

THE SECRETS OF THE HOHENZOLLERNS

A Startling Exposure of the Inner Life of the Courts of the Kaiser and Crown Prince

REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY

COUNT ERNST VON HELTZENDORFF

Late Personal-Adjutant to the German Crown Prince, Commander of the Black Eagle, Etc., and Since the War a Resident in France

EDITORIAL NOTE—William Le Queux, who has chronicled for his friend, Count Ernst von Helztendorff, the later's revelations of the inner life of the imperial German court, has long been recognized throughout Europe as the possessor of its innermost secrets.

The English "Who's Who" says of him: "He has intimate knowledge of the secret service of continental countries and is considered by the government (of Great Britain) an authority on such matters." Another authority says: "Few people have been more closely associated with or known more of the astounding inner machinery of Germany than he." Le Queux probably has more sources of secret information at his command than any contemporary in civil life, and for the last six years the British Government has made valuable use of his vast store of secret information through a specially organized department with which Le Queux works as a voluntary assistant.

Count von Helztendorff became an intimate of Le Queux several years prior to the outbreak of the war; he has been living in retirement in France since August, 1914, and it was there that Le Queux received from the crown prince's late personal adjutant permission to make public these revelations of the inner life of the Hohenzollerns—that the democracies of the world might come to know the real, but heretofore hidden, personalities of the two dominant members of the autocracy it is now arrayed against.

On August 5th, 1914, I shook the dust of Berlin from my feet, crossing the French frontier, and have since resided in the comfortable old-fashioned country house which you assisted me to purchase on the border of the lovely forest of Fontainebleau. And now you have asked me to reveal some facts concerning the public and private life of the emperor of my imperial master, the crown prince, known in his intimate circle as "Willie," and of the handsome but long suffering Cecil, Duchess of Mecklenburg, who married him 10 years ago, and was known as "Cilli." These poor women, she has experienced two years of misery, domestic unhappiness, by which she has become prematurely aged, deep-eyed, her countenance at times when we talked wearing an almost tragic look.

No wonder indeed that there is a heavy and alas, broken heart within the beautiful marble palace at Potsdam, that splendid residence where we once visited with me and were afterwards commanded to a reception held by his imperial highness.

I risk much I know in taking up my pen to tell the truth, and to do so because I think it is only just the world should know the true character of the emperor and the unscrupulous and ubiquitous "Willie," who is the idol of the German army and upon whom they pin their hopes.

A Son as Cunning as His Sire
It is true that the commander of the Death's Head Hussars once declared that "the day will come when social democrats will come to court." True, he has been known to be present at the golden wedding festivities of a poor cobbler in Potsdam; that he has picked up in his ninety-horse-power car—with its black imp as a mascot—a poor tramp and taken him to the hospital; and that he possesses the charming manner of his much-worshipped grandfather, the Emperor Frederick.

But he is as clever and cunning as his father, Wilhelm-der-Plotzich (William the Sudden) or Der Elitzige (The Only), as the Kaiser is called by the people of the palace. He shows with double cunning but one side of his character to the misguided German people, the Prussian junker party, and the Tom, Dick and Harry of the empire who have been made cannon fodder and whose bones lie rotting in Flanders and on the Aisne.

Ah, my dear friend, what a strange life was that of the German court before the war—a life of mummery, of gay uniforms, tinsel, gilded decorations, black hearts posing as virtues, and those people of both sexes evilly scandalizing their neighbors and pulling strings which caused their puppets to dance to the warlord's tune.

I once lifted the veil slightly to you when you stayed at the Palace hotel in Potsdam and came to us at the Marble palace, and I suppose it

is for that reason that you ask me to jot down, for the benefit of the world, a few facts concerning the plots of the Kaiser and his son—the idol of Germany, the Kronprinz "Willie."

A Strange Inexplicable Affair
In the early days of 1912 I found myself as the personal adjutant of his imperial highness the crown prince, involved in a very strange even inexplicable affair.

The drama opened in the emperor's palace in Berlin, on New Year's night, 1912, when, as usual a grand court reception was held.

