

AMAZING DISCLOSURES OF GERMAN DIPLOMATIC SECRETS.

A personal interview with the German Chancellor

Editor's Note : — Through the courtesy of THE DAILY RAIL we are enabled to publish the following interview by the special secret emissary of that journal — James J. Buttin.

I recognised him easily from his portraits. The long, pointed face, the carefully trimmed beard, tinged with grey, the slightly sarcastic pucker of the eyelids ; my old acquaintance Herr von Bethmann-Holweg. (We had been cub reporters together on the SATURDAY EVENING ROAST.)

Catching his eye for one brief instant I made a sign, the sign of comradeship of the BIER-TRINKERS BUST VEREIN of West 74th Street, Philadelphia, in the land of dollars and diplomacy. He started violently, but regained his composure with a visible effort and sauntered nonchalantly over to the dark corner where I stood.

« How's she comin' up, Von ? » I remarked, falling readily into the vernacular of other years before he married a wealthy and aristocratic wife and became Chancellor of the German Empire.

« Wie gehts, Buttin, » he responded, clasping my hand momentarily and glancing nervously around. « The debased speech of brutal Britain is verboten in cultured Germany, and I warn you that there are many, even here in Berlin, who seek my undoing. Endeavour, if you can, to look like a state official who owes me money. »

Accordingly I kissed his hand many times ostentatiously and invited him, in a loud voice, to join me in an ounce of butter which I had long kept stored in a secret pocket for just such an emergency.

BETHMANN-HOLWEG'S START IN THE SECRET SERVICE.

« Ah, that's better, » he said, « I see you have not lost the art of hiding your emotions, which was of such great use to us in solving The Mystery of the Missing Line-man's Lunch, whereby you became Sub-Editor of the ROAST, and I was first introduced to the notice of our unexcelled Secret Service. »

He thawed a trifle as he spoke. A little of the official reserve melted from his manner. A sparkle crept into his customarily cold eyes.

« Come with me to my private office, » he invited « and we shall talk at our leisure, free from espionage. »

We thereupon disguised ourselves by assuming the mien and manners of a couple of «Backfische» on a shopping expedition and made our way from the public place where we stood.

The streets we traversed on our way to the STRAFSTRASSE were crowded with women of the lower orders, singing the now notorious Famine-Lied.

« Give us brot und give us butter
For our vater und our mutter
Or our ruin will be utter
Wilhelm, dear. »

Suddenly a company of the **Machine-gun Corps for discouraging unrest amongst the populace** appeared at the end of the street we were passing through and turned their guns on the crowd. Many of the women fell dying and dead, but I dared not wait to see them all fall. Realising my duty to the Press, and being reluctant to becoming the subject of another note to Germany, I took cover, although unwillingly.

Chuckling merrily, Von remarked, as we reached the official residence, « That is how Germany deals with the virulent and viperous element which is yet, unhappily, in our midst. So perish all traitors. »

He uncovered himself a moment in silent prayer and preceded me into the elevator with most serene composure.

IN BETHMANN-HOLWEG'S PRIVATE OFFICE.

Once seated in his private office, he unbent absolutely. « Tell me, my dear Buttin, what do you wish to know ? I have exactly thirty four minutes to spare you before I am due in the August Presence with the latest details of our glorious victories in Monaco, Iceland and the hinterland of South-West Bolivia. »

« Von », said I, « I am curious to know by what methods you keep Neutral opinion so consistently favourable to your cause. »

He frowned a moment, and stared, as for inspiration, at his favourite picture, « The Pillage of Liege. »

« Buttin », said he « for once I will be indiscreet, although you, belonging to a race whose mentality is low and whose moral code is unenlightened, and tainted with so called British fair-play, may not wholly comprehend the high and sacred spirit of Germanism. »

« The sway the psychological processes of Neutral nations may seem to you a difficult matter, but in reality when reduced to a system by a board of German experts it may be simply stated a-Reason detached from Sentiment. »

« Take the case of the Belgian people for example, » he continued crisply. « They were not really happy. Under a King who could never wholly master the inherent blight of kindness in his nature; an exponent, moreover, of the domestic virtues — so long eliminated from our Hohenzollern Highnesses — what could one expect ? »

« I declare with emphasis, the Belgian people are deceived. » He struck the table a ringing blow. « They are deluded. They are hypnotised by precedent. Their mental outlook is cramped. They are temperamentally unable to appreciate all that Germany has done for them. » He drew a deep breath. « They cannot understand that to further their most vital interests we have to be cruel to be kind. Time and time again we have proved our affection for them by means of machine-guns, but even now, I must confess, in spite of our expenditure of time, trouble and ammunition, they fail to appreciate the advantages of German civilisation and culture. » He paused a moment, drumming the arm of his chair with restless fingers.

« There has been some outcry of « vandalism » amongst Neutrals. How blind these people are ! Belgian architecture was grotesquely crude, therefore we were obliged to remove several of the churches and cathedrals. These shall be replaced later by munitions factories of the Hindenburg type. »

« Belgian art was absurdly antiquated and impossibly stereotyped, therefore its destruction was decreed. We shall create a love for German art if it costs us our last cartridge. »

« Let these Belgians beware. » he declared menacingly. « Our patience and love may become exhausted, and we may yet decide to use coercive measures of no uncertain sort. »

« We lay these simple facts before the eyes of the Neutral world, proudly conscious of our rectitude, knowing that if we only reiterate them often and strongly enough they will be believed, in spite of the comment of a certain scurrilous section of the Neutral press. »

« Britain began the war. For years she kept trained and equipped an army of 100,000 hired assassins of the lowest type, to trample over fair Germany leaving behind a trail of blood and fire. » « but », he concluded piously, « thanks to our good, old, German God, our hands are clean. We only took up arms in self defence. »

There was real emotion on his face as he clasped my hand in farewell ; and I betook myself by devious ways to my obscure lodging.

James J. BUTTIN.

