer the peace-footing of the troops on our frontiers approaches to war-strength, the more effectively these troops are provided with everything necessary to enable them to leave within *three hours* of receiving marching orders, the more secure becomes Germany’s position.”

Quite so! By next October there will be 200,000 men in Alsace-Lorraine. As you see, the new law adds to the security of Germany precisely what it takes from ours.

June 12, 1890. [6]

My readers will recollect that after a journey in Switzerland, two years ago, I proved by statements which could not be (and never were) refuted, that the Russian Nihilists established in Switzerland before the Federal Government’s inquiry, were all either deliberate or unconscious tools of the German police.

On the one hand, M. de Puttkamer, Minister of the Interior, unable to refute the evidence brought forward by the socialist deputy, Bebel, had then been compelled to confess that the socialist agitators Haupt and Schneider were his agents in Switzerland. On the other hand, at the inquiry into the proceedings of these socialists, there was the

evidence furnished by letters seized on Schmidt and Friedmann, associates of Haupt and Schneider, that Schmidt had been commissioned by M. Krueger of the Berlin Police to commit a crime. In one of the seized letters, the following words were actually used by Krueger: "The next attempt upon the life of the Emperor Alexander must be prepared at Geneva. Write to me; I await your reports." [7]

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Whenever the alleged liberalism of William II finds its expression in anything else but speeches, it is easy to take its measure. He has just shown once more what it really amounts to, in the Treaty of Establishment with Switzerland, wherein restrictions are placed upon the issue of good moral character certificates by German parishes to their parishioners. These will no longer be available to enable a German to take up his residence in Switzerland. Henceforward it will be the business of the German Legation to pick and choose those whom it considers eligible to reside in Switzerland, either to practise a profession or to conduct an export business there. It will be for Germany to decide whether or not her subjects are dangerous abroad. This would be well enough if it were only a question of restraining rogues, but it is anything but reassuring when we come to deal with the ever advancing phalanx of German spies.

July 9, 1890. [8]

It seems to me that this Wagnerian Emperor, pursuing his legends to the uttermost parts of the earth, is doing his utmost to darken our horizon. Everywhere, always he confronts us, appearing on the scene to deprive us of the last remnants of good-will left to us in Europe.

In the Scandinavian States, even after 1870, we had preserved certain trusty friendships: of these William II now tries to rob us. He appears and, to use his own expression, draws men to him by magic strings. To the people who are offshoots of Germany he figures as “the Emperor,” unique, mysterious, he who goes forward in the name of the fables of mythology, gathering and uniting anew in his slumbering people the instincts of vassalage. “Super-German virtues,” he calls them, “ornaments of old-time Germany.” This monarch who, in his own land, is pleased to pose as a Liberal!

Can it be that this same William who, on the Bosphorus held communion with the stars, who, writing to Bismarck, said, “I talk with God,” finds the celestial responses so inadequate that his mind must needs invoke a retinue of Teutonic deities?

“Let the Latins, Slavs and Gauls know it,” says he, “the German Emperor bears to Germans the glad tidings which promise them the sovereignty of the world!”

Have not even the Anglo-Saxons bowed before the sovereign will of William II, so that before long the island of Heligoland will see the German flag floating over its rocky shores?

Yes, let her Press and public men say what they will, proud Albion has delivered herself over to Germany. She has made surrender to our enemy in the hope that we shall thus become for her an easier victim, that she will be able to recover at our expense what Germany has taken from her. Lord Salisbury hopes, in return for the plum he has yielded, to be able to help himself to ours, to those of Italy and Portugal, and to share others with Germany.

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But such is the character of William II that he despises those who serve him or who yield to his will. Like Don Juan, he seeks ever new worlds to conquer, new resistances to overcome, and neglects no means to secure his desired ends. England and Austria to-day count for less than nothing in his schemes. These countries have had a free hand in Bulgaria, and they have used it to indulge in every sort of intrigue. Screened by Bismarck, they have advised, upheld and exalted Stamboulof, they have set up the Prince of Coburg. And William, not having inspired any of this policy, would like to see it end in complications shameful for his associates.

As to the King of Sweden, he thinks it due to the dignity of his people to make some show of resistance, but one feels that this is only done to save appearances. He also has delivered himself, bound hand and foot, just as they have all done, the Emperor Francis Joseph, the King of Italy, the Hohenzollern who reigns at Bucharest, Stamboulof, Lord Salisbury and Leopold II.

July 29, 1890. [9]

The Imperial bagman travelling in Germanophil wares conceals under his flag a very mixed cargo. He makes a Bernadotte to serve as speaking trumpet for Prussian Conservatism at the same time that he subsidises *agents provocateurs* for the purpose of misleading and internationalising the social reform programme of the Danes.

And all the time, in every direction, he comes and goes—this ever restless, universal disturber—creating and perpetuating instability on all sides, so as to increase the price of his peace stock, he controlling the market. It is Bismarck's old game, played with up-to-date methods.

August 12, 1890. [10]

Does it not seem to you, dear reader, that the voyage of William II to Russia suggests in more ways than one the scene of the Temptation on the Mount?

At St. Petersburg there reigns a sovereign whose life, directed by the inspirations of his soul, is one long act of virtuous self-denial; who prefers the humble and the lowly to fortune's favourites; whose works are works of peace, and whose intentions are always those of a man ready to appear before Him Who only tolerates the great ones of this earth when their power is balanced by a due sense of their moral responsibility, by devotion to duty and truth.

At Berlin there reigns a man of ungovernable pride, who aspires to be torch-bearer to the world. Restless, like the spirit of evil, tormented by his inability to do good, he has dedicated his soul to wickedness and lies.

Alexander III regarded his accession to the throne as an ordeal, the sacrifice of his life. He would have given his own blood to spare his father the pangs of death. William II seized fiercely on the reins of power, after having committed a crime, at least in his heart; after having wished for the death of his father and increased his sufferings by his conduct.

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By the tragic end of two martyrs, God has brought face to face those who are destined to be the champions of good and of evil respectively in these last years of the century.

The German Emperor goes to Russia to say to the Tzar, “Divide with me the kingdoms of the earth, always on condition that I receive the lion’s share.”

The Emperor of Russia will reply: “Let us endeavour, my brother, to work for the welfare of the nations, let us calm their hatreds and follow the rugged paths of justice; above all, let us regard the power which the God of hosts has confided into our hands as an instrument of sovereignty, whose only purpose should be to keep the nation’s honour unsullied and safeguard the blessings of peace.”

“Words, nothing but words,” replies the Tempter. “Say, Yes or No, wilt thou go with me to the conquest of the world? On all sides your influence, which I have undermined, is waning: you and your followers are caught in a ring of iron from which before long you will be unable to escape.

“In Germany, all things are subject to my unfettered rule. Henceforth nothing can ever check or stop my triumphal march. Throughout the humbly listening world, which will soon be at my feet, I break that which will not bend before me. I overthrow all those that stand, and that which comes to me, I keep. Even the Church, which treated with my forefathers on a footing of equality, now bows the knee before me and humbly votes the money for my great slaughters.

“Socialism, that bogey of Bismarck’s, is an easily tamed monster. I have only to sow discord amongst its leaders to make it serve my ends of policy like the veriest National Liberal party.

“In Austria, my grandfather and I created financial troubles, entangled things, let loose envy and hatred and sowed the seeds of quarrels, which have delivered her into my hands. Let them try as they will to free themselves from the fetters with which I have bound them; I shall create such obstacles to all these efforts that the future shall be mine, like the present.

“In Hungary, Prussian diplomacy has found a way to turn the people’s hatred of Austria into hatred of Russia, and to make them forgive the House of Hapsburg for a policy of coercion so cruel than even a Romanoff denounced it.

“Everywhere I create dissension amongst my allies so that the final decision may be mine.

“In Italy I have my *ame damnee*, the only one who understands me, an ambitious tyrant, mad like Bismarck with the lust of power, who serves my purposes at Rome as effectively as Bismarck hampered them in Berlin.

“I have stifled and destroyed the spirit of brotherhood in the cradle of the Latin race. I have made history a liar, bringing a false morality to the interpretation of the most brilliant days and deeds. I have reduced to servility a Royal House that once was proud. I have cheated and deceived the cleverest and most suspicious race on earth.

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“At Rome, I have insulted the traditional and sacred majesty of the Head of the Christian religion!

“In England, I have done even more. I have compelled proud Albion to serve the ends of my personal policy. I have forced the most jealous of nations to yield the leading place to me, to work, in her own colonies and against her own interests, for the benefit of my growing rivalry, sacrificing to me her dreams of supremacy in the four quarters of the globe.

“As to America, I will deal with her later. I have my plans.

“Despite Lord Salisbury’s make-believe of caution and reserve (about which, I may say, we quite understand each other) England is so completely delivered into my power that, after the Conservatives the Liberals, in the person of the young leader John Morley, now proffer me their services, and no matter what changes may take place in the English parties my influence will soon prevail.

“My journeys to the Scandinavian States have been fruitful. In Denmark, O Tzar! your own father-in-law has become almost associated with my destiny.

“I have linked with my fortunes a king of French stock in Sweden, and I will prove it at Alsen Island, where I shall compel him to take part in the manoeuvres of my fleet.

“As to Norway, a few words from my Imperial lips have overcome the old republicanism of these brother Teutons.

“So as to keep closer watch over the submission of my new allies, I have wrested Heligoland from England; and there I shall build an eagle’s nest from which I shall be able to swoop down upon them, should they attempt to escape me. Those who had any doubts as to the importance of this surrender, have learned it from the speeches that I made when taking possession.

“By this means I have closed the German Ocean *for ever*, and that which is closed gives access to something.

“What need I say of Turkey that you do not know already? All her thoughts, movements and actions are regulated by one man, and he a vassal of German policy. Turkey’s army, trade and finances, the direction of her ruling minds, are either in my hands or in those of England. And England, say what you will, is hypnotised by me.

“I can afford at my pleasure to challenge her policy indefinitely.

“The diplomas which she conferred upon the Bulgarian bishops after the execution at Panitza have shown you, my brother, how greatly I am pleased to favour those whom you have condemned! Stamboulof, the inveterate foe of Russia, now dominates the

elections in Bulgaria and Roumelia, thanks to the irade on the bishoprics. He goes in triumph through the land, so that even the Russophile candidates invoke the protection of this man, who shoots the country's heroes and reduces its prince to the level of an ordinary public servant. His audacity, his impunity, the length of his tether, have no limits except those which will be imposed upon him by my power should you turn a deaf ear to my proposals.

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“And just as British policy has served the ends of Prussian statecraft in Bulgaria and Roumelia, even so it serves them at this moment in Armenia.

“It was I who willed and inspired the indulgence of the Sultan for the bloodthirsty Moussa Bey. Massacred by the Kurds on the one hand, and on the other observing the success of the revolution in Roumelia, the Armenians will inevitably be led from one revolt to another and, helped by a few timely suggestions, will come to believe that they can win their autonomy.

“Herein lies another difficulty which disturbs your mind, and of which my hands hold the threads; another people, to whom you might have looked for help in the event of my allies going to war with you, but which England and I will be able to remove from your influence.

“In Roumania, a Hohenzollern guards all the keys which open the doors of his frontiers.

“In Serbia, I am working by sure means to destroy the last remaining sympathies for Russia. To attain this end I will leave no stone unturned, even as I am doing in Greece against France.

“With an eye to the future interests of my African colonies, I have compelled England to keep Portugal quiet. I do not wish any revolutionary upheaval to react upon Spain, that indomitable nation which still resists me, but in whose mouth nevertheless, I have put an invisible bit. I shall know how to drive her headlong into the trap that awaits her in Morocco.

“With the help of Italy, Switzerland is mine. And Holland will fall to me through the little Duchy of Luxembourg, which will come to me by the marriage of one of my sisters with the heir of Nassau.

“My last master stroke was the way of my coming into Belgium. Therein I was artful. The Belgians affected to believe in the neutrality of their microscopic kingdom. I played up to the joke and entered their country by way of the sea.

“In all the splendour of my power, I came to Ostend on the *Hohenzollern*, and I made it my business to invest my appearance with every feature calculated to impress the mob, in these days when outward show appeals most powerfully to the popular imagination. And I was, moreover, determined that nothing should be lacking to the full effectiveness of this demonstration.

“Belgium had intimated by a revolution her objections to becoming German. Well and good: I imposed myself upon her as German Emperor. With wearisome reiteration she had manifested her sympathy for France. In order to challenge these sentiments the

more effectively, I compelled King Leopold to take his seat beside me as the Colonel of one of my Alsatian regiments!

“And do you suppose that the Belgians protested? Not a bit of it! No, the trick is played. No longer in secret, but openly, Belgium will play my waiting game, in the Congo and at the gates of France.

“My visit to Belgium is destined to produce such important results in days to come, that I have neglected not the smallest detail in order to produce a legendary impression upon Europe. Nothing have I forgotten: costumes for each part, words, good seed sown broadcast in the public mind, communications to the Press, advice given to sovereigns of a nature to please the people, and elsewhere (as in England) popularity with the military caste!

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“An individual of the name of Van der Smissen, having dared to argue in the ranks, got broken for his pains.

“At the same time, in order to cast into stronger relief the loftiness and majesty of my countenance, I invested it, amongst these good Belgians, with certain new features of good nature and cordiality.

“As to France, Russia’s only possible ally to-day, her artless simplicity protects me from all risks that I might otherwise run. I shall compel her to accept the neutralisation of Alsace-Lorraine, whenever the provinces shall have become thoroughly Germanised.

“For the present I leave England to deal with her: England who keeps her busy with childish things, and soothes her vanity with illusory diplomatic successes, such as the *exequatur* of the Madagascar Consuls (which the settled policy of the residents would have achieved in time) and with useless concessions amidst the fogs of Lake Chad, or on the Niger, or in regions whose possession none disputed.

“Lord Salisbury evoked much mirth, over these concessions at the Lord Mayor’s banquet, joking somewhat cynically at his own policy in disposing of territories over which he had no rights. One country, amongst others, given to France, has provided my good English friends with an inexhaustible source of merriment.

“Concerning Egypt, Lord Salisbury has clearly intimated to France that England will *never* give it up.

“Thus, the Salisbury Ministry has still at its disposal, to keep busy my fiery but easily duped neighbours, the Egyptian problem, with a French Minister at Cairo, who is more of a help than a hindrance to England; the Newfoundland question, with the Anglo-American Waddington, more yielding for the purposes of the British Foreign Office than one of its own agents.

“Moreover, whenever I choose, the rulers of France can be made to believe in a francophile reincarnation of M. Crispi! I have many things in store for them in that quarter.

“Deceived by the infinite resources of my diplomacy, led astray by my agents who have taken on less reptilian disguises, the guileless French nation remains a prey to ignorance and ambitions as countless as the sands on the shore of her democracy.

“To sum up; England, through India; England and Germany, through China, we hold in our hands that question of an Asiatic war, a scourge which will exhaust the strength of your Empire, O Tzar! and which may finally weaken France. I have said!”

’Tis a long tale, and were it all told at one time, Alexander III would certainly not listen to half of it. But William II spent a fortnight in Russia, and I have only an hour to summarise his argument.

Have the wings of the German Emperor the span of those of Lucifer, as he believes? He may play the part, but he will never be able to carry it through!

August 28, 1890. [11]

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Although for the meeting of these two powerful Emperors (whose destinies, as history proves, are so frequently commingled) there was no real necessity, other than the desire of the young and restless King of Prussia, to keep the whole world guessing as to the object of his multifarious designs, their coming together has its undeniable importance and significance, for it has been the means of increasing the resistance and strengthening the determination of the Tzar. Alexander III, whose mind reflects the great and untroubled soul of Russia, is well able to estimate at its true worth the insatiable greed of Germany and the ever-encroaching character of her ruler. Because of his own self-control and disinterestedness, the Tzar must have been able to gather from William's words and works a very fair idea of his unbounded self-conceit; of that vanity which, like its emblem the eagle of the outspread wings, aspires to cover the whole earth.

Even though William has offered to the Emperor of Russia the prospect of a general disarmament; even though, with his present mania for speech-making he may have suggested a Congress for the settlement of Europe's disputes, his success must have been of the negative kind.

If the Tzar were to agree to a conference, it could only lead to one of two results. Either it would embitter those disputes which threaten to embroil the nations in a fierce struggle, and bring France and Russia together in resistance to the same greedy foes, or it would end in the imposition of a lasting peace, which would mean that the Prussian and military fabric of the German State would be dissolved, as by a miracle, to the benefit of French and Russian influences in Europe.

Let then the German Emperor have his head. God is leading him straight on the path of failure. It is this still-vague feeling, that he will never have power to add to the Prussian birthright, that makes him rush feverishly from one scheme to another; stirring up this question and that, ever testing, ever striving. It is this foreboding that has driven him to pursue fame, fortune and glory, and so to weary them with his importunities and haste, that they flee from him, unable and unwilling to bear with him any longer.

Sire, if it be your ambition to become, immediately and by your own endeavours, greater than any one on earth, allow me to express the charitable wish without hoping to dissuade you—that you may break your neck in the attempt!

September 12, 1890. [12]

It was just at the time that I was writing my last article, that the Emperor of Germany, King of Prussia (who has a perfect obsession for being in the middle of the picture), was carrying out at the army manoeuvres at Narva, a certain strategic design, long-prepared and tested, by means of which he proposed to fill with amazement and admiration not only the Russian army but the Imperial Court—nay, all Russia, and the whole wide world!

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William's idea was to repeat the exploit performed by the troops of Charles XII (with the aid of the Russian Viborg Regiment, of which he is Colonel) and to pass through the heavy mass of a regiment of cavalry with light infantry battalions. The future Commander-in-Chief of the German Army wished to show the world that he would know how to add the *elan* of the French and the impetuosity of the Slav to the qualities of method and strength perfected by leaders like Von Moltke or Frederick Charles. Therefore, several weeks before, William II had asked the Tzar to be allowed to take part in the manoeuvres and to command in person the Viborg Regiment.

And so it came to pass that, having cast himself for a part of invincible audacity, he came to cut a very sorry and ridiculous figure. Surrounded by the Hussars, he was made to see that what may be done with German infantry against Uhlans, cannot be accomplished, even with Russian soldiers, against Russian cavalry.

This incident shows that the Tzar had something akin to second sight when he gave orders that the length of the manoeuvres would be optional. Thanks to this, the Kaiser was free to take home the sooner his pretty jacket (no, his tunic, I mean) from Narva.

What an interesting broadsheet might be made on the subject of "William II a prisoner"!

In the long winter evenings to come, how many a Russian peasant—gifted with imagination as they are—in telling again the tale of the Viborg Regiment's attack, will see in it an omen of the destiny of the German Emperor! And they will add, with bated breath, that the *Hohenzollern*, on leaving the shores of Russia narrowly missed being cut in two by another vessel. And one more sign of evil omen—a fearful tempest shook the Imperial yacht in Russian waters.

Let us, whose Emperor was a prisoner of the Germans in 1871, pray that some day a German Emperor may be taken prisoner by the Russian army—not like at Narva, but in all seriousness.

I said in my last letter that it might well be that William's journey to Russia might result in stiffening the resolution of the Emperor Alexander. And so it has proved, for scarcely had his Imperial guest returned to Berlin, than a ukase raised the Russian Customs tariff and imposed a new duty of 20 per cent. on German imports. A fine result this, of that which the German Press, before William's departure, described as the Russo-German Economic Entente, at a moment when, even for the Berlin newspapers, the prospects of a political *entente* were somewhat dubious.

For this reason, Professor Delbrueck says quite bluntly, in the "Prussian Annals," that William II's journey to Russia has been a lamentable fiasco; that the Tzar declined to listen to any diplomatic conversation; that he ridiculed and entertained his Imperial guest with a series of military parades whilst the Russian general staff was carrying out important manoeuvres on the western frontiers.

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In the same spirit as that of the ex-deputy Professor, the whole German and Austrian Press have been demanding that, for the peace of Europe, the German and Austrian troops should be withdrawn from their respective frontiers, so as to compel the Russian forces to do the same.

That is all very well, but inasmuch as the military zones of the Great Russian Empire are separated by enormous distances, and the movement of troops being very much easier for Germany and Austria than for Russia, one would like to know precisely what is the idea at the back of these demands. As soon as ever he returned to Germany, two very significant ideas occurred to William II: one, to make a display of the warmest sentiments for his august *pis-aller*, the Emperor of Austria; the other, to have his faithful ally Italy play some scurvy trick on France, Russia's friend.

To this end, the German Emperor proceeded to hold a review of the Austro-Hungarian Fleet and went beyond the official programme by going aboard the ironclad *Francis Joseph*, flying the flag of Admiral Sterneck. After this, inviting himself to luncheon with the Archduke Charles Stephen, commanding the Austrian squadron, he made a fervent speech, wishing health and glory to his precious ally the Emperor of Austria.

September 27, 1890. [13]

When Germany agreed to withdraw her armies from the soil of France, she replaced them by other soldiers: crossing-sweepers, clerks, workmen, bankers (industrials or "reptiles" as the case might be), as well organised, linked up and drilled as her best troops. Unceasingly, therefore, and without rest, it behoves us to be on our guard and to defend ourselves.

A good many amiable Frenchmen will shrug their shoulders at this, but if we act otherwise we shall be delivered over to our enemies, bound hand and foot, at the psychological moment.

And now, dear reader, to return to William II. You will grant, I think, that since we have followed the interminable zig-zags of his wanderings throughout Europe, we are entitled to coin and utter a new proverb: "A rolling monarch gathers no prestige."

November 1, 1890. [14]

For mastodons like Bismarck, William II prepares a refrigerating atmosphere which freezes them alive. Splendid mummies like Von Moltke he smothers with flowers. The men whom William dismisses and discards are great men in the eyes of Germany, even though in history they may not be so, because the ex-Chancellor is of inferior character, and because certain successes of Von Moltke were due rather to luck than design. Nevertheless, they are in William's way and he gets rid of them, by different means. He needs about him men of a different stamp to those of the iron age; for the present, he is

satisfied with courtiers, later he will demand valets. All those who are of any worth, all those who stand erect before his shadow, will be sacrificed sooner or later. His autocratic methods will end by producing the same results as those of the most jealous of democracies.

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Let us bear in mind how often, under Bismarck and William I, the German Press made mock of our fatal French mania for change, pointing out to Europe how the everlasting see-saw of Ministers of War was bound to reduce our national defences to a position of inferiority. In two years William is at his fourth!

Soon, no doubt, William II will be able to score a personal success in the matter of his intrigues against Count Taaffe. His benevolence spares not his allies. We know the measure of his good-will towards Italy. Lately, it seems, the Emperor, King of Prussia, said to the Count of Launay, King Humbert's Ambassador at Berlin, "Do not forget that, sooner or later, Trieste is destined to become a German port." And it was doubtless with this generous idea in his mind that he had his compliments conveyed to M. Crispi for his anti-irridentist speech at Florence.

That the Triple Alliance is the "safeguard of peace," has become a catchword that each of the allies repeats with wearisome reiteration. But there! It is not that William II does not wish for war: it is Germany which forbids him to seek it. It was not M. Crispi who declined to seek a pretext for attacking France: it was Italy that forbade him to find it. It is not the Germanised Austrians who hesitate to provoke Russia: it is the Slavs who threaten that if a provocation takes place they will revolt.

Let me add that the official organs in Germany, Italy and Vienna only raise a smile nowadays when they describe Russia and France as thunderbolts of war.

November 12, 1890. [15]

At the outset of the reign of William II, referring to his father, I spoke of the "dead hand" and its power over the living. Now, what has the young King of Prussia done since his accession to the Throne? He, the flatterer of Bismarck, this disciple of Pastor Stoeker, this out-and-out soldier, this hard and haughty personage, who was wont to blame his august parents for their bourgeois amiability and their frequent excursions? He carries out everything that his father planned, but he does it under impulse from without and he does it badly, without forethought, without the sincerity or the natural quality which is revealed in a man by a course of skilful action legitimate in its methods.

He smashed Von Bismarck in brutal fashion. His father, on the other hand, was wont to say: "I will not touch the Chancellor's statue, but I will remove the stones, one by one, from his pedestal, so that some fine day it will collapse of itself."

It is a curious thing that these reforms and ideas, not having been applied by the monarch whose character would have harmonised perfectly with their conception and execution, now possess no reversionary value. They lose it completely by being subjected to a false paternity.

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It is true that occasionally William II envoys some real satisfaction, such as that which he has derived from the coming of the King of Belgium. So impatient was His Majesty to return his visit, that he could not wait for the good season and therefore he came in the bad. At Ostend, Leopold II had caused sand to be strewn at William's coming (the beach being conveniently handy). The King of Prussia only spread mud. Why was the King of Belgium in such a hurry? After the visit of General Pontus to Berlin and his three days in retirement with the German headquarters staff, people at Brussels are still asking what more King Leopold could possibly have to settle in person with Messrs. Moltke and Waldersee at these same headquarters?

The *Courier de Bruxelles* informs us that certain proposals for an alliance were made to Leopold II during his stay at Potsdam. What! Could Prussia possibly have dared to think of laying an impious hand upon Belgian neutrality! But if not, why should they have been at such pains formerly to prove to me that the thing was inconceivable? Prussia wants a Belgian alliance and the King refuses. Splendid! But let him tell us so himself! I confess that such a document would interest me far more than all that I have published on the subject! May not the explanation of King Leopold's journey be, that William II would like a mobilisation in Belgium just as he wants one in Italy? M. Bleichroder will supply the cash. He has already got his bargain money, *viz*. Pastor Stoecker in disgrace, and the repudiation of anti-Semitism by its ex-partisan, William II.

November 27, 1890. [16]

How can one avoid taking an interest in William II of Hohenzollern? He is one of those people who, by every means and in every way, insist on being noticed. This up-to-date Emperor is obsessed by the idea of making profit, for purposes of advertisement, out of every sensation; he loves to upset calculations and produce every kind of astonishment. He believes that he has not fulfilled his part, until he has made a number of people lift their arms to heaven at least once a day and exclaim: "William is marvellous!" He wants to hear this cry arise from the humblest and the highest, from the miner's gallery and the palace of his "august confederates," from the workman's cottage and the homes of the middle-class, from the officers' club, from church and chapel, from the Parliament of the Empire and the House of Peers.

Being *blase* himself, it pleases him to tickle public opinion with spicy fare; his lack of mental balance compels him to these endless and senseless choppings and changes, to all these schemes projected, proclaimed and cast aside.

The former Court of his grandfather is already in ruins, the work of Bismarck crumbling in the dust; in less than no time he has reduced the old aristocratic and feudal Prussian monarchy to the purest kind of democratic Caesarism.

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Perched above every political party in Germany, William the Young wants to be the one and only ruler and judge of all. Among themselves let them differ as and when they will, it being always understood that all these separate opinions must equally be sacrificed to the Emperor.

Before long the King of Prussia will endeavour to be at one and the same time the spiritual head of the Lutheran Church and the temporal Pope of the Catholic Church, the leader of economists, the cleverest of stategists, the one and only socialist, the most marvellous incarnation of the warrior of German legends, the greatest pacifist of modern times, explorer in his day and soothsayer whenever he likes. In his own eyes, William is all these.

Have not the delegates of the old House of Peers ingenuously complained during these last few days that they no longer possess any initiative of legislation? But they have just as much or as little as the honourable members of the Prussian Diet.

All schemes of reform emanate from the Emperor. The people have no right to be Emperor. Surely that is simple enough?

To bulk larger in the public eye, William dwells apart; he can no longer endure that any one should presume to think himself useful or agreeable to him or to give him advice. He is fulfilling the prediction that he made of himself when he was twenty-one: "When I come to reign I shall have no friends; I shall only have dupes."

More infatuated with himself than ever, the Emperor wears his mystic helmet *a la* Lohengrin, tramples the purple underfoot and has the throne surrounded by his life-guards, wearing the iron-plated bonnets of the days of Frederick II. Thus he deludes himself with the dream of absolute authority. His mania for power is boundless, his pride knows no limits. He recognises only God and Himself.

To his recruits, he says: "After having sworn fidelity to your masters upon earth, swear the same oath to your Saviour in Heaven!"

But in his moments of solitude, in the privacy of the potentate's toilet-chamber, must it not be dreadful for him to reflect that his silver helmet rests on ears that suppurate, that his voice comes from a mouth afflicted with fistula of the bone, and that there are days when his sceptre is at the mercy of the surgeon's knife?

December 11, 1890. [17]

The rumour has spread, and has not yet been authoritatively contradicted, that William is suffering from disease of the brain. Is not this in itself good and sufficient reason to make him wish to prove that no one in his Empire can do as much brain work as he can? We, whose minds are so confused in the endeavour to follow William's

movements at a distance, where little things escape us, can imagine what it must be to observe them from close at hand!

One of the chief glories of his reign will be to have produced the diagnosis of a new disease, “locomotor Caesarism” of the restless type. Before his case, these symptoms were always associated with paralysis. Here is a discovery that may turn out to be more genuine that that of Dr. Koch.

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The unfortunate Koch is one more of William's victims. It was his Imperial will that Germany should wake up one morning to find herself possessed of a Pasteur of her own. He could not even wait long enough to allow the necessary experiments to be made with a remedy which is so violent that it may well be mortal. At the word of command "Forward, march," Koch found himself propelled by His Majesty into the position of a benevolent genius.

Dr. Henri Huchard has expressed his opinion of Koch's method in the following words: "In therapeutics, daring is always permissible, so long as it preserves its respect for human life."

A few days ago, the German Emperor was thrusting his advice on a man of science, to-day he is overthrowing the most venerable traditions of the Prussian monarchy with the scheme of M. Miguel, the new system, for taxing incomes and legacies, opening a campaign against the nobility and the old conservatives. With the help of an official of the "younger generation"—for thus is he pleased to describe his Minister of Finance—-he begins to make war on the "old school."

With the "old school" in his mind's eye, he conceives another idea, namely, that of a new method of teaching in the elementary, secondary and high schools, upon which it will be unnecessary to improve for the next hundred years. He sets the faithful M. Hinzpeter to work, and compels him to toil night and day to prepare a complete programme in all haste—whereupon behold the Emperor holding forth to the collegians just as he does to the recruits.

"Down with Latin!" cries William. "Let us make Germans instead of Greeks and Romans! Let us teach our children the practical side of life." All of which does not prevent him from adding: "Let us teach them the fabulous history of our race."

William insists that his name shall be on every lip—that he be recognised as father of his workmen, father of collegians, father of the country at large. It is his ambition to look upon all his subjects as his sons. Much good may it do them!