The scene was one which we who revolved around the throne knew so well. Court gowns, nodding plumes, gay uniforms and glittering decorations—a vicious, tinselled, gossip-loving little world which with devilish intent sow seeds of dark suspicion or struggles for the Kaiser's favor.

In the famous White Salon, with its ceiling gaudily emblazoned with the arms of the Hohenzollerns as Burggraves, electors, kings, emperors and what-not, its walls of colored marble and gilded bronze, and its fine statues of the Prussian rulers, we had all assembled and were waiting the entrance of the emperor.

Philip Eulenburg, one of the emperor's personal friends (by the way author of Von Moltke to the Kaiser's much-advertised "Song to Aegir"—a fact not generally known) approached me and began to chat, recalling a side-splitting incident, that had occurred a few days before at Kiel, whither I had been with the crown prince to open a new bridge.

Oh, those infernal statues and bridges!

Of a sudden the tap of the Cham bellan's stick, was heard thrice, the gold-and-white doors instantly fell open, and the emperor, his decorations gleaming beneath the myriad lights, smilingly entered with his wedding consort, the crown prince, and their brilliant suite.

Cause of the Kaiser's Annoyance
All of us bowed low in homage, but as we did so I saw now the eyes of the all-highest one, which nothing escapes, fixed upon a woman who stood close to my elbow.

As he fixed his fierce gaze upon her I saw, knowing that glance as that it spoke volumes, Hilbert I had not noticed the lady, for she was probably one of those unimportant persons who are companions of the emperor, wives and daughters of military nobodies, of whom we at the palace never took the trouble to enquire so long as their gilt carriage was here, the emperor's chamberlain, were in proper order.

That slight contraction of the Emperor's eyebrows caused me to ponder deeply, for knowing him so intimately, I saw that he was intensely annoyed.

For what reason? I was much mystified.

Naturally I turned to glance at the woman whose presence so annoyed him. She was fair-haired, blue-eyed, petite and pretty. Her age was about twenty-five and she was extremely good-looking. Besides, she stood a big, fair-haired giant in the uniform of a captain of the first regiment of the hussars of the guard, of which the crown prince was colonel-in-chief.

Within a quarter of an hour I discovered that the officer was Count Georg von Leutenberg, and that his pretty wife, whom he had married two years before was the eldest daughter of an English financier who had been created a baron by Great Britain's rule-of-thumb politicians.

Interview With the Crown Prince
Next day, just before noon, on entering the crown prince's private cabinet, I found "Willie" in the uniform of the 2nd Grenadiers, apparently awaiting me in that cozy apartment, which is crammed with effigies, statuettes, and relics of the great Napoleon, whom he worships just as the war Lord reveres his famous ancestor, Frederick the Great.

"Sit down, Helztendorff," said his elegant highness, waving his white, well-manicured hand to a

chair near by, and puffing at his cigar. "It is really pleasant to have an hour's rest!" he laughed, for he seemed in merry mood that day. "Look here! Do you happen to know Count Georg von Leutenberg of the Hussars of the Guard?"

"By sight only," was my reply. "He is a very good fellow, I understand. Do you know his wife—a pretty little Englishwoman?"

"Unfortunately I have not that pleasure."

"Neither have I, Helztendorff. But I soon shall know her, I expect. In that direction I want your assistance."

"I am yours for your highness to command," I replied, puzzled to know what was in progress. After a few seconds of silence the crown prince suddenly exclaimed:

"So good is the report of von Leutenberg that has reached the emperor—that though he is as yet in ignorance of the fact—he has been promoted to the rank of major and ordered upon a foreign mission—as military attaché in London. He will leave Berlin to-night to take up his new post."

"And the countess?"

"By a secret report I happen to have here it is shown that they are a most devoted pair," he said, glancing at a sheet of buff paper upon which was typed a report, one which I recognized as emanating from the secret bureau at the Polizeiprasidium, in Alexanderplatz. "They live in the Lennestrasse, No. 44, facing the Tiergarten. Note the address."

A Sudden Promotion to London

COMMANDER R. G. R. EVANS OF H. M. S. BROKE.



