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The Kaiser as I Knew Him
for Fourteen Years

By ARTHUR N. DAVIS, D. D. S.

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was never mentioned and it was not until several months later when the submarine warfare was started again on a greater scale than ever that I realized that the whole purpose of this interview was to ascertain if they could, without telling me their intentions, who was the candidate, Hughes or Wilson, who would be least dangerous to them if more American vessels were sunk in the ruthless submarine campaign they were then contemplating.

The election was drawing close; it was necessary to notify Von Bernstorff of Potsdam's preference; the kaiser believed that perhaps he held the deciding ballot in his hand in the shape of the German-American vote and he didn't know how to cast it. Hence the eagerness with which they interrogated me upon my return from the "front."

The interview with the reichskanzler and the fact that it was instigated by the kaiser indicated to me that America occupied a most important place in the kaiser's plans. When, a few months later, we declared war against Germany, however, all the kaiser's planning and plotting of years collapsed. The edifice he had been so confidently erecting came crashing to the ground because it was built upon a false foundation. How elementary was his expectation that his efforts to win the friendship of the United States in time of peace could avail him anything in the face of his barbaric methods of making war!

CHAPTER V.

The Kaiser Defends German War Methods.

The kaiser was always very careful about everything which might affect his health, and even after the war started, when his attention was naturally occupied by many pressing problems, he did not neglect his teeth, but came to me as regularly as he had always done.

Of this I was very glad, because it gave me an opportunity to draw the kaiser out on many of the interesting questions which the war suggested and which I found him always ready to discuss. Perhaps the fact that I was an American led the kaiser to greater lengths in his justification of German war methods and measures than he might otherwise have thought necessary.

The first time I saw the kaiser after the war started was about August 10, 1914. Between eleven and twelve o'clock the night before, I had been notified by telephone that the kaiser would like me to attend him at the Berlin palace the following morning

at nine o'clock. He was about to make his first visit to the front and wanted his teeth examined before he went.

The work I had to do for him was nothing of a serious character and did not occupy more than twenty minutes. One of his valets stood by to give me any assistance I might need, but left the room when I was through.

"Have you been reading in the papers, Davis," the kaiser asked when we were alone, "how our soldiers have been treated by the Belgians?"

I said I had not had a chance to read the papers that morning.

"Well, you must certainly read them. They've been gouging out the eyes of our wounded and mutilating my men horribly! They call it modern, civilized warfare. That's savagery! I hope your president is taking notice of these atrocities."

Of course I was in no position to contradict the kaiser's assertions, as I was not in possession of any of the facts, but I learned afterward that four American newspaper correspondents had scoured Germany from one end of the country to the other in an effort to run down these reports. They left no rumor uninvestigated, no matter how far they had to travel to verify it. When they had finally exhausted every clue and followed every lead they had not found a single case to justify the charge the kaiser had made against the Belgians and which, of course, the inspired German press continued to report from day to day.

The object of these lies was to justify the outrages which the Germans were committing in their plan to terrorize the inhabitants of the countries they were overrunning. According to reports the activities of franc-tireurs in the occupied territories were met by the Germans with the most barbaric punishments, crucifixion and similar atrocities being very common. Undoubtedly the kaiser was aware of what his soldiers were doing, and to defend their conduct he lent a ready ear to the unfounded charges made against the Belgians.

"I have already framed a message which I intend sending to your president regarding the use of dum-dum bullets by the Belgians and French," the kaiser went on. "We have ample proof to establish this charge not only in the character of the wounds suffered by my soldiers but in the shape of unused cartridges which we found in the captured forts."

Strangely enough, the kaiser sent off his protest to President Wilson

about the same day that President Poincare forwarded a similar protest based upon the use of dum-dum bullets by the Germans.

Regarding the violation of Belgium's neutrality, the kaiser was able to offer no reasonable argument. The fact that he was willing to pay Belgium for permission to allow his armies to go through that country was apparently sufficient justification in his eyes for taking by force what Belgium refused to sell.

"How foolish of Belgium to have resisted us!" he declared, in this connection. "Had they consented to let us walk through we would have paid for everything—everything! Not a hair of their heads would have been touched and Belgium today would be in the same happy financial condition that Luxembourg is."

At a subsequent interview we referred to Belgium again, and the kaiser alleged that Japan had violated the neutrality of China when she sent troops through Chinese territory to seize Kiao-Chau.

"It is all right for the allies to do these things," he commented sarcastically, "but when Germany does them England rises up in righteous indignation. The hypocrites! Why, we found papers in Brussels which showed conclusively that England and Belgium had a secret agreement by which in the event of war with Germany England was to be permitted to occupy Belgium! We've got those papers in Berlin. We could have no more positive proof against them. The Belgians were simply England's tools!"

Some of the arguments the kaiser raised in his discussions with me regarding the war were so weak and untenable that one might well doubt his sincerity in urging them, but I shall give them for what they are worth.

"They refer to us as the Huns!" the kaiser observed bitterly. "If your people could see what the Russians have done in the Bukovina and eastern Prussia they would know then who are the real Huns! They destroyed everything they could lay their hands on. In one of my shooting lodges which the Cossacks entered they even knocked out the teeth of the boars' heads which hung on the walls! With knives they cut out the covers of my chairs. They had special fire bombs which they threw on peaceful villages. These bombs had been constructed in peace times and were designed solely for pillage and destruction."

"Instead of treating their soldiers as prisoners of war we should have strung them up by the neck—every one of them!"

Several prominent Poles, who were patients of mine and whose fine estates in Poland were looted and demolished, told me positively that the destruction and depredations were committed entirely by German troops. The Russians had occupied the houses when they were in possession of that section of the country, but it was not until they were driven out by the Germans that the acts of vandalism were committed and they had convincing evidence that in every case the German soldiers and not the Russians were responsible.

The outrages committed by the Germans in their treatment of prisoners of war will probably never be known in their entirety. We do know that they executed Captain Fryatt, the commander of a British merchant vessel, who was captured after he had rammed a German U-boat. I don't know to what extent the kaiser was directly responsible for that dastardly crime, but from what he said regarding the capture of another British captain, the commander of the Baralong, it was quite evident that he was in entire sympathy with acts of that character.

A German U-boat had sunk a British vessel upon which were some of the relatives of the crew of the Baralong. The crew of this U-boat was subsequently captured by the Baralong, and according to reports in Germany they were harshly treated. Then it was reported that the Baralong had been captured and that her captain and the crew would be summarily dealt with.

"I hear we have captured the captain of the Baralong," the kaiser declared to me at that time. "If we can prove that he's the man we'll fix him!"

The manner in which the kaiser spoke left no doubt in my mind that the direst punishment would be meted out to the unfortunate British captain. Booty is undoubtedly a legitimate incident of war, but it is legitimate only as an incident. Otherwise booty becomes loot. In any event, when invading troops seize private property it is customary to pay for it. That the Germans were good takers but poor payers is revealed by two incidents which the kaiser narrated to me, and the keen enjoyment he derived from them can be fully understood only by those who know how much the kaiser appreciates getting something for nothing.

"Roumania wanted our gold for food products," he told me. "They demand-

(To be continued)

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