December 27, 1890. [18]

The Emperor of Germany, determined supporter of triumphant militarism, and, therefore, the deadly enemy of every permanent and beneficial social reform, has suddenly stopped short in his attempts to improve the condition of the masses.

If you ask: To whom does William II give satisfaction? the only possible answer is: Himself! For it matters nothing to him whether these plans of his succeed or fail. The thing that does matter to him is, that he should have left his mark everywhere, and that, after a quarter of a century or more, legislators shall inevitably find, in every project of law, the sacred mark, the holy seal of William's mind.

[1] From *La Nouvelle Revue*, of April 15, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[2] This paper had been, till then, in the service of Prince Bismarck.

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[3] *La Nouvelle Revue*, May 1, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[4] *La Nouvelle Revue*, May 15, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[5] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 1, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[6] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 15, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[7] Several pages of the “Letters on Foreign Policy” of June 12 give proofs, undeniable and complete, that the preparation of crimes committed by anarchists in Europe was instigated at Berlin, William knowing and approving the fact.

[8] *La Nouvelle Revue*, July 16, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[9] *La Nouvelle Revue*, August 1, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[10] *La Nouvelle Revue*, August 16, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[11] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 1, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[12] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 15, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[13] *La Nouvelle Revue*, October 1, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[14] *La Nouvelle Revue*, November 1, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[15] *La Nouvelle Revue*, November 16, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[16] *La Nouvelle Revue*, December 1, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[17] *La Nouvelle Revue*, December 15, 1890, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[18] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

CHAPTER II

1891-1892

The danger to France of a *rapprochement* with Germany—The Empress Frederick’s visit to Paris—William II as *summus episcopus* of the German Evangelical Church—-Reception of the Alsace-Lorraine deputation in Berlin—The law against espionage in Germany: every German is a spy abroad—Christening of the Imperial yacht, the *Hohenzollern*—Further increase of the military effective force in peace-time—The *Youth of William the Second*, by Mr. Bigelow.

January 12, 1891. [1]

The Berlin *Post* thinks that we should be able to get on very well without Alsace-Lorraine, and that the best thing for us to do, if we are “reasonable souls,” is simply to become reconciled with Germany. The reasonable ones among us are directed to prove to us others (who must needs be “gloomy lunatics”) the folly of believing in the Russian alliance, and gently to prepare us for a last and supreme act of cowardly surrender—namely, to give William II a friendly reception at Cannes or in Paris.

The chief argument with which they would persuade us is, that Berlin is quite willing to receive our philosophers and our doctors. But we are more than quits on this score, seeing the number of Germans that we entertain and enrich in Paris. To prove that we owe them nothing in the matter of hospitality, it should be enough to ascertain on the 27th inst. how many Germans will celebrate the birthday of William II in one of our first-rate hotels.

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Heaven be praised, hatred of the Hohenzollerns is not yet dead in France! If it be true that the corpse of an enemy always smells sweet, the person of a living enemy must always remain hateful.

Before we discuss the possibility of the King of Prussia visiting Paris, however, let us wait until M. Carnot has been to Berlin.

January 29, 1891. [2]

The nearer we approach to 1900, the less desire have I to be up-to-date. I persist in the belief that the solution of the problems of European policy in which France is concerned, would have been more readily attainable by an old fashioned fidelity to the memory of our misfortunes than by scorning to learn by our experience.

Certain well-meaning, end-of-the century sceptics may be able lightly to throw off that past in which they have (or believe they have) lost nothing, whilst we of the “mid-century” are borne down under its heavy burden. These people neglect no occasion to advise us to forget and they do it gracefully, lightly showing us how much more modern it is to crown oneself with roses than to continue to wear tragically our trailing garments of affliction and mourning.

I should be inclined to judge with more painful severity those witty writers who advise us to light-hearted friendship with Bismarck the “great German,” with William the “sympathetic Emperor”, with Richard Wagner “the highest expression of historical poetry and musical art,” those men who prepared and who perpetuate Prussia’s victories—I should judge them differently, I say, were it not that I remember my former anger against the young decadents and the older *roues* in the last days of the Empire.

All of them used to make mock of patriotism in a jargon mixed with slang which greatly disturbed the minds of worthy folk, who became half ashamed at harbouring, in spite of themselves, the ridiculous emotions “of another age.”

But these same decadents and *roues*, after a period of initiation somewhat longer than that which falls to the lot of ordinary mortals, behaved very gallantly in the Terrible Year.

True, in order to convince them that they had been wrong in regarding the theft of Schleswig-Holstein as a trifle, wrong in applauding the victory of Sadowa, and declaring that each war was the last, it required such disasters, that not one of us can evoke without trembling the memory of those events, whose lurid light served to open the eyes of the blindest.

“Understand this,” Nefftzer was wont to insist (before 1870), “we can never wish that Prussia should be victorious without running the risk of bringing about our own defeat; we must not yield to any of her allurements nor even smile at any of her wiles.”

If the people of Paris applaud Wagner, he who believed himself to be the genius of victorious Germany personified, it can only be in truth that Paris has forgotten. And in that case, there will only be left, of those who rightly remember, but a few mothers, a few widows, a few old campaigners and your humble servant!

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So that we may recognise each other in this world's wilderness, we will wear in our button-holes and in our bodices that blue flower which grows in the streams of Alsace-Lorraine, the forget-me-not!

And we shall vanish, one by one, disappearing with the dying century, *that is, unless some surprise of sudden war, such as one must expect from William II, should cure us of our antiquated attitude*.

Need I speak of these rumours of disarmament, wherewith the German Press now seeks to lull us, rumours which spread the more persistently since, at last, we have come to believe in our armaments?

"Germany is satisfied and seeks no further conquests," says William II. But does it follow that we also should be satisfied with the bitter memories of our defeats, and resolved that, no matter what may happen, we shall never object to Prussia's victories? I never forget that William II, as a Prince, in his grandfather's time, said, "When I come to the Throne I shall do my best to make dupes." This rumour of disarmament is part of his dupe-making. The real William reveals himself in his true colours when he awakens his aide-de-camp in the middle of the night, to go and pay a surprise visit to the garrison at Hanover.

In Militarism the German Emperor finds his complete expression and the emblem of his character. His empire is not a centralised empire and only the army holds it together.

And for this reason William has favoured the army this year at the expense of all the other public services, by increasing its peace-footing strength and the number of its officers, by ordering more than two hundred locomotives and a corresponding amount of rolling stock intended to expedite mobilisation. Seventy new batteries have been formed. The artillery has been furnished with new ammunition, the infantry with new weapons, and the strategic network of railways has been completed!

Abroad, every one, friends and enemies alike, think as I do on the subject of disarmament.

"This plaything of William the Second's leisure moments," says *The Standard* (although a fervent admirer of Queen Victoria's grandson), "this disarmament idea, is a myth." Our faithful and loyal supporter, the *Sviet*, says the same thing: "Disarmament is a myth, Germany talks of it unceasingly, but she strengthens her frontiers, east and west. On the north," adds the Russian organ, "she is converting Heligoland into a fortress; on the south-east, she is increasing the defences of Breslau, and holds in readiness two thousand axle-trees *of the width of the Russian railways*."

It is only in France that a few up-to-date journalists take this disarmament talk of the German Emperor quite seriously. To them, we may reply by a quotation from the official organ of the “great German.”

“The course of historic events,” says the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, “is opposed to any realisation of the idea of disarmament, and justifies the opinion expressed by Von Moltke, who declared war to be in reality a necessary element in the order of things, of itself natural and divine, which humanity can never give up without becoming stagnant and submitting to moral and physical ruin.”

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There you have the genuine style of Bismarck, of the man who invented the formula—-“the Right of Might.”

One thing—and one thing only—might possibly lead William II to entertain seriously this idea of disarmament, and that would be for Bismarck to oppose it. Truly, there is something extremely pleasant in this duel between the two ex-accomplices! Bismarck terrorising socialism, William coaxing and wheedling it, for no other tangible purpose than to act in opposition to him whose power he has overthrown.

What an eccentric freak is this German Emperor! One day he sends the Sultan a sword of honour, a bitter jest for one who has never known anything but defeat! The next, he proposes to take back the command of the fleet from his brother Henry, and in order to get rid of him conceives the plan of making Alsace-Lorraine and Luxembourg into a new kingdom.

At the same time he proposes to provide the Grand Duke of Luxembourg with a guard of honour, a guard *a la Prudhomme*, whose business it would be to defend and to fight him. The State Council of the patriotic Grand Duchy is aroused, and denies the right of Prussia on any pretext to interfere in its affairs. Boldly it reminds the Powers signatory to the Convention of 1867 of their pledges.

And with all his mania for governing the world at large, William II would seem to be possessed of the evil eye, and to bring misfortune to all whom he honours with his friendship for any length of time.

February 10, 1891.

It looks as if poor Bismarck were about to be treated just as he treated Count von Arnim. Can it be that everything must be paid for in this world, and that a splendid retributive justice rules the destiny even of super-men and punishes them for committing base actions? It is rumoured that the Duke of Lauenbourg (Bismarck) is threatened with prosecution on a charge of *lese majeste*, which the lawyers of the Crown will not have very much trouble in proving against him. That any one should dare to criticise the Emperor’s policy, even though it be Bismarck, or that any one, even be it Count Waldersee, should express a personal opinion in his presence, is more than William II will tolerate.

The “sympathetic Emperor” has a cruel way of doing things. Before striking his victims it is his wont to give them some public mark of his esteem and good-will. Small and great, they pass before him, sacrificed each in his turn, so soon as they have come to believe themselves for a moment in the enjoyment of his favour. Thus Colonel Kaissel, aide-de-camp to the Emperor, is about to be shelved. Lieutenant von Chelin has been removed from the Court, General von Wittich has already lost his fleeting favour, and the moderating influence of Major de Huene, erected on the ruins of that of Von

Falkenstein, proves to be equally short-lived. Three generals in command of army corps are now threatened—that is, of course, unless a fortnight hence they should prove to have reached the highest pinnacle of favour.

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Three months ago Von Moltke declared that he and Bismarck would live long enough to be able to say “Farewell to the Empire.”

On the other hand, Von Puttkamer seems to be regaining something of favour, and Prince Battenberg has been welcomed to the old Castle; strange plans concerning him are being hatched in the brain of William II.

Prince Henry has been brought back, ostensibly to take part in the Councils of the Government, but in reality that he may be watched the more closely. He also has received a letter in which he is publicly thanked for the services he has rendered. If I were in his place I should be very uneasy, seeing the kind of brother that he was, the most changeable the most jealous, and the most suspicious of men. There is a false ring about this letter to Prince Henry, just as there was in those which the Emperor addressed to Count Waldersee and to Bismarck. Gratitude is a word that William often thinks fit to use, but it is a sentiment that he is careful never to indulge in.

It is impossible to discover any sign of a heart in the actions of the German Sovereign. One may therefore predict that he will continue to show an ever increasing preference for distinguished personalities, whom it may please him to destroy, or creatures who would be the butts of his malicious sport, rather than to encourage the kind of public servants who strive continually to increase their efficiency, so as to serve him better. Instead of being simply good and ruling benevolently, he aspires to be first a sort of pope, imposing upon his people a social state composed of servility and compulsory comfort, and again a leader of crusades, drawing his people after him to the conquest of the world.

Spiritual and material interests, military organisation, he mixes and confuses them like everything else which occurs to his mind, and every day he does something to destroy the results of that marvellous continuity, which did more to establish the power of William I than the victories of Sadowa and Sedan. Ever more and more infatuated with the idea of military supremacy, he now pretends to be greatly concerned with the idea of disarmament. And he, the avowed protector of socialists, looks as if he were about to accept from Mr. Dryander, the protestant presidency of that association of workmen, which is being organised for the purpose of fighting socialism.

Wherever we look, it is always the same, false pretences, trickery, lying, love of mischief-making and of persecution, innumerable and unceasing proofs given by William that his sovereign soul, irretrievably committed to restless agitation, will never know the higher and divine joys of peace.

March 1, 1891. [3]

For some months past, my dear readers, I have predicted that William II will not be satisfied without paying a visit to France. The visit of the Empress Frederick should

have prepared us for this amiable surprise. But because the august mother of the German Emperor was received by us with nothing more than cold politeness, the *Cologne Gazette* gives us a sound drubbing, as witness the following—

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“The French have no right to be offensive towards the august head of the German Empire and his noble mother, by insulting them after the manner of blackguards (polissons). Every German who has the very least regard for the dignity of the nation must feel mortally insulted in the person of the Emperor.”

“The German people have the right to expect that the French Government and the French nation will give them ample satisfaction, and will wipe out this stain on the honour of France, by sternly calling to order the wretches in question, creatures whom we Germans consider to be the refuse of human society.”

And we who belong to this “refuse,” who flatter ourselves that we have made extraordinary efforts of self-control when we refrained from saying to the Empress Frederick: “Madame, spare us; let it not be said that you went one day to Saint-Cloud, and on the next to Versailles, lest our resolution to be calm should forsake us”—we, I say, now perceive, that all our prudence has been wasted, and that we are still “refuse,” the refuse of human society.

The character of William II continues to develop its series of eccentricities. With him, one may be sure of incurring displeasure, but his favours are shortlived. His mania for change is manifested to a degree unexampled since the days of the decay of the Roman Empire. His freakishness, the suddenness of his impulses, are becoming enough to create dismay amongst all those who approach him. One day he will suddenly start off to take by surprise the garrisons of Potsdam and of Rinfueld; he gives the order for boots and saddles, which naturally leads to innumerable accidents. Next day you will find him issuing a decree that, a play written by one of his *proteges*, entitled *The New Saviour*, is a masterpiece, which he would compel the public to applaud. The best he can do with it is to prevent its being hissed off the stage. Another day he has a room prepared for himself at the Headquarters of the General Staff, where he interferes in the preparation of strategic plans, without paying the least attention to the new chief who has replaced Count Waldersee. Then, again, he connects his private office with the entire Press organisation, so as to be able to manipulate the reptile fund himself, and to dictate in person the notices he requires, concerning all his proceedings, in the newspapers which he pays in Germany and in those which he buys abroad.

All of a sudden it occurs to him that six more war-ships would round off the German Fleet; and so he demands that they be built on the spot. His Minister resists, pointing out that the approval of the Reichstag is required, William II flies into a passion, and the wretched Minister obeys. Suddenly it occurs to him also to remember the existence of a certain Count Vedel, greatly favoured by the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar. He summons him by telegraph, and makes him his favourite of an hour. When it pleases

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him to remove a superior officer, or to put one on the shelf, nothing stops him, neither the worth of the man, nor the value of the services he may have rendered. One can readily conceive that German generals live in a state of perpetual fright. Add to all this that William is becoming impecunious. He has taken to borrowing, and is reduced to making money out of everything. What will the Sultan Abdul Hamid say when he learns that the Grand Marshal of the German Court has put up for sale the presents which he offered to the Emperor, his guest, and which are valued at four millions!

These things bring to mind the threat which William II uttered a few days before the fall of Bismarck: "Those who resist me I will break into a thousand pieces."

March 12, 1891. [4]

The many and varied causes which led to the journey of the Empress Frederick to Paris, and the equally numerous results that the Emperor, her son, expected from that visit, are beginning to stand out in such a manner that we can appreciate their significance more and more clearly. This proceeding on the part of William II, like all his actions, was invested with a certain quality of suddenness, but at the same time, it reveals itself as the result of a complicated series of deliberate plans. The object of these last was, as usual, the young monarch's unhealthy craving for making dupes. To this I shall return later on. Let us first examine the causes of William's sudden impulses.

He has acquired, and is teaching his people to acquire, the taste and habit of sudden and unexpected happenings. It having been the habit of Bismarck to speculate on things foreseen, it was inevitable that his jealous adversary should speculate on things unforeseen. Moreover, the King-Emperor is dominated by that law of compensation, from which neither men nor things can escape, and from which it follows logically that Germany, after having profited by methods of continuity, is now condemned to suffer, in the same proportion, her trials of instability.

In determining upon the journey of his august mother to Paris, the Emperor took no risks other than those which pleased him, and which served the purposes of his grudges and his policy. In the first place, this journey would serve for a moment to divert attention in Germany from a policy which the great industrials and the workmen, the party of progress and the conservatives, all unite in condemning. In the next place, Berlin, having for a long time made ready to be amiable to Paris, was bound to resent all the more acutely any failure to reciprocate her kind advances. These results could not fail to be favourable to the vote of credits for military purposes, which are always the last credits asked for by the Government (whether under Bismarck or under Caprivi) and which are always voted under stress of an appeal to the eternal but utterly non-existent dangers, that are supposed to threaten Germany from France.

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If our capital, then, should extend a cold welcome to the august mother of the German Sovereign, the result could not fail to be of immediate advantage to the vote of military credits. I ask my readers to notice, by the way, the deliberate coincidence of the journey of the Empress with the demand for these credits, and also with the anniversary of the Treaty of Versailles. Finally, it was to be expected that if she were badly received, the mistake thus committed by the Empress Frederick would make "the Englishwoman" more unpopular in Germany; and, so far as one knows, her Imperial son has never been passionately devoted to her. Moreover, she afforded Bismarck an opportunity of getting rid of a little of his venom, as witness the following words of his—

"Only an Englishwoman," the ex-Chancellor declared during a visit to Mr. Burckardt, "could possibly have inspired the Emperor with the idea of sending her to Paris as a challenge to the French. A German woman would have had too much respect for her own dignity to go and visit Versailles and Saint-Cloud. The nobility of her feelings would have forbidden her to make a triumphal appearance amidst the ruins of the houses and castles destroyed by our troops, and her pride would have prevented her from seeking the homage and the favours of the vanquished. The Empress is English, and English she will remain."

But if France were to welcome with enthusiasm—or even with favour—the Empress Frederick, William II might justifiably conclude (without making allowance for the sympathy which the widow of the Emperor-Martyr inspires in Frenchwomen) that France had accepted the accomplished fact, abandoned her claims to Alsace-Lorraine, and the defence of her future interests in common with Russia. In that case, he would have treated France as he treats those who show him the greatest devotion. In order to get a clear idea of the object pursued by William II, it is sufficient to read two short extracts from the *Etoile Belge*, a blind admirer of the Emperor of Germany, and to read them separately from the enthusiastic articles which this paper published at the commencement of the journey of the Empress Frederick.

The correspondent of the *Etoile Belge* wrote as follows—

"In confiding his mother and his sister to the hospitality of Paris, William II committed an act as clever as it was courageous. Let him continue in this policy of pacific advances, and the idea of a reconciliation with Germany will soon become more popular than the Russian Alliance."

The Berlin correspondent of the same *Etoile* wrote—

"Germany has at least as much as England to gain in bringing it about that Russia should not feel too sure of French support."

Is not this clear enough? There you have it: the real object which underlay the visit incognito of the Empress Frederick for the furtherance of the interests of Germany, It

meant a reconciliation with Germany, which would have separated us from Russia, from which England had everything to gain, which would once more have surrendered our credit to Italy unconditionally, and would have compelled us to renounce Alsace-Lorraine for good and all.

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What then would have been the results had she paid us an official visit? We have already seen that none of the alternative schemes for this journey could work to Germany's detriment; we need, therefore, not be astonished at the publicity given by the Count von Muenster to all the comings and goings of the Empress, and at the determination shown by Her Majesty to investigate the quality of our patriotism in all its various aspects. The memories which the Empress went to recall at Saint-Cloud and at Versailles were the same as those which she compelled us to call from the past: memories glorious for her but unforgettably sad for us, memories which, in reminding her of victory, were meant to remind us of a defeat to which our conquerors have added cruelty.

I watch with fervour the expression of our patriotism. A race which forgets the brutal insults of superior force deserves slavery. Italy would never have reconquered Milan and Venice had she resigned herself to see them pass under the yoke of the stranger. Forty years and more had passed since the 2nd of May, [5] when Prince Napoleon thought fit to send Prince Jerome as Ambassador to Madrid. He was forced to leave it. Princess Murat was in no way responsible for what the French Generals had done. She came in the suite of the Empress Eugenie, but Spain found a way to make her displeasure manifest without any lack of courtesy. To the Empress Frederick, France has shown a melancholy kind of astonishment rather than dislike, and has displayed an infinite courtesy. Not a single demonstration, not a gesture, not a word from the population of Paris has done anything to detract from the city's world-wide reputation for hospitality.

The Emperor William I and Bismarck, who pretended to make war only against the Empire, would have shown themselves to be great and far-seeing political minds had they left Republican France in possession of the whole of her territory. Although beaten at Sedan, she would have remembered Jena, and Germany's revenge would have quickly been forgotten.

Let us remember the words of the Emperor of Germany—

"I would rather that all my people should fall upon the field of battle than give back to France a single clover-field of Alsace-Lorraine."

The *Post* of Strasburg, recalling this declaration, adds—

"The French *bourgeoisie* is too cowardly to begin a war. It is willing to smile at the words of Deroulede, but does not move. The people of Alsace-Lorraine have done quite rightly in turning away from these talkers. We have *permitted* them to become Germans, why then, should they refuse the privilege?"

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But William II continues to evoke the red vision of France militant, in order to obtain the vote for his military credits. It would seem that his liberalism has gone to join his socialism. At the dinner of the Brandenburgers he said “God inspires me; the people and the nation owe me their obedience.” No matter whether he bungles or blunders, God alone is responsible, and it is not for the people or the nation to argue. And what is more, has not the new President of the Evangelical Church just proclaimed William II as *summus episcopus*? Just as William claims to decide infallibly every political question he will now decide all theological questions, without asking any help from the supreme council of the Evangelical Church.

Pope, Emperor and King—but does anybody suppose that this will satisfy him?

March 27, 1891. [6]

The reception of the delegates from Alsace-Lorraine at Berlin is characteristic. William II, eternally pre-occupied with stage-effects, has on this occasion accentuated the disproportion between the framework and the results obtained. He insisted upon it that the proceedings should be as imposing as the refusal of the delegates’ request was to be humiliating. All the pomp and circumstance of State was displayed for the occasion, with the result of producing a scene, carefully prepared in advance, worthy of a Nero. The Emperor of Germany surrounded by his military household, in the hall of his Knights of the Guard, receives the complaints of the representatives of Alsace-Lorraine, who have come to ask for a relaxation of the laws imposed on them by conquest. To them, William II made answer: “The sooner the population of Alsace-Lorraine becomes convinced that the ties which bind her to the German Empire will never be broken, the sooner she proves more definitely that she is resolved henceforward to display unswerving fidelity towards *me* and towards the Empire, the sooner will this hope of hers be realised.”

Above the Imperial Palace, during this scene, the yellow flag of the Emperors of Germany floated side by side with the purple banner of Prussia.

Another picture—

The Emperor gives a banquet to the delegates of Alsace-Lorraine, after having refused to hear their complaints. At the same table with them he invites Herr Krupp to sit, in order to remind the people of the annexed provinces of the cannons which defeated France and will defeat her again. Here we have a reproduction of the Roman Empire in decay. The power of the conqueror, imposed in all its pomp upon the vanquished, with the cruelty of a bygone age.

The all-absorbing personality of William grows more and more jealous. He would like to fill the whole stage of the theatre of the empire and of the world itself. More than that, he even demands that the past should date from himself, and he turns history inside

out, having it written to begin with his reign, and reascending the course of time. First himself, then the house of Hohenzollern, then Prussia, and let that suffice. The other dynasties, other kingdoms of Germany, count for so little that it is sufficient merely to mention their existence. The history of which I speak, written for the German Army, will be prescribed later on for use of the high schools.

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From each department of the public service William lifts an important part of its business. From the Department of Education he takes the direction of public worship, which, in his capacity as *summus episcopus*, he proposes to control in person. From the War Department he takes the section having control of maps and fortresses, which, he proposes to place under the general staff and his own direction. He is planning to make a province of Berlin, so that he himself may govern it in military fashion, *etc*., *etc*. Is it possible that the mind of such a man, thus inflated with pride, should not succumb to every temptation of ambition? Is there any one of those about him, or amongst his subjects, who can say where these ambitions will end? When one thinks of the mass of ambitions and emotions that William II has exhausted since he came to the throne, when one thinks of the difficult questions he has raised, the obstacles he has created and the enterprises he has undertaken, how is it possible not to *fear* the future?

Germany is beginning to be oppressed by a feeling of uneasiness. She is beginning to realise that her Emperor, by designing the orbit of his activity on too large a scale, is producing the contrary effect, with the result that sooner or later, the narrowing circumference of that orbit will close in upon him, and he will only be able to break its barriers by violent repression from within *and by a sudden outbreak of war without*. Militarism and militarism only, the passion for which is ever recurrent with William II, can satisfy his morbid craving for movement and action. Thus we see him celebrating the Anniversary of William I by a review of his troops and by a speech, so seriously threatening a breach of the peace, that even the newspapers of the opposition hesitate to reproduce it. All France should realise that *the German Emperor will make war upon her without warning and without formal declaration, just as he surprises his own garrisons*. By his orders, the statement is made on all sides that the rifle of the German army is villainously bad. Let us not believe a word of it. On the contrary, we should know that the greater part of the Prussian artillery is superior to ours; let us be on our guard against every surprise and ready.

April 28, 1891. [7]

On the occasion of the presentation of new standards to his troops, the Emperor observed that the number 18 is one of deep significance for his race, that it corresponds with six important dates in the history of Prussia. “For this reason,” he added, “I have chosen the 18th of April as the day on which to present the new standards.” As William II himself puts it, this day, like all the “eighteenths” that went before it, has its special significance.

The strange words uttered by the monarch on this occasion—always intoxicated with the sense of his power, and sometimes by *Kaiserbier*—are denied to-day, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that the *Monitor of the Empire* has not published them. “Let our soldiers come to me,” he proclaimed in the White Hall, to “overcome the resistance of the enemies of the Fatherland, abroad as well as at home.”

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On the one hand, after the manner of the Middle Ages, he reveals to us the ancient mysteries of the Cabal, on the other, as an up-to-date emperor, he compels his brother Henry to become a sportsman like himself. On occasion he will don the uniform of the Navy, interrupt a post-captain's lecture, and throw overboard the so-called plan of re-organisation, so as to substitute a new strategy of his own making for the use of the German fleet.

So Field-Marshal von Moltke is dead at last. His place is already filled by the Emperor, who is willing to be called his pupil, but a pupil equal in the art of strategy to his master and a better soldier. The remarkably peaceful death of Von Moltke only reminds me of the violent deaths that he brought about. It was to him that we owed the bombardment of Paris. Only yesterday, Marshal Canrobert said "he was our most implacable foe, and in that capacity, we must continue to regard him with hatred and contempt." Von Moltke himself was wont to say "when war is necessary it is holy." He leaves behind him all the plans in readiness for the next war.

William II, you may be sure, will proceed to depreciate the military work of Von Moltke, just as he tries to depreciate his diplomatic and parliamentary work. He has reached a pitch of infatuation unbelievable; and is becoming, as I have said before, more and more of a Nero every day. At the present moment he is instigating the construction of an arena at Schildorn where spectacles after the ancient manner will be given. These, according to William, are intended to afford instruction to the masses as well as to the classes. A very fitting conclusion this, to the fears which he has expressed about seeing the youth of the German schools working too hard and overloading its memory. For the same reason, no doubt, he has made Von Sedlitz Minister of Public Instruction—it is an unfortunate name—an individual who has never been to College, who has never studied at any University, and who only attended school up to the age of twelve.

Now, it seems, William II is bored with the Palace of his forefathers. For the next two years he is going to establish his Imperial Residence at Potsdam; consequently all his ministers and high officials are compelled to reside partly at Potsdam. His mania for change leads him to destroy the historic character of the old castle; his scandalised architects have been ordered to restore it in modern style. And Berlin, his faithful Berlin, is abandoned. It is said that at a gala dinner the other day the Emperor uttered these words: "The Empire has been made by the army, and not by a parliamentary majority." But it is also said that Bismarck observed to the Conservative Committee at Kiel: "It is best not to touch things that are quiet, best to do nothing to create uneasiness, when there is no reason for making changes. There are certain people who seem singularly upset by the craving to work for the benefit of humanity." It requires no special knowledge to interpret this sentence as a thinly veiled criticism of the character of William II.

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May 12, 1891. [8]

There is an attitude frequently adopted by William II, that German socialists are in the habit of describing, as “the whipping after the cake.” He has now had the socialist deputies arrested, and he is introducing throughout the country a system of espionage and intimidation, which is only balanced to a certain extent by his fondness for sending abroad a class of reptiles who go about preaching, writing and imparting to others the doctrines which he endeavours to strangle at birth in his own country. In spite of his brief flirtation with socialism (in which he indulged merely to copy the man whom he opposes in everything and cordially detests), William II has now come to persecute it. One of his amiable jokes is to try and lead people to believe that the order which he has given, for the dispositions of his troops on the frontier *en echelon*, has no other object but to prevent Belgian strikers, from coming into Germany. But can it be also to repel this invasion of Belgian strikers that the entire German army now receives orders just as if it were actually preparing to begin a campaign?

Sentinels of France, be on your guard!

It goes without saying that during the past fortnight we have had our regular supply of speeches from William II. At Duesseldorf he said three things.

The first, coming from the lips of a sovereign known all the world over for his mania for change, is calculated to raise a smile—

“From the paths which I have set before me, I shall not swerve a single inch.”

The second was a threat—

“I trust that the sons of those who fought in 1870 will know how to follow the example of their fathers.”

The third and last was meant for Bismarck—

“There is but one master, myself, and I will suffer none other beside me.”

For the future William will only make his appearances accompanied by heralds clad in the costumes of the Middle Ages, bodyguards drawn from the nobility, surrounding the *summus episcopus*, pope and khalif of the Protestant Church.

The extremely curious mixture which unceasingly permeates the character of William II may be observed in the orders which he, the mystic, the pious, has recently given to the chaplains of the Court, *viz*. that they are never to preach in his presence for more than twenty minutes. Naturally enough, the Prussian pastors are extremely indignant at the cavalier way in which the *summus episcopus* treats the Holy Word.

May 29, 1891. [9]

The business of a Sovereign is not a bed of roses, and causes of discomfiture are just as frequent in the palaces of kings as in the humblest cottages. William II has just had more than one experience of this humiliating truth, but it must be admitted he fully deserves most of the lessons he receives.

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Instead of saying, as he used to say, “my august confederates and myself,” he has suddenly conceived the pretension that he and he alone is the sole master in Germany. Accordingly the august confederates by common consent, although invited by the Grand Marshal of the Palace, Count Eulenberg, have refused to take part in the trifling folly of the Golden Throne that William is having made for himself. Kings, Grand Dukes and Senators of the Free Cities, all have unanimously declared that they will never assist “in the erection of a throne which is the sign and attribute of sovereignty.”