Commander Evans who commanded the torpedo boat destroyer Broke in one of the most thrilling episodes of the war is not a stranger to Canada. On his return from the ill-fated Scott expedition in 1912, he visited Canada and addressed Canadian clubs in many cities. He is shown here with his wife, formerly Miss Elsa Andvord, "the belle of Christiania." The destroyer Broke rammed and sank a Hun destroyer off Dover and when Germans attempted to board and capture the Broke they were driven into the sea by the British seamen.

Then his highness paused and, rising, crossed to the big writing-table set in the window, and examined another report. Afterwards glancing at the pretty blue clock opposite, he suddenly said:

"The countess! I have sent informing him of the emperor's good-will, and ordering him to report here to take leave of me as his colonel-in-chief."

Scarcely had he spoken when Count von Leutenberg was announced by a flunkey in pink silk stockings, and a moment later the tall officer clicked his heels together and saluted smartly on the threshold.

"I thought you would be pleased at your well-merited promotion," said his highness in a quite genial tone. "The emperor wishes you to leave for London by the ten o'clock express for Flushing to-night, so as to report to his excellency the ambassador before he departs on leave. Hence the urgency. The countess, of course, will remain in Berlin. You will, naturally, wish for time to make your arrangements in London and dispose of your house here."

"I think she will wish to accompany me, your imperial highness," replied the fond husband. "London is her home."

"Ah! That is absurd!" laughed Willie. "Why you who have been married two whole years are surely not still upon your honeymoon?"

1--Leutenberg Tragedy
How the Kaiser and His Consort planned for the Undoing of the Beautiful English Wife of a member of the German Nobility

and his close-set eyes glinted strangely. "You will be far too busy on taking up your new appointment to see much of her. No. Let her remain comfortably at home in Berlin until you are quite settled. Then I will see that Kiderlen grants you leave to return to put your house in order."

From the count's manner I could see that he was very much puzzled at his sudden promotion.

Indeed, on entering he had stammered out his surprise at being staged out for such high distinction.

A Command from the Crown Prince
Von Leutenberg's hesitation was the crown prince's opportunity. "Good!" went on his highness in his imperious, impetuous way. "You will leave for London tonight, and the countess will remain until you have settled. I congratulate you most heartily upon your well-deserved advancement, which I consider is an honor conferred by the emperor upon my regiment. I know, too, that you will act to the honor of the Fatherland abroad."

"A charming man," remarked the prince, after the door had closed. "He has only been brought to my notice quite recently. An enthusiastic officer, he will be of great use to

me. I confess that I became more than ever puzzled over the curious affair."

Within a week, however, thanks to the introduction of Hohenstein, I had dined at Count von Leutenberg's pretty house in the Lennestrasse in a fine room, the long windows of which commanded a delightful view over the Tiergarten and the Siegesallee.

The countess, extremely charming and refined, having the misfortune of being English, had not been taken up warmly by Berlin society. She was, I found, a most delightful hostess.

In their night attire, the elegant first secretary of the French embassy, and his Parisian wife, together with Baron Hoffmann, the burly, round-faced minister of the interior, and Doctor Paulsen, under-secretary at the colonial office. Hohenstein was, however, not there, as he had been suddenly dispatched to the emperor upon a mission to Corfu.

At the table talk ran upon Leutenberg's sudden promotion, whereupon the Minister Hoffmann declared:

"His majesty only gives reward when it is due. When he discerns talent, he is never mistaken. Von Leutenberg is a man of high caliber, returned from a surprise visit the Kaiser had made to Stettin. The emperor had played his old game of rousing the garrison in the middle of the night and then laughing at the ludicrous figures cut by his pompous generals and colonials rushing about in their night attire eager to greet their sovereign."

I was in the prince's private room arranging the details of a military program at Potsdam on the following day when he suddenly entered and exclaimed:

"Well, Helztendorff, and how are you in the Lennestrasse, eh?" and he looked at me with those crafty eyes of his. "I hear you were at the house last night."

I stammered, "Yes, I being watched? It was quite true that I had called on the previous evening, and, finding the countess alone, had sat in her pretty drawing-room enjoying a long and delightful chat with her."

