

GERMAN EMPIRE SHAKEN BY QUARRELS WITHIN

Accusation Made Against the Kaiser by Southern Rulers,
Who in Turn Are Accused of Seeking Prussia's Downfall.

"Our beloved Prussia is threatened by a mortal danger which comes far more from the interior of the German Empire than from beyond its borders. The enemies of Prussia within the German Empire are encompassing her downfall."

Thus speaks the Berlin Tageblatt, the leading daily newspaper of the Kaiser's capital, and these views are being re-echoed by all the principal organs of the press throughout the length and breadth of the Kingdom of Prussia. The Berlin Tageblatt and its contemporaries do not leave us in any doubt as to who these mortal enemies of Prussia really are. The foes are not, as might have been supposed, the Socialists, but the non-Prussian sovereign States of the Empire, and in particular the Kingdom of Bavaria, of Saxony and of Württemberg.

Thus at the moment when the Powers of the Entente are virtually knocking at the gates of the empire and have expressed their firm intention of dictating a victorious peace at Berlin the German people are engaged in fighting among themselves to such a degree that the various states of the confederation express far more antipathy against one another than against the French, the British, the Americans or the Belgians.

Each of the Powers of the Entente has proclaimed in turn that its principal object in the present war is to destroy the military terrorism and political supremacy of Prussia, whose domination has until now extended not only over all Germany, but over Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey as well.

It would seem that the non-Prussian States of Germany are determined to spare them the trouble. Certain it is that if Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg and the minor monarchies of Germany achieve their end it will go a long way toward simplifying matters and toward the promotion of a lasting and satisfactory peace.

In the early part of the week which has just come to a close a Council of the Crown was summoned by the Kaiser to assemble in the palace at Berlin. These Councils of the Crown meet only for the purpose of discussing matters of the utmost moment to the Crown of Prussia. Up to the time of the beginning of the war not more than three had taken place throughout the twenty-five years of the Kaiser's reign.

It is a matter of considerable significance that neither the Chancellor of the empire, Prince Maximilian of Baden, nor yet Vice-Chancellor von Payer, who is a Württemberger, was present at the recent session of the council. It was exclusively a Prussian affair, and according to all accounts it arrived at certain momentous decisions, which may become known before this article appears in print. In this particular it differed from the sensational meeting of all the scores of rulers of the sovereign states of the German Empire, hastily summoned a fortnight or so ago at Berlin by the Emperor. That assembly is stated to have been signified by recriminations of the most acrimonious nature, by differences apparently irreconcilable, so much so that it broke up without coming to any decision. The Kings of Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony leaving the Prussian capital in a state of indignation that they made no effort to conceal.

Three Kings Went Home Angry.

It is asserted by those in a position to know that on that occasion the three kings referred to savagely reproached the Kaiser with having brought them into the present war by means of a disgraceful fraud. It may be recalled that the Kaiser in order to evade the provision of the constitution of the empire which precludes him from declaring war without the consent of the Bundesrath or Federal Council, save in the case of a sudden invasion of German territory, has based his declaration of war upon France on an assertion to the effect that French aviators had bombed the railroads in the vicinity of Nuremberg. This statement of the Kaiser has long been proved to have been without the slightest foundation, in short a deliberate lie, in keeping with the telegram which Bismarck boasted of having forged, in the summer of 1870 in order to make it appear that France instead of Prussia was the aggressor and that all Germany was threatened by French invasion.

The Kings of Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony are said to have cast in the teeth of Emperor William that in this matter he had been guilty of lying to them and of perjury to the entire German people, since he had solemnly sworn on the gospels to observe and obey the various provisions of the Constitution. They are said to have pointed out to him that his violation of the Constitution which had precipitated the war and brought irreparable ruin, desolation and misery upon the kingdom of defeat, was of a nature to call for his forfeiture of the presidency of the confederation of sovereign States known as the German Empire and of his title of German Emperor.

It was to avert this charge that William during the last three years has made so many concessions to the non-Prussian States by bestowing the office of Chancellor upon Frederick von Payer of Württemberg and the Secretaryship of State for Foreign Affairs upon Von Kuehlmann, a south German, and when Count Hertling had become impossible from a Prussian point of view by appointing as his successor Prince Maximilian of Baden. But all these concessions, bitterly resented at Berlin, have proved of no avail in shielding the Kaiser from the charges made by his allies in the German confederation of having lied to them and of the people of Germany and of having violated the Constitution in such a fashion as to preclude his remaining any longer at the head of the confederation and in charge of the foreign relations and of the military destinies of the fatherland.