But to continue the list: At Strelitz, a clergyman refused the request of the Prussian colonel of the 89th Regiment to allow his church to be used for a thanksgiving service in honour of the birth of William II, and preached a sermon declaring that the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and he alone, had the right to have a divine service and a sermon in honour of his birthday.

And yet another instance: The Emperor has organised a regatta to be held on Lake Wannsee on May 30 for all yachts and pleasure boats owned by princes and by the German aristocracy. The Archduke, heir to the Austrian Throne, has refused to honour the occasion with his presence.

The toast at Dusseldorf, “Myself the only Master,” has been very generally condemned; equally that which the Emperor addressed to the students at Bonn, when he said to them “Let your jolly rapiers have full play,” or in other words, “Indulge to the top of your bent, and without regard to the laws, in your orgies of brutality.” People in Germany are beginning to think that William reminds them a little too much of the incoherencies of his great-uncle, Frederick William, who was undoubtedly clever in all sorts of ways, but who died insane.

At the shipyards of Elbing, William II narrowly escaped being wounded by the fall of the large mast of the ship *Kohlberg*, which had been sawn through in several places. He has just had his coachman, Menzel, arrested, who very nearly brought him to his death by driving him into a lime tree in a *troika* presented to him by the Tzar.

At present it is his wish that Holland and Belgium should receive him. The Queen Regent and Leopold II (in spite of the latter’s violent love for Germany) are hesitating, by no means certain as to the welcome which their peoples would extend to him. William II proposes to strike the imagination of the Dutch, as he did that of the Belgians, and to make his appearance before them, aboard his yacht, the *Hohenzollern*, which Dutch vessels are to go to meet and escort. To make the thing complete (and it may well be that the idea is germinating in his mind) it would only require him to visit the fortifications on the Meuse. The *Berliner Tageblatt* in a long article informs us that the Emperor declares them to be *perfect*. ’Tis a good word. . . .

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When the Imperial traveller shall have exhausted all pretexts for rushing about on this Continent, he will go to Africa. There is a *but* about this; it arises from the question whether he will be able to obtain from his Ministers that they should ask the Reichstag or the Landtag for the 800,000 francs that he needs for the voyage, the Constitution forbidding the King of Prussia to leave Europe. But what does the Constitution matter to William II? He, the master, will put an end to it!

August 1, 1891. [10]

What are the qualities which have distinguished the Government of Germany since the victories of Moltke? The patient tenacity of William I, and a continuous policy of trickery raised by Bismarck to the level of genius.

William II is a mind diseased, infatuated with itself. His actions are dominated by pride, and all the most childish off-shoots of that weakness, love of noise, of attitudes, of pomps and vanities and jewellery; his mind is a thing of somersaults, and his will is subject to capricious whims and sudden outbursts of temper.

August 11, 1891. [11]

May we not flatter ourselves that the torments of William II are now beginning? He, who only yesterday proclaimed himself to be the triumphant personification of the German Empire, is now compelled to inaction as the result of a fall. Whilst the Great Tzar is received with acclamation on board of the French *Marengo*, he goes awkwardly stumbling about on the deck of his yacht.

The German Emperor composed for himself a prayer, which he is accustomed to have said in his presence, and in which God is implored "to grant His protection to the Emperor William, to give him health and inspiration for the fulfilment of his mission *towards the nations*." To-day, reduced to inactivity by his illness and by the consequences of his folly, he has ample leisure to reflect on the psalm which he is so fond of singing, with the mitre of the *summus episcopus* on his head: "The kings of the earth are the instruments of God."

Yes, Sire, they are instruments which God breaks as easily as He bends a reed before the wind. He is pleased to humble the proud, and He reserves defeat and death as the portion of the parricide.

August 29, 1891. [12]

Germany's luck is running out. . . .

The Emperor certainly lacks neither the youth nor the audacity to compel fortune, but he drives her too hard, and ignores all her warnings. His fall is a clear warning, which he appears to be quite unwilling to notice; more mechanical than ever in his movements,

he is now taking to riding again. By his orders, his illness and even his fall are alike contradicted. His reason for withdrawing himself so long from the gaze of his adoring subjects is to let his beard grow, after the fashion of Boulanger. But he hasn't wasted his time; his furious impatience under activity has brought about a fresh attack.

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September 11, 1891. [13]

William II makes every effort to keep the Triple Alliance on its legs (it being as lame as himself) whilst he continues to give vent to his triple *hoch!* and resumes once more his rushing to and fro, so wearisome to his faithful subjects, which compels the European Press to groan so loudly that his pennon (Imperial in Austria, or Royal in Bavaria) waves madly about his excited person. Meanwhile the Emperor Alexander III, calm in the serenity of his nature, takes his rest in the pleasant retreat of Fredensborg, where he finds contented virtues and the joys of family life.

It really looks as if a certain deviltry were at work against William II. His splendid statecraft now revolves about questions of rye bread, Russian geese, and American pork; he struggles amidst a mass of difficulties more comic than sublime. He has imposed a system of rigid protection in order to entangle his allies in a net of tariffs favourable only to Germany, and now behold him, all of a sudden, removing the duties off diseased pork, all for the profit of the McKinley Bill, the scourge of Germany. Only the future can say what dangers await a policy of fierce protection and dangerous favouritism. How much simpler and cleverer it would have been to remove the duties on cereals! As far as the people are concerned, cheap pork will never appeal to them as cheap bread would have done. The progressive party had asked for both; the satisfaction they have received appeases them for the moment, but the socialists will still be able to say that William's Government takes off the duties on foodstuffs that poison the people, and leaves them on those which would afford them healthy nourishment.

September 27, 1891. [14]

William II has decidedly no luck when he puts the martial trumpet to his lips. It was at Erfurt that he learned that the tribes of the Wa Hehe had massacred Zalewski's expedition into East Africa. It is said that, on hearing this news, the German Emperor, seized with one of those sudden outbursts of rage which throw him into convulsions, swore to avenge in torrents of blood the insult thus suffered by the ever-victorious banner of Prussia. Are we, then, to see the Reichstag in its turn, like the French and Italian Parliaments, wasting its millions and its men in colonial adventures?

At Muenich, William II has declared that the wretched condition of the artillery in the Austrian army, the lack of cohesion in its infantry, and the inexperience, not to say incapacity, of its officers, render it unfit for war in the near future, and that no hope of its improvement is to be entertained, so long as it shall have as its head a man so completely worn out as Francis Joseph. Germany's armament is to be completely changed and renewed, and it is even said that William will go down in person to the Reichstag during the autumn session to demand the enormous credits which the situation requires. The *Neue Muenchen Tageblatt* has been seized at Muenich for having published an attack upon "the mania for armaments and for military pomp which

possesses William II, a mania which is exhausting Germany and will leave her completely ruined after the next war."

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November 12, 1891. [15]

The unfortunate Constitution of the German Empire, like the Emperor himself, doesn't know which way to turn. Legislation, administration, the army; the universities, the Church and the administration of justice: everything is being passed through a sieve, and transformed, first in order that it may retransform itself and then become more readily accessible to the rising generation. Anything that savours of a ripe age is extremely displeasing to William II. Ripeness is a thing which he disdains to acquire. All that is youthful finds favour in his eyes, with the sole exception of a class of youth with which he is disposed to deal severely, *viz*. the *souteneurs*. Against them the *summus episcopus* is extremely wroth. Here the virtue of chaste Germany is at stake, and he proposes to cauterise the disease with a red-hot iron. For the future, the scandalous discussion of these things will be forbidden to the Press, and thus, even if private morals continue the same, public morality will not be offended. Hypocrisy, at least, will be saved.

There is much talk at Vienna of a plan whispered at headquarters in Berlin, which has to do with converting the capital of Austria into an entrenched camp, so that an army driven back from the Austro-Russian frontiers might there be re-formed. William means to throw Austria against Russia, and to take his precautions in case of defeat, precautions which would at the same time, safeguard the rear of the German Empire.

November 29, 1891.

Germany is becoming uneasy; she has heard the rustling of the wings of defeat. Accustomed to victory, she is suffering, as rich people suffer under the least of privations. Bankruptcies, one after another, are spreading ruin in Berlin. Bismarck and William, united in a very touching manner on this subject, conceived the idea of bringing about Russia's financial ruin, and of importing into the Prussian capital the vitality of the Paris market. The fall in Russian securities was unlucky for the German Bank, and all the scrip that the Berlin Bourse so greedily devoured, for the sole purpose of preventing Paris from getting it, does not seem to have been easily digested. The middle class is suffering from the bad condition of the market, and the increase of taxation; the lower classes are hungry.

Impassive in his majesty, the Emperor contemplates himself upon the throne. Now you will find him copying Louis XIV and writing in the golden book of the city of Muenich *Regis volontas suprema lex*. And again he will imitate St. Louis, but not finding any oak tree within his reach, he administers justice on the public highway, as in the Skinkel-Platz. He is having his own statue made of marble, to be placed alongside of his throne. Great Heavens! If some day, this were to be for him the avenging Commander's statue! [16]

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But no, it cannot be, for has he not been converted? Is he not the *summus episcopus*, who conducts the service in person? Has he not composed psalms? Could anybody be more pious, a more resolute foe of those vices which he pursues with such energy? Could any one be more determined to be a pillar of the Church? In his interviews with the delegates of the synod of the United Prussian Church, has not the *summus* said that the Reformation drew its strength from the hearts of princes? True, you may say, that this does not sound very like a humble Christian; but then humility had never anything to do with William.

At the administration of the oath to new recruits, after having held forth to them on the subject of the hardships at the beginning of a soldier's life, he added, "It shall be your reward when you have learnt your trade, to manoeuvre before me."

December 13, 1891. [17]

The nations of Europe desire peace, and it has been so often proved to them that they also desire it, who have been accused of furbishing their weapons unceasingly, that it would be dangerous even for William II to seem to be preparing for war, or rather that, having made ready for it, he should be working to let it loose. And so it comes to pass that the fire-eating Emperor and King of Prussia himself is compelled to play the part of a bleating sheep "admiring his reflection in the crystal stream," and that he cannot even have recourse to the expedient, now exhausted, to make it appear that either France or Russia are ravening wolves in search of adventure. But the role of a sheep sits badly on William, and the *mot d'ordre*, which he dictates is so evidently opposed to the condition of affairs for which he is responsible, that Messrs. Kalnoky and Caprivi, in spite of their appearance of rotund good nature, have shown distinct signs of intractable irritation.

People have been asking what can be the meaning of all these pacific assurances, so hopelessly at variance with everything that one sees and knows, at a moment when the Monarch of Berlin is furious at the visit of the Tzar to Kronstadt? Well, the truth is out, and it is M. de Kalnoky who, by proxy, shall reveal it to you.

"The reception at Kronstadt and its consequences have effected no change in the situation." There you have the secret. It is necessary to prove that the diplomacy of the Triple Alliance has not been checked at any point or in any way; that the "excellent impression," to quote the words of M. de Caprivi, left in Russia by the visit of William II did not allow the Tzar any alternative; he was compelled to show attention to some other country than Germany. Moreover, the appearance of Alexander III on the *Marengo* was nothing more than a simple desire for a sea trip; France, going like Mohammed to the mountain, bore in her flanks nothing larger than a mouse. Finally, that Peace never having been threatened by the Loyal League of Peace, there could be no possible reason left to France and Russia for wanting to defend it, *etc*., *etc*.

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William II is working hard to control and direct the diplomacy of the Triple Alliance. Nevertheless, all his scaffolding work is liable to sudden collapse, overthrown by the most insignificant of events. Regarding his speech to the recruits, the German Press has pluckily voiced its condemnation by the public. It is impossible to deny that his observations on that occasion were a perfect masterpiece of self-glorification. This is what he said—

"You have just taken the oath of fidelity to myself. From this day forward there exists for you one order and one order only, that of my majesty. Henceforth you have only one enemy, mine, and should it be necessary for me some day (which God forbid) to order you to shoot your own parents, yes, to fire on your own brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, on that day remember your oath."

Those who wish to form an accurate idea of William's loquacity and self-conceit should read a few passages, selected haphazard from "The Voice of the Lord upon the waters," a sermon by His Majesty, the Emperor-King, for use in polar voyages. There they will find a strange hotch-potch of all sorts of ideas, religious, political and heathen, all half digested. But the dominant note in the sermons preached by William II lies in his tendency to diminish the Infinite, to hold it within the measure of his own mind, to bring down God to his own stature. All his comparisons tend to show God as an Emperor, built in the image in which William sees himself. When he draws you a picture, in which he brings God face to face with himself, there is about him a certain splendour of pride, something in his utterance that suggests an Imperial Lucifer. But beyond these relations between God and the German Emperor, his utterances reveal nothing beyond commonplace self-conceit. In his perpetual and personal contact with the Divinity, William's morality becomes more exacting than even that of God Himself towards His saints, who have long enjoyed His sanction to sin seven times a day. William II will not allow of a single sin. Everywhere and in everything he must interfere. Well may his subjects say, who have just received their catechism: "He is on heaven, on earth, and within us."

January 1, 1892. [18]

I, who have so long been devoted to the Franco-Russian Alliance, have followed with acute distress the intrigues of Bismarck in Bulgaria (intrigues of which the *Nouvelle Revue* revealed one proof in the letters of Prince Ferdinand of Coburg to the Countess of Flanders). I have known that William, in spite of his actual dislike for the proceedings of his ex-Chancellor, is pleased to approve the impertinences of a Stamboulof. Nevertheless, I confess I am seized with anxiety at seeing France enter into diplomatic proceedings with the so-called Government of Bulgaria. It is very often more dignified to despise and ignore the enterprises of certain people, then to endeavour to obtain satisfaction from them. There are certain complicated circumstances in which the manifestation of a sense of honour or loyalty becomes a weakness: at all costs one should avoid being led into it.

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The Emperor of Germany possesses a special talent for adding new complications to a difficult situation, so as to render it impossible of solution. He has now so completely tangled up the parliamentary skein, that in a little while it will be impossible for Parliament to govern. Can one conceive of a majority of the Chamber rallying around the Catholic centre, or the socialists, for the same reason, increasing in number at the bye-elections? In such a case William II, equally unable to surrender in favour of the clericals or to submit to the socialists, will find himself, as others have been before him, driven to adopt the ultimate remedy of war.

February 12, 1892. [19]

If the States of Germany, in joining themselves on to Prussia, have thereby increased in power, they have gained very little in humanity. The circular, secretly issued by Prince George of Saxony, commanding the 12th Army Corps, reveals something of the brutalities and exquisite torture which German soldiers have to suffer. This circular was addressed to the commanders of regiments, and has been published by a socialist newspaper, the *Vorwaerts*. This Prince of Saxony is indignant at these things, doubtless because he is a Saxon; Bavaria, we are told, declines to accept the application of the Prussian Military Code. By common consent, the House of Peers and the Chamber of Deputies at Muenich have voted against subscribing to a condition of things which permits men to behave like real savages. Military Germany takes pleasure in cruelty, sentimental Germany is moved by the tortures inflicted on her children. Brutality and sentiment rub elbows, and are so strangely intermingled amongst our neighbours that I, for one, abandon all attempts at understanding them.

It was Von Moltke who said one day that the army was the school of all the virtues. Next day the same Field-Marshal put into circulation certain formulas for the infliction of cruelty, intended for the use of commanding officers.

“If a superior officer should order an inferior to commit a crime, the inferior must commit it.” Thus says William II, who in the very next breath expresses his sentimental concern over the unfortunate lot of a woman of loose life handed over to the tender mercies of a bully!

William’s latest quarrel, it seems, is with liberty of conscience. The *summus episcopus* of the evangelical religion becomes the protector of clericalism in Germany. He, the elect of God, has discovered the power of the Catholic Church. This was the power that broke Bismarck, but it will not break William II, for he intends to assimilate it. He dreams of establishing his Protectorate over Catholicism in Europe, America, Africa and in the East; his destiny lies in a world-wide mission, which only Catholicism can support. He will, therefore, dominate the papacy, and through it will govern the world.

February 26, 1892. [20]

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The list of Emperor William's vagaries continues to grow. He, who was once the father of socialists, now pursues them with all manner of cruelty, in order to be revenged for their opposition to the scholastic law. This law is his dearest achievement. He produced it under the same conditions as his socialist rescripts, all by himself, without consulting his Minister. It seems that Von Sedlitz was instructed to bring it forward without discussing its terms. This is a reactionary *coup d'etat* in the same way that the rescripts on socialism were a democratic stroke. Will this "new course" of Imperial policy, as they call it in Germany, last any longer than its predecessor? I presume so, for it corresponds more closely than the old one to the autocratic instincts of William II.

The National, Liberal and Progressive parties, and even the Socialists, who had turned full of hope towards their Liberal Emperor, now vie with each other in turning their backs on the Sovereign, who fulfils the policies of a Von Kardoff or a Baron von Stumm, the most determined Conservatives of the extreme party.

The Universities of Berlin and Halle, together with all the other educational institutions, have addressed petitions to the Landtag, protesting against the re-organisation of the primary schools, which it is proposed to hand over to the Church. Sixty-nine professors out of eighty-three, six theologians out of eight, including amongst them certain members of the Faculty, have signed this protest. The greatest names of German science and literature have here joined forces. Liberals like Herr Harnack have made common cause with such anti-Semite Conservatives as Professor Treitschke. Mommsen, Virchow, Curtius Helmholtz, stand side by side in defence of the rights of liberty of thought. William is becoming irritated by the lessons thus administered to him and the opposition thus displayed, and his nervousness continues to assume an aggressive form.

Alsace-Lorraine is undisturbed, and all Europe bears witness to its pacific tendencies; nevertheless, the German Emperor is bringing forward a Bill before the Reichstag for declaring a state of siege in Alsace-Lorraine, which includes even a threat of war, and opens the door to every abusive power on the part of the civil authority. The speech which he addressed to the members of the Diet of Brandenburg is the most complete expression which the Emperor, King of Prussia, has yet given of his latest frame of mind.

How dare they criticise him, or discuss his policy! Let them all go to the devil! He, whose policy it is to block emigration, now wishes for nothing better than that all his opponents should leave Germany. But it is impossible to revoke public opinion wholesale, like an edict. If it is difficult now to expel all malcontents from Prussia, what will it be when their number is legion? William II has promised to his people a glorious destiny, happiness, and the protection of Heaven. Truly these Germans must be insatiable if they ask for more!

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March 12, 1892. [21]

William II aims at concentrating all power, and, to organise the work of espionage, in the hands of the military authorities. If the Prussian law of 1851 is still effective, the Emperor in case of need will be able to dispense with a vote of the Reichstag. This law confers on every general and on his representative, who may be an officer of eighteen years of age, the right to declare a state of siege in the event of war threatening. On the other hand, the projected Bill against espionage meets with very general approval. Your German has got spies on the brain. He wishes to be able to indulge in spying in other countries, but to prevent it in Germany. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Vorwaerts* assert that the proposed law against the revealing of military secrets was inspired by the publication of the report by Prince George of Saxony, containing revelations of a kind which the Emperor does not wish to occur again. One of the articles of this law against spying reveals the Prussian character in all its beauty. One has only to read it, in order to understand the inducements which the Government of William II holds out to informers. The end of this article runs as follows: "Every individual having knowledge of such an infringement, and who shall fail to notify the authorities, is liable to imprisonment."

To hear these Germans, one would think that France and Russia are flooding the Empire with spies, whilst Germany never sends a single one of them to France or Russia. In the first place, all these statements are purely cynical; and in the second Germany can very well afford to dispense with professionally selected spies, inasmuch as every German prides himself on being one at all times in the service of the Fatherland.

April 12, 1892. [22]

William II makes a solemn promise to his august grandmother, Queen Victoria, and to the "best beloved" of his Allies, the Emperor of Austria, that he will restore the Guelph Fund. Francis Joseph has obtained from the Duke of Cumberland the somewhat undignified letter of renunciation, which we have all read, and now it is either up to Rogue Scapin or Bre'r Fox, just as you please! William II says that he never meant to give back the capital, but only the interest! It is easy to imagine the effect produced on those concerned by the revelation of this astonishing mental reservation. But this is not all! The King of Prussia—always short of money, always in debt on account of his extravagant fancies and expensive clothes, and half ruined by his mania for running to and fro—had made certain arrangements for meeting his creditors by means of the Guelph Fund, but with the proviso, needless to say, that they affected only the interest!!

It is said that the heir of the House of Hanover has written a second letter which evoked a sickly smile from William II, and of which Councillor Roessing has suppressed the publication with some difficulty.

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Amongst other things, William II has had quick-firing guns, supplied to the people of Dahomey by slave merchants. The Berlin *Post*, directly inspired by the Emperor, tells us exactly what is his object in so doing—

"England and Russia will not help France to settle her difficulties in her colonies. These two Powers are far too pre-occupied with the struggle for supremacy in Asia. France is, therefore, reduced to looking to Germany as her sole support. If France consents to work together with Germany, Africa will be won for civilisation, and for the best civilisation of all, the Franco-German, but so long as France pursues this task single-handed, she will not attain her end, and will find in Africa nothing but disappointment."

Such evidences of effrontery remind us that William II is the pupil of Bismarck. We are, therefore, justified in concluding that the Germans realise that it is not Aristides the Just who has been exiled, but a master rogue, whom his pupil now imitates.

April 29, 1892. [23]

William II continues to expel from Berlin all unemployed workmen, quite regardless of the cause of their temporary or continuous idleness. He sends them back to their native parishes, without caring in the least whether they will find there the work which they are unable to secure at the capital. The "Workmen's Emperor" compels an emigration into the interior of all the most discontented, the most irritated and wretched, thus sowing throughout all the land the evil seed of the most dangerous kind of propagandist. The spirit of Germany is full of surprises for any one who takes the trouble to observe it carefully, and it is not only in the acts of the Emperor that we perceive its contradictions.

To take one instance out of a thousand. Five non-commissioned officers of dragoons have just been tried at Ulm, accused of having beaten recruits with sticks until they drew blood. They have been acquitted, after having proved that they acted under the orders of their captain. In this connection it is interesting to read the following—

"The Court of Saverne has just condemned a carrier named Schwartz to six weeks' imprisonment and a fine of ten marks for ill-treating his horse."

The unstable grandson of the steadfast William I threatens before long to get between his teeth a fourth war minister; he has already devoured three chiefs of the general staff, and, in a few years, as many ministers as his grandfather had during the whole course of his long reign.

It remains to be seen whether, after the withdrawal of the scholastic law, William II will still find a majority willing to accept his new and disturbing schemes.

May 28, 1892. [24]

As the German Empire has no other force of cohesion except such as lies in militarism, William is necessarily compelled to do everything to magnify and increase it. Whereas we in France are free to develop the quality rather than the quantity of our army, Germany, finding the elements of cohesion only in her military agglomerations is compelled to increase unceasingly the number of her soldiers.

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At this very moment William is planning to add a permanent effective of 40,000 men to the tactical units. In return, he will promise Parliament and the country a provisional two years' service, being quite capable of withdrawing his promise so soon as the vote has been secured.

Numbers, always numbers! It is the German Emperor's only ideal, and he becomes further and further removed from any principle of selection. . . .

The German newspapers make a speciality of the fabrication of sensational rumours. I could not ask any better vengeance for our beloved country than to have their stories placed before the most loyal of Sovereigns, the most far-seeing of diplomats, of the politician the furthest removed from sordid calculations that the world knows or has ever known, that is to say, of the Emperor Alexander III. . . .

But all this is just a manoeuvre of the enemy who plays his own game, and it has no importance whatsoever beyond that which credulous and anxious people choose to give it. Inasmuch as the renewal of the Triple Alliance has produced a definite situation, which affords no opportunity for any of the combinations which might have resulted had it been broken up into independent parts, the Tzar with his usual foresight was naturally led to proclaim his *rapprochement* with France, and this he has done. What change has there been in the situation since Kronstadt? None at all, unless it be that Lord Salisbury has revealed something more of the nature of his intrigues at Sofia, and of the anti-Russian intentions of his Bulgarian policy. The King of Italy has surrendered himself a little more into the hands of the King of Prussia, placing at the disposal of William's diseased restlessness further and inexhaustible sources of trouble and uneasiness for Europe.

July 9, 1892. [25]

It seems to me that the speech addressed by William to his new Admiralty yacht at the port of Stettin has not attracted sufficient notice. It is simply beautiful, a very choice morsel indeed. To show how little I exaggerate, I will ask my readers to study it in the actual text, and I would like to engage the services of the King of Prussia to collaborate in the *Nouvelle Revue* for a page in precisely the same style. Here is this little masterpiece of classic purity—

"Thou art ready to glide into thy new element, to take thy place amidst the Imperial war-ships, and thou art destined to carry our National Flag. Thine elegant construction, thy light sides, showing no sign of the heavy threatening defensive turrets, such as are carried by our war-ships destined to fight the foe, indicate that thou art consecrated to works of peace. Lightly, as on the wing, to cross the seas, bringing distant lands closer to each other, giving rest and recreation to workers, happiness to the Imperial children, and to the august mother of the country,—that is thine appointed task. May thy light artillery be worn by thee as an ornament and not as a weapon of war.

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“It is for me now to give thee a name. Thou shalt carry that which my Castle bears, whose towers rise so high towards Heaven, that which, lying amidst the beautiful country of Suabia, has given its name to my family. It is a name which recalls to my Fatherland centuries full of labour, of work done with and for the people, of life devoted to the people, of good examples set in leading the people in paths of literature and in many struggles. The name which thou shall bear means all this. Mayest thou do honour to thy name, and to thy flag, to the great Elector who, first of all men, taught us our Mission on the sea, and to my great ancestors who, by works of peace as in fierce warfare, knew how to keep and increase the glory of our fatherland. I baptize thee *Hohenzollern*!”

August 29, 1892. [26]

William II, claiming as usual to be ahead of every change of opinion in Europe, and to direct it, has chosen a very singular pretext to make profession of his faith as a pacifist, at the moment when Lord Rosebery was doing the same, and when the visit of our squadron to Genoa was about to emphasise a relaxation of tension in the relations between France and Italy.

On June 24, 1890, the following motion was adopted by the Reichstag—

“The Governments of the Confederated German States are requested to take into serious consideration the introduction of the two years’ period of military service for the Infantry.”

Without deigning to remember this, and without bothering his head as to the discomfiture of the peasantry, who believed the Emperor to be really favourable to a scheme which he had openly patronised hardly six months before, on the ground that he had been greatly impressed by General Falkenstein’s report; indifferent also to the difficulty of the situation in which he was placing Von Caprivi, advocate of the two years’ system—the Emperor-King (apparently just because on that day it had pleased him to make a declaration in favour of peace) made a speech to his officers after the last review of the Guards, and summarily condemned any reduction in the term of military service. Moreover, he requested his hearers to repeat his words and to let people know the motives which impelled him thus to set his face against a reform, which, not having secured his approval, must remain in the limbo of fantastic schemes.

Much stir and commotion follows, and as usual a great deal is said about the most changeable and the most feather-headed of Sovereigns; then we have a new interpretation of his speech by the Press, contradictions of the original text, withdrawal by the Emperor himself of his original words, and finally, as net result: a great deal of noise, and the attention of all Europe directed towards William II. What more could he ask?

Soon, thanks to the insidious activities of Austria in Servia, and thanks to that of his own police on the Franco-Belgian frontier, William will be able to threaten Europe with War.

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September 12, 1892. [27]

William has given up the idea of his trip to Hamburg, cholera being the sort of jest for which he has no relish. To make up, he has rushed off to Canossa. The Black Alliance, as the Liberals call it, is an accomplished fact. The price paid to the Catholics for their assistance has been a matter of bargaining; what William II wants is an increase in the peace-footing of the army, and of the annual contingent of recruits, so that Germany's army of 300,000 men may always be ready.

In twenty years the War budget has been raised from 309 to 700 millions, as the result of these new plans. The *Freisinnige Zeitung* wonders what will happen on the day when the opposition of the Catholic Centre shall cease, which has always been a check upon military expenditure and which, nevertheless, has not prevented Germany from spending 11,597 millions upon armaments since 1871.

Will Austria follow once more the lead of Berlin? The object of William II's visit to Vienna, accompanied by Von Caprivi, is to decide her to do so. In the Empire of the Hapsburgs, as in Germany, people are asking; "What is going to be the end of all this expenditure?" The *Vaterland*, discussing William's voyage, says that "the pact between the three great powers appears to be beginning to be very shaky."

September 29, 1892. [28]

William II thinks that War is impending and close at hand; he feels that Italy is inclined to argue, and Austria to assert herself. According to the tradition of Von Moltke, he wishes to be ready at the hour of his own choosing.

In the last volume of the Field-Marshal's memoirs, there is a letter addressed by him to the deputy, Count de Bethusy Huc, dated March 29, 1869, in which the following words occur—

"After a war like that which we have just ended, one can hardly wish for another. I desire, however, to profit by the occasion which now offers to make war on France, for, unfortunately, I consider this war to be absolutely necessary, and indispensable within a period of five years; after that, our organisation and armament, which are to-day superior, may be equalled by the efforts of France. It is therefore to our interest to fight as soon as possible. The present moment is favourable; let us profit by it."

November 12, 1892. [29]

If you would take the measure of the hatred which the Emperor-King of Prussia, has towards Russia, read the *Youth of William the Second* by Mr. Bigelow, his companion in childhood, the friend of his youth, and the passionate admirer of his imperial greatness.

In the eyes of Mr. Bigelow, William II is endowed with all the virtues, all the qualities, and a hatred of evil; he is a complete master of every conceivable kind of science. He is a person of tact, foresight, and superior feelings, he possesses the noblest qualities of courage and sense of honour. He knows better than any one else everything concerning government, business, trade and industry. Of his military art, it were needless to speak; it is conspicuously evident. A brilliant talker and a fine orator, his lucidity of observation, his judgment, and his rapidity of decision are all alike, incomparable.

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Mr. Bigelow's William has a complete knowledge of the history of Europe and of the character of its peoples. There is nothing that he does not know of the upper and lower foundations of the views of European statesmen, past and present. A frank and loyal fellow withal, good to children, he feels keenly the sufferings of soldiers ill-treated by their officers, and the hardships of the working classes exploited by their masters.

Frederick the Great is the only one who in any way approaches him. Then, as to his magnanimity, he proved it to M. Jules Simon, by offering him the musical works of the said Frederick the Great, with a letter which, according to Mr. Bigelow, should have made France give up her foolish ideas about Alsace-Lorraine, were it not for the fact that "from the drawing-rooms of the Faubourg Saint Germain to the garrets of Montmartre, all Frenchmen suffer from an incorrigible mania for revenge."