"Yes, I called there," I admitted. "The count is returning from London next week to take his wife back with him."

A Visit From Count Zeppelin.
The crown prince smiled mysteriously, and critically examined the curious snake ring which he always wears upon the little finger of his left hand.

"We need not anticipate that," he thought. "Kiderlen will not grant him leave. He is far better in Carlton house terrace than in the Lennestrasse."

"I hardly follow your highness," I remarked.

"H'm. Probably not, my dear count," he laughed. "I do not intend that you should."

And with that mysterious remark he turned to meet Count von Zeppelin, the round-faced, snow-haired, somewhat florid inventor, who was one of his highness' most intimate friends, and who had at that moment entered unannounced. Zeppelin was a character in Berlin. He sought no friends, no advertisement, and shunned notoriety.

"Ha, my dear Ferdinand!" cried the prince, shaking the hand of the man who so suddenly became world-famous at the age of seventy. "You have travelled from Stuttgart to see me—well as you are. It is an honor, but the matter is one of great urgency, as I have already written to you. I want to show you the correspondence and seek your advice."

And the prince invited his white-haired friend to the big carved armchair beside his writing table. Then, turning to me, he said:

"Will you see Von Glasenapp for me, and hand him those orders for Posen? He must leave tonight. The general court martial at Stendal I have fixed for the 25th. I shall be with the emperor this afternoon. Report here at seven to-night—understand."

Thus I was dismissed, while his imperial highness and Count Zeppelin sat together in the secret council.

A Starting Discovery.
At ten minutes to seven that evening I unlocked the crown prince's

room with the key I carried, the other two keys being in the hands of the crown prince and her husband. I had placed upon the table a bundle of reports which had just been brought around from the ministry of war, and required that scribbled signature, "Wilhelm Kronprinz," when I noticed three private letters that had evidently been placed aside.

The envelopes were addressed in a thin, angular, female hand, and bore an English address. I noted it. The name on each was that of a lady residing in Aylesbury avenue, Hampstead, London. The letters bore German stamps. In keen curiosity I took one and examined it, wondering whether it could be the correspondence which the crown prince had been so eager to show Count von Zeppelin in secret.

I drew the letter from the envelope and scanned it rapidly.

What I read caused me to hold my breath. The signature to the letter was "Enid von Leutenberg."

Those letters of her had, it was plain, been seized in the post on their way to London. The countess either had a traitor in her household or secret watch was being kept by the secret service upon her correspondence.

All three of those letters I read—letters which opened my eyes and broadened my mind. Then, taking up my bundle of reports, I crept away from the room, carefully relating the door. I intended that his highness should return, discover the letters left there inadvertently, and put them away ere my arrival, in which case he would never suspect that I had any knowledge of their contents.

With the papers in my hand I passed along the many carpeted corridors to the south wing of the palace, where I found Treutnitz, marshal of the prince's court, in his room.

The crown prince initiated his father's sharp punctuality, therefore I knew that he would be there at 7 or soon afterwards.

Treutnitz was always full of scandal concerning those who lived in the higher circles of Berlin, and it was to one of these stories of royal scandal concerning one of the ladies in waiting which I listened while I smoked one of his excellent Russian cigarettes.

Then, glancing at the clock, I rose suddenly and left him, returning again to the private room.

I found his highness there, and as I entered I noticed that he had hidden those remarkable letters which he had in secret shown to Count Zeppelin.

You Will Introduce Me to Your Pretty Friend.
A fortnight went past. The Kaiser with his mad love of constant travel had been rushing up and down the empire—to Krupp's at Essen, to the trials of a newly invented howitzer, thence to an inspection at Kassel, and afterwards to uneventful moments at Cologne and Erfurt. The crown prince and the princess had accompanied him, the Kaiserin being indisposed, and I, of course had been included in Willie's suite.

The week had been a strenuous one of train travel, luncheons, tiring dinners, receptions, dancing and general junketings, and I was glad enough to get back to my bachelor rooms—those rooms in the Krausenstrasse that you know so well before the bursting of the war cloud.