It is no longer any secret that the Kaiser responded to these reproaches by accusing the non-Prussian rulers, their statesmen and their military

leaders of disloyalty. These accusations have since been printed in the Berlin Tageblatt and by its contemporaries in the kingdom of Prussia, and are made much of in order to prove how thoroughly justified these organs of the press are in denouncing Bavaria, Württemberg and Saxony, and in a somewhat less degree Baden, as the enemies of Prussia and of the Hohenzollerns.

It is charged that the various reverses of the German army on the western front have been due to the unreliability of the Bavarian troops and to the mutiny of entire Bavarian divisions in Belgium and in northern France, when they refused to take up the positions assigned to them by the German Generalissimo, Hindenburg, and Ludendorff. Owing to this the Prussian forces suffered very heavy losses and were obliged to give way.

Upheld Bavarian Mutineers. When it was proposed to punish the mutinous Bavarian troops their Crown prince Rupert vetoed all disciplinary measures against them, declared that the Bavarian divisions were perfectly justified in refusing to take up positions that could not be held and in declining to permit themselves to be sacrificed to the idiosyncrasy of Prussian leadership and for the sake of Prussian troops, who always left them in the lurch and for whom they entertained no sympathy whatsoever, but merely well merited aversion.

Crown Prince Rupert likewise gave voice to his indignation at the endeavor to saddle him in the eyes of the German people with the responsibility for the mistakes of the Kaiser's eldest son and heir and at the insinuation that the Bavarians had not done their share of the fighting. Indeed, he declared that he would no longer be associated with the Prussian Generalissimo or with the German Army General Staff, which is exclusively Prussian, and withdrew to Munich, where his actions and utterances were endorsed by his father, King Louis.

The Berlin papers insist that if Count Hertling had been forced by the

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Kaiser to resign the office of Chancellor of the Empire it was because he had been caught in the act of organizing a coalition of his own sovereign King Louis, with the rulers of Württemberg and of Saxony. Emperor Charles of Austria and King Ferdinand of Bulgaria against the Kaiser and against Prussia. This assertion is in a measure borne out by the remarkable interchange of visits between these various rulers during the few weeks which preceded the abdication of King Ferdinand, who since his departure from Bulgaria has been at Vienna at Munich and at Stuttgart, but has pointedly avoided going to Berlin or visiting the Kaiser.

The Berlin Tageblatt and the Prussian press contend that Count Hertling, instead of having been merely required by Emperor William to resign the Chancellorship, should have been arrested at Berlin and tried there on a charge of high treason against the imperial crown. There is every reason to believe that these accusations made by the organs of the Prussian press against Count von Hertling, against the rulers of Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg, Austria and Bulgaria, and against the Bavarian armies on the western front were voiced by the Kaiser in defending himself against the charges and reproaches put for-

ward by the rulers of the various German sovereign States on the occasion of their meeting him recently at Berlin in response to his urgent summons.

State Organs for Abdication.

The open hostility of the non-Prussian German States against Prussia and the insistent demands of the newspapers of Dresden, Stuttgart, Leipzig and Munich, even those newspapers which are recognized as the official organs of their respective Governments, for the abdication of the Emperor and for the elimination of his sons from the presidency of the confederation and from the imperial dignity have had the effect of causing the Prussian nobility, especially the petty territorial aristocracy known as the Junkers, to rally to the house of Hohenzollern. But Prussia is not entirely composed of Junkers.

There are the masses, who owing to the restricted franchise are virtually excluded from any voice in the affairs of the nation. They are almost to a man Socialists, and socialism in Prussia, as elsewhere in Germany, is anti-monarchical and anti-dynastic. Emperor William has been endeavoring the past fortnight to win them over by promises of universal franchise and by suggesting himself as hereditary president of a Prussian or German republic. But rulers of Prussia have repeatedly promised in moments of danger to their crown electoral reforms in a liberal sense, and then when the danger was past they have always deliberately broken their promises with a cynical disregard for the laws of honor which is a tradition of their house. The Socialists of Prussia cannot but remember this and accord to the pledges of the Kaiser just the limited amount of confidence that they are worth.

It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that Bavaria and the other south German States were not allied to Prussia of their own free will, but by force and for the military terrorism of the Hohenzollerns. Their alliance has been a species of servitude, and Prussia, with the brutality and arrogance which is her chief characteristic, instead of endeavoring to conciliate them has never neglected any opportunity of making them feel the galling nature of the yoke by intolerable usurpations of their sovereignty and by her endeavor to crush their particularism. They have had to maintain a constant fight for the preservation of their independence and of their individual nationality from the encroachments of Prussia, and the latter's downfall means their emancipation from a slavery which has lasted ever since the war of 1866, that is to say, for close upon six decades.



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