To the great satisfaction of Mr. Bigelow, however, it has been given to England to understand, and she knows how to promote William's mission. On August 9, 1890, she ceded to him Heligoland, the Gibraltar of Germany. It is not I who put these words into the mouth of the friend of the King of Prussia! "Since Waterloo," adds Mr. Bigelow, "England has not been on such good terms with Germany."

A very touching confession for us to remember! Hatred of Russia finds expression in a hundred ways under the pen of Mr. Bigelow. Nothing that is Russian can find favour in his sight; the least of the sins of Russia are barbarism, corruption, vice of every kind, cruelty and ignorance. After having piled up all the usual accusations, he stops, and one might think that it was for lack of materials. But not at all! He could, but will not say more about it; and this "more" assumes most fabulous proportions "so as not to compromise my German friends." I imagine that some of those friends of his must figure on the margin of the Russian budget, for if it were not so, why should they be liable to be compromised?

Travelling down the Danube by boat, Mr. Bigelow was able to make use everywhere of the German language. Every intelligently conducted enterprise which he found on his way was in the hands of Germans. "Sooner or later," said he, "the Danube will belong to Germany."

According to Mr. Bigelow, all the people who have the misfortune to live in the neighbourhood of the frontiers of Russia only dream of becoming Germans, in order to escape her.

There is one remarkable quality which William II possesses and which Mr. Bigelow has forgotten, and that is his talent as a scenic artist and *impresario* for any and every kind of ceremony; in this he is past master. For the 375th Anniversary of October 31, 1517, the day on which the famous theses, which inaugurated the Reformation, were posted by Martin Luther on the door of the chapel at Wittenberg, the Emperor-King surpassed himself. The Imperial procession aroused the greatest enthusiasm in the little town by

its successful reconstruction of the historic picture. The speech of the *summus episcopus* cast all sermons into the shade by its lofty tone and spirit of tolerance.

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[1] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 16, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[2] *La Nouvelle Revue*, February 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[3] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[4] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 15, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[5] Spanish insurrection against the French invasion under the first Empire.

[6] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[7] *La Nouvelle Revue*, May 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[8] *La Nouvelle Revue*, May 15, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[9] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[10] *La Nouvelle Revue*, August 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[11] *Ibid.*, August 15, 1891.

[12] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[13] *Ibid.*, September 15,1891.

[14] *La Nouvelle Revue*, October 1, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[15] *La Nouvelle Revue*, November 15, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[16] An allusion to the Commander’s statue in “Don Juan.”

[17] *La Nouvelle Revue*, December 15, 1891, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[18] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 1, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[19] *La Nouvelle Revue*, February 15, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[20] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 1, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[21] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 15, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[22] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 15, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[23] *La Nouvelle Revue*, May 1, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[24] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 1, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[25] *La Nouvelle Revue*, July 15, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[26] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 1, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[27] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 15, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[28] *La Nouvelle Revue*, October 1, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[29] *La Nouvelle Revue*, November 16, 1892, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

CHAPTER III

1893

William II receives the Tzarewitch—Germany would rather shed the last drop of her blood than give up Alsace-Lorraine—William’s journey to Italy—The German manoeuvres in Alsace-Lorraine.

January 13, 1893. [1]

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Being too weak a man to accept such responsibility as that involved in the scheme of military reforms, Von Caprivi has, so to speak, by his suppliant attitude towards the parties in the Reichstag, forced William II to assert himself. In spite of his leanings towards prudent reform, the Emperor-King, whose pride we know, has found himself all of a sudden in a sorry plight on the question of the increase of the standing army. The rising tide of public censure, mounting to the foot of the throne itself, found no one to hold it back but a bewildered lock-keeper. And so the Emperor, with his helmet on his head, appeared upon the scene, to take charge of the damming operations. On January 1 he addressed his generals, his enthusiastic officers (who, like all soldiers, have a holy horror of politicians), and said to them, “I shall smash the obstacles that they raise against me.”

Thus it happens that it is no longer Von Caprivi who confronts the Reichstag, no longer the hesitating successor of Bismarck, whom the country accuses of leading it on the path to ruin: the Emperor-King takes charge in person. Instead of being a question of policy and bargaining between the political parties, the question becomes one of loyalty. In Parliament, the resistance of the country, instead of being a legitimate opposition intended to enlighten the sovereign, becomes revolutionary. So now the Reichstag is compelled either to vote the scheme of military reform, or to be dissolved; Germany must either confirm her representatives in their obedience, or take the consequences of her hostility towards the Emperor and his army. The Reichstag will submit, and Germany will humbly offer to her Sovereign an additional million of troops in the next five or six years. William II will hasten their general submission by threats of war and revolution, as unlimited as is the field of his falsehood.

February 12, 1893. [2]

William II has left no stone unturned, and has displayed the utmost skill, in endeavouring to enfold in his influence the heir to the throne of Russia. He has devoted to this end all the splendour that an Imperial Sovereign can display in the entertainment of his guest, all the resources of enthusiasm which he can lead his people to display in welcoming him, all his tricks of apparent good-will, all the fascination of a mind which is apt to dazzle those who meet it for the first time (although later on it is apt to inspire them with weariness by its very excesses), every manifestation of a wistful friendship which proclaims itself misunderstood.

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The whole Germany of tradition displayed itself before the eyes of the Tzarewitch, all its treacherous appearance of good nature, all its dishonest methods, composed of a mixture of vanity and apparent simplicity, whose object it is to make people believe in a sort of unconsciousness of great strength. The German Emperor made an appeal for a union of princes to resist the restless democracy of our times, and repeated it with urgency, and in the usual stock phrases. In a word, William II laid under contribution, to charm the son of the Tzar, all his arts and spells of fascination. Why wonder that he succeeded, when we remember that M. Jules Simon, a French Republican, member of the Government of National Defence in 1870, came back from Berlin singing the praises of the King of Prussia? Also, that the entire Press of our country, with the sole exception of the *Nouvelle Revue*, was wont, at the commencement of William's reign, to speak with sympathy of the genial character of the "young Emperor," to praise his schemes of social reform, and to express its belief in the superiority of a mind which, as a matter of fact, is remarkable only for its excesses and disorder? But all Germany, like M. Jules Simon and the French Press, will find out the truth. The country may have gone into ecstasies over the first acts and first speeches of its young sovereign, but it will soon learn to know how little connection there is between the words and assurances of William of Hohenzollern and his deeds.

At the outset, during the sojourn of the Tzarewitch at Berlin, whilst he was being carefully coddled by the Emperor, the chancellor, Von Caprivi (who boasts of having no initiative of his own and of acting only under the orders of his master), was inspiring accusations, and making them himself before the military commission, charging the war party in Russia with secretly plotting against Germany. One would like to know where the war party in Russia can possibly be at the present moment?

At the same time that William II was endeavouring to recover and restore amicable relations with the Tzar, he had every intention of carrying through his schemes of military re-organisation and the increase of the army, which, as Von Caprivi was wont to say after His Majesty, constitute essential safeguards against a Russian invasion. Now, the good Germans welcomed the son of Alexander III; they meant to prove to William II how useless they considered the increase of the army, inasmuch as the Tzar, with whom lies the final arbitrament of war, had shown his desire for peace by sending his son to Berlin. The Tzar, whose statecraft is great and profound, had clearly foreseen what the German people would think of the presence of his son in their midst; he showed them by this means that the increase of the army is useless, and that all the agitation and complications which William provokes, the oppositions and the struggles which he himself creates amongst the forces that he lets loose, give rise to dangers, far greater than any with which Russia could ever threaten Germany.

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William II wears blinkers; he can sometimes see in front of him, but never around him nor behind. He believed that the Tzar and the Russian Press were going to be affected by the same sort of enthusiasm which he had inspired in the Tzarewitch, but the Tzar, Russia, and the Russian Press considered matters dispassionately and saw them in their right light; they were even of opinion that William II had displayed far too much vanity in his reception of the Tzarewitch and too little dignity. Consequently, after the departure of the Tzarewitch, the Emperor-King of Prussia, had a fit of rage, furious with disappointment at not having been able to follow up the success which he had obtained with the Tzarewitch himself. In one of those fits of ungovernable temper which lead him to commit so many irreparable mistakes, and which are the despair of his Government and his Court, he caused Von Caprivi's Press to publish the news of an attempt upon the life of the Tzar. But the methods of reptile journalism are now thoroughly understood and the Emperor Alexander, guessing the source of this lie, demanded an immediate apology, which Admiral Prince Henry hastened to convey, in the name of his brother, to the Russian Embassy. At the same time that he invented this story of the attempt on the life of the Tzar, the King of Prussia, German Emperor, proposed a toast in honour of the Duke of Edinburgh, Commander-in-Chief of the British Fleet, in which he looked forward to "the glorious day when the British fleet should fight the common enemy." The common and double enemy of England and Germany, as every one is aware, is France and Russia.

March 11, 1893. [3]

Until quite recently, the proposed military law was heatedly discussed in Germany. Realising that the Military Commission was on the point of rejecting it, William II finished his speech in the following words—

"The supporters of the proposed Sedlitz Law accused the Government of weakness, when it withdrew the Bill in the face of the clearly declared opposition of a majority of the nation. Well, then, the proposed military law provides us with an opportunity of showing that my Government is not a weak one, and that the firm will of my grandfather, the Emperor William, lives again in me."

A few days before the vote in the Reichstag, Herr Bebel had raised the question of International Arbitration wherein, he said, lay Germany's best means of proving her love for peace, even should it involve the risk of having the question of Alsace-Lorraine brought before an International Tribunal. Hereupon, Von Caprivi, Chancellor of the Prusso-German Empire, replied to the applause which had come from almost the entire Reichstag, as follows—

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“The deputy Bebel advises us to adopt a tribunal of International Arbitration. He admits the possibility that such a tribunal might raise some day the question of Alsace-Lorraine; he insinuates that we were to blame for the outbreak of war in 1870, and that there are those who maintain this idea with even greater strength and assurance than himself. Well, then, if such a tribunal should come together, and should express, no matter in what connection, its opinion on the question of Alsace-Lorraine, and if that opinion should be to the effect that Germany should hand back Alsace-Lorraine, I am convinced that Germany would never submit to such a decision, and that she would rather shed her blood to the last drop than to hand back these provinces.”

To which Herr Bebel naturally replied—

“When one holds ideas of this kind, it is perfectly evident that one cannot admit of International tribunals.”

Before his little speech, His Majesty the German Emperor had made a big one, from which we learned yet once again that William I had been entrusted with a mission, and had handed it down to William II; and then we heard once more the phrase with which Bismarck had deafened our ears, on one of his blustering days, and which the King of Prussia has re-issued in a new form and on his own account: “We Germans fear God and nothing else in this world.”

Well, Sire, I for my part believe that your Majesty fears something else besides God, and that is the disintegration of the Triple Alliance.

March 29, 1893. [4]

William II is ever at pains to invest those occasions in which his personality plays a part, with all the glamour of Imperial pomp. Once again, accompanied this time by an enormous retinue of Germans glad of the occasion of a free trip to a sunny land, William II is about to remind the Romans at Rome of the majesty of the Caesars. May their King not be reminded at the same time, by certain aspects of this triumphal procession, of Rome’s captive kings. In binding herself to Germany, has not Italy given herself over into bondage to the Teuton and especially to Austria, her hereditary foe? I could readily answer this question in the affirmative by looking back into the past, I who have so often shared in the patriotic emotions of Italy in bygone days; but every people is entitled to be the sole judge of its own destinies, and its best friends abroad have no right to endeavour to enlighten it by any rays which do not fall from its own heaven above. One can easily lead a nation astray, even by means of truths that have been clearly demonstrated beyond its frontiers. One is compelled to admit that the most extraordinary events may occur amongst one’s neighbours.

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William II, after having sent General Loe to congratulate Leo XIII on his Episcopal Jubilee, has just made a speech on the occasion of the silver wedding of King Humbert I and Queen Margaret. It will please the Italians, but this ambiguous policy seems to me anything but flattering, either for the Italian Kingdom or for the Papacy. As in 1888 and with the same ceremonies, Leo XIII will receive the Emperor-King of Prussia at the Vatican, and William II, as on that previous occasion will be able to split his sides with laughter on returning to the Quirinal, mimicking the Holy Father and boasting that he has befooled him once more.

April 27, 1893. [5]

The wisdom of the nations is now enriched with a new proverb, “A rolling Emperor gathers moss, and gathers nothing more.” Before long the tumult and the shouting of the fetes at Rome will die down, and with them the popular excitement of enthusiasm for the all-powerful German Emperor. The Italian people will then find itself confronted by the exhaustion imposed upon it by the compulsory militarism of the so-called pacific Triple Alliance. Even if cavalcades, reviews and tournays, should awaken again in the heart of the Roman people that love of the circus, which this people has inspired in all the latinised races, the economic question still remains, the question of money and of bread, implacable. I know not why it is, but the brilliancy of William II’s visit to Italy gives me the impression of a fire of straw. What object had he in going there, and what has he attained? I can see none. All his fervent protestations appear to me in bad taste, when compared with the correct dignity of the Court of Austria, third of the Allied Powers.

May 12, 1893. [6]

How can our German Caesar, who has just made a journey to Rome after the manner of Barbarossa, continue to suffer an assembly of talkers, of political commercial travellers, of people who allow their minds to be dominated by the vulgar thing called economics? It is not possible, and therefore Caesar calls to witness the first Military Staff that he comes across at the Tempelhof and makes it judge of the matter. “I have had to order the dissolution of the Reichstag,” says William to his officers and generals, “and I trust that the new Parliament will sanction the re-organisation of the Army. But if this hope should not be realised, I fully intend to leave no stone unturned to attain the end which I desire. No stone unturned, gentlemen, and you understand, I hope, that it is to you that I am speaking, and you who are concerned. You are the defenders of the past, and of the prerogatives of the Imperial and Royal Power.”

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If the new Reichstag meets in the same spirit of resistance to the excesses of Prussian militarism, William II will be condemned to constitutional government and then, little by little, to the surrender of everything that he believes to be his proper attributes, and of all his tastes. No further possibility then of an offensive war, to escape from domestic difficulties; no more parades with the past riding behind him; no more finding a way out by some sudden headlong move, for he would drag behind him only a people convinced against its will and too late. The only thing then left to the King of Prussia, face to face with a new majority opposed to militarism, would be the dangerous resource of a *coup d'etat*.

Dr. Lieber, an influential deputy, has defined the actual situation with a clearness which leaves nothing to be desired—

"We perceive," he said, "that the Prussian principle of government is developing more and more, and tending to become the idea of the German Empire. The policy to be pursued in the German Parliament should be purely German."

The dilemma is clear. Will Germany continue to become Prussianised or will she remain German? If she is Prussian, that is to say, militarist, socialism will grow and increase; if she is German, the development and expansion of her political and social organism, having free play, will come about normally and surely. Therefore, the solidity of German unity should consist in resistance to Prussianism or militarism, to William II, and to the past. On the other hand, submission of the old Confederation to Prussia must inevitably lead to disintegration.

May 29, 1893. [7]

William II has told us, on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of William I at Gorlitz, that the question which brought about the dissolution of the Reichstag, that like which confronts the impending election, is that of the Military Bill, and that this question dominates all others.

"That which the Emperor, William I, has won, I will uphold," says the present Emperor; "we must assure the future of the Fatherland. In order to attain this object, the military strength of the country must be increased and fortified, and I have asked the nation to supply the necessary means. Confronted by this grave question, on which the very existence of the country depends, all others are relegated to the background."

Should we conclude, with the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, that "that which oppresses our minds in this struggle is the reflection, that no possible benefit is to be attained through victory, nor any remedy for defeat"?

Will Germany yield, or will she resist the will of the Emperor thus clearly expressed? Herein lies a question which, in one way or another, must have the gravest consequences.

July 1, 1893. [8]

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One day, on the occasion of a first performance of a play called “Cadio,” by George Sand, I was with a woman, my best friend, in the wings of the theatre, Porte-Saint-Martin. I saw Melingue stamping on the floor with his feet and jumping and twisting about, and upon my asking him what was the meaning of these extraordinary antics, he replied; “It is because, when I come upon the scene, I am supposed to have galloped several miles on horseback and it would not do for me, therefore, to present the appearance of a gentleman who has just come out of a room or from the garden.” I do not quite know why I should have remembered this far-off incident on learning that the German Emperor, King of Prussia, had come on horseback from Potsdam to open the new Reichstag. As a comedian, William II does not follow the methods of Melingue. He rides, in order to present a calmer appearance at his entry upon the scene. Clad in the uniform of a Hussar, he read the speech from the throne with an evangelical mildness. He was playing the part of a soldier-clergyman. The soldier said—

“My august allies agree with my conviction that the Empire, in view of the development of military institutions by other Powers, can no longer delay to give to its armed forces such increase as shall guarantee the security of its future.”

The clergyman had upon his lips the honey of promises of concessions, and he concluded with these words, added to the speech from the throne—

“And now, gentlemen, may the Lord grant His blessing to every one of us, for the successful issue of a meritorious work in the interests of our country. Amen!”

In the course of the latest discussion of the military law in the Reichstag, we have been able to gather certain unforgettable information. In the first place, Von Caprivi has told us that the increase of the army is directed really and more especially against France. Herr Richter declares that Germany, single-handed, can carry through victoriously any struggle against us. Liebknecht says that Turkey can hold Russia in check together with Poland, and finally, that: “Germany counts upon England as surely as upon Austria and upon Italy.”

September 13, 1893. [9]

The Emperor, King of Prussia, has addressed to our brothers that are cut off from us, the following words—

“You are Germans, and Germans you will remain; may God and our good German sword help us to bring it to pass.”

To which words, every Frenchman has replied—

“They are French and French they shall remain, God and our good French sword helping us.”

Calmly we await the final provocation. The German manoeuvres have only served to teach us one thing more, *viz*. that William II wishes us to know that the moment is at hand for a last challenge. All the German Sovereigns who were present at the manoeuvres in Alsace-Lorraine, appeared to be weary of the supremacy which William, the hot-headed, asserts throughout all the territory of the Empire. Certain of their number stated in the presence of several people whose sympathies are with the French, that the Emperor of Germany was no more master of the proceedings than they themselves, and that they had no intention of figuring either as members of his suite or of his general staff, in accordance with the wish which he had expressed to Von Caprivi.

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(Before the Emperor of Germany, Talma had played a part in the presence of an audience of kings.)

The gift offered by the German subjects of the city of Metz, by way of thanksgiving for the extraordinary performance given by William II, proves by its very nature that not a single Frenchman had anything to do with its selection. In its form and substance, and in the taste which it displayed, it is a typically German present, this casket of green plush full of candied fruits. No doubt, the Empress will be delighted and all the little princes too.

[1] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 15, 1893, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[2] *La Nouvelle Revue*, February 15, 1893, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[3] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 15, 1893, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[4] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 1, 1893, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[5] *La Nouvelle Revue*, May 1, 1893, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[6] *Ibid.*, May 15, 1893.

[7] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 1, 1893, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[8] *La Nouvelle Revue*, July 1, 1893, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[9] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 16, 1893, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

CHAPTER IV

1894-1895

Treaty of Commerce between Germany and Russia—Opening of the Kiel Canal; why France should not have sent her ships there—Germany proclaims her readiness to give us again the lesson which she gave us in 1870.

March 29, 1894. [1]

William II is triumphant in Germany, and his officious newspapers vie with each other in proclaiming the grandeur of his ideas. Meanwhile, the people of Berlin hiss him and sing rebel songs about him on the review ground at Tempelhof.

Beyond all doubt the King of Prussia got the better of much opposition when he secured the vote for his commercial treaty with Russia. Our friends of the north cannot doubt

that they have our best wishes, that their commercial and agrarian position may be improved thereby, but the more favourable the treaty proves for them, the more we would beg them to profit by its advantages, but not to allow themselves to be entangled in its dangerous consequences. If they act thus, if Germany's sacrifices should prove of benefit only to her neighbours, if the advantages of influence and penetration aimed at by William II under cover of this treaty, should be revealed to Russian patriotism, Germany may prove to be the party deceived.

If William II is clever it is only because of our lack of cleverness and foresight. It is because we leave the door open that he is able to make his way in. Prussian policy is completely lacking in honesty. It forces an entry by all possible means, keeps listening ears at every door, and weakens its rivals by the dissensions which it creates, maintains and fosters.

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Neither French influence in Russia, nor Russian influence in France, has ever made use of such methods of procedure as Germany employs in both our countries. The unwholesome and dangerous penetration of reptile influences and of espionage, in all its multitudinous forms, produce effects on our two allied nations, whose consequences are impossible to over-estimate. Only an unceasing vigilance against every one of the foreign intruders, salaried and enlisted in our midst, can protect Russia and France against their insidious influences. Our enemies labour to weaken us with the desperation inspired in them by the dangers which they must face, if only we remain staunch, united and strong.

Is it generally known that the German subjects of the poorer class who inhabit Paris, receive an annual subsidy of 100 marks? This amounts to putting a premium on a form of emigration useful to Germany and constitutes for us a grave danger. Proof of this is to be found in the report of a recent meeting of the municipal council at Metz. Instead of sending back distressed German subjects in France to their own country, Germany sends them money. The Alsatian newspaper which affords us this information adds with perfect accuracy: "What would Germany say if French municipalities were to subsidise officially Frenchmen living in Berlin?"

April 12, 1894. [2]

I am one of those French people who have hoped, up to the very last moment, for a continuation of good commercial relations (which means good political relations) with Italy; I am one of those who first believed in the possibility of re-establishing a good understanding under both these headings; but for this very reason I retain a certain susceptibility and pride which others, less sincere in the pursuit of a definite reconciliation, certainly do not possess. Sadly I have followed the cavalcade of the Prince of Naples to Metz. I can find no joy in the words of King Humbert, which M. Gaston Calmette has reproduced so wittily and with such good nature, in the *Figaro*. From my point of view, both these actions of the King of Italy were inspired by William II; and both had the same object in view, *viz*. to prove at Metz that he could wound us cruelly through his ally, and to prove at Venice that the good-will of Humbert I was subject to his control, dictated in his own good time, and sanctioned at his pleasure. The Emperor of Germany has inaugurated in Europe the policy of right-about-face, a policy which bewilders diplomacy, astonishes the *bourgeoisie* and fills the nations with fear.

April 27, 1894. [3]

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The revelations published by Mr. Valentin, Comptroller of Stores in the Cameroons, deserve to be quoted in their entirety. In the *Neue Deutsche Rundschau* he has described the atrocities committed by governors of German colonies, or by their representatives. Wholesale butcheries, slow and horrible tortures, a new and ingenious method of scalping, the imprisonment of wives snatched from their husbands and of young girls taken from their mothers (to minister to the debaucheries of these governors and their officers) and then brought back to tell the terrible story to other unfortunate creatures destined to the same fate; the horrible brutality of sentences, by virtue of which the flesh of the victims was reduced to pulp under the eyes of the judges—the revelation of all these things leaves one's mind possessed with feelings of terror and horror, sufficient in themselves to justify any reprisals that negro races might inflict upon white people.

July 23, 1894. [4]

One of these days I shall tell how the house of Krupp (in which William II has so large a personal interest over and above his public interest) is about to create for itself a formidable position in China, which is likely to overthrow many calculations and may end in turning Asia upside down. The great commercial houses of Hamburg, encouraged and supported by the government at Berlin, are in telegraphic communication with every market in China. Germany's economic life is developing with frightful rapidity in Asia.

September 11, 1894. [5]

Amongst the list of surprises with which the Emperor of Germany is pleased to supply the makers of small-talk in Europe, one often finds, since the journey of the Empress Frederick to Paris (although that was hardly to be called a success) that he is by way of making advances to France. From time to time William II, in a carefully premeditated pose (as, for that matter, all his poses are), extends towards us, across the frontiers of Alsace-Lorraine, the hand of generous friendship. Sometimes, for an entire day he will be good enough to forget that he is heir to the victories won from us in 1870. Next day, it is true, we shall find him celebrating in splendour our defeat at Sedan; but none the less he will have satisfied his great soul by thus inviting us to forget the past. Why is it that William II wearies not in thus renewing his attempts at reconciliation with France? The reason is, that he has nothing to lose by continual failures, whilst he has everything to gain if he succeeds, even for a moment, in deceiving our vigilance, and in diverting us from those feelings which alone can honour and raise the vanquished, that is to say, fidelity to the brothers we have lost, and the proud belief that, sooner or later, we shall re-enter into possession of the conquered territory.

Last on the list of the intermittent advances which William II has made to France, there appeared lately the following in the *Allegemeine Norddeutsche Zeitung*, official organ of the German government:—

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“There is no reason for misunderstanding, or for failure to appreciate, the increasing signs which go to show that public opinion in France is favourable to reconciliation with us, and that this opinion is growing, not only amongst the higher classes in France, but amongst the people. It is beginning to be recognised that it is to the interest of both nations to shake hands, as is fitting between neighbours, no matter what may have been their *former differences*. On the part of Germans the tendency towards an *entente* has gained in strength since we have noticed the tendency of the French to judge impartially a personality like that of our Emperor, as befits a nation so cultured and richly endowed as the French.”

What say you, veteran soldiers, who fought in the Terrible Year? What say you, Parisians of the Siege, Frenchmen who have seen the Prussian conqueror dragging his guns and booty along the roads of our France? What say you, men of Alsace-Lorraine, heroes all? (No matter whether, like some, you have sacrificed situation, home and your little fatherland, so as not to forsake the greater, or, like others, you have consented to become Prussians in order that the land you worship may remain in hands that are still French.) What say you, when our dreadful defeat, our piled-up ruin, and the spoliation of a portion of France, become for a German official organ our *former differences*? What words are these in which to speak of 1870-71, of that unforgettable and tragic invasion, of the terrible anguish of our ravished provinces, and what a proof they afford of the great gulf which separates the mind of Germany from that of France!

September 26, 1894.

The German Emperor does not forget that he is before all things a Prussian. Having administered a reprimand to the nobility, he proceeds to give to the five new fortresses at Koenigsberg, the five greatest family names of the Prussian nobility.

At Thorn he declared—

“Only they can count upon my royal favour who shall regard themselves as absolutely and entirely Prussian subjects.” The Germans have not yet realised that the German Empire will be Prussian, before ever Prussia consents to lose herself in a united Germany.

October 28, 1894.

The German Emperor, King of Prussia, with that love of peace for which even Frenchmen are pleased to praise him, is now chiefly occupied in displaying his passion for militarism. In the case of William II, it will be necessary to modify a hallowed phrase, and to say to him: “Seeing you in uniform, I guessed that you were no soldier.”

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The Emperor, King of Prussia, insists on continually reminding the German peoples that he is the commander-in-chief of the armies of the Empire, and he never misses an opportunity of emphasising the fact. At the presentation of flags to the 132 new battalions created by the new military law, (and doubtless with a view to peace, as usual) the Emperor with his own hand hammered 132 nails, fixing the standards to their flag-staffs. This sort of thing fills me with admiration, and if it were not for my stupid obstinacy, it might convert me to share the opinion of M. Jules Simon, who holds that we should entertain the King of Prussia at the Exhibition in 1900, and welcome him as the great *clou*[6] on that occasion. But I should not jest about those feelings which transcend all others in the heart of the French people. Germany owes us Alsace-Lorraine; she has every interest in trying to make us forget the debt. What would one think of a creditor who allowed the debtor to persuade him that the debt no longer existed? A nation which reserves its rights against the victor, and maintains its claims to conquered territory, may be despoiled but is not vanquished. Would Italy have recovered Lombardy and Venice had she not unceasingly protested against the Austrian occupation? Excessive politeness towards those who have inflicted upon us the unforgettable outrage of defeat is not a sign of good manners, but of culpable weakness, for it inflicts suffering upon those who have to put up with the material consequences of Germany's conquest, and might end in separating them from their old and unforgotten mother country.

When William II conducted the Prince of Naples to Metz he was only acting in accordance with his usual ideas as an insolent conqueror. But if we were to receive the German Emperor at the Exhibition of 1900—if at that time he is still master of Alsace-Lorraine—we should be committing the base act of a people defeated beyond all hope of recovery.

December 12, 1894. [7]

As day by day one follows the proceedings of William II, one gradually experiences a feeling of weariness and of numbness, such as one gets from watching the spectacle of waves in motion.

Before his speech from the throne, and in order to prepare his public for a surprise, William II had directed the King of Saxony, on the occasion of a presentation of standards, to tell France to her face that she had better behave, that the Saxon heroes of 1870 had sons worthy of them, and that the glorious, triumphant march from Metz to Paris might very easily begin all over again. Whereupon, general alarm and feverish expectation of the speech of William II, which of course, turned out to be pacific. The following sentence should suffice to prove it:

"Our confidence in the maintenance of peace has again been strengthened. Faithful to the spirit of our alliances, we maintain good and friendly relations with all the powers."

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One can discern, however, a little trumpet note (of which he would not lose the habit), in the speech which he made at the opening of the new Reichstag building, whose construction was begun at the time of the Prussian victories: "May this building remind them (the deputies) that it is their duty to watch over that which their fathers have conquered." But this is a pure and simple melody compared to the war-march of the Saxons.

January 12, 1885. [8]

William II, in search of a social position, has become lecturer. At his first lecture, he announced to the whole world that our commercial marine no longer holds the second place, that this second place belongs to Germany, and it is now necessary that Germany's Navy should also take our place. And in his usual chameleon way, the German Emperor, who until quite recently refused to admit that there lay any merit whatsoever in the Bismarckian policy, now adds: "And Prince Bismarck may rejoice, for the policy which he introduced has triumphed."