To dance attendance upon an imperious crown prince as well as upon an autocratic emperor, becomes after a time a wearisome business, however gay and cosmopolitan a man may be.

I had only been at home a few hours when a telephone message summoned me at 5 o'clock to the crown prince's palace.

His imperial highness who had I knew, been lunching with the emperor at the Königliches Schloss, across the bridge, seemed unusually serious and thoughtful. Perhaps the emperor had again shown his anger at his peccadilloes, as he did so frequently.

"Count," he said, after a few seconds of silence, during which I noted that upon his table lay a private letter from the German ambassador in London. "You will recall my conversation regarding the Countess von Leutenberg—eh?"

"Perfectly," was the reply. "I told you that I should require you to introduce me," he said. "Well I want you to do so this evening."

She has taken a box at the Königliche opera to-night, where they are to play Falstaff. I shall be there and you will be with me. Then you will introduce me to your pretty friend. Understand?"

A Puzzling Sentence
That night in accordance with my instructions, I sat in the emperor's box with the crown prince, Treutnitz and two personal adjutants, and recognizing the Countess von Leutenberg in a box opposite, accompanied by an elderly lady, I took the crown prince's hand, and there presented her to him, greatly to her surprise and undisguised delight.

The pretty and the countess chatted together while I sat with her elderly companion. Then, when we had withdrawn, my imperial master exclaimed:

"Ah, my dear Helztendorff. Why, she is one of the prettiest women in all Berlin! Surely it is unfortunate—most unfortunate."

What was unfortunate? I was further puzzled by that last sentence, yet I dare not ask any explanation, and we went back to our own box.

After our return to the palace the crown prince, who was standing in one of the corridors talking with the slim, fair-haired Baroness von Wedel, one of his wife's ladies in waiting, left her and beckoned me into an adjoining room.

"I wish you, Helztendorff, to call upon the Countess von Leutenberg at 9 o'clock to-morrow evening. She will expect you."

I looked at his highness much puzzled. How did he know that the pretty countess would expect me?

But he gave me no time to reply, merely turning upon his heel, and striding down the corridor to his private apartments.

You Are Witness He Has Drawn His Sword Upon Her to the Throne.

Punctually at 9 o'clock that evening I called at the Lennestrasse, but Josef, the elderly manservant, informed me that his mistress was engaged, adding that his imperial highness—the crown prince had paid a surprise call.

"The Crown prince here!" I gasped, astounded.

"Yes, count. And, further, my mistress is in high place, for my master returned quite unexpectedly this morning from London. He has been out at the ministry for foreign affairs all the evening and I expect him home at any moment. The crown prince ordered me to ask you to await him here."

Count von Leutenberg in Berlin! What did it mean? He was absurdly jealous, I recollected. He might return at any moment and find the crown prince alone in the countess's drawing-room. If so, the situation might certainly be a most unpleasant one.

Hardly had the thought crossed my mind when I heard the count enter, his spurs clinking and his sabre rattling as he strode up the stairs.

I crept forth, listening breathlessly. A few seconds later I heard the count's voice raised in anger and high, bitter words. Next moment I sprang up the stairs, and dashing into the room, found the pretty countess standing near the window, white and rigid as a statue, while the two men in uniform faced each other. Von Leutenberg's countenance was distorted with rage as he abused the crown prince, and openly charged him with having brought about his exile to London.

His highness made no reply, but only smiled sarcastically and shrugged his narrow shoulders.

So enraged the other became at this latter posture that, with a sudden movement, he drew his sword. The countess shrieked and swooned as I sprang forward and stayed her husband's hand.

It was a dramatic moment. The count instantly realized the enormity of his crime, and his hand dropped.

"Enough!" cried the crown prince waving his adversary aside. Then turning to me, he said in a calm, hard voice:

"Helztendorff, you are witness that this man has drawn his sword upon the heir to the throne."

And with those haughty words he bowed stiffly and strode out of the room.

A Message From the Emperor
Two hours later I was commanded to the Kaiser's presence, and (Continued on page 18)

Just one Guess as to who'll milk that cow

THAT SON-IN-LAW OF PA'S

---By Wellington