March 12, 1895. [9]

On a certain day, in 1871, the defenders of Paris and its patriotic inhabitants learned from the silence of our guns, that the Prussian enemy's victory over them was complete. And now it seems we are going to Kiel, to take part in the triumphant procession of H.M. William II, King of Prussia, and to add the glory of our flag to the brilliant inauguration of his strategic waterway. Why should we go to Kiel? Who wanted our government to go there? Nobody, either in France or Russia. The great Tzars are too jealous of the integrity of their own splendid territory, to refuse to allow that a nation should remember its lost provinces. We were indignant when the Prince Royal of Italy, the ally of Germany, went to take part in the German military cavalcades, and now we ourselves, whom Prussia defeated, are going, in the train of the despoiler of Schleswig-Holstein, to assist at the opening of a canal, which penetrates and bleeds Danish provinces, annexed by the same conqueror who took from us Alsace-Lorraine. Will Denmark, whom William II has had the audacity to invite, go to Kiel? No, a thousand times no! and neither should we go there ourselves, to applaud this taking possession of Danish waters. Denmark, though invited, will not go to Kiel; yet we know what are the ties which bind her Sovereigns to Russia. It has been said, in order to reassure consciences that are easily quieted, that our war-ships will go to Kiel sheltered by those of Russia, and, so to speak, hidden beneath their shadow. Our dignity is at stake, as much in the truth as in the falsehood of this news. The French Government is not a monarchy. By declining this invitation of our conquerors, it would have placed the whole question on its proper footing, which should be that of the situation created by the Treaty of Frankfort. We should have said to Germany, France desires peace. Our Chauvinists will remain quiet, so long as the German Government gives us no provocation. If we refrain from going to Kiel, it is in order to maintain the peaceful condition of our relations. Germany's chief interest is to lead Europe to believe that we

have come to accept the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, and to make the people of those provinces believe that we have forgotten them.

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The King of Prussia, German Emperor, just to keep his hand in, stimulates the military virtues of his recruits, and for the hundredth time presides over the taking of the oath of fidelity. He teaches the recruits that the eagle is a noble bird, which soars aloft into the skies and fears no danger; also, that it is the business of the said recruits to imitate the eagle. He adds that the German navy is the only real one, that all others are spurious imitations, and he concludes by saying that "the German Navy will achieve prosperity and greatness along paths of peace, for the good of the Fatherland, as it will in war, so as to be able, if God will, to crush the enemy." William II never speaks of conquering the enemy or being superior to him; it is always "crush." It is this crushing German navy that our sailors are to go and salute at Kiel.

It looks as if our artists were lending a hand to William, and gratifying this passion of his for crushing people. An Alsatian friend of mine, who knows his Germany well, said to me the other day that, in sending their pictures for exhibition at Berlin, our painters are likely to ruin their own market. For a long time the King of Prussia has wanted to have a *salon* at Berlin, and he looks to French painters to give it brilliancy and to attract those foreign artists who are accustomed to French exhibitions. Once it has become the fashion to go to Berlin, French artists will find that they have helped to ruin their own business. How can anybody suppose that William II really wishes to do honour to French art? Do not let us forget that Frederick III said "France must have her industrial Sedan, as she has had her military Sedan."

March 28, 1895. [10]

It seems then, that Germany's proudest ambitions are about to be realised at the fetes at Kiel. That patriotic hymn of theirs, which up to the present has been a dead letter for those peoples who have not yet been incorporated in the Prussianised Empire, will now become a living thing. Henceforward all Europe must hear and accept the offensive utterance which the Germans shout: "Deutschland ueber Alles!" Yes, Germany over all things.

That her Emperor should have willed it, is enough to bring together in his triumphant procession all the following—

Russia, despoiled of her triumph at Constantinople by the Congress of Berlin, and exposed on her flank by the Baltic Canal.

England, tricked at Heligoland and at Zanzibar, and whose power is threatened by the very fleet which she is going to salute.

Spain, threatened in the Carolines, who has only been protected from Prussian presumption by her own indomitable pride.

Denmark, cynically robbed of Schleswig-Holstein.

Italy, from whom the German navy, when it has become the equal of the German army and fulfilled the dream of William II, will take Trieste. It is true that, to make up for Trieste, diplomacy at Berlin is putting Salonika in pickle with a good deal of English pepper, intending to offer it as a *hors d'oeuvre* to Austria, Germany's advanced and submissive sentinel in the East.

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France, the most deeply injured and despoiled, whom the German conquest has plundered to the utmost, she also will take part in the procession, and in order that our humiliation be the more complete, so that the French army may be unable to forgive the French navy for it, our Flag, our beloved colours, will doubtless salute one of those Prussian vessels which carry the name of one of our defeats, for instance, the *Woerth*!

After that, William II, King of Prussia, will be unable to descry a single cloud on the German horizon. And Germany, Germany will be above and over all! The glory and the splendour of the Hohenzollerns will shine upon the entire universe, and the German Emperor, Emperor of Emperors, like the King of Kings, will have nothing to fear until the Heavens fall.

And we, who have forgotten nothing of the Terrible Year and what it took from us, we, who can see under the left breast of our beloved France, her bleeding heart, ravished Alsace-Lorraine, we shall lift our eyes unto Heaven, our last hope, beseeching it to strike down the presumptuous one, since men are afraid of him.

April 10, 1895. [11]

It has always been a dream of mine to see a newspaper founded under the title *Foreign Opinion*, a sheet confined to information, in which would be presented, clearly, simply, and held together by an intelligent sequence of ideas, quotations from the principal organs of those countries in which we have interests, either identical or opposed. Statesmen and Members of Parliament would be compelled to read such a paper. A knowledge of foreign opinion would render the greatest services to public opinion in this country, for it would compel our somewhat self-centred mind to take into consideration the judgment of others, to determine the justice or the harshness of the criticism directed against us, and to draw, from the study of these things, warnings and rules of conduct.

To take an immediate instance, let me give my readers an extract from the *Muenchner Nachtrichten*, a newspaper, which as a rule does not share the brutal harshness of the Berlin Press with regard to our feelings and their expression in French newspapers—

“These foolishly vain Frenchmen, sitting in their meagre little thicket of laurels, contemplate with evident displeasure the stirring of the winds in the great forest of German oaks, and their discontent finds expression in ways that are frequently comical. The *Figaro* for example, has expressed it in an article which is particularly silly (with a kind of foolishness not often found even in a French newspaper, which is saying a good deal). It denies to Germans the right to remember the glorious years of 1870 and ’71, for the reason that French people might thereby be hurt. Does it mean to say that the French would threaten us with war if we continue to celebrate our victories over them? Well, if these gentlemen are of that opinion, we will answer them that Germany is

peacefully inclined, but that, if the French are not satisfied with the severe lesson that we gave them in 1870-71, we are quite prepared to begin it all over again."

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And these are the people, mind you, who would have said that we were trying to provoke them if, faithful to the memory of our defeat, as they are to the memory of their victory, we had abstained from going to Kiel to sing the glories of the conqueror. Like William II, their Sovereign and Lord, Germany will never admit that our actions should be a counterpart to their own, even though such actions should include recognition of their former victories. They wish to impose upon us, not only the acceptance of defeat, but a definite recognition of their conquest, a final sacrifice of our ancient rights, together with unlimited scope for their new ambitions. The German Emperor, King of Prussia, has never made two consecutive speeches in which one did not contain some threat for us, long or short-dated. If one were to add together all the words of peace which William has spoken and all his war-like utterances, the mass of the latter would irretrievably swamp all the rest.

October 28, 1895. [12]

His Majesty the German Emperor, King of Prussia, seems to be quite incapable of understanding that, in love as in hate, it is wisest not to be overfond of repeating either the word “always” or the word “never.” It is the intention of William II, that Germany should for ever and ever remain the gate of Hell for France, and he has continued to din into our ears his *lasciate speranza* every year for the last twenty-five. He never misses an opportunity of showing us France humiliated and Germany magnified and glorified. The monument at Woerth has been unveiled with such a noisy demonstration, that it has for ever banished from our minds the figure, softened by suffering, of that Emperor Frederick, who had made us forget “Unser Fritz” of blood-stained memory. William II noisily recalls to our mind the conqueror, when we wished to see in him only the martyr. This is what the German Emperor now tells the world at large: “Before the statue of this great Conqueror, let us swear to keep what he conquered, to defend this territory against all comers and to keep it German, by the aid of God and our good German sword.”

To do him justice, William II has rendered to us patriots a most conspicuous service. At a word he has set us back in the position from which the luke-warm, the dreamers, and the cowards were trying to drive us. By saying that Alsace-Lorraine is to remain Prussian for ever and for ever, he has compelled France either to accept her defeat for centuries to come, or to protest against it every hour of her national existence.

November 2, 1895.

William II suffers from a curious kind of obsession, which makes him want to astonish the world by his threats, every time that his recruits take the oath. On the present occasion he said, that the army must not only remember the Watch on the Rhine but also the Watch on the Vistula.

[1] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 1, 1894, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

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[2] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 16, 1894, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[3] *Ibid.*, May 1, 1894.

[4] *La Nouvelle Revue*, August 1, 1894, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[5] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 15, 1894, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[6] A pun on the word *clou*, a nail.

[7] *La Nouvelle Revue*, December 15, 1894, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[8] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 15, 1895, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[9] *Ibid.*, March 16, 1895.

[10] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 1, 1895, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[11] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 15, 1895, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[12] *La Nouvelle Revue*, November 1, 1895, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

CHAPTER V

1896-1897

Telegram from William II to President Krueger—The Emperor Nicholas II visits France—William II and Turkish affairs; he becomes Protector of the Sultan—Why the condolences of William II preceded those of the Tzar on the occasion of the fire at the Charity Bazaar—“Germany, the Enemy”: Skobeleff’s word remains true—We have been, and we still are, gulls—Peace signed between Turkey and Greece.

January 11, 1896. [1]

As the result of his telegram to President Krueger, William II has recovered the popularity of the early days of his reign. The German Emperor had undoubtedly very powerful reasons for making a chivalrous display on behalf of the Transvaal, from which he anticipated deriving the greatest advantages. He expected to produce a moral effect by undertaking the defence of the weaker side (a role that once belonged to France). He saw a way to flatter Holland, deeply touched by these manifestations of German sympathy for Dutchmen, who were represented by others as barbarians. He saw also an opportunity for acquiring and keeping admirable outlets into the Transvaal, which had threatened to become for ever closed to German emigrants. Finally, he expected to produce a feeling of admiration for his magnanimous attitude, which would divert the

German people from socialism and make them forget the Hammerstein affair. Truly, the Transvaal is for William II one of those lucky finds from which all sorts of good things may spring.

The educated classes in Germany, as well as the lower orders, were beginning to get very weary of the everlasting celebrations in memory of 1870-71, which continually fed the flames of French hatred. A Silesian journal had just informed us that the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles would be celebrated by a great fete in all the German schools. The German artillery of the Siege of Paris had arranged for a commemorative banquet, to be held in Berlin on January 5. The senate and the *bourgeoisie* of Hamburg had made a gift of nearly 200,000 marks on behalf of the regiment of Hanseatic infantry which fought at Loigny on December 2, and for distressed veterans of that regiment.

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Germany was in great need of something to distract her attention by a stroke of exotic brilliancy and by the creation of some new object of hatred. Enmity for ever directed against France, was beginning somewhat to pall. This continually living on the strength of one's old triumphs, made Germany to appear like some much-dyed old dandy, seeking to gain recognition for past conquests by means of art and cosmetics. The time had come to create a diversion. The German Emperor, King of Prussia, has found it with his usual headlong impetuosity, the quality which impels him always to seize things on the wing, to display alternately the capacity of a genius, and that of a stupid blunderer. . . .

March 1, 1896. [2]

German opinion persists in expressing its severe criticisms on the subject of the Transvaal business and continues to display its sympathy for the Boers. There is every reason to expect that German interests will now be able to create for themselves numerous outlets in the Transvaal.

William II has made another speech on the subject of the war of 1870; in this he is like the tide, which the waves carry away only to bring it back. Lord, Lord, deliver us from this torture! I, for one, can bear it no longer. My eyes are filled with tears of rage as I listen and listen again, for ever, unceasingly and without end, to the tale of our defeat and to the glorification of the army which conquered us, to the tale of the German Empire born of these Prussian victories. Will it ever be finished, this tale? When will they have done, once and for all, with inscribing these cruel records of theirs in the golden book of Germany, and shut the clasp upon it?

We know that William II either painted himself, or had painted, a picture, which was all the rage in Germany and which represented Europe invaded by the Chinese. It would look as if William II really believed in the danger of this impending invasion, to judge by the inscription on the engraving of this picture, reproduced by the thousand; "Nations of Europe, take care for your most sacred treasures!—WILLIAM I.R."

But if this be so, how comes it that the German Emperor is sending hundreds of military instructors to the Chinese, who are supposed to be threatening his country?

June 1, 1896. [3]

William II believes that the victories of 1870 were due to Prussia alone, and that it was she who made the Empire; and this explains why he takes such complete possession of the Empire, and makes the celebrations of these victories so personal a matter. The people of Bavaria, Wuertemberg and Saxony are herein exposed to humiliation of a kind which they decline to accept. There is no doubt that all Germans hate us with an equal hatred, and all have united with the same enthusiasm to crush our unfortunate

France; nevertheless, we may derive some profit from the antipathy inspired in them by Prussia’s grasping claims to glory and authority.

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September 1, 1896. [4]

Do you remember, my faithful friends, and you, my earliest readers, what were the sentiments of hatred, love and fidelity, that inspired the letters which I addressed to you nearly eighteen years ago—the violence of my hatred for the most tyrannical, and at the same time, the most dangerously vindictive, of European statesmen, *viz*. Von Bismarck?

Have you not often smiled, when I then denied the strength of the Colossus and asserted his fragility, when I used to say: "He must not die with a halo of glory; let him witness rather the bankruptcy of his moral estate and give proof of the pettiness of his character and evidence of his unbridled lust for power. Let the effrontery of his lies return to him in bitterness?" And together, you and I, we have now seen Prince Bismarck, not hurled down, but slowly crumbling to ruin; there has been nothing great about his fall, neither the shout that he gave, nor his way of falling, nor the words which he said when he picked himself up.

And at the same time when I showed you, in the far distant future, this idol of blood-thirstiness broken, I preached to you the love of Russia. I saw her freeing herself from German influence and drawing closer to us. Hardly had the Emperor Alexander III come to the throne, than I said to you: "He will be a popular Emperor, and the more he loves his own people the more he will love ours." For a long time you thought that my hatred of Prince Bismarck was blind, but from the outset you regarded my love of Russia as enlightened. How many strengthening and encouraging letters have I not received from you?

And now, Nicholas II, son of Alexander III, the well-beloved Emperor, who represents in his own person the highest expression of great, holy and mystical Russia, is coming to Paris officially, as the ally of France, so that all the ambitions of our patriotism, all our dreams of the last twenty-five years, are coming true together. Am I not entitled to say to you, dear readers, "I have fulfilled the mission that I set before myself, my work amongst you is accomplished"? But there remains still a tie between us, our common fidelity to Alsace! How could we forget those who have not ceased to remember? Shall it be said that we failed those who rather than yield have suffered every form of torture? Let us endeavour together to prove in a more active manner our devotion to the brethren who are separated from us. Now that Prince Bismarck has one foot in the grave, now that the Russian Alliance is in the hands of the Government of France, let us devote all our strength and all the resources of our advocacy, all our love of justice, to the cause of Alsace-Lorraine. . . .

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William II is sick, nervous and irritable. He has lost all patience with the question of the reform of military organisation; he did not raise that question, it would seem, and has plenty of other things to worry him. He is going to ask Parliament, on its re-assembling, to vote large sums for the increase of the navy, his own particular care. After all, he received the army triumphant from the hands of Moltke and of Bismarck, but the navy is his own personal achievement; he believes this, and says so repeatedly. But the German navy has no luck. This year, besides the *Iltis*, the *Frauenlob*, and the *Amazone*, which swallowed up a large number of junior officers of the Prussian navy, it has lost the *Kurfurstin* (as the result of an error of navigation) with 300 sailors, also the *Augusta*, the *Undine*, and other vessels.

February 22, 1897. [5]

William II has announced himself as the enemy of Greece, and the prop of the Ottoman Empire. At the subscription ball given at the Opera in Berlin, did he not walk arm-in-arm with Ghalik Bey, the Turkish Ambassador, and authorise him to telegraph to the Sultan that, under existing conditions, he might count upon his sense of justice and his good-will? Does not this constitute an insolent challenge to the decision which the Powers are supposed to have taken for the observation of neutrality?

When William II is insolent, he does not do things by halves; now, he repeats to all concerned: "One does not argue with Greece, one gives her orders," and on every occasion that has offered, he has displayed sentiments hostile to Greece and favourable to the Sultan. For these reasons, Abdul Hamid is devoted to William II. He is tied to him, and bound by all his sentiments, by all his admiration and his fear, to the Germans. Messrs. Cambon and de Nelidoff believed that they had detached the Sultan from Germany, but illusions on that score are no longer possible. Germany possesses his entire confidence. Did not he, the most nervous and suspicious of men, allow on one occasion the German military mission to take *effective* command of his troops, whereas no other military mission has ever been allowed anything more than the right to put them through their drill? Germany, which in case of need can count upon the Turkish army, is fundamentally interested in preventing Turkey from being either weakened or divided up. A war in the East, in which Germany might get Russia deeply involved, at the same time that she kept her busy in Asia, is too great an advantage to risk losing, without doing everything possible to protect it. . . .

April 28, 1897. [6]

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William II, the God of war and of force, is in every way responsible for events in the East. Only his friendship, and the many consequences of that friendship, have given to Abdul Hamid the courage of his massacres, of his resistance to all efforts at reconciliation, and of his military proceedings in Greece. The German Emperor had been able to persuade the simple-minded Government of France of his peaceful and humanitarian intentions. It only needed a few of us to revolt and to express our indignation, to unmask him, and to show in its true, lurid light, the real nature of his actions, so as to enable the nations to know him for what he is. To-day he is the master of Europe; but let the power of the Kaiser be what it may (and it is a power no more capable of honesty than that of Bismarck, who lied without ceasing, forfeited without ceasing his honour, and accepted responsibility for crime), whatever conquests hereafter William II may achieve, even should we be defeated again, we shall be able to stand up before him and to his face to say, “You will never achieve greatness!” Material greatness turns again to dust, like all matter, but moral greatness is eternal, an intangible thing, which surrounds men, invisible, and which emanates from the best amongst them.

We will leave to history, which shall surely record it, the judgment of *human* men, of real peace-lovers, concerning William II, concerning this protector of the Red Sultan, this renegade and denier of his faith, who has sold his soul in order to govern the world through evil, through trickery, through force and through war. You have only to read the German legends, to analyse the souls of the traditional heroes of Germany, to see that they are indeed much more closely allied to the Turks (who have only understood Islamism under its aspects of conquest) than they are to the traditions which Europe has inherited from Greece and from her daughters, Rome and Byzantium.

The struggle of to-day lies between these two spirits: one the barbarian spirit, the spirit of conquest, which knows no other law but force, the spirit which subdues and kills, represented by Turkey and by Germany; the other, the spirit of civilisation, of love, which knows no other law than the right, the spirit which emancipates and vivifies, the spirit of Greece, from which European civilisation is drawn, excepting always that of the Germans and Turks. Either the East will resist the Turks, and Europe will resist Germany, or else both will relapse into barbarism, and be condemned to war without ceasing, to butcheries, to the brutality of force and all its works.

May 27, 1897. [7]

At all events they have not yet won their bet in Berlin that they would make us look ridiculous and hateful. Those very wise and well-bred people, who have been advising us to revise our national education, so as to welcome the Kaiser in 1900, have had but meagre success. As to the golden stream, which brought us the 8000 marks of the King of Prussia,[8] thank Heaven, it has not been able to drown our patriotism. Brother Frenchmen, it is still lawful for lunatics and ill-bred people like ourselves to remember Sedan, Metz, Strasburg and Paris, as well as Kronstadt and Toulon. Then let us not

forget either the first rays of sunlight which reach us from Russia, or the darkness of 1870. [9]

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There is not a single German journalist (*and I wish to emphasise this fact most clearly*), even in the ultra-Prussian party, who would have dared to put his signature to such an article as one of our greatest newspapers has published concerning William II, whom it describes as “a humanitarian thinker, a gentle philosopher, thinking only of the happiness of the human race, of appeasing ancient hatreds and removing old grudges. How joyfully would he not have restored Metz and Strasburg had he not been prevented in performing this act by the historical necessities of his position.” In proof of all which things, this article cites his telegrams of sympathy, the splendid bouquets which he has sent to our illustrious dead, his wish to pay homage to France in 1900, *etc*., *etc*.

The journalist grown old in harness, who has dared to write such monstrous things as well as such nonsense, will no doubt be greatly astonished when I inform him that no foreign reporter, however inexperienced, of any nation great or small, is ignorant of the fact that William II is relentlessly determined to achieve the re-establishment of absolute autocracy as it was conceived by certain Emperors of Rome and Byzantium. His motto is *Voluntas Regis Supremo Lex*, which, on the occasion of his first visit to Muenich, he wrote there with his own Imperial hand. On the first occasion of the opening of the States of Brandenburg, he declared that he counted on their fidelity to help him to crush and destroy everything that might oppose his personal wishes. Is it necessary to say once more for the hundredth time that he never has the oath taken by his recruits without telling them that “they must ever be ready to fire on those who oppose his rule, even though they should be their own fathers, mothers and brothers”? The other day, did he not make his brother Prince Henry read a letter to the sailors of his war-ship the *Wilhelm Imperator* (the vessel appointed to attend the Jubilee of Queen Victoria), in which letter he held up to the execration of the army and navy those “unpatriotic” Germans who refused to provide him with millions for his wild scheme of increasing the navy, that is to say, about nine-tenths of the Reichstag? There is in Germany one institution which commands very general respect, and enjoys traditional liberty, *viz*. the University. For the last year William II has opened a campaign against the liberties of University education, and the scandalous manner in which he has attacked the professors at Berlin because of the dignity with which they have defended their rights of scientific research, are known to every one except “this brilliant Chronicler of the Boulevards.”

From one end of Germany to the other they go into ecstasies whenever, either before, during, or after his acts of politeness to France, William finds some new pretext for humiliating, humbling, or threatening us. [10]

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A German pamphlet published two years ago, entitled *Caligula; a Study of Caesarian Madness*, by Mr. Quidde, achieved such a success, that hundreds of thousands of copies were bought up in a few days by the faithful subjects of the German Emperor. This pamphlet, ingeniously compiled by means of quotations from Suetonius, Dion Cassius, Philo, *etc*., gives a marvellous analysis of the character of William II. I cannot resist the pleasure of giving a few extracts from this little work, for it would appear that William II is endeavouring, since its publication, to emphasise the resemblance between himself and Caligula and Nero.

“The dominant feature in the actions of Caligula lies in a certain nervous haste, which led him spasmodically from one obsession to another, often of a self-contradictory nature; moreover, he had the dangerous habit of wanting to do everything himself. Caligula seems to have a great fondness of the sea. The strolling-player side of his character was by no means limited to his military performances. He was passionately devoted to the theatre and the circus, and would occasionally take part himself on the stage, led thereto by his peculiar taste for striking costumes and frequent changes of clothing. He was always endeavouring to shine in the display of eloquence; and was fond of talking, often in public. We know that he developed a certain talent in this direction, and was particularly successful in the gentle art of wounding people. His favourite quotation was the celebrated verse of Homer—

There is only one Master, only one King.

Sometimes he loved the crowd, and sometimes solitude; at other times he would start out on a journey, from which he would return quite unrecognisable, having allowed his hair and beard to grow.”

Just as the names of Caligula and Nero are daily affixed in Germany to the name of William II, Herr Hinzpeter is called Senecus, General von Hahnke is known as Burrhus; there is also an Acte and a Poppea at Berlin. Frederick III is Germanicus and Prince Bismarck is called Macro, after the powerful prefect of the praetorium in disgrace. Like Nero, William II has been cruel to his mother; he is cruel to his sister, the Princess of Greece. He hates England, just as Caligula hated Brittany. With a mind like that of Nero, William II derives the greatest pleasure from the thought of degrading the French people by making them receive him with acclamation. What a triumph it must be for this grandson of William I (who defeated us but left us our honour) thus to bring us to dishonour: us, the descendants of the France of 1789, republicans in the service of a Prussian Caesar!

June 10, 1897. [11]

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It should have been to the interest of France and, of Russia, and a policy of skilful strategy, to oppose Turkey when supported by the Triple Alliance, and to create around and about her, in Greece as in the Balkans, such a force of resistance as would have put a stop to her schemes of expansion, resulting from those of the Powers of the Triple Alliance. By so doing, France and Russia might have taken them in the rear and upset their plans. We were already in a position of considerable advantage, in that we could leave to the King of Prussia, the German Emperor, all the responsibility for the crimes of the Sultan, observing at the same time all those principles which would have maintained, in their integrity, the moral and Christian traditions of France and Russia. But our policy has been that of children building castles in the sand. Confronted by a triumphant Turkey, leaning on the Triple Alliance, and by a Sultan suffering from the dementia of blood-lust, certain of the faithful friendship of William II, and confident in his victorious army (already 720,000 strong, and commanded by a German General Staff); confronted by such fears and threats, we have chosen to place all our hopes upon the balanced mind of William II, the generosity of the Sultan, and the loyalty of oriental statecraft! I have said it so repeatedly that I may have wearied my readers, but I say it again; "*To their undoing, France and Russia have sacrificed their policy to Turkey, protected by Germany*." They are now confronted by German policy, evasive and at the same time triumphant, that is to say, in full command of the situation which it has brought about. William II is at last revealed, even to the blindest eyes, as the instigator and sole director of everything that has taken place in the East since his visit to Constantinople. He takes pleasure in advising the Sultan day by day, for he makes him do everything that he himself is prevented from doing, and he enjoys the satisfaction of being a tyrant in imagination when he cannot be one actually.

June 25, 1897. [12]

The Sultan's million of armed men, organised under a German General Staff, in a country where Germany is making every effort to possess herself of every kind of influence and every source of wealth, is not this the chief danger which Russia has to fear, and whose imminence she should clearly foresee, in dealing with a Sultan like Abdul Hamid, a man of nervous fears and bloodthirsty instincts, bound to furtherance of the sudden or premeditated schemes of William II?

July 27, 1897. [13]

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Although Germany has commemorated her victories for the last twenty-five years, and will doubtless continue to commemorate them for the next six months and then for evermore, it seems that we are to be compelled, in deference to “superior orders” revealed at the Council of Ministers, to postpone the official consecration of a monument intended to prove our devotion to our mutilated country, and our incurable grief at the defeat of Sedan. It seems that we have not the right, a free people, to give to sorely oppressed Alsace-Lorraine (which never ceases to give proofs of her fidelity to France) a proof in our turn, that we remember the disaster which has separated us, that we lament this disaster, and hope one day to repair, if not to avenge it. Our pride is being systematically humiliated in every direction! The nature and consequences of victory have indeed been cruelly modified, if one must submit to the law of the conqueror after having been delivered from him for twenty-five years. The glorious resistance of the past thus becomes an ignominious surrender and makes us shed tears of shame, even more bitter than those which we shed over our saddest memories.

Gentlemen of the Government of France, I would ask you to read the German newspapers; go to Berlin, go wherever you like in Germany or in Alsace-Lorraine, and you will find there hundreds and hundreds of monuments which have been inaugurated by the Imperial German Government. For these, the smallest event, ancient or modern, affords sufficient pretext. [14]

In all things and in every direction we yield today to the authority of a monarch who emphasises our defeat more severely than those who actually conquered us. Our strict national duty towards him who did not overcome us with his own sword, was to hold ourselves firmly upright before him and to protect our brethren, victims of the war. Alas! we have been obedient to Bismarck, and we shall be submissive to William II. But why, and to what end? Had we met the liar and cheat with honesty, had we remained calm in presence of this nerve-ridden individual, we should have been able to recover, morally at first and then actually, all the advantages that Prussia gained by her victory.

The Imperial victim of restlessness, whose nerves are so unhealthily and furiously shaken when he goes abroad, has a craving for disturbing the nerves of others; this in itself makes him the most dangerous of advisers. William II never allows to himself or to others any relaxation of the brain; like all spirits in torment, he must needs find, forthwith, to the very minute, a counter-effect to every thing that confronts him. With him, even a sudden calm contains the threat of a storm, excitement lurks beneath his moods of quietness. The bastard peace which he has authorised Turkey to conclude, conceals a new revolution in Crete: such is his will. No sooner is there evidence of an improvement in our relations with Italy, than he invites King Humbert to be present at the German military manoeuvres, in order to create dissension between the two countries. And so it is in everything. He makes it his business to inspire weariness and vexation of spirit, to destroy those hopes and feelings which restore vitality to the soul of a people. He is for ever stretching out a hand that would fain control by itself the rotation of the globe, and he sets it all awry.

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The glorification of William II at Kiel is founded upon shifting sands. Schleswig remains Danish and resists the Germanising process with a force of energy at least equal to that of Alsace-Lorraine. The Danes of Schleswig are still Danes, they have not bowed the knee in admiration of German *Kultur*, any more than the Alsatians, Schleswig says: "Let them ask us by a *plebiscite* and they shall see what we want, what civilised men have the right to ask: light and air and the right to dispose of themselves." The people of Alsace-Lorraine say: "If you would know what Alsace-Lorraine, which was never consulted, thinks of the Treaty of Frankfort, ask her."

I blush, and my soul is filled with shame, when I think of the degradation of French patriotism contained in the utterances of . . . ., of those words which, to our lasting sorrow, evoked in *the Centre* of the Chamber an outburst of enthusiasm. May our patriots never forget this cowardly session of the French Parliament! Thus, then, twenty-seven years after the war, when we have spent countless millions on the remaking of our army and navy, when every Frenchman has bled himself to the bone to make France so strong and independent that she might cherish the brightest hopes, a President of the French Council has the unutterable weakness, from the tribune, to threaten France with the German cane, should she dare to follow any other policy than that desired by Berlin!

And French deputies have applauded these shameful words, that are reproduced, with such joy as may be imagined, by the whole German Press! That Press has every reason to be delighted and to find in these words clear proof that the official class in France has always looked upon the Russian Alliance as a show-piece, never relying upon it, and that since the Berlin Congress (how often have I said it!) this official class has never ceased to gravitate towards Germany.

And I, a Republican, a fanatic for the Russian Alliance, such as it might and should have been, a Frenchwoman, blind worshipper of my vanquished country—how can I hold my head up in the face of such a shameful collapse!

In placing his services at the disposal of the Grand Turk for the persecution of Christians, in supporting those in Russia whose policy it is to urge their country into war with Japan and China and to divert it from its natural sphere of action in Europe, our Minister for Foreign Affairs has ruined one of the finest political situations in which France has ever found herself. If the conduct of our foreign affairs had been entrusted to a real statesman, France might have recovered her position in Europe instead of going, with giant strides, down the path of hopeless decadence.

Are not the intentions of Germany plain enough now and sufficiently proved? They must be stupidly foolish who cannot see that a great German war is being prepared against the Slavs and Gallo-Latins, under most disastrous conditions for us and for Russia. It needs all the blindness of King Humbert, of Leopold II and of the Hungarian

Centralists, to believe that if and when it comes, a German victory would confer any benefits on anything that is not German.

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September 8, 1897. [15]

The mind of Germany is everlastingly concerned with the toasts proposed by William II. We know the toast proposed after his review of the 8th Army Corps. First of all, come his remarks on the subject of foreign policy. "It rests with us to maintain in its integrity the work accomplished by the great Emperor and to defend it against the influences and claims of foreigners." On such an occasion, after the remarks on "justice and equity," which he made on board the *Pothuau*, the hot-headed Emperor was bound to deliver himself in some such strain.

The next toast was that which he proposed at Hamburg in honour of King Humbert and Queen Marguerita. This one is emphatic and at the same time gracious, for William II cultivates every style and all the arts. On this occasion the King of Prussia, Emperor of Germany, referred as usual to the solidity of the Triple Alliance and to the mandate which it has assumed for the preservation of peace. He spoke as the grandson of William I. King Humbert replied as the grandson of Victor Emmanuel (*sic*), skilfully gliding over the question of the indissoluble nature of the Triple Alliance and reminding his hearers that Germany has no monopoly in the pursuit of peace, but that all the Governments of Europe are equally concerned in endeavouring to attain it.

A movement is taking shape in Italy, full of danger and of promise, as events will prove. The clericals and the republicans have sketched the outline of an understanding, which looks as if it might be approved by Leo XIII. The danger of this union between the parties will lead King Humbert back to a more national, a more peninsular, policy. The strong opposition that it has to face is useful, in that it will oblige the country's rulers to pay more attention to home affairs and to the nation's interests than to the glorification of the dynasty.

September 28, 1897. [16]

"Germany is the enemy," Skobeleff used to say at Paris in 1882, speaking to the younger generation of Slavs in the Balkans. These prophetic words were inspired in the hero of Plevna by Germany's intrigues at the Berlin Congress, intricate intrigues, full of menace for the future of the East. They should have haunted the spirit of every chancellery ever since, and become the formula around and about which European diplomacy should have organised its forces to resist Prussia's invading tendencies.

Until 1870 the liberal, philosophic, learned and federalist genius of Germany, was spreading all over the world through its literature, science, poetry and music, a genius whose attitude and equilibrium were the fruit of an equal fusion of the mind of North Germany with that of the South. By the victories and conquest of 1870, this genius became suddenly and entirely absorbed in Prussian militarism, and has now grown to be a force hostile to all other races. The power of the intellect in all its forms, recognises

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reciprocity and scientific research; the power of brute force only recognises the idea of predominance and the subjection of others. The genius of Prussianised Germany to-day combines the lust of conquest and power with the shopkeeping spirit, but even in this last, there is no idea of reciprocity but only of exclusive encroachment. Her international misdeeds are past all number; she saps and undermines all that has been laboriously built up by others. Germanisation carries with it the seeds of disintegration; it is a sower of hatred, proclaiming for its own exclusive benefit the equity of iniquity, the justice of injustice.

Only less extraordinary than the audacity of Prussia is Europe's failure to realise these truths. In 1870 Napoleon III was deluded, fooled and compromised, led into war by means of lies. Nameless intrigues set our generals one against the other. At a moment when victory was possible, the treachery of Bazaine made defeat inevitable for France, whom the so-called genius of Moltke and Frederick-Carl would never have vanquished. Having overthrown the Empire, the King of Prussia, who had declared that he was fighting against it alone, made war on France, well aware that sufficient vitality remained in the broken pieces to enable them to come together again, and that, under the threat of a French *revanche*, Prussia would be able to keep Germany exercised in such a state of mind as would reconcile her to remaining under the military yoke of the Hohenzollerns. And Europe, without protest, accepts this condition of things, fatal to her interests and security, created for the sole profit of the lowest of nations. By her self-effacement, indeed, she increased fivefold the influence and power of that nation.

September 31, 1897. [17]

You and I, all of us, we French people in particular, who think that we were born clever, we are all a pack of credulous fools. Let any one take the trouble to put a little consistency, a little continuity, into the business of fooling us—especially about outside matters whose origins we ignore, or people whose history we have not closely followed—and we will swallow anything!

All of us Republicans, all the Liberals of the Second Empire, Edmond Adam, our friends, our group,—great Heavens! how we swallowed German republicanism and liberalism! With what brotherly emotion did we not sympathise with the misfortunes of those who, like ourselves, were the vanquished victims of tyranny! We, Frenchmen and Germans alike, were defending the same principles, the same cause; we were fighting the same good fight for the emancipation of ideas, for the levelling of intellectual frontiers, *etc*., *etc*.

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How well I remember the friendly *abandon* of Louis Bamberger in our midst! Truly these Prussian Liberals and ourselves held the same opinions concerning everything, far or near, which bore upon intellectual independence, upon progress and civilisation. And since we were united by such a complete understanding, such identity of ideas, it was our duty to work together: our German friends for the triumph of liberalism in France, and we, for the triumph of liberalism in Germany. As to such questions as those of territorial frontiers, or the banks of the Rhine, Bamberger used to ask, "Who thinks of such things in Germany? No one! They had other things to think about!" The heart's desire of the sons of the German revolution of 1848-49 was a universal republic, universal brotherhood, and nothing else. We believed him, but for what an awakening! Hardly were the Germans in France, than all the orders dictated by Bismarck were translated into French by Louis Bamberger.

A book by Dr. Hans Blum, which has just been published in Berlin under the title of "*The German Revolution of 1848-1849*," throws even more light on the "brotherly" sentiments of German republicans. In this book Dr. Blum recalls a speech made in the Palatinate on May 27, 1832. This is what the orator said: "There can only be one opinion amongst Germans, and only one voice, to proclaim that, on our side, we would not accept liberty as the price of giving the left bank of the Rhine to France. Should France show a desire to seize even an inch of German territory, all internal dissensions would cease at once and all Germany would rise to demand the retrocession of Alsace-Lorraine, for the deliverance of our country."

That is how German Republicans thought, as far back as 1832. In 1868-69 they made us swallow once again ideas of brotherhood from beyond the Rhine, by lulling our perspicacity, by enervating the courage we used to display towards *foreigners*, and it was several weeks before we realised in 1870 that *all Germany*, from one end to the other, was of the same type of honesty, the same character as the Ems telegram.

We are nothing but fools, credulous fools, if we believe that any German can think otherwise than as a member of united, that is to say Prussianised, Germany, or if we imagine that Prussia is anything but the complete, total, unique, fully accepted, assimilated and admired expression of German patriotism. Prussia is the fine flower, the ripe fruit of German unity. A few Bavarians, a few so-called German liberals, may pretend to be restive under the despotism of the King of Prussia, but they accept unreservedly the authority of the German Emperor. And what is more, it is just as he is, that they wish their Emperor to be, thus they have imagined, thus they have made him. He is like unto them in their own image, he governs them according to their own mind. There may be some who, as a matter of personal inclination, might prefer to have more liberalism, but whenever Germanism is in question it is personified in William II, King of Prussia. Berlin is the capital of all the Germans upon earth.

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During these past few days, in the Vienna Parliament, whilst an orator on the Government side was singing the praises of the Emperor Francis Joseph, a German Austrian exclaimed—an Austrian, mark you—"*Our* Emperor is William II."

The credulous fools of the moment in France are the Socialists. Just as we believed in the liberalism of German Liberals before 1870, so French Socialists now believe in the internationalism of German Socialists. With greater sincerity than anything displayed by the old German Liberals of before 1870, the Socialists of Hamburg have taken the trouble to enlighten their French brethren with regard to their real sentiments. Herr Liebknecht himself has explained their attitude; his words may be summed up as follows: "The Socialists of France are our brothers, but if they wanted to take back Alsace-Lorraine, we should regard them as enemies."

There is nothing more remarkable than these German Socialists and their congresses, these fellows who always preach to other nations against patriotism, and never come together except to make speeches about the Fatherland. At the Hamburg Congress, Auer, the socialist deputy, looked into the future and saw "the Cossacks trampling underfoot all the liberties of Western Europe." What tyranny of barbarians could be more cruel than the tyranny of Germany which, wherever it extends, oppresses the racial instincts of mankind, ruins and absorbs a people, reducing it to servitude by the assertion of the rights of a superior race over its inferiors.

Has the Hamburg Congress disabused the minds of French Socialists on the brotherhood of their German brethren? Let us hope that it will not be necessary for them, as it was for us, to hear the thunder of German guns to understand that all parties in Germany are included in the *German party*, and that those who believe anything else are nothing but poor deluded dupes.

October 26, 1897. [18]

Those amongst us who, hour by hour, have devoted their lives to the service of our mutilated country, have for their object, each within the humble limits of his individual efforts, the glorification of France and that of Russia, the greatness of the one being dependent on the greatness of the other. This twofold devotion, and dual service keep our fears perpetually alert in two directions; how great are those two commingled sources of fear when patriotic Frenchmen, like patriotic Russians, come to consider the bewildering development of Prussian power—a veritable process of absorption.

German policy knows no laws except those of which Prussia is sole beneficiary. Only that which is profitable to Prussia is good; the rest, all the rest, is a negligible quantity. Moral precepts, religious brotherhood, higher education by force of example, a sense of justice applied to the fair apportioning of influence, vested rights, and a reasonable idea of reciprocity—all such things are moonshine

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for Prussia. The sole object that Prussian Germany pursues is brutal conquest in all its forms. By all conceivable means to get a footing for herself, here, there and everywhere; by the most energetic and methodical diplomacy possible, by military science, by trade and manufactures, by emigration and the race-spirit, and at the same time by subterranean methods of allurement and by insolent threats; these are her purposes and she accomplishes something of them every day. When one reflects what Germany's objects were, and what she has achieved in the Eastern question, to what humiliations and cross purposes she has exposed and reduced Europe, to what contempt for her own interests, what bewilderment and impotence, then, I repeat, the stoutest heart may have good cause for fear.

Turkey, galvanised by Germany, has become a force to inspire terror amongst Christians in the East and throughout the whole range of European civilisation, where it comes into contact with Mussulmans, in all parts of the world. All the slow-moving patience of Russian and French diplomacy for centuries, all the long struggles of the Crusades have been robbed of their garnered fruits in a few months. German policy has overthrown all their influence, destroyed all their approach works, released Europe's vassal from all his promises and obligations. The Sick Man, cured by a quack who holds his health in pawn, has bound himself body and soul to his healer.

Greece, frequently hesitating in her policy between British and French sympathies, has nothing to hope for in the future from Turkophil Germany. William II will make her recovery a matter of limitations and bargaining. And who knows but that the strange proceedings of Prince Constantine and of the royal princes, his brothers, may not be explained by secret promises for the future—promises made by the German Emperor in return for blind submission to his will?

William II holds Turkey in the hollow of his hand. Byzantium and Rome are vassals of a German monarch. If Rome is threatened with ruin by her alliance with the King of Prussia, Byzantium is restored by a new Caraculla. William II is, therefore, twice entitled to wear the sphere with the Imperial crown atop, as the emblem of his sovereign power and as the imitator of the Roman Emperor. And notwithstanding the Anti-Christ protection which he extends to the infidel, he can also affix the Cross to his sphere. Is he not about to take possession, in theatrical fashion, of the Holy Places?

Turkey has been restored by the Kaiser of Berlin. He is her Emperor, her Khalif, Master of the Holy Places, for the reason that his most humble servant is Emperor, Khalif and Master of the Holy Places. So long as all these titles and powers lay in weak hands, the dangers of Turkish policy, if not the anxieties it created, might be disregarded. But today the military strength of Turkey is firmly established and it is supported by another tremendous Power. Russia and France have never committed an act of graver

imprudence than to allow these two forces to unite. Germany, Germany, ever and ever greater! The German song is no longer a dead letter.

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It was by guile that simulated liberal and democratic ideas, that Bismarck prepared public opinion in the German Confederation for union with Prussia. We, too, believed in the liberalism of Germans and of Bismarck before 1870, and herein we proved ourselves to be just as easily gullible as French socialists are to-day, who believe in the genuine internationalism of German socialists.

For those whose interest lies in this direction, the Imperial Statistical Bureau of Berlin provides information of an astounding kind. Germany's exports in 1896 reached the value of 3754 millions of marks. German exports to England and her colonies amounted to 808 million marks, whilst England and her colonies supplied Germany with produce to the amount of 931 million marks. [19]

Henceforth William II knows that he has at his command the tools with which to bite into England, industrially and commercially. He has already had a large bite, and he looks forward to eating up proud Albion, slowly but surely.

November 26, 1897. [20]

We must always remember and incessantly repeat: Germany's paths throughout the whole world are widening and lengthening horribly. The latest Roman invader profits at the same time by all the headway that Carthage and Athens lose. England and France, alike responsible for their spoliation, are the more to blame in that they allow themselves to be smitten with blindness at a time when they are not yet smitten with impotence. In the East, both might have done what they liked, with the help and the interested support of Russia. But what have they done? Less than nothing, since they have worked in servile fashion—one for the greater glory of her military conqueror, the other for the glory of her commercial conqueror. The European Concert, whether it retreated or advanced, whether it took up a question or discussed it, has done all things under the exclusive direction of German interests.

With a haughty contempt and disdain for the dignity of all Europe outside the Triple Alliance, which should have been met by emphatic protests, William II has compelled Russia, England and France to give public sanction to the crimes of the hyena of Stamboul, to build up with their own hands the supremacy of Prussia in the East and that of Austria in the Balkans.

Baron Marshal von Bieberstein, Germany's new Ambassador, has been welcomed at the Court of the Grand Turk as the envoy of his chief counsellor, his only friend, as the sacrosanct representative of the Emperor-King, over-lord of the East. Thus all the delays, evasions and subterfuges of the Sultan are sanctioned by William II.

The King of Prussia, Emperor of Germany, takes pleasure in a self-contradictory policy, whereby he misleads and confuses the world. He is the same to-day as he was when, as prince heir to the throne, he declared that he "would never have any friends, only

dupes." Through him the Sultan, whom he delights to honour, becomes a conqueror, his crimes are condoned and cynically absolved before the outraged conscience of all Europe. Yes, all these things have been done by William II; Abdul Hamid looks upon the German Emperor as the main pillar of the temple of his glory!

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One cannot speak of the East without feelings of shame and heartfelt indignation. In Turkey's stolid resistance to reform, in her massacres, in the Cretan revolt, and in the war between her and Greece, William II has seen only an opportunity of gain for himself. He has cynically pursued his policy of profit-snatching. Just as certain quacks demand a higher fee when they prescribe for a patient whose life is in serious danger, so William II exacts heavier payment from his client. His demands are exorbitant: trade, finance, armaments, concessions, sale of arms, renewal of munitions of war, rebuilding of the fleet, *etc*., *etc*.

The King of Prussia continues, without ceasing and at his own sweet will, to utter defiance to common sense and to the general direction of civilised opinion. Whilst by his policy he supports the foul murderer of Christians and prepares the way for fresh butcheries on the return of the victorious Turks from Thessaly, William II has addressed these astounding words to the recruits of his Royal Guards: "He who is not a good Christian, is not a brave man, nor a worthy Prussian soldier, and can by no means fulfil the duty required of a soldier in the Prussian army."

December 10, 1897. [21]

Germanism, which up till 1870 had a certain sense of decent restraint, and took the trouble to disguise itself skilfully under Bismarck, no longer knows either limitations or scruples. It displays itself without shame, secure in the hesitancy of the Slav and the weakness of the Latin peoples. Who could fail to be roused to indignation by the display of German fanaticism which has taken place at Vienna? To think that in the capital of an ally of William II, a faction, relying on advice publicly given in Berlin should shout in the Reichsrath, overthrow a ministry, disturb the public peace in the streets, and accompany these manifestations with Prussia's national song, "Die Wacht am Rhein," and the display of the German flag! If scandalous proceedings such as these make no difference in the relations of the Triple Alliance, why wonder at the audacity and pride of the Teutons?

Everything is a matter of exclusive right for the German. There are no other rights but German rights, and when Germany claims the exercise of a right, neither numbers, nor nationalism, nor races have any existence, confronted by the individuality, the nationalism, of the German race. Mommsen, the leading historian of Prussian Germany, wrote in the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, "Pummel the heads of the Czechs with your fists," whereat all the Austrians of German race applauded, loudly declaring that if it came to a question between the Germans of Prussian Germany and Austrian subjects of Slav extraction, their sympathies would not be in doubt, for they, although Austrians, saw on the one side their brethren of a superior *Kultur*, and, on the other, barbarians only fit to remain for ever oppressed.

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On another occasion, Mommsen wrote: "We are twin brothers; we became separated from you in former days, but soon we must be united again." The linguistic map of Germany, widespread wherever German is spoken, reveals very clearly what are the ambitions of "Alt-Deutschland." The lion's maw of the "Slav-eaters" is always wide open. Sometimes the devouring beast walks delicately, at others he hurls himself savagely on his prey.

The opening of the Reichstag has provided us with a very important speech from the throne by William II, for it emphasises the lack of agreement which prevails between Sovereign, Parliament and people. The Emperor-King has announced his plan for a seven-years' period for naval service, similar to that in force in the army. The Bill will come before the Reichstag during its present session. As William has declared more than once, he intends that the naval strength of Germany shall equal that of her army. As for the German people, while ready to accept all the sacrifices required to maintain the supremacy of its military forces, it has no hankerings after naval supremacy. Its proudest hopes lie in the direction covered by the "Drang nach Osten" formula. It wants to advance upon Austria, while retaining the ground already won. Mommsen and the Duke of Baden between them sum up Germany's ambitions.

In Germany at the present moment, public opinion would appear to be satisfied with preserving the work of William I and pushing on towards the East; but how little will these things satisfy William II! It is the will of the German Emperor, King of Prussia, to be a law-giver to the East, to dispute with England the sovereignty of the seas, to take bites out of China, to display the ever-victorious flag of Germany all over the world. It is true that, to accomplish this will of his, will require an additional 500 millions, and it will require, in particular, that the Reichstag should vote them in one lump sum. William II is like his teacher Bismarck in the matter of dogged obstinacy. Like him, he will present his scheme in a hundred different guises, until its opponents become weary and give in.

Germany has just been giving the European Concert a lesson in the policy of energy. She displays as much bluntness in her sudden claims as she displayed skill in having the Concert brought to ridicule by Turkey. Haiti and China have yielded on the spot to her direct threats. If they reflect, will not the Powers of the Concert realise that Germany's every act is either a challenge or a lesson? The German expedition to Kiao-chao, 4000 strong, is so greatly in excess of the requirements of her claims to compensation for injuries suffered, that it reveals a definite intention on the part of William II to take advantage of the first plausible pretext to acquire a naval station in China.

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Peace has been signed between Turkey and Greece, but let us not regard it as a settlement of outstanding questions, for the Ambassadors were only able to come to an agreement by eliminating questions in dispute, one by one. Germany now appears to dominate the Eastern question to such a degree that, in his Speech from the Throne, William II did not even allude to it. What would have been the good? Turkey is already a province of Germany! William II and his Ambassador are the rulers there and govern the country as sovereigns. The flood-gate of German emigration, secretly unlocked, will soon be thrown wide open; 200,000 Germans will be able to make their way into the Ottoman Empire every year. Before long their numbers will tell, they will assert their rights, and the Slav provinces in the Balkans and in Austria will find themselves out off by the flood.

Is Russia beginning to realise that it would have been better for her to protect the Christians against Turkey rather than to allow them to be slaughtered—that it would have been a more humane and far-seeing policy to defend Greece and Crete instead of abandoning them to the tender mercies of Turco-German policy? It is over-late to set the clock back and to challenge the pre-eminent control which William II has established over everything in the East.

December 25, 1897. [22]

None but the author of *Tartarin* and his immortal “departures” could have described for us the setting-forth of Prince Henry of Prussia for China. The exchange of speeches between William and his brother makes one of the most extravagant performances of modern times, when read in conjunction with the actual facts, reduced by means of the telegraph to their proper proportions, which may be summed up as follows: Taking up the cause of two German missionaries who have suffered ill-treatment in China, the Emperor of Germany sends an ultimatum to the Son of Heaven, who yields on every point and carries his submission so far that he runs the risk of compromising his relations with other Powers. Consequently, there is an end of the dispute. The facts, you see, are simple. But Prince Henry has made him ready to receive his solemn investiture at the hands of his brother, the Emperor, by going to kiss Prince Bismarck on his forehead and cheek ("forehead and cheek,” as Prince Henry unctuously remarks, “so often kissed by my grandfather, William I"). Next Prince Henry goes to seek the blessing of General Waldersee; then he has himself blessed by his mother, and by his aunt, and later he will go and get blessed by his grandmother, Queen Victoria. Slowly and solemnly each act and formality is accomplished in accordance with the rites prescribed by William. The Imperial missionary, the sailor transformed into a sort of bishop, sets forth. The quest of the pirate-knight is to conquer all China, to become its emperor, to fall upon it, inspired by the God of battles. What matters it that the Chinese will not resist, that they will fall prostrate before him? The grandeur of Tartarin’s setting forth has nothing to do with his getting there.

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At Kiel all was prepared. Germany trembled with impatience and this is what she heard:—

“Imperial power means sea power: the existence of the one depends upon the other. The squadron which your ships will reinforce must act and hold itself as the symbol of Imperial and maritime power; it must live on good terms of friendship with all its comrades of the fifteen foreign fleets out yonder, so as energetically to protect the interests of the Fatherland against any one who would injure a German. Let every European over them, every German merchant, and, above all, every foreigner in the land to which we are going, or with whom we may have to do, understand that the German Michael has firmly planted on this soil his shield bearing the Imperial Eagle, so as to be able, once and for all, to give his protection to all those who may require it of him. May our fellow-countrymen out yonder be firmly convinced that, no matter what their situation, be they priests or merchants, the protection of the German Empire will be extended to them with all possible energy by means of the warships of the Imperial fleet. And should any one ever infringe our just rights strike him with your mailed fist! If God so will He shall bind about your young brow laurels of which none, throughout all Germany, shall be jealous!

“Firmly convinced that, following the example of good models (and models are not lacking to our house, Heaven be praised!), you will fulfil my wishes and my vows, I drink to your health and wish a good journey, all success, and, a safe return! Hurrah for Prince Henry!”

Prince Henry’s incredible reply was as follows—

“As children we grew up together. Later, when we grew to manhood, it was given to us to look into each other’s eyes and to remain faithfully united to each other. For your Majesty the Imperial Crown has been girt with thorns. Within my narrower sphere and with my feeble strength strengthened by my vows, I have endeavoured to help your Majesty as a soldier and a citizen. . . .

“I am very sincerely grateful to your Majesty for the trust which you place in my feeble person. And I can assure your Majesty that it is not laurels that tempt me, nor glory. One thing and one only leads me on, it is to go and proclaim in a foreign land the gospel of the sacred person of your Majesty and to preach it as well to those who will hear it as to those who will not. It is this that I intend to blazon upon my flag and wherever I may go. Our comrades share these sentiments! Eternal life to our well-beloved Emperor!”

Such gems must be left intact. One should read them again and again, line by line. Ponderous eloquence, fustian bombast, and mouldy pathos combine with the display of pomp, to excite world-wide admiration. This play of well-rehearsed parts is given before an audience of generals, high officials and politicians, and the scene is set at Kiel, that

moving pedestal which the King of Prussia inaugurated when he made all the fleets of Europe file past him.

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William II looks upon history as a vulgar photographic plate designed for the purpose of "taking" him in all his poses and in such places as he may select and appoint.

A crusade is afoot: they go, they are gone, to preach "the gospel of the sacred person of William II." A holy war is declared, to be waged against a people which declines to fight. Never mind, they will find a way to glory, be it only in the size of the slices of territory which they will seize.

The two great conceptions of our Minister of Foreign Affairs are to act as the honest broker in China between St. Petersburg and Berlin, and to put the European Concert to rights. How often have I not told him that all he has to gain by playing this game is a final surrender on the part of France? Alas! my prophecy, already fulfilled in the East, is very near to coming true in the Far East. If it should prove otherwise, it would not be to anything in our foreign policy that our good luck would be due, but to the fact that all Russia has come to realise that she is likely to be Germany's dupe in the Far East, as she has been in the East.

During the reign of the Emperor Alexander III and the Presidency of M. Carnot, the Franco-Russian Alliance possessed a definite meaning, because both these rulers understood that any pro-German tendencies in their mutual policy must have constituted an obstacle to the perfect union of the national policies of their two countries. France had ceased to indulge in secret flirtations with Germany when the latter was no longer Russia's ally. The plain and inevitable duty of our Government was to promote an antagonism of interests between Germany and Russia and to prove to the latter that France was loyally working to promote her greatness above all else, on condition that she should help us to hold our own position. If France had been governed as she should have been, had we possessed a statesman at the Quai d'Orsay, our diplomatic defeats at Canea, Athens and Constantinople, though possibly inevitable, might have found a Court of Appeal; and France would finally have been in a position of exceptional advantage in securing a judgment favourable to our alliance.

Germany's brutal seizure in China of a naval station that the Chinese Government had leased to Russia for the purposes of a winter harbour for her fleet, foreshadows the sort of thing that William II is capable of doing, under cover of an *entente*, so soon as Japan comes to evacuate Wei-hai-wei, upon China's payment of the war indemnity. Germany's scruples in dealing with "sick men," remind one of the charlatans who either kill or cure, according to their estimate of their prospects of being able to grab the inheritance.

[1] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 15, 1896, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[2] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 1, 1896, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[3] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 1, 1896, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

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[4] *Ibid.*, September 1, 1896.

[5] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 1, 1897, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[6] La Nouvelle Revue, May 1, 1897, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[7] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 1, 1897, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[8] William II had just sent 8000 marks to the fund for the victims of the fire at the Charity Bazaar.

[9] Since Parisian journalists have dared to sing their cynical praises in honour of the German Emperor, no considerations need restrain our pen in defending the Tzars from the charges that have been brought against them. These people ask: How is it that *your* Emperor of Russia has delayed so long in expressing to us his condolence? Why? Let me explain. The fire at the Charity Bazaar broke out at 4 p.m. on May 4, but the Russian Ambassador in Paris only telegraphed the news to Count Mouravieff on the evening of May 5. The Emperor can only have heard of the disaster on the 6th; it was then too late for him to telegraph a direct message, and it was therefore thought best to send instructions to the Russian Embassy. The blame in this matter falls therefore upon M. de Mohrenheim. It was due to his methods of proceeding that the Emperor learnt the news forty-eight hours late. *Le Gaulois*, in a somewhat officious explanation, informs us that the Russian Ambassador kept back his telegram because May 5 is the birthday of the Empress, and because there is a superstition in Russia that it is bad luck to get bad news on one’s birthday. This explanation is untrue; there is no such superstition. Did they conceal from Nicholas II, on the day of his coronation, the terrible catastrophe at Khadyskaje, which cost the lives of thousands of Russians; and did this disaster prevent the Tzar from attending M. de Montebello’s ball that same evening? Moreover, M. de Mohrenheim should have telegraphed on May 4 to Count Mouravieff, leaving to him the choice as to the hour for communicating the information to the Tzar. M. de Mohrenheim is in the habit of doing this sort of thing; when he chooses, his instincts are dilatory. He behaved in exactly the same way, and with the same object, on the day when M. Carnot was assassinated.

As soon as the news of that dreadful event reached the Quai d’Orsay, the *Chef du Protocole*, (then Count Bourqueney) went in all haste to the Russian Embassy, woke up the Ambassador, and informed him officially of the disaster which had just overtaken France. It was then two o’clock in the morning. Instead of telegraphing the news at once to Alexander III, M. de Mohrenheim only did so at eleven o’clock on the following day. Now, he knew perfectly well that, as the result of this delay, the Tzar could only learn the news two days later because, on the following day in the early morning, Alexander III was starting with the whole Imperial family for Borki, where he was about to open a memorial chapel on the spot where several years before

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an attempt had been made on his life. The journey takes about forty-eight hours, and as the destination of the Imperial train is always kept secret, the Tzar could not receive the telegram until after his arrival at Borki. It will be remembered that the delay which thus took place, in the communication of the Tzar's sympathy with France in her mourning, created an unfortunate impression, and enabled the German Emperor to get in ahead of him by two days. The explanation of the delay which occurred on that occasion should have been communicated to the Havas Press Agency, and the Tzar's journey mentioned. This was done by all foreign newspapers, but good care was taken that no word of the sort should be published in Paris. It is, therefore, evident that, if the Kaiser has been twice placed in the position which has enabled him to get in well ahead of Alexander III and Nicholas II, the blame must not be ascribed to any indifference, or lukewarm feelings on the part of the friends of France. The most one can reproach them with is to have retained at Paris an Ambassador about whose sentiments both Tzars were fully informed long ago.

[10] "Truly, this man must be devoted to France," M. Emile Hinzelin writes me, "he must love her dearly, since he keeps a strip of her, cut from the living flesh, which still palpitates and bleeds. Whom can he possibly hope to deceive? Muelhausen is not far from Paris, neither is Colmar, nor Strasburg, nor Metz. It is from this unhappy town of Metz, the most cruelly tortured of all, that he sends us his condolences and his bag of money. As is usual with complete hypocrites, he is by no means lacking in impudence. Never have the French people of Alsace-Lorraine been accused with more bitter determination, prosecuted, condemned and exploited by all possible means and humiliated in every way. Never has William himself displayed such unrestraint and wealth of insult in his speeches to the Army. I came across him during a journey of mine some months ago, just as he was unveiling a monument, commemorating the fatal year of 1870. With his head thrown back, his eyes rolling in frenzy and rage, shaking his fist towards France and with his voice coming in jerks, he uttered imprecations, challenges and threats in wild confusion. Next day the German Press published his speech, very carefully arranged, toned down, and even changed in certain respects; but it still retained, in spite of this diplomatic doctoring, an unmistakable accent of fierce and determined hatred. There you have him in his true light, and in his real sentiments, this man of sympathetic telegrams, of flowers, and easy tears."

[11] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 16, 1897, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[12] *La Nouvelle Revue*, July 1, 1897, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[13] *La Nouvelle Revue*, August 1, 1897, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

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[14] Amongst the latest proofs of this, here is one, I quote from a German newspaper: "In 1870, when war was declared, the *Koelnische Zeitung* offered a reward of 500 thalers for the first capture of a French gun. This prize was won by some soldiers of the first Silesian Battalion of the 5th Regiment of Chasseurs, who, in their first fight at Wissemburg, took possession of a cannon which bore the name of Le Douay, after the commander-in-chief of a French Army Corps. It occurred to these soldiers to erect a monument at the spot where this gun was captured. The monument itself, consisting of a large rock from the Vosges, was the gift of one of them, and on June 20 the presentation of the monument took place, in the presence of Chasseurs who had come from all parts of the country and of a large number of officers. Twenty-seven years ago, the Chasseurs were there, on the same spot, facing the enemy; to-day, they hail the heights of Wissemburg as part of the great German Fatherland, reconquered after a fierce and bloody struggle." It is evident that the Emperor is not the only one to celebrate these anniversaries, that new ones are always being invented, and that no humiliation will be spared us in Alsace-Lorraine.

[15] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 15, 1897, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[16] *La Nouvelle Revue*, October 1, 1897, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[17] This article appeared in the *Petit Marseillais* under the title of "The Gulls."

[18] *La Nouvelle Revue*, October 1, 1897, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[19] A friend writes to me from Germany: "You cannot conceive the effects produced upon me by the *incredible* development of industrial enterprise throughout all Germany. Factories seem to spring out of the ground; in all the large towns that one visits, smoke ascends from hundreds of chimneys. The workshops that manufacture steam-engines are so overloaded with work, that orders take more than a year to fill. I went all over the offices of the Patents Bureau in Berlin—a place as large as our Ministry of Commerce, with a library more complete than that of our poor Conservatoire of arts and trades. Alas, we are but pigmies beside these giants! Everywhere one sees evidence of order, discipline and patience, qualities in which we are somewhat lacking. But I am not down-hearted, and with the help of a few colleagues, we are going to try and propagate some of the ideas we have learned from our neighbours and which may be of benefit to our country."

[20] *La Nouvelle Revue*, December 1, 1897, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[21] *La Nouvelle Revue*, December 15, 1897, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[22] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 2, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

CHAPTER VI

1898

The encroaching expansion of Germany—When will there be a determined coalition against Germany?—The crime of Jules Ferry—William II checked in his attempt to obtain a representative of the Holy See at Constantinople—Leo XIII confirms France in her protectorate over Christians in the East—William’s journey to Palestine.

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January 9, 1898. [1]

Shall I be told that I repeat myself if, once a fortnight, I say to every good citizen, anxious about the many dangers that threaten his country, “Beware of this Germany, whose numbers and wealth and strength are ever-increasing and multiplying?”

Let each one of us do all that lies in his power not to assist in any way the industry and commerce of Germany, which devour and destroy our own. Let us enlighten those near to us who in their turn will enlighten their neighbours, and let us stimulate a movement of resistance to the invasion of German produce of every kind; let every one of us contribute his share to the strengthening of public opinion for the struggle against the spirit of Germanism, which is gradually undermining the national spirit of France. May the voter insist that his representative should not keep his eyes fixed within the narrow semi-circle of parliamentary affairs and that he should observe beyond it the continual retreat of our diplomacy before the advance of German predominance.

Even the most limited intelligence can now perceive that, even if we felt ourselves powerless to pursue our secular policy for the defence and protection of Christians in the East, nothing compelled us to witness the marriage contract between Germany and the Grand Turk, to overwhelm them both with good wishes for their perfect union, to lend them our aid in establishing their perfect understanding.

What need is there for us to seek to reconcile Germany and Russia in China? Germany could not have rendered any valuable assistance to our ally in the Middle Kingdom, for she brings to Asia nothing but her insatiable greed, and had it not been for her reconciliation with Russia, she would never have dared to gratify it. Once sure of the confidence of the young Tzar, with what haste and brutality did William II proceed to display his long teeth! So there he is, definitely in possession of Kiao-chao Bay, for only the utterly credulous will believe in any retrocession of this so-called leased territory, in recovering from Germany this admirable commercial harbour, this marvellous strategical position.

February 6, 1898. [2]

Lies, insolence, polite hypocrisy, underhand plotting, audacity, cynicism and cruelty, these are the ingredients that go to the making of Prussian statecraft.

It must be admitted that the Emperor-King of Prussia is growing. Cutting himself clear from the timid souls who are still possessed of a sense of right, he assumes the proportions of a Machiavelli and a Mephistopheles combined. William the Incalculable, as his subjects call him, develops to his own advantage the influences and the power of evil. What new distress will he bring to Christian souls, this applauder of the Armenian massacres, when, after having covered with his favour, supported by his strength, guided by his advice and encouraged by his friendship, the

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assassin who reigns at Constantinople, he makes his pilgrimage to Palestine, escorted in triumph by the same soldiers who, by order of the Red Sultan, have killed, tortured and tormented Christians? We shall see him kneeling before the tomb of Christ, surrounded by Turks with bloodstained hands, when he goes to take possession of those much-coveted Holy Places, which shall make him, the prop and stay of the exterminator of Christians, sole arbiter of Christianity in the East. Can the heavens that look down on Mount Sinai smile on William II, sheltering in the shadow of Turkish bayonets? When, at Jerusalem, he celebrates the opening of the Prussian Church (whose corner-stone was laid by Frederick III, repentant of his military glory), will not this man of insatiable pride receive some sign of warning from above? No, it sufficeth perhaps that he should go forward to meet his fate. Is it not the same for all evil-doers, no matter to what heights they may attain, who only climb that they may be hurled to lower depths?

The challenges that men fling at the ideal structure of the principles of humanity are like the stones that children throw at monuments. They accumulate and serve to consolidate that which they were meant to destroy.

No one can reproach William II with inactivity, and in this the monarch at Berlin is of one mind with Germany. He draws the nation after him; it follows blindly on dizzy paths of adventure and the pursuit of wealth.

There is this about Germany to inspire us with fear—and one wonders how it is that Russia and France have not been so terrified long ago as to make them leave no stone unturned in the Near and Far East, to exorcise the perils with which her earth-hunger threatens them—that she is just as greedy as England in the politics of business, has just the same jealous desires for financial and commercial expansion, but that, in addition, she has hankerings of another sort: for glory, for conquests, for the annexations necessary to feed and satisfy her imperious military spirit. When we consider the innumerable objects for which Germany is working in the Near and Far East, we are compelled to astonishment at the narrow limits of the field of action that she leaves for other nations.

Prior to 1870, every country in Europe possessed its own distinguishing features, its power, its ambition, or its dominating influences. England was the first, of commercial and industrial nations. Russia was the great leader of Oriental policy, the predestined heir to Asia. Austria was the supreme German power. France was a military nation and at the same time the eldest daughter of the Church; she was the undisputed protector of Catholic Missions all over the world and umpire in most of the great international quarrels. To-day, Germany is at once all that England, Russia, Austria and France were. She holds every monopoly, centralises power of every kind, and destroys all power of movement in others. When shall we have a determined coalition against

Germany? Herein lies the only hope of liberating Europe from the claws of Prussia and recovering something of the lion's share which William takes to himself.

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February 22, 1898. [3]

By what process of mental aberration has it come to pass that our Minister of Foreign Affairs has placed himself under the wing of William II at Constantinople? His one object should have been to combine every effort on the part of Russia and France to keep Germany out of the East.

There would be no parallel to such a deplorable lack of foresight, if our diplomacy had not provided it in the Far East, if it had not helped to prove to Germany, there also, that she was becoming indispensable in China, that the prestige of Russia combined with that of France was insufficient to cope with the situation and to solve the difficulties that had arisen with the Son of Heaven, with Japan and England.

The blindness which has characterised our foreign policy, which, since Jules Ferry took it in hand, has made us labour continuously with our own hands for the greatness of Germany, as if to justify our humility in her eyes, this will remain the crime of the initiator of an anti-national policy, the crime of M. Jules Ferry. It will also remain the irreparable fault committed by those who have adopted the lamentable policy which consists in following in the train of the conqueror once the ransom has been paid.

March 9, 1898. [4]

William II will have his sea-going fleet, and be able to challenge the fleets of the Great Powers and meet them on equal terms. He had meant to carry with a high hand his seven years' naval construction plan, in the same way that Bismarck obtained his seven years' military programme in spite of the opposition of the German Catholics. And now behold the German Budget Committee has sanctioned the raising of the money for his warships in six years!

As to the projected reform of the military code and the complete re-organisation of the army on a homogeneous basis, the Emperor-King of Prussia is not in the least disturbed. No doubt Bavaria, Wuertemberg and certain other Confederated States will claim to keep their autonomous armies by virtue of the Constitution of 1871, but the King of Prussia is quite determined, on his part, to administer the German army under a single military code. Bavaria, they tell us, will never yield. Bavaria will yield. The German victories of 1870-71 created the German Empire and every Empire must of necessity be centralised or else become once more a Confederation.

United Teutondom, Germany, is embodied in Prussia. The Bavarians, like all the other Saxons, sing the national hymn "Germany, Germany, ever and ever greater." What, then, is the good of all their talking at Muenich? If Germany is to grow ever greater, she cannot have several centres of influence. Therefore Bavaria will submit.

April 1, 1898. [5]

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Notwithstanding the fact that he is a Protestant, William is impressed by the greatness of the role that Leo XIII might play in Christianity; and, therefore, brings all the influences at his command to bear upon him. Through all his official and officious agents he tells him that atheistic France, in the hands of laymen, can no longer be the eldest daughter of the Church; that the Holy Father is the Head of Christianity throughout the world, and that in the East and Far East he should make use of those who are most Christian; that an Emperor who is a believer, even though he be a Protestant, is much better fitted to be the protector of Christians in China and in Turkey than a Republic without faith. The only possible influences in China and in Turkey are religious influences, but economic questions follow in their wake, and the German Emperor, King of Prussia, means to appear before the peoples of the Near and Far East, in the light of his spectacular proceedings at Kiel, of the triumphant audacity of Kiao-chao, and of the splendour with which he is going to invest his journey in Palestine, as the Controller of their destinies, the defender of their rights and the supplier of such goods as they may wish to purchase.

It is possible that William II may be able to persuade Leo XIII that he should entrust him with the Holy Places and work together with him in China. In any event, the Catholics of Germany are now a long way from the *Kulturkampf*; they will vote the naval budget by an ample majority and Germany will become the great Naval Power, and at the same time the great Military Power, so that in the end she may become the wealthiest of the Commercial Powers: this is the dream of William, King of Prussia!

June 5, 1898. [6]

William II has become attached to the East, the scene of his chief diplomatic successes, a part of the world in which his Imperial word is law. He will continue to shower his favours upon it, and disturb everything there, so as to be able to fish in troubled waters. He will ransack everything for his purposes, even that very vague thing, homogeneous Turkey, based on the Mussulman faith. At this moment, he is planning I know not what kind of acceptance of the Cross by the Crescent, just as he planned Prince Henry's Chinese crusade. If the Cuban war did not detain him in Europe, he would have gone to Palestine, with a cavalcade of some sort which would have been an event in the history of Christianity. And he will do it yet.

What does Russia, so jealous for the Holy Places, think of the intrusion into them of the German Kaiser? He is master there. Here is one of the most striking proofs of the fact: the Mussulmans have a perfect horror of bells, but the new German Church erected at Jerusalem is equipped with a fine peal of them. That which neither Christian kings, nor even Tzars, were able to obtain, William II has achieved. And such is the idea of force with which the German Emperor is associated in their minds, that even the most fanatical Mussulmans have bent the knee in submission to this sacrilege.

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July 12, 1898. [7]

The unseverable unity of Pan-Germanism is the ruling formula with the Germans of Austria. Are they not continually threatening the Hapsburgs that they will secede if the supremacy of their German minority over the Slav majority is not maintained? They do not even take the trouble to lower their voices when they cry to the neighbouring Empire: "Before very long we shall be yours."

Since the defeat of France, Germany's ambitions have grown to a height out of all proportion even to the importance of her conquest. On all sides she has cast covetous eyes, stretched out her grasping hand in all directions. For only France, while still intact, possessed the courage to protect other nations from the all-consuming German appetite.

That Germany should have captured the monstrous friendship of a French Minister for the Christian-slaying Sultan! Can any one possibly find any absolution, any excuses, for such a deplorable mismanagement of our material and moral interests in the East?

Gradually, unless something can be done to check these unfortunate tendencies of our diplomacy, William II will announce that the time has come for the apotheosis, *a la turque,* of a Protestant Emperor.

And then, all of a sudden after this gradual preparation, the Catholics and the Holy Places of the Orthodox will be delivered over to one of the only forces of Christianity, to that which gives absolution for murder and protects the slayer of Christians.

Race, nationality, politics, trade, influence and guarantees, all may be summed up in Oriental countries in a single word: Religion! Must, then, a government seek to advance the cause of its State religion, not from religious conviction, but in the spirit which seeks to retain the privileges and wealth it has acquired and its powers of self-defence?

Our new Minister of Foreign Affairs understands these things—he has pondered over them long: will he not, therefore, seek and find in the complexities of Oriental policy the factor of immediate and personal advantage which is calculated to minister to boundless self-conceit? He will endeavour quietly to untie the least compact of the knots tied at Stamboul and Berlin; he will replace them by other knots, tied more closely by himself. He will display the cleverness of those who make no effort to be clever, and he will not lack clearness of sight and precision for the simple reason that he loves his country better than himself.

July 25, 1898. [8]

The high approval bestowed by Germany upon all the subterfuges of the diplomacy of Abdul Hamid, the bankruptcy of the European Concert, the embarrassment in which each one of the Governments that compose this strange Concert finds itself when confronted with the machiavelism of the Turk, all these have produced a situation intolerable for those statesmen who have any regard for the dignity of their country.

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Our new Minister of Foreign Affairs, upon coming to the Quai d'Orsay, felt keenly the humiliation inflicted upon France by the persistent weakness of our policy. From the outset he succeeded in foiling the Sultan's dangerous scheme for securing a representative of the Holy See at Constantinople which would have abolished at one stroke the whole French protectorate over Christians in the East.

Cardinal Ledochowsky, Prefect of Propaganda, with the help of the prospective Nuncio at Constantinople, and in order to emphasise the collapse of French influence in the East, was making his plans in readiness for William II to assume, solemnly and definitely, a protectorate over the Christians. Already the Kaiser's trusty friend at the Vatican had decided to instruct the Catholic clergy in Palestine to render exceptional honours to the German Emperor on the occasion of his journey to the Holy Places. But the Council of the Congregation, in plenary session, has opposed the wishes of Cardinal Ledochowsky, and so there will be no nomination of a representative of the Holy See at the Court of the Grand Turk. The German Emperor must needs be content with the honours "usually accorded to reigning princes." This is the kind of rebuff that neither Abdul Hamid nor William II readily forgives.

One of the German Emperor's chief joys is to break things. To bewilder people by the suddenness of his resolutions, to court all risks, to proclaim his power, to sow the wind and reap the whirlwind: these are the pleasures of the German Emperor, King of Prussia. There is no need for me to repeat the strange Neronian stories that are whispered in Germany concerning certain incidents of William's sea-voyages and journeys in Norway. A number of mysterious deaths following one upon the other provide sufficient material for these tales. For those who, like myself, have never ceased to regard William II as a creature of unbridled pride, it is enough from time to time to note one of his actions, so as to form our judgment of the man and to be able to predict to what heights of complacent admiration for himself and of severity for others he is likely to attain hereafter.

August 10, 1898. [9]

Created by force, the unity of Germany is maintained by force. On the day that another force arises, Germany will collapse, for her cohesion has only been attained and cemented by cunning and contempt for the truth; she has lived by the sword and she shall perish by the sword.

It is said that Bismarck was the real obstacle to an understanding between England and Germany. It is certainly true that neither France nor Russia has anything to gain by England's throwing herself into the arms of Germany. Mr. Chamberlain is ready to do all in his power to draw England into the Triple Alliance, and William II, no longer dreading the criticisms of Varzin, would now accept with pleasure the proposals which he seemed to disdain. Nevertheless, the real rival that threatens England's future is Germany.

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The German peril, industrial and commercial, inspires England with fear, and we should know how to turn this situation to our advantage. Let us do all we can to prevent an *entente* being arranged which would deprive us of a card and add one to the enemy's hand.

A war in China between Russia and Great Britain, no matter how it might end, would fulfil Germany's dream of being delivered from Russia in the East and the Balkans. This is precisely what William II desires and seeks—herein pursuing Bismarckian tactics. France and Russia must, therefore, exercise all their skill to prevent it, and go exceeding warily amidst the intrigues that are now afoot.

What has been the result of the Note which the representatives of the Powers have handed to the Porte, on the initiative of France and Russia, stating that they will never permit the landing of new Turkish forces in Crete? Merely to prove that Austria and Germany refuse to be parties to these proceedings, and to speak plainly, support the Sultan. Ah, if Russia could only be kept busy in China! What a godsend if France could be left alone to play the part of this admirable European Concert, the genial notion of our last Minister of Foreign Affairs!

Germany alone secures her ends, profits by all the disturbances she creates, waxes and grows fat, and William II smiles at the thought of a world-wide kingdom ruled by himself alone. Once master of the whole earth, he may come to stand face to face with God.

September 11, 1898. [10]

On the occasion of a gala dinner at Hanover, William II, always in a hurry to display his likes and everlastingly parading his dislikes, did not fail to seize the opportunity of being polite to England and uncivil to France. He proposed a toast to the health of the 10th Army Corps, recalling to memory the brotherhood of arms between Englishmen and Germans at Waterloo; he glorified the victory of the Sirdar, Kitchener, in the Soudan.

A few days later, speaking of peace, the German Emperor, King of Prussia, let fly his Parthian arrow at his august brother, the Tzar. At Porta, in Westphalia, he said: "Peace can only be obtained by keeping a trained army ready for battle. May God grant that 'e may always be able to work for the maintenance of peace by the use of this good and sharp-edged weapon."

Nothing could have been more bluntly expressed; it is now perfectly clear that the reduction of armaments has no place in the dreams of William II. I know not by what subterfuge he will pretend to approve of a Congress "to prepare for universal peace," but I know that, for him, the dominating and absorbing interest of life lies in conquest, in victories, in war. Turkey victorious, America victorious, England victorious—these are the lights that lead him on. He excels at gathering in the inheritance won for him by his

own people, and he likes to have a share also in the successes of others. He has had his share in Turkey and has filed his application in America. He is already beginning with England in China and speculating with Great Britain in Delagoa Bay, under the eyes of his greatly distressed friends of the Transvaal.

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Amidst a hundred other schemes, the German Emperor, King of Prussia, is by no means neglecting his apotheosis at Jerusalem. We are told even the details of his clothes, which combine the military with the civil, “An open tunic of light cloth, brown coloured; tight trousers, boots and sword-scabbard of yellow leather, the insignia of a German General of the Guards, a helmet winged with the Prussian eagle.” A truly pious rig-out forsooth, in which to go and kneel before the tomb of Christ! They say that, in order to judge of the effect of this costume, William II has posed for his photograph forty times.

The German Church in Palestine certainly never expected to see the *summus episcopus* adopting an attitude of extreme humility in that country. If any simple-minded Lutheran were to address the Kaiser in the streets of Jerusalem, after the manner of the Hungarian workman, who saw the archbishop primate, all glittering with gold in his gala coach, passing over the Buda bridge, William II would answer him in the same style as did the archbishop: “That is just the sort of carriage in which Jesus used to drive,” exclaimed the workman. The archbishop heard him, and leaning from the carriage door, replied: “Jesus, my good fellow, was the son of a carpenter. I am the son of a magnate, and Archbishop Primate of Hungary.”

William II undoubtedly believes that he does Christ an honour in going to visit Him. He goes in the full pride of a personality which sees in itself all the great events of the past, gathered together as in an historic procession. He goes, with all the pomp and circumstance of a glorious omnipotence, he, whose diplomacy has made a protege of the Khalif and a footstool of the Crescent—he goes, I say, to manifest himself as the Emperor of Christianity.

Was all then to be lost to us at a stroke—the Crusades, all the moral and economic interests of France in the East, that secular protectorate of which we, the possessors, make so light whilst William II devotes to its conquest all the resources of his skill and cunning? Not so! Our Minister of Foreign Affairs was on the alert. William XI, who is an artistic walking advertisement, designed, like a Mucha or a Cheret, for the German market, has now had evidence of the fact that, if religion is an article of export for him, anti-clericalism is nothing of the kind for us. Our interests in the East have been protected and preserved. The Pope of Lutheranism has not been able to silence the Pope of Rome. The radical Republic which represents France remains the grand-daughter of Saint Louis. On hearing the authoritative news of William II’s journey to Jerusalem, Cardinal Langenieux, Archbishop of Rheims, begged Leo XIII for “a reassuring word.” Up to the present, the Holy See has recognised our Protectorate in the East as a simple fact; to-day it is recognised as a right. Here is the “reassuring word,” the answer given by Leo XIII to Cardinal Langenieux:—

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“We know that for centuries the French nation’s protectorate has been established in Eastern Countries and that it has been confirmed by treaties between governments. Therefore no change whatsoever should be made in this matter. This nation’s protectorate, wherever it is exercised, should be religiously maintained and missionaries must be notified accordingly, so that, if they have need of help, they may have recourse to the Consuls and other agents of the French nation.”

At their last Congress the German Catholics—we know that the Catholics constitute a third of the population of Germany and that their representatives can hold in check the Imperial policy in the Reichstag—openly expressed their sympathy for Leo XIII, for the “noble exile at Rome, who is compelled, from the day of his elevation to the Papacy, to pledge himself never to cross the threshold of the Vatican alive.” When William II is compelled hereafter to make concessions to the Centre in the Reichstag, his allies, the Italians, will be well advised to give the matter their attention.

September 26, 1898. [11]

All the actions of that modern Lohengrin, William II, derive their inspiration from a Wagnerian theory concerning the harmony of discords. This friend of the Sultan, soon to be the guest of the Khedive, congratulates Kitchener, the Sirdar, whose deeds are the blood-stained consecration of England’s machinations in Mussulman territory.

Almost at the identical moment that he sent his telegram to the Sirdar to celebrate a British victory, he said at the opening of the new harbour at Stettin: “I rejoice that the ancient spirit of Pomerania is still alive in the present generation, urging it from the land towards the sea. *Our future lies on the water*.”

Queen of the Seas, take warning!

We know how William II is wont to express his pacific ideas and what is his conception of the reduction of armaments—with blustering threats and hosannahs in praise of rifles and cannons. On the subject of peace, the German mind has long since been fixed in its ideas. One cannot sum them up better than in the following quotation from a Berlin newspaper.

“At the Paris Salon in 1895 there was a great picture by Danger entitled ‘The Great Authors of Arbitration and Peace,’ depicting all those, from Confucius and Buddha down to the Tzar Alexander III, who have laboured in the cause of peace. In a note which explained the painter’s work, it was said to be impossible to depict all the friends of arbitration and peace. It seems to me that such friends of peace as William II and Prince Bismarck should not have been forgotten, for, by the Treaty of Frankfort, they have brought about a lasting peace and have obtained the power required to maintain it.”

Between this German conception of peace and ours, is there not a gulf that nothing can ever bridge?

October 23, 1898. [12]

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William II is in the seventh heaven. One by one he dons his shining garments, which the eastern sun gladdens with silver and gold. He has made another trip on his swan, that is to say, on the white *Hohenzollern*, which carries Lohengrin to the four corners of the earth. The German Emperor's departure from Venice was a master-stroke of scenic effects, one of those subversions of history, to which the eccentric monarch of Berlin is so passionately addicted. Nothing indeed could have been more original than to make the sons of the ancient Venetians, hereditary foes of the Turk, welcome a Protestant monarch who is the friend of the chief slaughterer of Catholics.

A Christian Emperor landing at Stamboul accompanied by his Empress, obtaining permission from the Sultan to hold a review of troops on a *Selamlik* day, acclaimed by the Mussulman people and soldiery, exalted amidst all the pomp and splendour of the East, feasting his eyes on magic colours, the hero of unrivalled entertainments, surely it is enough to raise to a frenzy of pride the potentate who has made such things possible.

But amidst these pomps and vanities, William is by no means neglectful of his skilful and lucrative business schemes. It is said that he has secured a concession for a commercial harbour at Haidar Pasha, near Scutari. Haidar Pasha is the railhead of the Anatolian line, which belongs to a German company. Will the great commercial traveller, William II be able to persuade his sweet friend the Slayer, to make him a grant of the coaling station which he covets at Haifa? The Sultan will refuse him nothing. Will France and Russia have time to spare for lodging protests, their attention having been so skilfully diverted to Fashoda on the one hand and to China on the other? Is it not written that the two nations must unite forces if they would check the schemes of him who aspires to world-wide dominion over religion and commerce?

Though France and Russia have sometimes quarrelled over the question of the Holy Places, they cannot regard without anxiety the triumphant entry of the third thief upon the scene.

England, too, is busy with Fashoda and does not seem to be in such a position, diplomatically speaking, at Constantinople, as to be able to oppose the cession by Turkey to Germany of a Mediterranean harbour. Moreover, the manner in which she has grabbed Cyprus leaves her without much voice to talk of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean.

William II in Palestine! This man with his mania for glittering pomp and grandeur going to kneel at the stable in Bethlehem; the proudest and most conceited of men, the most puffed up with vainglory, treading the paths trodden by the feet of the Humblest; the most egotistical and least brotherly, coming to bow before Him who is brotherhood personified: could any spectacle be sadder for true Christians?

November 10, 1898. [13]

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The Imperial pilgrim has left the Holy City, *El Cods*, as the Turks themselves have it. Amidst the silence of its holy places his turbulent majesty manifested itself in every direction. He prayed, discoursed, telegraphed, wrote and conducted inaugural functions. He made all the Stations of the Cross and preached to the German Colony in Jerusalem, telling them that amidst such surroundings "they should be possessed of a perpetual inclination to do good." And forthwith he proceeded to speak of his great friendship for the Sultan, for the individual who methodically suppresses Christians in his empire by killing them.

William has seen the tomb of David, which infidels may not approach, and whose stones only Mussulmans may lawfully tread. The very dear friend of Abdul Hamid, he whom the Turkish troops salute with the same words as they use for the Sultan, has written to the Holy See, announcing his gift of a plot of land to the German Catholic Association in the Holy Land and adding "that he was happy to have been able to prove to Catholics that their religious interests lie very near to his heart."

Leo XIII might have replied: "Sire—Let your Majesty do even more for Catholics; persuade your friend the Sultan to cease from killing them."

November 24, 1898. [14]

William II's journey to Palestine has completely proved the thorough understanding which he has established with Abdul Hamid—that he should take possession of the Holy Places, as head of the Lutheran religion and as representative of the Catholics of his Empire. France is, therefore, no longer *de facto* protector of Christians in the East, since she is not required to protect the German Catholics, now directly protected by their Emperor. In the Far East, William II had already refused to allow France to protect his Catholic subjects. The advantages which he derived from this decision were too great for him to abandon them elsewhere, since the murder of a single missionary had brought him Kiao-ohao.

Thus, then, ended this journey, accomplished in pomp and splendour, applauded at the same time by German Christians and by the slayers of Christians. William II has attained his object in the matter of religious influence and of the emigration of German colonists, whom the Sultan will be pleased to receive with open arms. The Kaiser paid his reckoning liberally by proposing the health of the Sultan at Damascus and by declaring his intention to help and sustain the Master and the Khalif of 300 million Mussulmans. The seed of the words thus spoken will sprout and will inspire encouragement for every kind of revolt in the Mussulman subjects of France—and, for that matter, of England also.

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Whilst William II was paying his devotions at the Holy Places, giving all the impression of a pious benevolent Head of the Church, a number of horrible evictions were being carried out in Schleswig in his name and by his orders. Hundreds of families, dragged from their native soil, from their homes and kindred, were led away to the frontier on the pretext that they still clung to their belief in a "Southern Jutland." Day after day, for the last thirty-four years, on one pretext or another—and sometimes without any—the Danes have been discouraged from living in Schleswig. Either life has gradually been made impossible for them, or else they have been suddenly compelled to leave the house where they were born, where their elders hoped to die in peace, and their places have been filled by German colonists. A terrible exodus, shameful cruelty! But "Germany for the Germans" is an axiom before which all must bow, big and little, rich and poor.

December 10, 1898. [15]

Mr. Chamberlain's coquetting with Germany has ceased for the time being. *The Times*, in contrast with its former hymns of praise, now contents itself with asking William II not to make difficulties for England in Europe or beyond the seas, and it adds that a friendly attitude would serve the interests of German subjects in the Colonies much better than one of hostility.

The passage in the German Emperor's Speech from the Throne which refers to China is not calculated, it would seem, to appease Great Britain's irritation. "Germany's Colonies," said the Kaiser, "are in a state of prosperous development. At Kiao-chao steps have already been taken to improve the economic conditions of the protectorate. The frontier has been definitely settled by agreement with the Chinese Government. A free port has been opened and work upon it has begun. The construction of the railway which will link up the Protectorate with the Hinterland, will be commenced in the near future. Relying on the old treaties still in force, and on the new rights acquired under the treaty concluded with China on March 6, 1898, my Government will also endeavour in future, whilst carefully respecting the lawful rights acquired by other Powers, *to develop economic relations with China, which, year by year, will become more important, and to secure to German subjects their full share in the activities directed towards opening the Far East to Europe, from the economic point of view*."

Nor is the influence acquired by William II and his subjects in the Ottoman Empire, emphasised by this same Speech from the Throne, of a nature to reassure England with regard to her projects in the East. In the Near, as in the Far, East she sees herself being supplanted by Germany, and this by methods identical with her own, against which, therefore, she fights more disadvantageously than against France and Russia, more foolishly chivalrous.

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William II, who had replied with insolent sharpness to a legitimate claim advanced by a certain princeling of the Confederated States—the Regent of Lippe-Detmold, Count Ernest von Lippe-Biesterfeld, has had occasion to see that public opinion severely condemns his unjustifiable action. The Confederated Sovereigns and Princes perceive therein a menace to themselves, and have rallied energetically in defence of one of their number. The masses, seeing an insignificant princeling oppressed and threatened by the biggest of them, have sided with the weaker. On his return from Jerusalem, William found the situation extremely strained, and he endeavoured to relieve it by concessions of various kinds. None of them, however, were regarded as adequate. Thereupon, with the suppleness which costs him so little when it is a question of sacrificing his most devoted and valuable servant, the Emperor, King of Prussia, sacrificed Herr von Lucanus, the head of his private household, an almost legendary personage who had had a hand in every important act of William's life. It was he who carried the Imperial ultimatum to Von Bismarck and escaped unhurt from the hands of the infuriated giant.

Herr von Lucanus had not been sacrificed to the violent sarcasms of the Chancellor after his reconciliation with William II; he seemed to be unassailable until, simply for having addressed a few improper lines, at the Emperor's dictation, to a minor prince, he is removed from the anonymous post which was one of the occult powers of Potsdam. The august Confederates may consider themselves satisfied.

[1] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 15, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[2] *La Nouvelle Revue*, February 16, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[3] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 1, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[4] *La Nouvelle Revue*, March 16, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[5] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 1, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[6] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 16, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[7] *La Nouvelle Revue*, July 16, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[8] *La Nouvelle Revue*, August 1, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[9] *La Nouvelle Revue*, August 16, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[10] *La Nouvelle Revue*, September 15, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[11] *La Nouvelle Revue*, October 1, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[12] *La Nouvelle Revue*, November 1, 1898, "Letters on Foreign Policy."

[13] *La Nouvelle Revue*, November 15, 1898, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[14] *La Nouvelle Revue*, December 1, 1898, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[15] *La Nouvelle Revue*, December 15, 1898, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

CHAPTER VII

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1899

Our diplomatic situation in 1899—William II visits the *Iphigenie*—The Hague Conference —Germany the only obstacle to the fulfilment of the humanitarian plans of the Tzar.

January 11, 1899. [1]

Impelled by a simplicity of mind that suggests vacuity, a great many French patriots imagine that our country cannot be equally hated by two nations at once. Seeing England threatening France every day in every way and by all the means at her disposal, these hypnotised patriots with fixed and staring eyes, see only England and nothing else! No matter what misdeeds Germany may commit, they scarcely trouble to turn towards her their inattentive gaze. Some of them, even, whose lips are tightened with anger when they think of London, smile with a vague feeling of good-will at the thought of Berlin. And yet the other enemy, the German, emboldened by our absorption, is more ready to oppress the weak, reveals himself as bolder and greedier, more cynical and exclusive, more violent in denying to others their rights. German influence may spread all over the world, but refuses to allow any other influence whatsoever to penetrate Germany. Prussia introduced the law of force because she was strong; she is now inaugurating a new system of human rights to the exclusive advantage of Germany. One newspaper, the *Vossische Zeitung*, has dared to say: "This system is unworthy of a civilised state and must lead to our being morally humiliated before the whole world." But that is all.

When Germany perpetrates some particularly monstrous act, she is only "a civilising power spreading the greatest of all languages." Moreover, Germany is the only nation that possesses a secular history; other nations have nothing more than a succession of irregular proceedings, tolerated by German generosity or indifference.

The German Emperor, King of Prussia, wages a victorious war against everything that is not German. He has just put to the sword the French terms in the Prussian military vocabulary. In vain these poor words pleaded the authority of the great Frederick, who introduced them into Prussia. In spite of his fondness for imitating Frederick the Great, William II has slaughtered the French expressions "*officier aspirant*," "*porte epee*," "*premier lieutenant*," "*general*," *etc*., *etc*. The massacre is complete, their exclusion wholesale; he leaves no trace of the enemy's tongue. William II follows with marked satisfaction the anti-French movement of opinion in England. "England will chastise France," he said to his Officers' Club, "and then she will come and beg me to protect her." Germany hates us with all her own hatred, added to that of England. She hopes for our defeat, but if we should win, she would come hypocritically to claim from us her vulture share of the spoil for her so-called neutrality.

February 9, 1899.

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Bismarck's interest in things was never keenly aroused unless they were worth lying about. When he said "the Eastern question is not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier," he was formulating in his mind the programme of the "Drang nach Osten," the great push towards the East. The Russo-Turkish war; the humbling of the victorious Slav colossus by the Congress of Berlin; the diabolical treachery contained in the Resolutions of the said Congress (not one of which but contains the germ of some revolt or movement on the part of the races of the Turkish Empire); the separation of Bulgaria and Roumelia, united by the Treaty of San Stefano; the subsequent reunion, directed against Russia, of these two countries; the handing over of Bulgaria to a Coburg, bound by ties to Austria—all these things were brought about by the treachery and guile of the super-liar who ruled at Berlin. And since then, William II has done everything possible to advance this "Drang nach Osten," Prussia's favourite scheme.

And whilst the menace of this "push towards the East" is steadily growing, whilst he who directs it from Berlin holds in his hand all the strings of the puppets who can help to advance it or pretend (as part of the conspiracy) to oppose it, what is great Russia doing, the mighty Tzar, and France?

They tell us that Russia is abandoning her interests in the East and that the Tzar is dreaming of giving Europe a lasting peace—a peace chiefly favourable to the economic and commercial development of Germany and to the increase of her influence.

Russia and France seem scarcely to realise that the only force which can drive back the tide of Germanic invasion is the Slav power, organised and firmly established in Europe. A Balkan league including Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, a southern Slav kingdom, a Bohemia-Moravia, these might hold the German power in check and give to Europe the necessary equilibrium. France has an interest as great as Russia's in the organisation of this opposing force, but she does not realise the fact. Just as the Athenians stretched out their hands towards the power of Rome, deadly in its fascination, even so there are culpably blind patriots among us who dream the monstrous dream of an *entente* with Germanism. As well might one, to escape the flood, throw oneself into the rising ravening torrent. Before long, Germany will be the ruler of Austria, of Hungary, Turkey and Holland, and we shall have prepared no counterpoise to this encroachment, we, the Allies of the great Russian people, who, even though they may eventually succumb to the fatal attraction of Asia, might first help us to secure our racial psychology and to establish bonds between our Gallo-Latin soul and the soul of the Slavs.

The Germans are establishing themselves comfortably and permanently in China. There lies before me an extract from the first number of a newspaper published by the Germans in China under the title of *The German Asiatic Sentinel*. This official organ of the Kiao-chao territory appears every week with six pages of articles and advertisements. It is strange to find in it advertisements of the most diverse description,

from that which commends brown Kulmback beer, to that in which two young German merchants seek to correspond, with a view to marriage, with good-looking young German girls of good family.

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When one remembers the solemn investiture at Kiel of Prince Henry of Prussia, as leader of the crusade which was to spread the sacred words of Christianity amongst the barbarian followers of Confucius, and when one sees this investiture finding its expression in the initiation of the Chinese into the mysteries of Kulmback beer and the search for exportable Gretchens, the association of the two pictures reminds one somehow of tight-rope dancing. But ridicule is unknown in Germany.

It seems to me that the Kaiser's latest speech, at the banquet of the provincial Landtag of Brandenburg, is in somewhat doubtful taste. On this occasion, he spoke first of the divine right and responsabilities of the Hohenzollerns on a footing of familiarity with God, and next he compared the functions of a sovereign with those of a gardener, who stirs up the earth, smokes the roots and hunts out noxious insects. True, the German Emperor has got to cultivate the tree of 1870-71 and to destroy "hostile animals," which I take to mean our good simple-minded Frenchmen!

The campaign in favour of a *rapprochement* between France and Germany continues to be cleverly managed and directed in our midst. There is talk of a visit of the Tzar, who would come to Antibes and who would there receive William II at the same time as M. Felix Faure. The formula with which this arrangement is commended to us is "we have sulked long enough." In other words, they would convert a great, strengthening and enduring hatred into a trivial grudge. That, since Fashoda they should regard Sedan as a peccadillo is strange, to say the least of it.

The *Kolnische Zeitung*, which opened the discussion with regard to a *rapprochement* with France, now closes it by observing—

"That if ever the French should feel impelled to seek a reconciliation with Germany, it could only be sincerely effected on the condition that they abandon once and for all the idea of a reckoning to be settled between the two countries for the war of 1870-71."

When we have estimated the nature and extent of Germany's greed, calculated the number of her demands and ambitions, reflected by the light of history and German exaggerations, on the character of the German race and its unbridled lust of domination, then the National, Colonial and Continental interests of France (considered dispassionately and without hatred for the conqueror or resentment for the cruel and humiliating past) do not lie in the direction of a *rapprochement* with Germany. They lie in the establishment and combination of the Slav States in Europe, in a more effective alliance with Russia, and a *rapprochement* between the Latin nations.

March 27, 1899. [2]

By our resistance, since the national defeat of 1871, we have pledged ourselves not to accept it. Our moral position and the dignity of our claims to restitution have been worthy of our history because we inveterate Frenchmen have never ceased to maintain

that our power over Alsace-Lorraine has been overthrown by force, but that our rights remain undiminished. Austria, to Germany, and Italy, to Austria, have sacrificed this moral position and the dignity of their respective claims, in return for an alliance which, besides being treacherously false, has brought them neither wealth nor honour.

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But alas! even whilst our rights became strengthened by our very faithfulness and constancy, our rulers were yielding to the insidious counsels of the enemy. M. Ferry listened to Bismarck and slowly, drop by drop, we wasted the blood with which we should have reconquered Alsace-Lorraine. Bismarck, seeing us regaining our strength too quickly for his liking, and becoming a danger to Germany, and prevented by the Tzar from stopping our recovery by striking at us again, played his hand so as to throw us headlong into a policy of colonial adventures. But the Great Iron Chancellor, the would-be genial fellow, had not foreseen that his pupil William II would be inspired by ambitions entirely different from his own: that of a relentless colonial policy, that of commercial and industrial development, on broad lines of encroachment, and that of a navy. All these things however, followed logically, one from the other; for profitable colonisation one must have a market for one's produce, and to protect a mercantile marine one must have a navy. Therefore, under these conditions, which Bismarck did not foresee, the danger to France became an immediate and equal danger to Germany, for England would be free to sweep the seas of Germany's merchantmen as well as those of France.

Certain misguided people, moved by their extravagant feelings either of hatred towards England or of fear, seized the opportunity of the hour of danger under cover of the well-worn word (which leads so many worthy folk to lose their heads, even when it represents just the opposite of what it means) pleading our *interests*, I say, seized the opportunity to lower France by making overtures to the Kaiser and to Prussia. Our interest, our twofold interest, was not to have a war with England, and to let Germany see that it was to her interest that we should not be deprived of our maritime power which *protects* the free development of German expansion.

We possess at this moment a third of Africa, a portion of Asia and Madagascar; before trying to add to these possessions, let us endeavour to make the most of their wealth.

To sum up: our position has never been better, if we *know how to wait* and not to make ourselves cheap. As the faithful Allies of Russia, either England or Germany will have need of us.

* * * * * *

And so, the German Emperor, King of Prussia, has added another chapter, and not the least astounding, to the volume of his swift changes and contradictions. The author of the telegram to President Krueger has received at Berlin Mr. Cecil Rhodes, the instigator of Jameson, invader of the Transvaal! William II has been negotiating with him in the matter of the telegraph line and the railway. If any one had foretold, on the day that he sent his famous telegram concerning the rights of the South African Republic, that the paladin who signed this chivalrous message

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would come to discuss “business” with Sir [*sic*] Cecil Rhodes, or that the latter would have dared to present himself, in a check suit, before the Kaiser wearing his winged helmet—such a prophet would have been regarded as a dangerous lunatic. Nevertheless, so it is. Mr. Rhodes entered the Imperial Palace quite simply and naturally, conveying to the Emperor the affectionate regards of Queen Victoria. I do not know whether they shook hands. Between business men, shopkeepers ready for a deal, etiquette is superfluous and a ready understanding easy. Shake!

Herr von Buelow, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs communicated the news to the Reichstag, promising further information on the subject before long. And now, what becomes of the hope of a rupture with England, anticipated by our worthy apostles of the Franco-German Alliance against perfidious Albion? Not only does William II flirt with old England and give her pledges, but he opens his arms to the most dangerous, the most enterprising, the most compromised of Englishmen, the Napoleon of the Cape!

April 27, 1899. [3]

Were it not for Alsace-Lorraine, we should be the ally of colonial Germany. Were it not for Alsace-Lorraine, we should be the most ardent disciples of the noble, truly humane, and admirable work of disarmament undertaken by the Emperor Nicholas II. Alsace-Lorraine has made us the irreconcilable enemies of Germanism and at the same time the faithful, devoted and ever loyal friends of every Slav cause.

Familiar with the work of these causes, attached to the greatness of our allies, those of us who were the first to seek that mighty alliance, will ever labour to strengthen and extend it by all the resources which can add to its glory, but at the same time we are anxious that nothing should be said or done to diminish our own first claims to restitution. An article in the *Novae Vremya* contains a protest against the idea (disseminated by the German Press) that Russia is working to bring about a reconciliation between Germany and France. The Russian organ declares that such a *rapprochement* would deprive France of all the advantages of her alliance with Russia. The St. Petersburg newspaper adds a sentence which appeals to us, because we can adapt it to our own case. “A Franco-German *entente*,” says the *Novae Vremya*, “would erect a cross on the Franco-Russian *entente*.” A Russo-German *entente* would erect a cross on the Franco-Russian *entente*.

Needless to say, the *Kolnische Zeitung* informs us that the *Novae Vremya* only represents middle-class opinion in Russia. Well, that isn’t so bad, considering that we are sure of the antipathy of the whole Russian people for the Germans. The *Kleine Zeitung*, already reckoning on the conclusion of the *rapprochement* between Germany and France, adds that it will be received with sympathy throughout the whole German Empire. I believe you, *O Kleine Zeitung*! And the more so when, with a mixture of

haughtiness and careless indifference, you add “with the exception of the question of Alsace-Lorraine, *which for us does not exist*, there is no difference which should separate Germany from France!”

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O most generous *Kleine Zeitung*! it is sweet to differ. On condition that we do not ask you to give us back the flesh that you have torn from our side, you are willing to extend to us your mild greetings of disinterested friendship, and I have no doubt that you are ready to forgive us the crime you have committed against us!

May 23, 1899. [4]

Amongst the most definite impressions produced by the general proceedings of the Peace Conference there are two which stand out: one, that the diplomats invariably assert that it will not lead to any practical result, either as regards disarmament or the creation of an arbitration tribunal; the other, that all patriots who are enemies of Germany are filled with anguish at the sight of Germany endeavouring to direct its discussions. In its practical results, the Conference will not go further than the splendidly magnanimous proposal of Nicholas II, having for its object the humanising of war, the development of arbitration as a remedial measure, and the possibility of conditional and partial disarmament. All that will be accomplished might have been attained by the Tzar alone in case of war, in the event of proposals for arbitration, or by way of leading the Powers to recognise the economic dangers to which they expose their peoples by ever-increasing armaments.

June 27, 1899. [5]

We know what a struggle William II had to face on the subject of the canal from the Elbe to the Rhine, and what concessions he was compelled to make to the Prussian Chamber. Moreover he had a stiff fight in the Parliament of the Empire with regard to the new relations with [Transcriber's note: which?] he proposes to establish between Germany and England and her colonies. The agrarians of the Right and the Socialists found themselves united in violent opposition. Herr von Buelow required genuine skill to avert the storm.

The Kaiser met with a very decided rebuff in the matter of what is called in Germany the "convicts' law." It will be remembered that last autumn, in Westphalia, the Emperor had threatened the socialists that those who incited to strikes would be condemned to hard labour. Such a threat is easily uttered, but difficult to enforce by process of law. Under the conditions existing nowadays it does not do to speak of forced labour in connection with trades unions and strikes; nevertheless, in order to make good the word of the German Emperor, his Ministers tried to snatch a vote for a fight with the workers. Baron Stumm, a factory king possessed of great influence with the Kaiser, had inspired him with hatred against industrial workers, just as others had inspired him with love for them at the beginning of his reign. With all his swagger and bluster, William II is more a creature of impulse than of constancy. All parties united to oppose his scheme, except those who are known in every Parliament as Mamelukes. The former "Father" of the working classes, suddenly become their enemy, has experienced a personal defeat in

this matter which is all the greater for the fact that the Socialists, while they rejoice at seeing it inflicted upon him by the Reichstag, will not forgive him for his “convicts’ law.”

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July 8, 1899. [6]

The wretched policy, which sent French ships to Kiel to salute the flag of the King of Prussia, continues to be honoured—no, dishonoured—by the Government of the Republic of to-day. For this Government, the least of William's wishes is an order.

So the Emperor William II has set foot upon the soil of France by paying a visit aboard of the *Iphigenie* (for every one of our ships is a bit of the mother-country). The Waldeck-Rousseau Cabinet, the ideal of M. Urbain Gohier, has allowed this monstrous thing to be done almost immediately after William II had laid the first stone of his fortresses on the Moselle, fortresses intended (to use his own aggressive words) to hold *the enemy* under Germany's guns. So we are the enemy for Germany and yet, oh shame! even while she slashes us with this word, we seek to show her that she is our friend.

* * * * * *

It certainly looks as if the present Prussian Ministry has neither the prestige nor the strength of will to control successfully the conduct of the ex-Mamelukes. Its failure at the last session of Parliament was complete. It is amongst the strongest supporters of the monarchy that the most determined opposition was offered to the proposed law for the construction of the canal from the Elbe to the Rhine, an enterprise dear to the heart of the Emperor, once the father of his working men and now the father of German manufacturers.

Where the political impediments block his path William II cuts and hacks away as it may please him. There is proof of this in the feverish haste with which he is lowering the age of officers in the army. On the 10th of June, six Prussian generals were allowed to retire; on the 15th, ten more were placed on the unattached list, and a further movement in the same direction is expected to take place after the great Imperial manoeuvres.

July 25, 1899. [7]

THE HAGUE CONFERENCE

I desire to convince my readers by indisputable facts—

(1) That the pacifist agitation in Europe, in all its various forms, is inspired and sustained by the most uncompromising military Power on this Continent, that is to say, by Germany;

(2) That if the magnanimous humanitarian idea, so sincerely conceived by Nicholas II, has not been fulfilled, its failure is entirely due to the treachery of Germany.

For that matter, Germany has been providentially punished for her machiavellian ways. Firstly, because she has been unable to conceal the fact that she is primarily responsible for this failure; and secondly (the fact is important in other ways and has proved in a most striking manner), because the Hague Conference has clearly demonstrated, that which the initiated have long suspected, that Germany is completely isolated in Europe!

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As a matter of fact neither Austria nor Italy were with her, only one Power voted solidly with Germany—the Power which is not content with war and supplements it by massacres—the Turkey of Abdul Hamid. This isolation (an indirect result of the Franco-Russian alliance, which has compelled Austria to come to a complete understanding with Russia in regard to affairs in the Balkans, and led Italy to draw closer to France), this isolation is a great and inestimable victory, whose benefit must be frankly recognised by every honest mind in the two allied countries, a victory for those who, like myself, have worked heart and soul for the Franco-Russian alliance.

And it is now, now that these things are clearly proved, now, when Germany finds but one servile nation in Europe—Turkey—that the French Government thinks fit to seek to draw closer to Germany! The thing is unthinkable, unbelievable!

For years, acting upon an evil policy which I propose to elucidate hereafter, the Government of the Republic first set itself to oppose the alliance with Russia, preferring an alliance with Germany; later, this Government saw in the Russian alliance nothing but a means to gain public applause, to acquire popularity. Now that the strength and worth of this alliance have been revealed in all their truth by the isolation of Germany, this same Government of the Republic compels our sailors to suffer the courtesy of William II and prepares us, by diplomatic communiques, for an entente with Germany.

Only super-simpletons can believe in William II's sham bluster against England on behalf of the Transvaal and of that Africa concerning which he has just concluded a binding treaty with Albion. One must either be hopelessly ignorant or wilfully blind not to see through the game of William II and to be fooled by his ingratiating ways.

His only object is to compel England to throw herself into his arms and to bring about a great common alliance of the Anglo-Saxon races. Will not the cynical supporters of the "policy of interest" experience a revulsion of conscience if they know whither they are leading us, or a sudden enlightenment, if they do not know? If not, then to those who, through cowardice or treachery, have lightly ruined the noblest of all causes, I shall say, "I wash my hands" of this crime of ignorance or base surrender. Weary, sick at heart and indignant I shall say it, in my own name and in the name of those who have died, suddenly or mysteriously, for the Franco-Russian cause.

Any one who followed carefully the successive events of the performance given under the direction of M. de Staal, any one familiar with the secret manoeuvres that led to the convening of the Peace Conference, could have had no difficulty in predicting what its end would be. From some of these secret manoeuvres in the wings, I propose to lift the veil; my readers will then be in a position to understand more clearly why it is that the truly Christian act of the Tzar (apart from certain unimportant improvements of the Brussels Convention) did not attain the result which might have been expected from the initiative of a powerful and generous sovereign.

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For the past year we have repeatedly been told, in more or less sensational revelations, that the influence which chiefly determined Nicholas II in his action, was his reading of a famous book on war by M. de Bloch. This is no doubt true and the fact may be admitted. Much moved by the eloquent description, given by the great financial writer of Warsaw, of the heavy burdens imposed on the nations by the extravagant armaments of the Continent, and terrified at the thought of the calamities which the next war would let loose upon all Europe, Nicholas II, full of Christian pity for the sufferings of humanity, directed Count Mouravieff to send the famous circular to the Powers, which resulted in the convening of the Hague Conference.

But I would ask, how are we to reconcile the hostile attitude of William II's delegates to the Russian proposals with his solemn declaration that he was absolutely in agreement with his friend Nicholas II? Why did the German Emperor first give his approval to De Bloch's campaign in favour of disarmament and then make Von Schwartzkopf publicly repudiate the most important arguments of that writer's book? Was it that William II was in the first instance seduced by the lamentable picture which De Bloch gives of France and the organisation of her army, or (and this seems far more likely) did he simply approve of the intrigue set on foot by the author of this work on war, an intrigue which aimed at casting a shadow over the patriotic hopes that France placed on the Russian alliance, by inciting Nicholas II to call for a general disarmament?

It must be confessed that the Franco-Russian alliance struck a bitter blow at the hopes of Polish patriots. The contempt and hostility towards France which inspire M. de Bloch's book are proof sufficient of the grudge its author bears us. It is perfectly evident that they must have been delighted in Berlin at the chief object of his work. But there were other objects in view.

For years William II has unceasingly laboured to persuade England that she has every interest to join the Triple Alliance. His perseverance in this direction is quite natural. But if Germany succeeded last year in concluding an agreement with England on a few special questions, the Hague Conference has proved that it does not involve an agreement in matters of general policy.

Nevertheless, William II counted on this Congress to produce closer relations with Great Britain. He hoped that the Congress would result in sharp antagonism between England and Russia and he reckoned on this antagonism to help him to inflict a severe defeat on Russia, which in its turn would have enabled him to draw one or other of these two Powers into the orbit of his policy. Great then was the disappointment of the German Emperor *when, from the very outset of the Conference, England, performing a most unexpected volte-face, made proposals on the subject of arbitration, which went a great deal farther than the Russian proposals laid before, the Congress. This master-stroke of British diplomacy compelled Germany to come out into the open and to reveal herself in her true light: that is to say, as the only obstacle to the fulfilment of the Tzar's humanitarian designs*.

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The Stengels, Zorns and Schwartzkopfs completed the success of British diplomacy by the brutal violence of their opposition and the cynicism of their proposals. It was not only on the two committees that dealt with arbitration and disarmament that German opposition (always supported by Turkey alone) wrecked the magnanimous attempt of Nicholas II to minimise the horrors of war. The committee presided over by M. de Martens succeeded in effecting certain improvements in the terms of the Brussels Convention; if the labours of its President and members were not successful in doing more to lessen the evils of war upon land, the fact is again due to the opposition of the German representatives. Thus, for instance, the humane measures proposed in forbidding the bombardment of open towns and private dwellings unoccupied by troops, or the destruction of unfortified villages, were not adopted because the German delegate insisted on the impossibility of limiting the powers of a commander-in-chief, who must remain the sole judge of the utility of such destruction in the general interest of military operations. It was the same in the case of the article whereby it was proposed that provinces occupied by enemy forces should be guaranteed in the maintenance of their autonomous administration and in certain rights against the demands of invasions, Germany declared her unwillingness to fetter in any way the decision of her army commanders.

I would ask those amongst us who rejoice at the idea of seeing William II take part in the Exhibition of 1900, to let their thoughts dwell a little on the attitude of the Prussian delegates at the Peace Conference. William I took part in the Exhibition of 1867 and we know what that visit cost France three years later.

Now that all the perfidious plans inspired by Berlin have come to nought, now that the defenders of German policy at St. Petersburg, Warsaw and elsewhere have come to grief, and that the Peace Congress—even though it may not have fulfilled the generous hopes of Nicholas II—has nevertheless led to a great advance in the opinion of the public as in that of governments, on the subjects of arbitration and disarmament, William II shifts his rifle on to the other shoulder. In order to clear Germany of the blame for the failure of the Conference in the eyes of the Tzar, the same individuals who constituted themselves the protectors and sponsors of M. de Bloch at the Russian Court and who had assured the Tzar of the absolute support of William II, have now started a campaign of intrigue against Count Mouravieff.

That faithful minister and servant of the Tzar, who undertook with great skill to carry out the initiative of his sovereign, and who has devoted himself whole-heartedly to the task of winning over to the Tzar’s ideas not only the sympathy of the entire civilised world, but even the vast majority of the sceptical diplomats, who are leaving the Conference with the conviction that they have done useful work—well, it is this same Count Mouravieff that the German Press is now trying to hold responsible for the misdeeds of the Stengels, the Zorns and the Schwartzkopfs.

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By way of a first attempt at abolishing the horrors of war by means of international agreements, the Hague Conference has given very satisfactory results, and the honour for these is due to M. de Staal, Count Mouravieff and M. de Martens. The Tzar has reason to be equally satisfied in that he has compelled his very good friend William II to throw off his mask and to reveal all his hostility towards Russia.

It is now for those who had pledged themselves to guarantee the unconditional support of Germany for the Tzar, to bear the load of responsibility which is properly theirs for having unworthily deceived their Sovereign. Many other hopes, bearing on internal affairs in Russia, had been created by the authors of the intrigue which I have endeavoured to expose. We know how deeply rooted is the religious and pacific character of the Russian masses. No initiative could stir their hearts so profoundly as that which seeks to lessen the horrors of war and to relieve the people of the crushing burden of armaments. One has only to remember the sects which exist in Russia which are opposed to military service and duties. Such an initiative coming from their adored Tzar was bound to produce far-reaching results.

After our experiences of 1868 and 1869—and even 1870—how can we be guilty of running the same risks again? Was not William I, King of Prussia, amiable enough? Did he not do everything to lull the suspicions of Napoleon whilst he himself was arming to the teeth? We all allowed ourselves to be sufficiently fooled by Bismarck's agents and spies in 1870 to be able to recognise the secret agents of William II to-day.

It is not only a shameful thing, that the *Iphigenie* should have hoisted at her mainmasthead the Imperial flag, bearing the insulting device of 1870, it is also an encouragement to William II in the treachery which he is plotting against us. One's heart is heavy with the grief of hopelessness when one thinks of our easy-going short memories, and the suffering courage of the people of Alsace-Lorraine. During the past few days, whilst our Parisian newspapers have been discussing the probability of the obnoxious presence of the Kaiser in Paris for the Exhibition, the *Strasburger Post* has been heaping bitter reproaches on the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine for their lack of enthusiasm and meagre contributions towards the proposed statue in honour of the late Emperor William. In spite of all the pressure applied, the subscriptions have hardly produced a few hundred marks. The German Press describes the Alsatians as ungrateful and short-sighted.

August 9, 1899. [8]

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The mania for autocracy dominates the mind of the German Emperor, King of Prussia, and leaves no room therein for anything but exactions of a disturbing kind. We know how numerous are the crimes of *lese-majeste*; also that William II wishes the Reichstag to pass a law punishing with hard labour those who incite strikes. A lecturer at the University of Berlin, M. Arons, having dared to proclaim himself a socialist—needless to say, from the theoretical point of view—the Emperor required his Minister of Public Education to have M. Arons brought for trial before the Council of the University, consisting of forty-five professors. These acquitted the accused, who, in their opinion, had not indulged in any propaganda and was within his strict rights in expressing his personal opinions. The Emperor had their judgment heard on appeal before a court consisting of officials of the Public Education Department. To make such an appeal possible, the Reichstag was required to pass a new law in June 1898, known as the Arons Law.

Whenever the occasion offered, I have shown how deep is the hatred which William II bears towards the old liberalism of the German Universities. Yet it is for this same William that certain Germanophils amongst our French Universities entertain such a disgraceful weakness. Whilst French newspapers are continually discussing, with evident sympathy, the possibility of the Kaiser's paying a visit to France during the Exhibition, it brings the tears to our eyes to read the following in the *Journal de Colmar*: —

"The possibility of a *rapprochement* between Frenchmen and Germans should not lead the latter to suppose that the Alsatians are likely to forget their country in order to be reconciled with the conquerors. The Alsatian will never give up his own individual character, he will never lightly consent to be merged in a homogeneous whole. The Alsatian remains French, and such is the rigour of his nationality that it has resisted every attempt to destroy it."

In order to make us believe the more easily that a reconciliation with Germany is possible, and that we may come to forget 1870 and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, they are continually telling us that Germany has never been on better terms with Russia. I showed in my last letter what were the steps taken by the Germans to minimise the great, imperishable, humanitarian success of Tzar Nicholas II in bringing about the Hague Conference. I showed that his efforts resulted in leading all the diplomats accredited to the Peace Congress to recognise that the foundation had been laid, not only of the possibility of eliminating needless horrors from the wars of the future, but also of action by the Powers in common, to be brought to bear, in the form of advice and arbitration proposals, on the minds of rivals, adversaries and enemies preparing to settle their quarrels by the arbitrament of war.

Germany realises the defeat at the Hague so completely that now she thinks only of new armaments and of arming Turkey, her only ally, to the teeth. Herein she finds numerous advantages; such as supplying rifles and guns, sending out new military

instructors, and threatening Russia with a formidable army commanded by German generals.

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Germany knows every inch of Russia, by land and by water, and has calculated her resources to a nicety. German spies are legion in Russia as they are in France. She may hope to make easy-going people like us believe that she is on the best of terms with our ally, but she will find it far more difficult to make Russia herself believe it. One has only to study the Russian Press to be convinced of this, and particularly a long article in the *Novae Vremya*, which proves that, as a matter of policy and of material facts, it is absolutely impossible for Russia and France to admit Germany into their Alliance without risking the destruction of that Alliance, inasmuch as its fundamental objects are diametrically opposed to those of Germany.

[1] *La Nouvelle Revue*, January 15, 1899, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[2] *La Nouvelle Revue*, April 1, 1899, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[3] *La Nouvelle Revue*, May 1, 1899, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[4] *La Nouvelle Revue*, June 1, 1899, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[5] *Ibid.*, July 1, 1899.

[6] *La Nouvelle Revue*, July 16, 1899, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[7] *La Nouvelle Revue*, August 1, 1899, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”

[8] *La Nouvelle Revue*, Aug. 15, 1899, “Letters on Foreign Policy.”